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Fashion effects: self-limitations of the free will caused by degeneration of the free market

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the existence of free will in the free market. The purpose of this article is to show how the free market restricts free will through the fashion effect and how an illusion of freedom is created. The article puts forward a hypothesis, which says that the market, especially the theoretical concept of the free market, limits free will. However, it gives a sense of freedom, which is a delusion. The authors see and describe an existence of a fashion effect as an example of degeneration of the free market. Fashion effect is one of the free-market processes – it uses the psychological mechanisms of seduction; first to sensual, and then intellectual – i.e., the biblical description of the seduction in Eden. In the degenerating free market, the goods are not required to possess practical aspects; however, they need to provoke internal conflicts.

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Introduction

The concept of free will is one of the most important concepts in European culture, which describes ‘human nature’ (Augustine, 2010). It provides a significant build-up for practices of public life. The main idea of the role of free will in the economy is as old as the discussion on the role of institutions in social life, and almost as old as the clash of two concepts that led to the creation of the free market and centrally planned economy. In the notion of liberalism, free will – understood as the lack of coercion – is treated as the highest value in human life. On the other hand, in reality, the institutional nexus gradually progresses towards concepts served by Plato, More, Campanella, Rousseau and Marx – where the economy is controlled only by a narrow group of individuals. This institutional nexus is built upon the assumption that

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humans are perfect, and thus they live to serve perfect institutions, with religious deliberation. On the contrary, the liberal practical realism, represented by Aristotle, Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, Smith, von Mises and Hayek – assumes that humans are not perfect and thus behave irrationally at times. The institutional nexus created by the second concept initiated waves of industrial revolutions and assisted the Great Enrichment.

At first sight the contention gives the impression of antithetical bipolarity. The subject matter of human nature, economic freedom and free will is, however, much more complex. Many theorists and researchers suggest that there is no free will as a feature of human nature (the key idea of deterministic incompatibilism). They claim that all decisions are affected by deterministic causes at different levels – from the micro level of the neuron system, to the macro level of physical laws and past accidents. Every decision is affected by deterministic non-subjective reasons – i.e., the individual history, education system, cultural inputs, emotions and neuronal system. However, it can be assumed that the hard deterministic approach can be marginalised and that humans share operational free will despite the impact of many factors that should be taken into account in the decision-making processes. Humans usually feel free in decision-making processes. This feeling is crucial, because humans usually do not evaluate their daily decisions in terms of true or false, reliable or unreliable, determined or manipulated.

The concept of free will works at least as some kind of useful reduction. It is necessary for decision-making processes that can be interpreted as a result of the rules of the game developed by the human civilisation (North, 2010). These rules were developed within various systems of belief – for instance, religious, philosophical, ideological or political. Each of them focused on a particular feature, i.e., religion on the transcendence, science on truth, or economy on allocating resources. Perhaps, in this context, it is better to speak of the feeling of having free will than about the concept of free will. Isaiah Berlin (1979) is one of these thinkers who underline the undetermined nature of free will. He points out that this concept, appropriate for the human naïve psychology, is necessary for decision-making processes and for moral responsibility. This topic, widely discussed in philosophy since ancient times and in theology since the Middle Ages, is much underestimated in the context of market institutional configurations and its correlation and impact on free will.

The purpose of the article is to present the way, in which the free market limits free will through a fashion effect. The authors put forward the following tasks:

- Task 1. Presenting the key ideas of the fashion effect.
- Task 2. Describing the potential impact of the fashion effect on the free market.
- Task 3. Showing the consequences of the existence of the fashion effect in the free market and for free will.

In this article, it is hypothesised that the market, especially the theoretical concept of the free market, limits free will. The market systems may cause side effects that could reduce free will. To even higher extend the free will is also reduced by the communist societies and totalitarian states. Collateral effects caused by the market may affect the psyche and stimulate some impulses, shape situations in which human

beings could give up the choice and revert towards autarchy. Paradoxically, the evolution of the market seems to have been inevitable since human groups began to accumulate material resources in the Holocene. From this point of view it can be said that human evolution is directly affected by the rules of accumulation and inheritance of material resources. The fashion effect is a good example of the above-mentioned relations and it works as the result of evolutionary, behavioural and economic patterns.

