

SELECTED ISSUES OF THE ETHICS IN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE NEW ECONOMY¹

ABSTRACT. The paperwork is inspired by the book «Civilized Man's Eight deadly sins» by Austrian Nobel prize winner Konrad Lorenz. In his book, Lorenz points at the several serious global problems and threats, concerning the devastation of environment, inadequate mutual human manners, behaviour of the youth towards the annuitants and tradition, overpopulation, consumerism, Mass Media influence or nuclear weapons. Besides the thoughts of Konrad Lorenz, the aim of the work is to focus on the economic ideas of socio-economic representatives, such as Amartya Sen, Amitai Etzioni or Zbigniew Brzezinski and others, who highlight the importance of ethics in economics. Our opinion is, that the solution of many problems is in one's revaluation of a way of living and the alert of human mind, which can lead to a change of everyday's acting. This must happen without forcing, which is very difficult to realize. Such decision depends on every person's free will, that is inscrutable.

KEYWORDS: consumerism, globalisation, Konrad Lorenz, morality,

1. Introduction

Knowledge and analysis of past processes is a part of the ability of comprehensive understanding of the presence and its possible future prediction, they should lead to critical thinking and helping to find optimum solutions of current issues and long-term trends of basic microeconomic and macroeconomic phenomena. The whole history of mankind gives evidence of human inability to introduce fair cultural, political and economic systems in which people would happily live. Human egoistic desire for one's own benefit and profit to the detriment of others is like a red line in the whole human history. It is not different nowadays. People long for power, control, or manipulation by others.

The paper is inspired by the work of Konrad Lorenz *Eight deadly sins* (1974). We shall try to elaborate some of his «sins» in wider context, while using opinions of socio-economic theory, including for instance A. Sen, A. Etzioni, Z. Brzezinski.

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The purpose of the paper is to highlight the respective position of ethics and morals in economics and in (economic) life of individual and social groups, to point out to the problems of the current globalized world which are difficult to resolve. By applying normative approach to the examination of economics we do not want to devalue, or invalidate a positive approach in examining economic science.

In the first part of the paper we shall focus on beginnings of economic thinking which comes from ancient philosophers, mainly Xenophon who used the term *oikonomikos* (along with Greek term *oikodomé*), contributing, thus, to antique beginnings and overall foundations of philosophic and economic thinking.

In the second (main) part we shall analyze selected issues related to current globalization process including analysis of work and ideas of K. Lorenz which will be followed by opinions of other representatives of socioeconomic thinking.

2. Oikonomikos and oikodomé

Many textbooks start the introduction into the topic with historic development, starting mainly from antique period. Greek philosopher Xenophone (430 B.C. — 355 B.C.) in his work *Oikonomikos* (Volejníková, 2005, p. 22) specifies practical advice, principles and rules of a good household management. The name of his treatise is composed of two words — *oikos* = household, house; *nomos* = rule, teaching, law. This word and his treatise express a guide to the right management (administration) of household/economic unit. The current term economics comes from this term. We do not know a comprehensive definition of economics, but in principle, it is a science that examines how people choose to use scarce and limited production resources to produce various goods and services and how these goods and services are distributed among members of society.

The term in Greek *oikonomikos* is similar to the term *oikodomé* and it specifies (concrete, purposeful and constructive) *building of house, construction*. We can use the term *oikodomé* in economic meaning because national, international and globalized economy can be compared with a building in which various social groups live.

Both terms *oikonomikos* and *oikodomé* are mutually interconnected and contain both microeconomic and macroeconomic aspect.

Microeconomics analyses and characterizes behaviour of individual entities in the market (households, companies, states). Macroeconomics analyses the economy as a whole and explains its

functioning mechanism. In our transferred meaning (of terms *oikonomikos*; *oikodomé*) microeconomic approach lies in the action, behaviour of individual towards other people. How does an individual manage himself/herself? What does his/her personality «household» look like?

