PhD Positions on "Organisational Reputation Mining Industry"

Project background and description

There is an increasing demand for raw materials as a result of the energy transition and digitalisation of many sectors. Especially the increasing demand for Critical Raw Materials (CRMs), which are of economic importance and have a high supply risk, means that Europe has made access to resources in Europe a strategic priority. However, recent public debates in Portugal and Serbia about lithium mining have made clear, once again, that there is often strong opposition to exploration and extraction practices.

Indeed, there are often negative connotation with the mining industry, as it is often associated with unsustainable and unethical practices, accidents and is sometimes seen as the cause of local conflicts. However, the involvement of the mining industry in these practices varies substantially. They are an economically essential sector, provide many jobs, are often strictly regulated and they provide the raw materials for many consumption goods and services, such as energy, transportation, and data centres. When the negative connotations overshadow the positive ones, a negative organisational reputation is formed. The overall aim of this project is to research how the reputation of the mining industry is formed, and how their reputation influences the public perception of the extraction of CRMs in Europe.

Organisational reputations are generally considered to be multi-dimensional constructs, which include familiarity with the organization, beliefs about what to expect from the organization in the future, and impressions about the organization's favourability. These are factors that organisations often can influence. However, organisational reputations are also based on ethical judgements, which is defined as the degree to which a portrayal, event, or behaviour is morally acceptable. This implies that considerations like is this a good or bad industry, are they involved in right or wrong practices, and do they behave morally acceptable or unacceptable are considered by the public when organisational reputations are formed. Ethical judgements are difficult to address for organisations, because their actions and practices may *legally* be correct, people can still consider them to be *morally* wrong. Therefore, it is important to understand how morally acceptable mining actives in Europe are and how this is related to the practices of mining companies and the industry as a whole. Moreover, it is important to understand how practices of one company, can spill over and influence the reputation of another company or the entire sector.

This project contributes to research about the general public support for CRM exploration and extraction practices in Europe and particularly focusses on how this is related to the reputation of the mining industry and sector. This project focusses on the perceptions of the mining industry in Ireland, and aims to test the generalisability of these results by looking at cross-cultural comparisons in a survey study.

This project has two main research objectives: How is the reputation of the mining industry formed (1) and how does this influence the general public support for mining in Europe (2). To answer these questions, this project focusses on the role of various psychological factors that may explain this, such as ethical judgements, level of trust, spill over effects and psychological distance. Primary data collection will focus on Ireland, and includes the comparison with other European countries.

Tasks: We are looking for a PhD student to work for 4 years on a fully funded project on organisational reputation, with a particular focus on the mining industry. The successful PhD student will be involved in several collaborative activities, including: literature reviews; design and execute primary data

collection. The successful candidate will be part of the taught PhD programme of the UCD Business School, and interact with PhD students in the SFI Research Centre in Applied Geosciences.

Selection Criteria

Essential skills & experience:
- A background in a relevant social science discipline, such as psychology, marketing, management, or behavioural economics.
- Ability to work independently and goal-oriented.
- Strong team player that will add value to an interdisciplinary team.
- Strong conceptual skills that are applicable to policy-relevant research.
- Willingness to travel and disseminate research results.
- Motivation to work in a multidisciplinary research group.
- Candidates must satisfy the entry requirements for the PhD degree at UCD which includes the UCD Minimum Language Requirements and possibly visa requirements.
- An MSc degree in a relevant area with at least an IE 2:1 honours degree (or its international equivalent).

Preferred skills & experience:
- Experience in quantitative research methods.
- Experience in using statistical software programs (e.g., SPSS, Stata, or R).
- Experience in survey design and/ or field or lab experiments.
- Relevant research experience.
- Strong organisational, writing, presentation and other communication skills.

Supervision by Dr Geertje Schuitema. If you have questions, please email geertje.schuitema@ucd.ie.

Closing date: Applications should be received no later than Wednesday the 1st October 2022, 5pm (Standard Irish Time).

Application: Apply by sending an email to Geertje Schuitema (geertje.schuitema@ucd.ie). Include *one* PDF with the following documents (in English):
- A cover letter explaining why you are applying for the position and what qualifies you for it;
- A current CV;
- Maximum three examples of work demonstrating prior achievement in research, enquiry or debate (e.g., a published paper or other work; software, standards or policy contribution; dissertation or master's thesis);
- Details of a maximum of 2 referees (names, contact details) who can provide information about the candidate's qualifications;

After an initial screening, shortlisted candidates will be required to attend an online or in-person meeting.

Starting date: January 2023.

Funding: The PhD positions include PhD tuition fees and a tax-free yearly stipend (€18,500 per annum) for a period of 4 years. There is also funding for travel to an annual conference and for a PC/laptop.