

Call for Papers - Special Issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics*

Historic Corporate Responsibility

Submission Deadline: **1 October 2018**

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Businesses, universities, governments, and organizations in myriad industries and of all sizes are increasingly held to account for the actions of prior generations of leaders. Lingering concerns over commemorating leaders with complicated pasts (e.g., indigenous peoples, slavery) barely scratches the surface of this global phenomenon. Tracking a similar trend in organization studies more broadly (Bucheli & Wadhvani, 2014; Maclean, Harvey, & Clegg, 2016; Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014), scholars of business ethics and corporate responsibility increasingly recognize the value of historical knowledge, research methods, and data (Acosta & Péretzs, 2017; Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017; Stutz & Sachs, 2016; Stutz, *under review*). A recent issue of *Academy of Management Review* (Godfrey, et al., 2016) included two articles addressing corporate (ir-)responsibility for long ago actions (Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming, & Spicer, 2016; Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Phillips, 2016). Though this work focuses largely on legacies of bad behavior, it may also be interesting to consider organizations with a history of being first movers on historically controversial issues.

These contributions represent the beginning of a deeper and broader conversation about the contours, extent, consequences, and limits of such responsibility. Thus, we welcome submissions on the following topics and questions amongst others:

1. Contours and Extent of Historic Corporate Responsibility

- What, if anything, can current leaders do to recognize, mitigate or limit responsibility today for past actions? How might the decision to take responsibility for the past reflect the values of the present?
- What can leaders today do to affect how they and their organizations are seen in the future? What role should concerns for legacy have in influencing current decisions?
- What is the role of forgetting and selective remembering?
- What, if any, duty do organizations have to be transparent about their past? Preserving and opening archives to the public?
- Can the past be a strategic advantage for the organization? Is this an ethical aim given our limits on knowing the truth about the past?
- What qualifies an actor to make claims about the past?
- Who can legitimately speak for the past?

2. *Boundaries and Limits of Historic Corporate Responsibility*

- How do different legal, political, economic, social, or cultural contexts of the past pose problems to current organizations? If the definition of legal wrongs are subject to change over time, then what about moral wrongs?
- Can organizations collectively be held responsible for the actions of prior generations of leaders and members?
- What, if any, effect do attempts at re-organization (e.g., acquisition, mergers, bankruptcy, re-branding, changes in leadership, etc.) have on responsibility?
- Is there a limit to how far back claims of historic corporate responsibility can go?
- What are the boundaries of past and current organizations? Are there affiliational responsibilities from the past?
- When has a corporation done enough in regards to its historic responsibilities?

3. *Consequences of Historic Corporate Responsibility*

- What would adequate restitution look like? To whom and in what form and magnitude?
- Can an organization apologize and who can accept it?
- How do we define participants? Did they have choices in their past actions?

4. *Historical inquiry into the “history” of CSR, the transformation of business-society relationships and the evolution CSR practices*

- Under what historical circumstances did the idea of CSR emerge and diffuse around the world and can this history generate insights for contemporary CSR scholarship?
- How have CSR practices changed over time? How are they shaped by their particular historical contexts?
- Does the examination of socially responsible business practices in particular historical settings shed new light on contemporary CSR scholarship?
- What can we learn from historical contextualization of past academic insights?

We invite contributions from a broad range of disciplines including (*but not limited to*), management, accounting, marketing, law, philosophy, organizational behavior, psychology, critical studies, politics, literature, drama, practice, and, of course, history, and business history). All submissions should consider the ethical implications as part of the analysis.

Submission Process and Deadline

Authors should refer to the *Journal of Business Ethics* website for instructions on submitting a paper and for more information about the journal:

<http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/applied+ethics/journal/10551>

Submission to the special issue by **1 October 2018** is required through Editorial Manager at: <http://www.editorialmanager.com/busi/>.

Please indicate that your submission is to this Special Issue.