Jacob Dahl Rendtorff

PHILOSOPHY OF MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Rethinking Business Ethics and Social Responsibility in Sustainable Development

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PHILOSOPHY OF MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY: RETHINKING BUSINESS ETHICS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This book is a contribution to the work of eco-ethica. Therefore, it is dedicated to the memory of two of my friends and colleagues. First, Professor Tomonubo Imamichi (1922–2012), a wise and thoughtful philosopher who was the founder of the eco-ethica Symposium, creating a unique environment for intercultural philosophical reflection on global ethics. Second, but even more important, the cosmopolitan philosopher and world intellectual, Professor Peter Kemp (1937–2018): director of the Center for Ethics and Law, Copenhagen, president of the World Congress of Philosophy (2008), a great scholar of philosophy in the European tradition, a powerful public intellectural, and an important colleague and inspiratory of my work in philosophy, ethics and sustainability.

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Preface

The argument for a new Philosophy of Management and Sustainability of this book is based on participation in the discussions of the international symposium for philosophy and ethics, eco-ethica, founded by Japanese philosopher Tomonobu Imamichi (1922–2012). Imamichi invented the discipline of eco-ethica in the 1960s that since 1980 achieved high recognition with its annual international symposium on eco-ethica gathering philosophers from all over the world to discuss philosophy and ethics in a cosmopolitan perspective.

I was generously invited to participate in the annual eco-ethica Symposium by my friend and colleague professor Peter Kemp (1937–2018), president of the World Congress of Philosophy and the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) (2008), and president of the International Tomonobu Imamichi Institute of Eco-ethica from 2004.

The discipline of eco-ethica is an attempt to revolutionize ethics and philosophy in order to respond to the challenges of science and technology. Since the power of humanity over the world is increasing with the mastery of new technology, our ethical responsibility is much higher and far-reaching. Eco-ethica deals not only with individuals, but also as a new philosophy of the technological age, it also deals with the subject of collective responsibility and focuses on an ethics for groups, organizations, corporations, institutions, and governments (Imamichi, 2009).

This is a subject, that is essential to eco-ethica, due to the close relation between technological and organizational power, but a topic has been largely neglected, and a growing ethical concern which nevertheless has become increasingly important with the emergence of the contemporary ethical challenges of technological civilization.

The chapters of the book have been developed within the discipline of eco-ethica as a contribution to the Annual Symposium of Eco-ethica since 2004 with focus on such a need for such a collective responsibility and ethics for groups, organizations, corporations, institutions, and governments. We can say that the source of inspiration of the book is the philosophical concept of ethics of sustainability as proposed by the discipline of eco-ethica.

Here, it is important to remember that eco-ethica not only means bioethics or environmental ethics, but also it is defined as a general ethics of the need for the good life on the planet. In this perspective, philosophy of management and sustainability as a part of the search for responsible collective ethics and group ethics is an important contribution to eco-ethica.

Indeed, I have discussed and defended my point of view on philosophy of management and sustainability in discussion with the other philosophers in the

symposium, who each year had 15–20 distinguished participants. These discussions have helped to improve the final version of the book and contributed to shape the argument and philosophical approach to ethics, politics, economics, and management, which is presented in the book.

Thus, previous versions of the chapters have been published in the Journal of the eco-ethica symposium, that is, *Acta institutionis philosophiae aestheticae*, Vol. 23, 2005 and Vol. 24, 2009, and *Eco-Ethics*, Vols. 1–7, 2011–2017. Some previous versions of two chapters have been presented in the Icelandic and European e-journal *Nordicum – Mediterraneum*, Vol. 5(1) and Vol. 8(3). A previous version of one chapter has been published in *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*, Vol. 19(1), 2018. Previous versions of other chapters have been published in the proceedings of the 25th IVR World Congress: *Law, Science and Technology Paper Series* No. 112, and in the Finish book series *Jyväskylän Yliopisto, SoPhi*, Vol. 125. Finally, my books *Responsibility, Ethics and Legitimacy of Corporations*, *French Philosophy and Social Theory: A Perspective for Ethics and Philosophy of Management* (2014) and *Cosmopolitan Business Ethics. Towards a Global Ethos of Management* (2018) are important for the development of the argument in this book.

The project of Philosophy of Management and Sustainability can therefore be considered as a part of my work on business ethics and corporate social responsibility and in particular as a part of the general project of eco-ethica. Imamichi proposed new virtues to cope with our existence in the technological conjuncture. We need to accomplish the classical virtues of justice, courage, loyalty, humility, and responsibility with the new virtues of philoxenia (love for strangers), punctuality, cosmopolitanism, and not least mastery of technology (Imamichi, 2009).

In particular, the cosmopolitan responsibility in globalization with economic and social challenges is important. Indeed, I understand this book as contribution to find such new virtues for management and leadership in the time of responsibility for the environment and for the future of humanity in advanced technological culture.

