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Introduction

Claus Dierksmeier, Wolfgang Amann, Ernst von Kimakowitz, Heiko Spitzeck, and Michael Pirson

The age of globality

Globalization was yesterday (Dasgupta and Kiely, 2006). Today we are increasingly facing a world of "globality," that is, a state of affairs where a global impact of individual actions, local business practices, and national politics is no longer the exception but has become more and more the rule (Carver and Bartelson, 2010). While numerous processes of globalization might still be stopped, and some reversed, the general trend of the developments of the last decades cannot be undone. The reach that globalization, especially economic globalization, has had in the past means that ever more people are faced with living in a state of *de facto* globality (Sklair, 1991). Whatever the future development of globalization, this emerging state of globality must be addressed, because its distinctive features require particular ways and modes of governance beyond those that characterized the era of the nation state. The search for adequate ethical norms for the state of globality has begun, and we hope our book will make a meaningful contribution to this quest.

While it is true that both global trade and cultural exchange have existed for centuries (Stearns, 2010), there are important differences between now and the past (MacGillivray, 2006). Today, an ever larger percentage of humanity is engaged in effortless global communication, building out a global imagination (around globalized brands and aesthetic idols) and a global awareness (crystallizing around certain geopolitical events and symbols). One could see in this merely the result of a hitherto unavailable level of technology. Yet this would overlook the fact that present technology is just a reflection of past economic and social incentives.

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In fact, human history was not, and is not, determined by technology. Rather, the organization of any particular society may, or may not, prove conducive to the development and spread of certain technologies. Differences in how, across historical time and cultural space, humanity has chosen to organize labor and property, how to regulate business and how to conduct politics, for example, are often much more significant for the present diffusion of particular technologies and their concomitant ways of life than the mere availability of specific technological devices. For an understanding of our global life-world, therefore, the factual organization and normative orientation of societies deserve our close attention.

In today's world we observe a growing awareness – ranging from the debate over climate change to ever more areas of our life-world – that we have only one planet and that there are always more consequences to our actions than we can foresee (Beck, 1992). In short, the signature we leave on the planet today will be decipherable only in the future, while we are accountable for it already. The more, however, the range of our actions outstrips the reach of our knowledge, and the more strongly the practical effects of our practices belie our theoretical prognoses, the less we can trust the conventional way of looking "inside-out" at global affairs, accessing globalization from a purely local or national angle (McLuhan and Powers, 1989). Wherever it is the whole that has determining force, focusing solely on the parts produces not only incomplete but biased results (Hartmann, 1950). It is not incidental that the isolated query as to what globalization means to this or that regional community, has time and again proven unable to answer its own question. Suggesting that the facts and factors of globalization can be captured in theory and contained in practice from an Archimedean point somewhere on the surface of the earth, is to misunderstand that the ongoing global transformations owe their power precisely to the fact that they operate without such fixed reference points. The enormous leverage of globalized developments stems from the ubiquity of their manifestations, which renders them into a force that is both elusive and inescapable (Roniger and Waisman, 2002).

Whereas the semantics of the term "globalization" suggest viewing the ongoing processes of growing interdependencies from a perspective that begins with the parts, and ends with the whole, the idea of "globality" points to a contrasting, holistic, worldview. While in the past only a few idealistic philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) dared to propose, as a moral imperative, that we should act as if the whole world was

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affected by our actions, and as if the whole of humanity was to judge our conduct (Dierksmeier, 2003), it becomes apparent now that to push farther and farther away the spatial and temporal limits of the considered effects and externalities of our actions is a pragmatic necessity for socioeconomic survival. Regardless of whether the ongoing processes of globalization will slow down in the future, what will remain is this deep, fundamental shift to a mental model that encompasses the unarticulated, incalculable, and indefinite consequences of our actions just as much as those that are captured by our established accounting practices and our traditional schemes of responsibility assignment (Jonas, 1984). Globality represents the insight that we have reached a position in history where the angle of moral universalization and the pragmatic perspective of prudent circumspection render almost identical results (Elliott, 2005). Whatever governance systems we propose for the future, they must take into account the changed premises on which they rest. Political as well as economic legitimacy, less and less tied to geographical boundaries, will increasingly have to be earned in view of and in response to the interests of the whole of humanity (Brock, 2009).

