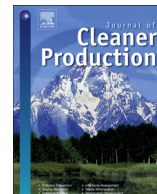




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Call for papers

Embracing the variety of sustainable business models: social entrepreneurship, corporate intrapreneurship, creativity, innovation, and other approaches to sustainability challenges

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1. Background

Sustainable business models are in the first place oriented to resolving social and environmental issues. In this vein, profit generation is not their predominant concern. In other words, sustainable business models function in contrast to what Magretta (2002: 87) argued is one of the “fundamental questions every manager must ask: How do we make money in this business?” In order to better understand this contrast, we first would like to refer to the mainstream management knowledge on business modeling. Academics have started to study business models more scrupulously in the last 15 years. Several definitions of business models have been proposed in the literature. Amit and Zott (2012: 42) defined the business model as “a system of interconnected and interdependent activities that determine the way the company does business with its customers, partners, and vendors.”

Casadesus-Masanell and Zhu (2013: 464) defined new business models as the “search for new logics of the firm, new ways to create and capture value for its stakeholders, and focusing, primarily, on finding new ways to generate revenues and to define value propositions for customers, suppliers, and partners”. Markides (2006: 20) wrote about the discovery of fundamentally different business models in existing businesses: “To qualify as an innovation, the new business model must enlarge the existing economic pie, either by attracting new customers into the market or by encouraging existing customers to consume more.” Teece (2010: 172) stated that “the essence of a business model is in defining the manner by which the enterprise delivers value to customers, entices customers to pay for value, and converts those payments to profit.” Overall, most scholars agree that the business model emphasizes a system-level, holistic approach to explaining how firms do business, that is how value is created and captured (Zott et al., 2011).

The missing centrality of profit generation in sustainable business models poses some several intriguing questions for researchers, in an inquiry that requires further exploration. Even the well-known strategic management perspective of Porter and Kramer (2011) on shared value creation, with a simultaneous attention to economic and social progress, acknowledges that “our recognition of the transformative power of shared value is still in its genesis.” It is not yet well researched or understood how alternative, often new, creative or innovative sustainable business models function and how their application in the real world evolve to create value without predominantly generating only profit in their ventures. In addition, certain forms of organizations – e.g. B-Corporations, Worker Owned Corporations, Crowd-Funded

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Corporations, and Cooperative Corporations – deserve attention in this context. While both value creation and value capturing remain important, the priorities for sustainable businesses might be organized in a different order (due to different priorities) compared to classic for-profit entrepreneurs. Moreover, sustainable business models might originate from entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, business development of multinationals or their intrapreneurial activities, but also from the initiative of a specific economic sector, groups of citizens or government agency. The various approaches of resolving important social or environmental issues might be organized thus by both profit and non-profit oriented organizations. This SV is designed to contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms behind sustainable business models, which help to ensure sustainable solutions to social and environmental issues. This SV team solicits a wide variety of sustainable business models, originated by (social) entrepreneurs, (non) profit organizations, sector related or governmental initiatives and other types of creative approaches to help to accelerate the transition to “Equitable, Sustainable, Post–Fossil Carbon Societies.”

2. Types of contributions solicited

We welcome theoretical, conceptual and empirical papers for this SV. In addition, we welcome scholarly studies from a broad variety of methodologies (e.g. qualitative and quantitative), and from a broad variety of disciplines (e.g. management, entrepreneurship, environmental studies, organization theory, to mention a few). This CFPs is designed to challenge scholars to elaborate on, but not limit themselves to, the following research themes:

2.1. Theme 1: successful sustainable business models

First, we would like authors to elaborate on the meaning of ‘success’ in sustainable business models.

- What are the mechanisms driving successful sustainable business models?
- What are the measures for success with respect to sustainable business models?
- How can sustainable business models be scaled to provide higher impact?
- Are there limitations to scaling sustainable business models?

2.2. Theme 2: value creation challenges of sustainable business models

Second, we solicit papers on the value creation challenges of sustainable business models.

- Assuming a keen stakeholder attention to the value generation process involved, how are activities with sustainability focus coordinated among stakeholders with diverging focus in individual bottom lines (financial and non-financial)?
- Within the category of non-financial value creation, what is the variety of perceived values by different stakeholders and how are all values truly valued in decision-making?
- What are the prioritization mechanisms for value creation, taking into account the variety of values related to a variety of stakeholders?
- How can sustainable business models be used to achieve “shared value creation” for different customers and partners involved in their business models?

2.3. Theme 3: variety of Origins of sustainable business models

Third, we solicit inputs on the variety of organisational settings, which support implementation of sustainable business models.

- Do organisational and legal structures matter for the development of sustainable business models? If so, how and how does that help or hinder utilization of the new models?
- What are the drivers for profit-dominated organizations to engage in implementing sustainable business models?
- How does intrapreneurship, impact the implementation of sustainable business models in multinationals?
- What is the role of the service sector in implementing sustainable business models, in addition to manufacturing or other types of industries?
- Are there conflicts of co-existence among multinational companies, which are using sustainable and conventional business models?
- What are the dynamics of sustainable business models implementation in non-profit organizations and government controlled organizations?

2.4. Theme 4: social entrepreneurship

Fourth, we solicit inputs on the long-term impacts of social transformations as a result of social entrepreneurship (Peredo and McLean, 2006; Alvord et al., 2004; Mair and Marti, 2006; Austin et al., 2006).

- What are the similarities and differences among business models with the main objective profit generation and business models with the main objective revolving around multi-generational social and environmental issues?
- Although profit generation is not the only focus of social entrepreneurs, no initiative can be developed without a financial budget. What is (or should be) the balance between financial and non-financial bottom lines in the business models of social entrepreneurs?
- Are business models of social entrepreneurs different from classic for-profit business models? If so, how? Based on which criteria can we (or should we) describe a business model of social entrepreneurs as successful? What are the indicators of success?
- Do social entrepreneurs generate and implement new business models? How can we define and evaluate these new business models? What is the impact of these new business models on society?

2.5. Theme 5: business models for a circular economy

Fifth, we solicit inputs on the theoretical foundations and on the practical organisational challenges when it comes to business models for the circular economy.

- What are fundamental principles and premises underpinning the idea of a circular economy and how does it shape or influence implementation of other business models?
- What are the theoretical foundations for this type of circular business models?
- What are the inter-connected challenges to make circular business models work in practice?
- What is the possible impact of implementation of circular business models upon societal progress toward truly sustainable societies, within the context of rapid climatic changes?

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