Various materials are used to construct a building — high quality, or poor quality materials and what is equally important is the way of their utilization. Low quality materials can be characterized by weak, or speedy effort for their acquisition, but high quality materials are mainly acquired in a longer, more patient and sophisticated way. A building can be constructed speedily and cheaply, while using easily accessible materials (e.g. woods, straw), or a building is constructed more slowly, but done in higher quality, by applying a consistent construction plan, with help of various firm, durable and permanent quality materials. On the other side one has to admit that it is also possible that poor quality and unprofessional work is done while using good materials.

Macroeconomic aspect lies in the fact that the house can represent not only an individual, but also a unit, or in our case a society, or, (inter)national economy. Division of labour, utilization of different talents and skills of various people leads to a gradual construction of one big building from which many benefit. Everybody, not just one person participate on its (high quality or low quality) construction.

Why do we treat these aspects (useless from outside point of view) in the introduction to our paper? There have been long term disputes in economics whether it has so called *normative* or *positive* form of its examination. Positive economics describes and characterizes economic phenomena, *states facts* of economic life, achieved economic results. It attempts to find answer to the question *what is* economic life *like*, *what is* economic reality *like*, it does not, thus, make an evaluation. On the other side normative economics explains *how* economy *should* function, *what* economic reality *should be like*. Normative form of economics is based on ethical¹ and value judgments.

¹ Ethics is a science on morals, moral relations and moral consciousness and subject of its interest involves morals. The term comes from the Greek word „ethos», which had a double meaning in Old Greek. The original meaning of *ethos* was accustomed place, place where people are at home. It was therefore a primary teaching how people should live in the municipality in which they live. The term comes from Latin translation of the Greek word „mos» (mores) i.e. custom, habit, character, behaviour, law, regulation. The morals can be understood as moral consciousness (form of spiritual life of society) and morality means custom, manners, that is, elements of practical behaviour. For more details about interconnection of ethics and economy — Remišová, 2004)

In real life there is a certain tension between «positive» and »normative» side of life. The world as it is versus the world as it should be — permanent tension between these two situations. Every economic entity tries to improve its present situation, any defender of positive approach in economics always tries to assess life and events happening to him/her in his/her surroundings. And for this reason according to Nobel prize laureate A. Sen (2002) economics (as interdisciplinary science) has to be interconnected with ethics and as a discipline which is constantly evolving «it can be even more productive if it lays stronger and more explicit focus on ethical considerations which form human behaviour and human judgment» (Sen, 2002, p. 8). The representatives of institutionalism also applied normative approach in economics, they considered ethical side of economics in the role and development of culture, customs, traditions, values and »role of thinking and mental factors in achieving wealth (satisfaction)» (Petríčová, 2006, p. 357)¹ of both individual and society.

At the end of the day, we believe that economics should involve a combination of its positive and normative side, creating, thus, a certain consensus because a positive approach is unable to find answers to all issues related to economic reality. Both individuals and society form various opinions, views, suppositions, or projections of its functioning.

3. Eight «deadly» sins of globalization

«Vast majority of people nowadays appreciate only what brings profit and what helps to outperform their neighbours in reckless competition. Every tool serving to this goal falsely seems to be a value.» (K. Lorenz)

In these times of globalisation, formation of new economy² with a view to human capital utilization, it is the creativity, initiative and entrepreneurship which are an important source of nation' s wealth and economic growth. «However, entrepreneurship must be accompanied with a moral and intellectual virtue. Bad human qualities (including dishonesty, egoism, contempt for colleagues, ill-wishing) are poisonous to economic creativity and entrepreneurship.»(Lisý 2011, p. 34) It is not difficult to write codes of conduct, or to write about ethics and morals, the most difficult task for an individual and

¹ For more about economic branch institutionalism and its representatives see e.g. (Volejníková, 2005).

