Track 14 Teaching International Business

~~**Format: Competitive**~~

Understanding ethics and international business processes for teaching in MBA Programmes

Abstract

This paper contributes to conversations about teaching in international MBA programmes where classroom diversity challenges "teachers" making choices on content, pedagogy, stances, and reconciling conflicting perspectives rooted in a plurality of local, national and international practices involving values, beliefs, norms and attitudes. We draw on experiences in MBA program institutions in four countries to examine this research cornucopia with implications for teaching international business.

In international business, many aspects taken for granted are incomprehensible due to heritage burdens and educational practices. Commonly used concepts, "privacy", "community", "fairness", "justice", "stakeholder" and "general good" fail to convey standardisable content to students with different needs, pressures and understanding frames. Values and belief structures need to consider implications for plurality in changing systems, structures and processes arising from boundaries of task, technology, sentience, space, time and understanding. The importance of attachments, childrearing and social structures governing possibilities and actualities of projections and introjections of past, current and future raise questions about balance, harmony, and purpose. The paper concludes that in teaching international business, dialogue space should be created for giving voice to local, national and international concerns, needs and responsibilities that arise from stakeholder interactions and practices, not only from pre-defined values and frames.

Keywords: international business, business ethics teaching and pedagogy, open systems, boundaries, experiential learning, dialogue, interpretation

Understanding ethics and international business processes for teaching in MBA Programmes

INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous clarion calls for reinforcing Business Ethics teaching in international MBA programmes after the global financial meltdown in 2008 and the many corporate scandals that have surfaced since then involving time revered institutions the world over. Two articles in the local Indian newspapers that caught our attention seem a good starting point to wonder how the way our understanding of the legitimacy, propriety and desirability of international business affects pedagogy in MBA programmes. There was a news item in the Indian media how school children are 'taught' to stay within lines or boundaries from early on, instructed not to question authority figures and authority structures, to walk, sit and behave without breaking boundaries and how this shapes them into submitting to hierarchical authority (Musafir, June 28, 2011). Another article by Sarabhai (June 26, 2011) at about the same time voiced concerns about future of humanity and how to safeguard it by creating new leaders with an explicit attitude to become "servant leaders" (Greenleaf, 2002), instead of leaders of greed, rot, debt, hunger and anger: a call for including ethics in all the subjects and facets of life (Sarabhai, 2011). What caused daring to care narrow down to non-caring to dare?

The answer may lie in Goscinny's brilliant satirical depiction in Obelix and Company of Roman graduates from a "Latin School of Economics" employed by a multinational empire conjure up the idea of introducing "menhir business" i.e. orchestrating demand and supply for accumulating heavy stone boulders of no value to anyone except those organizing the madness. (Goscinny, 1976), Akin to tulip- mania, the envy and greed acted out under the orchestrated demand and supply conditions artificially fuelled by "professional" managers capable of organizing worthless activity on an industrial scale nearly ruined the little Gaullian village (Goscinny, 1976).

Alumni of ivy league MBA programmes with sterling accreditations and high international rankings routinely show up as the usual culprits in corporate malfeasance sometimes exposed by their own

overreach, occasionally by whistleblowers, but most often when the crises their actions produce get investigated by auditors or regulatory agencies or those entrusted with tracking economic crimes. Might we as management teachers be contributing to the skills, acumen and utter disregard for humanity with which some of our alumni obsessed with "earning" their upward mobility, bonuses and Employee Stock Option Plans (ESOPs) as rewards take advantage of their positions? Do we need to do something or make changes in our approach? After all, one of the main Gandhian principles was: first change yourself, only then can you advise others. The espoused theory as a mental map and as an image does not always coincide with the theory-in-use (Argyris, 1990, 2002). How did we get where we are? Can it be said, to slightly twist a Douglas Adams' proclamation: "*We may not have gone where we intended to go, but we think we have ended up where we (unconsciously) wanted to be*".

As teachers, the authors have witnessed the pulls and pressures and struggles of young would-be MBAs on the threshold of professional aspirations adjusting to the competitive and rather Darwinian systems where success and achievement are valued as ends regardless of means. When identifying with aggressors, violators, oppressors offers quick vertical mobility, rules get regarded as impediments and the unlawful may take precedence over the unjust if only the illegal can be avoided. An Indian mobile telephone company's advertising campaign on television with the punchline "*Har ek friend zaroori hota hai*" (translatable as "all kinds of friends are required") exemplified this by showing how with the aid of a mobile phone, one could organize cheating in an exam from a distance, fooling the invigilators.

It has been reported (Sunderesan, 1.5. 2015) that when tremors of the recent earthquake of April 25, 2015 were felt by a large group of managers assembled for a corporate event in a 5-star convention centre in Delhi, people disbelieved what they were seeing (chandeliers swaying, floor shaking). They reassured themselves after turning on their phones because they found no messages, broadcasts or tweets on the internet or social media announcing an earthquake. So people joked about it, took no precautions and remained inside for the second tremor, minutes later. This is the

extent to which people have become desensitized from experiencing life in the raw. These are poignant reminders of the loss of personal authority and accountable locality in a world characterized by forces of centripetal convergence in which one of the casualties is the evaporation of responsibility vertices aided by vortices of communication.