On one hand, then, globality is simply a new label for the emerging *reality* of a world characterized by the planetary impact and the wholesale interconnectivity of human actions (Sirkin et al., 2008). On the other hand, globality denotes an intellectual *paradigm* that tries to address this impending state of affairs through a comprehensive, all-encompassing perspective. In the past, when the everyday life of ordinary people did not offer frequent experiences of a shared human destiny, the intellectual perspective of globality was already known and employed. Throughout the long history of philosophy, forward-looking thinkers of all centuries used a cosmopolitan frame of reference in order to address the common nature and needs of human life (Benhabib et al., 2006). In this volume, we intend to learn from such earlier attempts to conceptualize a global ethics of humanity, in order to contribute to a future ethics for business and society.

As a first step into this constructive direction, however, we need to ask how to make an inter-personally and inter-culturally valid use of ethical ideas. In the present age of globality, the multicultural premises of our social life demand academic theories that are capable of meeting *postmodern* and *relativistic challenges* to ethical rationales. How can this demand be answered? In 1948, the UN issued the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, based on a comprehensive consensus of peoples all over the globe on the essentials of all future human legal relations. According to its preamble, the rights it enshrines are anchored in the "recognition

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of the inherent dignity" of the human being. While itself not a legally binding declaration, most of its articles found equivalent articulation in the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which since 1976 has represented a legal obligation for the signatory nations. In specific articles, the international community spells out in great detail what it deems to be both essential and universal human rights, again expressly "recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person." The implicit assumption of these explicit acknowledgments is, in short, that there can be and, in fact, that there is, a global consensus about the nature of human dignity, irrespective of otherwise diverging cultural and religious backgrounds.

This codified *global* consensus on human dignity notwithstanding, its philosophical foundations have typically been constructed from the tradition of *Western* philosophy. While notions of human dignity also operate in African and Asian philosophies and religions, the Western philosophical tradition, today as well as at the time when the *Declaration of Human Rights* was formulated, stands out as the leading voice in the discourse. To some, such a degree of predominance of one cultural tradition may seem to discredit from the outset the effort of establishing globally acceptable norms. How, so the argument goes, can regional values justify universal postulates? Why should the philosophy of the West dominate the rest? Do we not thus betray in procedure what we affirm in substance: a global approach to ethics?

Such views, however, confuse the "genesis" and the "validity" of arguments. Whereas, admittedly, the past and present debate over human dignity has been heavily influenced by Western sources, this does not necessarily restrict their global validity. Rather, in appealing to human reason in general, philosophical positions from all parts of the world today aim for interpersonal plausibility across all cultural boundaries. One can reject the underlying idea that, underneath, there is *one* human reason operative in all human beings. Yet this rejection itself makes a claim for its own description of the nature of (a culturally fractured) human reason. The ensuing debate which conception of rationality – pro or contra the unity of human reason – merits our eventual approval again takes place before the court of human reason. Either party may fail to support its claims with convincing arguments, yet this can only be assessed *after* a critical examination of the theory at hand, which in turn appeals to the self-critical potentials of human rationality.

There is, in short, no way to decide the debate about the cultural relativity of rational standards other than through the universal employment of the very capacities of critical human reasoning whose universal

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character the relativists staunchly deny. Ethical relativists, to avoid self-contradiction, can defend their position only by refraining from claiming universal validity for their own arguments. For that reason, however, nothing compels anyone else to follow the relativistic train of thought, and we might as well continue in allegiance to more comprehensive conceptions of rationality.