² By New economy we mean a society in which technological changes and influence determine economic development.

society is to follow and apply in practice written and unwritten rules. Codes, or written laws as information carriers on socially appropriate behaviour bear a disadvantage that information on its own will not change people. A word or information will start to change people only if such information becomes a practical and integral part of internal (mental) and external (physical) manifestation of each individual.

According to **Konrad Z. Lorenz** (1903-1989), Austrian biologist and ethologist¹, Nobel Prize winner in 1973 for his works in the field of medicine and psychology, the civilization is threatened by destruction due to eight deadly sins of mankind:

- (uncontrolled) overpopulations of Earth,— the devastation of the natural environment,

- man's race against himself,

- an entropy of feeling due to increased sensitiveness to unpleasurable experience (decreased capacity for pleasure; boredom),

- genetic decay connected with impatient desire for immediate satisfaction of instincts, as well as lack of any responsibility and consideration (childishness of growing part of population),

- the break with tradition as young people view older generation as a foreign, hostile group,

- the easy indoctrination of people, mainly by means of mass media and nuclear weapons.

Overpopulation of Earth: It was for instance Robert T. Malthus (1766-1834) who pointed out to the issue of overpopulation in a certain regional area in his well-known population theory which reflects the period of industrial revolution in England and brought growth of industry in towns and related population growth. In his essay on principles of population (*Treatise on population law which influences future development of society* 1798) Malthus claimed that sooner or later mankind would get into problems. Population growth will one day get into the limits of the Earth, because population reproduces geometrically, i.e. faster than foodstuffs (subsistence means) which reproduce arithmetically. This problem can be softened by twofold obstacles: positive and preventative. According to him, nature has in its hands a number of («positive») tools, how to «regulate» population in critical moments: including criminals, various civilization bad habits, diseases, natural disasters and

¹Ethology is the scientific study of principles of animal behaviour. It makes a comparison of behaviour between animals and men. Its focus is on factors which determine cohabitation of a number of animal species in one place.

wars. Preventative voluntary ways to moderate population often have moral and immoral character: moral form concerned sexual abstinence, or celibacy (not forced, but voluntary until the time when people are able to conclude matrimony and have children from material side) and immoral barriers included for instance prostitution, or abortions.

The representative of so called younger German historic school G. Schmoller (1837-1917)¹ related his work to Malthusianism and claimed that «growing density of population leads to a situation in which contacts between people are weaker and weaker and conflicts of interest sharper and sharper». (Loužek, 2001, p. 119) Due to the fact that increase number of people live in relatively densely populated areas, an individual becomes more and more anonymous which may lead to avoidance of mutual emotional links. A large number of people in a narrow space leads to weakening and exhaustion of human relations, to feelings and dehumanization phenomena up to aggressive behaviour (of the same species), if their number is continuously increased in one territory. «General unkindness which we can observe in all large cities clearly corresponds to the density of masses of people crowded in respective place,» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 16) and overpopulation contributes indirectly to all sick (physical and psychic) situations and phenomena in the society.

Devastation of natural environment: The Austrian ethologist points out that the idea of inexhaustibility of natural resources may be disastrous for the environment. According to Lorenz, man becomes aware of his wrong action against environment only after he starts to feel it in economic terms. On the other side technological progress leads to utilization of natural resources which have been used to a small extent so far which could replace the current resources in foreseeable future. A lot of potential exists in thermal sources, wind energy utilization and energy from sea streams and surfs. The project

¹ Younger historic school represents a direction in development of economic thinking from end of 19th Century and beginning of 20th Century. Its representatives (e.g. G. Schmoller (1837-1917), A. Wagner (1835-1917), W. Sombart (1863-1941), or M. Weber (1864-1920)) lived in the period when unified Germany was formed (after the victory in the Franco-Prussian war in 1871) and were therefore influenced by national economic policy which was contradictory to classical political economy because they claimed that each economy is unique and liberal principles of classical economy cannot be applied everywhere, since each country has its historic, cultural and political specific features. Younger historic school was interested in social policy and they gave to the state a significant role in national economy. They advocated social reforms, e.g. abolishment of child labour, limitation of women work, compliance with days off work etc.

