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Dismissals: A Case for Business Ethics!

Abstract:

A scenario of dismissal is used to illustrate a business ethical reflection that is guided by the method of reflective equilibrium. Several rules of dismissal are considered with respect to an already proved practice and to the goals of the corporation. The deliberation shows how the demand for coherence between norms and practice and for the achievement of certain purposes works. The limits and chances of business ethical reflection are indicated on the basis of the discussed example. By providing the methodological frame business ethicists *support* decision makers in making *enlightened* decisions. They do not supply the decision maker with the ‘right ethical theory’ which provides an algorithm to conclude the ‘right decision’.

1. Introduction: Dismissals and Ethical Reflection

Though dismissal is a most prominent and urgent problem in the current global economic crisis, it is not confined to this situation. In fact, it is a continuous problem: the reorganisation of companies, the relocation of production abroad, the termination of production or whole industries, mergers and acquisitions, new strategic directions—all these measures are often accompanied by dismissals. Not only the affected employees are brought into a difficult situation by their dismissals as the need to dismiss troubles the people responsible, too. Seeing it from a wider perspective, one also has to take into account the economic consequences of numerically remarkable dismissals: the tax income of cities and states is reduced and, as private consumption decreases, merchants, private schools, fitness clubs, and so on are affected, too.

So, there is no doubt that dismissals bring about negative consequences of various kinds. As these are the results of human action and not merely natural events, as unavoidable as hurricanes and earthquakes, they are the objects of moral judgements.

What can business ethics contribute to the problem of dismissal?

In the first place, business ethics as a kind of philosophical reflection on moral problems of the economy in general and of business in particular should try to make clear the following conditions: Moral judgements relate to actions by asking for the performance or forbearance of the respective action. If someone says that it is *condemnable* to dismiss a father of four children, he also expresses that actors should *forbear* this action. If someone says that it is *praiseworthy* to give

up a part of a possible profit in order to avoid dismissals, he also expresses that actors should *perform* this action (see Birnbacher 2007, chapt. 1). One characteristic of *moral* judgements consists in the attitude with which they are brought forward: The author of a moral judgement presents it not as a matter of taste, but expects *general approval*. The other characteristic is that a moral judgement refers to a general moral *norm* that implies the judgement (see Hoerster 2008, chapt. 1).

Besides explaining these more general aspects of ethical reasoning, the theorist should—in the second place—clarify the manner and the scope of business ethical reflection: First, one must not expect the business ethicist—doing his business seriously—to give a non-hypothetical and concrete order: ‘Do that!’. Second, one should not presuppose that there is one single ‘right’ ethical theory, which just has to be applied to business ethical problems in order to deliver the ‘right’ solutions. The function of business ethics is not to relieve the actors of their decisions.—Taking into account these limits of business ethics, what is left? One should concede that there is a kind of middle position between recommending concrete actions and refraining completely from recommending anything. The object of business ethical reflection should consist in supporting actors that are responsible for morally relevant decisions in making these decisions in an enlightened manner. By discussing the example of a person who is forced to decide on who is to dismiss, the following paper tries to show how one could realise this task of supporting deliberation.

2. The Method of Reflective Equilibrium—A Sketch

Business ethical deliberations concerning concrete problems should be guided by method. In this section, I would like to outline the method of generating a *reflective equilibrium*, which seems to be fruitful in these contexts. The core of reflective equilibrium is the idea to justify rules by showing that they are in accordance with an approved practice or with considered judgements. If rules and practice do not match, the required agreement has to be produced by the mutual adjustment of rules and practice.

John Rawls coined the term ‘reflective equilibrium’ in his book *A Theory of Justice*.

“This state of affairs I refer to as reflective equilibrium. It is an equilibrium because at last our principles and judgements coincide; and it is reflective since we know to what principles our judgements conform and the premises of their derivation.” (Rawls 1971, 20)

Rawls himself points to Nelson Goodman’s proposal to justify rules of inductive and deductive reasoning by adjusting them to an approved practice.

“How do we justify a deduction? Plainly by showing that it conforms to the general rules of deductive inference. [...] Yet of course, the rules themselves must eventually be justified. But how is the validity

of rules to be determined? Here again we encounter philosophers who insist that these rules follow from some self-evident axiom, and others who try to show that the rules are grounded in the very nature of the human mind. I think the answer lies much nearer the surface. Principles of deductive inference are justified by their conformity with accepted deductive practice. [...] *A rule is amended if it yields an inference we are unwilling to accept; an inference is rejected if it violates a rule we are unwilling to amend.* The process of justification is the delicate one of making mutual adjustments between rules and accepted inferences; and in the agreement lies the only justification needed for either.” (Goodman 1983, 63f.)

