

## Part III

# Case Studies

**Howard Harris, Gayathri Wijesinghe, and Stephen McKenzie**

In the final part, the theoretical ideas of MacIntyre discussed in Parts I and II of the book are applied to practical concerns of three different management contexts; hospitality, human resource management, and social sustainability reporting.

These three chapters take as their starting point the observation that in contemporary society, productive crafts are often driven solely by external goods of profit maximisation. However, these case studies point out that this need not always be the case. By practicing productive crafts in a virtuous manner, internal and external goods can be sustainably achieved for all stakeholders concerned. The studies provide theoretical ideas on how to achieve this delicate balance, by steering a medium path between excessive vice (i.e. being exploitative in profit maximisation) and deficit virtue.

Tracy Wilcox begins the part by exploring the extent to which MacIntyre's conception that 'structures of compartmentalisation' tend to make difficult the exercise of moral agency in certain constraining situations through a case study that involves human resources managers being pressured to make difficult decisions during a corporate downsizing exercise. Wilcox examines the extent to which social structures shape agency and social structures are shaped by agency in terms of actions taken by individuals. Literature in institutionalist sociology ('new institutional theory') is considered alongside MacIntyrean theory, to draw out similarities and difference between the two perspectives. The results of this theoretical discussion are then assessed for accuracy through an empirical investigation which involves an ethnographic study of a large global corporation undergoing intense organisational changes including several downsizing exercises. This case study demonstrates how a group of human resources managers negotiated the intense pressure of competing priorities and interests of the organisational context to find ways to exercise moral agency for virtuous conduct.

The nature of moral agency and structures of compartmentalisation referred to in Wilcox's discussion are continued in the next chapter. Wijesinghe introduces the provision of hospitality as a practice that used to be virtue-based with values of social sustainability underling moral agency, in the way MacIntyre has identified virtuous practices of historical times to have been before the advent of capitalism.

The chapter argues that since becoming a productive craft, provision of hospitality has lost most of its virtuous qualities that used to sustain the practice. From this point of view, the contemporary commercial hospitality industry is seen as an economic activity driven solely by the motive for profit maximisation. In this context, labour is commoditised and the success of employees' enactment of organizational roles is judged by external goods. However, it is shown that employees are no longer satisfied with the tipping of scales towards external goods. It is argued that compartmentalisation of work and personal roles are responsible for this negative state of affairs. To address this issue, Wijesinghe looks towards MacIntyre's conception that when a practice is pursued only for the sake of external goods, such as status, money or power, the practitioner will have much less inner satisfaction than if the practitioner were to pursue internal goods based on good action, and examines whether this is true to hospitality employees. As a result, the need for exercising of moral agency is identified whereby individual employees are motivated to take responsibility for collective good. The last part of this chapter discusses how a virtue-based pedagogy of hospitality practice can be cultivated through the study of a particular type of narrative construction – portrayals of lived experience accounts of hospitality practitioners. These types of narratives are shown to provide insight into the embeddings of moral agency in terms of, for example, specific issues that were faced and how particular decisions were reached.

Both Wijesinghe's and Wilcox's chapters demonstrate that economic gain is only one aspect that contributes to sustainability of organisations and that moral concerns that are applicable to social aspects also need to be considered (e.g. internal goods that come from good corporate citizenship). It is from this vantage point that McKenzie enters the discussion pursued in this part. McKenzie argues that in considering the sustainability of organisations, proponents of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) model have mainly paid attention to economic and environmental dimensions, paying only lip service to the social dimension which has left a space to be filled. He proposes that virtue ethics would help fill this space left for considering the social dimension in the TBL model of sustainability, if a qualification is made to define social sustainability as a practice in MacIntyrean terms. A practical application of the TBL model operating in a virtue-based context is demonstrated through a case study: 2009 and 2010 sustainability reports by Toyota Australia, written in accordance with the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative.