

JUDGING THE AUTONOMY OF DEED FOR PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY

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Gelişimsel Bir Siyasi Ekonomi İçin Eylem Bağımsızlığının Sorgulanması **Özet**

Kendisine eşlik eden bir post-modern kültürel mantıkla yükselen neo-liberalizm bir yandan genelleştirilen kodlara dayalı sosyal projelerin geçerliliğine son verirken, bir yandan da liberalizmin özünü değiştirmektedir. Genelleştirilen kodların yıkımı ilk bakışta bireysel hak ve özgürlükleri genişletiyor görünmektedir. Buna karşın, ekonomik ve siyasi alanlar arasında içsel bir çelişki belirmektedir. Genel kodların yıkımı bireysel hakları tanım gereği artırmaktadır çünkü kişisel farklılık noktalarının kimlik konumlanması ile birlikte sürdürülebilirliğinin tanınması bireyin seçim hakkını olanaklar bakımından çoğaltmaktadır. Ne var ki bireysel hakların çoğalmasının yanında kişisel özgürlüğün gizli bir daralmayla sınırlandığı gerçeği de mevcuttur çünkü bireyin kendini oluşturma süreci, iletişimin güdümsel bir nitelik kazandığı zamanda adeta imkansızlaşmaktadır. Bu bakımdan bireyin yer aldığı çevrenin incelenmesinin yanı sıra, bireyin kişisel eylemlerini somutlaştırdığı girişimlerin ahlaki ya da gayri ahlaki olmasına bakılmaksızın hangi ölçülerde dış faktörlerle şekillendirilmekte olduğuyla, söz konusu tutumların ne ölçüde kişinin kendi hür iradesiyle yapılandırıldığının sorgulanması, bireyin ve toplumun sistem içerisindeki konumunun belirlenmesindeki nihai anlam olarak belirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liberalizm, neo-liberalizm, post-modernizm, etik, siyasi ekonomi.

Abstract

The rise of neo-liberalism with a post-modern cultural logic that accompanies it not only outdates social projects based on general codes, but also hampers the essence of liberalism. At first sight, destruction of general codes seems to enlarge individual rights and freedoms. Nevertheless, there occurs an implicit discrepancy between economic and political domains. Destruction of general codes by definition increases individual rights because emancipation of every individual idiosyncrasy as a means of identity positioning quadruples the options for individual choices. However, enlargement of rights take place with a clandestine shrivel of individual freedom because it has become almost impossible to achieve self-realizing under omnipresence of dominative communication. Therefore, along with the environment that covers individual, the ultimate meaning of individual's and society's positioning within the system passes through judgment of the deed by interrogating whether individual expressions have been shaped by external factors no matter whether be it determined on the basis of ethical or non-ethical; or whether individual's initiatives are outcome of his/her free will whether be it determined on the basis of ethical or non-ethical.

Keywords: Liberalism, neo-liberalism, post-modernism, ethics, political economy.

Judging the Autonomy of Deed for Progressive Political Economy

Introduction

Strict categories that define thinking and acting with regard to solid definition of right-wrong, good, bad etc. are being totally outdated by the rise of competitive individualism that goes beyond a war of possession and reaches a war of identity expression. This is why general codes such as Platonic (PLATO, BJ 375) or Kantian (KANT, 1785, 1788, 1790) understanding of individual and society seem no more relevant for contemporary society as stated respectively by Annas and Gulyga (ANNAS, 1981; GULYGA, 1987). General codes are being challenged by the idea that emancipation of every individual idiosyncrasy, with no regard to its ethical affiliation as far as it does not harm the existence of the Other, reflects the broadest range of rights and freedoms. In other words, individual rights and freedoms outdate the social responsibilities, which are assumed to limit the first without considering the deviations from the general. Asking “why responsibility at all” is nothing but begging the question by the mere fact of posing it; for whoever poses such a question has already assumed that the ego's “concern for itself” is the first and last word. The expectation that responsibility could be legitimated and founded would be out of place; it would be like asking Plato why everything should aspire to the Good or asking Kant why we should follow the categorical imperative (WALDENFELS, 1995: 49).

