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CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

BUSINESS ETHICS QUARTERLY

REVIVING TRADITION: VIRTUE AND THE COMMON GOOD IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

DUE JULY 15, 2010

Guest Editors: Alejo José G. Sison, University of Navarre
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Virtue ethics is one of several major options for a framework in the theory and practice of business ethics. Unlike the commonly invoked deontological and consequentialist approaches that focus on justice, rights, or utility, virtue ethics is little used and less understood. A review of the business ethics literature reveals the dominance in business ethics of rule-based approaches in theory and practice. Related areas of theory and practice, such as corporate social responsibility, also typically are characterized by rule-based approaches to a company's relationship to the environment and society. And a cursory look at popular media shows that consequentialist ethics is popular as well; many executives find the maximization of profit to be the preeminent purpose for most of their actions, notwithstanding their readiness to repeat official company slogans to the contrary.

A robust account of the virtues, such as the one offered by Aristotle, requires clearly identifiable goods connected with the norms and practices of human beings who identify themselves as members of communities that are culturally and historically situated. Aristotle argues that *eudaimonia*, a particularly deep form of happiness, is the prime example of the common good: something we can only achieve in collaboration with others. This is not a notion that we associate with deontological or consequentialist ethics. As MacIntyre reminded us in *After Virtue*, the inherent weakness of virtue ethics is that, unlike deontological and consequentialist ethics, it is unabashedly un-Enlightened. Instead of taking as starting points the principles of an abstract, universal reason and the freedom of the individual, virtue ethics thrives on and is nourished by tradition. What could be more easily dismissed in a multicultural and global society? That's why many academics and practitioners, even those who nostalgically cling to the word "virtue," refer to a lightly defined and lightly defended list of values, nebulous enough to earn a consensus without causing anyone much inconvenience.

In the past three decades we have seen a revival of virtue ethics and the idea of the common good in largely academic philosophical discussions. Perhaps the time has come to extend the debate, pioneered among others by the late Robert Solomon, to the theory and practice of business ethics today.

For this special issue of *Business Ethics Quarterly* we welcome philosophical and social scientific work on the relevance, challenges, critiques, and contributions of virtue ethics and the common good to business and management in today's global scenario. Here are a few of many possible topics:

What is the common good of a business? How does it relate to the common good of society?

What is the role of a business organization in the development or corruption of virtue or character?

What insights does research and theory in the behavioral sciences provide for our understanding of the virtues?

What is the relationship of practical reasoning to managerial decision making? How do virtues shape individual and social preferences?

Can virtues be global, or are there essentially rival accounts of virtue?

What is the status of the virtues? Are they explanatory? Normative? Non-existent?

How can we understand specific virtues or vices in business contexts? For example, what is the role of hubris in CEO behavior? What is the role of justice and moderation in executive compensation practices, or in competition? How does the virtue of honesty play a role in financial reporting, or prudence in investing, or courage in entrepreneurship, or moderation in marketing?

What issues arise in meshing personal characters with corporate cultures? How does this question affect hiring practices, or issues of “workaholism,” consumerism, and moderation, and the idea of self-realization through work?

What are the virtues and vices not of business specifically, but of commercial societies? What relationship holds between the virtues and business as an institution, or management as a profession?

What virtues are relevant to understanding stakeholder relationships or worker participation in corporate governance?

Are there specific virtues relevant to environmental and ecological issues and practices, such as sustainable production and consumption?

Do the virtues provide a basis for alternative paradigms of corporate success, or alternative measures of social capital?

To address these and other relevant questions, we seek a broad range of submissions—including both normative, philosophical research

and theoretical or empirical (quantitative or qualitative) social scientific research—and we encourage contributions that make use of, and contribute to, one or more theoretical perspectives that find their place within business ethics or any other relevant fields of inquiry (such as philosophy, psychology, organization studies, sociology, political science/theory, legal theory, economics, etc.). Ideally, manuscripts will provide a new and substantial contribution to the understanding of virtue ethics and the common good in the theory and practice of business and management, and also will make a significant contributions to the more general theoretical perspective(s) on which the manuscript is based.

Manuscripts should be prepared according to BEQ guidelines for contributors (<http://www.busesethicsquarterly.org>) and submitted by July 15, 2010 through BEQ's online manuscript submission system (<http://editorialexpress.com/beq>). Please include a reference to "Special Issue: Virtue and the Common Good" in the "Comments" box of the submissions website. Papers will be subject to a double-blind review and acceptance will be determined by the guest editors together with the regular editors of BEQ. For further information, please contact guest editor Alejo José G. Sison (ajsison@unav.es).

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