The essential elements of the idea of reflective equilibrium consist in a presystematic approved practice (a set of accepted conclusions or a set of considered judgements) and a systematic object, which has to be inspected for the conformity with practice. If the two elements do not match, which will be the normal situation, they have to be brought into agreement, neither the systematic part nor the presystematic one being exempted from adjustment.

In order to apply the idea of reflective equilibrium one has to provide some further interpretations and some amendments: The main ingredients of an equilibrium are actions for the practice-side and rules for the systematic-side. Rules are entities that generally guide actions in relation to types of situations: If that-and-that is the case, actors of that-and-that kind may/must not/should perform an action of a certain kind (for this concept of rules see Black 1962; Siegwart forthcoming). Actions of a presystematic practice conform to a rule if acting according to this rule results in the same actions as the presystematic practice.

According to this basic structure of correspondence one has to distinguish different sorts of equilibria: A *local equilibrium* exists if one rule conforms to a set of actions. If a set of rules or a system conforms to a set of actions, there is a *global equilibrium*. If the system of rules additionally fulfils certain second-order criteria, it is called a *rational equilibrium*.

The mentioned meta-criteria are in the first place *consistency* and *usefulness*. They have to be fulfilled necessarily. Inconsistent systems are not acceptable. A system of rules which both obliges an executive to dismiss an employee who is more than 55 years old and forbids him to do so, is not applicable. But consistency is not sufficient: Take a system of rules for rewarding that is to set incentives for increasing the efficiency of employees. If a proposed consistent system of rules leads to an atmosphere of envy and resentment, finally decreasing efficiency, then it does not realise the objective and is therefore not acceptable.

In a rational equilibrium the rules belonging to the system are justified. This condition exceeds the mere demand of correspondence between rules and practice. In order to be justified the rule has to belong to a system of rules that fulfils further criteria.

The method of reflective equilibrium is not only applicable to the reconstruction of rules out of a presystematic practice but also to the revision of systems of rules that are already in use. In cases of revision, one also has to produce conformity. Since the actions were already guided by systematic rules it is not a presystematic practice that is to be preserved but a *systematic* practice—a *proved* practice—that has been tested and has been—at least in part—successful. On the systematic side, revised sets of rules have to be hypothetically applied in order to investigate their conformity to the tested practice.

3. Dismissals—According to Which Rules?

The following deliberations are meant to demonstrate how the sketched method for justifying rules could work. The point of view is initially restricted to that of the corporation. In particular, no statutory regulations are presupposed. Several reasons justify this procedure. First, proceeding this way, the considerations are independent from national regulations; labour law is no global phenomenon. Second, the deliberations from the point of view of corporations can be integrated into a broader perspective (see 4.). Third, corporations can introduce these considerations into their lobbying. Fourth, and in the context of business ethics essential, these deliberations on dismissal rules provide the chance for companies to give themselves their own regulations, and thus to possibly prevent statutory rules. It could be an example to show that setting corporate rules and following these rules can have long-term benefits for corporations.

How does an application of the method of reflective equilibrium to the problem of dismissal look like? The following scenario will be investigated. George, a staff manager, has to dismiss two out of six employees working in a division. What does the business ethical support consist in?

3.1 Acting According to Rules vs. Acting According to Gut Feelings

Suppose George wants to decide according to his gut feelings and dismiss Tony and Maggie. Though Tony works efficiently, George already loathed him when he was employed. Maggie is a reliable colleague but annoys him by steadily showing to be in good mood.—At this point the business ethical reflection and consulting has to explain to George what consequences his gut decision may have. *First*, one should remind George that he sets a precedent by his choice. George thinks he is deciding *ad hoc* and only for this case. But the employees that remain in the corporation may interpret his action in a different way: They regard the dismissals as a precedent. So they understand George's action as an action according to certain criteria or—in other words—according to a rule, and form respective expectations. In view of the fact that with the dismissal of Tony and Maggie efficient and reliable colleagues have been dismissed, they expect that these qualities do not matter. Interpreting George's choice in that way, the remaining employees may minimise their efforts so that finally the corporate

success is reduced. Besides, if in a next round of dismissal the more inefficient employees are dismissed, they may refer to this precedent and point out that these properties did not matter so far.

