Imagining Ethical Organizations: Challenges and Insights from South Asia

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In this special issue, we seek papers that examine organizational ethics and sustainability that are grounded in a South Asian context. This region provides a particularly rich context for imagining ethical issues in sustainable initiatives for two reasons. First, in recent times, especially in the past three decades, there has been an intensification of efforts to integrate South Asia into the global economy. This has led to an increase in corporate activity, investment, and struggles that derive therefrom, relating to social justice, indigenous peoples, and traditional regimes of rights and property. Second, the emerging ethos of sustainable development in this region precedes the expansion of business. Prior to the emergence of multiple neoliberal economic regimes in various nations in South Asia, the challenges of transforming societies in that region had been designated a function of the state. These significant transformations require renewed examination, and can provide clues for a broader understanding of ethics, social responsibility and the relationship between populations, states and organizations.

The title of the special issue, "Imagining Ethical Organizations", does not presume that 'ethical organization' is a well-defined entity. On the contrary, it seeks to open up a space in which various organizational activities are subjected to scrutiny based on their disparate impacts on a variety of organizational and non-organizational actors, the environment, socio-cultural practices and economic systems. We hope that through this collective examination, we will be able to distil constitutive elements of 'ethical organization,' and move forward with discussions that inform theory, practice, research and policy. Likewise, the ethos of imagination is rooted in the ability to aspire and to transform current practices. Therefore, imagination is an issue of capability, and encompasses the freedom and capacity of an individual to materialise aspired changes in her defined social context (Sen, 1999). While aspired changes can cover a vast array of domains, this special issue focuses on sustainable initiatives that integrate ethics and rights in South Asia.

Organizational modes that emerged as part of the discourses and practices of global governance have often been criticised for facilitating hegemonic form of "inclusion" at the local level (Alamgir & Alakavuklar, 2018; Banerjee, 2010; Dar, 2008; Finkelstein, 1995; Khan et. al., 2007). Also, the accountability of global governance has been questioned and its legitimacy increasingly contested at the local level because of growing inequality and global societal upheavals (Bapuji, 2015; Mir, Calás & Smircich,

1999). Indeed, the rise of economic inequality presents challenges for organizing and managing good governance to ensure sustainability for individuals irrespective of age, caste, colour, class, ethnicity, gender, nation, race, and religion (Alamgir & Cairns, 2015; Bapuji & Chrispal, forthcoming; Sen, 2005). While economic inequality may be a result of shareholder-focused value distribution by corporations (Bapuji, Husted, Lu & Mir, 2018), its effects on societies are exacerbated by inadequacies of the market, the state, and civil society actors. South Asia provides a rich ground to examine these issues as they emerge on the global stage.

We welcome conceptual or empirical original papers from a wide variety of methodological and disciplinary perspectives and invite authors to provide insights into, but not limited to, the following topics:

1. Conceptualization of democratisation: Governance, geopolitics and ethics in different South Asian contexts; dominant ideological and conceptual underpinnings; and contestation in practices of governance and management.
2. Equality, inclusion and sustainable development: Ongoing initiatives and alternatives in current social and political spaces for promoting equality and inclusion.
3. Globalisation, marketization of the economy and community: Modern day slavery; challenges in representation of the affected communities in multi-level stakeholders' initiatives; and business implementation of human rights.
4. Ethics and responsiveness: Role of business in mitigating natural disasters and managing unethical practices in the broader society.
5. Ethical imaginations and management knowledge: Connecting 'indigenous' modes of organization and local forms of representation to represent them as legitimate management practices.

Submission Instructions

Authors are strongly encouraged to refer to the *Journal of Business Ethics* website for instructions on submitting a paper and for more information about the journal. Submission to the special issue, by April 30, 2020, is required through Editorial Manager at: http://www.editorialmanager.com/busi. A paper submitted to a Special Issue cannot be resubmitted to a regular issue. Upon submission, please indicate that your submission is to this Special Issue. Questions about expectations, requirements, the appropriateness of a topic, etc., should be directed to the corresponding guest editor.

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