In view of today's global problems, this outcome must count heavily against a relativistic perspective. Global problems, more often than not, require for their solutions global institutions and worldwide normative agreements. The burden of proof therefore lies much more with positions that reject cosmopolitan perspectives than with those who try to tackle the common problems of humankind from a single global perspective. Moreover, since only some – not all, nor even most – non-Western philosophers reject universal principles, ethical relativism also does injustice to non-Western thinkers who explicitly wish to be part of the cosmopolitan project. Thinkers in non-Western countries who argue against certain (restrictive) values of their own region and in favor of (more emancipating) global principles ought be taken seriously (Sen, 2006). Their dissenting voices can be seen as a *de facto* contradiction to the assumption that different contexts necessarily breed differing views. Sometimes, the exact same understanding of human rights, freedom, and dignity is being advanced from disparate cultural origins. We must therefore not allow ethical relativism to irresponsibly silence foreign advocates of the idea of human dignity by unthinkingly subsuming their positions under one-dimensional cultural stereotypes. Worse than the imperialistic imposition of rights that protect human dignity is surely a relativistic acquiescence in their violent denial.

Since Western philosophy has always aimed to speak to all human beings, and has done so in a continuous discourse from Plato until today, we would do better not to focus on the limited geographical and cultural confines of its origins but rather on the unlimited scope of the ideas it tries to promulgate. The answers of Western philosophers to questions about the nature and meaning of human dignity need not, of course, be worshiped uncritically as the ultimate achievements of human wisdom, but they should be seen as important stepping stones to a global debate about the dignity of human life for all inhabitants of this planet. The *procedural* character of this qualified endorsement of Western postulates about human dignity is all-important; it demands the integration of everyone in their making (Carver and Bartelson, 2010).

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Such participation, in fact, serves not only as a normative touchstone but also as a pragmatic yardstick for contemporary decision-making in business and society. Both the validity and the success of complex interactions hinge ever more on the participation of all stakeholders. Discourses in the political and in the economic sphere are not, incidentally, parallel in that respect: More and better stakeholder democracy seems to be required for the improvement of organizational behavior in the public realm as well as in the domains of business (Ellerman, 1992). It is not enough to proclaim the idea of human rights and the collective destiny of humanity. It is also necessary to translate such ideas into sustainable procedures of collective action and decision-making that assure the active participation and, if that is impossible, at least the passive representation of all concerned.

We, the editors of the *Humanistic Management Network* (more on our network below) see an increasing need for intercultural cooperation on all social and societal levels, and for ethical norms to support that cooperation. In accordance with the philosophy behind the United Nations' *Global Compact*, we set out from the basic assumption that global problems demand global solutions that, more often than not, need to rest on global institutions that in turn require at least some globally shared norms in order to function. Yet while the need for global norms based on shared global problems is rarely questioned in the abstract, concrete global consensus around normative questions is rare. In consequence, absent further convergence in moral judgment, the global problems of humanity will not be tackled in a satisfactory manner and increased frictions will hamper global cooperation. In order to find a common ground of shared moral understandings between individuals as well as collectives (associations, corporations, governments, non-governmental actors) from all regions of the world and formulate valid ethical arguments with global appeal, we undertook the investigation of the moral philosophies of the past, looking for the contributions they might make to the present challenges of globality. About two years ago, we sent out a global call for papers and organized an international conference at the University of Regensburg, Germany, and have selected some of the papers presented there for this volume. What you hold in your hands is the result of the collective effort of many scholars from many countries. We cannot pretend to offer a single answer to the ethical conundrums that present themselves in the age of globality, but we do find enough consensus between the authors featured here to warrant our hope that ethical solutions to the problems of humanity can be found and furthered by way of reasoned argument.

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Learning from past actions

The past decades have proven the obvious – that simple self-interest is too narrow a basis for the kind of sustained and providential international cooperation our planet requires. In the last decades, the West has tried to globalize the rest of the world, promoting its regional values unabashedly as universals (Scruton, 2003). This "globalization project" has created more resentment than agreement, instilling a profound skepticism towards any attempt at global normative approaches (Comor, 2008). Yet, while rejecting imperialistic approaches to ethics, let us not too hastily declare all moral universalism passé. The international and intercultural cooperation that we so much need cannot, after all, succeed without at least some very basic shared understandings of the world that do not arise automatically from the mere fact that we all inhabit the same planet. Responsibility towards humanity and future generations frequently requires us to form shared understandings on how to govern the planet together, painstakingly aligning different intellectual horizons and diverging convictions. The imminent fact of "globality-without-agreement" demands that we seek the unanimity needed for worldwide cooperation; not, as before, in "identity-through-sameness" but rather in "identity-as-consonant-diversity." Whether we use "mondialization" or some other postmodern epithet to denote such processes of coming together through the convergence of many different lines of thought, is secondary (Durand, 2008). Of prime significance is that any future attempt to address global concerns steers clear from imposing a one-size-fits-all approach (Gould, 2004). Whereas globalization has, in the past, indeed often been a one-way street of cultural expansion, what globality truly demands is a multi-dimensional process of reciprocal integration, informed by the constantly changing self-understandings of the manifold cultures that comprise the human family.

