

Summary

“Wirtschaftsethik vor neuen Herausforderungen”

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There is a steady tendency in the theory construction of ethics in business and economics in the German-speaking countries since the 1980s. During this process, a trend towards more sophisticated concepts and a distinct focus on practical demands, has appeared. In the face of the massive financial and economic problems of the recent past the call for ethics and morality is heard louder than ever. Distinguished economists and politicians claim for a radical change in theory and practice of economics. The article seeks to identify the most important current approaches, to show that economic and business ethics are facing new challenges. Globalization, cross-cultural challenges, and global environmental problems require a special attention of business ethics as well as an integration and (re-)contextualization of formerly independent areas. The assumption is to ensure that future emerging challenges for business ethics will lead to a mutual integration of economic and environmental ethics, in a cross-cultural and global perspective. Also, the need for a reinterpretation in the comprehension of justice is proposed.

The international discussions about the problems of climate change and the reduction of carbon dioxide illustrate the intersection of cross-cultural issues and the theory of justice. This relation allocates that pragmatic action is not practicable without an understanding of ethical principles. But at the same time, global threats open up the possibility to overcome the gap between theoretical foundations and an application-oriented perspective.