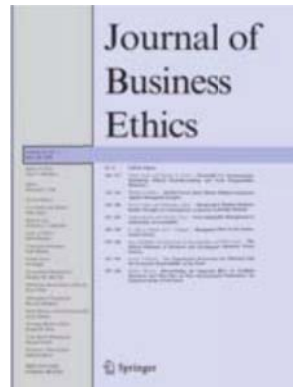


CALL FOR PAPERS

“The Scandinavian Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainability”

Thematic Symposium of the Journal of Business Ethics

Submissions due by June 1, 2012



Guest Editors

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“Few can contest Scandinavia’s place at the forefront of the corporate responsibility movement.” This was a claim that led a feature article in *Ethical Corporation* almost a decade ago (McCallin & Webb, 2004). Yet despite bold claims of this nature, the opportunity remains for a concerted focus to deeply explore the Scandinavian approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability-- and to do so from multiple perspectives by scholars from differing disciplines and regions. This thematic symposium entitled “***The Scandinavian Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainability***” addresses this opportunity with the intention to spur on further explorations.

Scandinavian companies are disproportionately well-represented in the major corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability performance indicators (Gjølberg, 2009) and the region as a whole has demonstrated strong and balanced macro economic, social, and environmental performances (Strand, forthcoming). This indicates that academics and practitioners alike may find something of interest by exploring the Scandinavian approach.

Scholars have pointed to the region’s longstanding commitment to integrating environmental and social issues into management practices (Morsing, Midttun & Palmås, 2007) and Scandinavian leadership approaches have been characterized as demonstrating a deep-seated commitment to participation and stakeholder engagement (House et al., 2004; Grenness, 2003; Bjerke, 1999). With Scandinavian corporations like Novo Nordisk and prominent Scandinavian leaders like Novo Nordisk’s former CEO Mads Øvlisen (Morsing & Oswald, 2009), Scandinavia presents promising empirical grounds from which to explore effective stakeholder engagement in practice and what this means in terms of CSR and sustainability. This includes within fields, such as innovation (Hockerts & Morsing, 2008). Grennes (2003: 13) described the “Scandinavian model promotes long-term ties between owners,

managers, workers, and society, where the role of the company includes promotion of goals of society at large” and Strand (2009) proposed that the willingness and ability of Scandinavian industry to embrace collaborative partnerships is a “*Scandinavian Cooperative Advantage*” that will prove to be a competitive advantage for the region in the face of increasingly complex social and environmental challenges that companies cannot solve alone.

Stakeholder theorists credit important developments in stakeholder theory as having come from Scandinavia where the contributions of Swedish Scholar Eric Rhenman stand out (Freeman, 1984; Nasi, 1995; Jones et al., 2002; Freeman, 2005; Freeman et. al, 2010). In a 1964 publication, Rhenman (1964) contributed one of the earliest definitions of stakeholders offering that the “stakeholders in an organization are the individuals and groups who are depending on the firm in order to achieve their personal goals and on whom the firm is depending for its existence”. Rhenman identified the very survival of the firm depended on the “crucial task” of the management to take care of the “stakeholder balance” (Nasi, 1995). The Finnish scholar Juha Nasi (1995) is also recognized as continuing the tradition, where Nasi also served to chronicle the historical development of Scandinavian stakeholder thinking in his chapter “A Scandinavian Approach to Stakeholder Thinking: An analysis of its theoretical and practices uses 1964-1980.”

Institutional and political scholars have recognized Scandinavia as a special place to explore CSR and sustainability (Midttun et al., 2006) where Scandinavian governmental institutions are taking an active role in the CSR and sustainability agenda (Gjølberg, 2010). Campbell (2007) described Scandinavia as having “the sorts of institutions that I have argued will facilitate socially responsible corporate behavior.” Scandinavia also presents opportunities to explore effects and impacts for a region of the world has demonstrated a tradition of strong “implicit CSR” and is more recently is demonstrating movement toward “explicit CSR” (Matten & Moon 2008; Vallentin & Murillo, 2010).

There also exist promising explorations spurred on by Scandinavia into pedagogical research for how to more effectively teach coursework in the fields of CSR and sustainability. Ghoshal (2005) questioned why the theories espoused in the dominant model of business school education did not acknowledge that companies survive and prosper when they simultaneously pay attention to the interests their stakeholders and Giacalone & Thompson (2006) called for a shift in role models in how we teach business students. With its balanced economic, environmental, and societal performances the Scandinavian region may serve as a role model of sorts- or at least provide some interesting food for thought for different approaches. And increasingly business schools from elsewhere in the world are taking note by bringing their students to Scandinavia (Strand, forthcoming). This may not be altogether surprising given the commonly used sustainability definition has Scandinavian roots (Brundtland, 1987).

For this variety of reasons the Scandinavian context offers unique perspectives and contributions to CSR, sustainability, and stakeholder theory from both a practitioner and academic standpoint. Some interesting questions follow. We invite contributions to address the following questions and all other contributions relevant to the concept of *the Scandinavian approach to CSR and sustainability*.

- What learnings can practitioners and academics worldwide take away from studying a so-called “Scandinavian approach” to CSR and sustainability?
- To what extent is the Scandinavian approach dependent on its institutional and cultural context and what does this mean for attempts to replicate it in other countries?
- What critical perspectives should be explored in more depth? Might Scandinavian firms miss crucial elements in their approach?
- Is there such a thing as a “Scandinavian Cooperative Advantage”? And if so, what might this mean in a business world that is overwhelmingly focused on competition?

Timeline:

- Full Paper Submissions due to kho.ikl@cbs.dk: June 1, 2012
- First round of reviews finished/decision send to authors: Early August 2012
- Deadline for first revisions: End September 2012
- 2nd round of reviews finished/decision send to authors: End October 2012
- Deadline for 2nd revisions: End November 2012
- Final round of reviews finished/decision send to authors: Early January 2013
- Deadline for final revisions: Early February 2013
- Final version of all manuscript handed to Journal of Business Ethics: Early March 2013

Process for submitting papers:

Papers submitted must not have been published, accepted for publication, or presently under consideration for publication elsewhere. Submissions should be approximately 8,000 words in length (including references and any endnotes, appendixes, and tables). Manuscripts should be submitted via e-mail as a Word document (.doc' attachment; one file including all figures and tables) to Kai Hockerts kho.ikl@cbs.dk.

Papers should employ standard English. To be eligible for review, manuscripts must follow the journal's guidelines and provide full contact information for the authors. For additional guidelines, see the "Notes for Contributors" in Journal of Business Ethics or at the homepage at <http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/applied+ethics/journal/10551>. Authors should not identify themselves in the body of the paper. The paper's front page should have the authors' names, affiliations, and contact information (e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, and physical addresses).

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