If the real can be substituted by virtual images aided by smartphones using Facebook, Apple, Google and Amazon (FAGA) in a world where "I tweet and receive tweets, therefore I am", skilled incompetence to learn experientially may be spreading faster than we imagine. There are two implications of this phenomenon. One, that the local, national and international rules, norms, customary practices are, day by day, getting more strongly influenced by the lull reinforced by global connectivity underpinning drivers of international business peddling the belief that international business has a prior claim and precedence over almost everything else. Secondly, how do we as teachers with the responsibility of facilitating young people growing up armed with second-to-second telematic connectivity help them in understanding the value of their own experience, the spirit of curiosity, wonder and inquiry to structure their own inquiry frames and develop their inquiring minds towards critical thinking, and to value knowing and not-knowing over valuing easily accessed information and opinions that can easily enslave them.

Understanding how international business processes affect the scope and prospects of Business Ethics pedagogy in MBA programmes, normatively, and phenomenally may hold the key to what may be done by responsible educators at this inflexion point in the historical evolution of a world where the artifice of limited liability incorporated entities as artificial juridical persons have expanded their power at the cost of erosion of authority of natural persons.

This paper contributes to conversations about teaching and pedagogy in international MBA programmes in this context. In these programmes, classroom diversity on nationality, gender, age, educational background and professional aspirations challenges the "teacher" to make difficult choices on content and pedagogy, adopt stances, and reconcile conflicting perspectives rooted in a plurality of local, national and international practices involving values, beliefs, norms and attitudes

arising from how international business is organised. The authors draw on their teaching experiences in the highly ranked MBA program institutions in India, Finland, Belgium and Bhutan to draw attention to this neglected research cornucopia that has implications for teaching international business.

The structure of this paper is as follows. After this introductory section, we examine why many business ethics issues have become incomprehensible due to overwhelming heritage burdens. We explore why commonly used concepts such as 'privacy', "community", "fairness", "justice", "stakeholder" and the "general good" fail to convey standardisable content of significance to students with different needs, pressures and understanding frames. In the following section, we argue that values and belief structures need to take into consideration implications arising from the pulls of plurality in changing systems, structures and processes arising from six boundary conditions of task, technology, sentience, space, time and understanding. The paper then links the microeconomic and microsocial underpinnings of macro processes to the importance of understanding attachments, childrearing and social structures governing possibilities and actualities of projections and introjections of past, current and future. We then raise more questions about balance, harmony, and purpose that are intractable without creating more space for dialogues which inquire into and examine held assumptions. Finally, we conclude that in the teaching of international business, the dialogue space we propose should give voice to local, national and international concerns, needs and responsibilities that arise from stakeholder interactions and practices and not only from pre-defined values and frames.

THE CAN OF WORMS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (IB) TEACHING

The idiom of can of worms can be seen through two diverse meanings: one, that there is something unpleasant ahead; the other,that no ground is fertile without worms! Teaching international business in MBA programmes is fraught with several difficulties (Mathur, 2012). The field originated as a multi-disciplinary endeavour with strands incorporated from industrial economics, governance of capital flows and the international financial markets and institutions,

concerns over circumventing trade barriers particularly non-tariff barriers, the structuring of trade substituting foreign direct investment, management of multinationals with regard to foreign affiliates and subsidiaries, management of cultural and institutional differences, international corporate governance, government procurements of strategic assets and resources, public-private partnerships, modes of entry including services and product-services linkages, proprietary knowledge creation and diffusion, and regulatory matters concerning environment, climate change, competitiveness and preferential bilateral and plurilateral treatments, to mention just a few.

The professionals inducted by organizations and institutions as actors in these domains are charged with furthering the interests of their identified stakeholding constituencies, communities of practice and limited interest groups characterized by lobbying and powerbases to pursue motivations legitimized locally, nationally and internationally. No incumbent takes up a role with a blank slate or an open-ended possibility that is not encumbered by expectations that have a history and a geography. The early idea of a person being epistemologically 'tabula rasa' (Locke, 1690/1959) that anything that a person learns is received from outside seems to be an unexamined assumption underlying the push for more business ethics teaching in MBA programmes. This is interesting because it presupposes that only by information inputs students would somehow change into more ethical beings and disregards that students live in communities where they notice how others actually behave. It also does not recognize the fact that basic emotions are fundamental to any person, either consciously or unconsciously. Ethics is not only epistemological, but emotional, ontological and phenomenal. It involves the psyche. If we are empty tables, do our experiences come from outside? Feelings and emotions are learned through attachments and interactions, and behaviours are reinforced or opposed by others, including parents, school teachers, neighbours, institutions, and other peers in the community.

In academia, we value that teaching must be evidence-based or flow from research and experience. Following Smith (1993, p. 153), if we use interpretivist criteria with open-ended mindsets and focusing , which means open-endedness, and focus our thoughts on what the role of

research should be, more inquiry based practices are needed. This also calls for, nomadic writing practices where writing is thought of and used as a method of inquiry (St.Pierre, 2002). "Authenticity" and reliance on "internal ethical system" are regarded as crucial in hermeneutic explorations (Lincoln, 2002, p. 329), because without examining assumptions those assumptions are never revealed and keep functioning in the background. All ethics teaching is fundamentally bound to inner and outer dialogues (Buber, 2002).

