

# The Philosophy of Industrial Enterprise from a Praxeological and Personalistic Perspective

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In the text entitled *Zur Philosophie der industriellen Unternehmung / Uwagi filozoficzne o przedsiębiorstwie przemysłowym* („Towards the Philosophy of Industrial Enterprise”), Józef I. M. Bocheński OP (†1995) attempts at discovering the function of the entrepreneur as a factor connecting capital and labor. The Dominican philosopher fails to notice, however, that there is no artificial division of consumer goods and capital goods. This is determined by the calculating mind of the acting man, whose point of reference is private property. It is a necessary element of economic calculation, without which there is no economic rationality. In his analysis, Bocheński does not take into account private property, and therefore he does not distinguish between the functions of a manager and an entrepreneur. The Dominican

thinker’s attempt to define philosophically an enterprise is innovative, based on anthropological principles consistent with Christian personalism, but incomplete. Ludwig von Mises and the Austrian School of Economics advocate a subjectivist theory of value that explains the essence of economic exchange based on private property. The author of this article, as a theologian, also reaches for economic personalism and John Paul II who taught that without private property man is not able to understand his dignity fully.

**Key words:** Józef M. Bocheński, Ludwig von Mises, John Paul II, enterprise, entrepreneur, private property, subjective theory of value, free market

Józef M. Bocheński OP (†1995) tackles the concept of the business enterprise as an analytical philosopher. The subject of his analysis is enterprise which he views as an external observer. Bocheński rightly notices that there is no philosophical definition of enterprise and that this reality has so far been insufficiently researched by philoso-

phy. His attempt to define industrial enterprise as a system is original. In the article entitled *Zur Philosophie der industriellen Unternehmung* (*Towards the Philosophy of Industrial Enterprise*) [Bocheński 1987], the Dominican philosopher carries out a static and dynamic analysis of industrial enterprise, coming to discover the function of entrepreneur as the factor connecting the entire system.

His description of industrial enterprise is internally consistent – it is not enough, however, to understand such a complex organism as enterprise, created by acting man. In our analysis, the Bocheński's concept of enterprise will be extended by praxeological perspective<sup>1</sup> – a method of the Austrian school of economics – and by economic personalism, in which we will refer to the social teaching of John Paul II (†2005) [Gniadek 2011; 2019]. The starting point is the analytical model given by Bocheński, which we will supplement by referring to other sciences that enrich our understanding of reality. The aim of this article is to supplement Bocheński's approach, who at the beginning of his essay states that it is only an attempt and a proposal for further research on the philosophy of entrepreneurship.

Bocheński uses logical analysis to formulate the concept of enterprise. He looks at the enterprise as an external observer. Ludwig von Mises (†1973) – the Austrian economist whose treatise on economics *Human Action* we will refer to in this analysis – looks at the enterprise from the point of view of *homo agens*, and uses verbal logic to describe human activity in the economic sphere [von Mises 1998: 4 ff.].

<sup>1</sup> In a context of the Austrian method, this term was first used by Ludwig von Mises. Nonetheless the initiator of praxeology as a concept, both in terms of the name and a separate research discipline, was Alfred Espinas. In 1890 in the article entitled *Les origines de la technologies*, he wrote *inter alia*: “and the word »practice« suggests the term »praxeology« to denote the science of the most general forms and principles of the highest action in the world of living creatures.” Praxeology is a methodology characteristic of the Austrian school of economics. The term was first used by Mises to refer to the Austrian method (in the Polish school initiated by Tadeusz Kotarbiński, in the English terminology, the form “praxiology” is used). I quote from: Kotarbiński 1968: 23.

## The enterprise as a system

Bocheński has a dilemma: which genus does enterprise belong to. The classic approach fails. Enterprise is not a thing or a feature. It includes numerous real relations, but is not only limited to these relations. Consequently, enterprise goes beyond the reality that has so far been described by classical philosophy, and it remains a reality unexplored by philosophers.

What is enterprise? Bocheński answers this question by observing the reality. But observing the economy is not the same as observing other living or inanimate beings. Enterprise is a system created by man in time. The very nature of the system dictates a different way of observation. It is set in specific time realities and the observer does not have a proper perspective. Enterprise may fulfill its function within this timeframe, but in the long run it fails to achieve its intended goals – an outside observer may not see it. This is how the enterprises operated in the former communist bloc countries, but in the end the system collapsed.