Not only, nor even primarily, for lack of a united global legislative and executive, the necessary regulation of our global commons must be generated by the soft power of consensus, leading the diverse forces of business, civil society, and the public sector in joint efforts. The global governance our planet needs is premised negatively on circumspect self-restraint by all parties and persons involved, and positively on their cooperative alignment. Yet without agreement on some moral principles that would permit the formulation of elementary codes of conduct, the prospects for the collective endeavors of humanity remain dim (Kitagawa et al., 2004). While there are attempts to elaborate a global

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code of conduct from the consensus of world religions and faith communities with respect to central moral strictures (Küng and Kuschel, 1993), an enormous difficulty for any such endeavor arises from the fact that – with the possible exception of the Golden Rule – almost none of the traditional values offered by religions and customary ethics are wholly uncontroversial or strictly universally accepted. With every advance of globalization came a reduction in the power and effectiveness of traditional customs and religions to regulate the practices of business (Schmidt, 2006). If we are neither capable of reversing this process, nor prepared to accept that values presumed as universal should be imposed on dissenters by force, how then are we to react to the fact that conventional values no longer generate comprehensive consent and compliance?

Learning from past thinkers

How does one arrive at a formulation of moral principles that will recommend themselves to people from all the vastly different cultural traditions the Earth has to offer? We decided to investigate inter-culturally valid arguments within the rich tradition of philosophical ethics that recommends itself through the "non-coercive coercion of the better argument" (Habermas, 1984, p. 95). What resulted from our decidedly international and broadly disseminated *Call for Papers* was, however, an anthology that comprises mostly European thinkers. While our volume does also contain examples of intercultural philosophizing in Africa and Asia (see the section NON-WESTERN AND NON-TRADITIONAL APPROACHES), we anticipate the objection that our selection still has a decidedly "Western" outlook – whatever that may mean exactly. Rejecting the view that non-Western cultures have been largely unable or unwilling to shape ethical thought-systems with sufficient clarity, consistence, or rigor to merit the appellation "philosophical," how do we explain the predominance of Western thinkers in our anthology? We think that the past political and economic domination of other cultures by the West must be factored in. In many formerly colonized regions, autochthonous traditions of philosophizing were deliberately thwarted – documents destroyed, native languages suppressed, ways and institutions of traditional education discouraged – with the result that few written records of pre-colonial philosophy survive in Africa or South America (Wallner et al., 2010), whereas in Asia and Europe written records are ample and allow us much easier access to the minds of past generations.

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The predominance of European thinkers must, however, not necessarily be detrimental to a project with global aspirations. For even though the *genesis* of rationales lies, as a rule, in the particular cultural and religious background in which they are formulated, if their content proves, in fact, to be universally intelligible, this does not in any way undermine their global *validity* (Habermas, 1996). As much as it is true that human beings everywhere need agreed-upon norms in order to live and cooperate well, it may prove to be true that certain values and norms facilitate common endeavors better than others (Rescher, 1993). While the contexts and conventions as well as the laws and religions of peoples change over time and across cultures, at their center remains the single human being. To maintain this simple fact does not amount to ascribing to humanity a single and permanent nature that could simply be used as a prescriptive blueprint for ethical questions (Plessner, 1983). Neither pragmatically (in view of how human life is altered and affected by its societal setting), nor logically (the "naturalistic fallacy"), does such reasoning seem sound (Moore, 1903). On the contrary, it seems to be essential to human life to articulate itself in diverse ways and through distinct cultures, not infrequently in deliberate opposition to what is deemed the natural norm of the human form. Yet whereas the specific outlook of the many human cultures is always and everywhere in flux, what remains permanent about human life is that it takes place within and through symbolic forms (Cassirer, 1953). Culture, in brief, is part and parcel of human nature, and insofar as culture requires morals to function and all moral systems need to be buttressed as well as corrected by critical ethical thinking, the practice of reasonable ethical deliberation can very well be claimed to be a human universal.

