

Advancing the sociopolitical view of supply chain management

Guest Editors

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Background and purpose

Early conceptualizations of supply chain management focused on how companies and their suppliers coordinate the flow of production, information, and finances to satisfy customers' demands on-time and in-full (Cooper *et al.*, 1997; Lambert & Cooper, 2000; Lambert *et al.*, 1998; Mentzer *et al.*, 2001). Most research from this period considered supply chains as isolated mechanistic systems and overlooked the social and political contexts in which supply chains operate (Wieland, 2021). Indeed, the sociopolitical environment, characterized by social, cultural, and political elements that interact across local, national, and international scales, has been largely left out of early characterizations of supply chain management (SCM), and this legacy has persisted throughout the development of the field.

Today's business reality is one where political tensions are high (Baudier *et al.*, 2021; Witt, 2019), and sociopolitical forces play an amplified role in global trade. Take, for example, the decoupling of global trade flows between the major economic forces of the world (i.e., China and the U.S.) (Witt *et al.*, 2023), which is having profound implications on global supply chain (GSC) design and management (Roscoe *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, sanctions imposed by foreign governments (Meyer *et al.*, 2023) and supply chain legislation in countries such as Germany (Rühl, 2020) and the U.K. (see the Modern Slavery Act) have made local businesses accountable for the practices of their supply chain partners.

Scholars in the fields of international business and economic geography have examined the roles of sociopolitical context in the governance of global value chains (GVCs), which serve as a unique operational alternative for multinational enterprises. GVCs refer to the "holistic systems and governance structures of value creation and provision that span across multiple countries" (Gölgeci *et al.*, 2021, p. 646). This lens provides insights across multiple scales (local, regional, international) into the effects of trade and economic policy on the movement of goods between nation-states (Gereffi & Lee, 2012; Richey *et al.*, 2022). The concept of Global Production Networks (GPNs) pays attention to the underlying political and economic forces that shape the ongoing formation and reconfiguration of global trade flows between countries (Hughes *et al.*, 2015; Yeung, 2021). Yet, similar macro and multi-scalar approaches to understanding supply chain phenomenon are largely missing from the field of SCM.

It is no longer possible to ignore the ways in which sociopolitical forces shape the design, organization, and orchestration of GSCs. Unfortunately, with the exception of rare research that accounts for the role of various sociopolitical factors (e.g., Handfield *et al.*, 2020; Mann, 2012;

Wieland, 2021), there is a dearth of research adopting a holistic and multi-scalar view of the sociopolitical environment in SCM research.

Purpose and potential topics

This call for papers aims to advance a sociopolitical perspective of SCM. To do so, we call on scholars and practitioners to develop new theories or extend existing theories (see GVCs and GPNs) of the effects of sociopolitical forces on the location, connection, and configuration of GSCs. We expect this special issue to bring substantial contributions to the field by examining contemporary sociopolitical events and their impact on GSCs, including (but not limited to): geopolitical tensions between nation-states, war, nationalism, protectionism, economic decoupling, supply chain legislation, friend-shoring, economic and political sanctions, trade policy, economic policy, and industrial strategy, and politically driven demographic changes. Contributions are welcome within (but not limited to) the following areas:

1. *International wars and armed conflict.* Armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the involvement of external government actors in this conflict has affected the flow and configuration of GSCs. At the same time, tensions over the ownership of territories and sovereign states are prompting companies to rethink their production and sourcing locations. The impact of conflicts between nation-states on the location, design, and flow of supply chains has received little attention and deserves further investigation.

2. *The decoupling of economic powers.* As the economic and political rivalry between the U.S. and China continues, companies are in search of new supply chain models that mitigate risks and build supply chain resilience. The increasingly popular notion of friend-shoring provides a backdrop for companies moving suppliers and production facilities to what they deem “friendly” countries as part of a supply chain risk mitigation strategy. Other companies are exploring vertical integration approaches, where supply and production are brought in-house or geographically bundled to reduce complexity and protect against acts of aggression between nation-states. Papers on this topic could examine how these supply chain models are effectively implemented to mitigate sociopolitical factors.

3. *De-globalization, nationalism, and protectionism.* Since 2016, protectionist and nationalistic sentiments stemming from U.S. and European governments have prompted a wide-ranging discussion about the onshoring of overseas production. This trend has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the protectionist measures (vaccine nationalism, the defense production act, export controls) that governments enacted as a result. Scholars may wish to examine how these protectionist measures have shaped the location and flow of GSCs over the past 10 years.

4. *Geopolitical rivalry and critical supply chains.* A particularly interesting avenue of investigation is geopolitical rivalry in the context of critical supply chains. Economic leadership in manufacturing critical items, including electric vehicle batteries, semiconductors, rare earths, pharmaceuticals, and vaccines, has the potential to dictate countries’ economic and political standing in the 21st century, bestowing a sociopolitical character on the manufacturing location decision for these products. Semiconductors, batteries, and advanced materials are the key building blocks for consumer-facing products and services, as well as cutting-edge weapons.

