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Main Ethical Dilemmas in Economics and Business: Which are the Burning Questions/Problems and Possible Solutions/Answers?

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„New generations are more and more worse. It will come the time when they will become so evil that they will adore power, choose strength, and the respect of good will disappear. On the end, when nobody will oppose to the misdoing and evil, or do not feel the shame in the presence of misery, the Zeus will destroy them.“

From the old Greek legend, Source: Fromm, 1984.

In market oriented society and analogue in business organizations rule two opposite ethical imperative which take effect in different directions regarding the ethics:

- a) Be altruistic, non selfish, just, do not do to the other what you do not want for yourself! (so called Golden ethical rule);
- b) Eliminate the competition, be better, more successful, more powerful, keep monopoly, be rich no matter how! (so called competition/domination rule).

Such different value systems in economic and business life have it sources in two different value systems/approaches:

I) *Humanistic value approach* (e.g. Christianity)- which tells about the love towards the humans (also towards enemy) because of life itself.

This tradition has ideas of humanity affirmation, communication, togetherness, helping, giving, social justice.

II) *Pagan value approach* (e.g. Imperialism, Despotism) – which positive values domination, power, control (violent achieving and keeping it), property&profit as ultimate goal, conquering, destruction, exploitation, dominant skills of killing, changing the right of using to right of malusing, manipulation of human mind for achieving control and obedience, with main tools of fear (punishment) and money (award).

The main goal of this paper is to answer: „How to resolve this value system paradox, or how to achieve more humanistic values in business

and so achieve better systemic balance between those two systems. The main metastrategical problems explicated in this paper are:

D1: Problem of balancing profit/competitiveness and morality/humanity. The main question is: „Which extent of each is appropriate?“

D2: Problem of choosing the most appropriate moral ideology/idolatry for the socio-economic/ business life in regard of achieving the goal of good balance of profit/competitiveness and morality/humanity. The main question is: „Which ideology/idolatry should be most appropriate?“

D3: Problem of value hypocrisy. The main question is: „How to overcome the present hypocrisy as result of confrontation of two opposite values in different value systems? (paradox of profit/competitiveness maximalization and moral/humanity maximalization in the same time).

Although pagan values are highly present in the numerous socio-economic settings and also in the international politics, there should arise strategical change for more balance with humanistic values in the name of survival of humanity and social responsible behavior.

Introduction

The main problem of ethical behavior in business and economy (in the organizational, corporate, social and global sense) is that ethical behavior should enable enough i.e. optimal satisfying human needs (e.g. needs by Maslow hierarchy), so it should be connected with everyday life, and on the another hand should strive to ideal i.e. moral maximalization, because satisfying the human/organizational needs is often in contradiction with moral demands.

Values of scientific management such as: survival, success, health and happiness are still dominant in today's organizational/corporate life, so they are often used as allowance to use every means to achieve it. Basically those values are instrumental ones because they have not its ends in itself. Also such value approach is quite subjective and ethics based on those instrumental values are achieved by the power. Instrumental values which are mediated by manipulation and adjustment of weaker ones, not by intrinsic moral values (those which have his ends in itself) and moral judgement (Lukšić, 1995:8), have serious ethical deficits. Mentioned instrumental values have the purpose in satisfying of egoistic interest, and therefore are not intrinsic values which has his ends in his own, i.e. which purpose is in themselves, in specific virtue (Žitinski, 2014), so selfish interest in instrumental values can be treated as negative term of good (Edel, 1955:170).