In discussions about '*national psyche'* as something very homogenous, the actual diversity in beliefs, practices and histories within national groups gets missed. We question this assumption of a homogenous psyche anchored in the notion that somehow one can promote only one kind of psyche and also that this psyche has remained the same throughout centuries and universally. According to Roland (1988, p. 4) "…intrapsychic self varies significantly if not radically according to social and cultural patterns of societies…". Psyche is also depicted as a 'soul', meaning the Self that the person is: in ethics this would be the strength to know what is essential. Psyche in Greek mythology was an exceptionally beautiful woman who had difficulty finding a husband, something that would be interesting in contexts where marriage marks an important stage of maturity, signifying a commitment to inter-generational continuity. How concerned are IB professionals we educate about inter-generational continuities? Is their concern about themselves, or their own families, or also about communities of origin? What about the conflicts between the interests of communities of origin and communities of habitat? The patriotism with which young Indians are raised and the accompanying hostility to colonial political and economic imperialism often translates into considerable animosity and xenophobia, particularly against the USA. USA is also the country to which a large number of young Indians migrate for higher education and employment with multinationals considering that over half of the world's multinational companies have the USA as their home country. Jairam Ramesh, writing an OP-ed piece for a national newspaper in India captured this brilliantly. According to him, the mindset among the young is: "*Yankee, Go home! And take me with you!!"*

The influence of USA (that pioneered the first MBA programmes and is home to most of the multinationals) pervaded the field of international business from the practitioners' perspective and also from the IB scholar's perspective. The salience of markets, the rights of owners to pursue shareholder value maximization as an overriding objective over other stakeholders, and the incentivisation of managers as agents by their principals has been mainstreamed.

What causes some concepts (such as profit) to be easily comprehended and others (such as privacy, fairness, justice, community, stakeholder, general good) to be elusive?. Profit as a concept has been easy to incorporate, and business discussions are often profit-oriented, as if nothing else matters. In business cases, a popular pedagogy, students are encouraged to step into the role of a protagonist, as if other actors in the drama who might be affected by his/her actions necessarily have some kind of subordinate significance. One of the authors organised an event for MBA students to discuss ethics with a prominent industrialist. Many questions raised by students were related to profit or 'losing out of opportunities' which seemed to scare students into fearing a performance shortfall. The industrialist responded to them that if one does not follow ethics, then one loses credibility. Time and again, we have noticed that the thinking that business and ethics or profit and ethics cannot co-exist is one of the most difficult aspects to address. When we have interacted with students to understand their anxieties, we learnt that their fears are multi-dimensional, not only about money. There are pictures in the mind that involve social status, aspirational thresholds and mental adjustments-intellectual and emotional. Any indication of lowering prospects of income or rewards are perceived as a 'threat' to existence and 'limit' to aspirations (fear of being curbed). Or is it difficult to distinguish ethics as specific values and beliefs from basic issues of responsibility and accountability held to be value and belief free? The latter refer to basic structures that provide reliability and systems that provide reasonable certainty that every business needs in the form of accounts, reporting systems, salary payments, customer relationships and commitments etc. In developing countries without welfare state entitlement guarantees, individuals are linked to their families, who often support their offsprings throughout

their schooling years right through to MBA education. This places additional mental burden on some students who feel they need or are compelled to graduate quickly to earn and pay back. This converts their self status to being instruments of a kind committed to generating a return on the investments made on their education.

Another aspect we found strange was that many of our students in India and Bhutan do not know what a sweatshop is or what constitutes work-life balance. For many, it is a reality they see in some form every day: persons working long hours on statutory minimum wages. Since it is common, what is special about it? Everyone has a right to income, and when there is little or no choice, are we supposed to let people starve? It is a compelling argument in cases where choices can be limited between bad and worse and loss of work and income from work is like economic death. Every society has its own problems that cannot be resolved quickly nor easily reconciled with international benchmarks. The paradoxes, of both, are present in this experience.

The familial relationships often exhibit high "symbiosis-reciprocity" (Roland, 1988, p. 7), referring to emotional intimacy, dependency and relationships within the family system. Also, many companies are family owned (over 90 percent in Belgium, Bhutan and India), and run by the family members with their own family compulsions and dynamics. In such instances, Family becomes an integral part of business ethics discussions. Ethics that do not incorporate dynamics in families, communities and societies and their plight in trying to balance needs of greater well-being and needs to belong appear irrelevant to our students in India and Bhutan.

There has been a dearth of articles about teaching ethics as part of MBA education in different parts of the world (e.g. Canales et al., 2010; Ghoshal, 2005; Middleton, 2011; O'Brien, 2010; Rogers, 2011). Everyone would easily agree that something needs to be done, but there can be considerable disagreement on what exactly should be done. For scholars, the whole new Millennium after 2000 has been both a 'goldmine' and a 'disaster': goldmine in the sense of new, spectacular cases of misbehaviour cropping up almost every day and disaster in terms of fallen

hopes, discredit and misrepresentations of what ethics could be. It is as if Business Ethics had reached the 'Matrix-Problem': The view from the window is beautiful, but the reality is ugly.