Enterprise is not a thing, and it is not an organization either. Bocheński aptly notes that an enterprise can be a one-man business, and that it consists of things and people. What genus does the enterprise belong to? Bocheński proposes to create a new genus, and he calls it „system”. Following Aristotle, Bocheński is cautious and emphasizes that the system, like society, is not just a simple sum of all its elements. The system not only contains real elements, but it itself, as a system, is also real and therefore belongs to a specific genus.

Bocheński devotes the most space to reflection on the division of systems with regard to their behavior. He distinguishes the static and dynamic aspect of the system. He begins his static system analysis with a critical analysis of the definition of industrial enterprise which comes from the English economist David Ricardo (†1832). He aptly notes that the enterprise is not created by the action of a capitalist who has capital and decides to open an enterprise. Such conclusions could be drawn from observations of the

first industrial companies in England. Over time, specialization took place, and at present the intelligent division of labor separates the functions of capitalist and entrepreneur, which are not identical.

The classic definition was popularized by Karl Marx (†1883), who saw in the labor force an essential factor without which the enterprise would not exist. Marx does not see the error in the classical definition of enterprise because of the theory of value: the main part of his economic thought on which his other concepts are based. This theory of value failed to take into account that the price one is willing to pay for a commodity is not determined by its total utility, but by its marginal utility. Marx argued for the labor theory of value, which asserts that the economic value of a given good is tied to the amount of labor required to produce it. Unlike the capitalists, he believed that labor was the driving force behind the enterprise. The classical value theory explained the long-run level towards which prices were tending, but was unable to answer the question of what influences prices overnight. This problem is solved only by the subjectivist approach of the subjective-marginalist theory, initiated by another Austrian, Carl Menger (†1921), who was the founder of the Austrian school of economics [Menger 1994: 145 ff.]. We will return to the subjectivist theory of values at the end of our paper.

### **Bonding element**

Bocheński sees flaws in the classic approach to the industrial enterprise. He notes that capital and the labor force are merely elements that need yet another element, one that holds them together and gives the meaning to their existence. This third element is the entrepreneur.

Bocheński claims that the world is much more complex and there are more than two economic-political systems. The division into two types of enterprises, that is, capitalist enterprises mana-

ged by capitalists and socialist ones managed by employees, is insufficient and no longer relevant today. He lists municipality-run enterprises, widespread cooperatives, enterprises with a mixed board of directors, and finally enterprises run by officials in socialist countries. This leads Bocheński to reject the classical division into two types of intrinsic elements constituting the enterprise. Capital and labor are indispensable elements of the enterprise, but they also need another element that initiates them and connects them into a system. Apart from the capitalist and the worker, there is also a third which is a human being as well – i.e. the entrepreneur who is a unifying factor of the industrial enterprise. Bocheński considers that identifying the capital owner with the entrepreneur is one of the numerous superstitions<sup>2</sup> (this is a contribution to the problem of perception of the world through stereotypes).

The Dominican philosopher correctly enriches the classic definition of enterprise with a new element. A capitalist is one who supplies the market with the means of production, and an entrepreneur is one who unifies various factors that make up the enterprise (capital, labor, invention, recipient, region, state, etc.). Their roles are not the same. This is a significant achievement of Bocheński, but he comes to the valid conclusion following false premises that there are more than two forms of enterprise organization. More precisely, we can talk about the existence of more than two forms in reality, however, we cannot talk about the functioning of an enterprise in a mixed or socialist form, as they are not able to fulfill their immanent functions in such systems. The creation of a mixed economy based on state interventionism – sometimes called the third way – is impossible from the rational and logical point of view. According to Austrian economics, any such action, sooner or later, gradually leads to the state taking over more and more areas of freedom, limiting human entrepreneurship and impoverishing society. Therefore, Bocheński's observations should be developed

<sup>2</sup> Bocheński 1992: 65 (entry: "Kapitalizm").

using the concept of capital, as it is adopted by the Austrian school of economics. The concept of capital cannot be understood when detached from time preference and private property.

Time and private property are two elements that are missing in Bocheński's definition. This does not mean that his definition incorrectly describes reality. It is only incomplete, yet at the same time is open to interdisciplinary complementation from other points of view.

