

Short paper submission to ‘EGOS Sub-theme 32: Generativity through Engaged Scholarship: Connecting Theory, Methods, and Praxis’

Understanding shifting legitimacy: Developing an approach for longitudinal isomorphic analysis of sustainability behaviours

Cristyn Meath¹, Claudia Gonzalez¹, Samuel Tang², Samira Nazar¹, and Claudia Navarrete Rojas¹

¹*The University of Queensland Business School, Level 2, Colin Clark Building, 39 Blair Drive, St Lucia, QLD 4067, Australia*

²*Imperial College London, South Kensington Campus, Exhibition Rd, London SW7 2AZ*

Introduction

The unsustainable behaviour of many private and public organisations, as well as limitations in government and global policies and practices has long been highlighted. From disruptions to rigid inflexible global supply chains and working environments, to short-term and limited horizon scenario and financial planning, as well as workplace inequalities (e.g., gender pay, black and ethnic minorities in leadership roles) and overconsumption of natural resources. While underlying business values and strategic priorities aligned with shareholder maximisation are widely held responsible as the catalyst for unsustainable behaviour, limitations in our ability to assess, monitor and influence sustainability behaviour of companies contribute to the problem.

In line with calls for problem-driven and phenomenon-based research (Davis, 2015; Doh, 2016; Wickert et al., 2020), we seek to produce knowledge for good, by developing an interdisciplinary and epistemically aware (Greenwood and Freeman, 2018) approach to conduct longitudinal isomorphic analysis of sustainability behaviours in organisations. As Wickert et al (2020) argue, we foresee that “a theoretical contribution should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means to the end of solving or at least better understanding and raising awareness about an important real-world problem”. Understanding and developing an approach to analyse sustainability behaviours of organisations over time has potential to help various stakeholders (e.g., investors, policymakers, educators) make more informed decisions, as well as influence how people and organisations think, behave, or perform.

We investigate how organisations position themselves towards societal values to achieve legitimacy in response to external pressures and events, and whether legitimacy justification shift overtime. This is achieved through a longitudinal study of sustainable behaviours by applying an isomorphic lens to analyse corporate narratives related to SDGs. Investigating the occurrence of isomorphism within organisations relating to such narratives identifies the role of this important mechanism evolving norms of narratives and actions related to societal values. In doing so the paper develops methodological insights for future studies related to measuring isomorphic behaviour in corporate reporting. Furthermore, the findings will provide important insights for related constructs critical to addressing grand challenges such as the relationship between efficiency and legitimacy, organisational innovation (including of narratives) versus aligning with industry norms, and cherry picking compared to holistic approaches to addressing the SDGs.

Why an isomorphic analytical approach?

Isomorphism

Organisations position themselves towards societal values as a means of achieving legitimacy from their external environment. However, traditional drivers of legitimacy, that assume homogenous and stable societal expectations, such as *cognitive (passive)* and *pragmatic (strategic choice)* legitimacy are no longer sufficient to meet the expectations of an organisation's environment. Researchers argue this is as a result of increasingly pluralistic societies eroding national level normative standards and the weakness of pragmatic legitimacy approaches (Palazzo and Scherer, 2006). While it is important to recognise the 'complexity and heterogeneity of today's social environment' (Scherer et al., 2013) organisations must navigate societal expectations with no clear normative standards at the global level to guide their actions (Habermas, 2001; Huntington, 1998). Therefore, deciphering *what* values organisations should position themselves towards is a complex and critical challenge (Palazzo and Scherer, 2006) with implications for achievement of society's grand challenges.

It is not simply positioning an organisation towards societal values which creates legitimacy. As DiMaggio and Powell, referring to isomorphism, argue 'organizations are rewarded for being similar to other organizations in their fields' (1983, p. 153). While isomorphism reflects the

alignment of organisations' efforts to achieve legitimacy, it can also create new norms. In periods of uncertainty, organisations may mimic a first mover in the field (mimetic). Coercive isomorphism reflects pressures on organisations particularly through regulations. Finally, normative isomorphism represents alignment between organisations resulting from professional education within an industry (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; 1991).