In the same time intrinsic values of religion (e.g. christianity or other religion values) and humanistic values (e.g. correct behavior, truth, love, equanimity, nonviolence) are not high practicaly valued and lived in organizational/social life, they are mainly treated in hypocrisy manner (as

only appropriate in idealistic sense) and are used when it is need for manipulation of human minds (employees or citizens). Also psychologically speaking it is not enough to satisfy human needs (instrumental values) in the hypothetical life after life (e.g. living in the Jesus Kristus value system and enjoy almost all the benefits in life after this Earth life), and due to this ethical consideration to behave ethically in the everyday life for the benefit in hypothetical another life. Therefore, if by ethical behavior can not be enoughly satisfied human needs, i.e. if by means of moral behavior humans/organizations can not satisfy even the basic human needs (i.e. existence values), or perhaps some of the higher human needs (development/growth/social advancement) we have serious problem in business ethics implementation (especially in the business settings). It is ethically not correct to use only instrumental values, so e.g. if those who strive to the organizational top, can achieve this goal without regard of ethics (e.g. without mercy for other people/competitors), and people mostly behave according the consequences which their behavior have for them, so awarding of appropriate (moral) behavior and punishing of unappropriate behavior (amoral/antimoral) behavior should be the main broad strategical tool, because it is empirically proved that external consequences which people suffer for his antisocial/prosocial behavior are mostly effective (Pastuović, 1999:252). Therefore every ethical behavior should have some impression/promise of awarding (actual/immediately or postponed one-but not postponed so long that it can be achieved in hypothetical life after life).

Known numerous ethical principles only state that everyone should behave with integrity (Sikula, 1996; Porter & Kramer, 2006), not how to resolve main ethical controversies/dilemmas, paradoxes in the economic system, and what should really motivate people/employees in behaving in such ethical manner. This actual unclear ethical situation make the achieving of this integrity principle very hard or impossible on organizational/corporate level. Therefore it is important to resolve the main dilemmas of systematic nature of unethical behavior which are the products of socio-economic systems, where the psychology of groups and individuals make the background of organizational (group) evil behavior (Zimbardo, 2007).

In ethics, there is often discrepancy between theory and practice that needs to be overcome. Namely, ethics that can't be applied in practice must suffer from a serious lack of theory, because the essence of ethical principles is that they lead to practice (Singer, 2003, 2). Therefore without solving this „meta-ethical“ strategical questions, ethics in practice often can be not effective. Namely, if crucial systematic ethical questions which create basic ethical motivation are not resolved, nothing crucial and nothing radical can be made with only formal organizational measures unconnected with broader socio-economic ethical reality. To enable more ethical behavior in contemporary economy, business organizations i.e. business relationships there should be resolved some important systemic meta-ethical problems such as:

- I. Problem/dilemma of balancing profit/competitiveness and morality/humanity. Is in competition (local/global competition with unequal conditions for achieving competitiveness), and in non-perfect market society, some extent of amorality/antimorality necessary, although it is not right?" If it is, what a-morality and anti-morality should be tolerated and how should be ballanced this two opposite ethical goals/basic valued (competitiveness/profit and morality/humanity)? How to solve this problem of morality and economic efficacy when this are the goals which pulls in different direction? Also here is important ethical question: „If someting make profit, i.e. is economic good but not quite moral, is it appropriate for human society? How balance existence and morality? How to create system in which is good balanced morality and economic efficiacy? Where should be such a balance?
- II. Problem/dilemma of choosing the most appropriate moral ideology/idolatry for the business in regard of morality/humanity. Which is the optimal ethical way of doing business? Can this way be separated from way of living or should be in the same ethical framework? (i.e. can good human life be lived according the same values, i.e. in the private and also in the business life or not?). Is here present the dual system of values (good and evil Lord)? How should live/work the people in organizations with different cultural origin, or concrete, what is the better/best way which should be adopted for living-working area values? Should be adopted the model of work/life from USA, West Europa, China, Japan or some other dominant way of doing business and way of living?
- III. Problem/dillemma of value systems hypocrisis. This is the problem of relationship between declared (PUBLIC- which has the character of „what should be“) and actual (working) but hidden (SECRET- which has the character of „what actualy is, and how we actualy work“) value system (sometimes called „hiden curriculum“) and the relationship between this two system (real - and parasystem). It is known the hypocrisis as the product of such hidden value system nowadays. The existence of such SECRET para-systems tell us that the question of ideal/optimal value system/ideology neither in organizational nor in the social life is not good resolved, also neither on theoretical nor on practical level. Although this old Hume dilemma between „what should be“ and „what it is“ some philosophers try to solve on theoretical level by equaling it, practically can not be solved in such a way because produce evil in socio-economic and business system.