Especially in today's rapidly changing, multicultural contexts – we hypothesized – ethical positions centering on the perceived nature and declared needs of the human being might not only offer valuable guidance, here and now, but also be able to acquire intercultural approval and importance. Our authors were therefore asked to examine their respective intellectual sources for arguments which could be used to address current concerns of humanity in the era of globality. By and large, our working hypothesis has been corroborated. While, of course, the texts of bygone eras rarely offer ready-made solutions to problems of the present, a re-reading of our intellectual traditions, inspired by these problems, nevertheless often proves fruitful. Our present troubles help us to spot the productive potentials of past cultural constellations, and seemingly superannuated intellectual frameworks can help start

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innovation within the very intellectual fields where contemporary reasoning stagnates.

In a way, our current state of mind operates like a lens through which some objects are seen clearly, while others appear obfuscated, or wholly out of focus. Changing the perspective by moving our intellectual focus through time and space alters the ambit of acuity and brings before our eyes the (otherwise overlooked) limits of our everyday mindset. For this reason, stepping back in time can be a way of moving forward (Lowry 1987, p. 7). Moreover, the examination of past debates and disputes benefits from the advantages of aggregated knowledge from various sources. Just as the use of slow-motion videos and multi-angle perspectives in sports photography provides insights unavailable to the athletes during their activities, the study of intellectual history allows comprehensive perspectives unseen by the actors involved. So, if we want to learn for the future, a look beyond the present, into the stores of learning offered by a long history of past trials and tribulations, recommends itself. Our research into the intellectual pedigree of present-day humanistic ethics is no exception.

Structure of the book

We begin our portrait of the philosophical past with representatives from antiquity and the Middle Ages (in the section on PRE-MODERN THEORIES). Our authors demonstrate how metaphysical concepts of the human being as essentially oriented to moral goodness (Socrates, Plato) and to social cooperation led to early pledges for temperance and moderation in the use of worldly goods (Aristotle) as well as to demands for a cosmopolitan perspective in ethics (in the philosophy of the Stoa) and, ultimately, to a call for social justice in all economic transactions (Thomas Aquinas). From around 400 BCE until the late seventeenth century the prevailing sentiment was that individual self-interest should be curbed by and subordinated to the common good. Government was seen as a facilitator and protector of a decent way of life, and the purpose of business was defined accordingly: to provide the goods required for a civic existence aimed at social harmony.

Modern thinkers (see the section MODERN POSITIONS), however, no longer operate from a fixed conception of human nature and its inherent purposes, but have shifted their emphasis onto the freedom of each individual to remake himself in the light of his own ideas. From the premise of that freedom certain conclusions follow, such as unconditional respect for the dignity of others (Kant), regard for the

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sociocultural preconditions of autonomous life (Hegel), concern for the material conditions of human flourishing (Mill) and a critique of the economic forces that, if unchecked, restrict and pervert individual freedom (Marx).

Again, an overarching agreement can be discerned. The classics of modern socioeconomic thinking evaluate the success of economic enterprises and political structures within the parameter of individual and collective gains in autonomy. In contrast to various schools of thought that reduce the assessment of human welfare to the measurement of material utilities, the philosophers presented here agree that the *quantitative* dimension must itself be subjected to ultimately *qualitative* judgments in terms of human liberty. For material growth does not always signify a gain in freedom; at times, it can represent its corruption.

Hereafter (in the section on CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY) we turn to authors from the present era. Philosophers of the twentieth and twenty-first century ponder enquire one can motivate people to ethical actions when their personal interests are not obviously involved (Wittgenstein), how to integrate the differing orientations of virtue (Solomon) and care for human capabilities (Sen/Nussbaum) in societal settings, where institutional power influences public opinion and impacts the ethical discourse (Habermas).

