*Edited by*

Guglielmo Faldetta
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Massimiliano Matteo Pellegrini

# Philosophy and Business Ethics

## Organizations, CSR and Moral Practice

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# 1

# Investigating the Philosophical Foundations of Management and Business

Guglielmo Faldetta, Edoardo Mollona, and Massimiliano Matteo Pellegrini

In the actual scientific debate among management and organizational scholars, the interest in business ethics and social issues for management is widespread, but there is still a lack in the normative aspect and the philosophical foundations of management. Academics and practitioners

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have often discussed the moral aspect of management and business actions, but they often miss a deeper philosophical reflection.

This book is aimed at investigating the philosophical foundations of management and business, both in theory and in practice. It consists of twenty-two chapters that use different philosophical paradigms and theories to better explaining, and hopefully impacting, business management issues.

The book is structured in three parts.

The chapters included in the first part "Philosophical foundations and normative approaches for business management" mobilize different theories to provide a normative and philosophical basis for business management. In this part, different approaches are used to create synergies between philosophical studies and managerial disciplines.

In particular, Chapter 2, "What should business ethics be? Aims, methodology, substance", by Brian Berkey, proposes to use traditional philosophical approaches to address some central questions in business ethics. In this chapter, the author defends traditional philosophical approaches against the criticism that they are insufficiently practical, speculates on the appropriate methodology for pursuing work in business ethics, and offers a brief characterization of how we should think about the substance of business ethics.

Chapter 3, "Philosophical challenges in development of ethical perspective in business", by Dušan Kučera, describes the fundamental philosophical challenges for the application of business ethics in management. By highlighting the need to change the Western intellectual paradigm of capitalism, the author describes the limits of the neoliberal philosophy of economic thinking and the utilitarianism framework. To offer some philosophical solutions, and looking for values and philosophical principles that are not conditional and relative, the chapter proposes a managerial transcendence menu, value anchoring in comprehensive philosophical orientation for future business challenges and ethical dilemmas.

Chapter 4, "Redefining stakeholder censuses and typologies: A new approach", by Miguel Ángel Serrano de Pablo and José Luis Fernández-Fernández, wonders how can a typology of stakeholders be established to truly illuminate the pathways of action for companies. According to the authors, the simple perspective regarding their classification arises out of aspects related to business ethics and the philosophical nature of the need to establish relations with stakeholders beyond those necessary for business survival. The chapter proposes a way to establish the taxonomic axes to do the exercise so companies can approach the issue with better outlooks. In addition, the authors provide criteria for inclusion using a taxonomy that may be able to reflect the weight of each stakeholder.

Chapter 5, "Empirical research in virtue ethics: In search of a paradigm", by Patricia Grant and Peter McGhee, calls for rigorous empirical investigation in business ethics through a careful elaboration of, alignment of, and justification for, ontological, epistemological, and methodological standpoints. The authors propose a Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics approach, which assumes that the metaphysical reality of human nature is an intrinsic part of the subjective experience and practice of virtue. An example of a study based on this approach is used to highlight the limitations of existing research paradigms. The authors as well propose an additional paradigm that assumes an interconnected continuum of mind-independent metaphysical, physical, and social dimensions, which shape and are shaped by the person's inner world.

Chapter 6, "Aristotelian flourishing for a virtuous business vision. The philosophical wisdom as a strategic tool for an effective change in the management", by Francesca Zimatore and Luca Greco, combines academic study with business experience, reflecting on the possibility to reconnect business and managerial practices to ethical action following the philosophical tradition. This chapter shows the renewed role that philosophy assumes within corporate dynamics and in the global socio-economic context, particularly referring to the Aristotelian Ethics as a paradigmatic starting point for any ethical reflection that still wants to be valid today. The authors highlight the importance of the practical philosopher for organizations, as a consultant who does not offer philosophical and dusty contents by taking the chair or "pre-packaged" theories, but offers philosophical skills, connected to conceptual analysis, deduction, and phenomenological description.

