

FREEDOM AND SAFETY OF AN INDIVIDUAL IN THE ATTITUDE OF LIBERALISM AND CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE

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The article deals with the freedom and safety of an individual under market conditions and ethical limits of market expression in the attitude of liberalism and Christian social science. Liberalism and Christian social teaching admits that market and its mechanism gives an individual and society an opportunity to fulfil their needs better, but differently estimates ethical limits of market expression. It is shown that in the attitude of Christian social teaching the goal of economic action is not only to create welfare for society and the individual but also to secure its safety. In its turn, creation of safety is associated with the necessity to overcome the single-acting dominance of economic values in the market society: ethic values by which economic action of the individual and society should be measured have to penetrate into economic space.

Keywords: individual, values, Christian social teaching, liberalism, solidarity, economic activity.

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Introduction

Under market conditions, selling (essentially, it is trade) is becoming the dominant form of lifestyle and activity for most people. People are constantly accustomed “to buy and sell” which is their job, abilities, realty, etc. By the way, both a seller and a buyer benefit from that selling. However, despite this mutual benefit the effect of such bargain process (buying and selling) is more often under consideration. There is some doubt as to whether really both sides benefit equally, whether the selling is really unconstrained and advantageous for the seller (Hook 2007: 18–21). Even in the Old Testament it was noticed: “As the stud is nailed in the gap of bricks thus the sin lies between the buyer and the seller” (Siracho 27: 2–3). Is the market (its shifts) really such a good “settler” of right and fair selling as the liberals claim?

As it is known, liberalism is prone to admit grand rights for the omnipotent market. To expand its limits it spares much more attention than for social sphere. It is not surprising. After all, the theory of liberalism defends the individual’s freedom and self-expression from all the possible infringement, especially from the national institutes’ attempts to limit it. It defends as much as it can.

On the other hand, it is clear that the individual’s freedom of action must have limits. These limits are determined by social norms, which all have to accept and stand by them. Exactly the fact that there are these social norms in the society creates advantageous conditions: firstly, to improve itself as a social system; secondly, to communicate and cooperate among individuals in order to seek well (welfare) which

everybody understands in their own way and is prone to seek it in a particular manner. As people seek for a different well (various kinds of well), they use various ways and means. It is important that the freedom to seek for welfare is appreciable for everybody.

Equally the theory of liberalism accepts a variety of actions (spheres) and their relative self-sufficiency. In other words, it is inclined strongly to dissociate a state from the market, accepts the principle realization of authorities' division, and defends the individual's forms of self-expression autonomy and independence of the state (family, clubs, professions, art, science, religion, autonomy existence of associations).

As stated above, liberals particularly defend a person's autonomy. What does it mean? Acceptance of a person's autonomy means the acceptance of rights to act according to one's own principles and appreciable attitudes. In fact, such requirement for autonomy can become a cover to excuse various neuroses and phobias of the individual (for instance, accepting for a particular national (or sexual) group of people, their peculiarity of self-expression and lifestyle, one can require for autonomy, exceptional rights and make the majority to tolerate doubtful attitudes). Under the requirement of autonomy one can seek to dominate in a particular sphere (social, cultural, etc.) (Hercog 1989: 162–174). Therefore, the requirement for autonomy always raises more issues than there are answers. In that way, it is always wanted to make exceptional rights for the individual or for a particular group. This ambition has to be not only based but also its particular universally balanced means for implementation have to be found. So, actually autonomy, the individual's as well, can be implemented only on a society level through adequate democratic institutes. Collective autonomy is based on collective self-rule according to the principles and solutions, which are supported by each of its members. Autonomy as well as freedom needs social conditions, which give an opportunity to realize most important rights of market and private possession. If there is no, the freedom and au-

tonomy essentially are not possible. If business is limited or not accepted, human rights are also limited. According to the liberals, strictly to dissociate public life from private is the only possibility to solve this problem. It is important for an individual not only freely and by oneself to seek for welfare but also welfare made by his/her attempts shall be protected, for him/her to have all the right for it. By creating welfare for oneself he/she will create it for others as well: workplaces and worldly goods for consumers will be made. So, liberals require autonomy for the individual and collective autonomy for business organization as well.

The question, to what degree an individual is really free under market conditions, and to what degree market is and can be free, where are its limits of expression, raises?

The goal of the article is to try to discuss the action freedom of an individual under market conditions and ethical limits of market expression in the attitude of liberalism and Christian social science.

Christian ethic and individual economic action

According to the Christian social science, economy is only one of a person's spheres of action. However, it is important because its achievements create welfare for the individual and society. Seeking for it as well as created welfare has to be realized and appreciated. Only then it gets sense. Ethics helps to realize goals' significance of economic action (Messner 1995). In such a way it influences further development of economy. In turn, ethics by placing economic action of an individual is constantly expanding its limits: it becomes a concrete means which places economic reality and improves itself. So, it may be claimed that economy and ethic complement one another (Pope's John Paul encyclicals: "Centessimus anus" 1991).

