

Call for Papers for a Special Issue

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE, STRATEGIC ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTION, AND SUCCESS

Submission Deadline: September 3, 2021

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The guest editors for this special issue of the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal (SEJ) invite papers for consideration for publication on the topic of “Environmental Change, Strategic Entrepreneurial Action, and Success.”

Background and Special Issue Purpose

Entrepreneurs do not literally “create something from nothing” (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Apart from human agency (Shane, 2003) and social interaction (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Wood & McKinley, 2010), they need some raw material to work with. Environmental changes – be they technological, regulatory, demographic, economic, socio-cultural, or natural-environmental – are important sources of such raw material. Whether ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ for the economy overall, all such changes are likely to be beneficial for *some* types of new economic activity.

Compared to the abundance of concepts and statements pertaining to entrepreneurial agents, the strategic role of environmental change remains under-emphasized and under-theorized in contemporary entrepreneurship and strategy research (Agarwal et al., 2017; Chandra, 2018; Davidsson, 2019). The obvious role of new technology in many recent entrepreneurial successes highlights the need for increased attention to the role of agent-independent, external change for strategy (Porter & Heppelman, 2014) and entrepreneurship (Autio et al., 2018; Nambisan, 2017). Socio-cultural, demographic, regulatory, and economic changes – even natural and man-made disasters – likewise provide new entrepreneurial potential either independent of or in conjunction with new technology.

A good library of theories, concepts, and evidence exists for the entrepreneurial inclinations and capacities of entrepreneurial agents such as individuals and organizations. There are good reasons to argue that an equally rich set of theories, concepts, and evidence should be developed for capturing the entrepreneurial potential in environmental change. Moreover, agent-focused theories may not reach their full potential without better theory and evidence regarding variance in characteristics and potentials among the environmental changes to which agents respond. For these reasons, we invite submissions that develop theory and empirical evidence on:

- The *enabling* role of environmental *change* for *new ventures*, whether independent or corporate; commercial or social. Conversely, the challenges environmental changes pose for existing businesses are not a focus for this Special Issue.
- Strategically relevant *variance and similarity* across types and instances of environmental change. This is important because not all changes are sudden shocks; all changes of the same type (e.g., technological, regulatory, demographic, socio-cultural) do not have the same effects, and instances of different types of environmental change may share strategically important characteristics or offer similar potentials.
- The particular, *venture-level benefits* strategically and fortuitously derived from environmental changes. Such benefits may be conceptualized as ‘affordances’ (Autio et al., 2018; Gibson, 1977); ‘enabling mechanisms’ (Davidsson et al., 2018); ‘unactualized propensities’ (Ramoglou & Tsang, 2017), ‘autonomous agency’ (Brynjolfson & McAfee, 2014) or otherwise.

Some prior studies link instances of environmental change to increased *rates* of new venture creation. Other studies examine effects of ‘characteristics of opportunities’ where those characteristics tend to be concrete and context-specific rather than expressed as generalizable abstractions. We particularly encourage submissions that offer strong conceptualization pertaining to external changes and their effects, and which explicitly link aggregate-level change to venture-level strategic action and outcomes. Amit and Zott (2001), Barreto (2012), Grégoire and Shepherd (2012), Hiatt et al. (2009), and von Briel et al. (2018) are examples of studies that demonstrate such qualities. These studies also illustrate some of the many different theoretical perspectives and approaches that can be fruitfully applied in this type of research. The purpose of this Special Issue is to stimulate, connect, and extend research of this kind to help make research on “Environmental Change, Strategic Entrepreneurial Action, and Success” an integrated and growing part of the core of entrepreneurship scholarship.

Possible Research Questions

Questions that might be examined in submissions to this Special Issue include, but are not limited to:

- What are the salient commonalities and differences across types and instances of environmental change regarding the potential they offer for strategic entrepreneurial action?
- How do different environmental changes *combine* to produce favorable circumstances for particular types of ventures?
- What precise benefits can be derived from what kinds of change by what types of venture?

- To what aspects of venture creation do these benefits pertain (e.g., the product/service; the organization of the venture; the venture creation process itself, or something else)?
- When and where in the venture creation process do these benefits set in? For example, how are key sub-processes such as resource acquisition and business model development shaped by the potentials offered by environmental changes?
- How and why do the ability and propensity to identify and act on such benefits vary across different types of agents (e.g., industry outsider/insider; corporate vs. independent start-ups)?
- Which such benefits are under- and over-estimated by novice vs. expert entrepreneurs, and by entrepreneurs vs. their investors, respectively?
- How can agent-focused strategic theories pertaining to creativity, regulatory focus, managerial cognition, absorptive capacity, dynamic capabilities, etc., be enhanced by also considering variance in characteristics and benefits of the changes to which agents respond?

Submission Guidelines

Submissions to this special issue should be prepared in accordance with SEJ's submission process described at <https://www.strategicmanagement.net/sej/overview/submission>.

Submissions can be made via the SEJ website at

<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sej> from August 1, 2021 to September 3, 2021. Please make sure to indicate that your submission is for the special issue on Environmental Change, Strategic Entrepreneurial Action, and Success.

Further Information

For questions regarding the content of this Special Issue, please contact

sejspecialissue@gmail.com. For questions about submitting to the Special Issue, please contact SEJ Co-editor Gary Dushnitsky, gdushnitsky@london.edu.

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