CALL FOR PAPERS

“The Neuroscience of Business Ethics”

Neuroscientific advances and their implications for the study and practice of ethics in organizations

The Journal of Business Ethics Special Issue

Submissions due October 1, 2014

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Purpose of the Special Issue:
In recent years the blending of theories and methods from neuroscience with management and organizations has seen a surge of interest. The improvement of new methods of neural imaging techniques has given us a much more reliable picture of how our brain works and we are starting to understand the biological underpinnings of human behavior and cognition. The impact of scientific and technological developments in neuroscience has inspired a new trend of “brain research” (see e.g., Becker et al., 2011; Senior et al., 2011; Stanton et al., 2010). An interdisciplinary approach that combines knowledge of social sciences and neuroscience enables us to look at different levels of analysis from an integrative point of view. It links questions related to the social (motivational and social factors relevant for behaviour and experience), cognitive (information-processing mechanisms), and neural level (brain mechanisms), using traditional neuroscience methods, neuroimaging and neuropsychology (Lieberman, 2007; Ochsner and Lieberman, 2001).

With regard to business ethics, neuroscience research can inform our theoretical thinking on ethical or moral decision making (see e.g., Amit and Greene, 2012; Reynolds, 2006; Robertson et al., 2007; Salvador and Folger, 2009), on issues of fairness, trust or altruism (see e.g., Kosfeld et al., 2005; Morishima et al., 2012), on self-reflection, self-awareness and intuition, but also on how we perceive and interact with others (theory of mind, mirror neurons, empathy, etc.) (see e.g. Bagozzi et al., 2013; Singer and Fehr, 2005). Other research areas relate to the ethical implications in different economic, business and management sub-disciplines like accounting, marketing, and specifically leadership and organizational behaviour (see e.g., Glimcher et al., 2009; Hubert and Kenning, 2008; Lee et al., 2007; Waldman et al., 2011a; Waldman et al., 2011b). This call for papers addresses a need for research that first, synthesizes and systematizes knowledge and insights from neuroscience to inform theories in business ethics, and second, uses neuroscience methods to empirically investigate ethical questions. Finally, we also encourage a critical view on the trend of doing research with the brain (Illes and Bird, 2006; Lindebaum, 2013). That is, we seek to encourage research that looks at the technological limitations and ethical implications of applied neuroscience research and its methods in business. The lack of research connecting neuroscience and business ethics is prevalent and further contributions in this area are both timely and needed. The Journal of Business Ethics as one of the leading journal in the field can provide an ideal platform for this kind of
research. With the special issue we want to start the dialogue within this journal as well as contribute to the overall discussion on neuroscience and (business) ethics. We invite contributions that deal with ethical issues in combination with neuroscience research and methods in all fields of management, business administration and economics and their sub-disciplines. Empirical as well as conceptual manuscripts are welcome. Interesting fields of study include for instance, neuroscience in combination with individual ethical decision making, fairness and trust; the neuroscience of responsible or ethical leadership, team engagement and collective ethical decision making. Moreover, topics like ethics and neuroeconomics, the affective and empathic links between individuals; or a review of the neurological possibilities for influencing consumer behavior or advances in neuro-feedback are timely topics. We expect this special issue to lead to significant cross-fertilization across fields and, therefore, to particularly high impact for the papers.

Possible research questions may include, but are not limited to:

- Which brain areas relate to processes associated with being a moral person or a moral manager?
- What is happening in the brain when we think about ourselves as moral individuals, make ethical decisions, or try to influence others to behave ethically?
- What is the role of self-reflection and self-regulation in ethical behaviour from a neuroscientific point of view?
- Is ethical behaviour contagious? What role do mirror neurons, theory of mind or empathy play in ethical decision-making?
- What can we learn from neuroscience research for learning and development with regard to business ethics?
- What can we learn from neuroscience research about the relationship between emotion, intuition and reason in ethical theories and ethical behaviour?
- How can neuroscience findings relating to trust, altruism and fairness inform business ethics theories?
- What is the role of sub-conscious and sequential processes (the temporal order in which information is transformed into declarative and procedural memory) in ethical behavior?
- How can state-of-the art application of neuroscience methods or implicit measures be applied for solving questions in business ethics?
- What can we learn from neuroscience research with regard to the specific ethical problems related to the different disciplines of management and economics, such as accounting, marketing, or human resource management?
- How can recent developments in the area of (wireless) qEEG in applied settings be used to inform research questions in business ethics? What can we learn from neurological assessment of teams in real life work settings? How valid and reliable are the results from such collective data gathering?
- What can we learn from neuroscience research for ethical and responsible leadership behavior?
- How can neuroscientific evidence advance our understanding of managerial and leadership decision-making, for instance when it comes to risk taking and moral behavior?
- Will neuroscientific evidence help us to distinguish “good” leaders from “bad” leaders? If yes, could bad leadership be “treated”? Can narcissism be healed? What are the dangers of such a view on leadership and the possibilities of neuroscience?
- What are the ethical limitations of neuro-feedback? What are the limits of neurological markers?
What are specific ethical considerations in the area of neuromarketing? (e.g., what are the ethical implications of targeting the hormone oxytocin to influence customers' dispositions to buy?)

What are the ethical implications of the use of information gathered through neuroscientific assessment for the purpose of selection and development of human beings (will neuroscientific methods become an integral part of employee or executive selection and assessment)?

How reliable and valid are neuroscience research methods and their findings?

Submission to the special issue is required through Editorial Manager at http://www.editorialmanager.com/busi/ Please follow the JBE guidelines: http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/applied+ethics/journal/10551 for manuscript presentation.

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References


