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*Call for Papers for the 2020 Emerging Discourse Incubator*

**Emerging Approaches for**

**Developing SCM Theory**

The topic for *JSCM*'s third emerging discourse incubator (EDI) is emerging approaches for developing SCM theory. These approaches may be emergent in social sciences in general or they could be familiar in other disciplines, but not traditionally used by SCM scholars. The aim is to incubate a discourse on unique ways to build theory and encourage SCM scholars to develop theory both for the SCM context and for the wider range of disciplines that study organizations (and their decision makers) within networks of other organizations.

Theory is critical to high quality SCM research, extending its relevance beyond a specific realm and providing a roadmap for systematically accumulating knowledge. Whether it inductively emerges or guides deductive research, theory helps SCM scholars generate coherent explanations for empirical findings. By articulating relevant constructs and expected relationships between them, theory helps SCM scholars to avoid getting sidetracked by extraneous constructs and relationships.

Although SCM scholars readily acknowledge the importance of theory to high quality research, they borrow much of it from other areas. For example, the resource-based view, transaction cost economics theory, information processing theory, and agency theory are commonly applied to SCM research. While borrowed theories have provided a foundation for some outstanding SCM research that has led to important insights, they were not specifically developed for the SC context and, thus, may not yield the most useful results or the best understanding of SC phenomena.

The SC context is unique in several important ways. 1) The key actors are organizations, not individuals. Although organizations are comprised of individuals, a single individual’s perspective may not reflect organizational processes and decisions. 2) Organizations in SCs face conflicting goals. While they seek to enhance the SC’s success, each must also maximize its own goals. Further, because most are members of multiple SCs, goal conflict also exists between their SCs. 3) Extended SCs are complex networks. Transparency beyond a tier or two may be lacking, yet liability for the actions of SC members ultimately lies with the focal organization, as many recent news stories attest. 4) Many SCs are global, vastly increasing their complexity and further contributing to transparency issues.

SCM theory should encompass these and other important characteristics, but many of our borrowed theories do not. As the primary researchers in networks of organizations, SCM researchers should be leaders in inter-organizational theory development. This EDI encourages new approaches to building theory in the hope that this will spur the development of theories that are bespoke to the SCM context and that will be borrowed by other disciplines.

**Research Opportunities**

While well-executed case-based research will continue to be effective in developing SCM theory, the 2020 EDI seeks to highlight emerging approaches to theory building that provide alternatives to case-based research or can be used with it, for triangulation. Both qualitative and quantitative data provide rich sources from which a story can emerge to form the foundation for SCM theory development. We are open to both interpretivistic (for example, engaged research, critical theory or metaphorical transfer) and positivistic approaches (for example, data visualization, social network analysis, or machine learning) that are unfamiliar to SCM researchers. Manuscripts must clearly show how these approaches can be used to develop SCM theory.

**Process**

We welcome all submissions that are related to emerging approaches to building SCM theory and advance *JSCM*'s mission to be the journal of choice among SC scholars across disciplines by attracting high-quality, high-impact behavioral research focusing on theory building and empirical methodologies. EDI submissions can include both descriptive expositions of emerging approaches to building SCM theory and manuscripts that apply an emerging approach to building SCM theory. Examples include, but are not limited to:

* Critical theory
* Dark data
* Data mining and text mining
* Data visualization
* Engaged research
* Ethnography
* Historical analysis
* Machine learning and data virtualization
* Metaphorical transfer
* Methods for collecting unstructured data
* Methods for using “live” big data to build theory
* New sources of unstructured data, such as blogs, videos and online reviews
* Predictive analytics
* Social network analysis
* Thick data
* Using data from ERP systems, sensors, RFID, GPS, energy usage meters, etc.

**Timeline**

# *June 2019*: Initial call for submissions

* *June 2019 - December 2020*: EDI submissions, as well as regular submissions, are welcomed and will be processed upon submission.
* *January 2020*: Invited papers will appear online, to initiate the discourse.
* *January 2020 - December 2020*: EDI papers will be published, as accepted.

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