

**Call for Papers
for a Special Issue of
Asia Business & Management**

**Non-routine Environments:
European-Asian Business in Times of Shock**

Submission deadline: 28 February 2020

Guest Editors

Sierk Horn, FH Vorarlberg, Austria
Tomoki Sekiguchi, Kyoto University, Japan
Matthias Weiss, Ruhr University of Bochum, Germany

Risk and uncertainty are global concerns for markets, organisations and people within them. Resolve and wisdom to deal with them is a requirement for organisational survival (e.g., Barney, 1999). Within bounds, a lack of predictability and worries about one's ability to influence unstable environments in one's favour are part and parcel of today's dynamics of change (Carmeli & Tishler, 2004). But what happens, when environmental spheres are so radical and random that there is little to no grip on change – through routines, through experience, through sagacity – to cushion consequences of disorder? Ill-preparedness for natural hazards (e.g., Hurricane Katrina), a resurgence of serious public health concerns (e.g., MRE), or illusions of control over unruly technology (e.g., Fukushima) question the extent to which we can 'really' shape our lives and the world around us. Human-made crises such as the Brexit referendum or the looming trade wars kindled by the Trump administration, too, test how things are routinely done. Shocks are not necessarily always external or cosmic. Inside events, too, can affect an organisation's course. The space shuttle Challenger catastrophe or the Diesel-emission scandal show how operational limitations can set off a chain of events that build up to unexpected outcomes.

The need for a better understanding of shock might have never been greater. We ask how organisations and actors within them prepare for a collapse of meaning and what they can do to shape the shifting world around us. Shocks can be defined as incidents that (i) happen suddenly and unexpectedly; (ii) rupture our trust in causal relationships; and (iii) bring about a shifting reality that causes controversy about routes to adjustment. Clearly, for organisations, it is impossible to prepare for all eventualities adequately (Chakrabarti, 2015). Even if we expect an incident, we cannot predict the experience. Because of their low probability shocks usually fall outside well-practised frames for identifying, assessing, and prioritising risks (Pearson & Claire, 1998). Yet, in our view, we ought to emphasise hard-to-predict events in management. Shocks are not only possible but common in a progressively destabilising world (Giddens, 1990), where sudden losses of meaning pose a considerable threat to the functioning of organisations (van der Vengt et al., 2015). Crucially, if change unfolds in an unorderly manner, organisations and actors within them need to give meaning to experiences that rain down on them (Weick, 1993). A crack in the shelter of cherished routines often whirls one's sense of agency. We feel unprepared and at a loss how to go about a situation, precisely because we cannot project the future from the past (Bernstein, 1996). Under these circumstances, non-ergodic conditions (i.e. incessant upheaval, Bennett & Lemoine, 2014), we lose our sense of balance with significant implications for mobilising emotions – sometimes vague, sometimes strong – about what is going to happen.

Without a doubt, Asia is an arena most permeable to study such a significant topic: Today, this region plays a pivotal role in business. The global reach of organisations

operating here (and from there) is astonishing. So is their growing exposure to hard-to-predict and disorientating events. Territorial tensions, competing political visions or institutional shifts accompany unique economic dynamics (Chan & Cui, 2016). And an accelerating vulnerability to environmental jolts is the result of that. Our knowledge of business and management in Asia is relatively advanced. Yet, there has been a relative neglect of research on how organisations operate in non-routine landscapes. This shortage of knowledge is in sharp contrast to the tremendous impact shocks have on the success (or indeed the survival) of organisations. Given the breadth and depth of the region's energy (and, as some would argue, turbulence), Asia provides a fitting context for exploring acclimatisation to and learning from low-probability, high-impact incidents. The aftermath of an unforeseen event is likely to affect organisations at all levels: individuals, teams, institutions, and networks. An understanding of just how organisations and people within them experience and move on from significant adversity is an urgent concern for organisations all over the world. Our regional lens might offer new or even alternative views on resilience.

