

Call for Papers  
Special Issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics*  
**Dissensus! Radical Democracy and Business Ethics**  
Submission Deadline: **4 June 2018**

**Guest Editors:**

Professor Carl Rhodes, University of Technology Sydney, Australia. [carl.rhodes@uts.edu.au](mailto:carl.rhodes@uts.edu.au)  
Professor Iain Munro, Newcastle University, UK. [iain.munro@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:iain.munro@ncl.ac.uk)  
Professor Torkild Thanem, Stockholm University, Sweden. [tt@sbs.su.se](mailto:tt@sbs.su.se)  
Professor Alison Pullen, Macquarie University, Australia. [alison.pullen@mq.edu.au](mailto:alison.pullen@mq.edu.au)

**Introduction to the Special Issue**

In an era of prolonged financial crisis, political instability and worldwide injustice, the economic and ethical legitimacy of corporate power requires continued challenge. Scandal after scandal has revealed corporations showing little regard for the institutions of liberal democracy. Whether it be tax evasion, law breaking, political lobbying or outright corruption, corporations are content to flout notions of justice, equality and freedom in an escalating pursuit of profit (see Barkan 2013; Brown 2015). Liberal democracy promises opportunity and inclusion, yet democratic states are complicit in strengthening the power of the corporations they glorify as wealth creators and job securers. In ‘post-democracy’ (Crouch, 2004) politics revolves around the conflated interests of corporations and politicians, reinforcing injustice and inequality on a global scale and resulting in poverty, torture, trafficking, imprisonment, and death.

This special issue will investigate and challenge this state of affairs by exploring business ethics as it relates to ‘radical democracy’ (Mouffe, 1996; Robbins, 2011). This is democracy conceived as an ethical alternative to the potent marriage of the liberal democratic state and corporate power. As Rancière (2015) explains, the political dissensus required for democracy bears witness to marginalized voices excluded from the prevailing status quo. Such dissensus also enacts a particular ethics rested in the radical questioning and subversion of the totalizing tendencies of power. In response to what Ziarek (2001) has called ‘the ethics of dissensus’, the political task is to fight against the powers, injustices and inequalities that affect people not just politically, but also materially. This ethics goes beyond the questioning of corporate power, and projects us towards trajectories where people already live and work independently of the corporate-government complex. The ethics and politics of dissensus becomes the radically democratic alternative, directed towards sustainable futures at the level of life itself.

**Possible Themes and Topics**

Papers are called for which explore the ethics and politics of radical democracy as it manifests in dissensus and the subversion of corporate power by alternative democratic practices and realities. This is no fantasy, it is witnessed by struggles in domains as diverse as environmentalism, agriculture, affective labour, domestic work, craftwork, art, and the hacker ethic of the open source community. Acknowledging that contemporary politics have created an inverse relationship between corporate power and democracy, we seek to consider the character of this inversion, how it has been resisted, and the alternatives to it.

We do not just ask whether democratic alternatives to the liberalistic reign of corporations, markets and corporate governments are possible, but *how they are and can be realized*. Required is a profound ethico-political engagement; a struggle that moves from critique, to resistance, to alternative realities. This evokes, in Spivak's (1993) words, an 'impossible intimacy of the ethical' that strives for a genuine respect of the value of difference. Such intimacy can also invoke a politically aware and democratic business ethics built on the potential of dissent, alterity and critique as a means of refusing hegemony of all types.

Papers might consider, but are by no means limited to, the following topics:

- The effects of Free Trade Agreements and trade wars on democracy.
- Spaces, places and strategies for ethico-political democratic dissent.
- The politics, ethics and aesthetics of dissensus, through feminism and critical race theory.
- The ethico-political struggle for alternative ways of life, work and organization in the context of global and nationalist capitalism.
- Alternative economies and the subversion of free market liberalism.
- The development of a heterodox management studies to better imagine alternatives within the field of management studies.
- The 'depoliticization' of theory and academic work more generally
- The praxis, organization and effectiveness of anti-corporate movements.
- Business ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility as anti-democratic forms of corporate consensus.
- Inequality, difference and class struggle.
- Critiques of corporate sovereignty, justice and dissent.
- Tensions between the materiality of democracy, neoliberal rationality and neoconservative ideology.

### 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 4 June 2018** is required through Editorial Manager at:

<http://www.editorialmanager.com/busi/>. Upon submission, please indicate that your submission is to this Special Issue. Questions about potential topics and papers should be directed to the guest editors.

### References

- Barkan, J. (2013) *Corporate Sovereignty: Law and Government Under Capitalism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Brown, W. (2015) *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, New York: Zone Books.
- Crouch, C. (2004) *Post-Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Mouffe, C. (1996) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. London: Verso.
- Ranci re, J. (2015) *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, London: Continuum
- Robbins, J. W. (2011) *Radical Democracy and Political Theology*, New York: Columbia.
- Spivak, G. (1993) *Outside the Teaching Machine*, London: Routledge.
- Ziarek, E. P. (2001) *Postmodernity, Feminism and the Politics of Radical Democracy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.