

The Outsourcing of Survival: Ethical Problems Regarding the Privatization of Migration and Integration Processes in the European Union

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Abstract

In many countries in Europe entrepreneurs take over the responsibility of the integration process. This paper criticizes a certain type of entrepreneurial role model as promoting a single input agent, only counting profit as its input. The possibility of a non-outsourced, conscience-based model for regulating the integration process is discussed as a possibility and as a stepping stone for critique of the entrepreneurial model's social claims as a whole.

Keywords: migration, ethics, conscience, outsourcing, profit, entrepreneurship

“An ever-present absent object of overpowering attractions inspires an impossible ritual quest for fulfilment. Not incidentally, this is good for business. The Commodity is the capitalist incarnation of the phallus as Master At- tractor. Love may be the light of one’s life, but a toaster is an acceptable substitute.”¹

(Brian Massumi, *A user’s guide to capitalism and schizophrenia*)

When more and more of our administrative processes are privatized and therefore moved from a public governmental or municipal sphere to a private and entrepreneurial one, we might need to reconsider some previously less-regarded problems in both ethics and economics and ethics and migration processes. Business ethics will no longer be striving to keep business proposals ethically cleansed of immoral economic claims but must include social ethics as well. Or is the privatization’s main gain to loosen the moral chains from the state and put the responsibility somewhere else? And is this new sphere even a moral one? Is morality possible in the hands of agents in a single input market system? What the consequences of entrepreneurial economics and the construction of an integration industry might become is what I will try to discuss in this paper. We do know that a migration affects one person’s whole life and often even the following generation.² Therefore a lot is at stake here. We will need a thorough ethical discussion to cope with these questions. This paper is intended as a beginning of such a discussion.

Before reading any further it can be of value if I present my conception of the goals of a discussion in ethics. I am inspired by the words of the Norwegian philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen who begins his short introductory book *Hva er Etikk* (*What is ethics*) with the proposition that ethical questions always should be grounded in the feeling of something worthwhile being violated (“i en opplevelse av krenkelse”). It is when we feel something is going the wrong way we should aim towards ethics to find ways of criticizing what is wrong. The beginning of a true ethical question is empathy.³

The different process-management systems of our neoliberal age (such as Lean, Kaizen or Six Sigma) form both government and market actors alike today. It gives governments the possibilities and inputs to use private companies to do parts of what used to be, at least in former Social Democratic states as Sweden, the work of the state or, on a local level, a municipality. The process-management systems give the decision makers a tool to cut out parts of their work; work that perhaps could cost less to buy from a market regulated company than to organize themselves. Doing this, the government does not need to take administrative, economic or logistic responsibility for these parts of their actions anymore, but what about the moral responsibility? What happens when action that until recently was ruled by political decisions instead get its inputs mostly from the economic sphere? This is something we need to discuss, especially when these changes happen in a sincerely social and delicate sphere such as migration.

And what is the effect on the companies doing the sometimes quite dirty work? A main interest for the anti-deportation action groups in my home country Sweden has been the exposure and boycott of companies who profit from the demobilization of illegal migrants.⁴ Bus companies are one example among others. This is of course not a way of building bridges between the pro-migration movement and the entrepreneurs – rather a way of burning the few bridges remaining today. But is outsourcing a moral problem? Yes, maybe. During the

¹ Brian Massumi, *A user’s guide to capitalism and schizophrenia - Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, Cambridge, MA. 1992, p. 84.

² Stephen Castles, Mark J. Miller, *The age of migration - International population movements in the modern world*, London 1998, p. 19; Herbert Spaich, *Fremd in Deutschland - Auf der Suche nach Heimat*, Weinheim-Basel 1991, p. 182.

³ Arne Johan Vetlesen, *Hva er etikk*, Oslo 2010, p. 7.