The article focuses on some particular questions, such as the fashion effect, associated with the possible limitations of free will by the market culture today and, perhaps, the basic evolutionary reasons for human self-limitations. The purpose is to show that the free market culture in its current institutional configurations not only reduces free will (Friedman & Elliot 2008; Mantovani 2015) but also modifies substantially so-called human nature. It does it in the most significant way in human history, much more than other cultural phenomena that have modified human abilities and patterns in the last thousand years. For this reason, it is worth considering the free market culture also from the above-mentioned philosophical perspective of its impact on the nature of human choices.

The impact of the institutional nexus on the imitation

The impact of institutional factors on consumer choices has been studied in various areas. Among the recent analyses that have shown the large impact of institutional factors on demand growth, Dragos et al. (2017) surveyed the market for insurance products, and Doytch and Eren (2012) studied foreign direct investment.

Among many factors that limit free will by the market, the concept of fashion plays an important role. The main power of fashion is imitation that creates positive and negative social effects. Positive effects – demonstration effects – stimulate diffusion of knowledge and technical advancements, create positive *spillover effects* that improve the standard of living. Imitation is the basic mode of social learning among humans and non-human primates as well (Creanza, Kolodny & Feldman 2017). Its genetic innateness makes it error prone. Imitation may often lead to maladaptive behaviours (Bulbulia 2008). The economy benefits from demonstration effects the most if it has inclusive institutional nexus (Acemoglu & Robinson 2012) – with equal distribution of political power and the right setup of property laws. Maintaining the right institutional setting is extremely hard; even those countries that had it in the past are not necessarily bound to still benefit from inclusive growth. It is because structural changes require constant and careful institutional amendments. In reality, most of the Western economies are heading towards great institutional degeneration (Ferguson 2012). Negative imitation effects – *fashion effects* – occur within unstable or extractive (non-inclusive) institutional settings. Because of the degeneration of the institutional nexus, fashion effects seem to be the important social factor – especially nowadays.

Fashion effects take the form of herd behaviour and mindless consumerism. The last is based on the mechanism of mimicry, which seems to be one of the most basic and important processes which are necessary for education and, consequently, for the

survival of children. One can say that the market in the current form feeds on these natural, biological and cognitive mechanisms which can be used in good and bad way. The fashion effects work on the mechanism of imitation that is used for acquisition of new features and behaviours, and for non-reinforced learning process (Heidrich-Meisner et al. 2016).

The mechanism of imitation used by fashion treats humans only within the category of consumers whose main purpose is only to buy goods proposed by the market. However, ubiquitous acts of consumption become the manifestation of freedom and possibility of choice. The problematic question is a risk of shaping needs and purposes by producers.

The concept of fashion relates to the pattern of consumerism, for which psychology is a crucial background. The market mechanisms use psychology to change mentality and to affect choices. Barber (2007) points out that modern consumer behaviours shaped the infantile ethos of an individual. In the past, humans grew up and divested themselves of what was childish. Today, adults develop a number of caprices and habits appropriate for children (desires based on impressions and moods). Adults become frozen in the time (grown-up children) and children transform into 'adult' consumers (Barber 2007).

Psychology shapes supply and demand as well by promotion of fashion trends. Fashions create supply, which constitutes human modes of choice. Consequently, choice is very limited and determined by supply, which is prepared by means of psychological knowledge about the human psyche, especially in relation to the unconscious. This situation can be called *the free will illusion*. Free will works in the framework of an artificial spectrum of choices shaped by the fashion and psychological knowledge, especially knowledge about these lower parts of the human psyche. The market introduces great deterministic power, which affects choices of consumers.

