



Call for Papers

Special Issue of the Sustainability Management Forum

The Sharing Economy and Beyond – Challenges and Opportunities for a more Sustainable Economy

Submission deadline: 15 January 2019

Link to the call:

www.springer.com/economics/environmental/journal/550

Guest Editor/s: Alexandra Palzkill¹

Various and complex sustainability challenges exert increasing pressure on modern societies and economic systems (Steffen et al. 2015; Rockstrom et al. 2009). A key dilemma when dealing with these challenges is that natural resource consumption and environmental pollution are interlinked with economic growth and social welfare. Thus, implementing the sustainability goals determined at various political levels (such as the SDGs) requires new and alternative response strategies within society at large, but also in the design of economic systems of consumption and production (van den Bergh et al. 2011; Geels 2011).

Alternative economic approaches are thus becoming more and more relevant and various concepts ranging from sharing to collaborative, circular economies or product-service systems are being discussed. Especially the emerging forms of a sharing economy are advocated as a potentially more sustainable way of organizing production and consumption: less ownership-oriented patterns of consumption, prolonged product lifecycles and intensified use as well as more collaborative and decentralized models of consumption and production could have meaningful environmental and social impact – especially when these strategies are developed as part of an alternative, more sustainability-oriented economic system as a whole (Daunoriene et al. 2015, Heinrichs, 2013, Martin, 2016).

However, what can be observed currently is that driven by digitalization (as one of the major driving forces), the sharing economy has materialized in the form of rapidly growing and globally operating platform providers such as Uber and Airbnb. A critical discussion has developed focusing on these actors and this specific version of the sharing economy. Major issues are rebound effects and sharing business models as yet another driver of high levels of consumption and growth. The case of the sharing economy might thus be a typical example of successful upscaling from the niche to the mainstream at the expense of sustainable development.

¹ Dr. Alexandra Palzkill, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, palzkill@uni-wuppertal.de

In particular, we invite theoretical, empirical, practice-oriented and review papers on the following issues and questions:

- How to leverage the potential of the sharing economy or other alternative forms of sustainable economies? Can the sharing economy be scaled up in sustainable ways? In what ways does the sharing economy produce positive social and environmental outcomes?
- To what extent are social/environmental sustainability and economic sustainability of sharing or other alternative business models compatible?
- Digitalization as a societal mega-trend: How is it related to a sustainable economy? Is it a driver or a threat? What role do technological and social innovations play in this context?
- What is the potential of digitalization for broadening the impact of sustainable sharing practices or related practices of sustainable consumption and production?
- What is the role of different actors – politics, business, civil society, individuals - in aligning the sharing economy with sustainability objectives? What is the impact of different groups of actors in developing framework conditions, regulation, social practices and innovations towards a more sustainable economy?
- Platform-cooperativism, blockchain, etc.: What is the potential of technological innovation and new organizational approaches to drive the transition towards a sustainable economy?
- These themes are only indicative.

These themes are only indicative. We particularly invite contributions from interdisciplinary perspectives as well as from practitioners and policy-makers.

The deadline for submissions is 15 January 2019. Accepted papers are expected to be published in 2019/2020. Please consider the submission process information on page 2 of this document. All enquiries regarding the special issue should be sent to:
palzkill@uni-wuppertal.de

Reference List

- Daunoriene et al. 2015, Evaluating Sustainability of Sharing Economy Business Models. *Social and Behavioral Science* 213: 836-841, DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.486
- Geels, F.W., 2011. The multi-level perspective on sustainability transitions: Responses to seven criticisms. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 1, 24–40. doi:10.1016/j.eist.2011.02.002
- Heinrichs, H. (2013). Sharing Economy: A Potential New Pathway to Sustainability. *GAIA - Ecological Perspectives for Science and Society*. 22:4, 228–231.

- Martin, C. J. (2016). The Sharing Economy: A Pathway to Sustainability or a Nightmarish Form of Neoliberal Capitalism? *Ecological Economics* 121, 149–59.
- Rockstrom et al. 2009. A safe operating space for humanity. *Nature* 461, 472–475.
doi:10.1038/461472a
- Steffen et al. 2015. Planetary boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet. *Science* 347, 1259855–1259855. doi:10.1126/science.1259855
- van den Bergh, J.C.J.M., 2011. Environment versus growth — A criticism of “degrowth” and a plea for “a-growth.” *Ecological Economics* 70, 881–890.
doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2010.09.035