⁴ Lena Andersson, Anna Becker, “Inte en sten – inte en rad”, in: *Feministiskt perspektiv*, 2012. <http://feministisktperspektiv.se/2012/06/29/inte-en-sten-inte-en-rad/>, p. 1, viewed on 18.02.2013.

later parts of the second world war/the great patriotic war Sweden sent back some hundreds of soldiers from the Baltic States who had been fighting together with the Third Reich against the Soviet Union. The “Baltutlämning” have since been a sore spot in the Swedish pride but some kind of reconciliation (among Swedes at least) have been achieved through various investigations.⁵ Would this have been possible if it were a transnational company behind the demobilization, let’s say for example Sodexo, G4S or Blackwater? Who would have taken the moral responsibility for the deportations? Is there a difference between saying, “I did this because my democratically elected government told me to” or “I did this because my boss at the company told me to”? This question might not be possible to answer here, but we should keep this in mind while we are discussing some other issues of ethics and migration, especially during the discussion about entrepreneurs and responsibility.

According to belief from current social research, the concept of globalization and our globalized world rests upon a common possibility of free movement. Free movement is thought to be the normality in the western world, even though the attacks of 9/11 have made the movement slower and more problematic.⁶ The flow of migrants today is the most intense ever, and it is increasing every year.⁷ Integration is for these people a prerequisite for social security in the countries and societies becoming their new homes. At the same time the concept of the migrant is something of an ideal for all humans living in the postmodern society. Migration is closely connected to contemporary themes regarding the employable person – a person who is flexible, moveable and changeable. Integrable you could say. And there is a fierce critique of these contemporary themes – not only from a nationalistic and conservative point of view.⁸ The push/pull movement of migration – where a person is pushed from the old home or pulled towards the new one has over time become known for being essentially individualistic and ahistorical.⁹ It has not been the case in the past and, as we can see when a migrant’s family tries to get together inside the European Union, is not the case today either. This paper is particularly interested in the concern for asylum-seekers; not with, for example, the former German *Gastarbeiter* system, even though the difference sometimes is not as easy to pinpoint as it seems. I am not interested in the migration nowadays of retired people from let’s say “Norway to Sweden” or “Sweden to Spain” where no other integration than a simple *Una cerveza por favor* is needed. Nor is my interest in internal refugees that already, although they might be scattered and uprooted from their homes, are integrated into society and culture even after being moved. I am interested in the around 300 people from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka that died on Christmas Day of 1996 in the waters between Malta and Sicily after a collision.¹⁰ It is among the bodies floating after failed attempts to reach Europe and among the people working illegally after succeeding that we find real ethical questions. These are questions for which we actually have to find an answer.

But what is integration? J.W. Berry presents integration as the migrant being strongly oriented both towards his or her “old” culture and the culture of the new home;¹¹ this enables the migrant to understand the new environment. In this paper I will use ideal integration as a term for a process which creates a citizen that is self-sufficient and accepted in the society into which he or she is

⁵ Lars Gyllenhaal, *Tyskar och allierade i Sverige – Sveriges krigshistoria i nytt ljus*, Stockholm 2011, p. 164.

⁶ Didier Bigo, “Globalized (in)security - the field and the ban-opticon”, in: *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty - Illiberal practices of liberal regimes after 9/11*, London 2008, p. 36.

⁷ Khalid Koser, *International Migration - A very short introduction*, Oxford 2007, p. 1.

⁸ The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection*, Semiotext(e) Intervention series 1, Cambridge, MA, 2009, p. 50.

⁹ St. Castles, M. J. Miller, *The age of migration*, p. 20.

¹⁰ St. Castles, M. J. Miller, *The age of migration*, p. 84.

¹¹ John W. Berry, “Acculturation as varieties of adaption”, in: Amado M. Padilla (ed.), *Acculturation, theory, model, and some new findings*, West view press for the American Association for the Advancement of Science 1980.

integrated. I do not mean that they need to be assimilated; it just means that they can live in a self-valuable and self-sufficient way in their new home. My concept of integration thus relates to the possibility of a working livable multicultural society. As everyone knows this is a possibility not accepted by all parts of the common European politics today. In my opinion it is the only possibility of the future and also a society in which I myself would like to live and participate. As we have seen, it is easy to condemn the attempts that were made during the 19th and 20th century to create homogenous national states. It did not work, there was a big lack of meaning in the process of doing so, and a lot of people had to die to prove the point. It was during these times that the status of “foreigner” first was used to restrict workers’ rights, and it was during the same nation-building era that the construction of nations demanded that the role of immigrants in society be denied.¹² You could say that it was the beginning of all the ethical problems related to migration that we face today. It would be very ahistorical and not very responsible, to say the least, for an ethicist to deny the huge problems in the creation of a homogenous national state. The nation state carries both a problematic history and a dangerous luggage. It has to be closely and continuously monitored.