Venus and world-wide movement Zeitgeist which also has active supporters in Slovakia¹ are currently actively dealing with this issue.

Man's race against himself: Lorenz compares mutual negative competitiveness with saying *Homo homini lupus* — Man is a wolf to man. It means that man causes more damage to himself than the biggest predators in animal kingdom. As an example we may point out to a motorway. Unfortunately it often occurs that cars overtake each other (without reason), whereby many tragic accidents frequently occur and in a number of cases a victim of reckless driving (e.g. under driving under the influence of alcohol) comes to a more tragic end than the culprit himself. The same applies to economic competitiveness (obviously not always) where customer often has to bear the consequences of unethical competitive fight (overtaking) between firms (e.g. badly processed food, poor quality work in construction industry a.o.).

Another part of man's race against himself is the issue of performance. Man is perceived as a being shaping the world which is, however, defined by its performance in modern western society. It seems as if human value was derived from what he/she can perform. When we apply this approach we can calculate individual's value by the following formula: performance is a product of power and distance (road), divided by time necessary for achieving the performance (Kettling, 2008, p. 28).

$$V = \frac{S \cdot C}{\check{C}} \quad (1)$$

Where: V = performance, S = power, C = road, distance, $\check{C}$ = time

Example: When someone carries 10 kilograms of potatoes in two minutes into the distance of 50 meters, his performance is better compared to someone who carries 5 kilograms of potatoes in three minutes into the distance of 25 meters.

We shall consider an elderly and ill man. His power and road he is able to overcome decrease all the way to zero. The time he needs to achieve the performance is longer, to put it in mathematical terms, it nears to infinity.

¹ Project Venus is a non-profit organization which proposes a major social change based on so called resource-based economy. It offers a plan which leads to creation of worldwide, peaceful and environmentally sustainable civilization which is able to ensure sufficient resources for dignified life of all inhabitants in our planet. More information: <http://www.zeitgeistmovement.sk>.

$$V = \frac{S \rightarrow 0 \cdot C \rightarrow 0}{\check{C} \rightarrow \infty} = \frac{0}{\infty} = 0 \quad (2)$$

If performance becomes a measurement of our life, we shall get a final result *zero times zero divided by infinity*, so the equation equals to zero. Orientation on performance makes a machine from human being which degrades him to the level of lifeless substance. Utopian socialists including for instance (Ch. Fourier (1772-1837), C. Saint-Simon (1760-1825), R. Owen (1771-1858)) and later K. H. Marx (1818-1883) were strongly against this approach. According to Marx, worker's existence is reduced to the existence of any other goods. Wage increase leads to workers' overwork because the more they want to earn, the more of their leisure time they have to sacrifice. They are, thus, striped of any freedom and they perform slave work in the services of cupidity and by that they gradually destroy and shorten their life. Marx believed that by division of labour and development of machine manufacturing man gets more and more into the position of machine which means that machine becomes his competitor. While division of labour increases work productivity and enriches the society as a whole, workers are impoverished to the level of lifeless machine, and therefore a worker can experience a permanent poverty even in a rich society. According to him, political economy and capitalism do not pay attention to man in the time when he does not work, they know him only as «draught cattle» which only has most essential life needs.

Entropy of feelings: Permanent development of new technologies and means facilitating life also lead to negative situations according to Lorenz. Modern man tries to avoid unpleasant experience and tries to ensure the best comfort. At first glance there is nothing wrong about it, it is humanly natural. Unfortunately, this desire is supported by manufacturers and advertising agencies and consumers are willy-nilly dragged into the system of «favourable» loans and purchases on credit which has a negative impact on indebtedness of households and states. People do not make gradual savings to purchase desired goods or services anymore.

