Preface and acknowledgements

A virtue ethics epistemology is the basis for this book's critical examination of the corrosive role that bare capitalism and its basis of market-driven valuation play in the possibility of a sustained 'good life' for persons, communities, societies and, indeed, all life. However, when the first thoughts and inspiration for this research project occurred to me, I was hoping that the initial seeds of this 'project' would develop beyond a systematic examination of the reductionist vision and the challenges relevant to the historical evolution of capitalism. Hence the intention of this collaborative project, at least for me, was that we should transcend the realms of a clinical scientific study and critically reflect on the rival conceptions of moral character and value offered by a market versus a virtue ethics epistemology. In this context, we hope to offer newly reflected theory and empirical pathways to help advise various constituencies and people in various roles in governance and practices that link economy and society. We aim to suggest the possibility of a better and alternative pathway towards a more sustainable evolution of social life, at this increasingly global and interdependent time in human history.

I came up with the initial ideas that culminate in this edited volume sometime around 2010. It took me about two years of reading and conversations with some of the virtue ethicists whose work is important and inspired me and directed me to some of the original philosophical works in virtue ethics by classical Greek philosophers that I could read in my mother tongue again. I also read more on later thinkers in the European philosophy traditions whose work was more or less inspired by Aristotle. Part of this phase of incubation harmonized well with my own intellectual pursuits since 2006 on the topic of human integrity, growth and good life (for example, my work in moral psychology and applications in governance, higher education and organizational behaviour), which of course fuelled my share in this effort. A larger hope of mine was a renewed and more deeply and broadly reflective humanistic orientation. Towards this aim I think various researchers and research streams ought to work collaboratively, as significant knowledge and wisdom are currently fragmented and 'spread' across the Humanities and Social Sciences, departments of Management Studies and Organizational

Behaviour included. It is more often the case that bureaucratic organization, short-termism and fragmented individual agendas impede the creation of substantial new knowledge with purpose that mindfully addresses ethical life dimensions. This latter is a way of bridging impact with a respect of humanistic values demonstrating respect for the human beings involved in various roles. Initially it seemed a distant, 'risky' and fragile endeavour that required some support. An important milestone in this process was the research symposium I organized approximately two to three years before the publication of this volume, with the title 'Challenges of Capitalism for the Common Good', which brought together approximately half of the contributors of the present volume and started this collaborative research project. The inquiry and the aims of this academic gathering inspired me to think of things worthy of pursuit as part of our academic roles, and in my personal journey this came at about the time when I was devastated by my father's passing. Fortunately my proposal was supported by the Dean of the Henley Business School, UK and colleagues in Humanities and Management.

The first seeds of this project grew into this volume, following another dense work process that expanded and broadened collaboration with other universities in the UK, Europe, the USA and, of course, the University of Reading. With the support of all contributors and Edward Elgar Publishing I am very pleased with its evolution, quality and outcome, despite a few unpleasant obstacles this effort also encountered on its way to fruition. So far, I can say that my initial aims have been achieved; only time will tell whether, inspired by them, others will take them forward in various ways and forms of research, impact and practice. I hope so, and there are some early promising signs that this is happening.

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