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Introduction to the business of sustainability: An organizing framework for theory, practice and impact

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1. Introduction to the business of sustainability: an organizing framework for theory, practice and impact

Gerard George, Martine R. Haas, Havovi Joshi, Anita M. McGahan and Paul Tracey

INTRODUCTION

Human activity needs to become sustainable, and businesses have a massive role to play in it. Important progress has occurred. The Coronavirus pandemic has reinforced the importance of sustainability and resilience. Businesses have become champions of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both by integrating them into their core activities and by developing strategies and metrics to achieve them. Despite this progress, more must be done to achieve sustainability targets on a timetable that is relevant. While the narratives of businesses are often exciting, their follow-through with implementation remains limited. So too is information on successful practices, conceptual knowledge of the opportunities, and insight on the tradeoffs and challenges. This *Handbook* is a scholarly effort to remedy this imbalance.

The *Handbook on the Business of Sustainability* is a compilation of chapters that together constitute a "call to action" on the business aspects of sustainable growth. It adopts a novel approach that emphasizes conceptual work to help businesses think through the critical issues. "Sustainability-in-Practice" case studies and implementation briefs complement these conceptual chapters. Our aspiration is that this *Handbook* can help scholars and executives reflect on the "concept and practice" of articulating, strategizing, resourcing, organizing, and implementing sustainability initiatives in business. In this chapter, we summarize the contributions in this edited volume and provide an overall framework to highlight the multiple issues that need to be considered from an organizational perspective on the business of sustainability.

The Business of Sustainability

From being a rather esoteric idea a few decades back, sustainability has now taken center stage in the stated mission, vision and strategies of many corporations across the world. Sustaining human activity is today the most pressing political, economic and social challenge that companies grapple with. For businesses, the term "sustainability" is construed as referring to the practice of doing business without negatively impacting the environment, the community, and society as a whole, recognizing that the failure to develop and implement holistic sustainable business strategies could lead to environmental degradation, social inequalities and injustice. Taking serious note of growing stakeholder interest in this regard – be it from 'woke' customers, concerned employees, regulators and activists, or the public at large, who expect sustainability commitments as a bare minimum – the number of companies jumping on to the sustainability bandwagon has grown exponentially.

Indeed, there is an emerging trend in which businesses integrate discussions of sustainability with organizational purpose. George, Haas, McGahan, Schillebeeckx and Tracey (2021, p. 7) note that purpose in the for-profit firm

> captures the essence of an organization's existence by explaining what value it seeks to create for its stakeholders. In doing so, purpose provides a clear definition of the firm's intent, creates the ability for stakeholders to identify with, and be inspired by, the firm's mission, vision, and values, and establishes actionable pathways and an aspirational outcome for the firm's actions.

Some firms approach sustainability through the concept of goal-based purpose, often emphasizing the SDGs, while others adopt a duty-based approach and articulate sustainability as perpetuating the positive impact of the firm (Hollensbe et al., 2014). In either case, purpose and sustainability are intertwined in narratives of business leadership. For example, coordinating organizations such as the Business Roundtable or the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) are taking action to facilitate sharing of knowledge, accelerating adoption of standards, and generating advocacy inputs for guiding policy related to sustainable growth.

Businesses are also restructuring to reflect their renewed purpose and commitment to sustainability (Marquis, 2020). Along with established firms such as Patagonia, Ben & Jerry's and Kickstarter, many start-ups seek to attain B Corp certification. B Corp is awarded to companies that meet a number of social and environmental criteria as well as performance, accountability and transparency standards. A B Corp is a for-profit corporation that is driven by both purpose and profit. The B Corp Declaration of Interdependence envisions a global economy that uses business as a force for good. It expresses the vision "that, through their products, practices, and profits, businesses should aspire to do no harm and benefit all; and to do so requires that we act with the understanding that we are each dependent upon another and thus responsible for each other and future generations" (B Corporation, 2021).

An extension of B Corp status is a benefit corporation, also referred to as a public benefit corporation or a social-purpose corporation. As of August 2020, over 30 states in the U.S. had passed benefit corporation legislation recognizing benefit corporation status. The key difference between the duties of the directors of a benefit corporation vis-à-vis that of a traditional for-profit firm is that

> in a benefit corporation, the directors have a fiduciary duty to consider the implications of corporate conduct on materially affected stakeholders including employees, the public and the environment. This stands in contrast to a traditional for-profit corporation, which limits the directors' fiduciary duties to managing the corporation in a manner that maximizes financial returns for stockholders. (Carpenter Wellington PLLC, 2020)

As of May 2021, 3,928 companies across 150 industries in 74 countries have received B Corp certification (bcorporation.net/).

Sustainability has grabbed the attention of boardroom conversations. A December 2017 McKinsey survey noted that 70% of respondents reported that their companies had some form of governance in place, compared with 56% in 2014. Additionally, 16% of respondents, up from 12% previously, said that their companies had a board-level committee dedicated to sustainability issues (Bové, D'Herde & Swartz, 2017). These numbers keep increasing every year.

However, clearly some firms are far ahead of the others in working on sustainability. Unilever, for instance, has a range of ambitious plans that includes getting to net zero emissions by 2039, eliminating deforestation in its palm oil, paper and board, tea, soy and cocoa supply chains, and ensuring that all of its plastic packaging will be designed to be fully reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. In another example, in January 2021, PepsiCo, Inc. announced plans to more than double its science-based climate goal, targeting a reduction of absolute greenhouse gas emissions across its value chain by more than 40% by 2030. It also pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040. In 2020, PepsiCo met its target to source 100% renewable electricity in the U.S. and set a new target to source 100% renewable electricity across all of its company owned and controlled operations globally by 2030 and across its entire franchise and third-party operations by 2040.

Governments too are moving ahead with sustainability initiatives. In April 2021, President Biden announced a new target for the U.S. to achieve a 50–52% reduction from 2005 levels in economy-wide net greenhouse gas pollution by 2030. This would support existing goals to create a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035 and a net zero emissions economy by no later than 2050. China's President Xi announced in December 2020 that the country would cut its carbon dioxide emissions per unit of gross domestic product, or carbon intensity, by more than 65% below 2005 levels by 2030, and reach carbon neutrality by 2060. In addition, it would boost its installed capacity of wind and solar power to more than 1,200 gigawatts by 2030, and increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to about 25% during the same period, up from a previous commitment of a reduction of 20% (Reuters, 2020).