Second, George's choice can be seen as purely arbitrary. Experiencing arbitrariness may cause a demotivation and can produce an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear. Here too, the result would be a decrease of the firm's profit. Furthermore, an arbitrary choice will not only have these psychological and finally economic effects, but is also the object of *moral judgement*. Arbitrary actions are usually judged to be unacceptable. A rule which encompasses these judgements, could be: choices causing another person pain should be made according to criteria and not arbitrarily. *Prima facie* one might say that the refusal of arbitrariness belongs to the sphere of individual morality. On closer examination, though, one can say that this rule is widely accepted in Western societies and constitutes a moral norm of the society. Actions against this widespread norm will be accompanied by a lack of understanding in the corporation as well as outside. If consumers get to know that a firm treats its employees arbitrarily they might buy the respective products or services elsewhere. Decreasing profits are probable.

All these hypothetical considerations indicate the same: *If* the corporation pursues the goal to increase its profits and *if* George, as an executive (or agent in the principal-agent-relation), undertakes the duty to realise this goal, *then* the first business ethical advice is to omit decisions according to gut feelings and instead develop rules or criteria for the dismissal of employees. Two aspects deserve special attention: First, the deliberations sketched so far contain empirical relations, e.g. the relation between the experience that efficiency is not estimated and the inclination to reduce engagement. Second, the considerations show that attending to a moral norm can promote the goals of a corporation; in short: Acting morally pays.

3.2 Several Rules of Dismissal

Having decided to leave gut feelings behind and to develop rules of dismissal instead, the method of reflective equilibrium guides the next steps. The rules should fulfil two conditions: Firstly, they have to fit to the already existing rules of the corporation. Secondly, they should contribute to the realisation of the corporation's goals. In the terms of reflective equilibrium: One wants justified rules that are part of a rational reflective equilibrium, i.e. rules of the rational normative system of the corporation.

Above, two scenarios have been mentioned in which the method of reflective equilibrium can be applied, the reconstruction of a system of rules out of an approved practice or the revision of a system of rules. The example discussed above should be analysed as a revision scenario. The company already has a system of rules, a corporate culture or—stricter—a corporate governance that is to be complemented by rules of dismissal. Suppose the following development: the company was founded eight years ago and was very successful. Until re-

cently it was expanding steadily and the need to dismiss employees to a greater extent was unknown. It was quite the reverse: the company often had to look for new employees and struggled to create an attractive working environment that made people stay. These efforts also contained the formulation of a corporate culture. The respective norms of the corporate culture guide, among other things, the recruitment, the reward and the promotion of employees. Criteria for these cases are the performance, special abilities and also company loyalty. A particular norm for the executives obligates them to provide for the transparency of their decisions so that a clear assignment between an action and the respective decision maker is possible. The continuously intended aim of the company is long-term profit maximisation.

Now, the economic situation has changed and the company has to reduce the number of employees. George deliberates which rule he could propose as a guiding line for dismissals. The rule is to be integrated into the system of rules of the company. In terms of reflective equilibrium one has to analyse a revision scenario. The objective is to retain the proved practice by the already established rules, to obtain a consistent system and to realise or promote the goal pursued with the normative system.

George considers four different procedures: Decision of dismissal by lottery, by measures of social responsibility, by criteria of efficiency, and by seniority.

3.2.1 Dismissal by Lottery

In contrast to his first approach, namely to decide according to his gut feelings, George considers applying a lottery. The employees who are to be dismissed are determined by a fair lottery. A business ethical reflection guided by the method of reflective equilibrium, has to investigate what consequences an integration of the rule ‘dismissal by lottery’—‘For all employees E holds: If a fair lottery of dismissal determines E, then the company is obliged to dismiss E’—into the norms of the corporate culture will have. As already explained, this task includes two steps: First, one has to test what consequences an integration of the rule will have concerning the proved practice in dealing with employees, i.e. one has to test the compatibility of the new rule with the already established rules. Second, one has to assess what consequences are to be expected with respect to the long-term profit of the company, i.e. with respect to the goal pursued the normative system.