While the complexity of the external environment and trade-offs in contributing to the achievement of values is evident, assessing the manner by which organisations seek to position themselves towards societal values provides evidence of normative standards. We argue the introduction of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ reflects the *moral legitimacy* of society. However, the recent identification of institutional investors using the SDGs as a framework for investment decisions (Meath, 2018) suggests the goals are in the process of becoming part of the business case for organisations or *pragmatic legitimacy*. Finally, the occurrence of isomorphism within industries, that is, organisations aligning their actions and discourse, particularly in terms of gaining legitimacy is argued to have the potential to transform the SDGs into *cognitive legitimacy* or unconscious bias towards such values among organisations in particular industries.

Understanding the extent to which a field presents homogeneity, allows policy makers to seek diversification as a guiding value (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), which ultimately harnesses legitimacy rather than mere elements of efficiency (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The ability to influence the corporate discourse and, therefore, actions (where decoupling does not occur) related to the SDGs through understanding the power and nature of isomorphism in this context reflects an important contribution to the corporate sustainability literature.

¹ [1] The United Nations have developed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide global action, aiming to create a more sustainable future (for further details, see <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>). The SDGs include seventeen interconnected goals, each supported by a number of targets reflecting critical challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, peace and justice amongst others. In contrast to the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which targeted governments and aid groups, the SDGs have been developed with collaboration from many businesses and acknowledge the need for business to contribute in order to achieve the goals.

Isomorphism, corporate reporting and sustainability

While leading management journals feature research on isomorphic behaviour, there is a dearth of research on the concept in the context of sustainability reporting or the SDGs. Studies featuring isomorphic behaviour in terms of reporting have addressed conflicting institutional pressures at a broader scale. For instance, a study developed in China demonstrated that governmental pressures on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influenced the way firms issue reports. Researchers found that similar organisations exhibit a similar quality of reporting (Luo et al., 2016). In addition, firms with less focus on economic development tend to report at a faster pace and higher quality than the ones located in areas that prioritize GDP growth (Luo et al., 2016).

In relation to coercive and endo-isomorphic behaviour as introduced by Souitaris et al. (2012), recent research has also shown how multinational organisations respond to pressures from their stakeholders conforming to their expectations by adopting socially responsible practices at the headquarters' levels while overlooking their standards at the subsidiaries levels (Surroca et al., 2012). Organisations seeking stakeholder support, conform to value systems and rules, however decoupling is apparent when any source of isomorphic behaviour (coercive, mimetic or normative) compromises profitability (Surroca et al., 2012). In other words, multinational organisations may respond to uncertainty by imitating successful rivals that are not socially responsible (Surroca et al., 2012).

More recently research has contributed to institutional theory by elaborating on existing concepts around isomorphism and corporate identity. Krause et al., (2018) added to the notion of coercive isomorphism in institutional theory the concept of forced compliance, arguing that board directors facing coercive pressures to adopt practices to all the organisations in which they are part of the board, even if not all the organisations are dealing with the same kind of pressures. Whereas Schike (2018) focused on evaluating how organisational identity shapes the way in which decision-makers develop resistance or, or the contrary, conform to environmental pressures. The results of these latter studies confirm a positive connection between resistance and organisational identity, therefore although organisations respond to pressures by replicating their peers' actions, a well-defined organizational identity is key for diversifying the interactions between decision-makers and their external environment (Schilke, 2018).

Methodological approach

Research context: Banking and finance industry in Australia

Financial institutions play a significant role in the overall health of the global economy, but also have important impacts on consumers and their wellbeing, and the social and environmental fabric of society through their lending activities. They can significantly influence the achievement of the SDGs in a number of ways: as investors they choose who and how to supply the investment needed to achieve sustainable development; as innovators developing new financial products to encourage sustainable development; as valuers by pricing risks and estimating returns for companies, projects and others; as polluters through the resources they consume and indirectly via their investments; and, as victims of environmental changes from extreme weather events and climate change that affect their existing assets and investments and future lending decisions.

Financial institutions have come under intense scrutiny since the 2007 global financial crisis (Herzig and Moon, 2013; Glynos et al., 2015; Liu, 2015). Not only are activist groups increasingly targeting financial institutions, but also the pressure on financial institutions to address sustainability comes from a variety of internal and external stakeholders. Employees are pushing for action, while investors are paying more attention. Blackrock, for example, place ‘sustainability’ as the new standard for investing ([Blackrock, 2020](#)).

