POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY AND ECONOMIC ETHICS AMONG THE SPANISH SECOND SCHOLASTICISM: ITS INFLUENCE ON MODERN THOUGHT

Rui Coimbra Gonçalves

University of Coimbra, Portugal

The question of power as it was thought by the theologians from the Spanish Second Scholasticism results always sensitive, especially while converting her in terms of political sovereignty exercise over the conquered peoples from the overseas.

If the pattern native from Francisco de Vitoria, based in his turn in the ideas of Saint Thomas Aquinas, offered us already at the dawn of the XVIth century a compromise situation according to this matter, recognising the rights from the aborigine of no submission to the Christian missions, for Luis de Molina, the struggle was clearly for the defence by which the conquered peoples should convert in practical actions their claim to maintain their condition of independence and resistance against colonial power.

The case was quite different in Francisco Suárez, a Spanish theologian from the University of Coimbra, like Molina. For him the church would have legitimacy to employ her force through the secular arm delegated in and offered by a prince of Christianity if any native nation refused to be evangelized.

Finally the main aim of this report will be to find how the Spanish doctors from the early modern age in Europe continue today exerting their influence on the contemporary ethics namely through the economic questions. In fact were the scholars S. Drakopoulos and G. N. Gotsis, both from the University of Athens, that pointed out shapely for us in their article entitled “A Meta-theoretical Assessment of the Decline of Scholastic Economics” as referring on «The Scholastic Research Tradition in the History of Economic thought», that, in such a synthesis of the Thomistic doctrines expressed about, the so-called late scholastics could create the ideal conditions to intend the economic ethics as a cognitive field of knowledge.

According to our opinion as well as for numerous contemporary thinkers and modern historians (including the here just quoted), the main reason for such a successful accomplishment is that of the way by which they tried to rationalize the institutions of their own times.

Keywords: Second Scholasticism, Suárez, Vieira, Society of Jesus, Politics, Economics.

In several manners we can distinguish the approach between the western and the eastern culture during the first two centuries of the Society of Jesus. Among those sights there is that only glanced from the theoretical practice through the severe eyes of treatises and classes at the European universities.

Francisco Suárez, for instance, wrote plentifully about the relationship with the gentile people and the right kind of rule under which the western Christian countries should make peace and war with the eastern ones in order to submit and evangelize him into Christianity.
This kind of discussion had reasons to be old, namely in Spain where the contemporary writers and moralists such as Lope de Vega, Miguel de Cervantes and Bartolomé de las Casas exposed to such an extent their positions that they overtook their times beyond the knowledge of the Aristotelian theories formulated on the matter.

A contemporary of them, like Lope de Vega, wrote at the comedy El Nuevo Mundo (The New World) referring to the conquerors of the colonial adventure from the overseas and putting his words in the mouth of the Idolatry: «Under the colour of religion they seek the silver and the gold from the closet treasure». And Cervantes, in his Exemplar Novels, don’t find any objection to qualify the western Indies enterprise as a common deceit of much people and a particular remedy for few, or a refuge for all the desperate persons of Spain.

On the other hand, the colonial question of the defence of freedom on behalf of the Indian and black people traded from Africa as slave was also in part sustained by the legitimate use of natural law. Namely for a Scottish jurist called John Major, so soon as in 1510 (that is to say, just after the first contacts established between natives of both the continents), the European could rightly assign the concept of natural slavery over those aborigines basing his arguing over Aristotle. All this polemics would culminate in the preaching of the Dominican priest established at the island of Hispaniola, Antonio de Montesinos, and departing from that were published in Spain the Laws of Burgos, dated of 1512...

Much later in Portugal (and by the influence exerted over the king John IV), remained equally known the Ordem Régia or “Royal Decree” of 1652, forbidding largely to get slaves both among the Indians arrested and purchased in the colonial markets, an order clearly based in similar theories developed by Father Manuel da Nóbrega one century earlier also in Brazil. This one was rightly another partisan of the natural law in South-American lands. It was not by chance that Nóbrega wrote complaining the manner by which the Indians corresponded to the missionary tasks developed in the inner jungle, now seeming to understand the Christian message arduous converted by the Jesuit priests in their countless idioms, now resisting and rebelling dangerously against the preachers.

The controversial struggle for the native liberation along this period in the both Iberian metropolis was sustained even by names of officers, humanists and jurists like Álvaro Pais (still a medieval author), Ginés de Sepúlveda, Serafim de Freitas and the soldier and governor of Margarita Island, D. Bernardo de Vargas Machuca. All of them defended the use of force as a legitimate kind of Christian evangelization practice and colonial conquest among the native people (and no less basing their thought on the Aristotelian derived Just War theories, this time through the apologue preached by Cyprian of Carthage, according to what «those who have not the Church as mother can not have God as father»).