To clarify the main purpose of this article I will now try to recapitulate and regroup its central questions and theme. The purpose of this text is to try to understand how a certain type of entrepreneurship – a Schumpeterian version of being an entrepreneur as you will notice further on – affects and can affect the way migrants are treated when arriving to countries in Europe. This is from an ethical point of view but not, for instance, an economic or organizational point of view which would be another possible way to investigate this problem. Instead of a Schumpeterian single-input model of entrepreneurship, where the only valuable input for the entrepreneur is profit, we will study a model of multiple inputs which is grounded in conscience. But first we need to take a closer look at migration.

A contemporary view of migration and the problems migrants face

Why is integration, in the sense I describe it above, so important? According to research in the field of migration there are two factors that can help a migrant succeed easily; first if the culture is very similar, for example someone from Great Britain moving to Australia, second the so-called professional transience, for example me getting a job in Sibiu at University Lucian Blaga.¹³ If neither of these factors is the case – and as I described our example above it is not – the process needs, in my view, helping agents with a broader responsibility. Why? This is something I will describe below when I draw the line between conscience as a broader and profit as a thin, single input. The difference might be between a life of social participation or the alienation faced by the inhabitants of the *bidonvilles*. If we think that a functioning possibility to communicate with the society (through a common language), and the possibility to get a job that gives the person a salary et caetera, both are connected with a workable integration. It is also well proven in recent research that integration is a criterion for mental health and stability and that being a stranger in a new country puts you in a position where you are being met with uncertainty by the inhabitants; as an immigrant you are not a part of the affect-economy that the other inhabitants rely on.¹⁴ The other inhabitants will meet the migrant “mit einer Mischung aus Unsicherheit, Überheblichkeit und Angst.”¹⁵ How well the community where

¹² St. Castles, M. J. Miller, *The age of migration*, p. 48ff.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

¹⁴ Sara Ahmed, *Vithetens hegemoni*, Stockholm 2011, p. 65; Parvin Pooremamali, *Culture, Occupation and Occupational therapy in a mental health care context -The challenge of meeting the needs of Middle Eastern immigrants*, Malmö University 2012, p. 14.

¹⁵ H. Spaich, *Fremd in Deutschland*, p. 15.

the migrant arrives can provide a climate in which he/she can flourish has a great impact on their wellbeing.¹⁶

In Sweden there are no societal tests or any language tests for migrants yet, but the education in becoming an integrated Swede is privatized.¹⁷ In the Netherlands the system is totally privatized. The *Inburgeringstest* could be described as the privatization of becoming a Dutchman. All the costs for the tests are to be paid for by the immigrant him- or herself with no involvement of the state.¹⁸ As we can see here the responsibility is moved from the government towards the migrant and the entrepreneurs that make money off the migrant's situation. This is a problem we will continue to discuss in this paper. It is also a continuous discussion in a lot of the European Union member states today. Even though we do not have any tests for migrants in Sweden today, this might change in a very short time, perhaps with the next election to Parliament. Privatization in this context is the process where an activity, for example providing education and accommodation for migrants, that previously has been done by state or municipality, instead is done by a private company. The privatization process is done through outsourcing – the process where a private actor is chosen – often through a procurement of the service. In this process a private company is chosen through bidding, where the lowest bid is the winner, and then gets the contract to provide the service that has been sought for.

What kind of moral involvement should we expect from these entrepreneurs engaged in the integration industry? I will try to propose conscience as a good ethical system to promote a moral involvement in the migrants' situation. The question is: does conscience fit an entrepreneur in a market economy if we stick to Schumpeter's version of the entrepreneur? To investigate this we have to discuss both conscience and the role of the entrepreneur according to Schumpeter. The first question is related to how we describe conscience.

What is conscience?