Although financial institutions have been enthusiastic reporters of their economic, social and environmental performance, they have a history of contradictory practice to what is disclosed. In Australia, a Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry revealed widespread issues of poor organisational conduct, systemic governance failures, and problematic organisational cultures (Karp, 2016; Commonwealth of Australia, 2019). Furthermore, concern has been raised about the poor culture within Australian financial institutions (Wishart and Wardrop 2018), regulatory safeguards (Schmulow et al., 2019), oversight of banking products and services, and risk-taking behaviour and poor corporate governance (Adams et al., 2017).

Despite growing pressure for financial institutions to embed sustainability values and behaviours, very little is known about how Australian financial institutions are currently reporting on and responding to the SDGs, particularly which SDGs are being engaged with, and the degree of engagement.

Data collection and analysis

We collected annual reports and sustainability reports (i.e., 791 documents) from 54 Australian financial companies, starting in 2013 until 2020, capturing the period prior to the introduction of the SDGs until post implementation. We focused on five sectors, including finance, insurance, asset management, institutional finance and banking. We first selected major players within the Australian market, according to IBIS World database (IBIS World, 2020). We then retrieved key details per company using the Osiris Database (i.e., turnover, financial and statistical data) and downloaded annual reports and sustainability reports from the companies' websites. Additional company information was obtained from Connect 4 (i.e., historical data of the companies' CEOs).

To start the analysis, we undertook a descriptive exploration of the entire dataset using NVivo. We first conducted an automated text analysis (Humphreys, 2014) of sustainable development “key words” outlined in the SDGs (e.g., poverty, hunger, health, well-being, education, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, economic-growth, industry, innovation, peace, justice, etc.). Similar to the procedures recommended by Humphreys and Wang (2018) we conducted this analysis starting with a dictionary-based approach (i.e., establishing a set of rules for counting concepts based on the presence or absence of a particular word). Two of five authors identified an initial set of search words for each of the 17 UN SDGs from the Sustainable Development Goals Taxonomy (<http://metadata.un.org/sdg/>), whereby they systematically reviewed each SDG's set of targets and indicators to identify the words, terms and concepts most frequently used and best represented the SDG goal. Table 1 provides a complete list of search words per SDG.

Table 1: Codebook

Sustainable development goals	Associated words and terms	Antonyms/negative terms and other words	Business-related terms
1. No poverty	poverty, poor, impoverishment, scarcity, deficiency, shortage, insufficiency, deficit	wealth, wealthiness, abundance, affluence, richness, wealth, economic, less developed, bankruptcy, hand-to-mouth existence, vulnerable	microfinance
2. Zero hunger	hunger, starve, famish, thirst, crave, malnutrition	full, healthy, nutrition, food (in)security, stunting, wasting	sustainable food production, resilient agricultural practices, indigenous/family farming, sustainable agriculture, genetic diversity, rural infrastructure, gene banks, agricultural export subsidies, trade, food price anomalies
3. Good health and well-being	healthy, fit, up-beat, welfare, happy, prosperous	illness, unhealthiness, sick, disability, unwell, malady, morality, disease well-being, maternal morality, suicide morality	vaccine, medicine, personal hygiene education, sexual and reproductive health-care services, family planning, health insurance, pollution and contamination management, emergency preparedness
4. Quality education	education, educated, equitable, childhood development, technical and vocational skills, disability, culture, learning, literacy, scholarship, schooling, science, study, teaching, training	uneducated, no access, ignorance primary and secondary, equal access	scholarships, apprenticeships, internships, employee training and education
5. Gender equality	parity, balance, transgender, lgbtq, equal rights, civil rights, equal opportunity, fairness, identity, tolerance, diversity, equality, kindness	inequality, disproportion, imbalance, unfairness, bias, discrimination, disparity, injustice, unfairness	women OR female, corporate governance, women in leadership, gender equality, inclusion, workplace violence and