While over 60 countries have pledged carbon neutrality by 2050, each is small compared to China, which now produces 28% of the world's emissions (Myers, 2020). India, which is the world's third-biggest carbon emitter after China and the U.S., is considering plans to reach zero emissions by mid-century. Some smaller nations have announced a slew of ambitious targets. Singapore, for instance, developed "The Singapore Green Plan 2030," which is a whole-of-nation movement to advance Singapore's national agenda on sustainable development. Key targets under the plan include the objectives to plant one million more trees; reduce waste sent to the landfill per capita per day by 30% by 2030; and become a leading center for Green Finance globally. Singapore also plans to extend producer responsibility by putting new laws in place for both packaging and electronic waste by 2025, which would make the companies responsible for the collection, treatment and disposal of products after they have been used.

It is interesting to note that the range of topics included under the "sustainability" heading has also grown. As recently as a decade ago, sustainability primarily referred to traditional concerns of carbon emissions and renewable energy. By 2021, sustainability topics on which firms engaged included the full range of topics addressed by the SDGs, including information security, privacy, diversity, inclusion, job quality, urban redesign, and water quality, among other pressing topics.

A significant development over the past decade in the field of sustainability has been corporate deployment of technology to support sustainability goals and strategies (George, Merrill & Schillebeeckx, 2021; George & Schillebeeckx, 2021). In what is often described as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industry 4.0, companies today have greatly increased their use of digital tools and platforms to manage their sustainability agendas.

Despite the progress made by some leading corporations, many businesses continue to face challenges in recognizing and capturing financial value from their sustainability efforts. Studies have consistently shown that sustainability is strongly correlated to financial performance. This linkage between financial performance and sustainability is also a key reason for businesses to move toward a circular-economy model. Given global economic pressures, both on the supply side with rising resource prices and on the demand side with a rapidly increasing consuming class, businesses need to evaluate their strategies in terms of "reusing resources, regenerating natural capital, and decoupling resource use from growth" (Stuchtey & Vanthournout, 2014).

One enabling mechanism for business transformation toward sustainability is green finance. Green finance refers to structured financial activities that are created to encourage a better environmental outcome, either by promoting green projects or then minimizing the impact on the climate of other projects. Some typical green finance projects include renewable energy and energy efficiency, pollution prevention and control, biodiversity conservation, circular-economy initiatives, and sustainable use of natural resources and land (Fleming, 2020). There appears to be tremendous momentum in green finance. In November 2019, Bloomberg reported that at least $30.7 trillion of funds were being held in sustainable or green investments, up 34% from 2016, according to a report by the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance, a group of organizations tracking those moves in five regions from the U.S. to Australia (Landberg, Massa & Pogkas, 2019). The most popular tool in green finance is the green bond. Globally, the green bond market could be worth $2.36 trillion by 2023 (Fleming, 2020).

These trends reflect the changing landscape for business. Sustainability is embraced globally and is at the forefront of organizational transformation. Yet evidence on the efficacy of sustainability initiatives is patchy. Detailed guidance on comparability and standards is evolving fast. And plenty of hesitancy exists despite the opportunities to create and capture value.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

With the goal of generating and perpetuating sustainable business and its impact, we organize the book into four parts. This framework simplifies the complexity of sustainable business into themes: (1) organizing for sustainability, (2) implementing sustainable development, (3) sustainability-in-practice, and (4) measuring outcomes and social impact. Part of the challenge in sustainability research and practice is that it has interdependencies and interconnectedness to other elements of the business and its outcomes. Therefore, the organizing framework focuses on the classification or categorization of issues, which can then help generate evidence and actionable insights. Next, we discuss the four themes and the conceptual issues in each to promote a generative discussion to aid sustainable business research and practice.

Organizing for Sustainability

The topic of "organizing for sustainability" provides a fundamental link between how businesses understand their sustainability mandates, manage and respond to their institutional contexts, implement their sustainability initiatives, and ultimately have impact in sustainability domains. In this section of the *Handbook*, authors have contributed six chapters that address several critical topics that contribute to advancing our understanding of the organizational and organizing aspects of sustainability agendas and activities by firms. These include what it means to be a purpose-driven organization, and how purpose is understood within the firm; the importance of stakeholder engagement, including the challenges of aligning stakeholder interests and deciding whether or not to publicize corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, as well as the need to consider the role of stakeholders in entrepreneurial firms; and opportunities and challenges involved in organizing through cross-sector partnerships, with NGOs broadly and with community enterprises in particular.

Taken together, the chapters in this section provide a set of multi-dimensional and multi-faceted perspectives on the considerations that businesses face as they decide how (and whether) to explicitly incorporate sustainability priorities into their agendas and architectures, and the challenges that arise as they decide how to communicate and manage those priorities. The authors provide valuable literature reviews that synthesize current scholarly understanding in the topics of organizing for sustainability, insightful conceptual frameworks that synthesize key theoretical components and explain their relationships and integration, and numerous exciting directions and promising suggestions for scholars to pursue as they work to further our insights into these issues.

Setting the stage for explaining the connections between corporate purpose and sustainability, in "Purpose-Driven Companies and Sustainability," Claudine Gartenberg provides a comprehensive review of the existing research literature on purpose-driven organizations, defined as "those whose members from the board to operating levels are inspired by the organization's purpose and make choices consistent with that purpose." She characterizes this literature as having evolved through two distinct traditions, one focused on the role of purpose in managing organizations, the other on the purpose of the corporation in the sense of its objective function. Together, these traditions illuminate several critical questions, including how corporate purpose can be defined and measured, how purpose and profits are interrelated, and the links between purpose and sustainability. Gartenberg argues that the two traditions have tended to adopt different baseline assumptions about whether purpose and profits are complements or substitutes, as well as addressing the question of whether purpose-driven organizations are more sustainable by explicating the mechanisms through which corporate purpose and corporate sustainability may be mutually reinforcing. The chapter highlights not only the progress of prior research on these questions, but also the opportunities for future research to illuminate them further.

In "Legitimacy Judgments and Prosociality," Rodolphe Durand and Chang-Wa Huynh aim to enrich the view that purpose is a set of common beliefs that guide organizational members' actions toward long-term achievements by addressing the question of how these organizational members actually perceive and respond to this purpose. To explicate the links between macro-level purpose and micro-level perceptions and motivations, the authors draw on the concepts of legitimacy judgments and prosocial orientations, complementing prior research on top-down stakeholder/CSR and moral leadership views of purpose with a more bottom-up view of the factors that influence how purpose is evaluated and enacted within the firm. Via this approach, the chapter offers a way to address a substantial gap in current scholarly understanding of purpose, while providing rich insight into the avenues that future research could pursue to deepen this understanding further, through attention to purpose as fundamental to an organization's existence rather than as an objective or goal, to issues of incentives and the aggregation of individual perceptions and motivations to the collective level, and to questions about the emergence of maintenance of purpose as a dependent variable.