In the opposite side, taking the party of the conciliation and the predisposition to goodwill, beyond the bishop of Chiapas in Mexico here just quoted, las Casas, and of course Montesinos,

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1 Act I, 772-774. Translation due to us from [F.] LOPE DE VEGA CARPIO, El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón, éd. critique, commentée et annotée par J. LEMARTINEL et CH. MINGUET, Lille, Presses Universitaires de Lille, s. d., p. 11:

>Van a buscar plata y oro
>Del encubierto tesoro.

2 Cf. e. g. M. DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA, Novela del amante liberal, ed. de F. SEVILLA ARROYO, Alicante, Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2001, fl. 64r; id., Novela del celoso estremeño, fl. 138r.

we can even settle Cristóvão de Lisboa and Duarte Pacheco Pereira in his famous cosmographic manuscript, _Esmeralda de situ orbis._ The activities displayed by Vieira in Brazil would be easily included here one time again, and by the way of the Brazilian reality from the XVIIth century in which he lived widely.

But the more sensitive matter we can here wonder about and cope with on behalf of this, is the slavery and the predisposition intended to serve among the human beings according to the most different opinions and judgements along the centuries. In that point Aristotle served as the main hand of a balance by which all the judgments were measured along the centuries and even more in societies, like the Iberian, from the _Siglo de Oro_, in what was in its major degree discussed such a problem, as remind us the German historian Josef Höflner.

To coming back to Aristotle, there is perhaps the finest piece from Book I of his _Politics_ treatise we can quote about the subject here implied:

> But is there anyone thus intended by nature to be a slave, and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or rather is not all slavery a violation of nature? There is no difficulty in answering this question, on grounds both of reason and of fact. For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out by subjection, others for rule.

To this the philosopher increases that beyond the severe condition to which the slave born so by nature can not apply, he «has no deliberative faculty at all».

This idea can also find its roots in the _Nichomachean Ethics_ by Aristotle himself (a work largely quoted both by Thomas Aquinas in his _reportationes_, and later by the Spanish Second Scholasticism, since the beginning of the XVIth century), when the ancient philosopher argues that there were men intended to serve and others to rule according to the social position granted to each one of themselves.

With several quotations we could underline such a reflection. In some of them the Stagirite points out with all his emphasis the disparities raised by the own human nature, the customs, as well as by the yields took by each one. He don’t hesitate to attribute to these last factors a typology of causes, in his turn, determinative of the way of live undergone by the men in so far as capable of carry her to social statement of servitude. In this way, perhaps too much severe and concise for our days, Aristotle has no doubts on the unavoidability of pointing the scorn that such a condition means to him.

Therefore, according to writings of Francisco Suárez provided to us some 21 centuries later, such as _De legibus_ (On the laws) and in his treatise on the war, he starts to asking us whether is the fighting with the stranger intrinsically bad. The conclusion of this austere man that never left Europe and some of its European centres of wisdom from his time (and according to which the

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6 Cf., _e. g._, respectively, ARIST., _Nic._ VIII 16, 1163a 20-30; _I_ 3, 1095b 20.
Christian Church would maintain a kind of legitimacy to employ strength against the reluctant people to religious message of the Gospel), is able to convince us about the intentions with what he would show the way to overwhelm the pagans from America and the Far East that he never knew.

Basing his thought in the deep heritage that means the Iberian Second Scholasticism from Thomas Aquinas and his system, and through this from the Aristotelian framework partly preserved by the Arabian transmission of wisdom since the Orient, Francisco Suárez argues that the Church can use her secular arm to evangelize and convert the native peoples by the overseas by force. This idea, exposed at his posthumously published treatise from 1621, De Fide, Spe et Charitate (On Faith, Hope and Charity), extends the presupposition of the Just War criteria to this third argument (in fact there are three) in favour of the maintaining devoted to the faith by the people already evangelized, also expressed by Francisco de Vitoria, the founder of the School of Salamanca at the first half of the XVIth century, and borrowed from Saint Thomas in the Relectio de Indis (the Reconsideration on the Indians) by the Basque theologian.

Such a principle knew the severe opposition of other scholars and theologians, one of them taught also in Portugal along those times, in the University of Évora: we refer to Luis de Molina. According to Molina, in his treatise from 1606, De Iustitia et Iure (On Justice and Law), the aborigine peoples from America might legitimately invoke their right to constitute as focus of resistance against their western oppressors.10

At contrary of these last, Father António Vieira stepped a long time on the missionary territories of Brazil. And in spite of not having been in India, China and Japan, he knew them in a specific kind of information shared with the yearly letters sent and exchanged among the Jesuits all over the world of their missionary territories.

