Are you serious? The importance, nature and gaps of managing Sustainable Supply Chains

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Although research on sustainable supply chain management has made many valuable contributions, in practice businesses still tend to follow the profit maximization paradigm. Also, there is a dearth of empirical evidence and theoretical reflection on how supply chains incorporate sustainability in developing and emerging economies. Drawing from established management theories (e.g., institutional theory, evolutionary theory, complexity theory, learning/innovation, RBV) and practice, the aim of this talk is to discuss these two gaps by exploring alternative ways of thinking and how supply chain sustainability can be implemented and managed in different settings. This talk stresses that becoming a sustainable supply chain is not a destination, but a journey, where trajectory and time matter. Given the evolutionary nature of supply chain sustainability trajectories, this talk highlights that supply chains learn and evolve just as organizations do. Also, it is argued that supply chains face additional barriers to sustainability in developing and emerging economies due to the existence of highly turbulent business environments and institutional voids, and this contributes to a higher degree of complexity and uncertainty. The talk finalizes with implications for theory and practice of sustainable supply chain management as well as several avenues for further research on the topic.