The main dilemma in this paper is illustrated by the Picture 1.

Picture 1. Duality of values (value systems) in economy and business



Source: Sikula (1996:94)

Dilemma profit/competitiveness vs. ethics/humanity

Economic organization has two opposite side. At the same time as it is feeding, housing, educating, and transporting us, it is also exploiting, polluting, poisoning, and impoverishing us (Mayer, 2013:23). The environmental disasters, financial catastrophes and corporate mistakes destroyed governments, towns, oceans, and anymal species.

Economy, market and monetary system are not natural forces, humans have created and planned this systems so they can be arranged in the way that it is possible to make money on ethical i.e. human way, but also on explatatory, damagefull i.e. non-human way. Therefore the task of economy should be in protecting rational values not in spreading moral evil (Žitinski, 2014), and the first step is to clear the dilemma of profit making on the humanistic, i.e ethical way.

When profits are threatened, costs and jobs (staff) are reduced and nobody (or rarely) is asked about ethics/humanity or even social costs of such approach - this is typical scenario in business organizations/corporations. Although the employees enthusiasm/motivation and also morality/humanity is lowered in the situatuion of employee cost cuts, the most important thing remain money/profit and neither humanity/morality nor morale (employee motivation). So it is important to practically see what should be done in the usual situation in business companies, where is obvious that profit/money is the most important value. So we clear see the hypocrisy that human beings and ethics are really not the most important in the business and most business organiazations (although it can be stated declaratively), and some authors argue that ethics and humans are more important than money (Sikula, 1996; Pupavac, 2006), the reality is often quite opposite. Namely, market is an abstraction which institutionalize irresponsibility (Solomon, 1999:XX). In fact market is blind mechanism

which in the same way promotes good and evil and the space and freedom needed for internalization of virtues simply destroy (Žitinski, 2015). If we adopt the view, that business ethics in market society and business is crucial for socio-economic development, ethics becomes very important issue, with important questions which arise in management/government of society and business. Ethical companies should ethically behave to people i.e. buyers, suppliers and employee's (Gini, 1998:33).

By means of ethics we should distinguish what is correct (ethical) and what is not correct (violence). What is correct can be defined so that at first we define what is not violence (Reiman, 1990, IX). So if market impact is such that from some people, group of people, organizations, nations makes victims we have violence in practice (opposite to the ethical approach). Therefore Entitlement Theory/Libertarian theory which promote that the right on social and economic freedom should be regulated only by the rules and procedures of economic profit and exchange on the principles of free market is by ethical view not appropriate (market do not create honorable virtues in humans). Also such libertarian approach which promotes egoism, makes invisible the social structure (Reiman, 1990:242-243) and destroys common people without concern on wellbeing of every human being. If we ignore what is correct, just, and favorize something or someone outside the frame of justice we practically have only power without morality in action what is in fact - violence (Ciulla, 1998:12). Violence is the opposite term of correctness, ethics and integrity.

Is there needed some integration of capitalism ideology/idolatry (where money/profit is the Lord, i.e. main value with market as nonquestionable honourable authority) with e.g. Bible/humanistic values in broader sense (e.g. main values of truth, correct behavior, love, peace/equanimity, nonviolence). This is really great ethical problem because is known (according Bible, 1968) that people can not serve to the two masters/Lords (value systems) i.e.:

- a) Value system of money/greediness (Symbolized by Lord Mammon in Bible story of „Golden Calve“).
- b) Value system of love, truth, justice, social equalness (Symbolised by Lord Jahve or his soon Jesus Christ in Bible).

So if we insist on business ethics (humanistic approach which can be identified with value system of Jesus Christ) in business world which operates with the main value of profit/greediness approach which also highly value the values of power, dominance, control over other human beings i.e. pagan values (Lukšić, 1995) we have an systemic ethical error/problem because is not possible to make good composite between this two systems and so as result we have dual systems i.e. very good conditions for developing hypocrisy.