Nevertheless his originality consists in the exposing of the belief (namely in the Sermon of the Holy Spirit), that, despite the appearances, the evangelization of East would be deeply easier in comparison with that developed by him and his colleagues in the Amazon’s basin and in the inner Brazil. And the simple reason for this, that he could find, was that of the writing language produced by sophisticated civilizations on the other side. This situation was not sure that he found in the Portuguese colony of America, with its unaccountable amount of languages, unable to catalogue and learning in order to proceed with the mission tasks. Aristotelism reached in any case Vieira mainly through his theoretical predecessors from Spain, such as Francisco de Vitoria, Luis de Molina and the own Suárez, with who he discusses deeply in the Third Book of the Clavis Prophetarum (The Key of Prophets), the limits of freedom in face of the sin intended to recognize by the new colonial power and the Christian Church to the slaves traded from Africa and the Indian savages from the Brazilian Sertão.

In spite of not recognize in this final work wrote in Latin (while entering there in controversy with the own Suárez on this sensitive subject), a true soul autonomy in the aborigine from the inner jungle to know in full the mysteries of God, Vieira shared the presupposition according to which the man in his times was not taken as a creature with full rights at his birth but susceptible to be built, as we can quote Erasmus of Rotterdam about the servants, or Hugh Grotius concerning the child. And as we can hear the own Father Vieira when he relates to the Indian people in his Sermon of Holy Spirit:

He’s a stone, as you tell, that rude Indian? Then work and prosecute with that (because never we accomplish someone without work), employ the chisel day by day, hammer

again and again and then you can see how from that unpolished and unshaped stone you produce not only a man as well as a Christian and perhaps a saint.\textsuperscript{11}

This is in that level of education based on the permanent building that took place a dimension not at all unknown by the own Vieira, as he proves us in his prophetical writing Esperanças de Portugal, Quinto Império do mundo (Hopes for Portugal, Fifth Empire of the World). There he argues the same God that blames and punish one day will be who comes to compensate and save the subjects from those severe law.

When José de Anchieta, the former General of the Jesuits in Brazil one century earlier, reporting apologetically what he intended to be the effective Jesuitical practices in his work dated from 1583, Primeiros aldeamentos na Baía (a title that we can try to translate in English properly by the expression The first mission settlements in Bahia), he was treating to denounce as long ago as in that still early date for the Brazilian evangelization, one of that accusations which would contributed during the Enlightenment era to conform the fame of the Jesuits as diabolic priests filled of secular interests.

Father Vieira made something alike, contesting this external persecution in the Sermon of the Epiphany, one of his most vehement sacred speeches.

If he was successful at least one time in relation with this last attempting (as it remained proofed by the above mentioned King John IV’s laws of 1652, known as Ordem régia), the carrying out of his ideals in the far and poor land of northern Brazil brought troubles against him from both sides of the colonizers and the own Indians, and summoned him to flee to Lisbon in 1654. Actually it was in his Sermon of the First Sunday of the Lent that he struggled against the situation raised by its temptations. We try to translate to English what Father Vieira argued to the colonizers’ allegation:

I see you telling me: «This people, this republic, this state will not be able to sustain himself without Indians. Who would seek for us a pot of water, or a sheaf of firewood? Who would do for us two measures of cassava root? Shall be our wives? Shall be our children?»\textsuperscript{12}

Vieira, by his turn, sudden answers:

When the necessities and the consciousness summon to do that, I say yes and I say yes again, […] because is better to sustain by oneself sweat rather than by the alien blood.\textsuperscript{13}

In the same way we can see, always laying hands on a sublimated procedure of argumentation related to a contemporary matter he obviously condemns, the plans drawn by Vieira to release from his irremovable condition of servitude. The Brazilian Indian while indenting for the punishments and the hard work as simple sin discounts towards a future of bliss in heaven.

At least he seems to proceed so in his Sermon XXVIII of the Rosary in which he argues that the servant was by his nature under the authority of the master in the same way shall be also under the reign of his saviour beyond the grave. Arguing so he intends that the slave was


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
dedicated to contribute for the expiation of the entire world’s evil. We are not surprised for this conception mainly when pointing out such ideas with his distinction between what he calls «licit» and «illicit» slavery; we can find the key to understand enough something alike in a quotation from the same sacred speech, where it resides this time. For him the humankind would be released to freedom and is now captive of Christ, as well as she was formerly captive of the devil… Such a discussion assumes then a more complex tongue with religious shapes and political implications that would run us to overtake the subject here elected as our moot point.

