

Barbara Zepp Larson

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Education

Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Boston, MA

Doctor of Business Administration, Management (expected November 2011)

Dissertation: “Working across societal borders: Essays on cross-sector interactions”

Committee: Jordan Siegel (chair), Amy Edmondson, Chris Marquis,
Brandon Lee (London Business School)

Abstract: My dissertation examines the intersections between the three societal sectors – business, government and civil society – with particular interest in the mechanisms and institutions that influence the effectiveness of these interactions. In the first chapter, I examine the strategic decision-making underlying the participation decisions made by social movement organizations (SMOs) seeking to influence business practices. I argue that as SMOs become more sophisticated and professionalized, and the boundary between social movements and the businesses they seek to influence becomes increasingly blurred, there is a level of strategic decision-making in SMOs that is not adequately accounted for in existing social movement theory. Using quantitative and qualitative data, I identify key strategic trade-offs made by SMOs seeking to influence meat labeling practices in the U.S. My analysis shows that the SMO actively seeks to position its activities relative to others in its issue field and relative to others that are interested in the same campaign, and that the SMO faces simultaneous (and potentially conflicting) goals of strategic differentiation and complementation, unlike for-profit firms.

In the second chapter, I utilize a unique dataset of individual-level communications between 43 large companies and a consultant for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regarding a very simple energy-saving innovation, to analyze some of the less-understood determinants of innovation adoption at the level of the individual manager. Results indicate that adoption is predicted by the involvement of managers from two functional departments, in a particular order. This finding suggests that two key skills previously described as co-requisites for boundary spanners (internal/external network star and ability to muster organizational resources) may be able to be split between two individuals. The third chapter examines the influence of country institutions on firms in a cross-country comparative context. In a paper co-authored with Jordan Siegel (published in *Management Science* in 2009), we employed a quasi-natural experiment: a representative multinational entering almost all large markets regardless of institutional difference, and relying on incentive pay-for-performance as a source of competitive advantage. With a comprehensive empirical assessment of distance factors from a range of institutional dimensions, we found that labor market distance was crucial to performance, but that the multinational was able to systematically overcome more than 75 percent of this distance through a creative form of adaptation (mixing and matching intermediate-level subsets of their practices to both maintain consistency with local institutions while delivering competitive advantage).

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

Master of Business Administration, Finance and Operations Management, 1993

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

Bachelor of Arts, Spanish, 1987

Fellowships and Awards

Management Innovation Laboratory, London Business School, Research Grant (£15,000) for “US EPA Monitor Power Management Project”. Lead researcher (with Brandon Lee), 2008-2011

PhD Sustainability Academy, Richard Ivey School, Univ of Western Ontario (fully funded), 2010

Harvard Business School, Dissertation Completion Grant, 2011

Harvard Business School Wyss Doctoral Fellowship, 2005-2011

Publications and Working Papers

Siegel, Jordan I. and Barbara Zepp Larson (2009), “Labor Market Institutions and Global Strategic Adaptation: Evidence from Lincoln Electric,” *Management Science*, 55:9, 1527-1546.

Larson, Barbara Zepp (2011), “Should we stay or should we go? A model of social movement organization strategic participation.” (*job market paper*)

Larson, Barbara Zepp (2011), “Leaving Money on the Table? The role of the manager in organizational innovation adoption.”

Larson, Barbara Zepp (2010), “Discourse or Protest? The impact of mass-mobilized communications on government regulation of business”

Selected Presentations

Larson, Barbara Zepp, “Should we stay or should we go? A model of social movement organization strategic participation.” Academy of Management Annual Meeting, 2011.

Larson, Barbara Zepp and Brandon Lee, “Picking Battles, Winning Wars? The effects of multiple targets on the mobilization of collective action.” Academy of Management Annual Meeting, 2009.

Larson, Barbara Zepp, “Picking Battles, Winning Wars? Implications of multiple targets for social movement mobilizing activity. Trans-Atlantic Doctoral Consortium, London Business School, 2009.

Larson, Barbara Zepp, “How do organizations deal with non-routine resources? Preliminary data and a research agenda,” Work, Organizations and Markets Seminar, Harvard Business School, 2008.

Zepp, Barbara, "Managing Uncertainty in Emerging Markets," University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, Finance Roundtable, 2004.

Zepp, Barbara, "Women in International Business," University of Illinois – Champaign, Graduate School of Business, Women in Business Conference, 2004.

Zepp, Barbara, "Multinational Financial Management in Emerging Markets," University of Illinois, Champaign and Chicago campuses, Guest lecturer for masters and undergraduate-level classes, 2002, 2003.

Teaching Cases

Chu, Michael and Barbara Zepp Larson (2006). "JA Worldwide: Managing Change in a Multi-Governed Environment." Harvard Business School Case 306-025.

Chu, Michael, and Barbara Zepp Larson (2005). "ACCION in Nigeria." Harvard Business School Case 305-079.

Chu, Michael, and Barbara Zepp Larson (2005). "Pegasus Capital: The Musimundo Decision." Harvard Business School Case 305-093.

Teaching Interests

Business Strategy, Organizational Behavior, Social Movements and Organizations, Business and Government, International Management, Qualitative Research Methods, Sustainable Business Management

Teaching Experience

Harvard Business School, Executive Education Programs, Boston, MA
Learning Group Facilitator, Women's Leadership Forum, 2007

Lake Forest Graduate School of Business, Lake Forest, IL
Lecturer, FIN 740 Financial Management (MBA program), 2003

Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Teaching Assistant, DSCI 601, Introduction to Decision Sciences, 1992

Professional Service and Memberships

Academy of Management, 2005 – present

- Named one of top 25 reviewers, International Management Division (IMD), 2009
- Doctoral Committee member (invited), IMD, 2007-2009
- Paper Session Discussant, 2009
- Reviewer, 2007, 2009-2011 Annual Meetings (OMT, ONE, IMD and BPS divisions)

Academy of International Business, member 2005 – 2009

- Reviewer, AIB 2006 Annual Meeting

University of Illinois CIBER (Center for International Business Education and Research)

- Member, Business Advisory Council (invited), 2003-4

Other Work Experience

Harvard Business School, Boston, MA

Research Associate, 2005

R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, Chicago, IL

Director, International Finance, 2002 - 2004

Reported to CFO, responsible for all finance activities in Latin America, Europe and Asia. Interim China CFO (30% of time in-country) during start-up of Shanghai joint venture.

FMC Corporation, Various locations in U.S. and Mexico

- Director, International Finance – FMC Corporation, 1999 – 2002
- Country Finance Director – Mexico, 1997 – 1999
FMC Chairman's Award, 1999
- Finance & Operations Manager, Latin America North, 1995 – 1997
- Business Analyst, 1993 – 1995

Dole Fresh Fruit International, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Finance/Operations Analyst Intern, 1992

Hearst Magazines New York, NY

Assistant Business Manager, Licensing Assistant 1988-1991

Saks Fifth Avenue New York, NY

Assistant Buyer 1987-1988

Languages

Native English. Fluent Spanish. Elementary French and Mandarin Chinese.