If the dismissal-by-lottery-rule was enforced, would it come into conflict with the existing rules? The answer is positive as the rule would conflict with all four rules mentioned above: The lottery can determine anyone, independently from efficiency, specific abilities, social aspects and seniority. So, for example, if one interprets the rule that recommends measures of promotion for those employees who have a special ability, this rule will conflict with the lottery-rule. If the lottery selects Peter, who happens to have a specific ability, the instruction will be to dismiss him. Applying the special-ability-rule one gets the instruction to promote Peter. Whatever ‘promotion’ may mean, it does not mean to dismiss

someone. In the same way the dismissal-by-lottery-rule gets into trouble with the other rules providing criteria for treating employees. Furthermore, there will be some tension with the transparency-rule for executives. This rule demands that one can identify executives with their actions. Applying a lottery-rule can be interpreted as trying to delegate decisions or to hide behind this mechanism.

So, in terms of reflective equilibrium, the proved practice will not be retainable if the company enforces the lottery-rule. Instead, all the mentioned other rules of the corporate culture will have to be changed. In order to decide between retaining the existing rules and looking for another dismissal-rule on the hand and enforcing the lottery-rule while changing the old rules on the other hand, one should perform the other mentioned step of the procedure and look at the possible consequences.

What will happen if the lottery-rule is enforced? One consequence might be that the employees agree with this procedure, which disregards all qualities. They might feel vindicated with respect to their sense of justice. This affirmative attitude could promote the working atmosphere and by this means result in good performance. If one assumes these empirical relations, one will argue that the company would benefit from this rule.

But it might also happen that the enforcement and application of this rule evoke very negative emotions and judgements. If the lottery determines the already mentioned efficient Tony and the reliable Maggie, the colleagues will interpret the dismissal by lottery as a signal that their behaviour does not matter. Engaging or not engaging, being reliable or not makes no difference. The result could be reduced engagement or the inclination to look for another job. Besides, as in the case of gut feelings, the lottery might cause an atmosphere of uncertainty. Employees steadily fearing the dismissal are not productive. If one assumes the latter empirical relations, one will draw the conclusion that the lottery-rule harms the company.

Altogether there seems to be only one condition under which the enforcement of the lottery-rule can be recommended: Only if one estimates that the rule will probably cause a wide agreement with the employees and by this way cause a good atmosphere and increase efficiency and if one is ready to give up or change the other existing rules, one should recommend the dismissal-by-lottery-rule.

If one wants to adhere to the proved practice and estimates that the good consequences of the rule are rather improbable, then one should not recommend the rule.

3.2.2 Three Alternative Rules: Seniority, Efficiency and Social Aspects

The other candidates for rules have to be treated in the same way. The questions to pose are:

- Does the rule in question fit to the already established rules or will there be conflicting instructions?
- Which consequences are to be expected if one assumes the enforcement and the application of the rule?
- How do the expectable consequences relate to the overall goal(s) of the company?

The deliberation concerning the lottery-rule illustrates how to proceed in generating a rational equilibrium. The following remarks mention some of the results for the other rules.

The seniority criterion can be accounted for in different ways. (i) For all employees E, F it holds: If the company has to dismiss employees and E and F both are candidates for dismissal and E has been longer in the company than F, then F is to dismiss. If one determines the rule in this way, the criterion of seniority *is decisive* for dismissal. This seniority-rule can come into conflict with the rules of promoting employees who are particularly efficient or those who have specific abilities. It may happen that Tony, who came to the company two years ago and who works most effectively, must go whereas David, who has belonged to the company for four years but is only an average performer, can stay. As a dismissal is not a kind of promotion, the dismissal of Tony conflicts with the respective promotion rule, which will recommend retaining Tony in the business.

Different consequences were to be expected if the seniority rule was enforced: The employees could understand the rule as expressing an esteem for long-term affiliation and could be motivated further, which could promote the company's profit-maximizing goal. It could also happen that the remaining senior employees become passive, feeling relatively secure in their jobs. Besides, employees who have not belonged to the business for a long time could conclude that the company rewards immobility instead of efficiency and engagement and so could minimise their efforts, finally being negative for the company's goal. Another aspect one has to bear in mind with privileging senior employees is the maintenance of networks. On the one hand, networks can improve communication in the company, and can help to disseminate essential abilities and knowledge. On the other hand, networks can inhibit intended changes. So, with regard to the company's goal they are to be judged with respect to the situation of the company and with respect to the assessment as to whether the company needs stability or change.—The overall evaluation of this rule again depends on the empirical relations between its enforcement and the employees' reaction and on the mentioned assessment of the company's future.