People do not face «natural obstacles the overcoming of which made people stronger because they learned how to bear the sorrow as a condition for experiencing joy from success.» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 41) In fact, if something has a big value, it must cost something.

French representative of late classical political economy C. F. Bastiat (1801 — 1850) in his work *What is seen and what is not seen* (1850) claims that all wars, slavery systems, government power

abuses, frauds, in other words immoral actions and ideas are based on the desire for pleasure and resistance to sorrows (effort). Bastiat 's term, «what is not seen», points to a (hidden) reality that «people lose the ability to dedicate unpleasant effort into a work which promises pleasure only sometimes in the future. Therefore we come across an impatient requirement to satisfy all key wishes.» (Bastiat, 1998, p. 37).

One has to consider whether everything offered as available and cheap goods (service) also has a specific, meaningful value. People can trade with goods which are relatively freely accessible e.g. timber, water, or sugar cane. On the other side it is obvious that most lucrative businesses are done with goods where much more effort needs to be done to produce them (oil, natural gas, coal, gold, diamonds) compared to acquisition of goods in the first case.

Genetic decay: In this part Lorenz stresses the importance of man's education from early childhood, which causes social problems if neglected. If all human action was programmed in genes and could not be influenced by learning and education, man would be just «an irresponsible victim of his instincts» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 46). However, man is not a programmed machine and a sign of civilized society is to guide people to learning and education about themselves and surrounding world. The danger lies in insufficient personal contact of the child with the mother at its earliest age, which leads to emotional poverty and inability to establish social contacts. Family policy is therefore extremely important, instability of family cohesion (frequent divorces, single mothers, child abuse) present a negative factor. The child becomes a barrier for building of career, married couples therefore either decide not to have children, or their upbringing is entrusted into the hands of guardians because parents ' workload does not allow them to spend sufficient time with their child.

Another problem in this part is lack of any responsibility and consideration (childishness of growing part of population). It is typical for a child (and obviously justifiable) to have an impatient desire for immediate satisfaction of its instinct and absence of responsibility. On the other side, what is expected from a mature adult is «a patient work with a view to distant goal, accountability for one's own action and thoughtfulness towards others and not only towards the closest» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 55). However, it is the adults where more and more frequently child-like features of «social neoteny» appear.¹ Moral

¹ Neoteny is a term in biology meaning that an adult individual (concerning mainly amphibians) keeps its larval or juvenile form. And it is the „social neoteny» which is a feature of many adult people whose behaviour should not be guided by instincts or childish impatience, but rational thinking, judgements and perspective. More detailed: (Mikulíček, Vongrej, 2005)

action should involve some control of impulses and in many cases postponement of satisfaction since many «pleasures are either morally neutral, or banned in certain circumstances». (Etzioni, 1995, p. 46)

Break with tradition: Current growing tendency of youth is to express hostile attitude towards parents and authorities and to consider things which are done by majority to be correct. Orders of authorities, including parents, are perceived by young people as interference with their privacy and freedom. Young people of these days want to be free and independent, but at the same time they are becoming slaves to computer games, free sexuality, soft and hard drugs, including smoking and alcoholism. They perceive the warnings of adults as unjustified and as a threat to their identity. For instance, in the past parents or teachers were among distinguished authorities, unfortunately disrespect towards parents and teachers is obvious nowadays when it comes to young generation.

Human relations should be based on the principle of mutual respect and love towards neighbour, «respect towards parents and superiors is an important condition for harmonious functioning of human society»(Kaczmarczyk, 2006, p. 92). «The more independent was the development of two ethnic groups of each other in the world in the history, the bigger are the differences between them» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 61). Specific behaviour of younger generation, its specific «group dialect, way of dressing etc. may become a symbol of community which is loved and defended by all its members as if they were defending a group of their best friends. Such a big respect towards one's own symbols goes hand in hand with reducing symbols of any other comparable cultural unit» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 61) which results into non-recognition of members of other units as full-fledged people and their opinions, traditions, customs and way of life are taken as old-fashioned and therefore have nothing valuable which they could bring to current young generation.

