



Call for papers

Journal of Business Ethics

Special Issue on

MORAL EMOTIONS AND ETHICS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Submission deadline: **1 March 2015**

This special issue seeks to examine moral emotions, how they shape and influence ethical behaviour at work, and how this affects a variety of organizational outcomes. Moral emotions are defined as emotions “that are linked to the interests or welfare either of society as a whole or *at least of persons other than the judge or agent*” (Haidt 2003: 276, italics added). Since ethics to a significant degree comprise a concern for others (Solomon 1993), moral emotions are an integral constituent of ethical behaviour in organisations (Gaudine and Thorne 2001). As Zajonc (1980) reminds us, emotions inform our value judgments that lead to approach or avoidance decisions. For example, moral anger over injustices or improprieties at work can provoke organizational members to leave their place of employment, confront the offending agent, or approach those able to redress the problematic situation (Geddes and Callister 2007, Geddes and Stickney 2011).

However, the link between moral emotions and ethical behaviour at both the individual and organizational level of analysis is far from straightforward. While ethical theories help us gauge what is the right kind of behaviour in concrete situations (Solomon 1993), it would be a mistake to assume that - only because concrete situations elicit specific subjective evaluations according to appraisal theory (Scherer 1997) – an emotional understanding of that situation would indicate the right kind of behavioural response. This is due to considerable cultural and subjective variation in the way individuals appraise emotion elicitors. As Scherer (1997) remarks, appraisal factors most likely to be subject to “cross-cultural differences are the more complex criteria such as attribution of agency or responsibility, fairness or legitimacy, and norm compatibility or morality” (p. 904). Further to this, our perceptions of emotion expressions (including moral emotions such as anger, shame, or guilt) and their consequences are not static. One primary reason for this dynamic is what Stearns and Stearns (1985) term ‘emotionologies’. These are “the attitudes or standards that a society . . . maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression; ways that institutions reflect and encourage these attitudes in human conduct” (p. 813). Emotionologies, by their very nature, reflect a particular

zeitgeist of a particular society and change constantly. By implication, emotionologies possess a cultural and chronological dimension. Together, these changes can reveal a great deal about our dynamic social environment - including organizations. Given the intimate link between emotion and values (and how they translate into ethical behaviour), it is plausible to argue that ethics too are constantly evolving and changing (Solomon 1993).

This Special Issue seeks to cast a fresh and state-of-the-art eye on moral emotions in terms of how they shape and influence ethical behaviour in organizations, and how this affects a variety of organizational outcomes. There is still much to learn in terms of how and why moral emotions, ethical behaviour, and a variety of outcomes at work are interlinked. Below we offer several suggestive rather than exhaustive questions that help delineate the scope and breadth of this Special Issue.

Example Questions

- How and why do moral emotions motivate the willingness to act ethically, even against prevailing social, institutional, or peer pressures?
- How complicated/valuable is it to allow for a greater range of emotional displays in the organization, and what are the consequences thereof (Lindebaum 2012)?
- What can we learn by recognizing that discrete moral emotions (such as anger, guilt, shame, or embarrassment), which follow distinct cognitive appraisal, may lead to divergent consequences for the individual and the social group? (That is, I may experience gratification having defended my own /other's dignity, but the organization may fire me).
- How are moral emotions negotiated within and between levels of analysis (Ashkanasy 2003), especially when perceptions of what is right and what is wrong differs between levels of analysis? (Nielsen 1996).
- How and why do organizational members suppress moral emotions with a pro-social and alter-centric intention?
- What role do approach/avoidance tendencies of emotions play in facilitating or hindering ethical conduct at work (e.g., fear of social exclusion leading to silence, Lindebaum 2009)?
- Given the evolutionary significance of moral emotions (Haidt 2001), how can we make sense of a 'post-emotional society' (Mestrovic 1999)?
- What part does courage to speak or - its converse, silence - play in organizational narratives and stories (Gabriel 2000)?
- What happens when values collide (for example, transparency vs. restraint, or sensitivity to the feelings of others vs. free speech or escalating incivility)?

Please note that we are especially receptive to (i) contributions from a variety of ontological traditions, (ii) papers conspicuous by innovative and challenging theorizing, and (iii) studies from a multiplicity of methodological backgrounds. However, a prerequisite for all submissions must be firm theoretical grounding in the relevant literature. For theoretical pieces, we expect that they also offer significant novel theoretical insights. For empirical papers, we expect that they have a strong

methodological design, competently execute the data analysis, and offer significant new insights as a result.

Authors are strongly encouraged to refer to the *Journal of Business Ethics* website and the instructions on submitting a paper for more details about the types of manuscripts that will be considered for publication see

<http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/applied+ethics/journal/10551>

Submission to the special issue – by *1 March 2015* – is required through Editorial Manager at <http://www.editorialmanager.com/busi/>

Questions about expectations, requirements, the appropriateness of a topic, and so forth, should be directed to the guest editors of the Special Issue: Dirk Lindebaum (d.lindebaum@liverpool.ac.uk); Deanna Geddes (geddes@temple.edu); Yiannis Gabriel (yg218@bath.ac.uk).

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