

JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Call for Papers for a Special Issue

What do social and environmental responsibilities mean in the 'Global South'? Towards pluriversal perspectives in management studies

Submission Deadline: 31 August 2025

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BACKGROUND

For management scholars and practitioners alike, organizational responsibility has been the object of study and intense debates for decades (Bowen, 2013; Carroll, 1999; Matten and Moon, 2008; Palazzo and Scherer, 2008; Post et al., 2002). This enduring discussion has its roots in a historical continuum of social and environmental responsibility practices that can be traced back centuries (Hielscher and Husted, 2020; Hoffman, 2007; Husted, 2015). Despite the multifaceted and context dependent nature of social and environmental responsibility (Matten and Moon, 2008) this area of study has been confined to certain types of businesses located in certain geographical regions tackling particular types of problems.

Consequently, we know little about what social and environmental responsibility looks like in non-Western contexts (i.e. contexts outside North America, Europe and Australia). This scholarly oversight is particularly noteworthy given the significance of non-Western contexts in both theory construction and the advancement, refinement, and interrogation of prevailing theoretical frameworks (Wickert et al., 2024), especially as they pertain to economic efficiency and effectiveness of non-Western businesses (Marquis and Raynard, 2015). Nonetheless, we lack a corresponding examination of how non-Western firms (as well as other types of organizations) attend to social and environmental issues.

In this special issue we seek to address this limitation by delving into the meanings and forms of social and environmental responsibility in the 'Global South'. The 'Global South' has been primarily embraced as a political and epistemological construction that represents the struggle against the economic, political and ontological hegemony of the 'Global North' over the rest of the world (Boaventura de Sousa and Meneses, 2020). While the concept of the 'Global South' has become a promising site for collective struggle in the pursuit of geopolitical, ecological, economic and epistemic change, its transformative possibilities have not been fully realized (Schneider, 2017).

We seek to delve into the complexities and possibilities offered by the concept of 'Global South' to build, integrate and inform theory from locations that have long been excluded from mainstream discourse. This has been especially true within the academic field of management, where a growing chorus of less-heard voices offer challenges to the entrenchment of Western-centric theoretical constructs (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Srinivas, 2023).

The inclusion of these pluriversal perspectives—distinct from North American or European ones – is necessary as we seek to engage in collective action to address significant ongoing and accelerating social and ecological crises. Yet such inclusion is often beset by constraints and challenges. As with the academic field of management more broadly, notions of responsibility have been predominantly shaped by North American and European ideologies, within a hegemonic framework that has hindered the inclusion of more localized understandings of managerial practices. This obscures the organizational arrangements and distinctive social commitments that are specific to contexts in emerging or developing countries (Austin et al., 2017). Business groups in India, for instance, engage in unique paternalistic and philanthropic practices towards employees and local communities that vary from one region to the next (Gao et al., 2017). The survival economy in Kenya encourages engagement in mutualist practices to collectively protect entrepreneurs from failure (Weiss et al., 2024). Companies in Colombia, in particular family businesses, have a long history of fulfilling political roles and providing public goods such as education, health and recreation (Acosta and Pérezts, 2019). Such engagement far predates the popularity of political corporate social responsibility in academic lexicon.

Understanding the plurality of organizational arrangements around social and environmental responsibility is thus necessary to examine the effectiveness, appropriateness – and importantly, drawbacks – of businesses involving themselves in tackling social and environmental issues. Beyond this, the global diffusion of sustainability (Bothello and Salles-Djelic, 2018) has generated avenues for private actors – Western multi-national corporations (MNCs) in particular – to actively shape the terms of engagement with sustainability, for instance defining environmental practices across supply chains (Reinecke and Donaghey, 2021). As a result, responsibility in the 'Global South' is not only comprised of local and traditional organizational practices but also involves hybridized forms that incorporate Western templates of responsibility around, for instance, stakeholder management, social and environmental reporting or standards and certifications (Jamali and Karam, 2018). At the intra-organizational level, this confluence manifests as a plurality of discourses that spurs intense debates and struggles over meanings of responsibility (Acosta et al., 2021).

The political struggle over social and environmental issues has long been a contentious topic in the 'Global South', where large corporates and non-governmental organizations are tasked with developing solutions that address structural problems like poverty and unemployment by providing microfinance services (Alamgir and Banerjee, 2018), bottom of the pyramid approaches (Sharma and Jaiswal, 2018), or developing sustainable global value chains (Krishnan et al., 2023; Schuessler et al., 2023; Soundararajan, 2023). Some company responses, like the infamous case of the United Fruit Company in Central America during the 20th century, have been highly condemned for their exploitative neo-colonial practices (Colby, 2019).