		female leadership and programs	harassment, equal remuneration, leave OR parental leave, non-discrimination
6. Clean water	clean, clear, safe, drinking water, disease free, uninfected, sustainable withdrawals and supply, freshwater, water sanitation, water management, water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies, sanitation, hygiene	unclean, dirty, soil, grime, stale, polluted, contaminated, impure, infected, salty, toxic, hazardous, untreated wastewater, water scarcity	reduce water consumption in water stress regions [replaced by water consumption), access to WASH OR wash, sustainable water withdrawals, water-related ecosystems and biodiversity, water efficiency, water quality, waste OR recycle OR reuse
7. Affordable and clean energy	energy, cheap <u>AND</u> energy, affordable <u>AND</u> energy, reliable AND energy, sustainable AND energy, renewable, energy efficiency, clean energy research and technology, cleaner fossil-fuel technology, investment in energy infrastructure, upgrade infrastructure, decarbonisation	expensive AND energy, unsafe AND energy, blackouts	infrastructure investments, renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy consumption, GHG emissions, energy intensity
8. Decent work and economic growth	sustainable economic growth, employment, decent work, economic productivity, diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, innovation, technological upgrading, job creation, entrepreneurship, encourage growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise, medium-sized enterprise, global resource efficiency, resource efficiency, equal pay, protect labour rights, labour rights, promote safe and secure working environments, save working environment, sustainable tourism, aid for trade	unemployment, unequal pay, child labour, modern slavery, human trafficking least developed countries, migrant workers	living wage, employee training and education, employee training, diversity and equal opportunity, diversity, labour practices, modern slavery, occupational health and safety, abolition of child labour, elimination of forced or compulsory labour, forced labour, migrant workers, youth employment

9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, foster innovation, access for all, retrofit, increased resource-use efficiency, clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, upgrade, development, research, modernization, cutting edge	old, damaged, tradition, stagnation	infrastructure investment, research and development, intellectual property,
10. Reduced inequalities	achieve and sustain income growth, inclusive, sex, age, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic, equal opportunity, eliminate discrimination, promote appropriate legislation, policies and action, effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions, accountable, legitimate, migration and mobility of people, migration, mobility, investment, equality	discrimination, disparity, diversity, injustice, unfairness, unfair, bias	diversity and equal opportunity, equal remuneration, foreign direct investment, inclusive business, no discrimination
11. Sustainable cities and communities	safe and affordable housing, basic services, sustainable transport systems, road safety, public transport, protect and safeguard, disaster resilient, green and public spaces, green spaces, public spaces, resilient buildings, infrastructure		improve road safety, transport, affordable housing, accessible and sustainable transport systems,
12. Responsible consumption and production	sustainable consumption and production patterns, sustainable consumption, production patterns, sustainable management, efficient use of natural resources, reduce consumption, reduce food waste, supply chains, life cycle, reduce waste generation, reduce waste, recycle and reuse, integrated	consumerism, over consumption air quality, energy efficiency, water quality, soil quality, materials efficiency	improve reusability and recyclability of products, reusability, recyclability, air quality and pollution, pollution, extended producer responsibility, environmentally sound management of products, waste management, chemical management
13. Climate action	mitigation, carbon, greenhouse gas, GHG, adaptation, resilience, vulnerability, hazards, extreme weather, natural disasters, climate		GHG emissions, resilience, climate-related hazards, natural disasters, energy efficiency, environmental investments, renewable

	change, policy, target, reduce, climate proof, impact		energy target, reporting, climate change risk assessment, vulnerability matrix
14. Life below water	conserve, sustainable, water management, marine conservation, protect marine and coastal ecosystems, marine pollution, water pollution, subsidies, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, marine resources	overfishing, illegal, unregulated, destructive ocean acidification, marine biodiversity	conservation, restoration, sustainable use
15. Life on land	terrestrial ecosystem, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss, biodiversity loss, conservation, restoration, sustainable use, desertification, land degradation, extinction of threatened species, extinction, fair and equitable sharing, equitable, end poaching and trafficking, trafficking, poaching, forest management	forest degradation, terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems, inland freshwater, mountain ecosystems, mountains, habitat, drought	conservation, restoration, sustainable use, habitat protection, protection, habitat engagement, traceability of raw material, traceability, raw material
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	peace, justice, reduce violence, end exploitation and trafficking,	violence, exploitation, trafficking, corruption, bribery, crime, extortion, fraud, nepotism, shadiness, unscrupulousness, bribing, fraudulency indigenous rights	ethical, lawful, compliant, transparency, accountable governance, accountable, governance, inclusive decision-making, anti-corruption, grievance mechanisms, protection of privacy, GDPR (general data protection rights)
17. Partnership for the goals	resource mobilisation, reduce debt, development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies, international support and cooperation, public-private and civil society partnerships		collaboration, cooperation, foreign direct investment, environmental investments