Chapter 7, "Catholic social teaching as a foundation for business ethics", by Domènec Melé, proposes to use Catholic Social Teaching

(CST) as a foundation for business ethics. The author builds on specific epistemology and anthropology that ground on Aristotelian-Thomistic thought and modern personalism. This ethics differs from relativism, rationalism, and emotivism. CST can be categorized as a "person-centered ethics" and includes some important elements as acting with personal and social love in truth, which encompasses the recognition of human dignity and universal fraternity, the fostering of integral human development, assuming transcendent moral norms, and taking the common good as a source of social legitimacy.

Chapter 8, "Ideas of organizations and ideas of justice", by Massimo Neri, proposes a reflection on justice within organizations. After the description of the "conceptions of organization", the author proposes an original reading of the theoretical contributions on justice, which uses the aforementioned knowledge alternatives as a frame of reference. The comparison between these different visions of organizational justice is a fundamental premise to face research and managerial implications and to deal with the new challenges that an issue as ancient as justice continues to bring to the fore of today's organizational phenomena.

Chapter 9, "How to ground corporate governance practice on African ethics", by Diana-Abasi Ibanga, takes issue with the Western approach to corporate governance adopted by companies in Africa that is incompatible with cultural contexts in this continent thereby stressing the need for Africanizing corporate governance practice. The author proposes a general outline of African ethics to show how its application to the concept of corporate governance might transform the conceptual status of firms operating in Africa. In this light, the personhood status of the firm is re-evaluated in the context of African ethics to show how it can evolve from an individualistic person, as was configured in Western jurisprudence, to a communal person, this latter compatible with African contexts. Finally, the author presents a Conversational Space Model to support grounding corporate governance practice in African ethics in practical ways.

The second part "Philosophical explanations for systemic, organizational, and social mechanisms" contains contributions that, adopting several philosophical interpretations, explain the functioning of a company, either in its technical or social dimension. Related to the technical system, ethical issues arise from a plethora of conditions like business models, knowledge management systems, and the consequences of the digital revolution and the new technologies like artificial intelligence. These technical innovations have huge consequences for working conditions and treatments. Related to the social system instead ethics is pervasive in each social behavior, comprising negative behaviors. From this point of view, this part offers different philosophical paradigms and theories to analyze the working relationships and the foundation of the social contract within a firm.

Considering the philosophical foundation of the technological aspect expressed by any firm, in Chapter 10, "Care ethics in the era of Artificial Intelligence", Carolina Villegas Galaviz and Jose Luis Fernández Fernández discuss the consequences of the advent of AI for socio-technological systems. While this paradigm opens up possibilities for many enhancements, such as objectification and speed, it also implies significant challenges, not least those of an ethical nature. The chapter proposes the ethics of care as a fundamental moral paradigm to firmly ground and guide the use of AI in management, especially in relation to its ability to consider stakeholders' instances.

Chapter 11, "Three rival versions of work and technology: Smith, Marx, and MacIntyre in discussion", written by Javier Pinto, Germán Scalzo, and Ignacio Ferrero, discusses a philosophical interpretation of the relation that should exist between technology and human work. The chapter takes into consideration three perspectives; two openly intellectual antagonist views such as that of Adam Smith and Karl Marx which both failed to provide a sustainable and realistic account of the meaning of work. In light of the thought of MacIntyre, a recomposing approach is reached understanding the way technology might negatively affect work, but also recognizing opportunities for the excellence of modern firms.

Instead, the following chapters pertain to the social dimension of firms especially in relation to their employees. Indeed, in Chapter 12, "Relational ontology for an ethics of work relationships", the authors Anna Marrucci, Cristiano Ciappei, Lamberto Zollo, and Riccardo Rialti analyze and develop the concept of relational ontology in response to modern challenges posed to the stability of individuals' well-being. Firms can promote interpersonal relationships that should be considered as sui generis realities and not as mere instrumental interactions among a firm's employees. By reinterpreting the thought of ancient and contemporary philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Edgar Morin, it is possible to build a clear definition for relational goods, which are those goods that can promote empathy and reciprocity, enabling individual and societal growth.

