

CfP "Corporate Accountability for Major International Crimes: A Fragmented Cause?" - Updated 2

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Corporate Accountability for Major International Crimes: A Fragmented Cause?

25-26 May 2023, SNSPA, Bucharest

The past ten years have witnessed a growing academic interest in strategies of corporate accountability for gross human rights violations across the globe. An important body of literature has examined the existing (and limited) legal frameworks and jurisprudence, and the transitional justice policies aimed at dealing with the complicity of economic actors in fuelling violent conflicts and dictatorships. However, only a few scholars have provided sociological analyses of the actors involved in the corporate accountability cause - an important shortcoming given that norms, policies, and jurisprudence do not enact themselves, but need actors to promote, enforce or oppose them. Moreover, with very few exceptions, the sociological approaches to corporate accountability have generally provided a triumphalist story of national and transnational coalitions involved in this cause, overlooking the multiplicity of competing projects, methods, and visions that exist within this emergent field of activism.

This conference seeks to move forward the academic debates on corporate accountability by providing a platform for sociological analysis of the variety of actors and their fragmented / competing ideas on how to deal with, punish, and prevent the involvement of multinational corporations in mass crimes. We argue that in order to understand what happens in the pursuit of corporate accountability, it is necessary to profile the agents that shape this field and to connect their visions of corporate liability to their professional and regional backgrounds, as well as their political goals. Drawing upon critical studies on transnational social movements, advocacy networks, and norm formation, we aim to examine how different actors and networks seek justice, and how their strategies are informed by different ideological, professional, or regional understandings of these accountability processes. How do different actors involved in the struggle to hold corporations accountable frame their efforts? To whom do they address their justice claims, and how? What role does the institutional and cultural background of different actors play? How do different understandings of human rights, economic globalization, development, and democratization shape different strategies of actions? And to what extent do professional interests and competition for funding affect and divide repertoires of action?

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We also aim to analyze the potential fragmentation of the way business groups and associations address corporate accountability. Are there different approaches according to different national business cultures, and different industries? Does the competition of different companies within the same industry produce different attitudes towards business responsibility and accountability? Are there important differences between companies based in democratic *versus* authoritarian regimes?

By corporate accountability, we understand a large spectrum of strategies aimed at preventing and sanctioning economic actors for their complicity in gross human rights violations, including, among others, advocacy for regional and international treaties, criminal and civil litigations, boycotts, divestment campaigns, truth commissions, etc.

We particularly welcome empirical research on transnational networks of advocacy actors from various world regions, but papers on domestic activism / business communities and their regional and international mobilizations are also welcome. We encourage proposals on the following topics, but other, non-listed themes are welcome:

- Regional, ideological, professional fragmentation / competition of accountability campaigns;
- Competing visions within epistemic communities;
- Different approaches of business communities;
- Diversity of repertoires of action (e.g., criminal and civil trials, boycotts, peoples' tribunals, advocacy for international / regional treaties, truth commissions, divestment campaigns, etc.);
- Different approaches according to levels of activism: local, national, transnational or global networks;
- Cultural and institutional factors producing fragmentation (e.g. ideologies, funding, legal traditions, degree of national / regional mobilization etc.).

Please submit your proposal including authors' names, email addresses and affiliations, a short CV and an abstract of around 300 words by 30 November 2022. The conference organizers will provide a response to the proposals by 10 December 2022. Selected participants will be invited to submit their papers (max. 7,000 words including tables, figures, and references) by 10th May 2023. A selection of papers will be published in English, in a special issue of an international academic journal / edited volume at a prestigious university press. Please, submit paper abstracts to: corpaccount@politice.ro For additional information, please contact Raluca Grosescu (raluca.grosescu@politice.ro).

Funding opportunities for travel and accommodation are available, but we ask that contributors also explore funding opportunities at their home institutions.

This workshop is organized by the National University of Political Science and Public Administration (Bucharest) in collaboration with the Movement Engaged Research Hub (George Mason University, US), as part of the ERC-Consolidator project *Transnational Advocacy Networks and Corporate Accountability for Major International Crimes*. This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 101002993 — CORPACCOUNT) and it is implemented by the National University of Political Science and Public Administration (Bucharest).

Contact Info:

raluca.grosescu@politice.ro

Contact Email:

corpaccount@politice.ro