The idea of psychological egoism (HOBBS, 1651; SMITH, 1776; BENTHAM, 1789) is becoming self-evident in compatible with society's evolution, which is currently based on competitive individualism both in political and economic domains. Nevertheless, the fact that such understanding dilutes not only the social aspect of the society but also the essence of individualism is something ignored (BAUMAN 1992, 1998). *At this point*, there occurs a significant deviation from contemporary understanding of

individualism when compared with its original sense as described by the forefathers such as Hobbes, Smith and Bentham. Political economy of individualism as brought out by these theoreticians is necessarily linked to psychological egoism, but with emancipation of the contingency of human's malleable nature's progress under certain principles (BAUMGARDT, 1952; GERT, 1967: 503-520; TEICHGRAEBER, 1986).

Within this sense, this article aims to bring out negative externalities brought by popular emancipation of the assumption, which believes that "destruction of the general codes expands individual freedom" not by referring to deontological understanding in order to depict new categorical imperatives, but rather by putting emphasis on the idea of individual freedom through axiological understanding. What had once been emphasized by the forefathers of individualism as the general milieu was nothing more than a check and balance system that tried to emancipate individual rights and freedoms at the broadest possible level. Nietzschean liberalization of the individual from the general environment, or this check and balance system, can be considered as a means of expanding rights and freedoms (LAMPERT, 1987). At first sight, *the death of Go(o)d* implies the collapse of morality which challenges the strict rationality of modern ages. Nevertheless identification of acting against the ethical as if it is ultimate expansion of individual freedom if it does not harm the existence of the Others takes place along with serious misidentification (DELEUZE, 1983). Such a system works for individual freedom only if the concerned self has already accomplished self-realizing process. However, since the modern ages clandestine tools of hegemony based on the abuse of communicative skills leave no room for individual self-creation. This is why Baudrillard's depiction of the contemporary capitalist reproduction (BAUDRILLARD, 1981, 1987) should be considered with regard to Jameson's argumentation of post-modernism as cultural logic of late capitalism (JAMESON, 1991). Indeed, since the very beginning of life the individual becomes oppressed by the bombardment of symbols and other communicative attacks most of which are currently being shaped along direct or indirect consumption motives. Therefore, the demise of morality takes place with the implosion of the self. Such misidentification becomes more problematic by the clandestine tools of hegemony all derived from hyper-realities produced through dominative communication skills (DELEUZE/GUATTARI, 1977; ROJEK/TURNER, 1993). Ironically any loyalty to general codes is doomed to fail under the expansion of individualism which poses strong arguments. Hence, it becomes necessary to go beyond a mere analysis of deontology that searches what ought to be done and refer to theory of value as axiology which here refers not only to judgments of value, extrinsic or intrinsic, moral or non-

moral but also judgment of the judgment on the individual basis (RUNES, 1976: 99). Within this perspective, the main hypothesis of this article suggests that the demise of the contingency of general codes increases the significance of individual judgments along which not only idiosyncratic understanding of life, but also the extent of individual freedom becomes shaped both in political and economic domains. What constitutes the rationality of judgment, no matter whether be it related to wisdom (or any other personal acuity that may even contradict with what is assumed to be wise) should first of all reflect the free will of the self. This necessitates going beyond a mere understanding of ethics, or a contingent positioning against it. Indeed in an era characterized by communicative domination and antagonisms among various identity positions, there can be no other way than to judge the autonomy of the deed with regard to individual attitudes in order to discern genuine individual freedom and sincerity of relationships.

1- Judging the ethical

Ethics is to a large extent accepted as a realm and/or discipline of judgments in terms of approval and disapproval, rightness, wrongness, goodness, badness, virtue, vice, dispositions, ends, objects and state of affairs. Interestingly, all of the phenomena related to ethics appear to be a part of politics in terms of regime, state, ideology, international relations, economics and even religion. It is impossible to point out an era, where judgments about the above-mentioned ingredients of ethics have not been made. A part from the judgments, it is self evident that the correlation amongst human beings necessarily takes place with some consequences, some of which are good, right, and/or respectable while the others are bad, wrong and unrespectable.

