Overview

Gender equality is an acknowledged universal human right in itself, and is also intertwined with other core corporate social responsibility (CSR) issues such as poverty, environmental degradation, and development. Yet, the literature on gender, business ethics, and CSR remains relatively underdeveloped. Our special issue seeks to fill this important research gap.

Our special issue focuses on gender, organizations, and society through the lens of business ethics and CSR. It aims to bring a variety of feminist theoretical perspectives to bear on business ethics and CSR research and practice. Its purpose is to explore whether, and if so how, CSR and business ethics might contribute to wider scholarship concerning how organizations, and particularly corporations, reflect, influence, structure, and impact gender relations at the organizational, as well as the societal, level.

Within the field of business ethics, feminist ethics has been discussed with particular reference to the “ethics of care” as it relates to stakeholder relations and organizational responsibility (for example, Wicks, Gilbert, & Freeman, 1994; Liedtka, 1996; Burton and Dunn, 1996; Hamington and Sander-Staudt, 2011). Yet, beyond Larson and Freeman (1997), there appears to have been relatively little engagement with the feminist “ethics of justice,” which “explicitly attempts to solve the inequities of discrimination rather than finding in women’s skills a fortuitous tool to economic efficiency (Derry, 1996: 106).” Thus, the literature on feminist business ethics remains underdeveloped, particularly in light of developments in CSR.

Over the past decade, CSR has emerged from its philanthropic foundations and broadened from its narrow association with instrumentalism. It has shifted from a “corporate-centred” to a “corporate-oriented” concept, extended to “new accountability” (McBarnet, Voiculescu, & Campbell, 2007), and become an important part of new governance systems. CSR now involves government, business and civil society (Scherer and Palazzo, 2007), and is thus increasingly propitious for feminist agendas. Yet, the gendered organization studies literature has barely considered the possibility of how CSR might be useful in advancing gender equality agendas. Moreover, despite acknowledgement by companies and within CSR standards, the status of gender within CSR and other systems of responsible business research and practice appears modest. An emerging literature explores gender issues through a CSR lens. This has led to research not only on workplace practice, but also on the wider gender impacts of corporations in the marketplace, the community, and the ecological environment, indeed throughout corporate value chains, and in governance processes (e.g., Barrientos, Dolan, & Tallontire, 2003; Hale and Opondo, 2005; Newell, 2005; Grosser and Moon, 2005, 2008; Kilgour, 2007; Marshall, 2007; Kemp, Keenan, & Gronow, 2010; Karam and Jamali, 2013). The important study of masculinity in the context of business
ethics and CSR has also begun (Marshall, 2007; Knights and Tullberg, 2012). However the gender and CSR literature remains underdeveloped, particularly with regard to its theoretical contribution. Our aim is to encourage the deepening and systematizing of this emerging field of research.

Potential Topics

Among the topics that could be the focus of submissions are the following:

• What new theoretical contributions can be generated by conversations between feminist theory, business ethics, and CSR?
• How does business impact gender relations in the workplace, the community, the marketplace, and in global value chains?
• How might we define corporate responsibility, and measure corporate progress, in a way that better accounts for gender equality or inequality?
• In what ways can linkages or intersections between gender, race and, class in business ethics/CSR research contribute to the advancement of theory?
• What are the key gender issues in such diverse areas such as behavioral business ethics, stakeholder relations, environmental sustainability, and base of the pyramid strategies, and how might these be further theorized?
• How can feminist perspectives inform our understanding of CSR as a process of governance?
• What are the relationships between women’s social movements and CSR? How might these relationships inform the future of CSR?
• How might engagement with the CSR agenda contribute to feminist organization studies, feminist research on regulation and governance, or feminist economics—or vice versa?
• How can the study of masculinity, for example in gendered organization studies, contribute to business ethics/CSR research?
• How could feminist perspectives inform our understanding of corporate citizenship?
• How are the new United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights related to gender concerns? How should they be?
• Can CSR research benefit from feminist methodologies i.e., methodologies such as feminist deconstruction analysis, which are designed to: overcome biases in research (e.g., from “gender blindness”), access voices on the margins of organizations, and make explicit the researcher’s position; and whose design is focused on realising feminist goals?

These topics are meant to be illustrative; submissions from a wide range of disciplines, theoretical perspectives, organizational contexts and regions, on any topic that relates to the special issue theme are encouraged. In line with BEQ standards we seek theoretical work including analytical, conceptual, and normative articles; qualitative work (e.g., interview, participant-observer, ethnographic, case-based) that makes an original theoretical contribution; quantitative work (e.g., survey-based, experimental, field, measure development) that makes an original theoretical contribution; or historical work that makes an original theoretical contribution. We encourage contributions that make use of, and contribute to, one or more theoretical perspectives arising from fields such as gender studies; business ethics; corporate social responsibility; organizational studies; feminist scholarship in politics, economics, sociology, or international relations; or the study of social movements and human rights. In all cases the expectation for publication is that the submission will make an original theoretical contribution.

Dates and Process

The BEQ submission guidelines and author guide are available at the links below:
http://www.pdcnet.org/beq/Submission-Guidelines

Authors must submit manuscripts by November 14, 2014, using BEQ’s online system:
https://editorialexpress.com/cgi-bin/e-editor/e-submit_v12.cgi?dbase=beq
Special Issue Manuscript Development Workshop

To help authors prepare their manuscripts for submission, a special-issue paper development workshop will be held during the Society for Business Ethics (SBE) annual meeting in Philadelphia (provisionally July 31–August 1, 2014). Authors are invited to present and discuss their draft papers (5,000–8,000 words) during the workshop. Presentation at the workshop does not guarantee acceptance of the paper for publication in Business Ethics Quarterly, and submission of a paper to the workshop is not a precondition for submission to the special issue. To be considered for the workshop, please send your working paper to Kate Grosser (k.grosser@latrobe.edu.au) by April 1, 2014. We will endeavour to communicate decisions by the end of April 2014.

About BEQ

BEQ 2-year Impact Factor: 2.196 (2012)
BEQ 5-year Impact Factor: 2.555 (2012)
For more information, see http://www.pdcnet.org/beq

Review Process

Papers will be reviewed following the regular BEQ double-blind review process.

More Information

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REFERENCES


