

Call for Papers: Special Issue of Business & Society

Collaborative Cross-Sector Business Models for Sustainability

Guest Editors:

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Introduction

In the last few decades, there has been a wave of interest in ‘business models’, which has also impacted the debates about corporate sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Business model thinking has been a widely used framework for analyzing the architecture of businesses’ operations, value creation rationales and sustainability efforts (Pedersen, Gwozdz, & Hvass, 2016; Schaltegger, Hansen, & Lüdeke-Freund, 2016). Moreover, scholars have discussed the adequacy of conventional business model frameworks to cope with social and environmental issues, which has led to the formulation of alternatives, including triple bottom line business models (Joyce & Paquin, 2016; Elkington, 1997), green business models (Bisgaard, Henriksen, & Bjerre, 2012), social business models (Yunus, Moingeon, & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010), circular business models (Linder & Williander, 2017; Aguinaga, Henriques, Scheel, & Scheel, 2017), shared value business models (Lüdeke-Freund, Massa, Bocken, Brent, & Musango, 2016) and flourishing business models (Upward & Jones, 2016).

Mainstream business model research has often focused on individual organizations such as Apple, Xerox, Southwest Airlines, Netflix, and Walmart to name a few (Chesbrough, 2007; Johnson, Christensen, & Kagermann, 2008; Teece, 2010). What is often missing or lost in the business model discussions is the fact that the development of businesses is often dependent on the *collaboration* of multiple actors such as suppliers, customers, universities and government – namely *cross-sector collaboration*. In cases related to corporate sustainability and corporate social responsibility these multiple stakeholder collaborations are critical characteristics of ensuing the business model (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Kurucz, Colbert, Lüdeke-Freund, Upward, & Willard, 2017; Rohrbeck, Konnertz, & Knab, 2013). For instance, it is hard to imagine circular economy business

models without an element of collaboration, whether it involves recycling, reuse, reselling, sharing, upcycling and/or downcycling (Webster, 2015). Organizations with a ‘trash-to-cash’ business model are logically dependent on trash providers (Gassman, Frankenberger, & Csik, 2014). Likewise, sharing platform business models are also dependent on users who often play multiple roles as both customers and suppliers (Pedersen & Netter, 2015). Therefore, scholarly attempts to develop sustainable alternatives for conventional business models almost always contain the inclusion of a broader range of stakeholders from the state, market, and civil society (Bocken, Short, Rana, & Evans, 2013; Yang, Evans, Vladimirova, & Rana, 2017).

The Special Issue

The purpose of this special issue is to explore the role of *cross-sector collaboration and partnerships* for new and potentially sustainable business models and sharing platforms. Collaboration and partnerships are crucial as the value creation, delivery and capture of an organization is always intimately related to the collaborative ties with its stakeholders (Dreyer, Lüdeke-Freund, Hamann, & Faccar, 2017; Freeman, 2010). To date, collaboration with stakeholders has often been lumped together and drawn as a ‘key partners’ box in the business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010), which in turn leads to an under-representation of partners and networks, or stakeholders in general, in dominating business model frameworks and theories. Conventional business model thinking has also been accused of being silent with respect to the external context more generally. Addressing collaborative models will blur the boundaries of conventional business model thinking, which remain dominated by well-defined boxes and clear-cut boundaries. This special issue aims at motivating authors to explore the theoretical, conceptual and practical areas where narrow perspectives on customers and suppliers are extended or replaced by considering the whole range of possible stakeholders related to business models and sharing platforms to develop insights about how collaborative business models and sharing platforms can be stimulated, managed and lead to outcomes that are beneficial for both business and society. Evaluative issues around collaborate efforts in a sharing economy are welcome. Special emphasis is on cross-sector collaboration, where business models addressing societal issues are based on partnership between public, private and/or nonprofit actors (see e.g. McDonald and Young, 2012; van Tulder, Seitanidi, Crane, and Brammer, 2016).