Both Professors Tomonobu Imamichi and Peter Kemp have been great sources of inspiration for the chapters of this book and contributed enormously to ethics and philosophy of technology and sustainability. I am therefore very happy to be able to dedicate this book to honor their memory and to other participants in the Symposium of eco-ethica who during the years helped to improve my argument and position in the field of Philosophy of Management and Sustainability.

Acknowledgments

Many people have in one way or another contributed to the improvement of this book. I would like to thank the regular participants in the annual symposium on eco-ethica who have contributed with discussions and criticisms of the previous versions different chapters of this book since 2005. Regular participants in the annual symposium on eco-ethica include Tomonobo Imamichi (1922–2012), Tokyo; Peter Kemp, (1937–2018), Copenhagen; Peter McCormick, Paris; Noriko Hashimoto, Tokyo; Manuel B. Dy, Manilla; Sang Hwan Kim, Seoul; Nam In Lee, Seoul; Pierre-Antoine Chardel, Paris; Robert Bernasconi, Memphis, David Rasmussen, Boston; Bengt Kristensson Uggla, Stockholm; Bernard Reber, Paris; Patrice Canivez, Lille; Zeynip Direk, Istanbul; Jayne Svennungson, Lund; Karen Joisten, Mainz. They have all been present at one, several of most the presentations of chapters for this book at the annual symposium on eco-ethica. My colleagues from the Scandinavian Chapter of the European Business Ethics Network (EBEN) have on the workshops, conferences, and meetings of EBEN been very helpful with comments. Here I will mention Kristian Alm, Oslo; Siri Granum Carson, Trondheim; and Magnus Frostenson, Stockholm. Previous versions of several of the chapters have been presented at the study circles in the Nordic Summer University from 2011 to 2016. Here, I would in particular like to thank Øjvind Larsen, Copenhagen; Giorgio Baruchello, Akureyri; Johan Söderberg, Göteborg; Asger Sørensen, Copenhagen; Arne-Johan Vetlesen, Oslo; Åke Nilsén, Halmstad; Peter Wolsing, Odense; Gorm Harste, Århus; Arto Laitinen, Helsinki; Maria Refer, Copenhagen; Anders Ramsey, Lund; Mikael Carleheden (Göteborg), Peter Aaagaard, Roskilde, and John Storm Pedersen, Esbjerg. Indeed, my colleagues at Roskilde University in the programs of business studies and economics and business administration and social entrepreneurship and management have over the years be helpful with comments and suggestions to different aspects of the book. Here, among many colleagues, I would in particular like to thank Luise-Li Langergaard, Oda Bagøien Hustad, Kirsten Mogensen, Inger Jensen, Poul Wolffsen, Søren Jagd, John Damm Scheuer, Kristian Sund, Margit Neisig, Sameer Ahmad Azizi, Anita Mac, Ada Scupola, Anne Vorre Hansen, Jørn Kjølseth Møller, Poul Bitsch Olsen, Johannes Kabderian Dreyer, and Lars Fuglsang. Finally, I would like to thank my wife Victoria and my children Joachim, Erik, Elias, and Arthur for all their support and help with the different chapters for this book.

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Introduction

The aim of this book about Philosophy of Management and Sustainability is to present the philosophical foundations for business of sustainability. The key challenge is to contribute to rethinking philosophy of management to find a new transition for business and society in the great transition toward sustainable development. Accordingly, this books aims at presenting a philosophy of management for developing in the context of philosophical and ethical reflection on sustainability, ethics, and corporate social responsibility.

In this perspective, the book provides philosophical foundations for the reflection on business and economics. Very broadly, we can say that the book presents the philosophical foundations for progressive business models in a more sustainable society. When we discuss the concept of philosophy of management in relation to an ethics of sustainability, we go beyond traditional management thinking and investigate sustainability in the perspective of ethical philosophy.

This argument is based on an interdisciplinary perspective on the sciences of management and organization investigating the philosophical theories behind the sustainability studies in relation to finance, organization and leadership, marketing, human relations, communication, legitimacy, responsibility, and ethics.

Moreover, being interdisciplinary with focus on philosophical foundations, the book elaborates on the different perspectives from disciplines like business, philosophy, ethics, economics, political sciences, and sociology. More specifically, through the disciplines, keywords of the book are philosophy of management, business ethics, corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability, and UN sustainability goals.

Accordingly, the book begins with the discussion of the concept of globalization in relation to philosophy, ethics, and justice with the aim of developing a cosmopolitan spirit as the basis for international justice. Globalization was in the beginning an economic concept but with the emergence of global problems of global poverty, environmental degradation, climate change, and global social and political interdependence we need to rethink the concept of justice for the international community at a cosmopolitan level.

