



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

STRATEGY IN TRANSITION

CONFERENCE PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS

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The fall of the Berlin Wall and the economic and political transitions of former Soviet Bloc states have changed the world. Few places embody this transition better than Prague, whose citizens, during the Prague Spring of 1968, triggered a chain of events that few people in business and society could have envisioned. The transition process in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries has been accompanied by an upsurge of entrepreneurial spirit, business acumen, and managerial talent of local business leaders and professionals, as well as a dramatic influx of foreign capital and know-how. It generated thousands of new business ventures throughout the region and prompted restructuring of centrally planned companies into modern, high-performing businesses that are often integrated into global production and distribution networks. These changes, however, are not confined to the CEE countries, and many emerging market economies, such as Russia, China, and India, as well as other Asian and Latin American countries, have also experienced profound transitional shifts in their political, economic, and institutional systems. Thus, the study of transitions is more pertinent today than ever before.

To understand the nature and impact of transitions, we need to develop a more holistic, multilevel approach that not only captures changes at the country level and the roles of institutions, but also addresses industry or sectoral transitions as well as corporate transformations and strategic changes at the firm level. While transition and emerging market economies in different regions started to adopt free market ideas, we witnessed unprecedented changes at sectoral and industry levels in the 'old world.' For example, the recent financial crises showed us that a lack of accountability and distorted incentive systems can significantly undermine the financial institutions of modern capitalism that most people thought would withstand the test of time. Ecological disasters, like the BP oil spill or the destruction of the Fukushima nuclear plant, reminded us that many existing business models and practices may not be sustainable in the long term. Often, these dramatic types of transitions force government bodies around the world to reassess their structural policies and introduce new types and forms of regulation. However, the mainstream strategy research so far has not offered a holistic, multilevel approach to address these important types of transitions.

At the firm level, businesses competing in transitional environments are hard pressed to cope with the rapidly changing economic, institutional, and social conditions; they have found it difficult to develop sustainable strategies aimed at the firm's growth and long-term survival. The search for new avenues to add value has propelled firms to unprecedented levels of innovation, be it in products, processes, or business models. As a result, firms have increasingly become key agents of transformation in their own right, suggesting that strategy adaptations in transitional environments often lead to profound transitions in strategy itself. While we already have some knowledge of what drives strategic (business model) innovation, we still know little about how firms manage such transitions. For example, recent research on the transition between different strategic orientations has demonstrated the ability of some firms to move across different competitive landscapes. Prominent cases like Nokia's migration from producing rubber boots to cell phones and

Preussag's journey from steel to tourism give us an initial idea of how some firms manage these transitions, but also point to the need for further research on this phenomenon.

To summarize, our 'Strategy in Transition' theme addresses the challenges and opportunities related to country, sectoral, and business model transitions or transformations. These complex phenomena pose new challenges for strategy researchers, calling for new concepts and theories in strategy research, as well as new methodologies that are based on multilevel research (i.e., country, industry, firm level) to tackle the multiplicity of changing organizational external and internal contexts. The challenges that transition brings are obviously manifold and go beyond the scope of any single call for proposals. In an attempt to focus the discussion, we want to draw attention to three key questions that cut across the levels of transitional change: (1) What impact do institutional transitions in different countries and sectors have on company strategies? (2) To what degree are recent transitions leading to more sustainable economic activity and strategic models? (3) Finally, how do institutional and sectoral transitions affect existing business models that are used by companies and that trigger their strategic transformation? These research themes are not only reflected in three conference theme tracks, but they also form theoretical foundations of discussions in the IG tracks.