(ii) Another strategy is to construe the seniority-criterion as *one of several* criteria. This construction would be analogous to the promotion rules, which also account for several criteria. Applying this strategy, there will be fewer conflicts with the existing rules. It could also happen that a mixture of criteria

incorporating the proved criteria will raise the acceptance by the employees. The probability for this development is rather high as the mentioned established rules are those which are proved and successful and should be—at least in part—retained. The discussion of the other rules George considers may provide further candidates.

The rule to except those employees from dismissal who work most efficiently can also conflict with the existing rules, e.g. the rewarding of loyalty and the esteem for essential abilities. As with the seniority-rule, one may consider a mixture that contains the efficiency-criterion. Assessing the consequences of the efficiency-rule alone, one can initially expect an incentive for all the remaining employees to engage in their job. One has to account, though, for findings on the so-called B-players: These are the colleagues who do their job very reliably and with a long-term-perspective but do not struggle to ascend to higher ranks as they, for different reasons, are content with their job and prefer stability and continuity to going in for a career (for the findings of business psychology, see Hus 2009). These employees could be upset by the enforcement of an efficiency-rule alone. Uncertainty does not motivate; besides, these employees will eventually look for another company, e.g. a small or medium-sized business that offers jobs possibly less lucrative but with more stability. These possible consequences again suggest the incorporation of several criteria into the rule of dismissal.

Finally one has to look at a dismissal-rule that regards social aspects, e.g. the obligations an employee has to other people. How does this rule match with the existing rules? Applying the rule Michael can be exempted from dismissal because he has to care for three children. Michael is an average worker who has often been absent due to his obligations outside the firm. The already existing rules will not select him as one to be promoted. So there is no agreement. The case would be different if the firm had rules for attracting employees with children. In this particular case, one would expect the incorporation of social aspects such as the mentioned one into the dismissal-rules.

What would happen if the dismissal-by-social-aspects-rule was enforced in the sketched example? Again, efficient employees might curtail their engagement or try to get another job. But it could also happen that the disregard of social aspects leads to an atmosphere of refusal or resignation with the usual negative effects on motivation. In this case the evaluation of rule enforcement also depends on empirical relations. Taking into account that social aspects were not regarded in the existing rules one might not recommend this rule.

Having considered the four rules in a methodologically guided way, one can draw a conclusion: The lottery-rule and the social-aspects rule conflict with the proved practice. Additionally, there is only a small chance that their enforcement will have positive consequences for the company. So, George should withdraw them. The consideration of the efficiency-rule and the seniority-rule showed that each should be integrated in a rule as one out of several criteria, but should not be enforced alone. If one wants to retain the proved practice of promoting specific abilities, one should take this aspect into account with regard to dismissals as well. One could think of structuring the rule in a way that first those employ-

ees are exempted from dismissal who work particular efficiently or who have a specific skill. Out of the group of the remaining employees the senior employees are exempted.

So far, the discussion was strictly related to the point of view of the company. The business ethical reflection referred to the normative system and the goals of a company. It is remarkable that from the view of the company setting rules and acting according to rules can promote the company's goal. The formulation and application of rules fulfil the criteria of transparency and non-arbitrariness. By this means transparency and non-arbitrariness as rather moral principles get access to business (see Kliemt 2008, 89). To say it again: Morality pays.

4. Dismissals—Remarks on the Policy of Legislation

The foregoing considerations can be used in a widened perspective. First, they provide arguments for companies, which are confronted—*de lege lata*—with norms of dismissal by law. Having deliberated in the sketched way, they have acquired clarification on the rules they—*de lege ferenda*—want to be enforced. Second, the considerations can be taken as a basis for the business ethical reflection of regulatory policy. If a government wants to establish or revise norms of dismissal, the preliminary procedures must contain assessments as to which consequences certain norms will have on the actions of the persons concerned. If the issue is the formulation of norms of dismissal for companies, one has to investigate which consequences one might expect with the enforcement of the rules.