Among the IB among the many cases the authors have taken to class in Finland were cases such as the obfuscation of the business model in Enron's mark-to-market accounting, GE (under Jack Welch) that immediately after his departure was fined by the Securities and Exchange Commission for mis-stating profits and ordered to restate its financial position for ten previous years, Tetrapak for predatory pricing in Norway and Italy, the contest over the domain name Port of Helsinki, predatory pricing by Valio, the leading Dairy product enterprise in Finland, and French La Poste's unjust exclusion by SWIFT in Switzerland. A word about each of these would exemplify the issues we are raising.

A generation of MBA students was brought up to admire Enron as an innovator and prominent scholars like Eisenhardt wrote articles published in Harvard Business Review extolling the virtues of Enron. The Finnish students wondered how lax the regulatory authorities in USA were in permitting the energy market of California to be turned into a casino and how Enron remained undiscovered for long due to its proximity to the Bush family. But they were unable to see parallels in their own country in the conduct of Nokia or Valio. The Finnish students trusted their own government and were aghast when discussing how the Finnish Valio engaged in predatory pricing to push dairy products of a neighbouring country's dairy enterprise out of the market. They were less sympathetic to the defence mounted by the owner of the brand name "Port of Helsinki" despite the fact the authorities found that the marine port of Helsinki had never previously used that epithet and went by the Finnish name of "*Helsingin Satama*". The solidarity with France as another EU member was a factor in their castigating SWIFT from placing obstructions to enlisting the French Postal system in its membership to enable its customers in France make international capital transfers. They rejoiced over the European Commission's decision to fine Tetrapak (from Sweden) for predatory contracting with their customers given the rivalry between Sweden and Finland which extends to more than ice-hockey.

The case of Satyam has been called as the "Enron of India". When a case-study of this company was taken to class for discussion, students were divided in their stance, although many investors lost their money due to the Chairman-CEO Mr Raju plundering the company to increase the wealth of his own family. This was because the company also participated actively in CSR (for instance the company offered ambulance services to the needy). The students get perplexed, since the 'good and the bad' co-exist in many cases, and companies step into spaces where there are inadequacies in public service provisioning and even if they do have profit motives, at least philanthropic services they provide improve well-being. And yet what Mr Raju did was deplorable! One needs to clearly define what is considered improper and what is proper, and how these can exist simultaneously. Often in class, there are students who have worked in the companies discussed. This makes discussion both lively and difficult. For peers, those who have work experience know more (superior knowledge) and for them experience weighs more than reflecting on the experiences and meanings (ownership of truth).

But what is ugly here? Some may even argue that there are no uglier scenes than before. However, in many ways, people discuss more of ethics, because they have a) lost money in get-rich quick ponzi schemes , b) been cheated in real-estate matters (eg: paying premium prices for housing that will never have piped water), c) lost confidence in a bank (eg: Barclays) or institution (LIBOR) or business partner abroad after being cheated); d) been discriminated against due to falling general wages alongside whopping increases in astronomical top-management packages. There have also been cases of delayed retribution of corrupt politicians or business leaders raising possibilities that today's misdeeds that are unlawful but not found illegal may be found illegal in the future. This counters the "it is not illegal" argument often presented as an excuse.

In Bhutan, MBA students already arrive in class with an indoctrination that "Gross National Happiness" is more important than "Gross National product". In a country with 2 million population and deep respect for the monarchy, it is very difficult to separate legitimate interests of businesses with nation-building agenda and the inherent basic right of people to determine what

constitute measures of their happiness. One of the authors had the strange experience of a whole college community (including himself) suddenly having to go without lunch because the Queen Mother's entourage was passing by and all the food was diverted to feed the royal procession. No one felt aggrieved by this because what happened was part of cultural tradition and there was never any discussion of whether this kind of incident adds or detracts from gross national happiness.

In Belgium, another peculiarity was observed. The IB curriculum itself was heavily loaded with learning International Finance, International Trade and EU community directives and regulations raising the spectre of what gets missed when students from different institutions study international business from widely different perspectives. In USA, the focus is mainly on multinational management of affiliates and subsidiaries with very little attention to international institutions.

THE DESIGN OF MBA PROGRAMMES

In many MBA institutions , courses in Business Ethics are not part of the international business curriculum, and considered 'soft-skills' secondary to primary skills such as marketing, operations and accounting. In schools, where it is part of the curriculum, there are mixed responses. If it is compulsory, students feel that beliefs and values are being imposed on them or that it has little or no value for 'real life'; if it is elective or voluntary, there are no or few takers. We find this paradoxical, because ethics and its relevance are spoken about in almost every management/CEO speech. Also, ethics, anti-corruption measures, need for good corporate governance are all much discussed, but ethics as a subject is not often valued, because the first response is: can ethics be taught? What skills does it increase? And if it can be learnt, what are the best ways of doing so?. The utilitarian approach speaks most to the students, because the 'greatest good for the greatest number of people' sounds good. But students are not clear what Fundamental Rights (based on the Constitution of India) they have, what Social Contract means and what constitutes Commons. What really is the cultural basis for 'care'? To whom does it extend? What is the rubric of fairness? Why is privacy inextricable from notions of human dignity, equality and autonomy? What is justice in a majoritarian democracy without rule of law and minority rights? Why is community important?