According to the Christian attitude, it is getting clearer that economy and business cannot refer only to its logic and stay exclusive, inde-

pendent (Hoffner 1996: 150–214). Ethics can and has to evaluate how individuals refer to values in their economic action, to realize the aspect of economical development itself, its objectives and attitudes, especially utilitarianism in the aspect of *homoeconomy* (Novak 1984). In other words, it is one's as God's creation's vocation implementation in the earth to help realize to what degree a person's, as economic subject's, action is turned not only to production of items but also to self improvement.

In the Christian attitude market cannot be absolutely independent. It would influence fatalistic consequences for a person: he/she would only be its victim without right and power to change something. Meanwhile a person is God's creation who has to rule the world and its resources. In this sense, he is the greatest worth.

At the same time he is the small author. Things created by hands and intelligence of human being (as well as market means) are also his pieces (Hoffner 1996: 7–65). Human must not become their slave, more over, the slave of anonymous market forces. Furthermore, the economic power, created by human exertion also shows the level of his personal responsibility and ethical maturity. Thus, the "faceless market" is just the production of human intelligence and hands, which, unfortunately, is increasingly starting to threaten its author.

That is why the integration of economics and ethics is necessary.

On the one hand, this integration would mean the admission of necessity to construe the omnipotent market and human economic activity there in the aspect of ethics. That is, the extent in which it is able to degrade the human, enforce him to play by its rules and make him dependant on them. (But this should not be allowed as it would contradict the Christian social tuition, which states the primacy of human being).

On the other hand, the integration of ethics into economics would mean the necessity to admit the importance of personal values to the success of economic actions. Person appeals to fundamental worth in his economic ac-

tions (business) and has patent way to rehabilitate faceless market space. He influences it positively, in such way humanizing one of the most important movers of economic headway – the competition (Uertzas 1994: 87–107).

It is obvious that economic (business) potential is growing constantly. The danger of the created products and services (production of weapons of mass destruction, artificial intelligence, medical strides, as cloning, changing gender, etc.) to safe and precious existence of human, as a biosociocultural being, is increasing as well. The attempt to natural human rights is made in pursuance to limit them (e.g. proprietorship, the right to obtain reliable information in face of monopolized ecumenical informational organizations). This new economic reality and its threat to human are commonly viewed twofold.

Firstly, following moral logics and legal provisions, that is to watch if economic reality is created strictly according to legal regulations, stated in laws. It is important to respect laws while creating economic welfare. Human being is eliminated from economic reality as a subject.

Secondly, following provisions of enthusiastic ethics, that especially points up human courage, activity, optimistic view to the world, defiance of difficulties and means to overcome them while seeking his constant study or good, foremost for himself.

Both of these attitudes to economic reality and its creation are single-acting.

According to Christian provision, the economic reality which is valued only by moral logics and legal regulations becomes inadequate, because then the unproductive economic systems that counter and deform human nature can be excused. We can analyze soviet economy model as an example. It was functioning according to legal provisions that were sanctioned by "socialistic" state, that is, it was legally accepted by collectivistic economic model. However, this system seemed not only economically inefficient, but it was also morally destructive. It destroyed trust among Soviet Union nations, the belief of a human in his/her own

power. The system also contributed to the decline of labor ethos and strengthened the temper of state's dependants. But the main thing was stimulating and maintaining the degradation of a human worth system. The true values (like truth, honesty, freedom, responsibility) were exchanged for pseudo-values (like devotion to a party, blind obedience to authority, refusal of own personal rights, etc.) or deformed. Given strained values a deformed economic system, which matched those human provisions, but seemed to inanimate, was created. For this reason, now it is obvious that being on the track of creation of the civilized economy, it is necessary to eliminate cultural and moral decline, that is, to return the real meaning of values. The creation of market is linked with ethics: the whole person is involved in economic process, not only with his economic knowledge and experience, (that is undoubtedly important) but also with his ethical worth.

It would be also inadequate to value economic reality blindly following provisions of enthusiastic ethics, because it essentially neglects the importance of *solidarity and productivity (effectiveness)* approximation, seeking for economic wealth.

Connection between values of solidarity and productivity

Although solidarity and productivity are closely related, they differ from the standpoint of overall wealth creation and realization of personal objectives and ambitions. *Solidarity* is the endeavor of public wealth: the personal efforts and strivings are pointed to the direction, which best serves to the wealth of society. Solidarity, as a value, is overall (universal). It is being reached by ignoring the available capital, social position, religion, race or gender. *Productivity (effectiveness)*, as a value, is a more constricted notion. It is being associated with utilitarian objectives, particular result, which is firstly important to its seeking person (or group), but not to community. Consequently, these values

necessarily conflict each other. Mostly it is evident in human economic activity.

