

## **Economic Man Model by M. Foucault**

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**Abstract:** The study based mainly on M. Foucault's work "The birth of biopolitics", summarized the philosopher's view on the subject of an economic man. M. Foucault's approach is peculiarity to the concept of an economic man is that he considers him under the aspect of management practices, as a specific type of rationality or a discourse. An economic person is analyzed by M. Foucault from the perspective of genealogy method developed by him, the possibilities of which are indicated in the research. Thus, M. Foucault's genealogical approach is not only designed to work with the spiritual sphere of society, but also allows you to reveal the complex structure of economic consciousness; to identify the relationship uniqueness of each element of discourse; to conclude that the difference between discursive practices cannot be removed in their synthesis; to conclude that the main criterion of the discourse viability is not the contradictions with which he is confronted, but the demand for his inherent rationality. The study presents the features that define the model of M. Foucault's economic man in a systematic form. The most important forms are: an economic man is a market man, he differs not only from a medieval person but also from a secular person; an economic man is an artificial one by nature and is the product of management practices; he is self-sufficient and authoritarian in nature. A special attention is paid to the Liberal and Neo-Liberal Model of an economic man. On the basis of their comparison as well as on the material summary, it is concluded that the economic views of M. Foucault are not only relevant today but also contain a heuristic capacity which allows to take a fresh look at the analysis and the critique of bourgeois consciousness in the face of his carrier, an economic man.

**Key words:** Economic man, economic consciousness, market, discourse, management practices

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In this study, we want to present M. Foucault's point of view like a model on the subject of an economic man as the bearer of economic consciousness. Let's note here that these concepts due to their inherent semantic proximity will be considered as interchangeable.

The relevance of the topic is conditioned by the following: firstly, in the present circumstances of "economic science impotence" the appeal to the value bases of bourgeois economy is not only significant, but also requires the efforts not only from economists but also from the representatives of other professions in particular philosophers (Kugman, 2008). Only in this way, through an interdisciplinary approach, we can come closer to the understanding of an economic man and consciousness phenomenon.

Secondly, despite the fact that a lot of work is paid to the characteristics and traits of an economic man (Philosophy of economics: Hausman (2012), Sombart (1994), Harvey (1979), Robert (2011) and Laval (2010), it still remains undefined by content. Hence, any research devoted to his analysis (an economic aspect of M. Foucault's creativity is not an exception from this series) will always be interesting and demanded.

Thirdly, the economic views of a French Philosopher are not articulated by him in a summary form which on one hand requires their generalization and on the other opens a wide field for their classification and interpretation. Due to this, we do not claim to a comprehensive analysis of Michel Foucault creativity, we would like to present our version of his economic views systematization, mainly basing on the work "The birth of biopolitics", where as we think, he expressed them more fully and clearly.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**The model of an economic man by M. Foucault:** Economic consciousness by Foucault (1996a, b) is considered from the position of genealogy method developed by him as a certain type of rationality or a discourse. The philosopher opposes his method to the principle of historicism, emphasizing the uniqueness, the structural complexity and the incompatibility of discursive practices to each other which does not exclude the possibility of their contact and interaction. Hence, this approach poses a difficult and almost an impossible task before a private researcher to introduce economic consciousness in the form of a complex formation of different discursive practices, with their inherent hierarchy of elements.

Therefore, it seems that not in the least the similar way of thinking and not just an interest led M. Foucault to limit the subject of an economic man by the aspect of management practices.

Taking into account the mentioned above, M. Foucault, identifies the following set of the most important features characterizing an economic man: first; an economic man appears as the subject of self-interest, focused on the achievement of maximum profit. This definition is a bipartite one, it includes the subject of self-interest and profit. Under the first one, a free individual acting in his own interest is understood. Such a man appears in the late middle ages new age. He is a secular man whose actions are based on selfish ambitions but he is not the bearer of an economic man according to Foucault (2010) in order to become an economic man, the subject of self-interest should subdue the diversity of his personality aspirations to one interest, the selfish desire for profit. Thus, Michel Foucault not only reproduces V. Zombart's idea about economic man as a person who has a passion for profit but also draws a line (though not clearly articulating it) that distinguishes him from a secular person.

Second: the system pursuit for profit is not peculiar to a man, so an economic man is not a natural person but a man-made construct, the set of practices constantly reproducing itself. The peculiarity of these practices is that they organize the space of a capitalist market in which an economic man lives and operates.

This space, according to M. Foucault, on the one hand, does not allow to be enriched alone and on the other hand it is hierarchical in its structure. That is, it includes the market which assumes the making of profit and a market space, which includes the countries that are the source of income for the organizers of a capitalist market. "Now Europe Foucault (2010) writes is in a constant state of collective enrichment at the expense of his own competition, provided that the whole world makes its market".