To simplify, the need to differentiate between the good and the bad has always been real and vital. Hence, the very beginning of human history does not differ so much from the contemporary world in terms of the existence of the good and the bad. Consequently, the necessity of defining the good and the bad has prevailed as one of the most critical questions of human history. This is why ethics had always been a significant concern of the individuals and societies long before the civilizations of Greece and Rome. Among these, two great Mediterranean nations made a contribution upon what is called as European heritage of ethics. "For a variety of reasons the Greek approach to ethics was intellectual rather than emotional, philosophical rather than religious, and moderate rather than extreme: for the Greeks, the main question of ethics was " how can I live the good life?" and by "the good life" they meant primarily a happy or satisfactory life" (PURTILL, 1976: 131-132).

To what extent it can be possible to define some phenomena as good and right, while attributing the bad and the wrong to the rest, has always been a very complex problem to solve. What gains ethics a peculiar characteristic in terms of historical background is its existence since the very early times of humanity. It is self-evident that, a kind of ethical concern should correlate with individual judgments. Whilst, it is also a very evident fact that the meaning and importance of ethics may vary due to some circumstances in terms of time and place. The main vacillation arises from the fact that it is eminently a very laborious task to evaluate a general theory of ethics which can be commonly accepted. The most significant question arises as why what had once been called as unethical becomes accepted today, and why what is accepted to day may not be approved in the future. Other wise what is called ethical becomes a domain through which certain cadres within the society re-produce themselves. In spite of the fact that there exist various approaches, it seems appropriate to analyze at least one of the sound theories of ethics in terms of not defining the good and the bad, but in order to indicate the problematic consequences of such a theoretical approach. Interestingly, the criticisms that can be applied to the relevant theoretical approach will also be potent enough to be applicable to every theory, which claims to define the good, right, bad and the wrong.

Ethical judgments fall, roughly, into two classes, (a) judgments of value, i.e. judgments as to the goodness or badness, desirability or undesirability of certain objects, ends, experiences, dispositions, or state of affairs, e.g. "Knowledge is good," (b) judgments of obligation, i.e. judgments as to the obligatoriness, rightness or wrongness, wisdom or foolishness of various courses of action and kinds of conducts, judgments enjoining, recommending or condemning certain lines of conduct. Thus there are two parts of ethics, (1) the theory of value or axiology, which is concerned with judgments of value, extrinsic or intrinsic, moral or non-moral, (2) the theory of obligation or deontology which is concerned with judgments of obligation (RUNES, 1976: 99).

The ultimate aim of the deontology is to clear out the things that are good or better. Within this perspective, goodness may imply a relative understanding that differs according to subject, place and time. It may also be hypothesized that, goodness arises from an emotive understanding that is strictly adhered to the individual. Finally, it is also possible to reach at the idea that goodness is an intrinsically possessed property. The good may be identified by satisfaction, pleasure as well as knowledge and virtue. Nevertheless, in each of the cases the initiative of the individual for the concern of satisfaction, pleasure, knowledge and wisdom may turn into a self deception when they are the outcomes of the

individual's interaction with the general macro or micro environment. The answer may change according to the relevant subject, time and place because axiology is highly related to these concepts. In addition to axiology and deontology, it is also indispensable to point out that teleology can be considered as a distinct understanding of ethics. In contrast to mechanism, which explains the present and the future in terms of the past, teleology explains the past and the present in terms of the future. Within this perspective, both the religious and scientific teleology refer to what is ought to be done but through different means (RUNES, 1976: 98-100). Therefore, it seems a very intricate assignment to differentiate these two ways of ethics. Whilst, whether be it possible to reach at a general theory of ethics or not, the main problem still remains because referring to the ethical, the unethical or non-ethics may be invoking a kind of relinquishment of some privileges obtained from the actual act, which is related to external impulses that constitute the dominative communication.

It is obvious that, axiology coincides with the quest for the direction of the behavior, while deontology indicates the things that have to be done. In spite of the fact that, many thinkers pay more attention on deontology claiming that one must know what ends are good before one can know what acts are to be performed, both of the aspects should be considered as a whole. Axiology seems of significance especially for the fact that it attempts to elucidate whether it is possible to define goodness or not. This should be considered as a natural consequence of the fact that, whenever an individual is at stakes of choosing amongst decisions, s/he is at the same time at crossroads between judgments.