The European civilisation was able to create rules of the game that germinated applied innovations and better the standard of living. Other civilisations, despite many scientific discoveries and great intellectual achievements, did not; all because of the Greek Heritage, and perhaps one lane provided by the main philosophy encouraging to 'give God what is God's and Caesar what is Caesar's'. However, that is only a possible proximate explanation. The ultimate explanation can refer to the important role that could be played by climate or an access to resources. These prior conditions could determine further evolution. Nowadays, however, degeneration of political arrangements is gradually transmitted to economies around the world and as the consequence quasi-Veblen goods (Veblen 1899) – a former symbol of status is no longer luxurious but just fashionable and thus subjected to artificially stimulated life-cycle. In this case, the fashion effect can be connected to the prestige bias – individuals tend to imitate behaviours of the most authoritative individuals in the group. It is possible to find a correlation between the attractiveness of attitudes and the power of conformist bias. But, at the same time, institutional degeneration creates the inflation of authority.

Baudrillard (1998) emphasises that the consumption society teaches us, trains us and introduces consumption. Consumption is a model of communisation. Referring to the works of Galbraith, he states that modern capitalism is no longer

based on the contradiction between profit maximisation and production rationality, but between unlimited production and a need for sale of product. It is not the production that is subject to control, but consumptive demand. In these actions, the power of decision-making is taken away from consumers and passed to producers, who introduce acts of manipulation. It is the manufacturers who according to their needs control market behaviours, shape social attitudes and needs. Producers administer certain means of pressure (advertisement, product placement, marketing), while in contrast, the consumers have limited knowledge even of their own consumer laws – thus, they limit their own sovereignty in the market. Marketing and advertisement superseded former constructive criticism and authority and created an everlasting feeling of dissatisfaction in a consumer, exerting pressure on him. Psychological needs are created that are based on the concept of free choice and the power of decision-making. The main manipulator remains the advertisement that not only plagiarises social objectives, but also imposes its own objectives as social objectives (Baudrillard 1998).

Efficiency of the industry may be regulated by the concepts of progress and of development elaborated by Condorcet (1976) and Turgot (1967). Since the 80s, new tactics have been used, first by Japanese concerns, which have referred to the quality and durability of the products. One of the most important elements which then had to come was the aesthetisation of industrial products.

Research shows, that 53–70% of purchases are made impulsively, as a result of trend, advertisement and wrapping (Szydzińska 2006). In this process, psychology plays an important role because it might make products not just functional – they have to lead to internal conflict between surrender and resistance. Perhaps it is a political and religious dogma that is making the free market prone to doctrines – i.e., devoted consumption – and the fashion effect is just a new stage of degeneration.

The great power of fashion effects is seen in the great impact of trademarks. Initially the concept of trademarks was aimed at protecting producers from unfair competition and fraud¹; along with other institutions it stimulated innovativeness and inclusive growth. However, institutional degeneration deformed its primary purpose and creates negative social effects. The meaning of the product purchased became a secondary element. The market offers items-symbols that are not related to reality. With growing demand one can observe an invasion of trademarks, logos and their cultural codes.

The produced and consumed goods have their purpose in the value system. It is not the consumption of utility value of the goods (material utility) that takes place, but the consumption of the trademarks (the goods-trademarks and their common meaning are produced along with the references for those trademarks) (Featherstone 1991). As a result, a *trademarking culture* is being created that saturates the consumptive society with trademarks and images (Paliaga, Franjić & Strunje 2010).

The importance of products is not a result of their utility, but meanings that are assigned to them. There cannot be a rational selection of products when a choice is not made through the prism of their utilitarian value. The choice is based on the system of meanings assigned to a product, on creation of its image. Items are symbols that determine a consumer (Ritzer 1997). This psychological, social and cultural

phenomenon connects the lower parts of the human psyche, i.e., blind imitation and pride, with an irrational concept of the man who does not make rational decisions and who does not act pragmatically.