If we have the resolved dilemma profit/greediness vs. humanism ethics or defined clear value system this dark-side of business and management would be much easier to resolve, but in the situation of unclear values i.e.

relativity of values we do not have hard ground from which we can destroy the injustice and non-moral behavior (Edel, 1955:21). If we have unique clear/transparent value system (not one for „naive“ and one for „smarter“ e.g. rulers), than is more difficult to govern and manage but the business and civilization will be pulled in the right direction of increased evolution, with better longterm results.

With this is also connected the problem of implementing ethical standards on powerfull and extremely intelligent people (political, social, economic, educational elite). Today becomes obvious that for very powerfull people do not exist neither legal nor moral norms. What is crime to usual/ordinary people is not for the powerful ones. This is also especially difficult problem if such elite/quasi-elite do not come to their social position by means of moral acts and values (e.g. by negative selection-i.e. they are champions in negative selection) and in the same time they should be models (moral verticals/pillows) for other subdominant people/groups i.e. followers. Also here we can ask: „Which type of morality is appropriate to whom?“ (e.g. which values are appropriate for collective life, and which values are appropriate for specific human groups life e.g. leaders/„Lords on the Earth“, if we accept the existing ethical principle from pagan value system "Quod licet Iovi non licet bovi!"), and so normalize the fact situation in practically every society and organization.

Namely, those which are in power mostly have no interest in practice humanistic/intrinsic ethics all the time (e.g. politicians to achieve their own goals almost lie all the time, and according humanism i.e. Bible this is one of main human sins) and this should be changed as strategic need in creating moral individuals, groups, organizations, society, civilization. Another problem here is how to organize control of controlors (elite) because without any control we will most probably experience the violating of the ethical principles.

Problem/dilemma of chosing the most appropriate moral ideology/idolatry for the business in regard of morality/humanity

Every society and organization have some kind of socialization - this is well-known social fact of human societies and also organization life. Dominant value system determine the way of socialization i.e. dominant ideology and accordingly idolatry. So in social life is important the specific value internalization especially early socialization (e.g. it is known that poor children have different values than rich ones and that early socialization has significant impact also in adult age). In the history are well known different very known social ideologies with analogue idolatries, which can be applied in the socio-economic system, e.g.:

- a) Ideology of fascism with idolatry of the race.
- b) Ideology of capitalism with idolatry of the capital/money/economy.
- c) Ideology of communism/socialism as easier variante with idolatry of the proleteriate (workers)
- d) Ideology of New Testament (Bible) with values of love, justice, social equality is also some kind of value system i.e. idelogy with idolatry of humanism (which has as idolatry tool the Golden ethical rule).
- e) Other types of ideologies and analogue idolatries. E.g. today in organizational life there exist many moral ideologies, the famoust are: idealism, ralativism, machiavelianism, golden ethical rule, narcism, utilitarianism, cost-benefit analysis and altruism (Chudziska-Czupala, 2013).

Important question here is what socio-economic idelogy and idolatry is most appropriate? Is this capitalistic ideology and idolatry, or we have some another good options? Also it is important to answer: „Is the most efficient economic ideology the best solution for social development?“, because economic goals can be subordinated to social goals, and vice versa. Namely it is known that fascism was extremelly economic successful in Germany, although we know it was not moral/humanistic because people were sacrificed for higher goals. Therefore democracy as value is also not necessarily connected with economic efficiacy - also civilisations based on slave work were in hystory very economically successful with long life circle of such civilizations (e.g. Roman empire, Chinese empire), but also old Greece (Ancient Athena) state which developed and lived first democracy (but not for slaves). Today we can also learn a lot from the organization on this slavery based work societies and their way of doing the business/projects (i.e. aquaductus, military strategy, etc.), but also from the democracy system work in old Athena (building the Parthenon where all names of the builders were imprinted in stone).