5. *Supply chain legislation and policies across the globe.* The Modern Slavery Act in the U.K., the Dodd-Frank Act in the U.S., and Germany’s new Supply Chain Due Diligence Act, require large companies to ensure social and environmental standards are observed in their supply chain. Companies must monitor their own operations and their direct suppliers worldwide and take action if

they find a violation. Papers on this topic could explore how companies create visibility across their supply chain using digital platforms (see Marks and Spencer (2023)) and work with suppliers to ensure compliance with supply chain-level legislation.

6. Global supply chain design and operations under sanctions and tariff wars. Economic and political sanctions and tariff wars are becoming increasingly prevalent. Many European and North American companies announced that they would leave Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. Papers on this topic may wish to explore how companies work with or avoid government actors to mitigate the effect of these sanctions and politically-driven tariffs on GSC flows.

7. Politically driven demographic changes. China's population policy has profoundly impacted its demographics. China has long been a global manufacturing hub, but its aging population will likely pose significant challenges. Last year, for the first time in six decades, deaths outnumbered births (Stevenson and Wang, 2023). Nearly a third of China's population is expected to be over the age of 60 by the year 2035. Such demographic shifts will impact not only China's supply chain capabilities but also its consumer base. Similarly, the displacement of the Ukrainian population is likely to influence supply chain capabilities and consumer behavior in Europe. Similar significant politically driven demographic crises are occurring globally, and scholars should explore how these changes will likely reshape GSC flows.

Interest to academics and practitioners

This special issue will contribute to ongoing discourses in IJOPM on how socio-political and geopolitical forces are reshaping GSCs. Recent articles in IJOPM have explored how the U.K.'s departure from the E.U. (i.e., Brexit) has led to the relocation of manufacturing and supplier facilities (Hendry *et al.*, 2019; Moradlou *et al.*, 2021; Roscoe *et al.*, 2020). Other articles have been broader in scope, considering how the compounding disruptions caused by Brexit, Covid-19, and the US-China Trade War have reshaped GSCs (Handfield *et al.*, 2020; Roscoe *et al.*, 2022). These studies have drawn on theories from the fields of strategy, management, and international business (Institutional Theory, Dunning's Eclectic Paradigm, and Dynamic Capabilities) to gain insights into how social, political, and economic forces impact GSCs. A recent study in IJOPM by Roscoe *et al.* (2022) has gone further by extending organizational logics beyond the boundaries of the firm to understand the decision-making logic of supply chain managers when faced with persistent geopolitical risks. Articles from other leading operations management journals have also applied management and strategy theories within a supply chain context to understand how firms manage geopolitical risk. For example, Charpin *et al.* (2021) use an institutional theory lens to identify three different supplier development strategies for U.S. foreign subunits operating in China during the US-China trade war. Fan *et al.* (2022) use transaction cost theory to show that imposing trade tariffs affects domestic industries negatively, especially when firms rely heavily on overseas sourcing.

While this body of literature has established a solid base to explore the impact of economic and political forces on GSCs, the sociopolitical view of SCM has not yet been fully developed and established. As such, there remain a number of gaps and untapped opportunities to advance the sociopolitical view of global SCM. First, these studies borrow existing managerial and strategy theories and apply them to understand supply chain-level phenomena. So, while we are gaining some understanding of how macro-level factors influence meso-level supply chain decisions, the impact on micro-level factors, such as buyer-supplier relationships, inventory positioning, final-mile delivery, and reverse logistics, is largely missing. At the same time, these existing studies take a unidirectional view of how external political forces shape supply chain processes and not how supply chain managers can interact with, and exert pressure on, policymakers. They also fail to fully appreciate the

social and political contexts in which supply chains operate and advance an understanding of how meso-level actors in supply chains engage with macro-level sociopolitical forces (Wieland, 2021).

Moreover, these studies tend to be framed in terms of managing the political and economic risks associated with trade wars and tensions between nation-states. The ways in which political events and policy decisions influence social and cultural norms (purchasing habits, brand perceptions), and the resulting impact on GSCs, remain an under-researched topic. This special issue intends to address these gaps by receiving high-quality articles that move the OM/SCM field closer to a comprehensive theoretical framework that explains the inter-relationship between socio-political forces and GSCs across macro, meso, and micro scales.

