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“OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND -- HOW VISIBILITY DYNAMICS INFLUENCE THE MSI LEGITIMACY FORMATION”

CO-AUTHORED WITH MARJO SILTAOJA, JYVÄSKYLÄ UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS (JSBE)

BY JOHANNA JARVELA - IÉSEG



ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the intricate dynamics of visibility and legitimacy within multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs), emphasizing their role as symbols of corporate transparency and governance. While existing literature highlights the successful development and institutionalization of standards within MSIs, the paper addresses a critical gap by examining why certain standards fail to achieve legitimacy. Through a longitudinal case study of an MSI in the Finnish mining industry, the paper scrutinizes the invisibility dynamics in MSI legitimacy-seeking behavior. By analyzing interviews, media materials, and progress reports, the study reveals how choices regarding visibility within the MSI led to its eventual downfall. The findings underscore the significance of MSI organization’s control and competing regulatory efforts shaping MSI legitimacy outcomes. The study then contributes to discussions on private-public regulatory efforts and dispositions of MSI members.

Keywords: Mining Industry, Multi-Stakeholder Initiative, Legitimacy, Visibility

