



IN COOPERATION WITH **BOCCONI UNIVERSITY**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AT THE CROSSROADS



CONFERENCE PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS

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The year 2010 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Annual Conference of the Strategic Management Society. To celebrate the event, we are delighted to invite you to Rome, the eternal city, for a collective reflection on what our field has accomplished during these three decades, and on the scholarly challenges before us. Visualize a community of scholars facing a double crossroads. One is concerned with the multiple levels of analysis that the strategy field must consider. This range has dramatically expanded, from the micro dimensions of individual behavior, potentially down to neuro-scientific inquiries of strategic thinking and leadership behavior, all the way to the macro dimensions of regional competition and the emergence of novel capitalist systems, with the more 'usual' levels of analysis of the firm, the network and the industry in the middle of the continuum. At the other crossroads, scholars need to confront the fundamental cultural and institutional diversity that currently epitomize East-West and North-South interaction and the implications these differences have for strategic decision-making and behavior.

Strategic management has typically drawn extensively on parts of selected social science disciplines, such as industrial economics, economic sociology, social psychology and business history. Time has come to foster deeper and broader dialogues with the frontiers of science, across all relevant domains (e.g. social, natural, medical science) and disciplines (e.g. political science, macro-economics, ecology, neurology). This raises questions about both the content of collaborative work with scholars in other disciplines, as well as the appropriate mode of engagement with them. A necessary and exciting 'mind-stretching' exercise, aimed at widening our scientific horizons towards both micro- and macro-levels of analysis.

On the micro side, the recent years have seen the dawn of new methodologies to directly observe the human mind 'at work' in its vast complexity of volitions, cognitions and behavioral implications. The advent of new boundary-spanning disciplines has expanded the array of concepts and metrics available for theoretical and empirical analysis of individual and firm behavior. With the rapid growth of neuro-scientific applications in economics, marketing and even accounting studies, time is ripe for the strategy field to take on the challenge of thoroughly developing the micro-foundations of its phenomena of interest.

At the macro level, different varieties of capitalism are evolving with increasing speed, especially as a consequence of the global crisis that we have been experiencing. A deep appreciation for the consequences of these rapid evolutionary patterns involves (and demands) a multi-disciplinary effort with other social scientists specializing in the underlying political, sociological and macro-economic dynamics.

Equally important is our ability to deepen the quality of our dialogue at the other cross-roads: the multi-context, multi-cultural one. Convergent and divergent forces among the national and regional flavors of capitalisms are already affecting the type of strategic behavior adopted by firms and the quality of its outcomes, especially in the context of the current global economic crisis. But we are still missing a thorough conceptual and empirical understanding of how the extant theories apply to those contexts, and of required expansions or adaptations to ensure generalizability of the insights that our discipline has thus far developed.

We therefore call for contributions based on important and bold conceptual advancements, as well as on innovative empirical studies, with a special emphasis on multi-disciplinary and/or cross-context comparative designs. The questions offered by the conference themes tracks and Interest Group tracks below will help you identify the most appropriate dialogue to which you might wish to contribute with your work.

CONFERENCE THEME TRACKS

Track A: Micro-Foundations of Strategy

Track Chair: Gianmario Verona, *Bocconi University*

This track tackles the set of questions related to the role of the individual in the content and process of strategy. It thus builds on the recent renaissance of interest in the factors related to traits and behavior of the individuals involved in, or chiefly responsible for, the process as antecedents to strategic thinking and decision-making. More particularly, we seek contributions that might help to answer questions such as: How do individuals and teams shape strategy and firm performance? What is their contribution in the development and leverage of firm's resources and capabilities? How do the cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of individuals involved in the strategy-making process, not only as senior or middle managers but also as relevant stakeholders and counterparts, influence its outcomes? What can we learn from the theoretical, empirical and methodological bases developed by other micro-level sciences, such as psychology and decision science on the nature and consequences of strategy?