CONFERENCE THEME TRACKS

Track A: Institutional Transitions and Business Strategy

Track Chair: Tatiana Kostova, *University of South Carolina*

While institutional embeddedness is important to consider in all types of environments, it is particularly critical under conditions of transition and continuous change. Some central questions we seek to address are: (1) How do the different facets of institutional change affect firm strategy, i.e., how do firms adjust their strategies to changes in formal and informal institutions, such as policies, regulations, social cognition, knowledge, and norms? (2) Which aspects have the biggest and the smallest effects on strategy? (3) How do institutional transition and firm strategies coevolve over time; what are the dynamics of strategic adjustment? (4) What are the strategy and firm performance implications of the different models of transition (e.g., gradual vs. 'big bang,' 'internally vs. externally motivated,' different models of privatization and deregulation, etc.)? (5) What are the winning competitive strategies for the different types of firms in this context?

Track B: Sectoral Transitions and Sustainability

Track Chair: Maurizio Zollo, *Bocconi University*

This track will focus on the multifaceted inter-connections between transitions experienced in various industries and sectors of the economy with the challenges posed by the growing concerns related to economic, social, and environmental sustainability in business models and firm strategies. In every sector and any region of the planet, companies are being asked, in different ways and to a widely different extent, to innovate and (often radically) change their strategies, their practices, and their mindsets to reflect the rapidly evolving expectations of stakeholders and (increasingly) policy-makers with regard to business conduct. We call for contributions that aim to shed light on (a) the heterogeneous evolution of expectations on firm practices across sectors and institutional contexts, on (b) the ways in which firms attempt to respond by innovating and adapting their strategies, processes, and mindsets, and on (c) the performance implications of such strategic change processes in terms of economic profit and risk, as well as environmental and social impacts.

Track C: Understanding Transitions in Business Models

Track Chair: Stephen Tallman, *University of Richmond*

This track addresses transitions in the organizations and strategies of firms, whether large, globally oriented multinationals or local, regionally focused firms that must respond to the pressures of changing competitive environments. Innovation, exploration, and dynamism are all terms that have been applied widely to firm products, resources, and strategies in recent times. This track incorporates these ideas, but proposes that the fundamentals of strategic intent and underlying business models are transitioning to new states in response to the changing technological, political, and social environment. Core questions are: How do established firms successfully make fundamental transitions in their strategic intentions and business models? What new organizational forms are evolving to give businesses the flexibility to adapt to a changing environment? Are new business models driven from the top down or the bottom up – or both? What are the roles of entrepreneurs in global, subsidiary and local firms when competition is increasingly global, institutions are changing, and stakeholder demands are impossible to ignore? How

can multinational firms best access the benefits of reverse or indigenous innovation to build competitive advantage? What new academic approaches do we need to understand the transitions of firms and their business models in a changing environment?

Track D: General Track

Track Chair: Frank Rothaermel, *Georgia Institute of Technology*

Many exciting sets of ideas have been offered concerning the implications of transitions for the practice and study of strategic management. Interesting questions include: (1) What theoretical and practical perspectives can be associated with the conference theme 'Strategy in Transition?' (2) Which theories are especially suitable in explaining how transitions matter? (3) Based on the empirical research to date, what do we know and how should we proceed? (4) What opportunities are there for theoretical integration and cross-disciplinary research, and what can strategic management learn from other fields?

INTEREST GROUP TRACKS

The SMS has formed a variety of different Interest Groups (IG) that explore important subfields in strategic management. Through this *Call for Proposals*, each IG invites submissions for the main body of the conference in which authors address aspects of 'Strategy in Transition' along with other topics relevant to the IGs' focus. The conference program will include presentations and panels that IGs select in their topical areas, along with the selections from the above conference tracks. Submissions to the IG tracks are open to any interested party.

Track E: Competitive Strategy

Track Chair: Glenn Hoetker, *Arizona State University*

The Competitive Strategy IG 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 in the face of transition. For example, we welcome work addressing questions such as: (1) How might our models of competitive advantage be adapted to reflect changes in national institutions? (2) How does the increased focus on social and environmental sustainability constrain firms' efforts to pursue competitive advantage and/or generate new opportunities for competitive success? (3) How do firms retain competitive advantage when their, and their competitors', business models change? As usual, we welcome all contributions linked with competitive strategy (competitive dynamics, sustainability of competitive advantage) and we specifically encourage submissions on the topic of competitive strategy with a link to the conference theme.

