

## Call for Proposals (CFP) and Submissions

### *Management and Organization Review*

Special Issue on ‘Responsible Leadership in China and Beyond:  
A Responsible Research Approach’

#### Workshop Organizers and Guest Editors

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#### Key Dates

May 15, 2020	The First Preliminary Project Proposal Submission Deadline
June 21, 2020	Proposal Development Workshop (online)
July 1, 2020	The Second Preliminary Proposal Submission Deadline
Aug 6, 2020	Proposal Development Workshop (in Vancouver or online)
September 30, 2020	Project Proposal Submission Deadline
December 1, 2021	Paper Submission Deadline
March/April 2022	Paper Development Workshop for R&R papers (location TBD)
December 2022	Publication of Special Issue
January 31, 2023	Follow-up Longitudinal Paper Submission Deadline
June 2023	Publication of follow-up longitudinal papers

Please submit project proposals to the MOR Managing Editor  
([MORManagingeditor@cambridge.org](mailto:MORManagingeditor@cambridge.org)) with the subject line ‘Responsible Leadership in China  
Proposal’.

#### Call for Proposal Guidelines

Larry Fink, the CEO of Blackrock whose firm manages nearly \$7 trillion of assets has argued, in an open letter to CEOs, that business leaders may be compelled by their consumers, and by society in general, to behave differently. Fundamental economic changes and government failure to provide new solutions are increasingly directing attention to companies, both public and private, for profit and non-profit, to address pressing social and economic issues (Fink, 2019).<sup>[1]</sup>

The New Enlightenment Conference (Edinburgh, July 1–2, 2019) on re-inventing capitalism issued the First Declaration of Panmure House, which urged international leaders to base their

policies and decision-making on a set of common principles, as espoused and formulated by Adam Smith, which cherish the required values of an ethically-based liberal democratic system, a moral commitment to the well-being of our communities, and affirm responsibility to protect economic, political, and social freedoms, use resources wisely, avoid unintentional consequences, follow the rule of law, favour markets and prices as guides to resource allocation, and take a long-term view of private and public investments, to support inclusive economic growth and prosperity for all.

It is not altogether clear how The Panmure House declaration or Fink's strong words will translate into redefining corporate performance beyond financial returns. But such important statements of intent highlight the growing awareness among leaders of major corporations that something must be done differently to realign business with the rapidly changing global economic context. This new realization is evident in the redefinition of 'Corporate Purpose' by the Business Roundtable (members are CEOs of leading US companies) on April 19, 2019.<sup>[2]</sup> The signatories of this statement, 181 CEOs, 'commit to lead their companies for the benefit of all stakeholders—customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and shareholders'. This declaration directs attention to an expanded set of stakeholders of the firm and offers insight into the idea of responsible leadership, a term used more and more often in the communities of both research and practice.

In China, the state council has issued in 2007, 'Guiding Opinions about Central SOEs' Fulfillment of Social Responsibilities', urging all SOEs controlled by the central government to adopt corporate governance practices to fulfill their CSR and to issue CSR reports. In 2018, the media representative of the State Asset Management Committee restated that fulfilling social responsibilities is the 'born attribute' of SOEs.<sup>[3]</sup>

Many leaders of POEs also believe in making contributions to society, beyond benefiting shareholders. For example, POEs have contributed the majority of charitable donations in China. The Li and Liang (2015) study on Chinese leaders' prosocial motivation also provides systematic evidence on their desires to serve the greater good. Majority owners of POEs often emphasize their orientation towards serving employees, customers, and the broader community (see examples in Tsui, Zhang, & Chen, 2017). Jack Ma from Alibaba, for instance, is known for his philosophy of serving 'customers first, employees second, and shareholders third'.

However, why are some enterprise leaders of SOEs or POEs more attentive than others to the interests of their stakeholders, even though they all face the same expectations from government and from society to behave responsibly? As China enters its next stage of global development, manifestations of understanding the meaning of responsible leadership and different approaches leaders use to lead responsibly is an important research agenda for the development of the next generation of leaders, both in China and beyond.