In the economics, the behaviour where individuals buy something regardless of their own beliefs just because other individuals are buying is called 'the bandwagon effect'. It was first described by Leibenstein (1950) as:

the extent to which the demand for a commodity is increased due to the fact that others are also consuming the same commodity. It represents the desire of people to purchase a commodity in order to get 'the swim of things'; in order to conform with the people, they wish to be associated with; in order to be fashionable or stylish; or, in order to appear to be 'one of the boys'. (p. 189)

The effect produces a very complex equilibrium of demand and price, with positive feedback sustaining further growth. The positive feedback is described as the process increasing the activity that leads to further increase of that activity via communication between players. With the 'healthy' institutional configuration, the scale of the bandwagon effect is marginal and creates positive economic response. It creates the stimulus to become more productive. In finance, herd behaviours come into sight when an individual decides to act prior to information received from observation of others and against his own judgment (Khan, Hassairi & Viviani 2011). The following sections of this article address the relationship between the concept of the degenerating free market and the human as an individual consumer.

Relation between the concept of the degenerating free market and the human as an individual consumer

In reality, the perfect free market does not exist – it is an unattainable concept – and degeneration of the institutional nexus creates enough capacity for the development of irrational self-limitations of free will – or the fashion effect. The market relates to basic human needs, such as pride. Perhaps, because of pride, humans can resign from making choices. The market mechanisms, which are the base for the contemporary culture, determine the nature of free will. The market in the current state is certainly one of our culture's important elements shaped by the laws of supply and demand – the essence of the free market economy. In the free market, the life-cycle of the product and consumers' decisions are inseparably related to the ongoing international processes. Theoretically, interactions in the market are the result of a supply-and-demand equilibrium, and perfect competition promotes quality over fashion. But an ideal free market does not exist and institutional degeneration created by political or religious dogma shifts the world economy gradually further from it. International institutions provide a limited framework to globalisation processes. The semi-chaotic globalisation transmits degenerative fashion effects to other countries. In the free market, the economics of scale provides access to the similar quality products. In the reality of degenerative institutional nexus, the inflation of authority or aggressive advertisement marginalised regional or new players. For example, in 2015 Google spent U.S.D. 4.62 million on lobbying, preventing the growth of many start-ups in the industry. An individual moving about degenerating market institutions is

therefore not completely free – she cannot choose other than the monopoly. Demonstration effects are slowly marginalised by the fashion effects, because utility is replaced by conformity.

Changes take place in the sphere of demand – they take the form of the unification of needs. People from less-developed countries want to live the same way as the people from developed countries. They learn the lifestyle from advertisements and media infiltrated with ad placement.² Purchasing recognised products provides the feeling of membership of the global social group (Arvidsson 2005). The adapted consumption model is extremely aggressive; it causes changes of values. Individuals' behaviour changes; aspirations and expectations are gradually further from reality and the original snapshots of the foreign culture.

Degenerating institutions shifts economies out of the free market set of institutions; they create reality where development of consumption needs in society transpire through the distorted prism of the need for award. According to Veblen (Dwyer 2009), the objective of the consumption is not solely the practical needs and looking for convenience. In this situation, prestigious prerequisites come into play that subordinate this process. Consumption of better, improved products is an evidence of welfare – it honours a person.

Consumer's choice is based on the willingness to belong to the better group, and this group imposes on him the way of assessing goods and thinking about them. At the same time he does not have the necessary tools to objectively assess whether the image of the culture or lifestyle is in line with reality. Possession of property became, therefore, not only expression of free will, but a remotely controlled must that defines the social status and is the basis for self-respect.

Perhaps because of the growing crisis of authority and degenerating institutions, in modern society not only the possession of property or a need for products' usage matters, but also a continuous desire of buying for the sake of buying. This creates an internal enforcement for purchasing; what then becomes a characteristic addiction that is not only socially accepted but also commonly adapted. Acts of consumption do not have much in common with rational behaviour. They are, rather, considered as a temptation, pressure or repression of acquisition.

