political science, thoughtful development of formal models which yield testable hypotheses, and well-designed efforts to carry out those tests with the best evidence available.

The book is also commendable for its efforts to expand its examination of religion's role in politics and economics beyond the usual Catholic/Protestant and European examples. In particular, Grigoriadis's exploration of the diversity of religious views in Israel is a good example of taking advantage of a natural experiment and his in-depth analysis of the connections between Orthodox monasticism and post-Soviet Russian political organization is both original and insightful. These are topics that merit further development, and I hope that both Grigoriadis and others will extend the book's analysis in both these areas.

The book's use of game theory and statistical analysis may put off some potential readers, who may blanch at the math. The most technical material is carefully segregated into appendices and Grigoriadis does a fine job of presenting his results clearly and with minimal reliance on technical jargon so that readers less familiar with both can still profit from reading the other parts of the book. It would be a great pity if Grigoriadis's careful social science approach prevented the book from sparking a conversation within the Orthodox world over the church's relationship to the state. This conversation needs to go beyond the relationships between churches and the Syrian and Russian states in particular (although those are surely important). What Grigoriadis demonstrates is that theology has consequences for how states are organized and what policies are likely to be effective, which implies that religious authorities need to consider their responsibility for those consequences.

—Andrew P. Morriss
Texas A&M University

The Ethics of Competition: How a Competitive Society Is Good for All

Christoph Lütge

Cheltenham, UK; Northhampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019 (221 pages)

The ethical dimension of competition is not a novelty. The well-known economist Frank Hyneman Knight wrote an essay with the title "Ethics of Competition" (*Quarterly Journal of Economics* 37 [August 1923]: 579–624; reprinted by Routledge in 2014 together with other essays and an introduction). However, this new book is innovative in its focus and in explaining how competition and ethics can be related. Its understanding of competition—unlike Knight, not reduced to the marketplace and the material satisfaction of needs—is also interesting.

The author, Christoph Lütge, is Full Professor of Business Ethics at Technische Universität München (TUM) and has recently been appointed Director of the TUM Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence. He is well-known in the field of business ethics, with numerous publications, including the *Handbook of the Philosophical Foundations of Business Ethics* (Heidelberg/New York: Springer, 2013), which he edited. He has also authored studies on experimental ethics and political philosophy.

The title *The Ethics of Competition* may raise different expectations in the potential reader. It could be an ethical analysis of competition or a utilitarian balance about pros and cons of competition. Or it could examine under what conditions competition can contribute to the common good of society. However, the author takes a different approach. As he explains in the introduction, the aim of this book is "to systematically work out and recognize the ethical benefits of competition—not in its combative or belligerent aspect [as the term can suggest], but rather as a civil mechanism that has made many of the achievements of the civilization possible" (2).

The *Ethics of Competition* is aligned with other works by the author where he understands ethics in contractarian terms and focuses on institutions for implementing moral norms, and also considers economics as a key theoretical resource (e.g., "Economic Ethics, Business Ethics, and the Idea of Mutual Advantages," *Business Ethics: A European Review* 14, no. 2 [2005]: 108–18). In this sense, he proposes "order ethics" as an ethical framework for the social market economy (see idem with N. Mukerrji, *Order Ethics: An Ethical Framework for the Social Market Economy* [Heidelberg/New York: Springer 2016]).

The book is very critical of the reduction of ethics to an individual level where it involves good personal behavior and points out the inefficiency of such ethics in dealing with systems, including the increasingly relevant models based on what is termed "swarm intelligence" (the interconnection of employees within a company, for instance). He is also critical of those conceptions of ethics that reduce its role to moderating economic activity, or even acting as a "brake" on economic dynamism. In contrast, he affirms, "We need an ethics for dynamic societies, an ethics that stresses that innovation, entrepreneurship, and dynamism are not only economically, but also, finally, ethically valuable" (30).

Professor Lütge discusses several criticisms of competition, arguing that many of these stem from an outdated understanding of how modern societies and economies function, or that they misunderstand competition as being without a framework of appropriate rules. He accepts, however, than under certain circumstances competition can be contrary to ethical requirements, but holds that, in other conditions, intensified competition can in fact work in favor of ethical goals.

The work is divided into nine chapters, besides the introduction. In chapter 1, the author defines competition as "a situation in which several actors are engaged in a competitive endeavor" (6) and distinguishes it from struggle or contest. Lütge also clarifies that competition is different from greed and capitalism. That is why some critics of capitalism accept competition. A free market entails competition, but competition is not only an economic matter: "Competition in all its forms rather involves a situation that is only stable because of rules" (6).

Probably the most central chapter of this work is chapter 2, which discusses the ethical qualities of competition, analyzing celebrated authors including Russell, Rawls, and Höff, as well as strong defenders of competition such as Hayek and Baumol. All of them agree that competition—given the appropriate rules—is a positive ethical tool for society. It is implicit that this positive ethical tool refers to promoting initiative, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit. However, some negative effects, such as envy in those who don't "win" are also mentioned (Rawls). Lütge explores some current examples illustrating the ethical benefits of competition, including the free movement of workers in Europe and others.

