Title: Ethics of Business Cases with Sustainability
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Abstract
This paper explores the links between ethics of CSR and the notion of creating a business case with regard to sustainability. The manufacture of CSR and corporate sustainability can be based on different ethical grounds. This paper draws on the framework of Roberts (2003) which distinguishes four different ethics of CSR, the encrusted selfhood, the narcissistic, the responsible and the one based on dialogue with the vulnerable. Management activities based on different ethics of CSR result in different operational CSR activities and thus have different effects on how the economic performance of the company is influenced. Assuming that corporate managers are concerned about creating business cases for their companies this paper raises the question how the different ethics of “manufacturing” CSR and corporate sustainability may relate to the attempt of creating business cases. The paper concludes by distinguishing four different kinds of business cases with regard to sustainability: reactionary and reputational business cases of sustainability, and responsibly managed and discursively developed business cases for sustainability.