Someone may object that such behaviour is a consequence of teenage mindset which is natural in human development. In this phase of life «young man starts to deviate from family traditions, judges them critically and is in search of new ideals and new group he could join and laws he could adopt as his» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 64). This fact can seem as a good argument from the outside, but if young person receives a regular and loving upbringing prior to teenage, at the end of the day an individual should not deviate from it from a long-term horizon.

According to Lorenz it is the physics which has the primacy from among sciences because it forms the foundations of everything else.

Equally important are scientific disciplines including chemistry, biology, or psychology. And an interesting question is why today's «commercial and materialistic» era assists in human degradation. The reality is that «it is not the science involving most important issues on our planet, or science on human soul, or human spirit which is most important, but it is the science which promises money, energy, or power» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 85).

Easy indoctrination: People in their conviction that they are free and civilized are not even aware how much they are manipulated by the power of commercialism. Never in the history «has mass suggestion been so effective; manipulators have never had such sophisticated advertising techniques available, as well as effective mass communication media, as today» (Lorenz, 2000, s. 82).

Various producers and advertising agencies spend vast amounts of money for advertisements with the aim to evoke dissatisfaction of consumers and to convince people that the meaning of their life is to consume more and more that by increasing their consumption they will solve all problems in their personal lives. Many people purchase goods they almost never use, so in this way they face sunk costs¹. It is therefore questionable if one should afford something he/she does not have based on his/her income so far and even take a loan.

Consumers are «uncritical to such an extent that they follow methods which come from results of advertising surveys and opinion polls» (Lorenz, 2000, p. 31). According to P. Macsovszky «speed and profit represent Siamese twins...in current economic and social conditions, disintegration of community starts in the moment when it becomes overpopulated, rich, educated. Communities have always tried — mainly to the detriment of other communities — to achieve the biggest wealth for themselves. However, achieved abundance is a prelude to decay. Because if you have enough of everything, motives and impulses fade away and the problem called boredom comes up» (Macsovszky, 2008, p. 30). Consumer often buys products he does not need at the end of the day, but he desires them due to the envy towards others who use latest goods and services, while he does not. In this way a society is created which does not understand what enough means and searches for more and more.

¹ Sunk costs are funds which were irreversibly and inefficiently spent in the past and are irrelevant from the view of current decision making. Example: Consumer buys a coat in the value of EUR 160 which he puts into his wardrobe after he dressed it once, because it is too tight. He may not be able to sell it for EUR 160 anymore, so the purchase of the coat becomes a bad and inefficient decision.

This situation is the result of a speedy acceleration of consumerism in Western civilization, helped by the influence of advertising industry. American historian J. K. Zerbo calls such society «homo coca-colens».

«These new casts are a global phenomenon. They are strongly attracted by consumerist society without having financial means to be part of it. Moreover, their own outlook is an unsure fight for survival in an inhospitable global society marked by dreary perspectives including strong competition or unemployment threat. (...) In other cases this need results into fundamentalism and fanaticism, expression of continuous dissatisfaction face to face to western model of modernization, consumption, growth and social progress which never delivered promises in most developing countries and brought dehumanization to industrialized countries.» (King, Schneider, 1991, p. 108)

R. Winter (2006) comments on this issue claiming that after the industrial revolution the Western world currently finds itself in «revolution of consumption». «Our culture changed from a culture in which people's lives were centred around manufacturing process into a culture led by consumption.(...) Advertisements promote hedonism and give a feeling to the people that they have the right to have their needs satisfied immediately. An environment focused on media saturates people with entertainment, separates them from reality and, eventually, lames and mortifies their perceptiveness. Many critics of the current culture are afraid of the impact of media on the following generation.» (Winter, 2006, pp. 42, 46)

Nuclear weapons: When it comes to the last issue which is armament of mankind with nuclear weapons Lorenz believes that the issue of avoiding nuclear war is the easiest to be resolved from among all eight issues. The idea that nuclear bombs will not be manufactured is realistic in practice.

