

Special Issue associated with the 26th International Vincentian Business Ethics Conference

*Ethics and Capitalism*

**Call for Papers**

**BACKGROUND**

Capitalism, as an economic and financial system, wields titanic social, cultural, and political influence globally. Since the nineteenth century, it has been the dominant economic system in the world. As Keith Tribe writes: “It could be said that, during the nineteenth century, capitalism took over the world. Developments in trade, finance, manufacturing, farming, energy sources and population growth in Western Europe converged to create a new kind of economy whose rhythms were no longer primarily dictated by pestilence, the seasons, climatic cycles or wars of religion and of succession.” (Tribe, 2019; also Collier, 2018; Akrivou and Sison, 2016). Almost two centuries later, the world is a very different place dominated, as it is, by the dual powers of information and communications technologies, on the one hand, and, on the other, the clash between capitalism and the various socialist-inspired economic systems, in an increasingly sophisticated and normally stealthy global battle for socio-economic and political dominance. In addition, pestilence, weather, climate change, medical pandemics, antibiotic-resistant diseases, and the interruption of production and supply chains in energy, food, goods, medicine and medical devices, to mention some of the most important, continue to wreak havoc on a global scale. To these grave concerns must be added the resurgence of religious-inspired ideologies, and resultant violence, as well as the deleterious consequences of global financial crashes of recent decades which continue to engender an ever-expansive insecurity and a corresponding deep suspicion of those at the top.

In search of success and profit in the present time, as in the past, the question remains the same for a world largely dominated by capitalist and consumerist ideologies. Is a more ethical capitalism, one defined by a higher purpose, possible? As the distinguished American ethicist Robert C. Solomon (1942-2007) put it: “As we enter the new millennium, there is an overriding question facing global corporate free enterprise, and that is whether the corporations that now or will control and affect so much of the planet’s humanity and resources can demonstrate not only their profitability but their integrity” (Solomon, 1999). The key challenge is one of effective moral leadership. In order to redress the excesses and imbalances of capitalism in the present era of near-total corporate dominance, the often tenuous connection

between ethics and leadership must be enhanced. Only virtuous, brave leaders at all levels of commerce and business, finance and banking, government and politics can respond effectively to the threats to the environment, international financial stability, and the wellbeing of humanity (Levine and Boaks, 2014).

## RESEARCH TOPIC

While much work has been done in the field of business ethics to clarify the new role of corporations in the age of globalization as corporate citizens (Matten and Crane, 2005; Moon, Crane, and Matten, 2005), or as political actors (Scherer and Palazzo, 2006; Scherer, Palazzo and Baumann, 2006), less attention has been paid to the ethical assessment of the capitalist system itself. Capitalism is seen, on the one hand, as the best way to solve economic problems, on the other, it depends on fair play and the honesty of the market partners as a precondition for the good functioning of the system. In a similar vein, the question of how political and business leaders influence the morality of the capitalist system has gone almost unnoticed in this discussion. Questions about ‘ethical leadership’, if mentioned at all, are discussed in the business context and, in most cases, are narrowed down to a discussion on integrity and upright business conduct (Maak, 2007; Ciulla, 1995). The aim of this special issue is, therefore, to broaden the perspective and to discuss the moral legitimacy of capitalism and the morality of the various actors in the capitalist system from different angles.

The journal invites innovative, relevant, high-quality articles that address historical and present socio-economic questions, as well as current issues that link the theme of ‘ethics and capitalism’ with urgent global concerns regarding the environment, medical pandemics including Coronavirus (COVID-19), corporate social responsibility, justice, rights, and care for all the world’s citizens, in particular, the poor. To discuss these questions, we invite papers that critically examine theoretical aspects as well as practical outcomes of the capitalist system.