Based on the developed dictionary, we used the “text search” function in NVivo to auto-code for the initial set of words per SDG. Text search parameters were set to broad context and stemmed/synonym word matches. This created a first order node for each initial word. Four of five authors reviewed the auto-coded results of each first order node to assess the reliability of text captured. Where text did not represent the SDG, we un-coded the text from the node. After this, we revised and updated the dictionary.

Additionally, we created a timeline of external events. We first conducted a Google search for major financial, environmental, political, and social events between 2013 and 2020, paying particular attention to more established sources that provided statistical data. Table 2 provides an overview of the major global events included in our study, with Figure 1 illustrating the date of occurrence.

Table 2: Major global events with hyperlinks to explanation. Blue highlighted events are financial; green highlighted events are environmental; yellow highlighted events are political; orange highlighted events are social; and grey highlighted events are initiatives related to tackling societal grand challenges.

Date	Event
Jan-13	Bushfires TAS
Mar-13	Royal Commission Act 1902 Superseded
Sep-13	Federal Election
Oct-13	Bushfire NSW (100K)
Mar-14	Ebola Outbreak
Apr-14	Severe Cyclone ITA
Jun-14	Water Efficiency Labelling (NT)
Jul-14	Royal Commission Act 1902 Superseded
Dec-14	Multiple Bushfires
Jan-15	Multiple Bushfires
Feb-15	Severe Cyclone Marcia

Apr-15	<u>BlackLivesMatter Movement (major)</u>
Sep-15	<u>Sustainable Development Goals</u>
Nov-15	<u>Bushfire WA</u>
Jan-16	<u>Bushfire WA</u>
May-16	<u>Royal Commission Act 1902 Superseded</u>
Jun-16	<u>Brexit Vote</u>
Jul-16	<u>Federal Election</u>
Nov-16	<u>US Presidential Election 2016</u>
Apr-17	<u>Severe Cyclone Ernie</u>
Aug-17	<u>Biodiversity Reform</u>
Oct-17	<u>#Metoo Movement</u>
Dec-17	<u>Marriage Equality in Australia</u>
Feb-18	<u>Royal Commission Act 1902 Superseded</u>
Mar-18	<u>Severe Cyclone Marcus</u>
Aug-18	<u>Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018</u>
Feb-19	<u>The Royal Commission into Misconduct*</u>
Mar-19	<u>Severe Cyclone Veronica</u>
May-19	<u>Federal Election</u>
Sep-19	<u>Royal Commission Act 1902 Superseded</u>
Dec-19	<u>Nationwide Bushfires started</u>
Jan-20	<u>First Case of Covid-19</u>
Jun-20	<u>Environmental Protection Act 2019</u>
Jul-20	<u>BlackLivesMatter Movement (protests in AUS)</u>
Sep-20	<u>Confirmation of Recession (Covid-19)</u>
Nov-20	<u>US Presidential Election 2020</u>