Track F: Corporate Strategy

Track Chair: Don Bergh, *University of Denver*

Economic, political, and social transitions pose significant opportunities for corporate strategy scholars. Thus, in addition to submissions addressing the core issues of our IG (e.g., the management of the diversified firm, the vehicles of growth and retraction, tradeoffs in alternative vehicles of growth and decline), we are particularly interested in submissions that focus on the conference theme as it pertains to corporate strategy. For instance: (1) What are the challenges firms face when their firm boundaries stretch to several different market types (e.g., developed, transitioning, developing) and how do these firms manage and support these divisions? (2) What questions do firms face when considering restructuring that might make the process significantly different depending on what sector or country in which the firm is restructuring? (3) Are certain modes of diversification or restructuring preferred during transitions? (4) Given the transition in our business models from hierarchical control over the value chain to global networks of alliances, what might we expect to become the next business model? (5) How do diversified corporations manage risk in a transitioning world?

Track G: Global Strategy

Track Chair: Timothy Devinney, *University of Technology-Sydney*

Strategic transitions in institutions, sectors, and purpose—the three dimensions of this year's conference theme—are central to scholarship for the Global Strategy IG. The diverse environments in which MNCs operate are perpetually in 'transition,' and the formation of global strategy implies conquering and accommodating these forces. Thus, we look forward to submissions addressing questions such as: (2) How do macroeconomic, political, and institutional dynamics

influence MNCs' strategic behavior and performance? (2) How do MNCs' strategic decisions influence the macroeconomic, political, and institutional dynamics in diverse local contexts? (3) And how can they proactively create strategies to do this? (4) How can MNCs build resilient strategies that take advantage of the strengths they wish to exploit while exploring and learning from transitional environments? (5) Are MNCs responding to the regulatory changes or are they leading the change? (6) How do MNCs manage this transition? (7) Can/should MNCs operate with global corporate norms or be more accommodating to local needs and pressures? (8) Institutionally, should MNCs be at the forefront of global 'regulatory' structures and what might be the costs and benefits? (9) How do MNCs set the pace for a transition toward sustainability?

Track H: Strategy Process

Track Chair: Tomi Laamanen, *Aalto University*

The Strategy Process IG focuses on questions concerning how strategies are formed, implemented, and changed. We particularly welcome contributions that examine strategy processes in organizational and institutional transitions. Potential subthemes include: (1) *Identification of the opportunities for transition*: Are organizational and institutional transitions emergent phenomena or can they be predicted and managed through deliberate strategic action? What kind of processes have some of the most successful firms and governments had? Are transitions created or discovered? (2) *Processes during transition*: What kind of strategy processes do firms and governments use during periods of transition? Are processes adapted to the situation? What kinds of processes improve the ability of firms and governments to perform better during times of transition? How do firms and governments balance the tension between the need for centralized control and local adaptation during transitions? What kinds of processes enable wider involvement of multiple different actors? (3) *Consequences of transition*: Do firms and governments become better at their strategy processes over time? Do transitions create experiential learning effects that improve the strategy process capability of a firm or government? What are the main elements of the strategy process capability?

Track I: Knowledge and Innovation

Track Chair: Gabriel Szulanski, *INSEAD*

Knowledge and innovation are critical in the context of institutional transition. For example, not only can firms be innovative in how they help orchestrate the nature of how institutions evolve in the context of transition, but the ability to recognize and assimilate knowledge about the changing context is paramount to surviving and thriving in transition contexts. Accordingly, we invite contributions that address some of the following questions related to the theme 'Strategy in Transition:': (1) What innovative strategies are successful in helping firms shape the nature of institutions in the context of institutional transition? (2) What strategies are particularly relevant under different institutional contexts (e.g., economic transition in CCE countries vs. emerging economies in South America) and why? (3) How should our theories and models related to the ability of firms to recognize, assimilate, and put to productive use external knowledge be adapted for contexts that are in rapid transition? (4) What capabilities, processes, and knowledge structures are particularly relevant in transition contexts? (5) How do these vary based on the nature of the transition (e.g., macroeconomic, industry, technological)?