This special issue of *Management and Organization Review* seeks research that identifies various forms of responsible leadership, including theory development, qualitative studies, as well as hypotheses testing using quantitative, qualitative, or experimental methods. The former may include well-grounded cases of responsible leadership that describe corporate or governmental experiments (or addressing pressing social and economic issues). The latter may be the testing of

hypotheses on responsible actions by leaders at different levels in the organization. Our goal is to discover Responsible Leadership at any level of the firm that addresses pressing social and economic issues. This special issue aims to contribute to both theory development and the practice of responsible leadership at different levels and in different contexts, especially in China.

### **A Responsible Research Approach to Studying Responsible Leadership**

Leadership research has a long tradition, but the literature on ‘responsible leadership’ is fairly recent and is mostly conceptual or normative, with some case studies, focusing on the leader’s role in corporate social responsibility (e.g., Waldman & Balven, 2014), or on addressing stakeholder needs beyond shareholder returns (e.g., Maak & Pless, 2006). There is a wide-open opportunity for systematic empirical studies on responsible leaders using actual experiments or taking real actions addressing specific social consequences beyond high level declarations and redefinitions of corporate purpose. We treat ‘responsible leadership’ as an umbrella term that covers various leadership approaches, which address legitimate concerns and needs of relevant stakeholders at multiple levels and different domains, e.g., individual, group, organization, sociocultural, environmental, and so forth. We hope the empirical projects to be reported in this special issue will help both the academic field and corporate practice by clarifying the definition and scope of responsible leadership from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

This special issue on responsible leadership departs from traditional leadership studies in its focus on leadership practices (e.g., policies, actions, or actual experiments) that aim to address specific issues and deliver specific value to the different stakeholders of the firm or of government agencies. Hence, we de-emphasize leadership style studies and give priority to broader actions and practices of leaders.

Responsible leadership research is also reflected in a movement calling for business research to focus on both rigor and relevance. The former refers to researchers’ responsibility to science in producing reliable and replicable findings, while the latter refers to their responsibility to society by developing actionable knowledge that can contribute to business, organization, and management practices for a better world. We encourage research proposals and papers that follow or exemplify the seven principles of responsible research (cRRBM, 2017; Tsui, 2019).

### **Core Research Question and Extensions**

The core question to be explored in this special issue is ‘How and why do Chinese organizational leaders and their firms conceive and implement socially or societally oriented policies and practices that address the range of distributive justice issues?’ Distributive justice issues include balancing attention to different external stakeholders (such as employees, customers, suppliers, and community) beyond owners or shareholders. But also the role of government to address distributive justice issue such as migrants, income, and wealth inequalities.

Possible extensions of the core research question include but are not limited to the following:

- Why are some Chinese leaders and their firms more societally oriented, i.e., they give balanced attention to different external stakeholders (such as customers, suppliers, community, and not only shareholders) than other leaders?
- How is such societally oriented responsible leadership manifested at the lower, middle, and strategic levels?
- What might be some cultural, economic, political, or psychological reasons explaining the differences in societally oriented responsible leadership?
- Why do some leaders of Chinese firms treat employees with dignity and respect their rights to decent compensation, benefits, working condition, well-being, voice in decision making, or a high investment in the employment relationship?
- Does responsible leadership differ across types of enterprises in China (e.g., state-owned, privately listed, family owned, non-governmental organizations, social enterprises) or different industries (e.g., manufacturing, service, financial, e-commerce, high technology)? How is responsible leadership manifested in the different types of firms?
- How are social innovations created and developed in for-profit or non-profit firms? What is the role of responsible leadership in social innovation within and between organizations or between levels within an organization?
- How is responsible leadership of some Chinese MNCs manifested in their foreign operations? How does the local context impact the reactions to or outcomes of the Chinese MNCs' socially responsible practices? Does societally oriented responsible leadership offer a better or worse explanation than other leadership or institutional factors, such as the nation, industry, social networks, in understanding the Chinese MNC's reputation and success abroad?

