

**Call for Papers:
THINKING “THE ECONOMY” II
Workshop at MANCEPT Conference 2013**

After last year’s successful workshop, we wish to continue the discussion of “the economy” from a philosophical perspective. This year, we would like to focus, in particular, on two dimensions: a) understanding economic agents and economic organizations; b) connecting the debate about the economy to issues of global justice. We invite scholars from different disciplines and from different philosophical perspectives to submit abstracts of 500 words. Please send us your abstract by May 31st, 2013 (to Andrew.Walton@unisg.ch and Lisa.Maria.Herzog@googlemail.com).

Thinking “the economy”

Although the influence of the global economy on individuals’ lives can hardly be denied, this is not yet reflected in the space it is given in the social and political philosophy of the last decades. This workshop aims to contribute to renewed interest in this area. Some notion of “the economy” figures in political and philosophical writing in different ways. It figures, for example, as part of the “system” in contrast to the “life-world”, as a space of symbolic interaction, or a realm in which specific forms of unequal power are produced and perpetuated. Often, descriptive and normative elements are narrowly intertwined in these accounts and they include ideas from a range of disciplines and perspectives. Untangling some of these threads and subjecting them to greater philosophical investigation is crucial for discussing the normative dimensions of the economy and addressing many important questions with which social and political philosophy engages, such as the moral limits of the market and its appropriate relation to the values of freedom, justice, and so forth.

Thinking economic agents

Economic textbooks usually work with “utility functions” as representations of the behaviour of individual or collective economic actors. This obscures crucial questions about who is actually active in markets. For example, do individuals act as *moral* agents when they make decisions about consumption or investment or do they follow a different rationality? Does competition imply that utility-maximizing behaviour is the only appropriate behaviour in economic contexts? A second range of questions concerns non-individual agency in the economy. Obviously, collective actors, such as companies, have a major impact on what happens in the economy, but their internal structures and their relation to the wider society have seldom been an issue in philosophical discussions. Understanding the dynamics caused by problems of collective action, both within organizations and between individual and collective agents, is crucial for understanding the normative questions around the economy.

Thinking the global economy

Many of the most pressing contemporary moral questions about the economy concern its global extension. Global markets can create situations in which agents of extremely unequal power, acting in very different institutional contexts, enter into exchange relationships. There are also major questions regarding how the gains and losses of international trade should be distributed and how the global trade regime should be structured and governed. These questions connect with wider debates on global justice. They direct us to ask whether there are principles of justice in trade or whether conceptualising fairness in the global economy requires a more holistic analysis, and whether principles of distributive justice can be applied directly to international markets, or make sense only if there is a common institutional framework? They also return us to questions regarding how individuals and other non-institutional actors should act in the economy. Should individuals choose their careers to

advance justice or buy Fair Trade goods? Should companies uphold labour standards that they would uphold in their home countries in the context of developing country production? And what difference do “ought imply can” considerations make in this context?

We invite papers that discuss any aspect of this topic, which we conceive broadly. If you are unsure about whether or not your paper fits in with the workshop, feel free to get in touch.

Dr Lisa Herzog, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, and Institut für Sozialforschung,
Germany – lisa.maria.herzog@googlemail.com

Prof. Andrew Walton, PhD., University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, and Institut de hautes
études internationales et du développement (Genève), Switzerland –

Andrew.Walton@unisg.ch