Track J: Strategy Practice

Track Chair: Timo Santalainen, *Aalto University*

The Strategy Practice track aims at getting an inside view from organizations in transition. While substantial attention has been paid to strategizing within for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, little attention has been paid to understanding the challenges of strategizing undergoing transition from stateownership to corporatization, as has happened in many countries over the past decade. The process of transitioning has seen the emergence of an organizational configuration, the 'parastatal,' where strategists are forced to straddle between state and business management logic. Industry-level boundaries keep eroding with constantly changing roles between subjects and objects of change. Many business organizations have entered the era of temporary advantage. Specific questions expected to be probed are: (1) What is the practice of strategizing amidst major transitions? (2) Is there a strategy, or can strategy absence be a strategy? (3) What are substitutes of formal strategy practices? (4) How are ambidextrous strategic thinking and action developed? (5) What strategy lessons—if any—can be learned from other disciplines? We encourage fresh stories and new insights from an analysis of such transitions. In addition to academics, practitioners and strategy consultants, who have an inside view on transitions, are most welcome to submit papers.

Track K: Entrepreneurship and Strategy

Track Chair: Christopher Tucci, *Swiss Federal Institute of Technology-Lausanne*

To address challenges associated with transitions, firms must rethink their approaches to strategic entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial strategy. These two areas are rich with different tensions as new firms, as well as established ones, develop and exploit opportunities to generate wealth. Entrepreneurial actors must be sensitive to the internal development needs of their organizations, but also to the external institutional environments in which they are embedded. Moreover, entrepreneurial actors must increasingly navigate local and global factors and product markets simultaneously. We call for contributions that examine such tensions. Questions that could be addressed include: (1) What are the main challenges entrepreneurial actors face in different contexts (including in transition economies/environments), and how can they manage them to ensure survival and growth of their firms? (2) How do (or should) business models vary as the context changes, and what are the performance implications of those variations? (3) How do entrepreneurial spinouts relate to knowledge agglomeration or diffusion in different contexts?

Track L: Strategic Human Capital

Track Chair: Patrick Wright, *Cornell University*

The Strategic Human Capital track explores the role of human capital in explaining heterogeneity in firm performance. Transitions caused by institutional change, economic innovation, and environmental shocks throughout the world have introduced greater heterogeneity in human capital, as well as distinct institutions for producing and allocating human capital around the world. Accordingly, 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: (1) What causes firm heterogeneity in valuable human capital? (2) What mechanisms link human capital to firm outcomes? (3) How do firms manage the value appropriation by 'stars'? (4) Why and how do labor markets differ from other strategic factor markets? (5) 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.

Track M: Stakeholder Strategy

Track Chair: Jeffrey Harrison, *University of Richmond*

In a rapidly changing global economy, one of the great challenges managers face is understanding how to fruitfully engage a large and diverse group of internal (i.e., employees, owners) and external (customers, financiers, regulators, suppliers, communities) stakeholders to everyone's advantage. This difficulty of this task is magnified when companies operate in countries or regions that are undergoing significant economic and/or political transitions. Some of the questions the Stakeholder Strategy IG would like to see addressed in this year's submissions are: (1) How should the current strategic management theories and constructs change to reflect a stakeholder view of the firm supporting the development of business models and strategies that generate sustainable value for the key stakeholders in environments that are undergoing significant transitions? (2) What stakeholder engagement and internal change strategies are necessary to influence the effectiveness of competitive corporate growth and innovation strategies? (3) How do firms based in advanced economies learn to change their business?