For this special issue, we cordially invite submissions that illustrate or reflect on practices surrounding shocks. We are particularly interested in contributions that explore what makes some organisations better able than others to bounce back or forward from turmoil. What prepares the ground for navigating and adapting successfully in non-routine environments? What is the role of "soft" factors (read language, culture, customs) in dealing with latent dangers? Or are organisations operating in or from Asia essentially bound by similar "hard" factors (read formalised business processes and structures) marshalling adjustment before, during or after hard-to-predict events? Would firms, for instance, from China or Japan have different responses in the face of an unexpected event (e.g., in Europe)? We welcome work that draws from archival, conceptual, or empirical approaches to this theme. The focus of the papers may include, but are not be limited to, the following:

- There should be a strong human side to shock events. Are there cultural differences in individual and collective dealing with uncertainty and risk, and if so what are they? Are we essentially helpless in the grand scheme of things, or do we believe we are essentially responsible for our fate? Based on such culturally reinforced assumptions, do we see in risk something negative or positive? How do organisational cultures affect reactions to shocks that may emerge through the uncertainty and riskiness of a firm's business, such as in start-ups or innovation-focused areas?
- Certainly, the role of Human Resource Management and leadership in absorbing shock, then, is significant. How can HR help an organisation to prepare for unforeseen events so that it can function effectively? How can we strengthen interaction and relationships at the workplace (e.g., in teams) to facilitate recovery and learning from shocks? What can we do to support staff in dealing with the fallout from an unexpected event (including health issues)? What about leadership styles and behaviours during a crisis?
- Recent financial crises and macroeconomic shocks have gained wide media attention. They exert significant influence on real business activities. Despite or precisely because revisions of regulatory legislation financial institutions still suffer severe problems. What are the systemic risks involved today? What is the role of risk-taking at banks and how and to what extent do Asia institutions differ? What measures are offered to assess, structure and control for relevant risks?
- At the core, Supply Chain Management (SCM) is about risk and dealing with the unknown. However, increasing complexity and interconnectedness exposes supply chains to even more significant risks. What about the destructive power of resurgent protectionism that hangs over supply chains? How can firms build up capacities for resisting disruption and shock? What thinking emerges in Asia when it comes to SCM capacities for recovery?

- Reputation is a real asset to any company. External or internal shocks easily endanger credibility and brand building efforts. How can marketing help to maintain stability in the face of crisis? Next to (short-term) crisis communication, what role (if any) can marketing play to transform operations and (re)connect with changing needs and wants of customers?

Submission Process

If you would like to discuss an idea for a paper prior to submission, please do not hesitate to email sierk.horn@fhv.at.

You are warmly invited to submit papers to this year's Euro Asia Management Studies Association (EAMSA) conference. This will take place in Vorarlberg, Austria. Here you will have the chance of meeting the editor of ABM and guest editors of the special issue. The paper submission deadline is 28 June 2019. For further details visit our website (www.fhv.at/eamsa2019) or follow us on [Facebook](#). EAMSA is home to scholarly exchange on management and organisation of European-Asian business. Annual conferences, held alternately in Europe and Asia, bring together researchers and business executives who discuss their research and experiences, exchange ideas, and establish collaborative network

To be considered for the special issue, final manuscripts must be submitted by 28 February 2020 via <https://www.editorialmanager.com/jabm/>. The submission system will be open from 1 November 2019. To ensure that all manuscripts are correctly identified as being submitted for this special issue, please select 'SI: Shock' when you reach the "Article Type" step in the online submission process. Authors should prepare their manuscript according to the guidelines of Asian Business & Management, see:

<http://www.palgrave.com/gp/journal/41291/authors/presentation-formatting>

Submitted papers will be reviewed through a double-blind peer review process. We welcome your submissions.

References

- Barney, J.B. (1999). How a firm's capabilities affect boundary decisions. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 40, 19-32.
- Bennett, N. & Lemoine, G.J. (2014). What a difference a word makes: Understanding threats to performance in a VUCA world. *Business Horizons*, 57, 311-317.
- Bernstein, P.L. (1996). *Against the gods*. New York, NY: John Wiley.
- Carmeli, A. & Tishler, A. (2004). The relationships between intangible organizational elements and organizational performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25, 1257–1278.
- Chakrabarti, A. (2015). Organizational adaptation in an economic shock: The role of growth reconfiguration. *Strategic Management Journal*, 36, 1717–1738.
- Cui, G. & Chan, T.S. (2016). *Asian businesses in a turbulent environment: Uncertainty and coping strategies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Pearson, C.M. & Clair, J.A. (1998). Reframing crisis management. *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 59–76.
- Van der Vegt, G.S., Essens, P., Wahlström, M. & George, G. (2015). Managing risk and resilience. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58, 971–980.
- Weick, K.E. (1993). The collapse of sensemaking in organizations: The mann gulch disaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 628–652.