Projects must be empirical studies and we encourage research designs involving multidisciplinary lenses, different levels of analyses, creative methodologies, and replications.

### **Three Phase Process**

**Phase I** seeks proposals that describe research ideas that can be studied empirically. The first preliminary proposal submission deadline is May 15 with invitations to present at the Proposal Development Workshop on June 21, 2020 (online). The second preliminary proposal submission deadline is July 1 with invitations to present at the Proposal Development Workshop at the Academy of Management meeting on August 6, 2020 (or online).

The length of the preliminary proposals is FIVE pages (excluding references, tables, and figures). The preliminary proposal should clearly state the key research questions, the theoretical frameworks, disciplinary perspective, research plans for the multiple studies, and plans for potential follow-up studies (see instructions of Phase III).

Each Project team will receive in-depth feedback and editorial guidelines for proceeding with the project. The formal research proposals must be submitted by Sept 30, 2020. Decision on proposal acceptance will be made by December 1, 2020.

All submitted project proposals must be pre-registered in an online depository. Pre-registration protects authors and ensures good science through publishing actual results whether they support or refute the hypotheses. Proposal acceptance and pre-registration do not guarantee acceptance of the manuscripts, but they will improve the chance of acceptance, assuming the authors implement the studies with good faith and follow the transparency and open science practices.

**Phase II** involves the submission of papers that collectively present and discuss the empirical findings of each project. Single papers unrelated to the approved project will also be considered if submitted to the Special Issue. Submission deadline is December 1, 2021. Authors of papers that have received a revise and resubmit will be invited to an MOR Special Issue Paper Development Workshop. Date and location to be determined (around March/April 2022).

Following the practices of MOR Paper Development Workshops, each paper author will receive detailed reviews and editorial guidelines as well as a specific editorial decision within two months of the Workshop whether the papers are conditionally accepted for publication in the special issue. We expect to publish the special issue in December 2022.

**Phase III** is for submission of papers that report longitudinal experiments, or constructive replications of the main projects, or examination of the consequences of responsible leadership practices, policies, or field experiments. The deadline for submission of follow-up longitudinal studies is January 31, 2023. Details will be shared at the MOR Proposal Development Workshop at 2020 IACMR Biennial Conference in Xi'an, China, and the same workshop at the AoM meeting in August in Vancouver, Canada. We may publish the follow-up longitudinal papers in June, 2023.

### **Proposal Submission Requirements**

Following the MOR Proposal Development Workshops, research teams will be invited to submit their formal proposals. The submitted proposals must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Each research team's research question must contribute to answering the core research question of this Special Issue.
2. Each study designs should demonstrate how it follows or exemplifies the seven principles of responsible research (see cRRBM, 2017; and Tsui, 2019 for some guidelines).
3. Each design should include at least one independent verification of findings (see Aguinis & Solinaro, 2019 for various types of replications).
4. Each research team should pre-register the study hypotheses and/or study design on a designated website depository (e.g., cos.io).
5. Proposal should include all research team members with brief biographies and listing up to five relevant publications demonstrating interest and prior related research experiences of each team member.
6. Timeline to complete the project from the date the project is approved.

7. Research proposal should not exceed 5000 words, include the research questions, a brief and relevant literature review, disciplinary perspectives for the study, hypotheses or research questions, sample and region where the study will be conducted, measures, data, analytical plan, and how the design will meet the above six requirements.

## NOTES

- [1] <https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/investor-relations/2019-larry-fink-ceo-letter>  
[2] <https://www.businessroundtable.org/business-roundtable-redefines-the-purpose-of-a-corporation-to-promote-an-economy-that-serves-all-americans>  
[3] <http://gongyi.people.com.cn/n1/2018/1217/c151132-30471937.html>

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