

Marginalized groups of people in business – a new research agenda

This track at the EBEN – research conference 2022 in St. Petersburg aims to explore, challenge and problematize ethical challenges as well as possible solutions relating to marginalized groups of people experiencing marginalization in business. They are conventionally perceived to lack traditional forms of power such as public influence, formal authority, education, money, and political positions; however, they still possess the resources to impact their situations, their circumstances, and the structures that determine their situations. Business ethics researchers seldom consider marginalized people’s voices and experiences as resources to understand their lives. Only 78 studies in the *Journal of Business Ethics* and *Business Ethics Quarterly* out of the 7500 studies published between 2000–2019 included aspects of marginalized groups (Alm & Guttormsen, 2021). We welcome papers that are addressing the above, and consider the following questions (but not meant as an exhaustive list) at the core of establishing a future research agenda:

1. First, given the limited number of studies on MGP, more research is needed to derive a deeper, more multifaceted understanding of the role of these groups in contemporary business.
2. Second, we encourage more theorizing about MGP to understand the different degrees of impact on business from an included stakeholder perspective and from the perspective of ideal types in a Weberian sense, distinguishing between strong, medium, and small degrees of marginalization.
3. Third, we strongly encourage examining what it means to be marginalized and the social construction of who constitutes these groups. This is important, as MGP should not only be treated as objects to investigate, as a fixed phenomenon; indeed, they are knowledgeable subjects capable of interpreting their worlds and the worlds of others and of processing others’ interpretations of their worlds. Thus, different forms of otherness and othering processes should be examined—from a cross-cultural perspective—as we cannot expect these constructs or phenomena to be equivalent across cultures, sociopolitical and economic contexts, or institutional practices (Guttormsen, 2018).
4. Forth. The ethical dimensions of otherness in relation to MGP could be examined: “The essence is ... that the Other is different and other from me and that I in my ethical acknowledgement of this otherness must let the Other disturb me” (Muhr, 2008: 180). This could be a disturbance of publishing policies.
5. Fifth, we see a need to contest extant theories from the perspectives of the marginalized, to explore whether the scientific understanding of key managerial and organizational behavior and thinking (e.g., sustainable innovation and business models, talent management, inclusion/exclusion, work–life balance) need to be nuanced because such research tends to focus on employee groups other than MGP.
6. Sixth, we welcome conceptualizing MGP and their roles in business in relation to the emerging agendas of responsible research and innovation, as well as responsible management—in addition to the UN’s 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.
7. Seventh, on a methodological note, we encourage methodological innovation where the conventional lines between the researchers and MGP as research subjects are diminishing. This might take the form of research designs in which MGP are placed in the driver’s seat as fellow researchers and set the direction of what knowledge to produce about MGP phenomena and/or in collaborative ventures with scientists (e.g., collaborative ethnography).
8. Finally, we see a need to investigate MGP and their roles in business in empirical contexts, such as during and after the ongoing pandemic, and the impact of context on their roles and marginalization, in addition to the rapidly changing nature of the future of work (Perkins,

Gilmore, Guttormsen, & Taylor, 2021)—preferably in a comparative perspective across organizations and countries.

Literature

Alm, K., & Guttormsen, D. S. (2021). Enabling the Voices of Marginalized Groups of People in Theoretical Business Ethics Research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-18.

Guttormsen, D. S. A. (2018). Advancing Otherness and Othering of the cultural Other during 'Intercultural Encounters' in Cross-Cultural Management Research. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 48(3), 314–332.

Muhr, S. L. (2008). Othering diversity—a Levinasian analysis of diversity management. *International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy*, 3(2), 176–189.

Perkins, G., Gilmore, S., Guttormsen, D. S. A. & Taylor, S. (2021). Analyzing the impacts of Universal Basic Income in the changing world of work: challenges to the Psychological Contract and a future research agenda. *Human Resource Management Journal* (<https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12348>).