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- When do collaborative business models supplement or replace conventional business models?
- Are sharing platforms able to address environmental and social issues? If so, what type of collaboration is needed for such sharing platforms to address environmental and social issues?
- What types of sharing and collaboration are needed for social innovations to thrive?
- How do the market and social logics that co-exist in social entrepreneurial models inform the selection of partners, the implementation and the prioritization of outcomes?

- How do social enterprises adopt to the innovative solutions that accrue from cross-sector collaborative platforms?
- How do hybridization approaches inform collective action models?
- How do market and social logics, which exist in social entrepreneurial models, inform the selection of partners, the implementation of and the prioritization of outcomes?
- How does hybridization approaches inform collective action models?
- How is economic, social and environmental value(s) balanced among the different actors in collaborative business models?
- How is value created, delivered and captured from cross-sector collaboration shared among actors from business and society?
- What tensions, dilemmas and paradoxes emerge when managing and operating collaborative business models for sustainability?
- What governance mechanisms are used to regulate the relationships between partners from multiple sectors collaborating on sustainability issues?
- How do organizations adapt their individual business models as a response to cross-sector collaboration?
- How to combine a conventional business mindset with a collaborative model – what kind of ‘hybrid’ logic is needed?
- How are collaborative business models managed, steered and controlled to achieve joint sustainability goals?
- How do collaborative business models for sustainability evolve over time? Are they temporary phenomena or ‘built to last’?
- What are the short-term and long-term impacts of collaborative business models for sustainability?
- How do collaborative business models for sustainability differ across sectors and contexts?

Types of Submission

We welcome high-quality submissions which advance our knowledge on collaborative business models that generate economic, social and environmental value. The special issue does not favor any special theoretical perspectives or methodological approaches and is open to theoretical as well as empirical contributions (Crane, Henriques, Husted, & Matten, 2015, 2016a, 2016b).

Submission process and deadlines

The deadline for submission of full papers is **December 1, 2018**. Authors should submit their manuscripts through ScholarOne Manuscripts at:

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bas>

Authors should be sure to specify in the submission system that the manuscript is for the special issue on “Collaborative Cross-Sector Business Models for Sustainability”.

Manuscripts should be prepared following the *Business & Society* author guidelines:

<http://www.sagepub.com/journals/Journal200878/manuscriptSubmission>

All articles will be subjected to double-blind peer review and editorial processes in accordance with the policies of *Business & Society*.

Special Issue Workshop

The special issue is coordinated with the Cross-Sector Social Interaction Conference (CSSI2018), which will be hosted by Copenhagen Business School on 10th -12th of June, 2018. However, your paper does not have to be presented at CSSI2018 in Copenhagen to be eligible for consideration for the special issue.

A Special Issue Workshop will be held in relation to CSSI2018. The workshop will be facilitated by the Special Issue editors and hosted at Copenhagen Business School. Here, authors will present and discuss their papers during the workshop and to receive feedback for further improvement of their manuscripts. Acceptance for presentation at the workshop does not guarantee acceptance of the paper for publication in *Business & Society*.

To be considered for the workshop, authors will need to submit a short paper (minimum 10 double-spaced pages, excluding references and exhibits) or a full paper to the special issue editors by April 16, 2018. Note that submission of a short or full paper to the workshop is not a precondition for submission of a full paper to the Special Issue.

About the Journal

Business & Society is one of the leading journals at the intersection of business and issues of social responsibility, ethics and governance. It is published by SAGE and its current two-year Citation Impact Factor is 3.298 (2016). It was ranked 31 out of 121 journals in the Business category of the 2016 Thomson Reuters Journals Citation Report (ISI). For further details see

<http://bas.sagepub.com> .

About the guest editors

Esben Rahbek Gjerdrum Pedersen (PhD, Copenhagen Business School) is professor in responsible management at Copenhagen Business School. His research mainly focuses on business models for sustainability and the operationalization of corporate social responsibility/corporate sustainability in everyday organisational practices. The results from his research have been published in a wide range of academic journals, including *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *Management Decision*, and *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*. The research has received international recognition, including Emerald Outstanding Paper Award and Emerald Social Impact Award. Esben R.G. Pedersen also serves at the Board of Directors of Academy of Business in Society (ABIS).

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