

Call for Submissions

Business Ethics Quarterly Special Issue on:

Wisdom and Sustainability: Transforming Business Ethics in Practice

Guest Editors

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Overview

The purpose of this special issue is to invite contributions that investigate the nexus of an extended understanding of wisdom and sustainability as it helps to transform business ethics *as* and *in* practice. Recent studies of practical wisdom related to ethics in business have problematized certain restricted understandings and implications and outlined the need for a future research agenda (e.g., Ames et al. 2020; Wolcott 2020). This agenda is timely, as we face complex crises with unprecedented grand challenges (George et al. 2016) concerning the present and future of the planet. For example, the broad concept of “sustainability” (e.g., Desjardins 2016) is used in this context to talk descriptively and normatively about alternatives to business-as-usual.

We call for a revival and reconceptualization of wisdom in relation to sustainability as a medium for transformation that realizes and implements ethics and responsibility in individual, social, and institutional practices (Küpers 2024), while realizing the ambitions of ‘good’ organizations, management, and leadership (Beabout 2012; Statler and Küpers 2019). Such transformative wisdom integrates extended forms of knowing, including: embodied, implicit knowing; not-knowing; and contemplative or spiritual knowing. These extended forms relate to ethically grounded, timely, and responsively placed sustainable practices on multiple levels in business organizations and management, as well as in relation to the wider ecology. The process of integrating wisdom and sustainability (Intezari 2015) enacts an embodied ethically integrative practice that is effective in a wide variety of applied fields. By going beyond traditional forms of knowledge-based phronesis and virtue ethics, transformative wisdom integrates emotional and experiential approaches and revives discernment and reflexivity, resulting in more meaningful work-related engagement and well-being (Ardel and Sharma 2023) catalyzing a just, resilient, and flourishing society (Antonacopoulou 2022).

Objectives and Illustrative Topics

The following objectives outline the key aims and thematic focus of this special issue:

- To reformulate contemporary business ethics theory to better respond to the multiple crises and grand challenges facing our planet and its people by repurposing businesses.
- To consider how practical, transformative wisdom in theory and practice can help scholars and practitioners to understand, develop, and enact new, integral responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and societies in dealing with or averting the negative consequences of the Anthropocene.
- To encourage multi- and interdisciplinary debate and dialogue on advancing existing wisdom paradigms in order to contribute to an extended understanding of ethics in practice, related to sustainability, by drawing on philosophy, cultural studies, management and organization science, and cross-disciplinary research.

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- To develop new paradigmatic, theoretical, and methodological frameworks for more ethical, responsive, responsible, sustainable, and wise practices and policies in business and society.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Examining the incorporation of philosophical understandings of wise transformative practices into business ethics and sustainability-oriented leadership—for example, the theoretical foundations and practical possibilities of wise sustainable strategies, decisions, and practices in the business ethics context.
- Conceptualizing and operationalizing the interconnected nature of transformative wisdom and ethical and political processes and practices at the micro, meso-, macro-, and mundo-levels, including individual, organizational, and societal levels.
- Exploring the role of wisdom-based ethos and ethics in shaping sustainable leadership and business models that prioritize long-term societal and environmental well-being over short-term gains, while considering constraints and other critical and limiting factors.
- Investigating the phenomenological aspects of sustainability, focusing on how embodied implicit knowing through direct engagement with sustainable practices can lead to deeper ethical insights and commitments. This includes navigating knowing, not-knowing, unlearning, meeting the epistemological, ontological, and axiological challenges in relation to sustainability, and addressing the dynamics of collective action in sustainable business practices.
- Understanding the influence of the core components of practical wisdom, such as mindfulness, reflexivity, sensemaking, compassionate concern, but also situational adaptation, social relations, and other aspects of embodied wise transformative practices on technological development, such as AI-driven and technocratic practices.
- Discussing the methodological challenges of assessing and measuring the effect of practical and transformative wisdom, for example, in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in organizational and societal settings.
- Providing practical implications, not merely for an ethics-oriented management, but a phronetic approach to cultivating human potentiality (at the core of “paideia”) which supports an activated and emplaced integration of transformative wisdom and sustainability for advancing and flourishing all life, including human and “more-than-human.”

Focus on (Business) Ethics and Methodology

In line with the disciplinary and thematic scope of the *Business Ethics Quarterly*, we invite scholars from a variety of perspectives. Especially welcomed are contributions that promote a critical and comprehensive integration of transformative wisdom as ethics in practice. Accordingly, contributions should not only elucidate but also critically reflect, inquire, and examine how transformative wisdom and sustainability intersect in general and how they are indispensably connected to ethics and responsibility in and of particular business practices. This requires a clear articulation of the challenges and opportunities associated with embedding ethical and responsible considerations into sustainability efforts, ensuring that these discussions are not peripheral but central to the discourse on sustainable business strategies. Methodologically, we welcome theoretical, conceptual, and historical research approaches as well as contributions based on qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed methods. We seek both original theoretical and empirical contributions for investigating transformative wisdom and sustainability practices attending to stance taking and choice making and not merely ethical dilemmas and moral paradoxes. We are interested especially in papers that offer new directions and critical and process-philosophical perspectives, related not only to organization and leadership/management studies but also multi- and crossdisciplinary approaches that integrate philosophical, sociological, psychological and other disciplines, including environmental science and cultural anthropology.