Economic determinants (e.g., income level, level of expenditures on consumption) elicit a need for 'managing', building up characteristic strategies. One of them is excessive indebtedness. A level of debt does not always go hand-in-hand with the level of income; often it is a debt beyond measure (Gomez-Salvador, Lojschova & Westermann 2015). The pressure of having some of the goods is so great that consumers choose to run into debt, often more than they can afford, to get some goods or services that they really do not need. Subjecting to fashion results in serious problems in managing the home budget (Gemzik-Salwach 2017).

Consumers think and act only with a short-term perspective; by getting into debt they follow only the willingness of possession, and they do not have plans concerning acquiring funds that will allow future repayment of the debt. In this situation, when banks refuse to grant bank loans, consumers are going to the shadow banking sector, where the money is easily accessible, but surrounded with much higher costs of servicing a debt.

Humans' activities are so strongly aimed at occupying the appropriate image in the society that they stop being rational and become a part of a mechanism aimed at consumerism acceleration. This kind of behaviour in the terms of life history theory is appropriate for fast-life strategies. This strategy involves 'short-term planning, greater risk-taking, focus on immediate gratification for short-term benefits, and more aggression'. In this model, people do not want to live longer in the created environment (Van Lange, Rinderu & Bushman 2016).

Discussion over the engraved choice

The European tradition of philosophical anthropology of Scheler (Harter 2006), Gehlen (1993) or Plessner (1988) has searched for a constitutive attribute of human uniqueness. One of the most appropriate descriptions of human nature is the concept of free will. What happens in the context of the impact of market mechanisms on the human psyche? If these mechanisms are focused on the specific nature of human free choices, is it justified to speak about individual freedom of choice? The collateral effects of the degenerating free market create the culture of consumerism. The concept of various *cultural turns* (Bachmann-Medick 2010) underlines that one of effects of the culture dominated by different *cultural turns* is consumerism's culture.

Baudrillard (1998) shows that making a choice in the market is not accidental, but is subject to civil control, and more precisely it is a reflection of a cultural model of where the choice is made. Consumers' behaviour is a social phenomenon; therefore, making a choice is a sign of conformity, not rationality. The essential choice (self-acting and involuntary) to be made by a unit is to accept a lifestyle – therefore, it is not a choice, there is no consideration of sovereignty, autonomy or free will (Baudrillard 1998). According to Ritzer (1997), the culture is responsible for forming the code (a system of meanings, symbols and values). It is the code that determines the units' needs. It controls the acts of consumption. Freedom based on symbolic meanings of the individual goods and services is illusory (Ritzer 1997).

The consumption culture promises to fulfil human desires. Similar to the longing for the lost 'golden age' or 'the gardens of Eden', this commitment cannot be brought to completion, as satisfaction of one need draws further needs and the necessity for their further realisation (Bauman 2005). The position of permanent demand is being used by the pro-consumer economy that is responsible for the creation of a system of integrated and controlled needs. New consumer goods are becoming an object of desire. Nevertheless, the differentiation of products and their rapid changes lead to an anxiety effect and the failure to satisfy the demand. This inability enhances the dependency on the system of consumer goods. Bauman (1998) points out that being a consumer is directly related to endless mood swings. The excess of offers in the market urges one to make a choice, which in effect induces uncertainty of the right choice, or sometimes to lose oneself in the variety of choices. As a result, the need emerges for a guide for the right choice. Consumption is a game in which the participant is the consumer. It is not the desire of possession and purchase, nor it is the accumulation of goods meant as material or tangible assets; it is the sense of stimulation of new, unknown sensations. Consumers, above all, are collectors of new

sensations; they gather only secondary items as derivatives of sensations (Bauman 1998). Purchasing in accordance with the trends and moods lures the consumers into this loop of restriction of free will and the need to adapt to the lifestyle or walk of life. The choices are made on the basis of picking the items that meet the actual situation or even a certain occasion.

In this context, is the concept of free will only a presupposition or consecutive human attribute? Perhaps it should state that instead of *free will turn*, there is *free will declaim*? Free forces of the degenerating free market configurations provide the pressure to the free will. If free will is rather consecutive than accidental human attribute, a permanent limitation of possibilities of free choice leads to a loss of a constitutive attribute of man. It means that any institutional regime that creates barriers as well as the regime that allows for uncontrolled influence over group of people – manipulation over people – declaims the free will.

