

become a very effective and active agent to remove large chunks of Western and civilized values from corporations that still support such quaint values; instead, it has showered modern corporations with values that are running the gamut between red and green, not forgetting Socialist pink, with the end state solidly projected to be environmental green.

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International Business Ethics: Challenges and Approaches

Georges Enderle (Editor)

Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999
(446 pages)

The origin of this book is the First World Congress of Business, Economics, and Ethics organized by The International Society of Business, Economics and Ethics (ISBEE), which took place in 1996 in Japan (Kashiwa-City, near Tokyo). It includes an introduction by the editor and twenty-nine papers from thirty-seven contributors from the United States (15), Asia (14), Europe (5), South Africa (2), and Latin America (1). These papers deal with many different topics, and grouping them has probably been a difficult task. The editor opted to group them in four parts under quite generic titles: Global Context and Ethical Orientations (Part 1), Ethical Standards and Sources for International Business Organizations (Part 2), Ethical Challenges for Business Leaders Around the World (Part 3), and Emerging Business Ethics in East Asia and Japan (Part 4).

International Business is a well-developed matter within business, so it is not strange to see that in the last few years increasing attention has been paid to International Business Ethics (IBE). Apart from two, well-known books by T. Donaldson (*The Ethics of International Business*, 1989) and R. T. De George (*Competing with Integrity in International Business*, 1993), both focused on multinationals, quite a number of articles have been published on this subject. This book, edited by Georges Enderle, adds to this field. It presents a pluralistic approach from different authors and different backgrounds.

In the field of IBE there are a number of recurrent topics such as specific issues in international business, universal principles of ethics for international business, codes of conduct for transnational companies, cross-cultural analysis, differences in ethical perception in managers, influences from national values, globalization problems, and so on. Most of these topics can be found in this book, but as the subtitle states ("Challenges and Approaches"), the majority of the articles are quite philosophical or descriptive while there is a significant absence of discussion on specific ethical issues on IBE. An exception is De George's article (271ff), which considers entrepreneurs and local small businesses facing some specific ethical issues.

One of the main concerns in IBE is to find universal principles to be applied around the world in spite of different cultures and religions. This point is treated in several contributions. This is not entirely a new problem, since in the sixteenth century, the theologians of the Salamanca School confronted the “international trading” in Spain and Europe among different countries and with people of different religions. They defended the natural moral law, which requires, for instance, the ethical requirement for everybody to keep promises and fulfill fair contracts, no matter whether they are Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, or Catholic.

Today, however, there is a strong emphasis on cultural differences and, as a result, some scholars posit an ethical relativism. Against that, N. Bowie and P. Vaaler argue in favor of (rational) universal ethical standards (160ff); S. Webley (96ff) reports on the “Interfaith Declaration” (Muslims, Jews, and Christians) as a moral base for international business activity, and H. Küng (109ff) defends a global ethics containing a set of minimums on common values, standards, and basic attitudes by a fundamental consensus of representatives of the world’s religions. Moreover, H. C. de Betingnies, K. E. Goodpaster, and T. Matsuoka (121ff) discuss “The Caux Roundtable Principles,” an interesting universal set of ethical principles for business, based on human dignity and the Japanese concept of “Kyosei” understood as “living and working together for the common good” (Goodpaster, 150ff and Yamaji, 443ff).

On the other hand, some contributions point out the role of local values in business activities: Confucian values (Ornatowski, 386ff), Hindu values (Grand and Rothlin, 67ff and Chakraborty, 78ff) and Islamic values (Abeng, 237ff). The Buddhist ethics of compassion is also studied, looking for similitude with the feminist ethics of care (White, 174ff). Beyond difference among these values and approaches, one can realize that they have much in common. More than likely, Enderle is right when, in the introduction, he states that, “Given the caveats against superficial harmonization and confrontation, a sound and lasting common ethical ground for international business is vital for humankind as we are moving toward an increasingly interconnected world” (4).

Special mention should be given to the essay by the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen who, remembering Adam Smith, discusses the place of business and moral sentiments in economic success and examines the role of cultures in influencing norms of business behavior. Sen points out the complex structure of business and practical influence of some features of business ethics in economics operations. He did so by considering the corruption in Italy (remembering the “clean hands” campaign at the beginning of the 1990s) and the “grabbing culture” in Russia.

Apart from that, the book contains some articles dealing with general topics on business ethics, such as “Formation” (Schmidt, 281ff), “Stakeholder Theory” (Pava, 187ff), “Courage” (Mahoney, 249ff), “Leadership” (Ciulla, 260ff) and also some criticism on the frequent use of business ethics exclusively as a tool for profits (Song and Park, 200ff and Polet, 223ff).

Finally, several articles are devoted to business ethics in developing economies in East Asia and, above all, in Japan (305ff). Most of them are descriptive: “Ethical Perceptions,” “Ethical Subjectivism of Managers,” “Ethics in Japanese Business Practices,” and others. More conceptual is the chapter of Sison (358ff), who considers the concept of “social capital” and analyses of how trust was established in some select Filipino family businesses. In contrast, hardly anything is said about Latin American economies and businesses.

Summarizing, this is a book with valuable and interesting specific topics, although, like most books from conferences, it has chapters that could be useful for those with specific interests.

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Globalization for the Common Good

Kamran Mofid

London: Shephard-Walwyn Publishers, 2002 (110 pages)

Globalization for the Common Good is a timely and valuable contribution to the debate over how the discipline of economics can be reformed in the twenty-first century. Unlike many of the other contributions to this debate, this book is not written by a theologian nor by a sociologist but by a professional economist who has more than twenty years’ experience in teaching and researching economics across the world. The book is written in an accessible and, at times, personal manner, intertwining the author’s personal Christian faith and his experience as an economics lecturer with his extensive knowledge of the complex debates that lie behind the separation of ethics and religion from economics as an academic discipline.

The structure of the book follows the suitably religious image of a journey from a “wasteland” into the “Promised Land.” Kamran Mofid argues that the world we are living in today can be likened to a wasteland—in which the economic rationale of self-interest has come to dominate all aspects of human life. Like Jürgen Habermas (*Legitimation Crisis*) and many others before him, Kamran Mofid sees this unsolicited intrusion of economic rationality into other aspects of human life as “colonization of the life world.” It has led to the creation of a world in which any concept of the “fair society” has been subsumed within policies geared at maximizing the interests of the strongest. Through tracing the history of economics from its roots as a branch of moral philosophy to its current scientific form, Kamran Mofid demonstrates the discipline’s “moral bankruptcy.” The policies of the IMF and the World Bank are a case in point. Underpinning much of this analysis is the view that economists have much to answer for. The book, in fact, is also an impassioned plea to the neoclassical economics establishment to reflect on their work—in particular, how they teach economics—and to mend the errors of their ways before it is too late: “My plea is for mainstream economics scholars to build these considerations into their analysis and discover how