Submission Process

Manuscripts must comply with the journal's submission guidelines for contributors: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-ethics-quarterly/information/instructions-for-authors-submission-guidelines>. Submissions that do not conform to these instructions, in terms of manuscript style and referencing, will not be reviewed. Note that, as per the journal's statement of aims and scope, *BEQ* does not publish pedagogically focused research or review articles that summarize a body of literature. All manuscripts must be prepared according to the journal guidelines: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-ethics-quarterly/information/instructions-contributors>. Papers should be no more than 12,000 words (*BEQ* standard) in length (including the body of the text and the footnotes, but not including the abstract, tables, figures, or references), and will be blind reviewed following the journal's standard review process.

Manuscripts should be submitted after August 1, 2025, and no later than September 30, 2025, using *BEQ*'s online submission system: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/beq>. When submitting, be sure to choose the option that indicates that the submission is for this special issue.

Key Dates

BEQ special issue submission window: August 1–September 30, 2025

Publication: late 2026 (est.)

More Information

Further information may be obtained by contacting the guest editors at SI_wisdom@beqjournal.org.

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WENDELIN KÜPERS (wkuepers@karlshochschule.de) is professor of leadership and organization studies at Karlshochschule International University in Karlsruhe, Germany. Combining a phenomenological and cross-disciplinary orientation, his research focuses on embodied, emplaced, emotional, creative and aesthetic dimensions of organizing and managing. In his current research and teaching he is focusing on more responsive, responsible, and wiser forms of organizations and management/leadership that are contributing towards more integral and sustainable practices. He is co-editor of a book series, The Practical Wisdom in Leadership and Organization Series, with Routledge. Furthermore, he is associate editor of the journal *Business Ethics, the Environment and Responsibility*, has edited a recent special issue on “Ethics and Temporality” in the *Journal of Business Ethics* and serves as editorial board member of and reviewer for various journals.

MATT STATLER is the Richman Family Director of Business Ethics and Social Impact Programming and a Clinical Professor of Business and Society at NYU Stern School of Business. Previously, Statler served NYU’s Center for Catastrophe Preparedness and Response as the Director of Research and as Associate Director of the International Center for Enterprise Preparedness. He worked as the Director of Research at the Imagination Lab Foundation in Lausanne, Switzerland following several years as a management consultant in New York City. His research on wisdom, play, ethics, leadership, and strategy has been published in dozens of peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. He completed a PhD in philosophy from Vanderbilt University, spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Heidelberg, and obtained bachelor’s degrees in Spanish and philosophy from the University of Missouri.

ELENA P. ANTONACOPOULOU served as tenured faculty (full professor) at universities in the UK (Warwick, Manchester, Liverpool) and Canada (Western) and visiting professor in the UK (Lincoln University), Norway (Royal Norwegian Airforce Academy), and Cyprus (University of Cyprus, Nicosia). Her principal research expertise lies in the future of work, organizational learning and strategic resilience and renewal, with a focus on the leadership implications. She has published widely in international journals and edited books and policy

reports. She has been elected and served in multiple leadership roles in the top professional bodies (Academy of Management, European Academy of Management, European Group for Organizational Studies, British Academy of Management) and has received several awards for her outstanding leadership, service contributions, and teaching excellence. She has founded the GNOSIS Institute to promote knowledge philanthropy and to avert “humane poverty” by designing innovative leadership and organizational development programs.

MONIKA ARDELT is professor of sociology in the Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law at the University of Florida. She is the developer of the widely used *Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale* (3D-WS; 2003) based on the *Three-Dimensional Wisdom Model* (3D-WM). In 1999, she was elected as a Brookdale National Fellow to study the similarities and differences between aging and dying well. As a Positive Psychology Templeton Senior Fellow in 2005, she examined the association between spirituality and aging well. In 2010, Ardel was awarded Fellowship status of the Gerontological Society of America. She is the co-editor of the book *Faith and Well-being in Late Life: Linking Theories with Evidence in an Interdisciplinary Inquiry* (2009), a deputy editor of the *Journal of Family Issues*, and a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Aging Studies*, *Research in Human Development*, and the *Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. Ardel has published numerous journal articles and book chapters in the area of successful human development across the life course with particular emphasis on the relations between wisdom, spirituality, and well-being. She also studies the characteristics of wise organizations and wise leadership and how they affect employees’ work-related and personal well-being.