Call for Papers: Special Issue — Journal of Business Ethics
VIRTUE ETHICS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

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Deadlines
Submission of full papers by 31st July 2017

Background

Character and virtue have been recently reinvigorated in philosophy (Annas, 2011; Slote, 2015), psychology (Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Haidt, 2006) and organizational scholarship (Cameron and Spreitzer, 2011). Business ethicists now appreciate that ethics is primarily about the person, his or her character, and the virtues and vices that are part of it and only secondarily about the acts that character causes (Alzola, 2015). Solomon (1992) began to argue for virtue as a way into business in the early nineties. Today, it is the most popular normative theory in terms of the number of articles published in Business Ethics Quarterly (Alzola, 2017).

Still, most publications about virtue in business are part of a Western variety of virtue, namely, the Aristotelian tradition. Only a few scholars have bridged the alleged gap between disparate cultures of the East and West. Only a few philosophical writings focus on the ethics of virtue these cultures share. Recent panels in business ethics conferences have explored the way Western versions of virtue ethics may resemble that of Eastern thinkers (Koehn, 2013).

Business ethicists as well as management scholars and businesspeople have all good reasons to consider where these traditions converge and diverge not only for the sake of mutual understanding but also as a way to enrich business theorizing and as a tool for character building and virtue development in different cultures.

Western companies have developed alliances and joint ventures in the East, and a growing number of their employees and customers hail from that cultural tradition. Likewise, Eastern firms are increasingly engaging with Western partners, workers, and customers educated in Western traditions of virtue. Globalization has brought into business relations people of different cultures. Building up the necessary trust between them entails the need for a robust understanding of their differences and their commonalities.

Despite a recent interest in Western scholarship for the role of Confucianism in economic development (Hofstede & Bond 1988), corporate management and governance (Low & Ang 2013), consumer behavior (Ackerman, Hu & Wei 2009), and corporate social responsibility (Wang & Juslin 2009), and the unique contributions of Confucian thought to the field of business ethics (e.g., Romar 2002; Lam 2003; Woods and Lamond 2011), mainstream Western ethics literature has addressed it only cursorily. Other Eastern traditions such as Buddhism and Daoism are only addressed by a few Eastern and Western scholars like Du (2013), Gerstner (2011), Koewn (2007), Li (2012), Lin et al (2013), and Xing and Sims (2011) amongst others.
One reason for this neglect is the idea that there is not a universal ethics of virtue. Rather, some Western scholars tend to believe that Eastern ideals are at odds—or even contrary—to Western ethics and vice versa. Besides the different origins and trajectories, these traditions may share important similarities and common elements that can ultimately be traced back to the natural basis of virtue (Foot, 2002; Hartman, 2013). The exercise of comparing different virtue traditions may help Western scholars better contextualize their arguments in Eastern cultures as well as contribute to the development of an Eastern approach to business ethics.

While there is some comparative work in moral philosophy, business ethicists have done little to foster mutual understanding and appreciation of the work on Eastern virtue. The aim of this issue is to fill this gap by bringing together work in the Eastern and Western traditions of virtue in business and engage them with questions about the nature, justification, and content of the virtues in each tradition.

**Purpose and prospective themes of the special issue**

The aim of this issue is to bring together works in the Eastern and Western traditions of virtue in business and engage them with questions about the nature, justification, and content of the virtues in each tradition. We especially welcome papers that reflect on possible connections and interactions between philosophy, psychology, management, sociology, political theory, and legal theory around these issues.

Research questions and themes explored by potential contributions to this Special issue include, but are not limited to, the following aspects:

1. Are categories in Western virtue ethics, as applied to business organizations, meaningful in an Eastern business context? Are categories in Eastern virtue, as applied to business organizations, meaningful in a Western business context?
2. Would both traditions demand the same catalogs or lists of virtues?
3. To what extent is the fully virtuous person an ethical model for managers and business leaders in both traditions?
4. To what extent does the Eastern tradition (vis-à-vis the Western tradition) introduce a separation of freedom from responsibility, right from obligation, and duty from power?
5. What basic differences and similarities exist between these two traditions with regard to the concepts of responsibility, right, and duty?
6. How should selection and training of Western (Eastern) managers be carried out if they are to work in organizations in an Eastern (Western) culture?
7. What is the role of emotions and the appropriateness of displaying appropriate emotions in business relationships and social networks?
8. What is the role of social class and wealth on one’s potential to develop virtue in Eastern and Western virtue?
9. To what extent do firms in both traditions foster similar or different values and ethical practices?
Types of submissions

This special issue seeks to expand our knowledge of the similarities and differences of Western and Eastern ethical traditions in business and management. As such it invites contributions from a broad range of disciplines, including (but not limited to) business ethics, corporate governance, organizational behavior, organizational theory, international business, and marketing. We also encourage theoretical approaches from a range of social and cultural disciplines, including business, law, politics, anthropology, and sociology.

Submission Instructions

Authors are strongly encouraged to refer to the Journal of Business Ethics website and the instructions on submitting a paper. For more information see: http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/applied+ethics/journal/10551. Submission to the special issue—by July 31st, 2017—is required through Editorial Manager at http://www.editorialmanager.com/busi/. Upon submission, please indicate that your submission is to this Special Issue of JBE. Questions about expectations, requirements, the appropriateness of a topic, etc, should be directed to the guest editors of the Special Issue: Miguel Alzola, Edward Romar, or Alicia Hennig.

References