Conscience is an old and long discussed term in ethics, primarily used by Catholic moral theologians. It can be described as a feeling of right or wrong but should not be regarded as a subjective feeling just manufactured by the individual himself. Events stirring the conscience should not be regarded as a feeling exclusively connected to a group of individuals because they belong to a certain group, et caetera. The conscience is, or should be thought of, as universal.¹⁹ If we feel different from one another in a certain situation, we should also feel the need to discuss this from different angles. It is important to see the possibility of conscience as a moral norm not as a possibility of finding a moral blueprint somewhere inside every person, but as a possibility of a continuous discussion about morality and the feeling of conscience.

It is also important that we see conscience as a feeling, as something in the mind that we can choose to explore or not to explore. But conscience is also a skill. To quote Charles Curran: "Conscience is stimulated in many different ways through parables, stories, symbols, the liturgy, through the example of others as models, and through a myriad of life experiences." If we choose not to use this skill, the conscience will be crippled. The ethical warning system will not work anymore. We will later see what I mean by "single input agent" and how this agent is morally crippled from a conscience- based ethics point of view.

¹⁶ Ignacio Correa-Velez, Sandra M. Gifford, Adrian G. Barnett, "Longing to belong: Social Inclusion and wellbeing among youth with refugee backgrounds in the first three years in Melbourne, Australia", in: *Social Science & Medicine* No 71, 2010.

¹⁷ Jon Weman, *Åtgärdslandet - Arbetsförmedlingens svarta bok*, Stockholm 2011, p. 101.

¹⁸ Ines Michelowski, "What is the Dutch integration model, and has it failed?" in: *Focus Migration* No 1, 2005. See also <http://www.nt2examen.nl/inburgeringsexamen.htm>, viewed on 18.02.2013.

¹⁹ Charles Curran, *The living tradition of Catholic Moral Theology*, Notre Dame 1992, p. 160.

What is conscience then? It is possible to ground this ethical warning system in many ways. It has been used by Catholic theologians, as above, but that does not mean it has to imply a God, or a created world. It could be grounded for example in Kropotkin's thought of mutual aid; the altruistic system created during the late 1800 as a critique of Social Darwinism.²⁰ In a more advanced work we had to discuss this more, now we just have to note that there might be different ways of grounding conscience; both religious and nonreligious. Conscience is a phenomenon that has been continuously discussed in theology and philosophy since Augustinian.²¹ Not everything is clear if we compare conscience-based ethics with the ethics of rights, for example. We do not really know if they can actually work together.²² This might be problematic concerning ethics and migration because a lot of work that has been done in that field has been related to right-based claims. But I do believe that with the use of conscience it is possible to build a conscience-based ethical system. A conscience-based ethical system will in my point of view work with multiple inputs. By not defining what an input is (like pain, money, happiness or such) and instead working towards a broader scheme of feeling moral satisfaction, it is possible to end up in a broader moral fulfilment than what we will find in the single input agent below. But as I have been discussing above, we need more work in the field of conscience before we can be surer of how much we can rely on it. This counts both for secular and religious based ethics alike. The answer to how this ethic of conscience should be arranged is not constructed here, but it could be suggested that it should closely relate to thoughts of altruism. Another possibility is also to use the concept of affect-economy being, by some theorists in migration studies as seen above, what a newcomer in a society lacks. Towards the end of this paper we will return to conscience and how it is possible to integrate it into decision-processes and practical work in state and municipality.

Entrepreneurs as single input agents

The entrepreneur working for a government might have a different input and output than our common government official. Market economy is often seen as a single-input system, where only the financial gain, the profit, is countable as a gain. For example, a good day is shown by your final assets, not your feeling of worth. To save someone might be wrong in a system where profit is the single-input – if you lose time, assets or other, while saving. But of course this is merely an example; most people are, hopefully, more morally advanced than this. One way of describing how to be more morally advanced is through the concept of conscience. A person with a conscience is more morally advanced than an agent in a market economy – but if we use the *homo economicus* as a model of man, the financial system will try to convert all its participants into single input agents, and in the long run the system might make persons change. A difference in narrow and wide responsibility can be seen here, where wide responsibility is viewed as conscience.

