

The state governance system seems to be incapable to address sufficiently global public goods problems or to regulate global business so that the public interest is served. At the same time, international governmental organizations are unable to fill the governance gap while nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) criticize the behavior of business firms along their supply chains. Therefore, business firms are confronted with increasing social and environmental demands and are requested to take responsibility for issues of public concern. As a response, some business firms engage with corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects and directly contribute to the production of public goods. These developments challenge the received theory of the firm and its strict separation of public and private domains. Corporations become political actors. In this introductory essay, the guest editors first elaborate on the concept of politics and describe the challenges that lead to the new political role of global business firms and, second, will introduce the articles in this special issue and briefly comment on their contribution.

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