Chapter 13, "Toward a scale of Islamic work ethics: Validation from Middle Eastern countries", written by Mohammed Aboramadan, Khalid Dahleez, Mosab I. Tabash, Wasim Alhabil, Mohamad Ayesh Almhairat, Kawtar Ouchane, and Caterina Farao, aims at developing a valid scale of Islamic work ethics in the Middle Eastern region. Building on an extensive review on the topic, 15 items are formulated and assessed by a large sample of employees working in several countries of the Arab region (e.g., data were from Jordan, Oman, Palestine Qatar, and UAE). The results suggested a 12-item unidimensional scale; this represents one of the first Islamic work ethic scales developed and confirmed using data collected from several countries in the region.

However, also negative aspects should be considered when human relationships within a firm are involved. Chapter 14, "Extending Amartya Sen's Paretian liberal paradox to a firm's hierarchy" by Massimiliano Vatiero, compares how Sen's perspective may clash with an economic efficiency criterion, the final objective of a firm. Such efficiency assured through the hierarchy of a firm may and does invade the private sphere of individuals outside the firm, including in workers' homes, political activities, and even the choice of sexual partners. Those circumstances show that a risk of conflict exists between the reasons of the efficiency and Sen's idea of liberalism; thus, even if the firm's hierarchical nature may improve the efficiency, it may conflict with liberal values.

Chapter 15, "Reinforcing or slackening the spiral of deviance: The role of the personal norm of reciprocity" written by Deborah Gervasi and Guglielmo Faldetta, analyzes detrimental organizational phenomena through the lens of the norm of reciprocity. Based on the importance of philosophical and theoretical paradigms, the chapter considers three levels of negative organizational behavior: psychological contract violation, incivility, and organizational workplace deviance. Specifically, the psychological contract violation could bring to the start of the incivility spiral that, in turn, could escalate to workplace deviance and the personal belief in reciprocity could influence the relationship between these three phenomena and the spiral propagation.

Finally, Chapter 16, "The cancer of corruption: A philosophical and ethical perspective", written by Flor Gerardou, Anthony Brown, Blanca Guizar, and Roy Meriton, addresses the philosophical and ethical perspective of corruption, in its many forms, as it is embedded in most societies' fabrics, justified, and rationalized. The chapter examines ethical pluralisms that open up the opportunity for corruption and its counterbalance as a global ethics that avoids imposing a Greek and Western lens, conjoins shared norms, and simultaneously preserves the irreducible differences between cultures and peoples.

In the third part "Philosophical explanations for political action of the organization", the chapters adopt different philosophical paradigms and theories to investigate the political activity of organizations. We refer to political activity, in a broad sense, as the activities that organizations pursue to maintain and intervene upon their power relationships with a variety of stakeholders, but also, in a narrower meaning, as the activities that organizations put in place to affect policy-making processes.

In Chapter 17, "The pathology of corporate power", Jeff Bone takes issue with the hypertrophic corporate political power. The author mobilizes a thought experiment and portrays an imaginary future to explore what consequences this specific scenario would produce if it had to materialize. Specifically, the chapter describes a dystopic scenario in which Zuckerberg, the owner of Facebook, becomes the president of the USA and implements several law-making initiatives explicitly revealing a conflict of interest. Exposed to such a disquieting perspective, the reader is forced to wonder about the limits of the current regulation of political activity.

