Eastern philosophies and business ethics in organisational contexts

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Project description:

This PhD project aims to explore how ideas and concepts originated from Eastern philosophies (such as Daoism, Confucius etc.) influence the practice of business ethics in organisational contexts. Rather than being occluded by Western-centric theories and philosophies, new contributions to the field can be made through exploring endogenous representations and Eastern accounts of ethical understandings.

Despite the emerging research interest in the field, there is a lack of endogenous representations and understanding of how Eastern ethical ideas and concepts are interpreted and practised in organisational contexts (e.g. Yin & Quazi, 2018). Similarly, it is recognised that key concepts within the business ethics canon, such as responsibility and justice can be interpreted, practised, and experienced in different ways that are defined by Western-inspired models and theories (Todeschini, 2011). It has been increasingly recognised that ethical ideas and notions originated from Eastern, Southern and other non-Anglophone philosophies have distinctive features and understandings (e.g. Jamali, Karam, Yin, & Soundararajan, 2017; Todeschini, 2011; Xu & Yang, 2010). For example, the concept of friendship from Chinese thinking (Liang, Wu, & Zhang, 2018), ubuntu (Eyong, 2017), Daoist thinking (Dai, 2018; Xing & Sims, 2012), and Confucian ethics (Low & Ang, 2012). Although there are researchers attempt to adopt endogenous perspectives, further in-depth studies from Eastern and Southern perspectives are needed to 'actively engage with grassroots meaning-making' (Mitra, 2012, p. 132) to re-define business ethical concepts and contribute to contextually based understandings.

Hence, this PhD studentship invites applications that explore business ethics practice drawing from Eastern perspectives. It offers an opportunity to explore how Eastern perspectives will contribute to the understanding and practice of business ethics and organisation studies. It will also critically evaluate the demarcation between the so-called 'East' and 'West'.

The proposed research context can be in either private and/or public sectors, based in the UK and/or in other (inter)national contexts. However, the focus should be on exploring Eastern philosophical perspectives on ethics.

The call is open to a wide range of perspectives that influence business ethical understandings and practices in organisational contexts. The application should state clearly the chosen perspectives and focus of the proposed study. The research methodology will be qualitative, for example, ethnography, participant observations, interviews, and applicants will be expected to outline and offer a rationale for their preferred approach.

About the supervisors:

Wenjin's research interests are in the areas of organization studies, the dynamics of language and communication, Chinese classical philosophies and the associated implications for understanding organizing and organizations. Her current work is in the topics of discursive leadership, Daoism, endogenous understanding of ethics and sustainability.

Nik's research interests are in business ethics, social justice and inter-organisational collaboration. He is particularly interested in the intersection between contemporary ethics theory and practice.

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