Contestations over land, water and natural resources become even more salient because Western-dominant approaches privilege a particular vision of the world that marginalize pluriversal perspectives offering a profoundly different vision of human-nature relations (Banerjee, 2003; Ehrnström-Fuentes and Böhm, 2023). The pursuit of "greener" development and technologies has resulted in numerous conflicts in the 'Global South', where governments and companies promote resource extraction for prosperity and modernization and as a necessary strategy for developing new technologies to address climate change (Voskoboynik and Andreucci, 2022).

This domination of particular forms of thinking and knowledge may ultimately exacerbate the ecological and social problems we face rather than ameliorate them (Banerjee and Arjaliès, 2021). There is a need to broaden our scope to include alternative organizational forms that can generate new avenues for tackling these issues, building on existing work on indigenous entrepreneurship (Dana, 2015; Padilla-Meléndez et al., 2022), community-based organizations (Peredo, 2019), cooperatives (Huybrechts and Haugh, 2018); social enterprises (Doherty et al., 2014), public-private arrangements (Azizi et al., 2021; Nkomo and Nkomo, 2023), the informal economy (Bothello et al., 2019), environmental justice (Foster et al., 2023), and traditional approaches from the 'Global South' like *Buen Vivir* (Husted, 2021; Peredo, 2019).

Importantly, in this call we seek to avoid romanticization and exoticization of the 'Global South', despite the term being used as a way to overcome the limitations of prior North-South dichotomies (Connell, 2007; Schneider, 2017). We invite instead accounts that acknowledge the role of context without overemphasizing or over valorizing it (Hamann et al., 2020). We also use 'Global South' in a manner that reflects its limitations: first, it is not a geographical concept. Not all countries geographically located in the 'Global South' are marginalized - some are culturally, ideologically, and economically aligned with the 'Global North' (e.g. Australia); nor do all marginalized countries identify with the term 'Global South'. Second, collectivism and a shared history of colonialism cannot obscure and homogenize the diversity of local realities among 'Global South' countries. We recognize both the limitations and possibilities of the term but do so with a view towards "strategic essentialism" (Spivak, 1999) that problematizes both epistemic location and epistemic exclusion (Srinivas, 2023).

Overall, the urgency of this special issue is motivated by two concomitant developments. First, our special issue is a response to recent calls to contextualize and decolonize management studies – see for example the recent point-counterpoint discussion in *Journal of Management Studies* (Banerjee, 2022; Bruton et al., 2022; Filatotchev et al., 2022; Muzio, 2022) and also calls to decolonize management and organization studies journals

(Barros and Alcadipani, 2023). Second, we seek a plurality of perspectives to contend with the multifaceted complexities, political, social and cultural diversity in such settings. We need greater efforts not only to understand and make visible local solutions, give voice to traditionally neglected actors including academics and practitioners located in the 'Global South' and their (alternative) forms of organizing, but also to recognize why and how 'Global North' practices and policies may lead to negative outcomes in local settings in the 'Global South' (see for example Claus et al., 2021).

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

In this Special Issue, our aim is to develop a better understanding of what social and environmental responsibility looks like within different contexts of the 'Global South'. We endeavor to construct conceptual frameworks that capture the unique characteristics across a variety of non-Western settings, enabling us to inform, complement and challenge some of the theoretical approaches that have predominantly originated from a 'Global North' perspective (Wickert et al., 2024). Emphasizing the need to reconsider responsibility from pluriversal perspectives, our goal is to bring in knowledge from those whose voices have been neglected or marginalized.

We also aim to bring in a greater diversity of perspectives and voices in this Special Issue. Voices from the 'Global South' – particularly those from marginalized communities – remain underrepresented in management research (Alm and Guttormsen, 2023). Understanding, for instance, Indigenous contexts and kinship systems and their relationship to land and nature can offer valuable insights to enrich our understanding of responsibility (Cutcher and Dale, 2023; Salmon et al., 2023) and even how we think about taken for granted concepts like sustainable development (Kim et al., 2019). However, there are real risks of misrepresenting marginalized groups arising from a lack of political reflexivity among researchers that can perpetuate epistemic neo-colonialism (Chowdhury, 2023).

Thus, gaining a deeper understanding and theoretical insight into the viewpoints of the 'Global South' is crucial. This knowledge will contribute to a more nuanced appreciation of multiple realities and facilitate the reconstruction of representations often imposed. Despite an existing body of studies challenging the Western-centric perspective, our aspiration in this special issue is to gain a richer understanding and mapping of how research from the 'Global South' can inform social and environmental theories in management.