Suggestions and self-limitations

In the methodological discourse of economics, there is deep-seated question of the rationality of the choices made by the consumer. Today, the commonly accepted view is that the assumptions of fully rational behaviour and perfectly free market are a purely theoretical model, useful in the conduct of economic analysis, having nothing, however, to do with reality. Still, it does not prevent the use of these principles in a manner useful to science. The choices are characterised by the limited human rationality, because they must take into account the real conditions that in turn limit freedom. However, feelings strongly affect decision-making (Charpentier et al. 2016).

According to Simon (1982), decisions are affected by limitations of an objective and subjective character. The objective limitation is the uncertainty about the impact of actions taken and conditions resulting from a potential choice. The subjective limitation is the insufficient knowledge regarding the state of reality, the poor ability to foresee the consequences of decisions, as well as the decision-maker's unspecific targets (Simon, 1982). Sociology associates the concept of free choice with conformism – the need of identification and adaptation – while the consumer is perceived as the entity with entangled needs' considerations. It points out the contradictions arising from the acts of consumption. One of them is the tension between freedom of individual choice and obedience to a particular group. Freedom of choice is an element of individual expression, non-conformism. The desire to belong to a particular community of consumers of the good forces predetermined acts of consumption (Andersen 1995). Involuntarily consumers are under the influence of someone else's suggestion and, as indicated by Ritzer (1997), within our own groups people are very similar to each other – they consume similar things, which is an element of social integration, a form of symbolic contact with other consumers (Ritzer 1997).

The freedom of choice is treated as an ideology, an imitation of genuine individualism, trivialisation of freedom and its re-education. This ideology masks predictability. The glorified free choice of the consumer is based on market popularity standards and adaptability. It is stressed that consumer behaviour shrouded in a mirage of free will is based on the collective actions and have a 'herd' character.

Economic factors and temples of consumption

The concepts of the free market and free choice have a very long tradition in the history of economics. Smith (1776) writes that economic freedom is an illusion; the proceedings against the laws of the market leads to an economic ruin. Therefore, a man is free, but to a limited extent. The concept of free will has received a new significance in the degenerating free market economy. It seems that just as the deterministic hypothesis influential in biology, psychology and sociology, the same influence of economic factors on free will occurs where the contemporary culture of the economically globalised world plays deterministic role. Free will may be formed by the advertising campaign, which might eventuate in modification of attitudes, choices and tendencies, both of individuals as well as of societies. The concept of the free market is the basic component, which causes development of culture and may form a new model of consumer, of human being, but also of citizen. The concept of the free market is not only a basic type of economic relations but also other forms of human relations. A truly free market, in addition to economic factors, should take into account more elements of cultural, social and even religious character. Therefore, in order to look objectively, from the point of view of the economy, on the free market and free choice, the paradigm of economics with the social component should be expanded, which will allow for better ways to justify decisions.

In today's culture, there is a tendency to promote a model of mass consumerism, which highlights the widening of choice, and with this the weakening of the determinants arising from the relationship between the divisions appropriate for the structure of society and its culture (Bell 1997). This cultural model leads to a potential limiting, or even to a limitation of the individuality. An attribute of the individuality are unrepeatable choices which are a consequence of free will. The culture determined by the free market in some sense does eliminate individuality by foundation models of spending free time, which are addressed to mass customers. The concept of the free market is a new base for determining cultural and human nature. The market culture determines the way of spending free time, which can be treated as an illustration of human nature. Degenerating free market culture based on consumerism and the great power of fashion imposes the way of spending free time and thereby limits the possibility for free expression of our nature.