There are many reasons that mitigate against business ethics starting from need to learn other subjects (time); not seeing any practical use for ethics; competitive pressures in MBA itself and subsequent need to secure a good work placement where it may or may not be valued; scarcity of good ethics teaching material; limited understanding of cross-cultural issues in international business and its relevance to ethics; inflexibilities in the curriculum, etc. But this is also related to what kind of workforce is desired by the industry at a given time, how roles and tasks are drawn, and what kinds of skills are appreciated versus what kinds of skills young graduates are assumed to possess. While discussing need for ethics, one student pointed out that it could take years before any of them from the class reach a position of responsibility where ethics thinking and organisational skills are needed (so why to study now?). Structures in businesses are such that graduating MBAs in India get placed according to their perceived skills and learning institution's prestige people and grow within the company by contributing to its growth and prosperity. In contrast, where MBA placement programmes are weak as in Finland, MBA students graduating have to consider entrepreneurship for their livelihood and soon may have to relate to other stakeholders such as community institutions, parastatal subventing organizations and banks, besides potential customers and employees. Therefore, we need to also understand and research why something is sidetracked, what is the nature of work and employment at a given time and space, what is expected, how and by whom. To understand these, we explore heritage burdens.

Heritage Burdens and Family Structures

In India, class discussions often touch traffic conditions and safety issues such as using seatbelts (or rather, not using them), and unruly road-behavior and not wearing a helmet, despite traffic rules. Helmets and seatbelts are worn by many only to avoid police and traffic fines, not for their intrinsic worth because safety is a non-issue. We often wonder and have explored with students why there is little or no safety consciousness, but so far, have not received any sufficiently comprehensive answer. Seeing families of three to four and without helmets on two wheelers makes us think that

safety may be a culturally relative phenomenon. So is the value placed on human life, on privacy, autonomy.

Following Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) and the GLOBE-study (Chhokar et al., 2007), India is considered to be high in collectivism and in-group collectivism, and very high in power distance. What does this signify in terms of pronounced values and practices? To understand these, consider how family, community and society affect pedagogy.The usual family structure in India is depicted as that of joint-family, which means that there can be 2-4 generations living together. The joint-family is a dynamic process, where new members are added by marriage (male offspring bring their spouses into the family system) or subtracted through death, divorce or marriage (female offspring move to their new husband's place). While joint-family as a place in time is changing, it is still a very significant factor in how persons view, grow and start understanding the world.

The "picture in the mind" of hierarchy and authority originates in the family system and child-rearing practices. In family systems (seven persons or more living together in one space), group dynamics are different from nuclear families (of below seven persons). A large family becomes almost like an organization, because roles and role boundaries are drawn in such a manner that facilitate everyday functioning and may become more transactional due to this. For example, age, seniority, education, and work contribute to how the internal hierarchy is drawn: usually the eldest male is the key decision maker, and the hearth is controlled by the eldest lady. Others submit to the perceived hierarchy, its compulsions and role-tasks assigned to them. The system is controlled by routines that prescribe for members how the system functions, when they are needed, what their tasks are and how to ensure harmony, when possible, based on the previously mentioned "symbiosis-reciprocity" (Roland, 1988, p. 7). In joint-families, privacy is not the most valued issue, because spaces are shared and often even so called private spaces are not really private where individual privacy is strongly adhered to and institutionally enforced.

Finland is largely populated by nuclear families, single adult households, and strong ties to communities of habitat. Housing markets are so rigid that it is difficult for people to sell homes and

move to other locations for work. Despite shrinkage in the size and scope of welfare-state entitlements, Finns rely for their security of well-being (especially childcare, maternity care, healthcare and education) on the welfare state. The inward looking perspective makes international business required to support the economy, especially public expenditures, the domain of very few persons. So both the teaching of international business and ethics surrounding international business are peripheral concerns for the populace and contact with foreigners are limited (Finland has the dubious distinction of having the smallest proportion of foreigners in its resident population of all the countries in the world).

Belgium is accustomed to a strong presence of foreigners in the country, particularly other Europeans. In contrast, Bhutan, the fourth country from which we draw examples in this paper is an isolated mountainous national community consisting of isolated local communities where inter-community contact is extremely limited because of poor transport networks. Travelling a distance of 200 kilometres can take over 8 to 10 hours. The brightest students would tend to go abroad to USA or Europe to study and the ones studying international business in Bhutan are hardly likely to work in a multinational abroad. Would such differences not have implications for the design of teaching international business and ethics in MBA programmes?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

In an Indian classroom, we discussed the Google case where Google bosses were found to be guilty for privacy violation by the Italian courts. This perplexed students greatly. They struggled to comprehend why Google would be indicted, and how the bosses could be held responsible. After all, internet spells 'freedom' and with privacy laws this freedom would be lost! We had a long discussion what it means for laws and legal systems to be local and jurisdictional, even though internet does not –from users point of view – appear to have boundaries. Also, a long discussion ensued about the differences in privacy notions. The notion of personal space varies across cultures. It also has to do with population density and the density of networks. This has a bearing on the

notion of "privacy" and unauthorized passing on of personal information or even selling it may render persons to become actual and virtual marketplaces in themselves – often without their knowledge.