Therefore, in contrast to the idea which suggests that ethics coexists with social norms and values with no regard to the individual value, it is argued in this study that individual and social aspects of ethics spontaneously coexist. This division may at first sight seem as a very simplistic method of understanding one of the most ethereal concepts of human history, however it must be remembered that just like the simplicity of two hydrogen and an oxygen, the bare content of the ethical embodies the endowment to induce the characteristic of not only the socio-economic, but also the political and the cultural strata of life. Hence, initiating from a very distinct ramification of ethics it is possible to reach at the ground for the contradiction which is essential for the dialectical kernel of life. In other words, there is no way other than judging the judgment in order to indicate to what extent the individual initiative in terms of acting or thinking is an outcome of his/her free will which necessitates axiological analysis rather than deontological conceptualization.

2- Judging the deed

The definition of the ethical is very hard to clarify due to its relativity. Whilst, if the term good is identified with the interest, while the bad with the detriment at the most simplistic way, then it turns out to be possible to determine some ways in terms of the relations between individual and the rest *vis-à-vis* ethical judgments. Indeed moving from this definition does not only allow construction of a deed category but also reflects the essence of contemporary liberal economy derived from Benthamite-Smithian postulate. Consequently, an analysis of behaviors in terms of deed at the most possible simplistic way may be helpful (PURTILL, 1976: 20-21).

1) Decent Behavior (g.....G)

Doing something good for oneself in order to bring about good for others

Example: Someone who enjoys singing sings for old people at a rest home in order to help them enjoy the holiday.

2) Altruistic Behavior (b.....G)

Doing something bad for oneself in order to bring about good for others

Example: A friend of the singer who has no special talent and dislikes washing dishes after a party so that the rest home staff can have a holiday.

3) Malicious Behavior (g.....B)

Doing something good for oneself in order to bring about bad for others

Example: The singer practices some of her favorite songs late at night with the window open in order to annoy a grouch neighbor.

4) Spiteful Behavior (b.....B)

Doing something bad for oneself in order to bring about bad for others

Example: The grouch neighbor gets out of bed and stands in his old garage in his pajamas running his power in order to get back at the singer.

5) Self-serving Behavior (G.....g)

Doing something good for others in order to bring about good for oneself

Example: The singer gives a concert which is enjoyed by the audience, but her only motive is her own enjoyment and the concert fee.

6) Selfish Behavior (B.....g)

Doing something bad for others in order to bring about good for oneself

Example: The singer's manager steals the box-office receipts and flies off for a luxurious vacation in Europe.

7) Self-torturing behavior (G.....b)

Doing something good for others in order to bring about bad for oneself.

Example: The singer's ex-boyfriend takes the singer and her new husband out to dinner, knowing it will make him feel terrible to see their happiness.

8) Self-destructive behavior (B.....b)

Doing something bad for others in order to bring about bad for oneself.

Example: The singer's manager continues to steal from others, knowing he will soon be caught and imprisoned.

This schematic diagram is of course a very artificial and a very limited way of understanding the role of ethical judgments which are concerned in human relations. Within the mere perspective of this diagram, one may conclude that Marx and Hitler have both been ethical at the same level due to their decent characters aimed to attempt the good for others. This is a natural consequence of the fact that this chart ignores, (as Purtil accepts) various cases such as g.....g - B.....B - as well as more complex series such as g.....(B and G)

This diagram may be very useful to indicate that the relations amongst individuals refer to something more than being intrinsically good or bad. Most of the time, these possibilities co-exist with no regard to the subject, varying according to time, place and the object. Therefore, in order to build upon this simplistic diagram it seems to be a very appropriate method to illustrate some contingencies *vis-à-vis* the above-mentioned basic attitudes, and the political actions. By the help of this illustration, it will be explicit, how easily the political actions can be categorized in terms of simple daily attitudes.

The decent behavior (g.....G) is compatible with the politicization of cultural elites who claim to bring viable and genuine solutions to social, economic and political problems. In this case the elites involve in politics due to the fact that they want to feel satisfied because of doing something good for the society, as well as aspiring to increase the level of society to a higher degree which they assume to be more congruous with their superior understanding of values and norms.

Altruistic Behavior (b.....G) Resignation of a party leader who believes his action will work on behalf of social harmony can be considered as a good example of this type.

Malicious Behavior may take many forms in politics. An extremist party no matter it is leftist or rightist may propose a law in the parliament, which is impossible to be accepted with the purpose to gain the sympathy of its followers by provoking and ruining the *status-quo*.

