Abstract Theories of business ethics or corporate responsibility tend to focus on justifying
obligations that go above and beyond what is required by law. This article examines the curious
fact that most business ethics scholars use concepts, principles, and normative methods for
identifying and justifying these beyond-compliance obligations that are very different from the
ones that are used to set the levels of regulations themselves. Its modest proposal—a plea for
a research agenda, really—is that we could reduce this normative asymmetry by borrowing
from the normative framework of "regulation" to identify and justify an important range of
beyond-compliance obligations. In short, we might think of "self-regulation" as a language and a
normative framework with some distinct advantages over other frameworks like stakeholder
theory, corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, and the like. These other
frameworks have been under attack in the business ethics literature of late, primarily for their
vagueness and their disappointing inability to distinguish clearly between genuine
beyond-compliance moral obligations, on the one hand, and charitable acts that are laudable
but not morally obligatory, on the other.

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