The long tradition of *guru-shishya* relationship in India and Bhutan involves experiential learning and is different from the European or North-American idea of social individualism or total individualism. In this relationship, the guru is the person who takes some burden off the learner, and projects good qualities which the learner introjects and acts out. This means trusting the guru to be highly or more morally developed than one is. It is subduing one's will and choice to another. This, in the European tradition is very difficult to comprehend, since individualism is much stronger and part of the living tradition of everyday life. The idea of dependency, which is high in India, would be viewed as strange and not mature in Europe or in USA, where maturity has associations with the idea of freedom and related responsibilities. In Europe, the teacher may be an authority, but it is learner's responsibility to take care of her/his learning and learning process. In India, more responsibility from the teacher is expected. It is teacher's task to make sure most, if not all, persons in the class are learning.

Globalization and cross-border influences are affecting traditional structures. In the quest for getting best available education, places in good institutions can be achieved only by those with excellent academic track records and skills acquired to compete in entrance tests. Parents make sacrifices to finance good education for children, and competition is fierce from the moment a child starts school. Students are pushed to study hard, take extra tuition classes after school hours and education becomes the central issue in life, until a good job is secured. If one cannot keep up with others, one gets left out and choices get constricted. This makes the process cruel and insensitive for those who have different life-cycles of development for whatever reasons. Hardened competition focuses on individuals doing well, contrary to the ideas of sharing, life-long learning and helping others.

It is often forgotten that with the number of people increasing, so does complexity and delegation of tasks. The boundary of task and task partitioning is one of the most complex issues in MBA learning about organizations. In Finland, students have difficulties in conceiving the scale at which international business projects require collaboration, not merely cooperation. In Belgium, students find it difficult to understand that porosity of national boundaries for flows of goods, services, capital and ideas vary greatly country to country because they are used to regarding the post-1993 EU as the norm. This calls for a nuanced pluralistic outlook on understand ethics pedagogy needs in different countries. In our view and in the given context, this means a mix of using conceptual and experiential approaches: working from problems that people encounter towards concepts that can be linked – a 'pedagogical grounded theory' approach.

One of the most common laments encountered is that 'authorities' (again) failed to act or that problems are due to 'authorities'. This overarching and ever present argument blurs two boundaries: one, that a group contains persons that have individual responsibilities too; second, that authority figure is not only on the outside, but inherently part of self-authority residing in the person. In class rooms in India, Belgium and Bhutan, discipline is very strict. Such issues as being late, bunking classes, eating in class, making noises, not sitting in one's allotted seat are expected to be taken seriously. Metaphorically studies are more 'work' than 'fun' presenting the seriousness of studies and the goal which one hopes to achieve. In contrast, Finnish students learn at their own pace, are seldom under any pressure to complete their studies, and are treated as responsible adults in university classrooms.

This has implications. For instance, in India, much of the time one needs to clarify in class and refer to a concept that could be slightly alien in the Indian context: free will. It is alien, because free will also presupposes possibilities in carrying out many choices. In the Indian context it would be duty. The authority within is not the Self(ish) core of an individual, but the duty assigned to the person to take forward a family or a small community. Thus, in many cases, the expectations loaded on persons are high. It is here that the Kantian idea of duty as a mental representation of attitude

clashes with the duty perspective brought forth by Shri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. While both speak of duty and non-adherence to results as a basis for action, in Bhagavad Gita this non-adherence includes submission to a force higher than oneself, the Higher Being, because the ultimate goal is *moksha* (liberation).

One problem is that even if there is submission to a Higher Being, this beingness is not allotted to 'authorities' as a default; nor is it inherent in all managers. This is the problem with high power distance, because it strips person from deciding on their own, a quality needed for initiative in fast moving and changing environments. The 'authority' often depicted as a skewed displacement of modalities better suited for other quests blurs the use of self-authority – if not as free will, then as possibility to act from oneself, which is a key idea in most yogic traditions (as the True Self). Authority as a figure gets blurred with non-democratic and tyrannic authoritarianism as an activity orientation. Authority arises based on dynamic relationship and authoritarianism invokes power. Sometimes a hypothesis is presented that if one is not extremely strict in the class (e.g. remove people for slightest of disobedience, raise her/his voice, demand obedience), students do not feel cared for and safe.

So far we have discussed some elements that we have encountered and which have caused problems in understanding what Business Ethics is, can be and ought to be. The normative orientation thus needs to accompanied with activity orientation and understanding also behavioural and mental processes related to normativeness and behaviours: Business Ethics is both normative (as directive) and practice (the outcome). To become a directive, it needs to incorporate more views into how Business Ethics actually functions in different spaces and territories. In countries, where institutional systems are changing rapidly, business ethics cannot rely only on what is pre-set or written, but also what is experienced, which is current and involves emotions.