The goal of Chapter 18, "Organizing resistance: DiY as ethical and political praxis", written by Luigi Maria Sicca, Domenico Napolitano, and Maria Auriemma, is to describe the *DiY (Do it Yourself)* movement, a political and philosophical movement that has been applied in a vast array of contexts, including political activism, with particular focus on the concept of "independence". In providing a detailed analysis of organizational aspects of DiY culture, the authors particularly focus on the artistic declination of the movement and mobilize a participant observation; they study the activity of a group of artists based in Naples. The authors argue that, due to DiY's reliance on methods derived from anarchy, true independence allows no separation between theory and practice, manifesting instead as an immanent thought. Capitalizing on this concept of independence, the authors derive considerations that are relevant for the ethics of organizing.

The notion of justice is at the core of Chapters 19 and 20.

In Chapter 19, "The Aristotelian commutative justice and the management of the firm's stakeholder relations", Roberta Troisi, Luigi Enrico Golzio, and Marco Biagi mobilize the concept of commutative justice, as opposed to distributive justice, to contribute to normative stakeholder theory. Namely, the authors draw attention to the lack of criteria for the distribution of the benefits among stakeholders and propose a relational explanation that grounds on the philosophical notion of an "exchange as an ethical action". Following this line of reasoning, they emphasize the rationale of commutative justice, rather than the more widely used distributive justice, for the distribution of benefits among stakeholders.

On the other hand, Nikos Valance, in Chapter 20, "Restorative justice and sustainable development: A preview of holistic and systemic contextual change", analyzes the relationships between two world views, Restorative Justice (RJ) and Sustainable Development (SD). In the opinion of the author, both these worldviews have some features in common. Both have arisen in response to the need to address structural inequities and inefficiencies in our systems of justice and economic development. In addition, both worldviews have at their core similar paradigms shifts, i.e., away from individualism and commodification of resources (including labor) to one of recognizing interdependence and valuing community. Moving from the assumption, the author tackles to challenging questions. The first question is whether RJ and SD are symbiotic, implying that one cannot be truly complete or successful without the other. Whether the increasing prevalence of SD provides for further adoption of RJ is the second question. In addressing the question, Nikos Valance as well evaluates potential public policy responses and institutions to orchestrate the transition eventually brought about by the paradigm shifts.

Giancarlo Ianulardo, Aldo Stella, and Roberta De Angelis, in their work (Chapter 21, "Uncovering the dialogical dimension of corporate responsibility: Towards a transcendental approach to economics with an application to the circular economy"), address the lack of a proper philosophical reflection on the concept of responsibility. Based on this assumption, the chapter engages in a journey into the analysis of the concept of responsibility exploring the work of Weber, Jonas, Apple, and Levinas. Along this line, the authors propose a transcendental notion of responsibility as a "response" to a "quest" for an authentic realization of individuals that implies the interaction between a dialogical and a normative dimension. Taking the perspective offered by this transcendental conceptualization of responsibility, the authors assess the circular economy model by re-conceptualizing both the concept of waste and resources and the notion of stewardship toward the ecosystem.

Finally, in Chapter 22, "Power, authority and leadership: A proposal for organizational theory in the post-bureaucratic era", Lucia Ciardi and German Scalzo explore organizations' political dimension with a conceptual, philosophical-political, and historical investigation of the development of the relationship between power and authority. The authors propose a multidisciplinary analysis and, in particular, capitalize on the work of Juan Antonio Pérez López to interpret the impact on management and leadership of the imminent post-bureaucratic era and the crisis of modernity along with the bureaucratic model that accompanies it. The chapter concludes by describing how the coexistence of power and authority in the figure of the leader is a characteristic feature of healthy organizations that are focused on human development.

# Part I

## Philosophical Foundations and Normative Approaches for Business Management

# 2

# What Should Business Ethics Be? Aims, Methodology, Substance

Brian Berkey

## Introduction

The term "business ethics" is now used to refer to various types of work done within and across a wide range of academic disciplines. Much of this work is purely empirical: scholars examine the impact of corporate policies that are widely regarded to be ethical or "socially responsible" on the profitability of firms that adopt those policies; they attempt to determine what features of corporate environments tend to promote behavior that is widely regarded to be ethical among employees, and what features of such environments tend to lead to behavior that is generally thought to be unethical; and they assess which firms tend to be viewed by members of the public as ethical, and which as unethical, and attempt to determine what explains these public perceptions.

