

Tra virtù, business e filosofia. Contributo alla definizione del *purpose*

GIACOMO MARIA ARRIGO

Between Virtue, Business, and Philosophy. Contribution to the Definition of Purpose

Abstract: This paper explores the concept of corporate purpose through the lens of virtue ethics, arguing that purpose is not merely an external framework for corporate responsibility but an intrinsic element of ethical business conduct. Drawing on the philosophical tradition of virtue ethics, particularly the Aristotelian version, the study positions purpose as a guiding principle that shapes decision-making, fosters moral agency, and harmonizes profit-driven goals with societal well-being. By integrating stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility (CSR), the paper highlights how purpose transcends instrumental approaches, cultivating a business ethos rooted in prudence (*phronesis*), relationality, and moral excellence. Ultimately, it argues that an authentic corporate purpose – rather than merely serving as a compliance tool – fosters long-term value creation by aligning economic success with ethical flourishing.

Keywords: Corporate purpose, Virtue ethics, Business ethics, Stakeholder theory, Prudence (*Phronesis*).

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