Contemporary acts of consumption ceased to be purposeful. The ethics of consumption are defined through pleasure, relaxation and fun. Consumption and consuming have become a domain of free time; that is, the one that people spend on recreation, entertainment, self-improvement. It is a time of pleasure, not duty. Leisure ceased to be a time of doing nothing, however, and became another consumer product where you can assert social position. The market appropriates space in every dimension of the off-duty life. The advertising message is based on transmitting power to the consumer, which is based on choice. The choice is not, however, whether people buy a product, but whether they choose lifestyle A or B. At the same time, the range of lifestyles is constantly expanding; it becomes almost limitless. With the wide offer in the market, the question arising is not whether you want to own a product, but rather which one best 'describes' you.

Ritzer (1997) talks about the creation of temples of consumption. Acquisition receives the setting of a performance; it cuts off from everyday life (grey and repeatable) and introduces one into the realm of the sacred. Consumerism is seen as a modern religion, accompanied by symbols (desired by all brands), rituals (sales, Sunday shopping, the 'pilgrimage' to the stores) and feelings (broadcast of identity, solace through successful purchase, fulfilment) (Ritzer 1999). Shopping centres are compared with, on the one hand, directed virtual worlds, harmonically perfect imitations of the real world, (Baudrillard, 1998), on the other, traps. As is vividly depicted by Barber (2007): just like monkeys fall into traps during the hunt, so do consumers fall into the trap of the shopping centres. Monkeys follow the lure, while consumers, the reward of acquisition (Barber 2007). Bauman (1998) aptly summed up the problem, when he wrote:

in any subsequent visits to the shopping mall or the service centre, consumers have every reason to believe that they, perhaps only they govern here. It is them that make judgements, form critique, make a choice. After all, they can opt out of choice every opportunity – and there are infinitely many. With one exception: they cannot give up the choice of the possibility to make the choice itself; this choice does not seem to be a choice.

Degeneration of the free will

The self-limitation of the free will may lead to loss of responsibility, and to the opportunity of deciding autonomously. The free market uses (exceptionally) the knowledge about the awareness and self-awareness, psychoanalysis and the unconscious. The psychological knowledge about the unconscious may reshape the range of individual decisions and may subordinate the individual choices to particular, economical aims. The concept of the free market is not only the contemporary economic and cultural scene but also the instrument which may serve to implement various projects depending on financial aims. The mechanisms of the free market, according to Smith (1776) and of *laissez faire* (Cunningham 1907) should be *free from pressures and interventions of the political authorities*. Smith, followed by all representatives of classical economics, repeated that any, even the smallest intervention, corrupts the free market, disturbs the harmony of its activities and disrupts the self-regulatory functions.

Free forces of free market are not totally free in correlation with political efforts (Roberts 2013). The free market 'invisible hand' may be invisible only for consumers. In the context of hidden, non-self-regulating processes that determine behaviour of the degenerating free market, configurations' various forms of determination may control free will. Popular culture may regulate decisions and choices, which are the base of the concept of free will. But yet, again, the true free market does not exist. Examples of this mode are related to 'discredited and devalued consumer products' (Bauman 2005). Because the objects are subject to the rapid cultural 'wear off', they require additional acts of consumption and choice.

Another aspect highlights the series-approach (assembly manufacture) of the products introduced in the market (product appliances series, clothing lines), which forces

consumers to acquire collections, packages. Relying on the mania of 'rational' completion is both part of the market determinism and an aspect of free will self-restraining by consumers.

There is a great risk of self-limitation of free will. Or, perhaps, a self-limitation forced by institutions and oligopolies. If this concept is one of the most important elements of human nature, it seems possible to modify human nature, determining its free will and perhaps also human perception. This topic is especially decisive for the relation between individual freedom and economical determinants. Sometimes it may be supposed that economy doesn't serve the human being, but rather the human being serves the economy – the same principal was present at the core of collectivism, where all rules of the game were imposed by the elite for the good of all. This is a peril of supremacy of the hidden forces of the free market over individual decisions and choices. Today, contrary to the 17th and 18th centuries, the free market is a basic model of economy, and it has a global character. It is worth discovering all possible, hidden mechanisms and processes which may arrange the nature of today's culture.

