

Approaches to Ethical Challenges in Business and Economics: Religious and Cultural Contributions

1 March 2017

Innsbruck (Austria), **Claudiana** (Herzog-Friedrich-Straße 3)

Austria-Israel Academic Network Innsbruck (AIANI) in cooperation with the Research Area “Cultural Encounters – Cultural Conflicts” of the University of Innsbruck (Austria) as well as the School of Business Administration at the College of Management Academic Studies (COMAS) in Rishon-le-Zion (Israel)

Aim of the Workshop:

Today’s globalizing world is dominated by a large and strong business sector that sometimes acts as if it has no restraints. In this world of intensifying economic interactions with ever growing impact potential in the social, political and environmental sphere at local, regional and global scale, ethical and moral fundamentals equally grow in relevance. This is even aggravated by the fact that these fundamentals are not at all regarded as universal by most players in the field, but very dependent on their respective cultural background.

The workshop aims at opening a field for discussion of a specific element of this challenge. It will allow reflective space for understanding and debating the capacity of historical texts and teachings, especially (but not necessarily) religious, for today’s management and business decisions, strategies and practices from the perspective of practical ethics. For that purpose, we invite inputs from a particular perspective based in historical texts or teachings and applied to one or two recent business cases as stimuli for plenary discussions in a broader group. The issues to discuss should especially target the “grey areas” of everyday business activities and may include fairness in trading, truth in advertising, biased consulting practises, management compensation schemes, repelling communication practices or product/service quality, but also deception, subcontracting or whistleblowing, to name just a few examples.

We will allow 20-25 minutes for each input and at least equal time for discussions, to which we will invite about 15 scholars from various backgrounds to participate over the whole day. This will allow to uncover differences and similarities of these various approaches and hence to promote mutual understanding of challenges as well as potential ways to address the issues raised. Consequently, the workshop should initiate a process to develop comparative research and integrated teaching in the area of practical business and economic ethics.

Program

Chair for all sessions: Andreas Exenberger, Innsbruck

09.00-09.30 – Welcome and Introduction

09.30-10.30 – *A Jewish perspective on business ethics: A glance into the sources and implications for curriculum development:* **Benjamin Gidron**, COMAS, and Rabbi **Barry Leff**, The Neshamah Center

Coffee Break

11.00-12.30 – *Debt cancellation as a common Jewish-Christian heritage. Contextual re-lecture of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in the view of current indebtedness and debt cancellation:* **Franz Segbers**, Marburg
– *You made them equal to us! How to read New-Testament parables in context of contemporary ethics:* **Wilhelm Guggenberger**, Innsbruck

Lunch Break

14.00-15.30 – *The balance of economics: An Islamic-Theological approach:* **Idris Nassery**, Paderborn
– *Parrhesia: The ethics of truth-telling as an “action which is risky and free”* **Richard Weiskopf**, Innsbruck

Coffee Break

16.00-17.30 **Concluding Plenary** targeted at teaching applications with brief final inputs by all presenters and open discussion among all participants