Chapter 3 is specifically devoted to deconstructing the zero-sum thinking which is at the core of much criticism of competition. The author employs his expertise in experimental ethics and, after reviewing attitudes on competition in different cultural contexts, concludes that zero-sum thinking must be abandoned.

The next chapters apply the ideas previously presented to particular contexts, illustrating these with numerous examples, most of them taken from Germany, the author's home country. These contexts cover ecology (chap. 4), education (chap. 5), health and nursing care (chap. 6), politics and media (chap. 7), and competition in our daily lives (chap. 8). In a short conclusion (chap. 9), the book introduces competition in the field of digital technologies.

To sum up, Lütge argues that ethics and competition are not necessarily in opposition. Given due conditions and appropriate rules—with maybe a few exceptions—it is quite the contrary: Competition is actually ethically beneficial. The subtitle is succinctly expressive of the thesis of the book "How a Competitive Society Is Good for All."

The work is a translation from German. It is well-written and excellently documented, with copious bibliographical references and empirical data. It is convincing in many aspects. Arguments against competition are taken into account and addressed. The position of the author is that criticism of competition is often based on an incomplete or wrong view of competition as a struggle with insufficient rules or wholly lacking in them.

I think the author is right in his belief that ethics should not be limited to individual behavior. The argument that ethics should be included in the economic system also sounds plausible. Another strong point is relating creativity, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit fostered by competition with ethics.

There is a weakness in the book's scarce attention to an explanation of what ethics is about and of what justifies it. The aim of recognizing the ethical benefits of competition puts forward the question of how "ethical benefits" should be understood. Implicitly, the author responds that ethical benefits make the achievements of civilization possible, and more explicitly affirms that "the ethical qualities of competition lie in its *systemic* results" (28, italics original). One could guess that ethics is what people understand as beneficial even beyond the economic, but this is quite imprecise. Are "ethical benefits" related to human flourishing, to welfare, or is this only a certain consensus of what they are? In contractarian ethics, the latter is probably the right answer. This prompts several reservations; the first being whether contractarian ethics is good ethics. Achieving moral consensus in some key point is plausible. However, it is questionable to reduce morality to what most people understand as beneficial. Another drawback is that the ethics underlying this book is a completely impersonal "third person ethics," ignoring the role of virtues shaping the agent's personal character in competition. Finally, the concept of "ethical order" for institutions—implicitly treated in this book—posits the problem of the place of ethics in institutions and what justifies such ethical order. These problems may be overcome with a different ethical approach, for instance, one based on human goods, virtues, and the common good.

—Domènec Melé
University of Navarra, Spain

Prosperity: Better Business Makes the Greater Good

Colin Mayer

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018 (261 pages)

Colin Mayer's *Prosperity* has two main parts: First, it identifies the main problem that Mayer sees with business today, as well as its primary responsible party; and second, it offers a series of reforms that, if enacted, Mayer argues would enable business to achieve the good of which it is capable. Mayer believes that business in a market economy creates wealth, which is the good news, but the bad news is that it is also "the source of inequality, deprivation, and environmental degradation" (1). Mayer asserts that we must therefore "ensure that we harness business as a source of societal benefits and avoid its detriments" (2).

This is not exactly a novel ambition: The last few decades have seen book after book, and article after article, that (sometimes grudgingly) concede that something beneficial might come from business, but only if we "harness," regulate, control, nudge, and steer it in the right directions—directions that the authors aspirationally spell out, though without always identifying who will serve as the philosopher-economists commanding the ship of good commerce.

What is Mayer's contribution to this discussion? Mayer begins by identifying a single cause, indeed a single person, as the "starting point" of business's wrong turn: Milton Friedman. Mayer claims that Friedman's "most enduring legacy" is the "Friedman doctrine," which holds that all business activity should begin from "the premise that the purpose of business is to maximize shareholder value" (2). Mayer fingers Friedman's 1970 *New York Times Magazine* essay, "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits," as the beginning of this wrong turn, and he claims that, despite its obvious moral dubiousness, its thesis has come to dominate the world of business and business academia. According to Mayer, it was not Friedman's work in, say, monetary theory that constituted his "most enduring legacy," but instead this one nonacademic essay, which articulated a position about fidelity to shareholders that is not only "unnatural" but "has been the seed of nature's destruction." Indeed, "the damage it inflicts on our societies, the natural environment, and ourselves" is so great as "to threaten our existence" (2).

"The assets of the firm," Mayer claims, "have been accumulated on the back of the investments of virtually every segment of society—employees, suppliers, communities, nations, and nature." According to Mayer, shareholders do not own companies; instead, they have "roles and responsibilities as well as rights and rewards deriving from their