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This kind of work is important, and much of it is essential to the overall enterprise of business ethics, which surely has as one of its aims providing the necessary bases for agents in business to make ethical choices.[1] Since making ethical choices often requires accurately predicting what the most important effects of different available options would be, empirical work that contributes to our ability to do this is indispensable. Any adequate view of the scope of business ethics, however, must include work on *normative* questions about the proper conduct of business by firms and the individuals who work within them.[2] Normative questions are unavoidably *philosophical*, since answering them requires taking a position, at least implicitly, on which values and principles *ought* to guide choice and behavior.[3] No amount or type of empirical research can tell us which values ought to guide our choices, or to which principles our behavior ought to conform. Answers to these questions must come from, and be supported by, philosophical reflection and argument.

Despite the fact that few would deny that some central questions in business ethics are normative, there has been, and remains, much skepticism about the value of traditional philosophical approaches to answering these questions. One common variant of this skepticism has its roots in the thought that scholarship in business ethics must have as one of its aims providing "practical" guidance to managers and others making important decisions in real-world business contexts. It is suggested by skeptics that, for a number of reasons, philosophical approaches, and

[1] There is a broader question that can be asked about whether it makes sense to consider all of the work that is currently referred to as "business ethics" as part of a single, unified field of scholarly inquiry. I take no position on this question here.

[2] There is, in my view, good reason to count a much broader range of normative questions among those that fall within the scope of business ethics, including, for example, questions about the obligations of consumers (Hussain 2012; Ferguson and Ostmann 2018; Lawford-Smith 2018; Barry and MacDonald 2019; Hassoun 2019; Berkey 2021c; Kingston 2021), questions about the appropriate structure and limits of markets within a society (Satz 2010; Sandel 2012; Brennan and Jaworski 2016), and questions about international trade justice (James 2012; Risse and Wollner 2019).

[3] Individuals can, of course, take positions on these questions without engaging in philosophical inquiry—they can, for example, defer to religious texts or leaders, or views that are widely accepted in their culture. Openness to philosophical inquiry, broadly understood, however, is essential for the kind of debate about the complex and important issues that work in business ethics, and ethics more generally, should help us address.

in particular those that treat business ethics as largely continuous with moral and political philosophy more broadly, cannot provide guidance that is appropriately practical.

Any defense of this criticism of philosophical approaches in business ethics must include an account of the conditions that must be met in order for the guidance offered by an argument, principle, or theory to be sufficiently practical, as well as grounds for thinking that the philosophical approaches being criticized tend to yield results that fail to meet those conditions. It is, however, often unclear exactly what skeptics take the relevant conditions to be, and therefore unclear precisely why we should think that the views that they target should be rejected. A common theme is that those who employ traditional philosophical approaches tend to endorse claims, principles, and theories that are unrealistic and utopian, as well as too condemnatory of common and widely accepted features of business practice, such as deception[4] or the profit motive. At a fairly general level, the suggestion seems to be that any view that implies that the actual motives and practices of typical businesspeople tend to be ethically troubling should be considered insufficiently practical. More specifically, the suggestion is that such views cannot provide the kind of practical guidance to businesspeople that scholarship in business ethics must aim to provide. And since, according to proponents of this line of argument, work in business ethics ought to be constrained by the requirement to offer practical guidance, traditional philosophical approaches to business ethics should be regarded as objectionable in virtue of their aims, methodology, and/or substance.