Track B: Macro-Foundations of Strategy

Track Chair: Maurizio Zollo, *Bocconi University*

The strategy of firms is constantly influenced by, and constantly influences, the social, political and economic development of communities, regions and nations. Yet, research in our field has rarely moved beyond the analysis of firm-industry dynamics in the study of the macro-level antecedents and consequences of strategic decisions and consequent actions. Track B addresses this gap by welcoming work that will leverage diverse theoretical traditions in social science to address questions like: how do the dynamics in the macro-economic, sociopolitical and natural environment influence the purpose, the aspirations and the (competitive and growth) strategies developed by firms? How does the deployment of firm strategy influence the dynamics in the social, political and natural environment? What factors influence the performance of strategic choices vis-à-vis the economic, social and political expectations of their multiple constituencies? What theoretical, empirical and methodological approaches might be useful to study the likelihood of success of strategic choices in terms of firms' ability to satisfy the expectations of social, political and economic counterparts?

Track C: Strategies at the Crossroads of Contexts and Cultures

Track Chair: Giovanni Battista Dagnino, *University of Catania*

Rather than reducing the significance of contexts and cultures in which firms are embedded, globalization has brought to the forefront the key influences these forces exert on the way firms compete and achieve performance.

Unfortunately, the strategy field has evolved with conceptual and empirical foundations largely developed within the boundaries of standard and relatively homogenous geographies and cultures. Their application to culturally and institutionally diverse contexts is severely limited and can generate contradictions and inconsistencies. This track thus calls for contributions aimed at unpacking industry- and firm-level strategic dynamics across diverse cultural and institutional contexts. How should the received wisdom on the content and process of strategy need to be adapted to describe firms' strategic behavior and success in cultural, political and institutional contexts different from the more familiar Anglo-Saxon or western European ones? What theoretical, empirical and methodological approaches might be fruitful to study the antecedents and consequences of strategy in highly diverse institutional and cultural and political contexts?

Track D: Integrating Strategies at the Crossroad: General Track

Track Chair: Rosario Faraci, *University of Catania*

Thirty years after the formal birth of the strategic management field, that unified existing but relatively sparse efforts performed in the long-standing business policy stream, the study of corporate and business strategies calls for more integrated and inclusive approaches. The field of strategy is, in fact, currently crisscrossed by two dimensions: the micro and macro perspectives influence decision-making processes, cultural and international dimensions affect primarily strategy implementation. Both strategy formulation and implementation may largely benefit from more integrated and inclusive approaches. Accordingly, we call for research work which addresses integrative aspects of a given strategic decision or process from different perspectives. How can micro and macro perspectives, and the multi-cultural dimensions of both corporate and business strategies be fruitfully integrated? Which theories or conceptual frameworks might help us develop more integrated approaches to the study of firm strategy? Which performance measures are more useful to further an integrated approach to the study of strategic management?

INTEREST GROUP TRACKS

The SMS has formed eight Interest Groups around some important sub-fields in strategic management. These groups each invite interested participants to engage with them in pre-conference activities. In addition, through this Call, each Interest Group invites submissions for the main body of the conference in which the authors address aspects of "Strategic Management at the Crossroads" along with other topics relevant to the Interest Group domain. The conference program will include presentations and panels that Interest Groups select in their topical areas, along with the selections from the above conference tracks. Submissions to the Interest Group tracks are open to any interested parties.

Track E: Competitive Strategy

Track Chair: Michael Leiblein, *Ohio State University*

The Competitive Strategy Interest Group focuses on questions concerning firms' competitive interactions within product and factor markets over time. Within the broader theme of the conference, we call for contributions aimed at exploring competitive dynamics across cultural and institutional contexts, as well as levels of analysis. For example, we welcome work addressing questions such as: how does the notion of competitive advantage vary across institutional contexts? How might our models of competitive advantage be adapted to reflect cultural and institutional diversity? How can we re-think the notion of sustainability of competitive advantage in front of the recent crisis? How can micro-competitive behaviors explain macro-competitive outcomes (e.g. regional competition)? How can we combine the traditional approaches to competitive dynamics with the more recent developments of behavioral and psychological sciences? How does increased and epitomized diversity change multi-market competition? What combinations of proactive and reactive strategies, exploration and exploitation, should firms undertake to position themselves at the crossroads of the new strategic challenges?