Moving into the topic of stakeholders and stakeholder management, the chapter by Sinziana Dorobantu, Abhishek Gupte, and Sam Yuqing Li on "Stakeholder Governance" argues that firms often have relatively limited impact on sustainability issues because of the inherent difficulties involved in stakeholder management and governance. The authors start from the premise that firms' efforts to adopt sustainable practices, and their success at implementing those practices, tend to be constrained by lack of alignment among their stakeholders' interests. The reason for this, they argue, is that the sheer complexity of many sustainability issues makes alignment among stakeholders perhaps inevitably rare. In addition, the prioritization of some stakeholders over others, and of some issues over others among those stakeholders, means that firms tend to narrow their focus to relatively small sets of issues, further limiting their impact. To address these challenges and increase the impact of firms' sustainability efforts, stakeholder governance arrangements are needed to reduce tensions and to facilitate stakeholders' collaboration with firms and with each other. The need for greater insight into such arrangements requires that scholars expand their research focus beyond firm-level sustainability efforts to incorporate a broader understanding of the varieties and implications of stakeholder governance arrangements.

Peter G. Klein and Ileana Maldonado-Bautista's chapter on "Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, and Stakeholder Theory" continues the theme of engagement with stakeholders, but this time in the context of entrepreneurial ventures. While research that takes a stakeholder perspective on entrepreneurship has been relatively limited, the authors suggest that understanding of the entrepreneurial process can be advanced by expanding beyond a narrow conceptualization of the stakeholders that matter to entrepreneurs to encompass a broader variety of stakeholders that includes not only investors but also customers and employees. The implication is that by broadening their own understanding of the stakeholders that matter to their enterprises, and engaging more fully and thoughtfully with those stakeholders, entrepreneurs can not only increase the sustainability of their own nascent firms but also contribute more fully to sustainable development and growth. The authors provide a systematic literature view of 65 studies that use stakeholder theory to advance understanding of entrepreneurship, identify the key themes that are emerging, and point to directions for future research in this area, highlighting among these the potential value of enriching economic perspectives on entrepreneurship with perspectives that emphasize morality and ethics.

Transitioning to the topic of cross-sector partnerships and firms' relationships with NGOs, in "Firm–NGO Collaborations for Sustainability," Kate Odziemkowska provides a broad framework for understanding the nature and impact of collaborations between firms and NGOs, particularly social-purpose NGOs. To undertake this ambitious agenda, the author proposes taking a comparative perspective that focuses on developing new insights into both, which collaborations have different types of impact and when they may have such impact. To illustrate the insights to be gained from this approach, she draws attention to the different organizational forms that NGOs can take – service, advocacy, and protest – and explicates how these different forms can lead to different implications for business sustainability, for the NGOs themselves, and for broader social welfare and institutions. The chapter provides a timely and important reminder that NGOs have very heterogenous agendas and motivations, and offers a promising new research agenda by illuminating how these in turn have important potential implications for the collaborations they engage in, the partners they work with, and the nature and outcomes of the interactions that constitute those partnerships.

Finally, in their chapter on "Partnerships and Place," Neil Stott, Michelle Darlington, Jennifer Brenton and Natalie Slawinski focus in on the role of community enterprises (CEs) in cross-sector partnerships, and argue that such organizations are critically important for addressing the "slow violence" of global sustainability challenges that are felt most acutely among poorer communities (Borch & Kornberger, 2015; Stott & Tracey, 2017). The fundamental reason for this, the authors propose, is because they are place-based, which makes them uniquely well positioned to contend with the challenges that arise at the intersection of sustainability and economic inequality. To illuminate the role played by place-based CEs, the authors take an institutional work perspective that views the creation and maintenance of cross-sector partnerships as agentic processes. Drawing on findings from empirical work in the UK and Canada, they elaborate four features of CEs that guide their work: intimacy, negotiated solidarities, patience, and incubation. These features enable them to endure and survive over extended periods, working with numerous partners, even when their power and resources are relatively low. In closing, the authors offer directions for future research, point to emergent questions, and highlight some methodological considerations for future study on the role of place-based community enterprises in addressing the challenges of sustainability and inequality.

Implementing Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has become a highly visible concept, and corporations around the world are increasingly engaging with it. Reflecting this shift, there is now a substantive body of research which has examined how businesses talk about, evaluate and report upon their efforts to build sustainability into their strategies and operations. The findings of this research present a mixed picture – while sustainable development in general, and the UN SDGs in particular, are ever more evident in corporate discourses (ElAlfy, Darwish & Weber, 2020), the extent to they are actually integrated into core corporate activities may be more limited (van der Waal & Thijssens, 2020). In other words, there appears to be a gap in how some firms talk about sustainable development and how they enact it. The chapters in this section help to shed light on this discrepancy by considering the implementation of sustainable development in both established firms and new ventures.

For established firms, organizational culture represents a key challenge – firms that have long prided themselves on the singular pursuit of the financial bottom line often struggle to integrate new norms, values and systems of performance measurement that prioritize a broader range of interests and stakeholders. Efforts to incorporate these broader interests can create strategic tensions that many businesses struggle to manage and contain. Such tensions may be internal – related, for example, to how firms ensure gender and other forms of inequality are addressed, and workforces empowered to shape strategic decision making. Or they may be external – related, for example, to how firms deal with stakeholders and systems of knowledge which are unfamiliar to them.

The implementation challenges of sustainable development are somewhat different for new ventures. Unlike established companies, entrepreneurs have the capacity to create their own cultures and business models which place sustainability at their core, but often they must do so in the context of extreme resource constraints and deep-rooted uncertainty about the future direction of the markets in which they compete will develop. As a consequence, many new ventures designed to address SDGs are required to collaborate with a range of stakeholders from inception – collaborations which both provide opportunities for, and impose constraints upon, the ventures concerned. Given the importance of entrepreneurship and new venture creation to creating a sustainable future, research in this area represents a very important area of inquiry.