Along the Cartesian century, according to the colonial missionary and politician here subject of our analysis (as the Portuguese Jesuit, Father António Vieira, referring to the American lands, namely Brazil), and in the light of a Flemish jurist (as Hugh Grotius, reporting the law situation in the Eastern Indies), was then pointed out the irreversible lack of freedom among the slaves (a disposition that could again, in her turn, find support in the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle, where the ancient Greek philosopher declares, as we saw, many man to be subject to servitude right at the start of their lives, from birth). This situation would be changeable while discussing and getting better the limits of individual human will, to which obviously might be conceded more liberty.

In fact Vieira only seems to accept definitively the rule of power over the servants as a Christian meaning of salvation in Heaven, legitimating this through the secular methods of punishment among the colonial workers with the presupposition that their souls were not intellectually prepared by themselves to reach the grace and the bliss in the eternal life. We can find his opinions concerning this subject in works such as *Esperanças de Portugal* (a prophetic writing just quoted above) and in several sermons, like the *Sermon XXVII of the Rosary* and the *Sermon of the Epiphany*.

The main conclusion we can find from this last level of discussion is that of the almost equality of the ruler men in the *Ancient Régime*’s society with God.

There are several outstanding spirits, both fully identifiable with the complex and fascinating adventure of discovery of the other (accomplished under their times), but sure all deeply due to themselves’ own ages, according to those they were its produces, each in their manner. In both we are convinced the Aristotelian spirit exerted a modelling influence, of course subjected to the natural changes of the successive times’ behaviour. But resisting even so along the manner by which each epoch and sensibility received to such an extent a sensitive controversy as the raised by the human servitude subjection to a dominant people in terms of politics and religion.

A good-will cause that Father Vieira all along his life fought for while he was able to do so was the promotion of the backing moved by the civil power to the rich and entreprising jewish people, that should convert to christianity under the name of new Christians (the so-called “Cristãos novos” in Portuguese). He entreprised that despite the bruising opposition exerted by the Inquisition, but he knew also how to profit from the temporary weakness experienced by this tribunal during the years of the Portuguese recovery of its independence from Spain as the Holly See not recognised until 1669 the realm’s new situation.

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Once again the idea of personal impoverishment served as pattern of economic reflection on the questions connected with the so-called principle of "proportionality"\(^{17}\) pointed out in the Stagirit’s *Nichomachean Ethics*. According to him the grades of poverty could measure so much the relationships between the individuals so that even beginning to conditionate those private bonds in terms of affections and friendship.\(^{18}\)

From Aristotle could it steer towards for the Thomistic system of thought, mainly those topics comprised in the *Summa Theologica* by the own Thomas Aquinas. Through this last work it reached the Iberian Second Scholasticism at Salamanca, whose school was headed by the just quoted Dominican friar Francisco de Vitoria. Vieira probably knew this wisdom heritage from his literary discussions developed in his written in Latin final work *The Key of Prophets*, with the Grenadine doctor of Coimbra, Francisco Suárez, beyond Luis de Molina, another Spanish-born scholar established in Portugal.

Among the aspects consecrated by that shoot on the subject of economic ethics we can distinguish the illegitimacy of the commercial activities displayed by their agents in order to obtain gains, getting money through the speculative proceedings of loan with lucrativ goals. In fact it arose allways a question of licit or illicit behaviour as the mercantile sector was in a general way for the scholastic doctors identified with the easy and dubious profits. The revenues got by the lender speculation between money and money or goods and money would have in mind only a sense of no public utility instead of being directed to the common good. In this way the use of money with no views beyond the gain would be ethically blamable while its use with useful purposes could be considered as profitable and even desirable. In short it was not a subject of blame in itself, just the usage given to that would be really taken for a sort of a bad temptation capable to put in discussion.