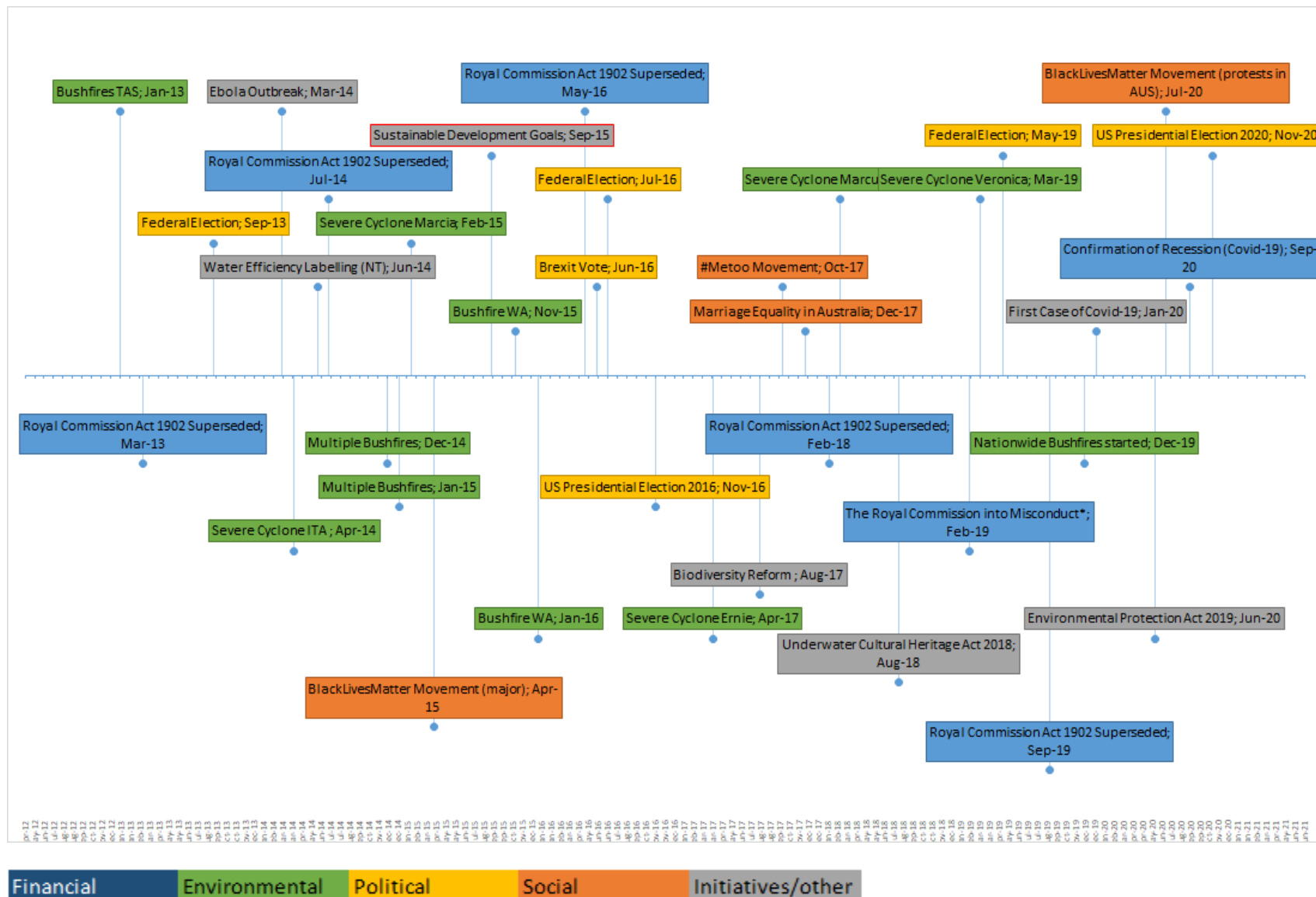


Figure 1: Timeline of major global events between January 2013 and December 2020

We then investigated evidence of shifts in isomorphic organisational behaviour by identifying trends across the industry (within and between companies) related to frequency of key terms related to the identified events, language (using a sensitivity analysis) and legitimacy approaches.

Finally, we conducted a thematic analysis investigating categories of legitimacy looking at the narrative at the individual company level (i.e., moral, pragmatic and cognitive) and coded actions, strategies and tactics linked to the coded SDGs in the reports. This process continued until a set of theoretical concepts emerged that captured and explained the process of corporate sustainability isomorphism and allowed us to understand what type of isomorphic behaviour leads to different types of legitimacy.

Lastly, the four authors compared and discussed their individual findings to review and realign coding decisions, and where necessary, recode text in accordance with this discussion.

Preliminary findings

1. Company SDG action justified in multiple forms

We found that organisations position themselves towards societal values in response to external events (e.g., bushfires, changes in the legislation, reporting frameworks, stakeholder pressure, extreme weather events). Organisations manifest legitimacy seeking behaviour across already identified categories in the literature of moral, pragmatic and cognitive. For instance, at the company-level we found—based on narratives in the corporate reporting related to the introduction of the SDGs—companies justified action on SDGs in line with moral legitimacy (‘the right thing to do’), pragmatic legitimacy (business case), and cognitive legitimacy (taken-for-grantedness) (illustrative examples in Table 3).