Turning to the constituent chapters in this section, Jennifer Howard-Grenville and Tirza Gapp focus on the role of organizational culture in business sustainability. They begin by critiquing the literature on organizational culture, noting that it is characterized by two waves: a first wave in which culture is viewed as a "deep structure of shared values" largely under the control of organizational leaders, and a second wave in which culture is viewed as a "toolkit" enacted and experienced by members across organizations. Research on culture is used to consider sustainability across four dimensions: top-down vs bottom-up; inside-out versus outside-in; timeframe; and magnitude. Finally, the authors extend these arguments further by building a 2x2 framework that reveals four different approaches to culture change in the context of sustainable business. This chapter on "Organizational Culture for Sustainability" makes a critically important contribution to our understanding of the relationship between culture and business sustainability, and also reveals powerful practical insights for how organizational members can precipitate change – regardless of their position in the organization.

Thijs Geradts and Justin Jansen explore the "paradoxical tensions" that multinational corporations face when seeking to embed sustainability into their core strategies while at the same time developing new innovative products and services. In their chapter on "Paradoxical Tensions in Business Sustainability," the authors draw on insights from paradox theory to identify four tensions which they argue are "inherent" to corporations that embrace sustainability: tensions pertaining to mission, temporal orientation, problem-solving, and external relationships. They draw on the fascinating case of Unilever's Sunlight Water Centres – which provide access to clean water in rural parts of sub-Saharan Africa through solar powered boreholes – to explore how the tensions manifest themselves and the practices that can be used to address them. It is a powerful study that sheds new light on both the challenges and the opportunities faced by very large companies that engage with deep-rooted social and environmental problems.

The issue of gender equality has been the focus of much attention on the part of policy makers and in the corporate world, but the pace of change remains frustratingly slow. In "Gender Equality in Organizations," Carol T. Kulik, Sukhbir Sandhu, Sanjeewa Perera and Sarah A. Jarvis focus attention on gender inequality in the workplace, noting that systematic gender bias is widespread and deep-rooted in the world of work. They build a framework that draws on growing research on institutional logics and spatial configurations to show how organizations can "break free from the herd" in order to promote gender equality in the workplace in meaningful ways. To do so, organizations need to strategically align gender equality actions across what they term the physical, mental and social spaces. The authors also offer a powerful research agenda at the intersection of institutional theory and organizational research on space designed to further scholarship on gender equality at work.

In their chapter "Sustainability for People and the Planet," Julie Yen, Julie Battilana and Emilie Aguirre consider the critical role of workplace empowerment in sustainable business. They note that the rights and well-being of workers are often curiously absent from research on sustainable business, which they view as a significant limitation of existing work. The authors build on the growing literature on hybrid organizing to consider how organizational democracy can both support employee well-being while also helping companies in their pursuit of social, environmental and financial goals – goals that are often seen as existing in conflict. Finally, the authors develop an inter-disciplinary research agenda that considers these issues in the context of broader institutional and legal frameworks. This is a powerful chapter that highlights critically important – but often neglected – connections between organizational democracy and business sustainability.

Dev Jennings, Maggie Cascadden and Andy Hoffman draw attention to the role of knowledge in corporate sustainability implementation in their chapter on "Sustainability Science and Corporate Cleanup in Community Fields." They argue that firms engaging with environmental issues in a community inevitably encounter sustainability science – the "diverse collection of environmental science, engineering, economic, policy, and public health disciplines that underpin sustainability" – but may struggle to understand the practices and assumptions that underpin it. At the same time, actors from the field of sustainability science may struggle to understand the distinct ways in which companies approach problems and decision making. The result may be mutual misunderstanding which inhibits corporate action. The authors develop a process model to explore how teams from companies and sustainability science can translate their respective systems of knowledge in order to address environmental issues more effectively. The chapter has important implications for actors working in both fields, and also offers an exciting research agenda for organizational scholars.

Reflecting the importance of the topic, entrepreneurship is a focus of two of the chapters in this section. Elizabeth Embry, Jeffrey G. York and Stacey Edgar examine the crucial role that entrepreneurs can play helping to achieve sustainable development. A particular strength of the chapter "Entrepreneurs as Essential but Missing Actors in the Sustainable Development Goals" is that it considers a range of different types of entrepreneurship, including "economic, social, institutional and environmental venturing." Drawing on these different forms of entrepreneurship, the authors create a framework that considers "how and when" entrepreneurs can help to address the various SDGs, which are classified according to economic, societal, health, environmental, and political goals. They also offer an exciting research agenda that offers suggestions for how researchers can deepen understanding about the role and potential of entrepreneurship in sustainable development.

Finally, Brandon H. Lee, Panikos Georgallis and Jeroen Struben focus more specifically on the role of sustainable entrepreneurs in the creation of what they term sustainable markets. In the chapter titled "Sustainable Entrepreneurship Under Market Uncertainty," they argue that sustainable entrepreneurs face a collective action problem: the uncertainty surrounding the creation of new, environmentally sustainable products and services means that collaboration across a range of entrepreneurs and other actors is required, but because the commercial viability of these products and services is unclear, such collaboration is fraught with difficulties. The authors develop a 2x2 framework based on demand and supply uncertainty to identify four distinct types of opportunities and the challenges associated with them. The chapter represents a fascinating contribution not only to our understanding of sustainable entrepreneurship, but also to research on new market creation more broadly.

Sustainability-in-Practice

"When it comes to sustainability, despite genuine interest, many [corporate leaders] still suffer from collective inertia – waiting or hoping for other companies or governments to respond; simply not knowing where to start; or not fully recognizing how much more of a difference they could make," says McKinsey Quarterly in a recent report (Bhattacharya, 2020). This section of the *Handbook* attempts to address these challenges. Our authors appreciate that the business of sustainability has gone far beyond what it traditionally encompassed – typically efforts to be greener or create more eco-friendly products – and the eight case studies and short implementation briefs listed in this section address wide-ranging issues, such as supply chain effectiveness, green finance and impact investment, and the implementation of natural resource strategies.

These chapters complement the other more conceptual chapters found in the *Handbook*, and lay out several interesting examples of how organizations and industries enact sustainability models, challenge current constraints, and consider new opportunities. The style and substance of these chapters differ markedly from existing theories of management because these authors help us define the sustainability problem from the perspective of a practicing executive or industry leader. These chapters are best read as deep dives into specific industry challenges and opportunities that may highlight ways where business and management academics could provide a lens to study and develop an evidence-based framework for action.