Finally, the discursive construction of the 'Global South' is also an outcome of power relations between actors and institutions that privilege particular ways of knowing and being. Our aim is to challenge the perception of the 'Global South' solely as an empirical setting. We see this special issue as a place to discuss our responsibility as researchers in engaging with these settings (Bothello and Bonfim, 2023), as well as with marginalized actors and organizations, when studying social and environmental issues.

We invite conceptual and empirical papers that explore a wide range of themes and questions including, but not limited to, the following questions:

Questions about alternative forms of organizing for social and environmental responsibility:

- What are alternative forms of organizations in the 'Global South' and how do they address socio-ecological issues/crises?
- How does acknowledgement of pluriversal perspectives contribute to tackling social and environmental challenges?
- What is the role of the institutional environment in facilitating responsibility in the 'Global South'?
- How do actors, organizations, and governments in the 'Global South' reconcile the tensions between economic growth and social and environmental issues?
- How can perspectives from the 'Global South' inform eco-centric perspectives and relational ontologies (Ergene et al., 2021) ?

Questions about global vs. local approaches to responsibility:

- What role do business leaders in the 'Global South' play in perpetuating Western based views and approaches?
- Do Western-based approaches marginalize communities in the 'Global South' (for instance in the context of global value chains)? How?
- How do Western-based approaches transform existing human-nature and human-human relationships in the 'Global South'?
- In what ways, if any, do actors and organizations in the 'Global South' preserve their traditions and resist Western imposition (for instance, in the context of 'green extractivism' (Henriques and Böhm, 2022; Voskoboynik and Andreucci, 2022))?

Questions about epistemology and the ethics of conducting research in the 'Global South':

- How can we better equip ourselves as researchers and academics to avoid a pejorative view of settings in developing countries?
- How can we create impact through research in the 'Global South'?
- How can we ensure that Indigenous approaches to social and environmental responsibility are not co-opted or appropriated by researchers?
- How can epistemologies rooted in the 'Global South' be embraced in management scholarship? (Cutcher and Dale, 2023)
- What are ethical and responsible ways of collaboration for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data with scholars in the 'Global South'? (e.g., von Richthofen and Gümüşay, 2023)

Questions relating to marginalized communities in the 'Global South'

- What role can Indigenous knowledge systems play in shaping sustainable and culturally sensitive business models?
- How can businesses effectively engage with local communities while respecting Indigenous rights?
- What can we learn from Indigenous approaches to social and environmental responsibility in the 'Global South'?
- How can researchers minimize risks of misrepresenting marginalized communities and their knowledge in research?
- How do marginalized communities perceive and understand (organizational) approaches to social and environmental responsibility?

SUBMISSION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

- **Submission deadline:** 31st August 2025.
- Submissions should be prepared using the JMS Manuscript Preparation Guidelines (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/pb-assets/assets/14676486/JMS-Manuscript-Preparation-Guidelines-2024-1703285166.pdf>)
- Manuscripts should be submitted using the JMS ScholarOne system (<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jmstudies>).
- Articles will be reviewed according to the JMS double-blind review process.
- We welcome informal inquiries relating to the Special Issue, proposed topics, and potential fit with the Special Issue objectives. Please direct any questions on the Special Issue to the Guest Editors.

SPECIAL ISSUE EVENTS

Information session: The Guest Editors will hold an online information session for the SI in Fall 2024 (exact date, time, and format TBA).

Pre-submission paper development workshop: The special issue editors will conduct an online pre-submission paper development workshop at the beginning of 2025 (exact date, time and submission deadline TBA). Interested authors should submit a short paper (3000 words) to attend the workshop (see the requirements below). In breakout sessions, we will discuss the papers and the fit with the special issue as well as receive feedback from other authors. We also plan to invite some senior academics who will serve as mentors. Attendance is not a precondition for submission to the Special Issue.

Submission requirements: Please submit a short paper no longer than 3000 words (including references, appendices and other materials). Short papers should focus on the main ideas of the proposed paper, i.e. they should explain the purpose of the paper, theoretical framework, the research gap/puzzle/ problematization of the issue under study, data and the methods of analysis (for empirical papers), preliminary findings and contributions. Please highlight how this paper fits the SI by offering a richer understanding and mapping of how a 'Global South' perspective can inform social and environmental theories in management.

Post-submission paper development workshop: The special issue editors will also organize a post-submission paper development workshop in Winter 2026 (exact date, time, and format TBA) to provide support for authors invited to revise and resubmit their manuscripts. Participation in the workshop does not guarantee acceptance of the paper in the Special Issue and attendance is not a prerequisite for publication.

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