Spiteful Behavior (b.....B) When a coalition government is constituted

by two parties, one of the parties may choose to dissolve the coalition and leave the hold of power aside with the hope that the other one will be harshly damaged.

Self-serving Behavior (G.....g) A civil society organization which claims to work for the environment may have other purposes such as constituting their dream life by using (not abusing) the funds and the chances offered to them.

Selfish Behavior (B.....g) A state make investments in a foreign country in order to make more profits knowing that its investment will lead to hazardous consequences for human health.

Self-torturing Behavior (G.....b) Militants of an extremist organization may harm their bodies in order to achieve some goals that are assumed to be of value for their organization.

Self-destructive Behavior (B.....b) One of the enthusiasts of an extremist organization may fire at the members of parliament knowing that s/he will be punished for that action.

It is possible to produce many examples of attitudes that possess significance for the political aspects of the social stratum. Within this perspective, it is very hard to deny that ideal socialism is more compatible with Decent Behavior (g.....G) than Malicious Behavior (g.....B). The essence of capitalism which promotes competition amongst individuals make people to involve in Selfish Behavior (B.....g) because the system *per se* can not go beyond a zero sum game. There may of course be some deviations from the general norms and values of the system in terms of individual attitudes. That is to say, it is likely to point out some individuals within an ideal socialist system who prefer Selfish (B.....g) and/or Malicious (g.....B) behavior. It is also likely, though as it exists in most of the capitalist societies, to indicate some people who deliberately follows a Decent (g.....G) and even Altruistic (b.....G) behavior. Therefore, besides its inadequacies such as neglecting complex explanations of attitudes such as g.....(B and G) it seems of utmost significance to point out that there may be some exceptional contradictions when this schematic diagram of attitudes is assumed to represent the frameworks of various ideologies. In spite of the fact that the divergence of individual from the generally accepted norms and values (whether be it capitalist, socialist, fascist, nationalist etc.) is very critical because of indicating some potential uneasiness, the essence of the ideologies in terms of *the ethical* seems the most vital phenomenon. For those, who define the limits of the ideologies, there may be some coincidences between individual attitudes, and the necessities of the relevant ideology. To be more comprehensible; it is more

likely to act decently for someone who has devoted his/her life for the good of others. Whilst, this does not necessarily imply that the contradictions between individual and ideological means are impossible. On the contrary, a fascist leader who considers ethnic cleansing (B.....(g and G)) an action that serves for his ideology, may be a very modest, generous and democratic at home and may even act altruistically (b.....G) towards his family and people.

It is indispensable to elucidate why people tend to differentiate their attitudes according to the environment in which they live. "A responsive form of ethics capable of preserving the spirit of response presupposes that not only the self but also the common ground between the self and the Other is contested. The contestation occurs in terms of a demand (*Anspruch*) which arises simultaneously as a claim to (*Anspruch auf*) something and as an appeal to (*Anspruch an*) someone" (WALDENFELS, 1995: 42). Nevertheless, the interaction among demand, claim to something and appeal to someone can not indicate individual's freedom from the general environment which becomes extremely problematic in the current era characterized by communicative domination.

3- Contingency of autonomous deed

Among many other moralist theoretician, Kant is one of the most renowned because of his depicting solid general environment in which the difference between right and wrong is dictated upon individuals (KANT, 1785). Indeed Kant clearly defines the line between the right and the wrong, which is similar to good and the bad by emphasizing that some activities are explicitly wrong from which people should be avoided.

"It could however reasonably be argued that he was a monist, that he argued for only one general principle of absolute duty, and that he thought it could be formulated in various ways, in the various formulations of the categorical imperative. Against this, however, a number of points may be urged. Firstly the various formulations of the categorical imperative, in particular, Formula 2 (" So act as to use humanity, both in your own person and in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never simply as a means"), and the other formula (i.e. Formula 1" Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law", 1a " Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a *Universal Law* of Nature", Formula 3 "So act that your will can regard itself at

the same time as making universal law through its maxim", and 3a "So act as if you were always through your maxims a law-making member in a universal kingdom of ends") differ in their content, and in what they imply" (MCCLOSKEY, 1969: 199-200).