Since the experiments of Benjamin Libet in the 80s, the primary research topic in the context of the explanation of the free will is the question of its reality. His experiments seem to suggest that the conscious will occurs not before but after the start of the brain's activity which produces physical actions. The results of these experiments are interpreted as arguments to undermine traditional views of free will and to eliminate its connection with moral responsibility. Thus, theoretical consequences of Libet's experiments may have practical implications for criminal justice (Libet 1985). According to Libet (1985), the brain decides what the human being will do before his awareness of its decisions. In this deterministic paradigm, the intentions and their physical correlates play no role in the process of producing the corresponding actions. The concept of free will is understood only as an illusion. A more challenging question is to explain the correlation between free will and free market in the light of all tools and strategies appropriate for the free market forces and processes. Today, philosophers and scholars do not consider the concept of free will with reference to the mechanisms of the free market and to effects of this economy on the nature of the contemporary culture and, consequently, on the essence and importance of the individual free will. Consumers can only choose between the names of trademarks, but almost always they 'must' buy some particular things. It is impossible to stop acquiring goods. The free market culture is based on this knowledge, and it uses specific human psychological and cognitive mechanisms in advertising campaigns and the fashion effects.

Conclusions

The idea of free choice and the concept of the free market work well in academic textbooks, but in reality their existence is questionable. The same could be said of the concept of free will that is examined today according to the two following schemes: (1) an evaluation of the validity of arguments for and against reality of free will; and (2) a reflection on the nature of free will. These aspects do not consider ethical,

political and economical contexts as mentioned above the mechanisms of the free market and their collateral effects, which affect the nature of free will. This niche in current scientific literature is the main reason for our economic and philosophical analysis of mutual correlation between free will and free market. Commonly people believe that institutions restrict consumer choice. The same choice is limited by the artificial barriers to internalise the knowledge within the global enterprise. These two factors in fact have a negative effect on the global free market, and also the consumer's free will. On the one side, hidden economic and political mechanisms may shape the framework of our free will. There is no doubt that the fashion which uses psychological knowledge has a great impact on everyday choices. On the other side, the Western civilisation propagates sovereign decision-making and freedom. Political and social contexts shape new frames for the question of free will, which also today is not only one of the most essential human attributes, but one of the most important values of humanity.

A unit is free to the extent that the free market is free. The free market processes may form our manner of free will's understanding and decide on the range of our choices. They may shape various modes of human relations by creating new purposes, new spare-time manners or a new model of the popular culture. Actually, predominant ideas may regulate political aims. Such a globally dominant idea is the idea referring to the model of functioning and of promoting free market mechanisms. Understanding individual freedom is the theoretical base for political and economic activity. Maybe cultural policy and plans for education should educate people to make responsible choices on all levels of social life – especially today, when our choices may vary through *the free market turn*.

In present-day culture, the human being is the consumer of market's goods. The consumer is not, however, *homo eligensa* (Siciński 2002) – a man of fully conscious choices, as he selects only those products and services that the market offers. Yet, there is no choice to even consume. Consumerism leaves no choice. Freedom talks about the choice between greater and lesser satisfaction; rationality comes down to a choice between the better or worse. Consumerism is not, however associated with the use of the product; it is based on an imaginary pursuit of pleasure acquisition, on the obligation to freely spend money (Ritzer, 1997). Risk of manipulation, as well as of particular modification of the individual free will, is important from the economic policy's point of view. The free market culture based on the advertising campaign and the fashion effects is the result of the natural tendency to take an advantage over others. However, how can this phenomenon, that limits or even destroys one of the basic and distinctive elements of the human nature, be morally evaluated?

Notes

1. One of the first and, thus, influential modern concepts of Trade Marks was developed in England: A Bill to Amend the Law Relating to the Counterfeiting or Fraudulent Use or Appropriation of Trade Marks, and to Secure to Proprietors of Trade Marks in Certain Cases the Benefit of International Protection (1862) 5 PP (267).
2. Transmitted information might not be adequate to the real values shared by this culture.

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