I have three central aims in the remainder of this chapter. The first is to defend traditional philosophical approaches to business ethics[5] against the criticism that they are insufficiently practical. I do this, in section "The Aims of Business Ethics", by arguing that there are two main ways that the requirement that scholarship in business ethics offer practical guidance can be understood. On the first, the requirement

[4] See, for example, Carr (1968). For critical discussion, see Sullivan (1984), Carson (1993, 2005), Strudler (1995, 2005), Allhoff (2003), and Varelius (2006).

[5] In the remainder of this chapter, I use the term "business ethics" to refer only to the subset of scholarship that is typically referred to by that label that addresses normative questions about the proper conduct of agents in business contexts.

should, I claim, be rejected, since it is not an appropriate constraint on acceptable answers to any normative question. And on the second, the arguments, principles, and theories that are produced by employing traditional philosophical approaches will, at least in general, satisfy it. Because of this, we should accept that scholarship in business ethics, like scholarship in moral and political philosophy more generally, and in other areas of applied ethics, should take among its central aims offering arguments, principles, and theories that represent appropriate normative ideals to govern the behavior and practices at issue.

My second aim is to defend the view that the appropriate methodology for pursuing work in business ethics is largely continuous with the appropriate methodology in moral and political philosophy more broadly. I do this, in section "Methodology in Business Ethics", largely via a critique of approaches that treat business ethics as fundamentally a kind of "professional ethics," and on which the principles that ought to guide the behavior of actors in business are grounded primarily, if not exclusively, in the values that are central to the profession and provide the justification for its role in society. Proponents of these approaches sometimes suggest that they represent a plausible middle-ground between, on the one hand, potentially unrealistic and impractical philosophical approaches that treat business ethics as largely continuous with moral and political philosophy more generally, and, on the other, the approaches favored by more thorough-going skeptics of business ethics, which offer too little space for normatively justified criticism of much actual behavior in business. I argue, however, that because of the immense impact of business activities on a vast range of morally important values, it is less plausible to approach questions in business ethics as purely, or even primarily, a matter of professional ethics than it is to approach questions in, for example, medical or legal ethics in that way. More generally, I argue that the methodology characteristic of the professional ethics approach inevitably screens out values that are in fact relevant to the moral status of conduct in business. Employing that methodology, then, will unavoidably generate principles and theories that cannot account for all of the obligations of firms and the individuals working within them.

My final aim is to offer a brief characterization of how we should think about the substance of business ethics, in light of my arguments about its proper aims and methodology. I do this, in section "The Substance of Business Ethics", by highlighting some of the central ways in which my arguments suggest that the substance of business ethics ought to be informed by theoretical work in moral and political philosophy, and noting some important implications of this view.

## The Aims of Business Ethics

As I have noted, a number of those who are skeptical of philosophical approaches to business ethics have claimed that scholarship in business ethics must have as one of its central aims offering practical guidance to managers and other actors in business contexts. And they have suggested that employing philosophical approaches tends to generate arguments, principles, and theories that do not provide guidance that meets the requirement of practicality. In order to assess this charge, it is essential to consider precisely how critics might understand the requirement that the guidance provided by scholarship in business ethics be practical.

### Stark's Practicality Requirement

In order to determine what critics might have in mind, it will be helpful to examine the well-known critique of philosophical approaches in business ethics offered by Andrew Stark (1993a). According to Stark, business ethics at the time that he was writing was largely dominated by those employing philosophical approaches. And this was regrettable because, on his view, moral philosophy as it is traditionally practiced has little of practical value to offer to managers and others working in the business world. As he puts it, "the discipline of business ethics has yet to provide much concrete help to managers" in areas that ought to be its focus, such as, for example, identifying ethical courses of action in difficult real-world cases, or helping managers to do what they already know is right in cases in which competitive and organizational pressures tend to encourage unethical behavior (1993a, p. 38).[6]

The central reason that Stark thinks that philosophical approaches offer little of practical value to managers is that the views that tend to be defended by those employing such approaches typically imply that complying with many moral obligations in business will come at the cost of the agent's self-interest, the profits of her firm, or both. Arguments that suggest that managers have such obligations fail to provide appropriately practical guidance, Stark suggests, in effect because their implications will tend to be viewed as radical, and managers will predictably refuse to act in accordance with them. The obligations that business ethicists defend, "however morally respectable, run so contrary to existing managerial roles and responsibilities that they become untenable" (Stark 1993a, p. 43). If they are to succeed in influencing managers, "they must advance their proposals with a heightened sensitivity to practitioners' understanding of their professional-principal responsibilities" (Stark 1993a, p. 46).