Therefore, the normative aspect of Kantian theory is explicitly open to harsh criticisms in many aspects. It is not so difficult to find cases that hamper Kantian categories. In addition Kantian categories are a part from explaining complexity of the relations among individuals as well as individual's interaction with the concerned system. "If we could prevent the assassination (after torture) of ten innocent persons only by lying to a member of the secret police, it would seem clearly to be our duty to lie, and to lie as convincingly as we can" (MCCLOSKEY, 1969: 199-200). That is to say, one can assert that a lie, for instance, may save the lives of many people, one can also create many situations where the Kantian wrong activities can be considered within the most possible highest ethical meaning. Furthermore, it can also be added that it is of utmost significance to differentiate between distinct types of lies. Furthermore, suicide can also be considered as a symbol of high self-respect depending on the situation as it has once been in the case of Japan.

There can be produced many examples in order to falsify the Kantian theory of categorical imperative. Whilst, it should also be remembered that, Kant had once been aware of the deficiencies of his theory. (DELEUZE, 1984) There is no doubt that Kantian categorical imperatives define a strict general environment as almost a religion of morality. Nevertheless it should also be mentioned that ethics represent "good will" at the ultimate meaning and this good will comes from humans' being free which means that they are noumenal as well as phenomenal (KANT, 1788). In other words, morality loses its essence if it does not coincide with freedom and vice versa. Hence, instead of harshly criticizing the categorical imperative for its being a theory of absolute obligation, one must be aware of the fact that, it has, first of all, aimed to enlighten people to draw the boundaries of their rights and freedoms in the most simplistic way. Pointing out the exceptions of his theory should have not been a very hard task for Kant. However, such an action could lead to the misuse of his theory via referring to legalized exceptions.

Whether Kant had the right of defining the good and the bad, as well as the right and the wrong, may at first sight seem as another troublesome issue. This traumatic aspect of the issue arises from the fact that, one can never be sure whether the world we are living in had been inspired by the spirit of g(o)od or evil. In other words, what if the rules of the bad and evil are more appropriate for the human soul and, what if those who claim to follow a certain

category of the so called g(o)od have been involved in a universal fallacy. These attacks are certainly valid to the extent that one can never be sure whether the universal core is dependent on the g(o)od or the bad, no matter which one is considered to be the better. In other words, a part from the controversy of time and place another problem arises from the difficulty of defining the general good and the bad as well as the general right and the wrong. Indeed, the idea of general codes has always been challenged by a counter argument suggesting "what if your understanding of bad life may be the good for me?"

This controversy becomes even more complicated in contemporary societies based on rugged individualism that considers itself above every solid definition. Such multitude of options work on behalf of the economy based on consumerism because putting general codes such as good and bad bring at least restrictive measures upon consumption the act of which starts to be tested through the existing norms. Nevertheless, emancipating individual definitions of ethical codes may not always work for politics in its progressive sense. It is obvious that these attacks can easily be outdated through a mere Kantian perspective. To do this, a *synthetic a priori* contemplation of the human attitudes seems to be enough. This is why contemporary evaporation of ethics by rugged individualism fundamentally differs from the Benthamite understanding. If we accept Benthamite perspective by accepting that the human beings are intrinsically inclined towards pleasure escaping from pain, then it turns out to be possible to conclude that any action that makes the other feel a kind of pain is considered to be the wrong (ROSEN, 1983). Nevertheless, such formulation which seems to bring societal consensus within political domain contradicts with the economic one because it imposes restrictions upon consumption decisions. For Bentham the political and economic consequences seemed compatible because of his bringing a certain definition of rationality as a check and balance mechanism. Indeed, simplistic selfish attitudes are not assumed to create societal disasters because Bentham considers each of the acting as an outcome of judgment process based on rational criteria (BAUMGARDT, 1952).