Possible themes include, but are not limited to, the following:

### **The Crisis of Capitalism in the Twenty-first Century:**

- Capitalism as Economic Theory and as Political Ideology
- Capitalism and the declining Role of Governments
- Anti-Capitalist Theories and the Critique of the Capitalist System

### **Capitalism and the Battle for Integrity in Business and Finance:**

- The Role of the Financial Sector in Global Capitalism
- State Responsibility and the Banking System
- International Financial Crises: The Recurrent Malfunction of Global Capitalism
- Capitalism and the Crisis of Trust

### **The COVID-19 Crisis as a Challenge for Borderless Capitalism:**

- Rethinking Global Capitalism and National Sovereignty in the wake of the COVID-19 Crisis
- Deregulating Economic Deregulation – Political Consequences of the COVID-19 Crisis
- Leadership during the Crisis – the Reinvigoration of Nation States’ Political Authority

### **The Moral Legitimacy of Capitalism and its Principal Actors**

- Capitalism, Ethics, and Leadership for Human Flourishing
- Solidarity or Enlightened Self-Interest: Virtues and Vices in Capitalist Societies
- Rules and Principles for Ethical Market Behaviour

### **Capitalism in the Service of Society and Humanity**

- Capitalism and the Challenge of Human Rights
- Capitalism and Profit: The Challenge of Fairness and Equality in the Third World
- Capitalism and Global Poverty

### **The Future of the Labour Force in Global Capitalism**

- Labour-Relations in 21st Century Capitalism
- The Dark Side of Capitalism: New Slavery and the Working Poor
- Labour Migrants and the Broken Promises of the Capitalist Society
- Capitalism and the Human Rights of the Labour Force

## **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

Authors should refer to the BE:ER website for instructions on submission of papers:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14678608/homepage/forauthors.html>

Submission to the Special Issue is required through

ScholarOne: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/beer>

For questions concerning expectations, requirements, appropriateness of a topic or other queries, please feel free to contact one of the Guest Editors: Michael Stefan Aßländer ([michael.asslaender@tu-dresden.de](mailto:michael.asslaender@tu-dresden.de)), Gabriel Flynn ([gabriel.flynn@dcu.ie](mailto:gabriel.flynn@dcu.ie)), or Daryl Koehn ([dkoehn@depaul.edu](mailto:dkoehn@depaul.edu)).

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE

**1 July 2021**

## ABOUT THE GUEST EDITORS

**Michael Stefan Aßländer** is Professor of Business Ethics at the International Institute of the Technical University Dresden, Zittau (Germany). From 2005-2010 he held the Plansecur Endowed Chair for business ethics at the University of Kassel (Germany). He has studied management, philosophy, sociology, psychology, political economy and Russian language in Bamberg (Germany), Vienna (Austria), Bochum (Germany) and Moscow (Russia) and holds a MBA in Business Administration (1988), a Masters in Philosophy (1990), a PhD in Philosophy (1998) and a PhD in Social Sciences (2005). From 2005-2011 he was board member of the German Business Ethics Network, and was a founding member of the Austrian Business Ethics Network (2004) where he has served as a Deputy Chairperson to the present. From 2008-2016 he was a member of the Executive Committee of the European Business Ethics Network.

**Gabriel Flynn** is Associate Professor of Theology at Dublin City University. He completed his doctorate at the University of Oxford in 2000. His research interests in ethics include virtue ethics, ethics in business, and leadership. He has contributed scholarly articles to the *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Business and Professional Ethics Journal*, and *Philosophy of Management*. He is a long-serving reviewer of articles at the *Journal of Business Ethics* and more recently at *Business Ethics: A European Review* as well as of journals in other disciplines and has served on a number of occasions as Guest Editor, and is also a member of various boards.

**Daryl Koehn** is the Wicklander Chair of Business Ethics and Managing Director of the Institute for Business and Professional Ethics (IBPE) at DePaul University, Chicago, USA. She has published widely in the fields of ethics, political theory, and corporate governance. Her monographs include *The Ground of Professional Ethics*; *The Nature of Evil*; *Rethinking Feminist Ethics*; *Local Insights, Global Ethics*; and *Living with the Dragon: Thinking and Acting Ethically in a World of Unintended Consequences*. Her edited volumes include *Corporate Governance: Ethics across the Board* and *Ethics and Aesthetics in Business Ethics*. In addition, she has published scores of articles in the *Harvard Business Review*, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Ethics* and numerous other journals. She consults regularly with major corporations and has served on a major corporation's compliance committee. She has been profiled in *Time* and *Life* magazines. Daryl Koehn is Editor-in-Chief of *Business and Professional Ethics Journal*.

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