As Joseph Heath rightly points out (2004, pp. 71–72), Stark's discussion runs together, on the one hand, the pursuit by managers of their personal self-interest and, on the other, their pursuit of profit maximization on behalf of their firms (or, perhaps more precisely, on behalf of shareholders). This is important because the charge that philosophical approaches to business ethics should be rejected as insufficiently practical can be articulated by suggesting that purported moral obligations to sacrifice one of these in business must be rejected, but it cannot be

[6] It is worth noting that while the first of these suggestions regarding what business ethicists ought to aim to do in their work clearly lies within the domain of normative scholarship, the second just as clearly does not. Insofar as his aim is to critique the way that normative scholars have approached their work in business ethics, then, the second suggestion is clearly out of place, since normative scholars are generally not trained to produce work that has as its aim motivating people to behave in ways that they know, independently, are morally required. In addition, this would be an unusual aim to have in producing scholarly work in any field of inquiry. It seems instead to be a more suitable aim to adopt if one is, for example, acting as a consultant to a corporation and in a position to shape the decisions of managers. Indeed, to some extent Stark's critique can be understood as suggesting that much scholarship in business ethics is problematic because it does not, and perhaps cannot, play a central role in satisfying the aims that an ethics consultant might reasonably adopt. As I will argue, however, there are strong reasons to reject the view that normative scholarship, whether in business ethics or any other domain, should be constrained by aims of this kind.

claimed that obligations to sacrifice either must be rejected. This is, of course, because they can conflict—sometimes the course of action that will best promote a manager's personal self-interest is not the same as the course of action that would be most profitable for her firm.

On the whole, Stark is, it seems to me, most plausibly interpreted as primarily claiming that views that require non-trivial sacrifices of potential firm profits should be rejected as failing to provide sufficiently practical guidance to managers.[7] Nonetheless, there are at least some grounds for interpreting him as, at least at times, appealing to managers' self-interest as grounds for skepticism about the practicality of the views that he critiques. For example, he speaks largely favorably about views according to which the reason that managers should be ethical can be characterized in terms of "enlightened self-interest" (Stark 1993a, p. 39),[8] and suggests that views that require managers to be motivated by altruism are problematic (p. 40).[9] Relatedly, he suggests that business ethicists whose academic background is in moral philosophy have tended to produce work that fails to address the "real-world moral problems of management" because their discipline "tends to place a high value on precisely those kinds of experiences and activities where self-interest does not rule" (p. 40).

Since managers are not identical with the firms for which they work, there is at least some awkwardness in interpreting the claim that managers should be ethical for reasons of enlightened *self*-interest to mean that they should be ethical because it is in the interests of their firms.[10] In addition, Stark favorably quotes Joanne Ciulla's claim that

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[7] Joseph Monast (1994) also interprets Stark in this way, though he is not always entirely careful to distinguish profitability from personal self-interest either.

[8] He notes, for example, that several scholars have claimed that the primary (and appropriate) goal of ethical management is to prevent the enactment of regulations that would constrain firms' business activities (presumably in ways that would limit their profitability while protecting or promoting other values).

[9] Stark does not deny that individuals, including managers and others acting in business contexts, are sometimes motivated by altruism (1993a, pp. 43, 46). But he does at least at times suggest that approaches in business ethics that do not take a significant degree of self-interested motivation as given, and as a constraint on what individuals can be obligated to do, must be rejected (pp. 40, 43, 46).