At first sight Kantian strict categorical imperatives seem to contradict with individual morality of Bentham and selfishness conceptualization of Smith. At first sight it seems as if Benthamite-Smithian individualism differ from Kantian like categories, including religion, on the basis of emancipation of pleasure seeking selfish individual as the leitmotiv of the society. However the discrepancy occurs because the first one does not count on the individual and attempts to create a general environment for social good, while the second one indicates extensive belief in individual's ability to make rational judgment that

coincides with the social good. Therefore, the real problem is whether not to count on individual judgments and create strict codes of categorical imperatives; or to emancipate individual ability of judgment. Deciding about such controversy becomes very problematic in contemporary society where clandestine tools of hegemony are so strong by the virtue of media and other communicative means. Indeed, the controversy between economic and political domains continues on behalf of the growth of the first that costs the corruption of the second. Individual behavior's ethical quintessence loses pre-eminence by raising the significance of the autonomy of the concerned self from the domination of external symbols. The most challenging question that should be asked here is if going beyond a strict definition of rationality, or the ethical because they may not coincide with each other, can be considered as an indicator of expanded individual freedom. In terms of choices, the individual increases his/her options by including rationality-irrationality as well as the ethical and unethical among the choices. Nevertheless, it is not possible to reach a similar conclusion in terms of individual's relationship with what takes place around him/her. In fact there is no doubt that characteristics of the system vis-à-vis its re-production process define the existing general codes (BRENKERT, 1998: 98). Therefore, eradication of the general codes per se indicates another coding that takes place around the individual before s/he becomes who s/he is.

This fact has always been real because of institution's long lasting life when compared with intellect's short term presence in society. Heller and Fehér distinguish three typical spheres in all non-tribal societies: the sphere of everyday life, the sphere of economic and political institutions, and the sphere of cultural ideas and practices (HELLER and FEHÉR, 1988: 76 This differentiation is not so surprising because since Marx many social scientists have been categorizing society in terms of its social, political and economic aspects. What makes Heller and Féher interesting is the fact that, they consider *Sittlichkeit* (norms, values and prescriptions that are collectively accepted) as the common denominator of all of the three social spheres of the pre-modern times. Furthermore, they assert that these spheres have been differentiated under the effect of *Sittlichkeit* of their own.

“All spheres of modern life thus developed their own intrinsic norms and rules of *Sittlichkeit*, though not always to the same degree. Yet there are so few norms actually shared by all of them that skeptical and pessimistic theorists could plausibly argue that spheres of life are both irreducible to one another and irreconcilable in terms of their value content. This, for instance, was Weber's standpoint. Nowadays, we have no

reason to be skeptical. For example, we reject racism and sexism in all spheres and, at least theoretically, to an equal degree in each. This indicates that a kind of common ethos is still present or that it has presented itself once again... We would term such an ethos a 'loose ethos' "(HELLER and FEHÉR, 1988: 76).

The modern loose ethos therefore distinguishes from the primordial dense ethos, which had once been determined by the norms of the pre-modern *Sittlichkeit* that is to say, a kind of common virtue, which plays a crucial role in all of the aspects of the social, economic and cultural spheres. Above all, the contemporary society can be best delineated as the aberration of the image from the essence, which at the same time is perceived as the reality.

"Baudrillard depicts the contemporary capitalist body politic as hyperkinetic. Everything tingles, radiates, reverberates. All is in flux, everything is reflected or refracted through various media, speed is hypnotic, there is a carnival of hyper-real appearances, an appetite for excitement. The advent of what Marcuse dubbed 'repressive desublimation', releasing a long repressed libidinal hedonism in a shout of 'I want it now', produces a hyper-aesthetized mass hysteria throughout the body politico-economic, a multimedia whirl of 'floating signifiers'. Baudrillard offers an evocative, if impressionistic, picture of contemporary capitalism. What needs to be emphasized from the historical viewpoint is that this characterization of capitalism as a fevered, frenzied epidemic of signs is not applicable solely to late capitalism. At least since the seventeenth century, capitalism has been inseparable from the incitement of imagination, the creation of blitz of speculation, fantasy, fiction, hyper-stimulation -and from the attendant destabilizing mental and emotional disturbances" (PORTER, 1993: 5-6).