Capitalism hystorically showed also economic more successful than communism/socialism in implementation. But capitalism is not moral system „per se“ it is primarily economic system, i.e. some authors argue that capitalism is amoral system (Marx, 1887; Kulić, 2010), but for better functioning of capitalism is important indoctrination with humanistic values of democracy, freedom and free choice, which in practice are mostly illusions i.e. some kind of manipulations of human mind, if we think thouroughly about that and have insight in empirical evidence about the essence of the socio-economic system. Communism/socialism although it was a noble idea and somewhere also in the implementation because is near humanism (christianity), because it has similarity to christian values (e.g. social equality, principles of communist/socialist social justice in distribution (Visković, 1981), etc. The problem with communism was because of deviations in implementation because of dominant evil human nature. For thousand of years people try to find socio-economic system where the people will live better, without

exploitation (e.g. from slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism, communism), but still we can not escape from exploitation of one human being over other human being, and this is not because of lack of knowledge, or difficulty in solving this problem but in dominant evil human nature, which wants to exploit, have under control nature and other human beings.

For morality i.e. ideology/idolatry here is the crucial question how to integrate dominant capitalism ideology/idolatry with humanistic values (e.g. truth, correct behavior, love, peace/equanimity, nonviolence), or simply 10 Lords imperatives from the Christian Bible. The rulers/government should create such ideology with such the spiritual ideas which can give the global hope and purpose. Today with the domination of capitalism management tool (money and fear) this is not possible. True leadership is possible only with higher spirituality (superior value system i.e. ideology/idolatry). We should seek and find appropriate ideology which is appropriate for the future civilization and of course in analogy organization life.

Yet, in the ethical context it is not ethical to base his own freedom on someone else's slavery, i.e. non-freedom (i.e. violence, exploitation). Therefore, in contemporary civilization we have not the final answer what ideology/idolatry is the best (optimal) one, so this is still an open (philosophical) and practical question.

As conclusion it can be stated that ideology/idolatry should be moral i.e. rational i.e. honorable which enable dignity of human beings by means of virtues. Integrity in fact means that people have internalized and practice the basic human virtues by habit, because virtue humans achieve through habit-this is not natural characteristic of humans (Aristotle, 1998:20, 1103a). The first aim of intellectual and moral elite is to block the egoism in order that it can not be wide-spreaded, so it becomes legitimate principle against nobody protest. Evil spreads when nobody cares about the misery which is not our (lack of solidarity). Namely in business world is important to achieve the dignity of human beings which means that the humans have their aims in themselves.

Problem/dilemma of value systems hypocrisy

Because in contemporary business world, also in social life are existing very different contradictory values and whole value systems which pull in totally different directions, it is hardly to avoid hypocrisy of values. Because it is known that by means of humanistic (e.g. christianity values) it sometimes not possible to survive (e.g. „who tells the truth is in big trouble“), or at least lead succesful life (e.g. without lies or pure power application is not possible succesful leadership and the human hierarchy with subordination). Because pure power leading is not popular, we often instead have terirrible hypocrisy with manipulation. The question is: „What

is better? Management by pure power or by hypocrisy with manipulation of human mind?"

Such a hypocrisy is great problem of social and organizational life, and in contemporary social conditions without resolving the dilemma between profit maximization and morality maximization; the problem of dominant social/organizational ideology/idolatry also the problem of hypocrisy and culture of lie/manipulation can not to be solved.

In contemporary society hypocrisy is normalized as normal behavior. For example in organization is often not known the difference between motivation by manipulation, and motivation by ethical approach. By the motivation by manipulation, management is created additional reason because something by somebody should be done by impressing the employee(s) in the correctness of this approach. By ethical motivation management honesty seek wishes, needs and striving of employee(s) in order to find the solution of together needs (organizations and employees). Ethical motivation is working on together interest. Only ethical motivation is leadership, and true motivation.