Lost and Found in Translations

Globalisation has paradoxically increased possibilities of getting lost. There is a need to understand deeply what others are and wish to be, something that has received little attention. In

this connection, the use of self as an instrument has not been discussed because it is regarded as belonging to the realm of therapy and counseling. However, the educator is in key position in what ethical problems, challenges, values, beliefs, stereotypes, reflections, archetypes, notions of self and others are explored and expressed, especially in groups where diversity is high or is needed. THow Ethics without involvement does not convince, but ethics with over-involvement is not good either. The use of self as an instrument can be a powerful way of connecting people to themselves and the world around them. The teacher needs to take different viewpoints or roles in the class. When the class prefers one view, the teacher can take another. This dialogue enables different sides of the matter to be examined. However, sometimes there is an assumption that whatever one says, is what one thinks. There is room for more reflective approaches.

The use of self in cross-cultural settings with large groups (having 60 to 90 students in class), based on our experiences, may become heavy for the teacher. This is particularly so for teachers from other cultures than the class who experience a plethora of projections which may sideline main discussions, and are in themselves quite important for class learning. Both co-authors have experience of this outside our own cultures. What we have observed in ourselves and in the class, is that a controversial subject such as business ethics raises a lot of anxieties which are sought to be unconsciously transferred to the teacher. The usual detachment from issues does not work in such a scenario; one needs to have a clear stance, but not a directive one to be able to creatively play with ideas. Leaving the decision to class only confuses it. The more unfamiliar the teacher, the more anxiety is projected. One of the authors told the class " *I represent a constructivist approach where learning happens between the active learners and the teacher*". This was interpreted as 'anything goes'. So there was a need to change the approach.

The perceived gap in cultural backgrounds is difficult if not impossible to address when there is lack of possibility to prepare students for cross-cultural encounters, or when the groups are too big to address such anxieties freely. We found this to be alarming, since cross-cultural issues and cross-cultural psychology are needed when interacting with diverse backgrounds (Laungani, 2007;

Roland, 1988). Students need to have spaces where they can reflect ethical everyday issues related to their own lives and studies in more informal and direct way, since they have voice that can bring out experiences and insights that need to be considered and addressed in the class, and further inquired. If this does not happen in a classroom, where else would it happen? However, time pressures and systemic rigidness may discourage this, and learned rigidness is then carried as a picture-in-the-mind over to other systems. While ethics has a strong knowledge component, the connection with self and the environment is most crucial in understanding and practising ethics. For this, dialogue practices offer a safe and contained space for explorations.

The *guru-shishya* mentoring relationship is important, since the 'new gurus' seem to be the "Internet" and the "CEO". The first was vividly portrayed by one student who wrote that for us students, the internet is practically a 'god'. One could decipher from the expression that whatever is presented in the web-of-all-thoughts, is relevant, real and respected. The use of the word "God" in this context was interesting, because God can also be understood and used as an attachment figure. One could hypothesize that whatever one considers as a 'higher being' will be one's constant companion on the path of life: it is from the internet and social media that solace, support and hope is derived from. If the web is god, what will be the role of a teacher? What kind of authority structure will be emerging?

What is in a System?

All open systems have six boundaries, sentience, space, task, technology, time, and understanding explained below

The Six Open Systems Boundaries

Boundary	**General meaning**	**Examples**
Sentience	How do I feel in my belonging in a group? What groups do I belong?	Belongingness to a particular group, e.g. peer group; feeling of connectedness, dependency issues, familial relationships
Space	How spaces are constructed? How do I use the space?	Construct of physical spaces such as educational institutions; classrooms, distance or nearness, noise
Task	How am I doing a task? What do I need to do? Why is it done? By whom?	The primary task needed to be done in any given moment, related to work, family, hobbies.
Technology	What helps me in carrying	Cross-cultural issues; misunderstandings; technological advances,

	out processes? What interrupts them?	technological barriers
Time	How do I use physical (kronos) and mental (kairos) time? What is time to me?	Using time and seeing time in relation to spaces and mental representations such as quick/slow, timely/untimely, opportunity cost
Understanding	What meanings do I derive? How flexible is my mind? How do I learn?	Understanding how the other boundaries constitute experiences and ability to work with these, alter these and constitute new experiences based on old ones and gaining new ones.

All of the above boundaries of a system are permeable. So is a role boundary where the nature of role, its boundaries and related tasks differ. In some ways, boundaries are illusions (Chattopadhyay, 1999). These mental representations of inner and outer worlds capable of being held as pictures-in-the-mind can be shared, expressed, explored, and also transformed. This would allay anxieties indirectly and directly expressed about being 'taught' ethics is as if one is not ethical to begin with besides providing a platform for reflection on experiences into connections with the 'abstract' (concepts and their relationships with each other); the role of own understanding (authority figures and the 'superego'); what can one actually do (frustration over perceived rigidness); and submission to lures, when own boundaries cannot hold.

To What Extent does Cultures Influence Us?