When the peculiarities of the current *post modern* era are considered in terms of all kinds of indicators (such as economic, political, social and cultural) it can be pointed out that almost every occurrence is taking place under the influence of hegemonic communication. Be it advanced, late, and/or post modern capitalism, its enormous affect is certain. Consequently, a universal culture of consumption based on libidinal coding totally outdates discussions about any other kind of *Sittlichkeit* by becoming the sole dominant ethics (LYOTARD, 1974). In such a world, *self-realization* turns out to be a very accidental occurrence due to enormous capabilities of capitalism in terms of

enlarging its hegemony. Such difficulty completely destructs the assumptions of fore fathers of competitive individualism, whose theory had been based on psychological egoism that is accompanied by the contingency of self realizing. Indeed contemporary tools of communicative hegemony do not only jeopardize theories based on a pre-determined understanding of ethics, but also dilutes every positives aspect of individualism by restricting the contingency of individual freedom. The hegemonic communication and the long repressed libidinal hedonism of Marcuse, including the hyper-real appearances and the mass hysteria obtained out of it basically imply a total process of alienation (PORTER, 1993: 5-6). In a world of hyper-realities, Kantian understanding of ethics, any kind of *Sittlichkeit* based on societal evolution as well as progressive individualism based on competition can sustain their quintessence. Indeed a new definition of ethics and *hyper-Sittlichkeit* is being successfully invoked through hegemonic communication which claims to emancipate the largest individual freedom by eradicating the general codes on the favor of idiosyncratic individual acuties. In reality, fabrication of schizophrenia for emancipation of consumerism which shows itself as more consumption in economic domain and dilution of everything that decelerates market growth in political domain constitutes the ultimate general coding (DELEUZE/GUATTARI, 1977). In such a simulacrum it is not possible to identify eradication of the ethical as if it expands individual freedom because simulacrum per se does not allow individual freedom by imposing modes of thinking and acting in which not morality or immorality but system's reproduction is essential. In fact there is no way other than judging to what extent the concerned deed is an autonomous outcome of the concerned self or whether it is a positioning created by the general environment no matter whether be it affiliated with harmonious or disharmonious attitudes within the system.

Conclusion

Esoteric paradigms and ethereal ideologies are considered to be unavailing phenomena in a world characterized by the broadest range of hegemonic tools obtained from communicative skills. In such a world, it is not surprising to see the dissolution of generalized strict codes, which somehow claim to represent consistent sets of norms and values in terms of ethics. However, and ironically, what makes the categorical imperative or strict moral codes to decay claims to expand individual's free domain by also hampering the essence of individualism.

Within this perspective, this article tried to show that breaking the ethical codes into peaces does not necessarily reflect individual freedom. To the extent that such definitions refer to individual choices; the contrast between the ethical and the non-ethical vanishes. In order to minimize possible confusions, this article referred to the concept of *Sittlichkeit*, which in its original sense depicted the quintessence of concerned system. The demise of the ethical as a source of general coding increases the significance of individual judgments along which not only idiosyncratic understanding of life but also the extent of individual freedom becomes shaped. As a matter of fact, though strict ethical codes limit individual liberties, it is a great fallacy to consider the destruction of the ethical as if it necessarily represents individual freedom. The space left by destruction of the ethical, which is assumed to represent strict categorical imperatives, becomes filled by the unethical or other micro general environment leaving no rooms for individual's idiosyncratic development. This argument has extensive validity for contemporary societies characterized by communicative domination based on the deviation of the perceptions from the reality. That is to say, the theory of deontology is hampered through emancipation of antagonistic relationships among various identity positions each of which are assumed to have their own morality.

Within this perspective, the main hypothesis of this article is verified because eradication of general codes necessarily increases individual rights by creating options, but enlargement of individual freedom can be achieved after self-realizing of the self that necessitates liberalization of individual deed from artificial codes. What constitutes the rationality of judgment, be it based on morality or immorality, should first of all reflect the free will of the self. In contemporary modern societies that are characterized by communicative domination and antagonisms among various identity positions, there can be no other way than to judge the autonomy of the deed with regard to individual attitudes in order to discern genuine individual freedom and sincerity of relationships.

Under such dominative environment, it is imperative to differentiate deontology from updated definition of axiology. This method serves for understanding whether individual's identity positioning has been shaped by external factors no matter whether be on the basis of the ethical or non-ethical or whether individual's initiatives are outcome of his/her free will. Hence, what constitutes the *Sittlichkeit*, no matter whether be it related to wisdom or any other personal acuity that may even contradict with what is assumed to be wise, should first of all reflect the free will of the self. This conclusion brings out the necessity to test individual's interaction with the system in terms of a *Sittlichkeit* as freedom.

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