



## Call for Papers

### “Immanuel Kant as an Inspiration for Ordoliberalism”

Before the turn of the century, in 1999, the American economist Paul Krugman published an op-ed in the magazine *Fortune* titled “Why Germany Kant Kompete”. The pun was quite intended: on the background of Germany as the “sick man of Europe,” in a time of “eurosclerosis” (Herbert Giersch), Krugman attacked what he saw as a fetish of order and discipline, allegedly inherited from Kant’s categorical imperative, that blinded German economic policy to the urgent need of flexibility. Without Krugman using the term, it was an attack on ordoliberalism, seen not as the better version of neoliberalism but as a conservative, stern, and ultimately sterile creed. Since then, a quarter of a century has elapsed, seeing a global financial crisis, the eurocrisis, and now even war in Europe. Germany seems to be the “sick man of Europe” again, its economy dropping into recession in 2023. Scholars from a variety of fields, from economics to history and political science, have engaged critically with ordoliberalism and its historical protagonists in the meantime, essentially repeating Krugman’s challenge, probing the necessity/potential for renovating the paradigm.

In our interdisciplinary workshop on “Immanuel Kant as an inspiration for ordoliberalism,” organized on the occasion of the tricentenary of Kant’s birth in 1724, we will seek to explore and elucidate, beyond the cliché, the deeper connection between the thought of the broader Freiburg school, specifically Walter Eucken, and Kant’s philosophy. The workshop is scheduled for **December 5 – 6, 2024, at the Walter Eucken Institute** in Freiburg, Germany. It is well-known that Eucken was a Kantian “throughout” (Olaf J. Schumann/Hans G. Nutzinger) – not only in his intellectual upbringing as a son of the philosopher and Nobel laureate Rudolf Eucken, or in his protestant religiosity, but also in his normative economic approach, based on human dignity as an end in itself, derived from the categorical imperative, and on Kant’s understanding of liberty under the law. After all, in his posthumously published “Principles of Economic Policy” (1952), Eucken sets out to define no less than „that order which [...] corresponds to reason or the nature of man and things.”

We invite original contributions to the workshop that seek to track and explore in more detail various aspects of the inspiration that Kant’s philosophy meant for Eucken, the other ordoliberals, and his contemporaries in Freiburg – Franz Böhm, Karl Diehl, Alexander Rüstow, Gerhard Ritter, Edith Eucken and many others come to mind. Beyond such research in the field of the history of thought, we also invite more forward-looking contributions that venture to formulate an answer to Krugman’s challenge, drawing on Kant’s work and the corpus of ordoliberalism. Can historical ordoliberalism be considered a faithful heir to Kant’s philosophy

to begin with? Does the same hold for ordoliberalism as it is viewed and practiced today? Could today's proponents of ordoliberal policies draw fresh and fruitful inspiration from Kant's writings?

Scholars are asked to submit a **500-word (max.) abstract** for a paper in the form attached here, additionally specifying the title of their presentation and its main thrust, their full name and institutional affiliation, and an e-mail address for correspondence. The **deadline for submitting abstracts is March 30, 2024**. A decision will be made by the end of April, 2024, and you will be notified directly thereafter. After the conference, you will be invited to submit your papers, in English or German, to the **ORDO yearbook** for publication.

The Walter Eucken Institut will cover travel expenses\*, local accommodation, and conference meals, including two dinners (\*up to 1,000 Euro for transatlantic travelling costs, up to 400 Euro for travelling costs from other European countries, and up to 200 Euro for travelling costs within Germany).

## **“Immanuel Kant as an Inspiration for Ordoliberalism”**

**NOUS Workshop in Freiburg and ORDO**

### **Abstract Form**

Please return by e-mail to [dinter@eucken.de](mailto:dinter@eucken.de)  
no later than **30 March 2024**

Title, name and surname \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I intend to propose a paper on the following theme:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Title:**

(500 words max.)