Commencing the discussion, Reto Gieré provides an enriched example of how cement and concrete production and use needs to change. Given their terrific properties as a robust building material and its resultant demand in infrastructure development, Gieré calls for significant changes across the cement and concrete industry, and demands partnering with other industries, agencies, governments, research institutions and the society at large. In his chapter, "Towards a More Sustainable Cement and Concrete Industry," he highlights five specific areas for enhancing the sustainability of this industry: (1) upgrading technology and plant infrastructure changes to allow for carbon capture, (2) target practices in resource consumption, substitution and circularity, (3) change processes for raw material extraction of gravel and sand to protect the environment, (4) develop new practices for reducing air pollution, and (5) develop new models of partnerships to push forward the sustainability agenda.

"Access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all" has been one of the key health targets defined in the United Nations' SDGs, and with this theme, our next two chapters are related to the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to devastate many parts of the world and has brought a long-standing issue of insufficient access to medicines, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, to the forefront once again. Tobias Bünder, Nikolas Rathert and Johanna Mair examine the emergence and evolution of access to medicines in an interesting take on how companies are facing increasing expectations to proactively address problems related to the social dimensions of the SDGs. In their chapter, "Understanding Firm- and Field-Level Change toward Sustainable Development," they trace the historical developments of corporate social initiatives in the pharmaceutical industry, and introduce three distinct analytical perspectives – field emergence and change, firm heterogeneity, organizational processes – to examine access to medicine. They expose managerial challenges and offer a research agenda that helps to advance our understanding of access to medicines and, more generally, corporate efforts to address pressing global problems subsumed under the SDGs.

In the next chapter of this section, "Can Businesses Truly Create Shared Value? A Healthcare Case Study of Value Creation and Appropriation," Prakash J. Singh and Mehrdokht (Medo) Pournader use the supply chain lens to discuss how creating shared value (CSV) studies can incorporate a more holistic view of supply chains by adopting a complex adaptive view, network view and stakeholder view of the firm. The authors use a case study of a pharmaceutical company's supply chain to examine the promises and shortcomings of CSV in addressing value creation in the supply chain, and state that more challenges arise when looking beyond the single firm to its competitive forces, stakeholder behavior, and end-to-end supply chain.

Alyssa Lovegrove considers a specific group of individuals – those with prior criminal convictions – to discuss employment-focused interventions in her chapter "Increasing Employment Pathways for Returning Citizens in Washington, DC." The challenge is not insignificant, as nearly one in three African American adult males have some form of criminal record, creating lifelong barriers to economic mobility, including significant obstacles to employment. Drawing on the learnings from Georgetown University's Pivot Program, a business and entrepreneurship-oriented re-entry program, delivered in partnership with the DC Department of Employment Services, she notes that the 'best-example' employment partners are characterized by

> strong and forceful top-down leadership who initiate the effort and then drive for culture change at all levels of their organizations; update recruiting, hiring and talent management practices, as well as incentive systems that align with those new practices; and both internal and external messaging that explains why this is a positive step for the company, for its customers, and for the community.

She concludes that rebuilding the economy post the pandemic would necessitate smart, targeted workforce development investments and intentional changes to employment practices.

Shifting focus from prior offenders to a "wicked problem" of global warming and climate change, Simon J.D. Schillebeeckx and Ryan K. Merrill narrate their experience in developing a two-year long informal collaboration between their non-profit, mission-driven start-up, the Global Mangrove Trust, and a large incumbent Asian Bank to advance nature-based solutions, specifically mangrove reforestation, in South-East Asia. In their chapter, "Conflicting Institutional Logics as a Safe Space for Collaboration," the authors observe that while the organizations' radically opposing logics created a safe space for explorative collaboration, they also made it difficult to deploy organizational resources in the partnership, eventually making it impossible for the non-contractual relationship to continue. Their findings highlight the importance of deploying personal resources to facilitate the social partnership, and they propose five activities, anchored in personal resources, that were used to advance the collaboration as potential avenues for future research in social partnerships: collective sensemaking – establishing shared understanding; befriending – trade in trust and information; showcasing – trade in reputation and networks; vouchsafing – discretionary budget allocations; and bartering – quid pro quo.

Thomas Menkhoff considers sustainability in a different context – that of smart cities, or how well a city uses digital technology to improve the efficiency of services and create sustainable, livable communities. In his chapter, "Smart Cities," he critically analyzes what makes a city "smart" and introduces its six key components – smart mobility, smart people, smart living, smart environment, smart economy, and smart governance. Menkhoff argues that the smart cities field is riddled with methodological issues such as the lack of causality-oriented, empirical research. He suggests five theories that are critical for a better understanding of smart cities – critical urban theory, theories of governance, behavioral science theories, theories of networks and ecosystems, and theories of technology adoption and business model innovation – and outlines opportunities for more theory-based, empirical research on smart cities from a purpose-driven business perspective linked to human betterment.

Continuing with the theme of digital sustainability, Vian Sharif and Andreas B. Eisingerich are concerned about vanishing wildlife species. The World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Risks Report ranks biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse as one of the top five threats humanity will face in the next decade, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the profound toll human consumption is having on nature. In their chapter "A Road to Preserving Biodiversity," the authors consider the context in which the consumer is situated from the perspective of environmental and nature conservation, and then examine the role of business and consumer marketing frameworks in understanding the consumer protagonist at the heart of effecting positive change. They then explore the potential that the nascent union of sustainability and digitization may have to achieve change at a scale, and the application of self-based consumer behavior frameworks within such design, to motivate positive environmental behaviors and encourage the development of digital sustainability tools for positive change.

Our final chapter for this section deals with one of the most hotly debated topics in the world of sustainability finance – how financial institutions should approach capital provision for carbon-intensive firms. Anastasiya Ostrovnaya, Milica Fomicov, Charles Donovan, Zoë Knight, and Jonathan Amacker deal with this question in their chapter on "Transition Finance." Many investors are seeking to position themselves as environmentally friendly, but "aspirations for transformative green finance may now be running ahead of reality." The authors aim to advance the concept of transition finance as a channel for systemic decarbonization of the global economy, and offer a new definition of transition finance, reviewing estimates of investment flows directed toward low-carbon activities, and highlighting metrics that can be adopted to ensure the system's integrity.

Measuring Outcomes and Social Impact

One of the most enduring insights in social science is that nothing gets done by organizations if it is not measured. When the outcome is social impact, the problem of developing effective measures is compounded both by the complexity of social change and by the interactions between organizations that occur as change unfolds. In this section of the *Handbook*, we present eight chapters that offer frameworks, tools, and assessment techniques for measuring an organization's social impact. These eight chapters reflect sophisticated insights on both the challenges of performance measurement and the imperative for overcoming them.