Track F: Corporate Strategy and Governance

Track Chair: Robert Wiseman, *Michigan State University*

Institutional and cultural diversity pose significant challenges for our theories of corporate strategy and governance. We thus call for contributions addressing the typical questions in our Interest Group from a cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary perspective. Contributions addressing one or more of the following questions will be particularly welcome: how does the macro-economic, political and cultural context influence the type and the success of corporate strategies enacted by firms active in those contexts? What are the macro-level implications of different modes of corporate growth? How can the choice between alternative corporate growth strategies and their success be explained by individual level factors? How should our models of M&A, alliance and organic growth performance be adapted to reflect different macro-economic, socio-political and cultural conditions? What governance mechanisms help firms address the strategic challenges at cultural and institutional crossroads? How do the various governance mechanisms influence, and are influenced by, strategies across cultural and institutional domains? How do individual factors influence the adoption and the success of corporate governance mechanisms?

Track G: Global Strategy

Track Chair: Anil Gupta, *University of Maryland*

The Global Strategy Interest Group works at the forefront of some of the questions raised in this year's conference themes. Still, the selected themes pose significant challenges for global strategy scholars to further stretch the scope of their work across disciplinary, cultural and institutional boundaries. We thus look forward to submissions addressing questions such as: how do macro-economic, political and institutional dynamics influence MNCs strategic behavior and performance? How do MNC's strategic decisions influence the macro-economic, political and institutional dynamics in diverse local contexts? What factors explain the cross-firm and cross-location variation in the economic, environmental and social performance of MNCs? What strategies can mitigate the hazards of worsening social ties with local communities consequent to MNC behavior? What is the role of individual psychological traits of country managers in the explanation of diversity in MNC's local strategies and outcomes? What organizational structure and process design choices might explain different performance outcomes in MNCs' adaptive strategies to local market variations across the globe?

Track H: Strategy Process

Track Chair: Bill Wooldridge, *University of Massachusetts*

Strategy process research focuses on the activities, practices and routines that govern the formation of strategies and their performance implications on the group, functional, business, corporate, and network levels of analysis. The process focus and the emphasis on multiple levels of analysis are particularly useful to address some of the questions in the 2010 SMS conference theme. In particular, we welcome contributions tackling issues related to one or more of the following questions: how does the general characteristics of local firms' strategy process vary with diverse institutional, cultural and macro-economic conditions? How does inter-firm variation in the processes that they adopt to develop their strategy influence their performance level across institutional, cultural and macro-economic contexts? What routines and competencies are needed at the top, as well as in the middle-rank of the organization, to select the appropriate strategies to deal with high diversity in expectations across their economic, social and political counterparts? How do the psychological characteristics of the individuals chiefly responsible to shape the firm's strategy affect the decisional outcomes and the performance consequences of those decisions?

Track I: Knowledge and Innovation

Track Chair: Sharon Matusik, *University of Colorado-Boulder*

Scholars of knowledge and innovation are especially attuned to multiple levels of analysis and the diversity of firms' contexts and so are particularly well positioned to tackle the questions posed by the conference theme. However, the multiple ways in which cultural and institutional conditions affect the the direction of the firm's innovation efforts are not well understood. And the mechanisms through which firm knowledge and innovation processes are affected

by the interaction of individuals' behaviors, cognitions, and motivations are yet to be fully identified, let alone empirically probed. We thus invite contributions addressing some of the following questions: how do individual level factors influence innovation and the generation, selection, replication and retention of firm knowledge? What macro-economic, political and sociological factors shape variation across countries and industries in firms' ability to learn and innovate, and what should firms do to leverage, or protect themselves from, these factors? How do cultural traits of nations and communities impact the resident firms' competencies and new product development processes? How can firms adapt their learning and innovation strategies to benefit from these cultural traits?

