

Call for Papers - Special Issue – *critical perspectives on international business (cpoib)*



“Working towards the Sustainable Development Goals in earnest – critical international business perspectives on designing better interventions”

I. Guest Editors

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II. Introduction to the Special Issue

This special issue intends to foster critical debate around the challenges and opportunities facing enterprises when working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) beyond ‘SDG washing’ (cf. van Zanten & van Tulder, 2018). The SDGs are the latest in a series of transnational attempts at designing a governance framework for sustainable development. The scale of stakeholder consultations that preceded the design of the SDGs along with the framework’s emphasis on the role of the business sector in achieving these goals makes this framework “the most important frame of the global development agenda until 2030” (cf. Kolk, 2016; van Zanten & van Tulder, 2018: 209). As such, they provide an excellent frame of reference when critically investigating issues that are “of crucial concern to the world, groups of countries or stakeholders” (cf. Buckley et al., 2017; Dörrenbächer & Gammelgaard, 2019: 254; George et al., 2016).

While there is an increasing number of grey literature on the SDGs, academic studies need to yet incorporate them into their analyses as the rule, rather than the exception (cf. Sinkovics et al., 2016; Sinkovics et al., 2015). This is all the more important as several of the nine planetary boundaries for a safe operating space for humanity have been already exceeded (Rockstrom et al., 2009a; Rockstrom et al., 2009b; Steffen et al., 2015). This has serious implications for the extent to which the SDGs can be met. As firms cannot be separated from human beings, nor from their environment, academic studies need to investigate how the SDGs can become an integral part of the (re)design of business models

as well as global value chains (Elkington & Braun, 2013; Linnenluecke et al., 2016; Sinkovics & Archie-acheampong, 2019).

In line with the remit of *critical perspectives on international business* (Dörrenbächer & Michailova, 2019) we encourage submissions that take a critical stance to what is needed to meaningfully contribute to the SDGs and also clearly outline the relevance of their insights for future critical IB research. We are especially looking for contributions that 1) identify and question widely held assumptions that hinder the design and implementation of more effective SDG contributions and/or 2) propose alternatives to predominant 'business as usual' solutions that are not sufficient to effectuate meaningful change. This special issue is interested in a wide range of SDG related projects including but not limited to solutions that originated from multinational enterprises (MNEs), large domestic corporations, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), commissioned by governments/local authorities, initiated by standard setting bodies or by third sector organizations. We will only consider contributions for publication if they clearly and meaningfully discuss the implication of their study for 1) international business, 2) global value chains, or 3) cross-border collaborations for designing and implementing more effective policies.

III. Conceptual and Empirical Topics of Particular Interest

The special issue of *cpoib* provides an opportunity for scholars from different academic disciplines and sub-disciplines with relevance to IB research to submit their work on how the business sector, on its own or in collaboration with other actors, can contribute to the SDGs. Indicative research questions invited for submission are:

- Are existing theories in IB able to support a better understanding of the SDGs including the process of their implementation and evaluation? If not, how can we extend or modify these theories? Do we need new theories?
- How can SDGs be addressed at different units of analysis (individual, firm, sector, nation state, the supranational level)?
- How can the tensions between climate change and development be mitigated? Can local or regional solutions be scaled up nationally and internationally?
- How can the SDGs help achieve more meaningful social and environmental upgrading in GVCs? Should MNEs be the main driving force?
- What are the limitations of current SDG projects? How can they be addressed? Do MNEs foster or hinder the design of more effective interventions?
- How can multi-stakeholder SDG collaborations be made more effective? Where are the tensions?
- What are the challenges of transforming existing business models into models that embrace the SDGs?
- What are the challenges of designing and implementing cross-border solutions to SDGs?

IV. Submission Process and Deadlines

Guidelines for submission

- Authors should refer to the *cpoib* website and the instructions on submitting a paper. For author guidelines and more information see: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/cpoib.htm>
- Submissions to *cpoib* are made using ScholarOne Manuscripts <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cpoib>
- All papers will be subjected to double-blind peer review and papers will be reviewed in accordance with *cpoib* guidelines.
- Manuscripts will be only considered for this special issue if they 1) adopt a critical stance (in the sense of reflection and problematization) and 2) clearly and meaningfully discuss the implications of the findings for internal business research
- The guest editors welcome informal enquiries related to proposed topics.
- Submission deadline: 15 July 2020
- Approximate date of publication: volume 18

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