### **Private property**

Bocheński claims that an industrial enterprise is a dynamic system. Its dynamic structure depends on understanding its goals. Since enterprise is created by men, it always has purpose, is future-oriented and exists in time order. The enterprise is also a related place, not an abstract one but a specific one that has an owner.

For Bocheński, the state and the region are extrinsic elements of the industrial enterprise. The Dominican philosopher claims that the state is interested in the industrial enterprise located within its territory. However, he does not take into account the fact that one state is not equal to another. Certain conditions must be met for the enterprise to pursue its immanent and transcendent goals. The fundamental condition is the entrepreneur who is the owner of an industrial plant. This condition is not fulfilled in a socialist system, where the state is the owner of the means of production, and thus excludes the presence of the entrepreneur and the capitalist. In a mixed system, which is either a smaller or a larger form of state interventionism, the state, through fiscal policy, significantly influences the decisions and choices of the entrepreneur which otherwise, in an unrestricted market, might be different.

A hundred years ago, Mises demonstrated that socialism is not only less effective as a system, but it is literally "impossible" [von Mises 1990: 21]. The socialist central planning and the overthrow of private property lead to the elimination of economic calculation,

and this marks the end of all economic rationality. Monetary calculation is an essential compass that enables people to navigate within the social system of the division of labor. Consumers determine the prices of not only consumer goods, but also of all means of production. Thus, depriving a person of the possibility of private ownership is a serious obstacle in making decisions. John Paul II teaches that man deprived of private property and the possibility of earning a living thanks to his own entrepreneurship is unable to understand his own dignity as a person and is unable to create an authentic human community [*Centesimus annus*: 13].

Interventionism, likewise, is not an alternative to the free market, as it disturbs the functioning of the price system and undermines the activity of entrepreneurs, naturally driven by the profit motive to best serve the customers – who, according to Bocheński, constitute the third extrinsic element of enterprise, i.e. recipients. For this reason, it is difficult to agree with Bocheński that there are 64 possible types of enterprises, including state-owned. Private property is a necessary element of economic calculation – since enterprises in the socialist system cannot achieve the intrinsic goals for which they were created, and thus they would not be enterprises.

## **The concept of capital**

The same also holds true for the concepts of capital and capitalist. Mises shows there is no such thing as abstract capital that we are capable of understanding, without private property.

Bocheński distinguishes a capitalist from an entrepreneur who buys or takes on credit the means of production. The Dominican philosopher emphasizes that an industrial enterprise is oriented towards production, which is its main immanent goal. However, it does not happen spontaneously and mechanically. Bocheński does not notice that goods in this world are rare and their allocation requires constant vigilance on the part of the entrepreneur. The entrepreneur is not alone. Other entrepreneurs operate at the same

time, in the same or similar manufacturing industry, and they may be more innovative than him in predicting an unknown future, and hence, it is their actions that will be rewarded by consumers.

In his analysis, Bocheński introduces a distinction between immanent and transcendent goals of an enterprise. Mises does likewise, but he describes it in the language of praxeology and does it from a different perspective. Human action always entails the use of means for some purpose. The means is what serves the purpose to achieve the end. The means do not exist in our world. What exist are things. A thing becomes a means when human reason plans to use it as a tool. Mises assumes that every person has the right to set his own goals, and he places this right beyond the realm of rationality or irrationality. An enterprise's immanent goal may only be a means to achieve another goal superior to it. However, this does not mean that immanent goals can be ignored. It is necessary to distinguish here between the actions of machines and those of humans. Failure to use the machinery in accordance with the operating instructions leads to its damage, or failure to use it to its full production capacity, and thus the intrinsic goals are not achieved. However, this is not how man works. According to Mises, the laws of praxeology are not an autonomous process operating on the basis of the laws of supply and demand. The praxeological laws are based on the fundamental axiom that individual human beings act and engage in conscious actions to achieve their chosen goals. The praxeological laws are universal and can be discovered using deduction.