Still, in this wider perspective the consequences for companies constitute *only one element* of deliberation. Not just the consequences for companies matter, but also the expected results for the whole economy and the citizens of the respective states. Discussing the establishment or the revision of employment protection, one has to take into account not only the goals of the companies, but also the goals pursued by the individuals in the economic system. One may suppose that an economic system should be constructed in a way that promotes the wealth of its citizens or in a way that offers every individual the chance to pursue his own goals. From this perspective one has to ask if companies that are guided by their profit and set the rules for dismissals themselves will contribute to realise these goals.

If one assumes that the sketched considerations are actually performed in companies and that these companies pursue the goal of *long-term-profit-maximisation*, one will answer in the affirmative. Firms deliberately setting rules for dealing with the employees that incorporate the empirical relations between working conditions and motivation and engagement may have positive effects in several respects. The firms may profit, contribute to the tax revenue and in consequence let people outside the firm profit too. The employees know the rules and what they have to expect and can act accordingly. They have a job with a long-term-perspective. Milton Friedman's thesis that profit-maximisation makes sure

that all people are better off, corresponds to this ideal scenario (Friedman 1970). But the assumption that corporations pursue this policy may be false. In many states, norms of dismissal protection exist. This fact may indicate that reality deviates from the ideal scenario. One reason for the formulation of norms of dismissal might have been that the responsible people in companies do not perform the illustrated deliberations. They possibly act in the way George wants to act initially—according to their gut feelings. The first and foremost purpose of the German dismissal protection is to prevent arbitrariness and to produce legal security and planning security for employers and employees. Short dated decisions of dismissal disturb planning security. An uncertain life situation may prevent employees from long-term decisions on consumption, family or education. But one also has to admit that this emphasis on security is a rather German phenomenon that does not find much appreciation elsewhere, e.g. in the United States. The business ethical reflection though, has to take these phenomena into account as the hypothetical recommendations are made on the basis of such assumptions.

The (business) ethical reflection on this level of policy legislation has to raise the following questions: Which purposes are pursued by the setting or revision of a normative system? What is the approved practice (in case of the reconstruction of norms out of a presystematic practice)? What is the proved practice (in case of the revision of a normative system)? Do the proposed rules encompass the presystematic practice? Do the revised or the new rules match with the proved practice? Which consequences are to be expected if the rules are enforced? Does the enforcement of and the adherence to rules promote the pursued goals?

5. Business Ethics as Analysis

The foregoing discussion of the example is meant to illustrate an approach to business ethics that is methodologically guided. It should not be misunderstood as presenting the only way of reasoning on the example. One could think of other empirical correlations or other norms and goals that come into play when one performs the procedure of construing a reflective equilibrium. The presentation is only meant to demonstrate what this process may look like. But regardless of what the specific contents of reflective equilibria may be, some remarks on the chances and limits of a methodologically based business ethics are in place.

The results of business ethical reflections are hypothetical recommendations or instructions. They require an analysis of the situations in which ethical deliberations becomes necessary, e.g. when someone makes moral judgements or when someone has to make morally relevant decisions etc. The analysis contains considerations as to which norms are involved as well as assessments of the empirical relations one has to assume. One often has to determine the meaning of rather vague terms, e.g. 'social aspects', at once.

In the normative part of the analysis one has to identify the approved or proved practice and to determine the corresponding rules. Then the norm can-

didates are to be tested, i.e. they have to be hypothetically applied in order to discover incompatibilities. In the descriptive part one has to ascertain the correlations, i.e. one has to ascertain how the individuals will behave if the norms were enforced. To accomplish this task, one should incorporate empirical findings of the sciences investigating human behaviour, e.g. psychology, sociology and behavioural economics. The consequences of the enforcement of norms are to be evaluated with respect to the goals that are pursued with the normative system.

Relying on these results of the analysis of norms and their coherence, of empirical correlations and the realizability of pursued purposes, the business ethicist can give hypothetical recommendations. Weighing up the options and concrete trade-offs are left to the decision maker. Business ethicists support the decision maker in making enlightened decisions, they cannot take the decision.

“Die Lehre in Wirtschaftsethik kann nicht legitim vorgeben, welches Gleichgewicht gewählt werden soll. Sie kann nur das Handwerkszeug liefern, wie man ein solches Gleichgewicht suchen und vielleicht finden kann.” (Kliemt 2008, 89) [Teaching in business ethics cannot legitimately determine which equilibrium is to be chosen. Teaching can only provide the instruments for searching and possibly finding an equilibrium. Translation S. H.]

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