Is the task of philosophy of management to have an outlook of political philosophy in order to reflect on this other concept of globalization, not only as a Utopia but also as a real alternative for the global community. The dream of another globalization includes overcoming the misery of the world in the struggle for democracy and hope for cosmopolitan justice in the age of hypermodernity.

The foundation of philosophy of management in globalization can be found in my comprehensive theory of responsibility, ethics, and legitimacy of corporations in a globalized society. In the book, I present this approach as based on an ethical liberalism or a "communitarian Kantianism." This approach to business ethics and philosophy of management is inspired by the philosophy of Paul Ricœur with his vision of "the good life with and for others in just institutions." In close connection with this ethical ideal, we can mention the four ethical principles for protection of the human person: autonomy, dignity, integrity, and vulnerability. This philosophical theory of business ethics concerns both micro- and macro-levels of society.

Accordingly, it is possible to apply philosophy of management and business ethics to ethics of administration. This book argues for the importance for an ethics of sustainability for public administrators and policy-makers. Public administration ethics includes reflections on the ethical theories, principles, and dilemmas of public organizations, corporations, and institutions, including the state, regional, and municipal administrations and bureaucracies, including ethical dimensions of the work of courts, police, and military. We need to provide the philosophical and ethical basis for good and just decision-making in public administrations.

Together business ethics and public administration ethics can be integrated in general philosophy of management, focusing on responsibility, and sustainability in private business and public administration. An important concept for coining the ethical responsibilities in private organization and public administration is the vision of corporate citizenship and the corporation, organization, or institution as a good corporate citizen. In order to realize good citizenship in private and public leadership and administration, we can emphasize the need for stakeholder management to ensure the ethical and sustainable legitimacy of private business or public organizations.

It is in this context that philosophy of management and ethics focuses on the great transition toward sustainable development. With the starting point in the Brundtland Commissions groundbreaking report on *Our Common Future* from 1987, the book provides a philosophical interpretation of sustainability and sustainable development. In order to rethink philosophy of management in the transition toward sustainable development, we discuss the philosophical implications of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the world Agenda for 2030, decided by the UN in 2015. The book discusses the implications for new business models based on the SDGs. Moreover, the question is how management can make sense of the SDGs for more responsible business. Thus, the promotion of the SDGs for business is an important focus of discussion for contemporary reflections of philosophy of management and business ethics.

Thus, new technological challenges to sustainability are important for philosophy of management in order to develop an ethical economy of sustainability. Therefore, we move on to analyze the philosophical dimensions of the ethical interdependence in the Anthropocene age. Philosophy of management deals with advanced technological and economic systems that face a necessary transition toward circular and ecological and more environmentally friendly economic

systems. Today, the ontological and epistemological reality of philosophy of management is the condition of the Anthropocene age, where human beings live in conjunction with technology and have great power to modify their natural environments.

A paradigmatic case of the environmental challenge to sustainability in the age of the Anthropocene is the treat of environmental and social catastrophe and disaster. The book presents the catastrophe of the nuclear plant in Fukushima in Japan in winter 2011 as an important example of the challenges for philosophy of management and leadership facing the fragility and paradoxes of technology and ethics in the age of the technological conjuncture and life in the Anthropocene age. The environmental disaster reminds us about the importance of an ethical economy with focus on transition toward sustainable development.

Thus, we need to develop an ethical economy. The challenges of sustainability means that philosophy of management needs to develop a more responsible concept of economic systems and markets. Therefore, the book presents an argument for the need to take seriously the close relation between ethics and economics as a challenge to the crisis of market economics based on individual profit maximization without concern for social and environmental sustainability.

This ethical economy implies a transformation of business and its stakeholders with new demands for ethical concern of businesses toward their stakeholders. The global environmental challenge of sustainable development must deal with the current changes and disruptions of traditional business systems by working for an ethical economy that can be the basis for progressive business models.

The challenges of technological civilization to find more sustainable life-styles require philosophical reflection in order to develop new business models for sustainable business. We need to rethink our concepts to establish new practices of pro-social business, social entrepreneurship for innovative ideas of sharing, and ecological and circular economy. Here, the book aims to provide the basis for the use of philosophical reflection as a method to capture the theoretical foundations and practical implications for leadership, governance, organizations, and organizational processes in pro-social businesses.

However, we should not forget the social dimensions of the challenge of the great transition toward sustainable development. Therefore, the book considers the concept of equality as essential to the ethics of political economy as an important dimension of the reflections on the ethical economy. As suggested by the SDGs of the UN, global equality is an important element of the effort to create a sustainable future for humanity.

After having presented this framework, the book goes deeper with a perspective on the philosophical foundations of the perspective on sustainability and management philosophy. We present after this the challenge of moral blindness in management and business administration as a challenge to ethics and philosophy of management. Moral blindness and evil is the dark side of sustainability and it challenges our efforts to rethink sustainability in the light of philosophy of management and ethics.