All eight «deadly sins», but mainly first seven sins stated by Lorenz talk about moral decay of the society. Trends in developed information society go in the direction of degradation of man and environment. In deepening globalization we face a challenge how to use knowledge we have about the world and the man.

The picture of man in Globalization era reminds us of a story about an old marine vessel:

«An old marine vessel captured some signal in radar when it was turning on a see. It sent immediately a signal that it is an American marine and the other vessel would need to change its course. Nobody answered on the other side of the radio receiver, so the captain

repeated his call in a more vehement tone: «This is a United States Marine Vessel. We order you to change the course, otherwise there will a collision.» Silence again. He said it third time: «I repeat last time, change your direction immediately. This is the United States Marine Vessel. I insist that you change your course.» Finally the voice on the other side replies: «This is a beacon. It is you who should change your course immediately!»»(Moore, 2010, s. 72).

The reasons of tension in social groups also include absence of humility and healthy self-criticism. According to the psychologist Viktor E. Frankl (2006) every human act is at the same time his own monument. Every day we carry out actions which we do not like if others do to us. Human beings are extremely susceptible to self-justification in comparisons with others. We determine any hierarchy of vices and subsequently we justify ourselves how far we are in the ranking from the bottom and how high are the others around us. We are mainly trying to point out and judge behaviour of others, so that *they* change direction of their «navigation», not *us*. However, the story of the old marine boat clearly shows that everybody should start from himself (to change direction of navigation). We shall therefore not make people good by writing a decree on polite behaviour. Every man must come to understanding and acceptance of morals in his mind.¹

A well-known Czech entrepreneur Tomáš Baťa (1876-1932) lived in the period of Great Depression in years 1929 — 1933. Many people perceived the crisis in those times mainly as a consequence of stock market crash, while T. Baťa labelled this crisis as a consequence of failure of moral values: «The reason of the crisis is mainly moral poverty. (...) What we used to call moral crisis is a different name for moral poverty. Moral poverty is the reason, economic decay is the consequence. In our country there are many people who believe that economic decay can be rescued by money. I am scared of consequences of this failure. In the position in which we find ourselves we do not need any ingenious turns and combinations. We need a moral standpoint towards people, work and public goods. Not to support bankruptcy people, not to make debts, not to blackmail workers, but to act in a way that lifted us out of poverty, to work and save and to make work and saving more productive, desired and honest than laziness and wasting.» (Baťa, 2009, p. 26, 27)

¹ Man should not be sad in his moral behaviour when he does the right thing, moral action should spring from joy over good deed. Michael Novak writes in this regard: „To take the morals only as an obligation, burden and responsibility, is too Kantian,... right morals means a practice to increase skills of action and as such it is part of joy and beauty.» (Novak, 1998, s. 59,60)

Any crisis can be changed (softened) by behaviour of people, not money. The hope that crisis will disappear with the help of laws, or money is false because by writing laws we shall not force people to act in accordance with the rules. Even if some monetary and fiscal measures are taken, the root of the problem lies in the people. Has human behaviour changed for the better? Are we more considerate of each other, less envious, do we mainly follow the interests of others and not our egoistic interests? No. Unless such steps happen, it may seem that industry, or international trade temporarily improve, but unless people change their behaviour and «course», global crisis will continue in its rising and decreasing phases.