The first three chapters in the section offer frameworks for aligning organizational action with ambitious social agendas such as those expressed under the United Nations' framework of SDGs. These chapters consider that the SDGs and other public-policy targets such as the carbon-impact goals established under the Paris Climate Accord must be translated into specific agendas for which organizations are held accountable if they are to be internalized successfully. The next three chapters describe the implications of social challenges for the structure of institutions such as public–private partnerships, private–non-governmental organization partnerships, and markets. The core insight that unifies these chapters is that achievement of social impact at scale requires the joint deployment of capabilities of multiple organizations.

Coordinating this deployment is a management challenge of the first order. The last two chapters in this section suggest that the incentives that commonly work to support organizational action in private-sector settings may fail when the goal is social impact. As a group, these chapters highlight the complexity of the link between measurement and organizational action when goals are social. The processes that entrench social problems institutionally also impede the crafting of goals, the ways that organizations must be designed, the functioning of institutions, and the implementation of measurements within organizations. Each of these insightful chapters suggests avenues for future research on these critical challenges.

In the first chapter in this section, "Impact Assessment and Measurement with Sustainable Development Goals," Hao Liang, David Fernandez, and Mikkel Larsen address the challenge of operationalizing the UN's SDGs for measuring the impact of various organizational interventions by considering the critical role of rating agencies. The chapter first considers the many different ways in which rating agencies consider various elements of the SDGs, and then offers a framework to enhance comparability and consistency in the operationalization of these metrics.

Next, Kendall Park, Matthew G. Grimes, and Joel Gehman point to the opportunity for capability development within organizations for linking specific organizational outcomes with the SDGs. In the chapter titled "Becoming A Generalized Specialist," they suggest that a central implication for corporations of the SDG framework is the challenge of generalized specialization, which they define as the ability to engage deeply with the specific measurement targets of the SDGs without losing sight of the purpose and scope of the problems that the SDGs are designed to address. They invite executives to adopt this generalized specialist posture by proposing an SDG canvas map for the organization and then by tracking and evaluating progress over time. In this insightful study, the authors challenge us all to internalize the SDGs rather than to treat them as remote objectives that are only tangentially relevant to an organization.

In their chapter titled "Impact Measurement Tools and Social Value Creation," Leandro Nardi, Sergio G. Lazzarini, and Sandro Cabral focus on social value creation, and show how the routes that organizations take in measuring their social impact create tradeoffs in the way they assess accomplishments, and thus in the actions they take. The core ideas introduced by the authors are, first, that there are four categories of ways in which corporations measure social value: signaling, creating tools, assessing causality, and computing welfare gains. Each approach has pros and cons because there are tradeoffs among the cost, precision, and implementability. For example, signaling an impact purpose or orientation is inexpensive, but also may be imprecise and hard to implement across projects. In contrast, monitoring welfare gains may facilitate comparisons of impact across project interventions, but also may be costly. These insights lead to important opportunities for future research on breaking the tradeoffs and innovating in types of metrics. The findings suggest how companies devoted to social impact can break new ground by overcoming tradeoffs in measurement and by innovating in the ways in which they measure impact.

In the chapter "Creating and Distributing Sustainable Value through Public–Private Collaborative Projects," Jens K. Roehrich and Ilze Kivleniece bring a fresh new lens to our understanding of how large projects that require collaboration between organizations in the public and private sector face tensions in the generation of sustainable value for communities. The analysis in this chapter explores the facets and elements of sustainable value creation, which the authors categorize into four types: totality, intertemporality, fairness, and inclusiveness. These are then linked to the tensions that arise between organizations engaged in working together to create this value. The tensions are those of cooperation, coordination, and cooptation. The authors describe a rich research agenda on how large project-based organizations overcome the managerial challenges to enact sustainable value that outlasts the specific projects in which they engage. The result is an inspiring agenda that can guide research on organizational governance, collaboration, and competition in pursuit of solutions to large public problems.

Aline Gatignon's chapter, titled "Scaling Up Collaboration for Social Impact," considers the critical role of partnerships between for-profit corporations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the under-studied and under-valued role of NGOs in enabling corporations to act in the public interest. Her contribution is premised on the need for scaling up collaboration for social impact with a specific focus on the governance and design of corporate–non-profit partnerships. This insightful chapter suggests that most research in the field on collaboration to address grand challenges focuses primarily on large corporations working in collaboration with governments. Gatignon argues that an important gap exists in our understanding of how organizations – especially large corporations – work most effectively in these contexts. That gap arises from a lack of consideration of collaborations between corporations and non-profit organizations that are private rather than public. The author offers a framework for understanding corporate–non-profit partnerships that researchers can use to analyze how corporations effectively scale up to achieve social impact.

In "Addressing the Market Failures of Environmental Health Products," Diana Jue-Rajasingh and Jordan Siegel provide compelling evidence of market failure in the implementation of easy-to-adopt products and services in resource-limited settings. They observe that environmental pollution which adversely affects health is especially concentrated in low- and middle-income settings where vulnerable populations are affected intensively. The goal of the chapter is to examine how markets fail in appropriately valuing technologically enabled products and services designed to mitigate the health effects of these pollutants. Examples include smoke-reducing cookstoves and water-purification devices. The authors demonstrate that these types of products, which typically are inexpensive to manufacture and distribute, are systematically under-valued for a range of reasons, including psychological, behavioral, and sociological factors. By surveying research on consumer uptake in the various stages through which potential users encounter the products, the authors show exactly how markets fail as institutions.

Michelle P. Lee's chapter titled "When Money Fails to Talk," tackles the boundary conditions of monetary incentives to shape sustainable consumer behavior, and shows that the use of incentives to align private behavior with social impact can have the perverse effect of reducing the incidence of the desired behaviour. The chapter describes three types of unintended consequences that can arise when people are paid to engage in sustainable behavior, such as recycling and engaging in clean-up activities: prompting a transactional frame of mind, which crowds out other motivations, such as a concern for the environment; priming mental constructs that run counter to sustainable behavior; and signaling to self and others that money is the motivation for the sustainable behaviour. sustainable behavior. The author then addresses the consequences of these problems for designing interventions. Incentives make the most sense in the evocation of one-time rather than repeated behavior, for example. The consequences of the analysis for future research emphasize the integration of psychological and behavioral insights at a much broader level than incentive design.

