
Editorial: Business model innovation from an entrepreneurial perspective

Patrick Spieth*

Department of Innovation Management & Entrepreneurship,
EBS Business School,
EBS Universität für Wirtschaft und Recht,
Rheingastr. 1, 65375 Oestrich-Winkel, Germany
and
Faculty of Business Studies,
University of Kassel,
Nora-Platiel-Str. 4, 34109 Kassel, Germany
E-mail: patrick.spieth@ebs.edu
E-mail: spieth@uni-kassel.de
*Corresponding author

Hans Lundberg

Linnaeus School of Business and Economics,
Linnaeus University, Campus Växjö,
SE-351 95 Växjö, Sweden
E-mail: hans.lundberg@lnu.se

Kurt Matzler

Department of Strategic Management, Marketing and Tourism,
Innsbruck University School of Management,
Universitätsstrasse 15, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria
E-mail: Kurt.Matzler@uibk.ac.at

Biographical notes: From 2013, Patrick Spieth is affiliated with University of Kassel. He is an Interim Full Professor for Innovation and Technology Management at the Faculty of Business Studies. Since 2010, he is an Assistant Professor for Innovation Management at EBS Business School. He had visiting positions at Arizona State University, Department of Management, as well as at Copenhagen Business School, Department of Innovation and Organizational Economics. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Kassel/Germany. His current research interests focus primarily on business model innovation, innovativeness and innovation success, innovation project portfolio management, and innovation networks.

Hans Lundberg is Senior Lecturer and Postdoc Researcher at Linnaeus University, Sweden. Before returning to Sweden in 2011, he was working as a Profesor Investigador at EGADE Business School, Mexico. He is Founding Chair of the EURAM Entrepreneurship SIG and a board member of the European Academy of Management. He received his PhD from Växjö

University in Sweden on the market formation of creative industries in Sweden. His research interest focuses on nascent entrepreneurship in liminal practices constituted of hybrid logics or increasingly under influence thereof.

Kurt Matzler is a Professor of Strategic Management at Innsbruck University School of Management. Before joining the faculty of Innsbruck University, he was a Professor of Marketing at the University of Klagenfurt, Austria (2003–2005). He is an Academic Director of the Executive MBA-program at the Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) and teaches at several MBA-Programs. His primary research and teaching interests are in the area of innovativeness, market orientation, strategy and leadership.

1 Introduction

Research on business model innovation (BMI) is in its infancy and the cradle is mainly located in the fields of strategy and innovation (Zott et al., 2011). BMI can be defined as the “discovery of a fundamentally different business model in an existing business” [Markides, (2006), p.20] or as “the search for new business logics of the firm and new ways to create and capture value for its stakeholders” [Casadesus-Masanell and Zhu, (2013), p.464]. Despite the various attempts to classify the growing literature on BMI (for a review see for example, Spieth et al., 2014), the phenomenon is still fuzzy. Business model design is important for entrepreneurs (Zott and Amit, 2010) and as a field of study it is new and attractive to entrepreneurship research (Trimi and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2012). Business models provide means to describe and classify businesses, to operate as sites for scientific investigation and to act as recipes for creative managers (Baden-Fuller and Morgan, 2010). A better understanding of business models should help entrepreneurs make more informed and thus better decisions and increase the probability of success (Trimi and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2012).

Unfortunately though, the field of entrepreneurship is not very active so far when it comes to BMI research, at most as a minor play area for the infant when crawling out of the cradle and playing around somewhat. A few examples: a recent survey on ‘what is hot in entrepreneurship research 2013’ is categorising the answers into 14 categories; BMI is not explicitly mentioned in neither of the 14 main categories nor as an explicit sub-category in either of these (Kuckertz, 2013). A pioneering effort, although focusing on business models (not BMI) vis-à-vis entrepreneurship research and on manager perception rather than researchers preferred areas of research (like Kuckertz does), George and Bock (2011, p.83) perform a “discourse analysis of 151 surveys of practicing managers to better understand their conceptualization of a business model”. Given this (at large) absence, what does the ‘entrepreneurial perspective’ in our headline actually mean? And what eventual relevance may an entrepreneurial perspective have for BMI research, given the location of its cradle?

2 Entrepreneurship as process philosophy and its relevance for BMI

Starting with the former question, we refer with an ‘entrepreneurial perspective’ on BMI here to Spinozian inspired forms of organisational creativity based on process philosophy focusing on *heterogeneity* [Hjorth and Holt, (2014), pp.91–92], which operationalised into a more straightforward vocabulary may be defined as follows:

“Entrepreneurship is a working attitude, a mode of thinking, a concrete everyday practice and increasingly an identity marker for ways of being and living within liquid modernity. Entrepreneurship is nowadays a broadly endorsed and accepted signifier for forms of organizing that targets human, organizational and economic renewal and growth. While empirical evidence for these politically and individually appealing ends are to be found, the contingency and contextuality of the myriad of entrepreneurial forms of organizing may humble us in face of the apparently Zen Buddhist quality of entrepreneurship; the more determined the efforts to pinpoint, box and fence it gets, the more elusively it retreats back to various in-between voids. Such a quality is unbearable for conceptual monopolists and impractical for those in positions where efficiency and effectiveness are agenda setting norms, why the discourse on entrepreneurship is a constant prey for various unidirectional advocates.” (Lundberg et al., 2011)