[10] Despite this, in the same section Stark does characterize the view that he is describing as concerned with the effects of ethical behavior on firms' "bottom line," and quotes another

"the really creative part of business ethics is discovering ways to do what is morally right and socially responsible without ruining your career and company," and shortly after states that "the key task for business ethicists is…to participate with managers in designing new corporate structures, incentive systems, and decision-making processes that are more accommodating of the whole employee, recognizing his or her altruistic and self-interested motivations" (1993a, p. 46). Perhaps most significantly, in a reply (Stark 1993b) to a critical response to his initial article (Duska 1993), Stark describes his critique as motivated in part by the fact that, in his view, "the reality of self-interest in managerial psychology is not given adequate importance" (p. 12) in the business ethics scholarship that he critiques.

## Practicality and Managerial Self-Interest

Because Stark does at times seem to suggest that philosophical approaches are insufficiently practical in virtue of requiring too much sacrifice of managers' self-interest, it is worth considering whether this charge might be plausible before moving on to consider the alternative version of the charge that is grounded in the claim that views that require non-trivial sacrifices of profitability fail to provide sufficiently practical guidance. The first thing to notice is that there do not seem to be any grounds on which the claim that an ethical argument, principle, or theory that implies that an individual is obligated to make significant sacrifices of her self-interest should be rejected as insufficiently practical can be limited to business contexts, or even to professional contexts more generally. Instead, it would seem to constitute a rather general basis for skepticism about any normative argument, principle, or theory that implies that individuals can, at least at times, be obligated to make significant sacrifices with respect to their personal self-interest. If this is right, then a significant degree of self-interested motivation would

scholar who claims that there will tend not to be any conflict between the courses of action that would be chosen by those concerned about social responsibility and "long-range profit considerations" (1993a, p. 39).

have to be accepted as given, and as a constraint on normative scholarship, including in theoretical work in moral and political philosophy that does not aim to directly address questions of professional ethics.

Stark, however, clearly accepts that scholarship in moral theory is not subject to the requirement to offer sufficiently practical guidance. Instead, he claims that there is an important distinction between moral theory and work in applied and professional ethics, and that only the latter must satisfy it—"[s]urely, business ethicists are not pure moral theorists who needn't worry about the practicality of their prescriptions" (1993a, p. 43). In addition, it would, in any event, be extremely implausible to think that all normative scholarship must avoid endorsing views about our obligations that at least sometimes require that individuals accept significant sacrifices of their self-interest. One of the central debates in moral philosophy in recent decades is about how demanding morality is, that is, how much sacrifice of one's own interests it requires or can require.[11] While most participants in this debate reject the most demanding views, virtually all accept that morality can, at least at times, require substantial sacrifices of one's personal interests. Accepting that normative scholarship is insufficiently practical if it implies that there are obligations to make significant sacrifices of one's self-interest would imply that nearly all work in this central debate is fundamentally misconceived, and that the central questions that are at issue in the debate should in fact be treated by all normative scholars as, in effect, settled in favor of the views on the least demanding end of the spectrum. This would limit what ought to count as proper normative scholarship much more than Stark intends, and more than anyone, including critics of philosophical approaches in business ethics, should find acceptable.

Furthermore, even if there were a plausible basis for applying the requirement only to scholarship in professional ethics, it is clearly unacceptable to think that scholars working in other areas of professional ethics must avoid endorsing views that require individuals to forego their personal interests to a significant extent when acting in their professional capacities. As Heath notes, the very idea that a doctor's self-interested

[11] Just a few of the many important contributions to this debate are Singer (1972), Williams (1973, 1981), Wolf (1982), Scheffler (1992), Unger (1996), Ashford (2000), Murphy (2000), Miller (2004), and Buss (2006). I contribute to the debate in Berkey (2016).