Lastly in this section, Arkangel M. Cordero and Wesley D. Sine, in their chapter titled "Compliance and Ambition as Distinct Dimensions of Implementation," show that political and other social and institutional processes can impede the implementation of previously announced and agreed-upon social goals in public-sector organizations – and specifically in regulatory bodies charged with responsibility for assuring that electric utilities in the United States rely on renewables. The authors consider the phenomenon of decoupling, which they define as the practice by organizations of announcing practices that are never fully implemented. The chapter offers a framework for understanding decoupling that relies on three central dimensions of the emergence of renewable portfolio standards: compliance, absolute ambition, and relative ambition. These dimensions are analyzed using data describing the implementation of the requirement in U.S. states whose electric utilities source some portion of power through renewable sources. The results demonstrate that the field's historic emphasis on compliance with announced standards is incomplete. What is needed is a more nuanced understanding of how the absolute and relative ambition of the public policies interacts with corporate behavior to produce compliance. This engaging chapter illustrates these points with detailed data that demonstrates how a focus on compliance alone can lead to misleading conclusions about corporate environmentalism.

INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE

The constituent chapters of this *Handbook* make many important contributions to our understanding of how business can contribute to the SDGs in meaningful ways. In setting the overall direction for the *Handbook* and in guiding the authors, we were mindful of the need to integrate theoretical ideas from research on business and management with their practical application to a range of real-world settings and problems. At the same time, we are acutely aware that research on this vitally important topic remains emergent. We see the *Handbook* as a starting point rather than a final destination in our understanding of sustainable business. In this section, we offer some directions for research that we hope will serve as a guide to researchers moving forward.

The Organization of Business for Sustainability

A first area where there is much potential for future research concerns the organizational challenges and opportunities of sustainable business. While an increasing proportion of businesses are seeking to become "purpose driven," the organizational implications of doing so remain unclear (George et al., 2021; Hollensbe et al., 2014). The demands of moving from a business model that is driven mainly by the "bottom-line" to one that is focused on a broader set of goals and stakeholders should not be underestimated. Significant changes in organizational structure and culture, alongside business model design, are likely to be needed if such a transition is to be effective, and there may be significant resistance along the way (Lozano, 2013).

The type of leadership required to create these organizational changes is also uncertain. Many researchers and business leaders seem sure that some kind of transformational leadership is required. For example, Çop, Olorunsola and Alola (2021) argued that "the race to gain competitive advantage through the formulation of a sustainable business strategy" (p. 671) requires leaders who inspire their followers through their mix of energy and passion to drive change forward. However, others have noted the impetus for more sustainable business models often “arise out of bottom-up self-organization processes that can be nurtured and supported, but not controlled” (Porter & Derry, 2012, p. 47), suggesting a more inclusive approach may be more effective in some cases. Research on sustainability leadership and organizational change, drawing on but not necessarily constrained by existing theories, is needed to help deepen our understanding of this crucial issue (George & Schillebeeckx, 2018).

In additional to internal changes, stakeholder engagement and coordination present key organizational challenges for firms seeking to embed purpose into core strategy. Indeed, at the heart of sustainable business is the idea that firms have a range of stakeholders whose interests they need to take account of and carefully balance. In a recent comparison of the assumptions underpinning stakeholder theory with those of mainstream strategic management, Freeman, Phillips and Sisodia (2020) argued that many of the presumed tensions between the two perspectives have been exaggerated. Instead, they emphasized areas of overlap and suggested that, where tensions do exist, they provide “interesting ways to put the two areas of scholarship and practice together” (p. 213). Nonetheless, despite important progress, there remains uncertainty, and indeed some confusion, about some of the core tenets of stakeholder theory – such as how firms identify and adjudicate between competing stakeholder interests, the role of stakeholders in firm decision making, and the governance structures required to ensure stakeholder accountability (Wood et al., 2021).

Finally, there is growing interest in what sustainable business models look like (Bocken et al., 2014), and how firms will need new ways to conceptualize and enact new business models (Shepherd, Seyb & George, 2021). Much of the work to date has focused on new ventures addressing social issues and the role of digital technology in business model design. For example, George, Merrill and Schillebeeckx (2021) identify six key challenges facing mission-driven new ventures: problems of uncertainty about how markets, and indeed social problems, will evolve; problems of how to quantify – and therefore price – the creation and destruction of social value; problems of how to communicate value propositions to customers who may or may not care about social issues; problems of coordination and trust, especially given the complex nature of contemporary supply chains and the difficulties of monitoring them; problems of access and reach, particularly with respect to low-income consumers in marginalized communities; and problems of institutions, often linked to government corruption or an inability to regulate effectively. Interestingly, these issues are often downplayed in the literature on sustainable strategy and business model design in established firms, where debates about “shared value” often assume “win–win” outcomes without acknowledging tensions, tradeoffs or constraints (Crane et al., 2014; Kaplan, 2019). Business model design for sustainability is likely to be a core area for research moving forward, and we encourage researchers to think about how their work can contribute to this critically important topic.

Institutions and Sustainable Business

Like so much of management research, academic work on sustainable business often assumes a Western context and a Western set of interests. Even where other contexts are studied, the perspective taken is often that of the North American or European firm. There is an urgent need for more work on how the institutional contexts in which firms operate influence sustainable business practices and strategies. Formal institutions – such as those relating to regulation and standard setting, competition, and the governance of common pool resources – provide the context in which businesses must achieve their sustainability goals. Governments are the architects of this institutional landscape. A key debate is whether government should seek to regulate firms through carrots, sticks, or some combination of the two. Many business leaders have called for a voluntary set of regulations – "soft measures" that encourage socially responsible practices rather than new laws that require "fundamental changes in production and consumption" (Scheyvens, Banks & Hughes, 2016, p. 377). For others, however, history attests to the need for legally binding rules that oblige firms to adhere to particular standards, and to face meaningful sanctions should they fail to comply. These are important issues, and researchers could usefully examine the types of regulatory frameworks that produce the optimal mix of incentives to align firm behavior with the SDGs.