Third: according to M. Foucault a civil society is a legal environment for an economic man existence. On the one hand, it is focused most of all on the accounting of an economic man needs and the other they are not identical to it as they include the attitudes and interests that go beyond economy and are also linked to the territory while an economic man is extraterritorial. That is, there is a gap between these phenomena which is a source of controversy between the desire for profit without boundaries and the consideration of group rights and interests associated with a particular territory.

Fourth: from Michel Foucault's perspective, economic consciousness is self-sufficient as a discourse.

Therefore, it cannot be subordinated to the control mechanisms on the part of ethics and law. On the contrary, the philosopher leads to the idea that ethics and especially the right are only the tools (which at any time may be discarded as useless) for an economic man in the course of income generation.

Fifth: a self-sufficient economic man is alien to religion. Foucault (2010) writes: "Economy is an atheistic discipline; economy is the discipline without God". This is a significant observation made by philosopher, because it allows us to speak about an economic discourse as an alternative to a religious one.

Sixth: in terms of M. Foucault point of view an economic man lives in the world of event, in the situation of uncertainty. It allows him:

- To turn himself in his actions. Michel Foucault said that the result of uncertainty is the system rationalism of an economic man actions
- To equalize the chances of all participants in maximum possible way during the struggle for profit (taking into account what was said about the hierarchy of the market space) in which victory will always be on the side of those who consider the consequences of their actions better than others
- Do not allow government interference in the management of economy

Foucault (2010) in this regard writes: "In the end, Kant, although a little later, will have to tell a man that he cannot cognize the integrity of the world. So, the political economy said to the governor a few decades before: you, too, can not know the totality of the economic process". At the same time, it does not mean, in terms of the philosopher that the principle of uncertainty is alien to the authorities in the form of law. On the contrary, M. Foucault puts this principle into the basis of the market jurisdiction as the jurisdiction of a special kind which regulates the relationship between people is based on market needs rather than on a ruler's whims.

Since, society exists in a market space, the market jurisdiction is universal jurisdiction, permeating all spheres of society. Therefore, M. Foucault reveals an important feature inherent to an economic man, economic and legal totalitarianism, confining the freedom of a man in the market space and submitting, it to the profit making.

Seventh: according to M. Foucault an economic man is the construct of management practices which is not static and volatile in nature.

The history of an economic man, from the philosopher's point of view, consists of discontinuities.

The largest of these ones is the gap between the Liberal and Neo-Liberal Model of an economic man. Following M. Foucault, let's consider these models in more detail.

In the Liberal Model of an economic man market is not regarded as the foundation of a society development. In this connection, the main problem which is tried to be solved by a liberal type of economic thinking is to find the best demarcation option between the government and the market where, on one hand, the government will not violate the principles of the market and the other, the market will not bend a variety of human relation forms to its power. Thus, the Liberal Model of an economic man according to Michel Foucault is the model of balance.

The Neo-Liberal Model of an economic man rejects the possibility of such a compromise. This is the market model, defining and including the diversity of social relations and therefore, M. Foucault considers, it a genuine model of an economic man.

The first model is treated negatively by the philosopher and he emphasizes the following traits, determining it:

- The constant intrusion of government into the market mechanism (by the means of administrative measures and social policy) in order to control and optimize, it with respect to a person
- The prevalence of inactivity over the business activity of economic agents

They point to the fact that a man have is not fully absorbed by the market yet. In other words, an individual is more interested here not so much the case itself but in the fact that he can get a lot by entering a market. That is why, Foucault (2010) characterizes a liberal man as the man of exchange and consumption.

The philosopher treats the Neo-Liberal Model with more sympathy and identifies the following, inherent features: the prevalence of business activity over passivity. "Homo economicus, which seeks to revive writes Foucault (2010) is not a man of exchange, not a consumer; he is the person of an enterprise and production". In contrast to the liberal model, the neo-liberal economic discourse does not consider the economic agents as passive participants of the market any longer. Here, a man is not thrown into the market space, continuing to maintain a personal autonomy in relation to it but determined by it ontologically. In other words, a man now is not a passive resident of a supermarket but a businessman, who defines himself in terms of the market (competencies, prices, production, satisfaction, costs, etc.).

As the market determines the existence of every person, the neo-liberal economic man is a massive man, but not a man of mass. This means that the market requires to become an economic man from any member of society, a legal person who determines the strategy of his life. Hence, a market person is individual and unique in nature and cannot be a part of a mass as he is not able to dissolve in his anonymity and irrational impulses.