This quote brings us to the second question in the introduction, the relevance of such entrepreneurial perspective for BMI research. We argue that BMI is a multidimensional process of the kind described in the quote above; a multi-layered process of ongoing organising and re-organising that is targeting human, organisational and economic renewal and growth. So defined, BMI is to be seen as a *fundamental change construct*, as it calls into questioning of and changing of some of the core fundamentals upon which organisations live their lives, externalise their values and make their profits from. The BMI construct so perceived then is a construct that still yet is not adequately researched on such levels of processual complexity. Therefore, a need for new playmates is required. This special issue emanates out of an initiative in line with this need; on the initiative of Patrick Spieth, new playmates were invited and new playgrounds were created through the research exchange between three EURAM SIGs (innovation, strategy, and entrepreneurship) on creating a special track on BMI at EURAM 2013 and 2014 alike.

3 The ‘entrepreneurial perspective’ in the articles in this special issue

The articles making it to this special issue bears the mark of a core logic of process-based entrepreneurial perspectives; the performative quality of practicing entrepreneurial scholarship (‘process is how process does’; Helin et al., 2014), rather than writing something about whatever in a non-entrepreneurial way but locating it within entrepreneurship research. The latter, we have too much of already as the publish-and-perish curse continue to roam the academic landscapes, while the need of the former accordingly is huge. None of the contributions in this special issue positions itself within entrepreneurship research but all of them are examples of fine academic entrepreneurship, providing entrepreneurial perspectives on BMI. How so?

The article, ‘Service-dominant logic and the business model concept: toward a conceptual integration’ by Thomas Clauß, Sven M. Laudien and Birgit Daxböck, by focusing on ‘how to adapt the business model to a service-dominant business logic’, a

distinctly entrepreneurial contribution to a BMI field dominated by business logics other than service management and service innovation.

The article, ‘Incumbents’ responses to disruptive business model innovation: the moderating role of technology vs. market-driven innovation’ by Solomon Russom Habtay and Magnus Holmén, by highlighting and empirically showing the importance ‘for the incumbent to be entrepreneurially oriented’.

The article, ‘Business model innovation in the retail industry: growth by serving the silver generation’ by Veit Gregor Lange and Vivek K. Velamuri, by focusing on a highly under-researched empirical cohort, the senior citizens, or the ‘silver generation’ as they elegantly conceptualise this increasingly important segment for retail industries.

The article, ‘A six-step approach to business model innovation’ by Markus Eurich, Tobias Weiblen and Pablo Breitenmoser, by advocating the processual complexity we asked for above when arguing for a “holistic and systemic approach [that] comprises features of established techniques and explicates assumptions about the organization’s specific business situation”.

The article, ‘Dynamic capabilities as drivers of business model innovation – from the perspective of SMEs in mature industries’ by Ingrid Roaldsen, by investigating how and which dynamic capabilities lead to BMI. Methodologically, Roaldsen also contributes extensively to the BMI field with her empirically very rich longitudinal, in-depth case studies of the value chains of SMEs within the food industry.

We hope that the fine entrepreneurial scholarship in these articles, positioned in strategy and innovation, will continue to inspire researchers from these fields but also make visible for entrepreneurship scholars that BMI research is a field waiting for their entree ‘for real’. Soon the infant is out of its cradle, growing to a teenager, and do not we know too well about the difficulties inherent in that stage; better then, is to be around earlier on, and contribute to its early years of development.

References

- Baden-Fuller, C. and Morgan, M.S. (2010) ‘Business models as models’, *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 43, Nos. 2/3, pp.156–171.
- Casadesus-Masanell, R. and Zhu, F. (2013) ‘Business model innovation and competitive imitation: the case of sponsor-based business models’, *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp.464–482.
- George, G. and Bock, A.J. (2011) ‘The business model in practice and its implications for entrepreneurship research’, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, January, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp.83–111.
- Helin, J., Hernes, T., Hjorth, D. and Holt, R. (Eds.) (2014) *The Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.
- Hjorth, D. and Holt, R. (2014) ‘Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677)’, in Helin, J., Hernes, T., Hjorth, D. and Holt, R. (Eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.
- Kuckertz, A. (2013) *What’s Hot in Entrepreneurship Research in 2013? The 1st of a Series of Annual Trend Surveys*, Universität Hohenheim, Hohenheim, Germany.
- Lundberg, H., Champenois, C., Gnan, L., Fayolle, A. and Songini, L. (2011) *The Formation of a EURAM Entrepreneurship SIG*, Report to the EURAM Executive Committee Meeting September 27, 2011, European Academy of Management, Brussels, Belgium.
- Markides, C. (2006) ‘Disruptive innovation: in the need for a better theory’, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp.19–25.

- Spieth, P., Schneckenberg, D. and Ricart, J.E. (2014) 'Business model innovation – state of the art and future challenges for the field', *R&D Management*, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp.237–247.
- Trimi, S. and Berbegal-Mirabent, J. (2012) 'Business model innovation in entrepreneurship', *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp.449–465.
- Zott, C. and Amit, R. (2010) 'Business model design: an activity system perspective', *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 43, Nos. 2/3, pp.216–226.
- Zott, C., Amit, R. and Massa, L. (2011) 'The business model: recent developments and future research', *Journal of Management*, July, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp.1019–1042.