Types of papers to be published

In this special issue, we expect influential articles dealing with a range of sociopolitical phenomena using empirical quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including (but not limited to) case studies, surveys, design science, action research, mixed-methods, etc. We also welcome Impact Pathway Paper submissions as per the journal policy: <https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/ijopm/impact-pathways-a-new-type-article-ijopm/>. The papers must provide new insights and theoretical contributions to the Operations and SCM field. Moreover, we expect papers to develop and/or apply theory and frameworks that can shed new light on the interaction between sociopolitical factors and a range of SCM topics, including supply chain design, manufacturing location decisions, and buyer-supplier relationships.

Submission and review process

Papers must adhere to the normal author guidelines of the International Journal of Operations and Production Management, which can be found at http://emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/author_guidelines.htm?id=ijopm.

Submission must be made via Manuscript Central (<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijopm>) with a clear selection indicating that the submission is for this Special Issue. Early submissions are accepted and welcome. Papers submitted to the Special Issue will be subjected to the normal, double-blind review process. The special issue editorial team will review the quality and contribution of each submitted paper. A long-list of papers (approximately 12-15) will then be sent to at least 2 external reviewers for their comments and feedback on whether the paper should be considered for further review or be rejected. From the long-list, it is anticipated that between 6 and 10 fully developed papers will be included in the proposed special issue. The following is a proposed timeline for the review and revision process.

Deadline for paper submission: 29/02/2024

Initial Paper Sift and Long-Listing: 15/03/2024

Long-list sent for external review: 20/03/2024

First review outcome by: 31/05/2024

Revised manuscript to be submitted by: 01/09/2024

Second review outcome by: 15/11/2024

Expected publication date of this Special Issue: 31/01/2025

Special issue editorial team

Dr. Ismail Gölgeci is Associate Professor at Aarhus University, Herning, Denmark. He holds a D.Sc. in Economics and Business Administration from the University of Vaasa. His research interests include global supply chain management, marketing strategy (B2B and international), sustainable supply chain management, and innovation networks. His research has been published in over 70 peer-reviewed academic articles and appeared in journals such as *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Human Relations*, *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, *Journal of Business Logistics*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Business Research*, *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, *International Business Review*, *Journal of International Management*, *International Marketing Review*, *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, and amongst others. He has served as guest editor at *European Journal of Marketing*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, and *Journal of Business Research*. He is an associate editor of the *Journal of Business Research* and *International Marketing Review* and senior associate editor of the *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*.

Dr. Samuel Roscoe is a Full Professor of Supply Chain Management at Thompson Rivers University, British Columbia, Canada. His research interests include how geopolitical disruptions (US-China TradeWar, Brexit, Covid-19) and innovative technologies (Additive Manufacturing, Blockchain, and Artificial Intelligence) are transforming global supply chains. Sam has published 20 articles in leading journals, including the *Journal of Operations Management (JOM)*, *Production and Operations Management (POM)*, and *Business Strategy and the Environment*. Sam was invited to give evidence to the U.K. government's International Trade Select Committee on Pharmaceutical Supply Chains and Covid 19 in April 2020. His recommendation for establishing "parallel supply chains" for the manufacture of critical goods in the U.K., as well as non-critical commodity items in Asia, was put forward by the Select Committee to U.K. government policymakers. Samuel has been the Principal Investigator on EPSRC grants and co-investigator on ESRC grants totaling £ 20 million. His research on Covid 19 and the disruption caused to GSCs has been featured in the Financial Times, the Guardian, Raconteur Magazine, and the BBC evening news.

Dr. David M. Gligor has earned his PhD at the University of Tennessee. He has published over 90 peer-reviewed academic articles, and his work has appeared in journals such as *Journal of Operations Management*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Decision Sciences*, *Journal of Business Logistics*, and *Journal of Supply Chain Management*. Dr. Gligor has been recognized as the top 2% most cited scholar in the world within the field of Business and Management in 2021 and 2020. He has extensive experience consulting and teaching executives globally, in countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Italy, and the USA. Dr. Gligor is Senior Associate Editor for the *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management* and on the editorial review board of *Journal of Operations Management*, *Journal of Business Logistics*, and *Journal of Business Research*. Before academia, he spent several years working in the industry for companies such as Hapaq-Lloyd, General Electric, and Ryder Logistics.

Dr. Chang Hoon Oh is William & Judy Docking Professor of Strategy at the University of Kansas School of Business. His research interests focus on the impact of NOSTEP (natural, organizational, social, technological, economic, and political) risks on multinational enterprises and how these businesses can improve their resilience and continuity. He has published over 65 peer-reviewed articles in leading journals such as *Strategic Management Journal*, *Organization Science*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Review of International Political Economy*, the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Global Environmental Change*, among

others. He has also recently co-authored a book, *Business Adaptation to Climate Change*, published by Cambridge University Press. Dr. Oh serves as Co-editor in Chief for *Multinational Business Review*, associate editor for *Global Strategy Journal*, and consulting editor for *Journal of World Business*. He has also edited several special issues for *the Journal of World Business* and *International Marketing Review*.

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