So the profitable revenue with its origins in interests and in any kind of avarice, as the granted through the loans, would be always illegitimate in so far as we can try to sell values without cover, transacting something that simply does not exist. We can now easily evaluate about the justice comprised in such a point of view in our days of post US Subprime crisis of 2007 and the adjustable-rate mortgage practices, built over speculative indices and decided on a periodically adjusted basis... It was the own Aquinas that preached a morality on economics in his *Summa Theologiae*,\(^{19}\) whose theoretical background was closely followed by another Italian master one century later: Dante Alighieri in his treatrise *On the Monarchy*.\(^{20}\)

In spite of being us warned about the recognition by Aquinas of the loan as factor of progress associated to the glory of human work,\(^{21}\) was the reformer Martin Luther who sheltered such an idea enthusiastically: getting money and the personal enrichment would be, according to this last, not only beyond any borns of morality\(^{22}\) but also could be recognised as proof of God’s aid among the people, while for Saint Thomas this kind of irregular activity conducting to that condition was intrinsically identified with the Jews.\(^{23}\)

From that theoretical basis it proceeded for the calvinist mentality and is by this way we can find such ideas and practices largely widespread among the Anglosaxon people and the

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\(^{17}\) Cf. A\-R\-I\-S\-T, ibid.

\(^{18}\) Cf. ibid.

\(^{19}\) Cf. S. T\-O\-M\-Á\-S D\-E A\-Q\-U\-I\-N\-O, *Summa theologicae* II, II, q. 78 a. 1-2 c.


\(^{21}\) Cf. S. T\-O\-M\-Á\-S D\-E A\-Q\-U\-I\-N\-O, *Commentum in IV libri sententiarum* III 37, 1, 6. 4.


countries that choose its cultural patterns at the western legacy, includind through the mercantilist and capitalist conceptions on the subject of economy. At the contrary, even within the western civilizations, we can find such a mythical ideology at the southern european peoples while preachers of the honor in poverty. And probal y if they not proceed to do so is in part because of not following anymore the advices clearly provided by Thomas Aquinas and Vitoria, that preached the obligation to refund all interest got by the avarice means in order to erase any trace of iniquity carried over there.\textsuperscript{24}

Such all an ideological view was carried forward until our times, and we could find it again at the inner XIX\textsuperscript{th} century of the utopic socialism, mainly through the violent pamphlet \textit{Qu'est-ce que la propriété?} (What is Property?, firstly published in 1840), by the french anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. As well as the scholastic doctors sustained many times, Proudhon and the other protocommunists defended ideas such as that the not legitimately taken property would be a theft and that the right holder can not be a worker producing goods in factories of common utility starting from raw materials.\textsuperscript{25}

Today the approach we are able to do seems to be quite different. In fact the reasons to explain the fall of the scholastic tradition concerning economic doctrines are based on theories such as those developed by Gailbraith, according to which the medieval heritated thought was «supersed by the inevitable growth of the emergent capitalist economy».\textsuperscript{26} Its goals were not anymore those sustained since the late Middle Ages as by the Church along centuries, whose purposes had no connection with the social new phenomena of the transition from domestic economic structures to others with national range, putting all its emphasis, according now to Bell, «on he satisfaction of human wants».\textsuperscript{27}

An emerging sense of freedom based on human individuality took progressively the place formerly occupied by the religious ideology zealous of its ethical teachings and its economic powerfull monopoly, at least exerting their influence through the political rule over the emerging nations along the Middle Ages, the heart of Scholastics. The imperfection intrinsically comprised within the same ideal of «correspondence between theological teachings and secular practices» carried, according to Spiegel, the Church to put its emphasis on the maximization of charity whereas rejecting the new kind of seeking for welfare and common good as the personification of the sin that she tried to minimize.

Finally the many roles that the economic teachings transmited by the Iberian Scholasticism carried out were both eradicated as valid social structure and scientific method of analysis by outstanding thinkers from the modern times, such as Pribram and Laudan, owing to the too much identic conceptual framework with the medieval corporative bonds established between the individuals and their jobs. This last organic conception could be intended to be a phenomenon that really started with the reformative laws implemented by the emperor Diocletian during the late Roman Empire for reasons of fiscal control over the population.

In short, nothing in the scholastic theories could assist an emerging, mercantilist and, at least, capitalist economy, since the first would always try to prevent the incertainty involved at the activities based on the factor of risk. The risk, after all, natural of the times in what we live now.

\textsuperscript{24} Cf. S.\textsc{omas de Aquino}, \textit{Summa theologiae} II, II, q. 78 a 3 c.
\textsuperscript{26} S.\textsc{ Drakopoulos-G.\ Gotsis}, "A Meta-theoretical Assessment of the Decline of Scholastic Economics", \textit{Munich Personal RePEc Archive}, no. 12876 (2009), p. 4.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Id., p. 5.
ABBREVIATIONS

ARIST. = ARISTOTELES (ARISTOTLE)

Nic., Ética Nicomachea (Nicomachean Ethics)

Pol., Politica (Politics)

CYPR. = CYPRIAN (ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGUE)

unit. eccl., De unitate ecclesiae (On the Unity of the Church)

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