A critical question is whether national governments have an appetite to create such frameworks, particularly in a post-COVID world in which the focus is on immediate pressures to catalyze recovery, tackle unemployment, and get deficits under control. Governments are also reluctant to over-regulate in case they put firms in their jurisdiction at a competitive disadvantage, and in any case many of the most intractable social issues are beyond the scope of any single nation state. As a consequence, attention has increasingly turned to the role of supranational forms of governance and regulation. An interesting line of work in public policy has explored how political institutions have changed in response to environmental, health, and other major social issues. For example, Hale and Roger (2014) theorize the notion of "orchestration" whereby international organizations, often working with national governments, businesses and civil society organizations, seek to structure and refine regulation across national borders. They identify twenty-three such "orchestrated transnational governance schemes," noting that many of them have been surprisingly effective. For example, they draw attention to an initiative led by the World Bank to minimize gas flaring in oil and gas production, which led to a significant reduction in the practice. Other scholars have noted how a range of voluntary standards, such as those relating to carbon reporting, "are changing the global system of rules and norms from traditional state-based modes of governance to a more heterogeneous and polycentric structure" (Hickmann et al., 2021, p. 25), and that these changes are underpinned by a surprising degree of collaboration between a range of organizations at the local, national and supranational levels.

Broadly, the institutional change required for many of the most intractable social problems requires collaboration across sectors, with no one type of actor – be it government, or companies, or civil society – able to address them alone. There is now a significant body of research on cross-sector partnerships, often focused on systemic change. This work spans a range of disciplines from management, to political science, to geography, to development, but it is seldom actually inter-disciplinary. For example, in development studies scholars have argued that cross-sector partnerships essentially serve the interests of business (Vestergaard et al., 2021, p. 1), while management scholars often implicitly or explicitly assume businesses in the lead role (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). This fragmentation and disciplinary bias led Clarke and Crane (2018) to note that we are "a long way from developing an integrated theory of cross-sector partnerships" (p. 311). We echo their call for more research that is genuinely inter-disciplinary, and which seeks to develop common conceptualizations of key ideas and processes. There is also an interesting opportunity to link research on cross-sector collaboration with the work outlined above on transnational governance.

The Implementation of Sustainable Business

Businesses' ability to contribute to the SDGs will require them innovate new products and services that are both financially sustainable and socially beneficial. In this regard, the role of entrepreneurship is crucial. A growing body of research has examined how purpose-driven new ventures construct and exploit opportunities to address a range of social issues. This includes research on social entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin & Tracey, 2011) and sustainable entrepreneurship (Cohen & Winn, 2007). While this work has made important steps forward, we still know relatively little about how such ventures, as well as established businesses, create and capture value, and how they balance the two. The relationship between value creation and capture is of course much debated in strategy research. In the context of social entrepreneurship, Santos (2012) sees value creation as a process that generates value for society, while value capture happens when part of that value is appropriated for the venture or firm. A distinguishing feature of ventures with a social purpose, he argues, is their relative emphasis on value creation. But the focus on creation over capture raises questions about how such ventures can address problems at scale and with the reach to make meaningful progress toward the SDGs.

In the context of for-profit firms, where even enlightened shareholders will expect businesses to appropriate returns for their owners, the situation becomes more complex still. The challenge of fusing value creation and value capture to address social issues can be viewed as one of business model design. What types of business models will allow appropriate balance between the two processes such that both the organization and the context in which it operates thrive? Research on business models shows that "novelty-centered" designs drive financial performance (Zott & Amit, 2007). But does it also drive social performance? And how does novelty affect the relationship between social and financial performance? These are important questions that business model researchers are only beginning to grapple with.

It is important to emphasize that these implementation issues may vary across country contexts. In the previous section we noted the Western focus of much research on sustainable business. Going forward, it is crucial that researchers consider business model design, and the relationship between value creation and value capture, in ways that take account of the distinct contextual dynamics in which entrepreneurs and firms are operating (George et al., 2016). This means more than Western scholars studying non-Western contexts; it also involves supporting and welcoming a new generation of scholars from around the world who can bring to bear their deep cultural knowledge of their context, how social problems manifest, and the strengths of weaknesses of different organizational approaches for addressing them.

The Impact and Outcomes of Sustainable Business

One of the most contentious areas of the sustainable business landscape concerns impact measurement and assessment. The search for universal measures that investors, regulators, customers, and other stakeholders can use to evaluate social performance has progressed surprisingly little over the past two decades. Indeed, long-standing calls for consistency have gone unheeded, with ever more methodologies and tools being used around the world. Part of the challenge is that the same social issue often manifests very differently in different places. Impact measurement can also place a significant burden on entrepreneurs and firms. Indeed, some argue that there is a fundamental paradox inherent in impact measurement: the more that organizations invest in measuring the social consequences of their work, the less resources they have available to actually create impact (Molecke & Pinkse, 2017).

As impact investing has become mainstream, a new set of ESG reporting measures have emerged that are used by investors and ratings agencies around the world. However, these measures are often superficial, and do not adequately take into account the complexity or context-dependent nature of firms' activities (Boiral, Talbot & Brotherton, 2020). These measures are also vulnerable to gaming and manipulation, and questions have been raised about whether they help or actually undermine firms' sustainability performance (Clementino & Perkins, 2020). The upshot is that we need to know much more not only about the effectiveness of different methodologies for measuring social performance, but also their effects on firm behavior. This line of inquiry is particularly important in the context of calls for global assessments and pathways to SDG realization.

In addition to impact measurement, the scaling of firms' responses to social and environmental challenges has been a significant focus of attention. An important distinction has been made between scaling up (i.e., the growth of a particular organization); scaling out (i.e., the replication of an organization's activities in other contexts); and scaling deep (i.e., broader policy and institutional changes required to scale impact at a systems level) (Riddell & Moore, 2015). There is a growing literature on these different forms of scaling, but much of it focuses on non-profits and (to a lesser extent) social enterprises and its effects on social inclusion, reach and access (George et al., 2019). We know much less about scaling social impact in the context of established firms, and we also know very little about the relationship between these different approaches to scaling. Ultimately, the ability of businesses to support progress toward the SDGs will require not only that more firms engage in sustainable business, but that they do so at scale. This is therefore a crucial area of research for management scholars.

CONCLUSION

Scientific briefs on climate change or multilateral agency reports on poverty, inequality or the environment implore us to act now and to act decisively. Humanity and human development is at a pivotal point, and private-sector business cannot be a bystander in an economic model based on capitalism. Over the recent decades, businesses have embraced sustainability while also recognizing that there is much more to do to generate impact. With 30 chapters from 72 contributors, the *Handbook* highlights the plurality of perspectives and research questions on the all-important topic of sustainable business. This chapter summarizes their core contributions and integrates these powerful ideas into an organizing framework. We identify key questions for future research on organizing for sustainability, implementing sustainable development, and outcomes for social impact. This *Handbook* encourages business and management scholars to engage and guide businesses with the tools such as frameworks, concepts and empirical evidence needed to help them transition to a more sustainable future.

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