Notwithstanding the conceptual and intentional variety of these positions, a common denominator can be found. The modern interest in personal liberation continues in postmodern configurations, albeit in disguise. The interest in freedom presents itself indirectly, through a critique of the conditions that hinder the direct realization of freedom through forms of public deliberation. The philosophers whose works are discussed in this chapter are concerned with overlooked asymmetries, hidden premises, and unseen consequences of the prevailing modes of thought that, contrary to their proclaimed intentions, often impede advances towards true emancipation. Thus our authors pierce the veil of "manufactured consent" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) which obscures the unintended realizations and the unrealized intentions of economic and political systems ostensibly oriented towards the idea of freedom; they emphasize the interests of the victims of the current state of affairs and point to the loss of human dignity endemic in societies that reduce the meaning of personal liberty to mere consumer choices.

Last but not least, we look (in the section on NON-WESTERN AND NON-TRADITIONAL APPROACHES) for parallels to the arguments found in the Western tradition in the philosophical traditions of Asia and Africa. While in part differing radically from traditional Western

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philosophy, even questioning its foundation on theories of rationality, these contributions show that the quest for norms with appeal and validity for all human beings is relevant to Non-Western cultures as well. With arguments that both in their general intention and frequently also in their particular form strongly resemble thought patterns common in the European tradition, the thought-systems investigated by our authors appear to aim at convergent goals: a formulation of the collective interests and values of humanity, based upon the power of dialectical reasoning and noncoercive argument. From this overlapping philosophical consensus from different times and cultures, we, the editors, finally draw our own conclusions about our initial question about the conceptual preconditions and central tenets of a humanistic ethics in the age of globality.

About us: The Humanistic Management Network

The *Humanistic Management Network* is an international, interdisciplinary, and nonprofit network that promotes the development of an economic system in the service of human dignity and well-being. Since human autonomy realizes itself through social cooperation, economic relations and business activities can foster or obstruct human life and well-being. Against the widespread objectification of human subjects as human capital, against the instrumentalization of human beings as human resources, against the destructive exploitation of our cultural and natural environments as mere means for profit, we uphold humanity as the ultimate end and principle of all economic activities. The dignity of the human being lies, we hold, in its capacity to define autonomously the purpose of its existence. In business as well as in society, respect for human dignity demands respect for human freedom. Collective decision-making, in corporations just as in governments, should be based on free and equal deliberation, participation, or representation of all affected parties. Concerns of legitimacy must, in economics as in politics, precede questions of expediency. Thus the *Humanistic Management Network* criticizes the purely quantitative metrics which have hitherto defined managerial and economic success, promoting instead qualitative economic criteria that focus on the human dignity of every woman and every man. In short, the *Humanistic Management Network* defends human dignity in face of its socioeconomic vulnerability.

These are our main activities: *As researchers,* we work towards a humanistic paradigm for business and economics, trying to identify and facilitate corporate and governmental efforts for the common good. *As a think tank*, we set out to spread intellectual tools for culturally and ecologically sustainable business practices that have the human being as their focal

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point. *As teachers*, we strive to educate, emancipate, and enable students to contribute actively to a life-conducive economy in which human dignity is universally respected. *As practitioners*, we act towards the implementation of a humanistic economy on an individual, corporate, and governmental level. *As citizens*, we try to engage our communities in discourse about the benefits of a human-centered economy.

The *Humanistic Management Network* has already produced three publications in book form. The first, *Humanism in Business*, looks at how humanism can contribute to management theory and practice on a system, organizational, and personal level (Cambridge University Press, 2009). In our second volume, *Humanistic Management in Practice* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) we are providing case-studies on how humanistic principles can be integrated into managerial practice so that businesses can emancipate themselves from a single focus on (short-term) profit maximization, whilst remaining competitive players in a market environment. Our third book is dedicated to a humanistic reform of management education *Business Schools Under Fire – Humanistic Management Education As the Way Forward* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Further volumes on related subjects will follow soon. (For more information on our work, please consult our website: www.humanetwork.org/.)

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