The Neo-Liberal discourse does not split, as a liberal one, and integrates all the diversity of a man's personality (intellect, breadth of outlook, anthropomorphic figures, health, etc.), turning it into capital. Only in this way, basing not only on the calculation, but also on a person in the form of equity, a legal person may exist and operate effectively.

By comparing these models, M. Foucault comes to the paradoxical conclusion that such costs of capitalism, known since, the times of W. Sombart as the one-dimensionality, alienation, mass, monopoly, etc. are inherent not so much by himself as there is the lack of it in society. That is, these disadvantages are inherent in the liberal model of economic discourse that comes from the ability of both the market and the authorities to find a compromise.

Finishing the characteristics of features given by M. Foucault to an economic man, it should be noted that this view of the philosopher they is not devoid of controversy, the main of which is the contradiction between a market and a person. So, on the one hand, Michel Foucault considers a market as a universal space of uncertainty, which should be maintained for the sake of competition in profit, on the other hand, he denies that right, claiming that the market does not serve everyone's interests. It turns out that the market mechanism always stumbles on a man, his interests and desires. If it is so, a neo-liberal project of some correct capitalism close to M. Foucault is impossible is it could not go beyond the human nature which denies the permanence of a game uncertainty inherent to a market.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Summary:** Summing up the above stated views by M. Foucault on the content of an economic man, it should be noted that the presented model may be agreed only partially. For example, the facts that the liberal discourse is characterized by the opposition of the economy and the government, that the costs inherent in capitalism are explained by the interference in the market outside that a neo-liberal man of competition is a true economic man in comparison with a person of exchange and consumption are not true. At the same time, M. Foucault's judgments

about an economic man are not just debatable and interesting, but also embody a heuristic potential. Firstly, they allow to deepen the understanding of the fact that there is an economic man. It is no coincidence in this regard, in a recently published work "Essays on Economic Man" Laval (2010) refers to the economic aspect of M. Foucault's creativity, argues with him, develops his ideas, in particular, describes in detail the process of an economic man liberation from ethics, deterring and controlling his development. Secondly, M. Foucault extends the methodological field of approaches to the analysis and understanding of what an economic man is. Third, the economic aspect of Foucault's legacy calls the current researchers of capitalism to rethink the tradition of his criticism which changed a little since, the time of Hegel, Marx and W. Sombart.

### CONCLUSION

M. Foucault's methodological approach encompasses the following research potential in the study of economic consciousness:

- It allows you to focus on the revealing of the most important features and properties that characterize a particular discourse as well as to establish the relationship between its various components
- It does not preclude the use of other methodological approaches, but on condition that they do not need to eliminate the differences between the unique types of rationality
- It is focused on the operation with the system of the spiritual sphere of society and encompasses the ability to identify various discursive layers in it with their inherent relationship of elements which greatly enriches the analysis and interpretation of the studied phenomena

The main indicator of the economic discourse viability is the demand of rationality inherent to it, rather than external challenges it faces. By stating the difference between an economic and a secular man, Foucault does not develop this idea in detail, however, from our point of view, this topic may become a separate direction in the field of economic consciousness.

The bourgeois value system translates not the principles of an effective market economy development, but the market space, where an economic man may exist and make profit comfortably. M. Foucault's position on the difference between civil society and an economic man allows to understand better and deeper the origins of the

tolerance policy crisis in Europe, the difficulties associated with the development of a global economic project.

The philosopher's thesis about a self-sufficient economic consciousness eliminates an exogenous approach to the regulation of economic practices, leaving the right to exist for an endogenous approach only. In its turn, this means that an economic person actually makes moral and right service the market economy.

The conditions for entry into the post-secular stage of development, M. Foucault statement on self-sufficiency of economic consciousness poses an actual problem of its interaction study with a religious discourse. The situation of uncertainty in which an economic person resides excludes the voluntarism of power but the power but states the power of market jurisdiction.

According to M. Foucault an inherently totalitarian economic man "consumes freedom" but does not produce it. Thus, democratic liberties by which Western Europe boasts, there is only a side effect of market rationality which may discard them as useless at any time.

The difference between a Liberal and a Neo-liberal Model showed by M. Foucault, poses the problem of rethinking the traditional approaches to the criticism of capitalism before the researches of economic consciousness. It is important to emphasize that M. Foucault is far from thinking that the Neo-Liberal Model has overcome the costs attributed to capitalism. For example, the transformation of man into a machine which "produces a stream of income" and has a life span is not a satisfactory solution to the problem of human alienation in a market society (Hausman, 2012). Neo-liberalism is a new way to look at the tradition of capitalism criticism.

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