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Conceptual and Theoretical Underpinnings in the Research of Corporate Political Activity: A Bibliometric Analysis

In this study, we focus on existing research of corporate political activity (CPA) in management and organization science. The study of CPA has established itself as a distinctive sub-area of inquiry in management and organization research by focusing on the various ways that business organizations try to manage their government relations. We systematically explore the theoretical and conceptual underpin-

nings of the research field by utilizing bibliometric analysis. In particular, we employ citation analysis, network centrality analysis and co-occurrence analysis in order to examine the intellectual foundations and various dimensions and their interrelations in the network of existing CPA research. The results identify several gaps in the extant research on CPA, implying that the field is incomplete and inadequate. The research field is dominated by North American scholars, whereas the European scholars have played a minor role. Theoretically the field has been dominated by few theories, whereas several established theories in organization and management science have not yet been applied in the literature. Hence, we argue that the field needs the application of a wider array of theories and methodological approaches in order to increase and complement the prevailing knowledge. The increased diversity of knowledge would benefit not only the scholars but also the practitioners, both business managers and public policy makers. This study is an example of how meta-analytical research can assist research problematization and theory building in organization studies. ■