Table 3: Legitimacy seeking narratives associated with SDGs

Type of legitimacy	Examples
Moral legitimacy (‘the right thing to do’)	“We aim to provide a good inclusive working environment for our employees (SDG 8) [...] It is our ambition to do the right things well.” (Rabobank Australia Limited, 2018). [SDG 8; work rights]. “Medibank is proud to run 1800RESPECT, a vital service for the Australian community that provides critical support to those impacted by sexual assault, domestic and family violence [...] The conversation about sexual assault, domestic or family violence continues to gather momentum – with media campaigns like #MeToo empowering the community to reach out for support.” (Medibank, 2018) [violence; harassment]

Pragmatic legitimacy (business case)	“According to the World Economic Forum, social instability and polarization of societies pose an increasing global risk [...] Civil unrest, social tensions and societal upheaval pose a major business risk for Allianz and have significant cost implications for the insurance industry and society as a whole. (Allianz, 2019) [SDG16; cost implications; risk implications]
Cognitive legitimacy (taken-for-grantedness)	“I’m proud that in recognition of our continuous work in this area, we earned the 12th spot out of 300 companies included in Newsweek’s 2020 list of America’s Most Responsible Companies and were recently named to the CDP Climate A List for the first time, recognizing our efforts to back our communities through environmentally sustainable practices and climate action. (American Express Australia, 2019)” [SDG 13; climate action; pride]

2. Information differences exist amongst legitimacy types

Another observation related to differences in the information disclosed and detail of narratives for each type of legitimacy. For moral legitimacy, narratives of SDG action were future oriented, with little context provided about what it means for the company or is doing or will do. For pragmatic legitimacy, narratives focus on the implications for the company, what it means for them, and what they are beginning to do or will do. For cognitive legitimacy, SDGs are linked to cases or examples about what they are doing. The narrative is of an embedded action. They provide information about what they have done and doing, and outline targets. Data is often provided to show progress from where they have come.

3. Shifting justifications

Through our isomorphic analytical approach we observed shifts in how companies justify their SDG actions. Sustainable finance, for example, shifts from pragmatic to cognitive legitimacy over time. In 2013, most narratives reflect that it is the right thing to do:

“Natural disasters such as (but not restricted to) cyclones, floods and earthquakes, and the economic and financial market implications of such disasters on domestic and global conditions can adversely impact the Group’s ability to continue operating or trading in the country or countries directly or indirectly affected, which in turn may adversely affect the Group’s business, operations and financial condition.” (ANZ, 2013) [risk]

By 2020, company narratives indicate the SDG action is more embedded, thus resembling cognitive legitimacy:

“Our \$50 billion sustainable finance target now includes \$1 billion specifically for funding and facilitating initiatives that support customers and communities impacted by disasters. Capital may be allocated for weather related events (such as bushfires, floods and cyclones) or to build resilience against non-weather related disasters such as pandemics.” (ANZ, 2020) [climate change]

4. Opportunistic company SDG action

We also observed an increase in certain types of SDG actions after a major global event. For example, in 2016, after the Ebola crisis, financial institutions included actions that aimed to help finance a critical public health issue in the developing world.

In 2016, Citi helped the International Finance Facility for Immunisation to raise \$500 million through a three-year Vaccine Bond that gave investors the opportunity to fund immunization programs at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which delivers vaccines that protect millions of children in the world’s poorest countries against preventable diseases. We also financed nearly \$6 billion in green bonds. For more information on green bonds, see the Environmental Finance section. (Citigroup, 2016) [SDG 3; SDG 1: vaccination program; green bonds]

For some companies, SDG actions appear reactive to what is happening in the world.