«Modern man is not defined by the fact that he lives at the end of 20th Century, but by the fact that he acquired a significant part of thinking which is considered as modern» (Grešo, 1998, p. 74), and at the same time he is moving in a vicious circle he cannot break: production — advertisement — increased consumption — increased production — more intensive advertisement — even more consumption etc. (Grešo, 1998, p. 74). «Rush, lack of concentration, disorder, dissatisfaction, helplessness and fear — these are packages which are carried on our backs by each of us» (Vicenik, 1998, p. 84). According to V. Frankl «consumerist society brought along the feeling of senselessness, labelled as «mass neurotic syndrome» which consists in the triad which is composed of addiction, aggression, depression». (Frankl, 2006, p. 68). Descartes 'statement «I think therefore I am» is replaced by pragmatic statement «I feel therefore I am», which means for the current times that «in the spirit of consumerist culture everything is reduced to a game, fastidiousness, fashion, comfort and even bigger consumption... Cultural choice and moral decision-making are not based on any rational foundations anymore. Instead of that ethics of desire is incited by unrestraint consumerism. People are exposed to manipulation from the side of media and advertising agencies» (Raeper, Smith, 1998, p. 409).

Zbigniew Brzezinski perceives as a big problem related to American and West-European media which try to give a deceptive (falsely beneficial) picture of life style of modern man. In his view, television is an element which breaks generational continuity of traditions and values and tries to present «material or sexual hedonism as normal and even admirable behaviour» (Brzezinski, 1993, p. 113). Another problem which is connected with the previous one is a decay of family cohabitation. This decay is a consequence of worsened social values, which is due to materialistic (consumerist) individualism which is a stranger to such values as loyalty, trust, family

commitments, abstinence, responsibility, or self-sacrifice: «America obviously needs a period of philosophical self-questioning and cultural self-criticism. It must come to the realization that relativistic¹ hedonism as a basic life philosophy does not provide firm social roots...»(Brzezinski, 1993, p. 114).

4. Conclusion

The terms *oikonomikos* and *oikodomé* mentioned in the first part of the paper serve us for pointing out that (national, international and globalized) economy represents a construction reflecting quality of life of society which, if built without quality and ethical awareness, creates social tension and social conflicts which we, unfortunately, witness in these times.

In ongoing economic crisis political and economic elites try to «heal» the crisis for instance by treaties and directives on fiscal responsibility (e.g. European stabilization mechanism). They see hope for better times with regard to money and their use. However, the reason why money will not help is the fact that as an exchange tool, or settlement unit, money it is not responsible for how people handle it.

And therefore money will not change a negative situation from a long-term view which has its origin in failure to comply with written an unwritten rules. And therefore ESM (and in general money as such) in principle do not provide any solutions, unless a change occurs somewhere else — in thinking and subsequent action based on change of thinking of individuals. The whole problem is centred around human mind, free will and morals, not in lifeless goods.

The purpose of our paper was to point out to the work of Lorenz Eight deadly sins and his chosen problems of the current turbulent globalized world. Environment threatened by industrial production, or consumerist society shaped by media and advertising industry mean a deepening threat to mankind and planet. We can currently observe that commercial media present much more ideals of human power, beauty, or performance than virtues of human character and morals. A psychological problem which is becoming more and more frequent includes a negative perfectionism, depressions and fear of life, property and future. It is interesting that most people are afraid of things which in reality never or only seldom occur to them.

¹ The issue of (moral) relativism as part of postmodernism see e.g.: (McDowell, Hostetler, 2009) or (Grenz, 1997).

Globalization and technological progress lay focus on quality of human capital, information and knowledge. Our proposed solution is that every individual becomes aware of a bad situation in the society which is followed by change of individuals' thinking. Our basis is methodological individualism which, in our view, constitutes an appropriate starting point, a basis for building of society. Every unit is composed of fragments and it is the quality of individual parts which determines the quality of the unit. The change has to be developed from the bottom going upwards, macroeconomic picture depends on changes in microeconomic relations. In order to change the world, it is necessary that individuals change first (preference for non-violent way), by which we also allow to disagree with our opinions and therefore desired change may not occur in a free society, everything depends on a free decision of each individual.

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