TRACK J: The Practice of Strategy

Track Chair: Sotirios Paroutis, *University of Warwick*

The Practice of Strategy Interest Group focuses on what people actually do in all types of organizations to plan, pursue, develop and implement strategies across multiple levels. Related to this year's conference theme, we welcome contributions that offer novel ways to study the practice of strategy aimed at taking on the complexity of cultural and institutional context, of macro-economic and political forces, and of the interdependencies with multiple social actors with which any organization needs to interact. In particular, we call for research work addressing one or more of the following questions: how does the practice of strategy differ across similar organizations in diverse cultural and institutional contexts? How and by whom are strategy problems identified and conceptualized within organizations facing high levels of diversity in the interests, characteristics and expectations of their economic, social and political counterparts? How are potential solutions under these conditions generated, evaluated, and decided on? What is the role of personal traits and psychological characteristics in shaping the way organizations plan, pursue, develop and implement strategy?

Track K: Entrepreneurship and Strategy

Track Chair: MB Sarkar, *Temple University*

The rise of entrepreneurship in developing markets around the world is challenging existing precepts, models and accepted wisdom. Consider how entrepreneurial firms from developing markets are using unique business models and strategies very successfully as they transition into emerging multinationals, and how start-ups located in developed country clusters need to design a global business/innovation model from inception. Or, consider the rise of social entrepreneurship, and models that address society's intractable problems while simultaneously creating economic value. We call for contributions that address emerging tensions: how do strategies developed and implemented by new ventures vary as context changes over space and time? What are similarities and differences between traditional entrepreneurial strategies and those aimed at creating both social and economic value? How do such strategies differ in the face of uncertainty of the 'reset economy'? How do traits and psychological characteristics of individuals influence the strategies devised and success rates?

Track L: Strategic Human Capital

Track Chair: Dave Lepak, *Rutgers University*

The Strategic Human Capital track explores the role of human capital in explaining heterogeneity in firm performance. We seek research that highlights firms' distinct capabilities to acquire, develop, motivate and retain human capital along with how these capabilities affect performance. Examples of key questions include: What causes firm heterogeneity in valuable human capital? What mechanisms link human capital to firm outcomes? How do firms manage the value appropriation by "stars"? Why and how do labor markets differ from other strategic factor markets? How human capital management practices diffuse? How does human capital interact with other forms of intellectual capital (social, organizational, etc.)? Scholarship that is interdisciplinary and/or considers human capital at multiple levels of analysis is especially welcomed.

To learn more about the
SMS 30th Annual International Conference
and for instructions on how to submit proposal(s),
please go to:

<http://rome.strategicmanagement.net>

Timeline:

February 25, 2010	Submission Deadline for Proposals
March 4, 2010	Co-Author Confirmation Deadline
Mid April, 2010	Notifications of Review Program Committee Decisions
May 17, 2010	Presenter Registration Deadline
July, 2010	Conference Program Available online
September 12–15, 2010	SMS 30th Annual International Conference

a professional society for the advancement of strategic management

The Strategic Management Society (SMS) is unique in bringing together the worlds of reflective practice and thoughtful scholarship. The Society consists of more than 2,500 members representing over 65 different countries. Membership, composed of academics, business practitioners, and consultants, focuses its attention on the development and dissemination of insights on the strategic management process, as well as fostering contacts and interchange around the world.

The Society is probably best known through the Strategic Management Journal (SMJ) published by John Wiley & Sons. The SMJ has become the leading scholarly publication in the field of Strategic Management. Since its inception it has sought to promote the development of advances in the field by maintaining the highest standards of intellectual thought combined with practical relevance. Since 2007, the Society also publishes the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal (SEJ).



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