

Letter from the Managing Editor

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This special issue of *Harvard Deusto Business Research* includes a series of research projects that have been carried out on legitimacy in organizations and groups. The articles in this issue analyze different aspects of legitimacy in consumer attitude towards boycotts, in the actions by the states and in public tenders, as well as the effect of gender equality and the management of intangible assets in the legitimacy of organizations, the relationship between image and legitimacy in higher education or the relationship between corporate social responsibility and social legitimacy.

In the article that opens this special issue, Professors Beatriz Palacios Florencio, M. Ángeles Revilla-Camacho and Lola Garzón-Benítez analyze and explain the principles that determine human behavior towards boycotts. They understand that consumer attitude towards boycotts depends on a number of factors: the perceived legitimacy of the behavior, the ethical idealism towards said behavior and the ethical relativism towards the boycott behavior. They stress legitimacy, since the relevance of legitimacy processes in the business-client relationship lies in the recognition of the validity of the actions that permit their subjective recognition, and therefore, set them apart from the legal nature of the acts.

In the second article, Professors Alicia Blanco-González, Gregory Payne and Camilo Prado-Román focus on the legitimacy of the state, which is a measure of support by citizens for its institutions and also a source of sustainable competitive advantage that protects the states by making them less vulnerable to social, economic and political turbulence. The level of support varies according to political variables such as national identity, political interest, the representativeness of the political elites and political ideology. The results of their investigation show that political representativeness and national identity are the most influential factors in terms of state legitimacy.

The following article, by Professors Giorgia Miotto and Sandra Vilajoana-Alejandre, focuses on gender equality in the fast fashion industry, a sector that targets primarily the female population and that is facing important challenges related to the wellbeing of women, labor rights and the professional and personal development of employees. Their aim is to analyze how three leading fast fashion companies include gender equality in their sustainability reports as part of their communications strategy and as a tool for generating legitimacy.

The aim of the article by Professors Cristina Del-Castillo-Feito, Encarnación González-Vázquez and Jaime Gil Lafuente is to analyze the relationship between image and legitimacy in the context of higher education in Spanish public universities, given that the proper management of intangible assets like image and legitimacy can

be crucial for the survival and success of organizations in today's competitive environment. They conduct a review of the literature on image and legitimacy and analyze the results obtained through a survey distributed to different interested parties from the universities (students, professors, administrative personnel, pupils and managers).

The fifth article, by Professors Tatiana Cuervo Carabel and Natalia Orviz Martínez, focuses on the management of intangible assets, a key matter for the survival of organizations, since the perceived quality and brand value are two such assets. The objective of their work is to answer the question "Are a precedent of quality and a brand value of legitimacy perceived in the organization?". A quantitative analysis is carried out, using structural modeling, and it is confirmed that the management of both intangible assets is fundamental to ensure good social results in organizations, increasing their legitimacy.

In their article, Emilio Díez-de-Castro, Francisco Díez-Martín and Martín Madrid-Sanz observe that in public bidding processes for large international contracts, the legitimacy of the organization is considered a prerequisite to limit the risk of commitment with companies that do not have it. The authors analyze the legitimacy requirement in the bidding processes and focus on large contracts, primarily for the public sector, based on documents that are accessible through public digital media. The results of their investigation suggest that the requirements for legitimacy by bidders are multidimensional, which implies that in order to take part in public bidding processes, various dimensions of legitimacy are evaluated.

The aim of the article closing this special issue, by Sandra Escamilla Solano, Paola Plaza Casado, Evaristo Galeana Figueroa and Dora Aguila-socho Montoya, is to analyze the relationship between corporate social responsibility and social legitimacy, since the consideration of corporate social responsibility within the company's strategy can be considered a vehicle to legitimate it in the view of society. Their research into three Spanish and one Mexican company reveals the existence of a positive relationship between both social legitimacy and corporate social responsibility and business results. Their conclusion is that legitimacy represents a key intangible resource within the company and one that must be managed so that it is not lost.

Obviously, I cannot finish presenting this special issue of *Harvard Deusto Business Research* without expressly thanking all the authors and editorial committee members who have made it possible through their effort, professionalism and collaboration. I would also like to express my appreciation for the warm reception that readers have given to our publication. Thank you very much to everyone. ☺