

Journal of Organizational Behavior

Special Issue Call for Papers

Micro-Foundations of Organizational Behavior and Sustainability: Issues, Drivers and Trajectories?

The editors of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* will publish a special issue of the journal on the subject of Micro-Foundations of Organizational Behavior and Sustainability.

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Background and Rationale for the Special Issue

There has been extensive research on both sustainability and organizational behavior. However, while there has been a rounded mix of micro and macro-studies of organizational behavior in a range of contexts, much of the underlying approach that drives investigation into sustainability has tended to be macro-orientated rather than micro-orientated. This preference in work on sustainability tends to result in a focus on overall entities such as companies or organizations and the ways in which sustainability interconnects with broad concepts of efficacy, effectiveness and performativity rather than micro-analyses. This raises concern that such prevailing currents are prone to obscuring, the combination of the more micro, individual, political, relational dimensions and drivers of sustainability actions, situations and contexts which ultimately lead to macro-situations and events (Alcaraz & Thiruvattal, 2010; Porritt, 2007; Sharma, Starik, & Husted, 2007). Essentially, sustainability should involve multi-level and multi-system perspectives (Starik & Rands, 1995).

Importantly, we argue that the fields of organizational behavior and organizational psychology can offer significant opportunities to advance sustainability research. Greening organizational behavior matters (Andersson, Jackson, & Russell, 2013). Building upon the micro-foundational approach (Felin, Foss, Heimeriks, & Madsen, 2012), we believe it is time to explore the social mechanisms and illuminate the multi-faceted micro-foundations of sustainability including, by way of example, leadership which carries a strong bearing for corporate social responsibility (Christensen, Mackey, & Whetten, 2014). Research shows that leaders can influence employees' pro-environmental behaviors (Robertson & Barling, 2013). From a managerial cognitive and behavioral perspective (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008), managers' cognitive framing underpins their decision-making and manifested behaviors in confronting with, and navigating through, complex issues and tensions between economic, environmental and social aspects (Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014). Furthermore, trust and social exchange relationships and behaviors can affect creativity (Khazanchi & Masterson, 2011), that, in turn, may play an important role to design and implement innovative approach for achieving sustainability. Therefore, a closer scrutiny of micro-aspects embraces issues such as emotions (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009; Ashkanasy & Cooper, 2008; Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005) and resilience (Cooper, Flint-Taylor, & Pearn, 2013), which provide potentially significant antecedents of sustainability in a micro-foundations context.

There is scope, therefore, for a fresh consideration and reconceptualization of theory for practice in the sustainability field (Aragon-Correa, 2013; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). This special issue intends to examine the underexplored individual, relational and behavioral micro-foundational aspects of sustainability. A better understanding of human behaviours and social interaction at the micro-level

potentially provides an opportunity for advancing our understanding of sustainability at the macro-level, not uniquely organizationally but also for society at large (as suggested in micro-foundational approaches (Barney & Felin, 2013). Using a micro-foundational approach, it is also possible to examine sustainability through two of its key mechanisms: aggregation and social interaction (Foss, 2011) wherein “organization analysis should be fundamentally concerned with how individual level factors aggregate to the collective level” (Barney & Felin, 2013: 145). In summary, a nuanced and micro-level understanding of individuals, organizational behavior and their social interaction is valuable in explaining macro-level outcomes and thereby developing our current comprehension of sustainability in conjunction with shaping future research agendas.

With the aim of examining these questions, the special issue embraces a diversity of organizational research approaches to explore and debate the micro-foundations of sustainability from fresh and alternative approaches. The call for papers also encourages studies that can demonstrate both rigor and relevance, and research that can inform and impact practices in designing, implementing and achieving sustainability (Bansal, Bertels, Ewart, MacConnachie, & O'Brien, 2012).

Objectives of the Special Issue:

- To examine the micro-foundational organisational behavioral and psychological aspects of sustainability focusing on a consideration individual, political and relational factors;
- To assess, understand and evaluate perspectives and conceptualisations that underpin historical, contemporary and emergent understandings of behavior and psychology in micro-foundational sustainability;
- To, ultimately, reconceptualise sustainability in the light of micro-foundational behavioral dimensions, aspects and contexts.

Indicative and illustrative questions that may energise these investigations (although of course not exclusively or comprehensively) include:

- What are the micro-foundations of organizational behaviour and organizational psychology in relation to sustainability? How can the micro-foundational factors assist in reconciling the contradictions and/or resolve tensions surrounding sustainability?
- What are the contemporary macro and micro-foundational structures, conditions, states, relations, discourses, identities and perspectives that drive behaviors in relation to sustainability and how do these aspects impact on individuals and collectives?
- What dynamics of behavior can be identified in the rhetoric and realities at the heart of sustainability and what can be done to resolve them and progress the field and human and organizational relations through a micro-foundational understanding?
- Through an engagement of micro-foundational perspectives, in which ways and manners might behavior in relation to sustainability be recontextualized and reconceptualised in order to address and respond to the prevailing contemporary organizational contexts and challenges?
- Examined through the lens of micro-foundational perspectives and behaviors, what are the possible and potential future trajectories and narratives of sustainability and the implications for the future nature of work social structures and conventions?
- To what extent might management education cultivate a sustainable and responsible business agenda for educating business leaders (considering the individual, political and relational aspects) who will transform the business world through micro-foundational approaches?
- How can a better understanding of micro-foundational perspectives and contexts better assist MNCs to engage in sustainability in emerging and advanced economies?

- What are the antecedents, mediating and moderating factors, and outcomes of behaviors connected to sustainability's micro-level origins?
- How might different levels of analysis (individual-, team-, unit-, firm-level) conjointly help create sustainability within and/or across firms?
- What skills, personal competencies, and behaviors do managers at different hierarchical levels need to learn and practice in order to achieve and preserve sustainability?
- What role do teams play in creating sustainability within firms, and how is team-level sustainability jointly influenced by higher-level mechanisms and individual-level characteristics?

The deadline for submissions is **15th March, 2016**. The special issue is intended for publication in late 2017. Papers to be considered for this special issue should be submitted online via <http://mc.manuscript.central.com/job> (selecting 'Special Issue Paper' as the manuscript type). Please direct questions about the submission process, or any administrative matter, to Managing Editor, Iris Poessé, jobedoffice@wiley.com. If you wish to discuss the special issue further, please contact Dr. Yipeng Liu, Y.Liu.8@bham.ac.uk

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