Gielen (2007) points out that perspectives needs widening, and concepts clear in one setting may be totally confusing in another. Padmanaban (1998) refers to feelings of alienation based on "pictures in the mind" invite projections. It is puzzling how students react to foreignness. For one, there is immense curiosity, which rarely gets spoken out. Foreigners are easily taken for a ride because no outsider knows nitty-gritties of a system. In countries rich in philosophical and spiritual texts, ethics problems and challenges, are part of social and cultural discourse traditions. In the so called developed countries, "sterile" problems (Laungani, 2007: p. 125) are often discussed. The 'absolutist position' (Berry, Poortinga, Segall and Dasen, 1992) which Laungani (2007: 7) assumes that whatever behaviours, feelings or emotions are mentioned, they are the same everywhere. Emotions need to be discussed, because the underlying meanings may differ greatly from thought.

These would be ethical "unthought knowns" (Bollas, 1987). Such unknown thoughts can be examined by creating shared understanding and dialogue mapping (Conklin, 2006).

Students often recognise the need for balance and yearn for fairness, without necessarily being able to connect behavior to results. There is an overwhelming introjection of the business world as the ruling force, idealized image or even goal of life. These are enforced by individual experiences which may be imagined or real. Imagined experiences are usually second hand impressions which are turned into reality, whereas real experiences are direct self-acquired ones. People may cite 'cost' as a factor way above ethics. Argyris (1980, p. 205) pointed out that in many or most societies, people are acculturated and socialized into "action strategies" which produce automated responses "to threatening issues by 'easing in,' 'appropriately covering,' or by 'being civilized". This means that to uncover these 'action strategies' we need interactions with other kinds of strategies, not just our own. Cross-cultural interactions are useful. Cultures evolve and cannot be pre-fabricated.

MBA on the Couch

The discussion on education reforms in India has been raging a long time. Recently there was a view expressed by the Head of India's Scientific Advisory Council C.N.R. Rao that India does not have an education system, but an exam system (Mathang & Chhapia, TNN, Apr 14, 2011). Indian students take many exams and their weightage is often more than 70% of the overall grade. It is difficult to create learning environments (especially in ethics) that are free of evaluation anxiety and competition; on the other hand we also have experiences in trying to promote courses on pass/fail approach where students themselves wanted grades! This was also reflected in some comments which highlighted that exam passers are of higher quality because they have passed exams. While this circularity rarely gets addressed, it is important to recognize that some systemic features easily become vicious. Faced with much competition, exam results become points of differentiation. Learning experience may get devalued.

To dare to care we need to look at logics of human functioning as an individual, in groups, communities and larger entities. Spaces have their own logics such as how institutions are started,

their histories and functions. If the making of a 'standard manager' with skills to operate and execute, take precedence over preparing a 'thinking manager', dreams of futures may crowd out future of dreams. Thus the need to widen experiential learning possibilities in order to introduce interpretation and containing ambiguity as managerial realities is acute. More inquiry based approaches need to be introduced into the curricula.This means that opportunities should be given to students to find out themselves how to address and find working solutions to wicked problems involving fragmentation, and social and factual complexity. In dialogue based approaches, experiential learning possibilities, observation skills, and ability to dwell in ambiguity become more relevant. For students, their own ability, interests, skills are important. Dialogue practices also emphasize listening to different views and working from a plurality of assumptions to find out appropriate solutions in a manner similar to design thinking (Liedtka, 2011). Often , problems need new solutions, not recycling of old ones.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, our focus of interest has been to contribute to an understanding of the living nature of Business Ethics in International Business by sharing what we have experienced in our work as educators in selected MBA institutions. We focused on our own experiences, because these provide roadmaps. Experiences trigger reflections and insights that release not only tremendous amount of information, but also reveal plurality of perspectives. No such experiences are truth-as-it-is, but stepping stones for inquiries when issues arise for further consideration in order to avoid ethical colonialism. Experiences constitute an important basis for knowing and for some forms of action research as well as "listening post" approaches. We urge for international business teaching to be blended with organization behavior and ethics. Technology has introduced an illusion of boundarylessness, timelessness and spacelessness with normative pressure for 'one size fit all' regardless of interpreter's location. This may result in interpreting facts in ways that do not make sense. This 'virtuality' seems to make it difficult to address issues that have complex origins, and there are kinds of learning cannot be dispensed quickly in compact forms.

Often such logics get castigated as 'national', rendering local interpretations void of power or universal appeal, ignoring relevant differences. Daring to transcend a current frame is increasingly difficult when sameness and standards are converging without understanding boundaries, and logics of time and space. This can be seen in how laws pertaining to one location are sought to be teleported to another without any or little systemic and cultural interpretation of social developments, history and related understandings that are part of the lived experience. It may induce behaviours that may be counterproductive to business when the quest for freedom overrides all other quests. One needs to think whether there can be local variations and value plurality.

The central problem of teaching international business with foundations in organization behavior and ethics involves a balance between three elements, relevance, harmonization and convergence. Since much of our understanding of the world is tightly connected to understanding frameworks, there will be differences in interpretations. Flexible and permeable boundaries can enable us see the logics behind actions of individuals, groups and institutions without giving in to commercial pressures that detract from advances in human dignity and well-being.

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