Track N: Cooperative Strategies

Track Chair: Jeffrey Reuer, *Purdue University*

Cooperative arrangements often enable organizations to cope with environmental and organizational transitions. Such transitions also shape cooperative strategies that coevolve with the strategic intents of partnering organizations. Transitions in institutions, industry sectors, and organizations have important and diverse implications for cooperative strategy research. We welcome proposal submissions related to the general domain of this newly-formed interest group. In addition, we particularly encourage submissions that address questions that are related to strategy in transition: How do political, institutional, and other macro dynamics affect the formation and outcomes of cooperative arrangements? How can organizations, including corporations, nonprofit organizations and public sector agencies, use cooperative arrangements as a means of addressing transitions in their environments? How do cooperative arrangements, alliance portfolios, and networks evolve in sectors experiencing substantial change? How can cooperative arrangements be managed and governed to effectively cope with transitions in institutions, industry

sectors, and organizational objectives? What are the consequences of environmental changes for organizations' cooperative strategies in the private and public sectors? What processes and capabilities are needed to manage transitions via cooperative arrangements?

Track O: Strategic Leadership and Governance

Track Chair: Parthiban David, *American University*

Country level, industry and firm transitions raise interesting questions and challenges for scholars of strategic leadership and governance. In addition to submissions addressing the core issues of our IG (e.g., the composition and influence of the TMT and the board of directors, the use and effectiveness of corporate governance mechanisms, and institutional differences that impact governance around the world), we are particularly interested in submissions that focus on the conference theme as it pertains to strategic leadership and corporate governance. For instance: (1) How do changes in institutional infrastructure impact the nature, design, and effectiveness of strategic leadership and governance? (2) What is the role of strategic leadership and governance in transitioning from government-centered to market-based economies? (3) How might social upheavals influence the role and functioning of strategic leaders and governance? (4) Do non-public firms in transition offer different problems or potential solutions that public or state-owned firms do not? (5) Do different governance practices transition at the same pace as, faster than, or slower than the economy transitions to a market-based economy? What role does the composition of the strategic leadership play in this relationship?

Track T: Excellence in Teaching

Track Chair: Jay Dial, *Ohio State University*

The Teaching Community provides a forum for researchers who teach strategy to improve their classroom effectiveness. This track aims to identify and address teaching-related needs and to provide the means for efficient and effective sharing of teaching experiences and resources. We invite proposal submissions that seek innovative, inclusive, and interactive teaching enhancing processes that emphasize such issues as content analyses of courses, new research on strategy pedagogy, and literature reviews of prior pedagogy research. Target student audience includes undergraduate, MBA, and executive. Special attention will be given to proposals that share best practices, impart actionable tools, frameworks, and concepts, and/or advance members' knowledge of adult learning processes.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

Proposals (5-7 pages, for paper and panel sessions)

Only original, unpublished work is sought.

Deadline for Submission of Proposals: February 23, 2012

To learn more about the
SMS 32nd Annual International Conference in Prague
and the submission process, please go to:
prague.strategicmanagement.net

Timeline:

February 23, 2012	Submission Deadline for Proposals
March 1, 2012	Co-Author Confirmation Deadline
Mid-April, 2012	Notifications of Program Review Committee Decisions
May 14, 2012	Presenter Registration Deadline
July 2012	Conference Program Available Online
October 7-9, 2012	SMS 32 nd Annual International Conference in Prague

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The Strategic Management Society (SMS) is unique in bringing together the worlds of reflective practice and thoughtful scholarship. The Society consists of nearly 3,000 members representing over 80 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. This Class A journal has become the leading scholarly publication in the field of Strategic Management and is consistently rated one of the top publications in the management area. In 2007 the Society launched the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal (SEJ) and in 2010 the Global Strategy Journal (GSJ). The intent is for these new quarterly publications to soon also become Class A journals and to promote the development and dissemination of advances in the field by maintaining the highest standards of intellectual thought combined with practical relevance, just as their sister publication SMJ has done for many years.



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