A true entrepreneur must lack conscience. By saying this I do not mean that all people that are working in entrepreneurial circumstances lack conscience. But J. A. Schumpeter, the founder of the entrepreneurial view in economics, tells it to us like this; in trying to make us understand what a plausible capitalism is, he says that it must be grounded on the single input of profit. Otherwise it is not effective.²³ A non-effective entrepreneurial attempt would be illogical in a system with a single input of profit. The only thing the entrepreneur can do is to try to make as much profit as possible. From Schumpeter we can also draw a very interesting fact

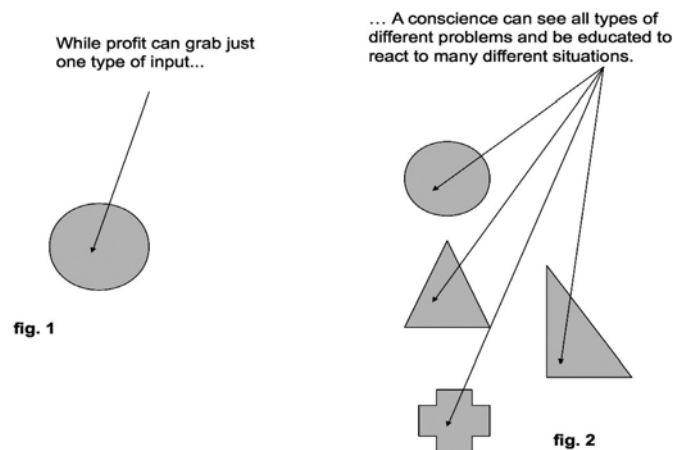
²⁰ Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual aid: A factor of evolution*, New York 1972.

²¹ Paul Strohm, *Conscience - A very short introduction*, Oxford 2011, p. 9.

²² P. Strohm, *Conscience*, p. 76.

²³ Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, London 1966, p. 73.

about capitalism and entrepreneurships. It has to be “creatively destructive” – to gain more profit it has to tear down a system that existed beforehand. This is what Schumpeter calls “the process of creative destruction”.²⁴ Important here is to pinpoint that the entrepreneur has no interest in valuing the older system in any other way than how he or she shall change it to earn more profit. Which does not mean it is more effective or better for the people otherwise affected by it. Single input does actually mean single input as you can see illustrated in the picture below (in fig. 1). Even if the entrepreneur would feel that what he or she is doing is morally wrong – if it means gaining maximum profit the entrepreneurial system would say that it is actually the right thing to do. This calls for moral problems in a variety of different ways. If we want the Schumpeterian entrepreneur to act morally we have to put profit behind the moral claims. There must be a way for the entrepreneur to gain money in doing a job that is good for all people included, not just themselves and their profit. Or we have to choose an entrepreneur that cares less about profit or includes more inputs (fig. 2). This is something that is not possible from Schumpeter’s point of view. But what about the customer? Is not the satisfied customer a key issue in capitalism? Yes. But why? We will discuss this in the upcoming paragraph.



What is a satisfied customer? It is something very different from a clear conscience. In the relation between a customer and a person that provides a service, it is possible to see a correlation between ethical behaviour from the provider and the satisfaction of the customer.²⁵ And satisfied customers are directly related to the outcome of the business. A satisfied customer comes back a second time and therefore is a reliable source of profit for the entrepreneur. The aim is not to clear the entrepreneur’s conscience regarding anything else than the conscience towards his or her investors or accountants. But isn’t it the government that is the customer in the migration scenario? Yes, probably. And in this case the government does not take the personal consequences of the integration process in the same way as the migrant does. There is a “by proxy” relationship here that distorts the moral view and makes it more advanced than an ordinary transaction between an entrepreneur and a customer. There might, for example, not be a second time for this customer if unsatisfied. A government might end a contract with an entrepreneur that does not act according to law or moral – but we cannot be sure that this changes the situation for the hundreds or maybe thousands of migrants that already have had to use the company for integration services. For them years might have passed

²⁴ J. A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism*, p. 83.

