

New topic for a Master Thesis at the Chair of Accounting and Managerial Control

To whom this may concern,

Vienna, October 20, 2022

Currently, there is a lively debate about the governments' optimal action towards what can be described as *windfall profits* in the energy industry. These are the result of a series of crises, from climate change to excessive monetary easing after the Covid pandemic, to the Russian-Ukraine conflict. Governments face monetary incentives as well as societal pressures to absorb at least part of these profits. However, in doing so, they would interfere with the mechanics of the market at the most basic level and therefore change incentives for all market participants.

Do companies (via the decisions of their managers) anticipate such governmental interaction and are they changing their behavior because of it?

For instance, managers could preempt profit skimming by the government by using alternative but legal accounting techniques or simply balance those profits by increased spending somewhere else. There are many countries with differing strategies, and not all companies are affected, which sets up an interesting possibility to do research in this area.

References

Arkes, H. R., et al. (1994). The psychology of windfall gains. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 59(3), 331-347.

Fuest, C., & Ockenfels, A. (07.10.2022). How to Tax Energy Companies' Windfall Profits, *Project Syndicate*.

Both are available online [here](#) and [here](#) or attached to this .pdf.

Interested students may apply until 20.11.2022 (incl.). To do so, please submit

1. a motivation why you want to research this topic,
2. at least one particular idea of how exactly you would like to answer the research question (does not need to be final), and
3. a description of the competencies you bring with you that enable you to do this work

in a single .pdf file via mail to markus.eigruber@univie.ac.at.

Best regards,

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