Christian social science requires that a human seeking for personal goals would not offend the wealth of community, the natural rights of another person, assure social justice, individual social and ecological safety. In turn, the objective of a social wealth is an easy disposition of individuals (and social groups), that are proceeding in economic activity. There is also a need of exertion in order to obtain a particular result. Therefore, these values should be harmonized. The scope, range and success of this harmonization mostly depends on maturity of civil society, the readiness of its members to organize companies and groups having common interests, that are capable to think and act jointly towards common goals. It also depends on the recognition, that an individual, when making decisions, has a right to take risk, which is concurrent to responsibility. The size of responsibility of an individual right to risk is in turn influenced by objective (such as integrity and stability of state economic politics, favorable attitude of community towards individual incentives, general level of business ethics) and subjective (such as moral attribution of people participating in economic activity, their value orientation and priorities, their objectives and means to achieve them) factors. The conflict of solidarity and productivity values and success of its reduction and consistency particularly depends on specifying and functioning of the above-mentioned matters; concisely, it is made in particular economic activity of every individual.

Besides, assessing the economic reality in the viewpoint of enthusiastic ethics, the risk to trample natural rights of another person and admit the liberty of "the strong", especially his right to monopolism occurs (Nelson 1989: 45–48).

While assessing economic reality, unfortunately, it is common to follow the two above-mentioned attitudes: whether to look at it in viewpoint of validity of laws or individual right to seek for good incessantly. Essentially in such a way the cruelty of economics is being excused.

It is further developed ignoring the individual, not reckoning to his natural rights and even allowing demeaning him. Economics and the subject of economic activity (human) itself, conditioned by the consumer society, becomes the slave of utilitarianism. It is forgotten, that the individual (human) is an economic subject. Everything that is created must benefit not only from his material wealth, but also from his spiritual perfection and his personality process. The economics and its development lacks an anthropological vision that could help more clearly realize and name the value orientations of society economical activity in market conditions.

It is obvious that market economics has its own values (in fact, pretty concise, e.g. market demand), which it pays attention to. Together it increasingly creates new values that are rather specific (e.g. the quality of consumption) (Ross 1988: 29–30). While creating its own values, market economy is trying to supplant the universal values (such as truth, freedom, justice, etc.) from the consciousness of an individual or society or to read them in its own way. Let us take the value of “truth”. Business understands truth differently in market conditions. Various aspects of truth are available, depending on what is being sought. (Could a company tell all the truth if it wanted to sell its product? Hardly ever. Thus, the truth and truth in case of market conditions is not the same. The need to survive and find own niche in the market stimulates an increasingly declining need for true values (let us remember advertisements). In this way the truth is being destroyed. The allergy of society to true values is increasing. The cult of new values (pseudo values) is more and more being entrenched in minds of consumer society (Lee 1982; Zaretsky 1986).

On the other hand, the economic activity based on new values does not always create welfare to everybody (Ropke 1990: 68–72). A rather big number of citizens of the developed Western European countries are not definitely satisfied with the results of market economy and, especially, the standard of living, which, from our point of view, is rather high. Not eve-

rybody in Lithuania is happy with market development results as well. Thus, new values created by market economy are not equally accepted and they cannot perfectly match all needs.

It is true that a market demand is a value, but only one from many. It is also true that we are and should onward be the creators of values, not only of economic, but also of those satisfying needs of people which economics does not pay attention to, because they do not participate in economic process, though being members of society - our relatives (unemployed, invalids). That is why, according to Christian social science, economic individual activity should be based on more comprehensive value (not only economic) basis. Only then a human will be able to successfully implement God's will to master world's resources and create welfare.

God blesses every activity and incentive, no matter if it is our intellectual or physical activity. Every attempt of human being is blessed by God. Especially, that is directed to major and versatile fulfillment of existing unsatisfied needs of society (Power 1990: 89–90). The activity of a businessman stands as very generous by this viewpoint. It would be inappropriate to forget that he uses services of other people, involving them into a particular action. He is also using science and technical achievements, provides opportunities to progress and influences processes of nurture and education. This significantly expands the limits of his freedom and choice (Raz 1986). Together it increases the responsibility for tasks and the results of their implementation, their after-effects to human material wealth and versatile spiritual perfection (Werhahn 1996: 65–125). These results are achieved through economics (business). For this reason economics must be ethical (Paul, Miller 1985). This means, that single-acting of economic values in market society should be defeated. The ethical values should be integrated into economic space (Pesche 1996: 233–242). These should be the measures of economical activity of an individual and society. “Ethics would infuse to economics additional strength and

would present additional substantiation of new specific economic values that are rising in market society and integrate them into scale of universal (general human) values” (Raz 1986: 65). The individual would obtain possibility to live in society and have not only economical, but also moral liabilities.