²⁵ Sergio Román, Ruiz Salvador, “Relationship outcomes of perceived ethical sales behavior: The customer’s perspective”, in: *Journal of Business Research*. No 58 (4/2005).

that is not possible to compensate for – not even in the juridical sense because the entrepreneur can always declare bankruptcy and thus be freed from guilt in the market economy. It seems therefore that entrepreneurs, working in this single-input way, might create an outcome that could be very dangerous from the migrant's point of view.

Here we can also find another problem – the problem of reciprocity. A customer (for example in our case the migrant studying a European language because language skills are needed to gain citizenship or at least to be integrated into the society) often has a direct relation to the entrepreneur that provides the service. If I buy a pair of trousers in a shop and they come with some kind of problem I can go back and claim a new pair. But the migrant is not really a customer in the same sense. He or she gets the services because the state or municipality has outsourced it to a company that provides it. The real customer, in a legal sense as seen above, is the state. This makes it really hard for migrants to complain in many different ways. First, are they really subjects of the state? How much power do they have to address the state and tell them that the education they get is not good enough? That it lacks something? Do they know that they can complain and how to do this in an effective way? The position where the migrant is placed in the system is a very tricky one. It is very easy for them to be misled about services that they are actually entitled to by law.

As we can see, there is a problem with an entrepreneurial model that only accepts profit as an input – what I have chosen to call a single input agent. But could we perhaps have other qualification criteria that guide the entrepreneur to value more inputs than just profit alone? Yes, this might be possible and could be done in two ways. The first way is to challenge Schumpeter's view of the entrepreneur by making other inputs than profit worth something. This could be done for example through education and might succeed, even though it would be a slow process. The other way is through the procurement criteria. The state or municipality could, through the criteria for awarding the procurement, be very clear in what kind of services they actually seek. Thus providing the entrepreneur with what we could call a semi-conscience criteria that are so strict that the problematic situations described above do not appear. This puts the responsibility in the arms of the contracting agent not the provider of the service. One way that has been used by venture capitalists to gain greater (in their case economical) control of entrepreneurs is through shared ownership.²⁶ If a state or municipality wants to gain the control over entrepreneurs in the integration industry this might be one of the ways to act in the contemporary economy. Through this sort of shared ownership a possibility arises to implement a system with more than one input, thus forcing the company to accept more inputs than just profit. Of course these inputs would have to compete with profit; that is just what the change is all about.

Another way to act, if it is possible to supply services for migrants without craving a profit, could be closer to a possibility to try to integrate conscience into the working processes in an organization funded by state or municipality. Conscience would in this case be integrated through a continuous discussion between workers and between the recipient migrants. What are the needs and how could they be met? How can we, with the fixed resources given to us through tax funding, create education and integration that works in a suitable way for both parties? Of course this is just the sketching of a model of conscience-related decision-making that needs more work and discussion before it can be presented. But it is still clear that the possibilities to meet the migrant's needs will be more likely to succeed than in a system that works through single-input.

²⁶ Rebecca Strätling, Frits H. Wijnbenga, Graham Dietz, "The Impact of contracts on trust in entrepreneur-venture capitalist relationship", in: *International Small Business Journal*, No 30, (8/2011)

Conclusions

The main objective of this paper is to show that entrepreneurial systems might cripple the feeling of conscience through the single input of profit. A conscience-based ethic could be used instead when dealing with questions of migration and integration. Here we define conscience preliminary as an inner rejection of ethically repugnant behaviour. I also define it as both a feeling and a skill. As a skill it gives us possibilities to try to change how we feel about certain things when we suddenly understand our moral feelings being less sensitive to important ethical questions. This is both a personal and a social phenomenon and has to be treated as such. The conscience needs more than one input and is therefore more advanced than the model the market economy uses, the *homo economicus*. However, continuing definitional work must be done to pinpoint ways of detecting and discussing conscience-based inputs.

The introducing quotation from Massumi's guide to the contemporary critique of capitalism as it has been formed by Deleuze and Guattari tells us something about the system in which the outsourced integration process exists. It is a system that, according to some, lacks true love and that puts the new piece of kitchen equipment in front of our relations to living human beings. Even though this might be a rather radical view of seeing the contemporary economic society I think it is worth meditation on these questions once in a while. If some parts of it are true it must guide us when we choose which system to apply in socially important processes, especially if we put ourselves in the position of the migrant.