



The Humanistic Management Network

and the

University of Regensburg

invite to the following conference.



MORAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

HUMANISTIC ETHICS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION



The conference will take place on December 12-14th
in Regensburg, Dollingersaal, Zieroldsplatz 1.



PROGRAM

- Religious and Cultural Bases of Humanism
- Contemporary Humanism
- Antique and Medieval Humanism
- Humanism and Medical Ethics



RATIONALE

The Challenges of Globalization

With astounding speed the global exchange of products and services is transforming the natural and cultural face of the earth. Biological systems vanish, customary rules of behavior fade, legal frameworks dissolve, languages die out, and many traditional religions are on the wane. In their stead, driven by an exponential increase in information exchange, novel forms of interaction are taking hold. Various new ways of life are quickly spreading, from their origins in the remotest localities on earth and from cyberspace, to everywhere all around the globe. Unprecedented wealth has been created for many; likewise, unacceptable destitution persists for others.

Participants

Wolfgang Amann, St. Gallen, Switzerland

Claus Dierksmeier, Regensburg, Germany

Richard Fincham, Kairo, Egypt

Maximilian Forschner, Erlangen, Germany

Minou Friele, Köln, Germany

Günter Fröhlich, Regensburg, Germany

Benedetta Giavonola, Macerata, Italy

Rainer Gömmel, Regensburg, Germany

Ernst von Kimakowitz, St. Gallen, Switzerland

Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach, Constance, Germany

Nikolaus Knoepffler, Jena, Germany

Kai Kresse, Berlin, Germany

Norbert W. Paul, Mainz, Germany

Michael Pirson, Bosten, USA

Heiko Spitzeck Cranfield, England

Ulrich Steinvorth, Ankara, Turkey

It is open to debate what these developments carry out for the moral and physical health of human beings. Are we heading toward a paradise of freedom and autonomy where all human needs are met or are we facing endless war, civil strife, environmental destruction, and cultural poverty? Are we nearing one global culture or 'multiple modernities'?

Two complexes of questions concern almost everyone:

(1) What will be the future role of the corporations?

Will they become an integral part of a global civic society, and close ranks with the various non-governmental organizations that work toward the betterment of human life? Or will business impede the advancement toward a more humane society? In brief, will corporations foster or hinder human progress?

(2) How is the human being faring in terms of health and physical well-being in the years to come?

Will the enhanced technical possibilities to manipulate biological life contribute to a more humane life on part of the individuals or will the human being fall victim to a self-objectification in the name of aesthetic and functionalistic perfectionism?

Both questions are interrelated. The dynamic shifts we have seen in recent years both on the commercial drug and pharmaceutical markets and in the sector of public health care are inexorably intertwined with an overall move towards market liberalization, political deregulation, and privatization.

So far the outcomes of these policies are mixed. Globalization in its emerging form surely has sharpened the competitive environment for companies. Greater connectivity and the speed at which the global integration of business occurs have increased the number of relationships, multiplied the amount of available information, but done nothing to give managers more time to interpret and manage the information. Tougher competition for companies and their managers might signal the dawn of an era where managers lose track of the moral and social repercussions of their actions. The global business community risks an overemphasis on financial results only – to the detriment of both society and the long-term interests of business.



Medical and pharmaceutical business practices are a case in point. They can serve as an exemplar of a shift away from notions of objective human needs to subjective wants as, e.g., in the transition from the production of life-saving drugs to life-style drugs, or in the growing field of plastic surgery and cosmetic treatments within clinical facilities. The rarely questioned supremacy of subjective preferences over objective needs that rules pharmaceutical and medical markets these days has led to a questionable increase in inequality in basic health care provisions and to failures in public health services.

The Need for Humanistic Ethics

On a very basic level, the main problems as well as their likely solutions seem clear: humanity can halt the current “race to the bottom” of ever lower basic standards (social, environmental, medical, cultural, etc.) only through implementing global guidelines for business. Hence we need agreement on a normative framework for economic practice. The problem, however, is that virtually none of the traditional values offered by religions and customary ethics are uncontroversial or universally accepted. With every advance of globalization came a reduction in the power and effectiveness of traditional ethics to regulate the practices of business.

From an attempt to find a common moral rationale for all humans, academics all around the world have recently given humanistic ethics increased attention. The parsimonious and agnostic foundations of its approach to ethics make the humanistic philosophy an attractive candidate for advancing positions that can legitimately claim to be of common concern for all of humanity. Humanism promises to provide an ethics that caters to the nature of the human being, and thus it offers a platform to address the moral and physical health of human life in conjunction.

Hence, at our conference, we are bringing together the expertise of a number of leading scholars on the history of humanism in order to work out a concise conceptual framework that can provide orientation for further research in the field. Our foremost purpose is the development of actionable guidelines for questions of ethical management in times of change and challenge.



TRANSPORT

When arriving by plane, use the Shuttle Munich – Regensburg „Airportliner“. You need to book a seat ahead of time; by phone: 0941 / 22 22 0, or on the web: <http://www.airportliner.com>

Upon arrival by car, take the exit „A 93 Regensburg Prüfening“ and head for Regensburg „Zentrum“. For parking we recommend „Bismarkplatz Parkhaus“. From there, follow signs to „Altes Rathaus“, and for further directions use map below.

When arriving by train, follow „Maximilianstrasse“ until you see signs to „Altes Rathaus“, then continue according to the map below.