In contrast to moral blindness and evil in organizations, we need an ethics of integrity and recognition. The ethics of integrity represents a new foundation

of sustainable wholeness. Integrity can be defined as the cardinal virtue of eco-ethics, as the foundation of other virtues of justice, courage, loyalty, humility, and responsibility. We can say that integrity is the condition of all the other virtues. Integrity refers to virtuous personal identity and character.

The ethics of recognition moves the ethical economy and the concern for integrity into the realm of social and political sustainability. The problem of recognition also refers to the relation to the other person in culture and society. This is the foundation for social and political justice of political and economic equality in democracy and society. Accordingly, recognition is an essential concept for understanding social and political community in philosophy of management.

The context of the ethical economy and the transition toward sustainability is the hypermodern experience economy, where there is an ongoing transformation of business and its stakeholders with new demands for authenticity by employees, consumers, and society. The global environmental challenge of sustainable development must deal with the current challenges of the experience economy where the technological conjunctive between humans and society, include the emergence of new technological innovations like artificial intelligence, robots, and digital economies. Nevertheless, the experience economy also represents an opportunity for new philosophical reflection in order to develop new business models for sustainable business. Accordingly, the book presents the concept of the experience economy in hypermodernity as the sociological and philosophy foundation for contemporary business ethics and philosophy of management.

In conclusion, we present the new concept of responsibility and CSR that emerges with effort of rethinking business sustainability with the SDGs. This is the concept of CSR that captures the need for new progressive business models, integrating CSR in SDG management.

Thus, the book contains three main sections: (I) From CSR and business ethics to SDGs; (II) Philosophy of management and ethical economy of sustainability; and (III) Foundations of philosophy of management, ethics, and sustainability.

Part I presents the movement from CSR and business ethics to the SDGs with focus on the current transformations of CSR and business ethics toward SDG leadership and philosophy of management of the SDGs. The chapters of this section deal with the following topics: (1) Ethics and justice and globalization; (2) Sustainability and business ethics in a global society; (3) The ethics of administration and sustainability; (4) CSR, sustainability, and stakeholder management; and (5) Business sustainability and the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Part II presents the philosophy of management and the ethical economy of sustainability. The reality of the Anthropocene and the technological challenges of contemporary society require a new ethical economy with focus on sustainability and responsibility. The chapters of this section deal with the following topics: (6) Philosophy, management, and ethical interdependence; (7) Environmental catastrophes and challenges to ethical decision-making; (8) From financial crisis to new economics of sustainability; (9) Ethical economy and the environment; and (10) The concept of equality in ethics and political economy.

Part III presents the foundations of philosophy of management, ethics, and sustainability with focus on basic concepts that can justify ethical reflections

in philosophy of management. Important are the concept of moral blindness, integrity, and recognition. In addition, a condition of the search for sustainability is the hypermodern experience economy. The chapters of this section deal with the following topics: (11) The dark side of sustainability: Evil in organizations and corporations; (12) The ethics of integrity: A new foundation of sustainable wholeness; (13) Recognition between cultures as the foundation of ethical and political sustainability; and (14) Philosophy of management in the hypermodern experience economy.

Part IV presents the new concept of responsibility related to the changed concept of sustainability with the SDGs. It contains Chapter 15: The principle of responsibility: Rethinking CSR as SDG management.

With this, we can say that the aim of the book is to provide education for a sustainable world in business and management. Social and environmental sustainability implies the development of a new understanding of the relation between human beings and nature. The new concept of sustainability that we need should go beyond brutal anthropocentrism reducing nature to an object of utility and exploitation for human beings. Nevertheless, it should also be critical towards an eco-centric concept of nature leaving no room for humanity in its natural environment. Today, we need to acknowledge the multiplicity and complexity of the relation of humanity to nature, which is expressed in the concept of the Anthropocene, where nature is both subject and object of human existence. The argument for sustainability in this book mediates between economic and ecological concepts of sustainability. As such, education for sustainability in business implies learning to act for the sustainable development goals making sustainability an integrated part of human virtues and education. An ethical culture of sustainability overcomes the brutal exploitation of nature by integrating human beings and nature in education for sustainable integrity in nature and society.

Accordingly, this is a fairly abstract philosophical book about philosophy of management and sustainability. Nevertheless, even though the book is an academic book, it has a wide appeal because it discusses the philosophical basis for sustainability, management, and leadership. Thus, this book is not only directed toward colleagues in philosophy of management, but the book is also for practically oriented business people and administrators, and people who are concerned about sustainable development. I think that eventual readers and not least university students could use the book as a theory and philosophy book to understand the philosophical and ideological foundations for use of the concept of sustainability in business. The book would therefore be able to serve as core adoption, reading list, and library reference according to the needs of each student.