References

- Anand, J., Mesquita, L. F., & Vassolo, R. S. (2009). The Dynamics of Multimarket Competition in Exploration and Exploitation Activities. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(4), 802-821. doi:10.5465/amj.2009.43670897
- ASX. (2019). Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations 4th Edition February 2019, ASX Corporate Governance Council.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (1990), “Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria,” *Qualitative Sociology*, 13 (1), 3-21
- Davis, G. F. (2015). ‘Celebrating organization theory: The after-party’. *Journal of Management Studies*, 52, 309–19.
- Deepphouse, D. (1996). Does Isomorphism Legitimate? *The Academy of Management Journal*, 39(4), 1024-1039. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/256722>
- DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Collective rationality and institutional isomorphism in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147-160.
- DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W. W. (1991). The new institutionalism in organisational analysis. *The new institutionalism in Organisational analysis*.
- Doh, J. P. (2016). ‘From the editor: Why we need phenomenon-based research in international business’. *Journal of World Business*, 50, 609–11.
- Corbin, J.M., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3-21.
- Gaba, V., & Terlaak, A. (2013). Decomposing Uncertainty and Its Effects on Imitation in Firm Exit Decisions. *Organization Science*, 24(6), 1847-1869. doi:10.1287/orsc.2013.0823

- Greenwood, M., & Freeman, R. E. (2018). Deepening ethical analysis in business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 147(1), 1-4.
- Heugens, P. P. M. A. R., & Lander, M. W. (2009). Structure! Agency! (And Other Quarrels): A Meta-Analysis Of Institutional Theories Of Organization. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(1), 61-85. doi:10.5465/amj.2009.36461835
- Habermas, J. (2001). The postnational constellation and the future of democracy. *The postnational constellation*, 58-112.
- Humphreys, A. (2014), "How is Sustainability Structured? The Discursive Life of Environmentalism," *Journal of Macromarketing*, 34 (3), 265–281.
- Humphreys, A., & Wang, R. J. H. (2018). Automated text analysis for consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(6), 1274-1306.
- Huntington, S.P. (1998). *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon & Schuster, New York.
- IBIS World. (2020). IBIS World - where knowledge is power. Retrieved from <https://my.ibisworld.com/>
- Krause, R., Wu, Z., Bruton, G. D., & Carter, S. M. (2018). The Coercive Isomorphism Ripple Effect: An Investigation of Nonprofit Interlocks on Corporate Boards. *Academy of Management Journal*, 62(1), 283-308. doi:10.5465/amj.2017.0064
- Luo, X. R., Wang, D., & Zhang, J. (2016). Whose Call to Answer: Institutional Complexity and Firms' CSR Reporting. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(1), 321-344. doi:10.5465/amj.2014.0847
- Meath, C. (2018). *The Future of Corporate Reporting*. The Australian Institute for Business and Economics, The University of Queensland. 2018. Available from: https://aibe.uq.edu.au/files/1778/AIBE_Future_of_Corporate_Reporting.pdf

- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340-363.
doi:10.1086/226550
- Palazzo, G., & Scherer, A. G. (2006). Corporate legitimacy as deliberation: A communicative framework. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 66(1), 71-88.
- Scherer, A. G., Palazzo, G. and Seidl, D. (2013), Sustainable Development in a Globalized World. *Journal of Management Studies*, 50: 259-284.
doi:[10.1111/joms.12014](https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12014)
- Schilke, O. (2018). A Micro-institutional Inquiry into Resistance to Environmental Pressures. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(4), 1431-1466.
doi:10.5465/amj.2016.0762
- Souitaris, V., Zerbinati, S., & Liu, G. (2012). Which Iron Cage? Endo- and exoisomorphism in Corporate Venture Capital Programs. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(2), 477-505. doi:10.5465/amj.2009.0709
- Surroca, J., Tribó, J. A., & Zahra, S. A. (2012). Stakeholder Pressure on MNEs and the Transfer of Socially Irresponsible Practices to Subsidiaries. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(2), 549-572. doi:10.5465/amj.2010.0962
- UN. (2015). UN Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>
- Wickert, C., Post, C., Doh, J.P., Precott, J.E., Prencipe, A. 2020. Management Research that Makes a Difference: Broadening the Meaning of Impact. *Journal of Management Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12666>
- York, J. G., Vedula, S., & Lenox, M. J. (2017). It's Not Easy Building Green: The Impact of Public Policy, Private Actors, and Regional Logics on Voluntary Standards Adoption. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(4), 1492-1523.
doi:10.5465/amj.2015.0769