Conclusions

Liberalism and Christian social teaching admit that the market and its mechanism creates an opportunity for an individual and society to better satisfy their needs and differently assess ethical limits of market exertion.

In the viewpoint of liberalism, contemporary market not only helps to satisfy individual needs, but also educates him/her as a consumer (in a broad sense), offering him new goods and services. Thus, market becomes the proponent of necessary human values – economical and political goods (functioning of democratic apparatus), as well as utility and prestige setter and prompter of their acquisition. Values that have no market admittance and “benediction” are not true values. In such way an individual becomes a slave of market and its cherished values and norms; at the same time, he is demanded only one thing – obedience to market laws only: then the life, according to them, will be ethically motivated.

In the viewpoint of Christian social science, market is just a production of human hands and intelligence, for this reason it may not become superior to the creator. The created and nurtured market values are rather specific (consuming quality). They are definitely important, but not only ones: a human has a right and may seek for those values that are not accepted by the market, but personally important to him. In this situation he should be supported not only by the community, but also by the state that is obliged to create conditions for every member of society to seek for his own purposes, with respect to supreme values – human and his dignity, that may not be sacrificed

to omnipotence of faceless market. As the goal of economic activity is to satisfy individual and society needs, its results may and must be measured not only by economic (benefit, efficiency), but also by ethical (consistency with individual objectives) scale.

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INDIVIDO LAISVĖ IR SAUGA LIBERALIZMO IR KRIKŠČIONIŠKOJO SOCIALINIO MOKSLO POŽIŪRIU

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Straipsnyje atskleidžiama, kad liberalizmas ir krikščioniškasis socialinis mokymas pripažįsta, jog rinka ir jos mechanizmas sudaro galimybę individui ir visuomenei geriau patenkinti savo poreikius, tačiau skirtingai vertina rinkos raiškos etines ribas. Liberalizmo požiūriu, šiuolaikinė rinka ne tik padeda individui geriau patenkinti poreikius, bet ir ugdo jį kaip vartotoją (plačiąja prasme), siūlydama vis naujų prekių ir paslaugų. Taigi rinka tampa ne tik žmogui reikalingų vertybių – tiek ekonominių, tiek politinių (demokratijos aparato funkcionavimas) – siūlytoja, bet ir jų naudingumo bei prestižiškumo nustatytoja ir įgijimo skatintoja. Vertybės, kurios neturi rinkos pripažinimo, „palaiminimo“, nėra tikros vertybės. Taip individas tampa savotišku rinkos ir jos puoselėjamų vertybių bei normų įkaitu, iš kurio reikalaujama vieno – paklusnumo tik rinkos dėsniams: gyvenimas pagal juos būsiąs etiškai motyvuotas. Krikščioniškojo socialinio mokslo požiūriu rinka yra tik žmogaus rankų ir proto kūrinys, todėl ji negali būti aukščiau už patį kūrėją. Rinkos kuriamos ir puoselėjamos vertybės yra specifinės (pvz., vartojimo kokybė). Jos neabejotinai svarbios, bet ne vienintelės: žmogus turi teisę ir gali siekti tų vertybių, kurios nėra rinkos pripažintos, bet jam asmeniškai svarbios. Čia jis turįs jausti realią paramą ne tik bendruomenės, bet ir valstybės, kurios priedermė – sudaryti sąlygas visiems ir kiekvienam visuomenės nariui siekti savų tikslų, paisant aukščiausios vertybės – žmogaus ir jo orumo, kuris negali būti aukojamas beveidės rinkos tariai visagalybei. Kadangi ekonominio veikimo tikslas yra patenkinti individo ir visuomenės poreikius, tai jo rezultatai gali ir turi būti matuojami ne tik ekonominiu (naudos, efektyvumo), bet ir etiniu (neprieštarinėjimo individo siekiams) masteliu. Parodoma, kad krikščioniškojo socialinio mokymo požiūriu ekonominio veikimo uždavinys yra ne tik sukurti visuomenės ir individo gerovę, bet ir užtikrinti jų saugą. Saugos kūrimas savo ruožtu neatsiejamas nuo būtinumo įveikti ekonominių vertybių vyravimo rinkos visuomenėje vienpusiškumą: į ekonomikos erdvę turi įsilieti etikos vertybės, kuriomis derėtų matuoti ekonominį individo ir visuomenės veikimą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: individas, krikščioniškasis socialinis mokymas, liberalizmas, rinka, solidarumas, vertybės, ekonominis veikimas.

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