By hypocrisy there can be only motivation by manipulation or by the traditional rough (primitive) tools fear and money. As anachronism here is also the problem of serving to the different value systems (e.g. imperialistic/pagan values or capitalistic and humanistic values in the same time). So, is it possible to serve to the „Good of Mamon“ (idolatry of gold/money/greed-known as the story of „Golden Calf“ in Bible) and in the same time to „Good Jahve“ (justice, love, social equality)? The Bible answered that nobody can serve two masters (two different value systems), because those will hate the one Good (dominant value), and love the other Good (dominant value). So nobody can serve Good Jahve and Greed (Good Mamon) in the same time. Can we have different value systems, to have totally opposite and incompatible values (i.e. humanistic and capitalistic or fascism or pagan values) which in reality can not exist together without hypocrisy, hidden curriculum and existing parasystems of values? Or there is perhaps some of the composite of different ethical systems possible solution? But solution is certainly not to have humanistic value system for presentation and impression management and other value system (e.g. pagan values) for practical everyday usage. This is nothing else than hypocrisy and in fact represent serious crisis of morality.

So the main question here is how to integrate, reconcile or transform the existing dominant value system which is e.g. based on capitalism ideology and money/capital idolatry with morality (e.g. humanistic values), as tool for manipulation. Namely morality can not avoid the humanistic framework (doing the good to other people by means of humanistic values) i.e. humanistic values mentioned earlier. So to achieve morality which is humanistic one i.e. with humanistic values (perhaps this could be the spiritual goal, otherwise it is not clear that any real morality can exist), the dominant ideology and practice should be also humanistic.

Otherwise, if we do have real integrity¹ in every level of aggregation (individual, group, organizational, systematic/social) it can not be expected to have moral individuals, moral organizations, moral society and moral civilization. So when we talk about morality in organizations we can not avoid dominant ideological and idolatric framework, we can not avoid this meta-ethical strategical questions i.e. dominant ethical framework. The solution could be to achieve dominance of humanistic over pagan value system, e.g.:

- Good balance of two value systems can be achieved by institutional behaviour which dominantly promote humanistic values not only in declaration but also practice way.
- Good balance of two value systems can be achieved by punishing pagan values approach, and such way of behavior.
- Good balance of two value systems can be achieved by humanistic socialization in family, schools, enterprises, institutions and also elite education.
- Good balance of two value systems can be achieved by international promotion, and collectiveness in humanistic values approach and to oppression to the violence and manipulation of any kind and from any place in the world (pagan value approach).

If we know the answers on the above three mentioned main ethical dilemmas (if we know „what“), the question „how“ is the technical one. Solutions to improve specific ethics are much easier and are known as strategies to improve business ethics. Of course it is difficult to internalize unclear ethical system (or double one which has controversies), where is not clear defined the ideology/idolatry and where exist systemic ethical hypocrisy, i.e. in one word unsolved meta-ethical questions of socio-economic system and business life.

Conclusion

This paper discussed main meta-ethical problems/dilemmas in the socio-economic and business area:

- a) appropriate value system in market society-especially the dilemma profit/competition maximization (instrumental/extrinsic value system) vs. humanistic value maximization (humanistic/intrinsic value system).
- b) appropriate ideology/idolatry for the need of desirable socio-economic system.
- c) resolving the hypocrisy in socio-economic and business system as result of inconsistent value systems (instrumental/extrinsic vs. humanistic/intrinsic one).

¹ Integrity as term can also be treated as result (epiphenomenon) of all human virtues, also uniqueness in thinking, feeling, speaking, doing.

If we try to resolve this basic meta-ethical questions we find that there are much more question which arise when we try to resolve this problems then the concrete answers. It is difficult to give answer if something is not ethical but it is necessary because of interest of power/development. Thretherefore which ethical system, ideology/idolatry to apply, remain the question of socio-economic/organizaitonal choice, without ideal (optimal) solution yet.

If we are aware of above mentioned meta-ethical dilemmas, and know in ourself the answer „what should be“ to improve „what actually is“ than we can make systematical internalization of values by means of ethical strategies, to deal with ethical problems/dilemmas. Of course this old ethical Hume dilemma between „what should be“ and „what it is“ on this way is not quite resolved. The solution of some philosophers which try to solve it on the theoretical level by equaling it, is not good solution, because such solution in practice produce hypocrisy and evil in socio-economic and business system.

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