Now it will be easier to move on to explain the concept of capital. Bocheński only assumes that capital exists, without explaining what are its nature and division. Mises, as an economist, is more specific here and strongly emphasizes that there is no artificial distinction between consumer and capital goods. This division always depends on the situation of the acting man, i.e. the subject who makes choices. The same consumer goods can be capital goods for someone, and vice versa. The concept of capital is therefore a con-



cept of economic calculation and the most important intellectual tool of actions undertaken in a market economy, which does not exist outside the minds of planning people. It is invented by capitalists and entrepreneurs who want to profit and avoid losses. Thus, the calculating mind of an acting man, for whom the reference point is private property, sets boundaries between consumer goods – one allocates to the immediate satisfaction of ones own ongoing needs – and goods of a higher order, which one intends to use in other activities aimed at meeting future needs. The concept of capital in economic systems in which there is neither private ownership of the means of production, nor market and prices for these resources is without practical importance.

An enterprise cannot exist without an entire supply chain which must be based on economic calculation and a price system. The economic calculation is a necessary condition for the existence of an enterprise, and this requires the existence of private property. It is another point that was not taken into consideration by Bocheński. Although the Dominican philosopher writes about the state, his statement that there can be a variety of enterprises, also under socialism or state interventionism, allows us to assume that he does not take into account how vital for entrepreneurship private property is. Bocheński is trying to show that the existence of a mixed system – which would be state interventionism – could be legitimate. Meanwhile – as Mises shows – the inherent goals of the enterprise would not be fulfilled because the entrepreneurial function would be replaced by a manager, who is not the owner. Private property is what assigns human activities to their goals. This was explained by St. Thomas Aquinas, for whom private property was a product of human reason. Aquinas had not yet argued that private property was an element of economic calculation, but he correctly assumed that it was the guarantor of social order and peace.

## **Technological invention**

We agree with Bocheński that inventiveness, next to capital and labor, is the third important intrinsic element in an enterprise. The Dominican philosopher states that without inventiveness there would be no enterprise. He is absolutely right here, but inventiveness requires the right conditions, and these are in the area of economic freedom. The innovativeness grows with increasing economic freedom. Thus, it is difficult to agree with the author that enterprises can also operate profitably in socialist or mixed economies. They may function for a period of time, while the central planner is able to provide the supply chain, but eventually such systems go bankrupt.

So where is the problem? Mises, being the economist, is more precise here, and firmly emphasizes that in the free market economy the tasks of a manager must be distinguished from those of an entrepreneur and a capitalist. Whatever the role of managers may be, the capitalist system is not a system run by managers. It is the owner, and not the manager, who determines the directions of allocating production factors to various production industries. According to Mises, every entrepreneur is a speculator who is rewarded with profit, but only when he better aligns his production with the needs of future market structures. This knowledge cannot be learned because it does not submit to any rules.

For this reason, Bocheński's observation is not correct. The entrepreneur is a unifying element, but only in a capitalist economy. At first glance, a manager in a planned economy may act like an entrepreneur, but not being the owner, one will not be able to decide rationally on the use of production factors. "Rationally" means that one will achieve the goal with the use of available means and make a profit. The result of one's decision may be not only profit, but also loss. The difference between the manager and the entrepreneur who is the owner is that the former is not responsible for losses. Losses only affect the owners whose capital is involved in a given

project, because the manager is merely a hired man for specific tasks assigned by the owner. When an entrepreneur starts a specific project, he risks his property and social standing. Sometimes it is associated with the loss of all his property. The situation is different in a centrally planned economy. A manager entrusted by the central planner with the management of social wealth does not risk his own wealth. His speculation involve risking someone else's money.

According to Bocheński, an entrepreneur is a connecting factor. He is the one looking for capital, finding an inventor and employing workers to implement his project. Entrepreneurial activity should not be confused with technological innovations and improvements, however, it is not clearly emphasized by Bocheński. Mises is more precise here and insists that the entrepreneurs' role is not experimenting with new technologies, but choosing, from a variety of new methods, those that are best fit to supply consumers with the goods for which there is the greatest demand. The entrepreneur's activity mainly consists in making decisions about what means of production should be used to achieve the intended goals of the business. Capital goods are never enough to produce what we want to produce. The entrepreneur must therefore use capital goods in such a way so that the most urgent needs of consumers are satisfied, and he should not waste them on the production of goods that are less needed at a given moment.

Bocheński talks about the role of the entrepreneur, but it is now evident that innovation requires the entrepreneur to take the appropriate risks in the face of an unknown future. The entrepreneur is not only the link between capital and labor, but he is the one who can, better than other people, predict the future needs of consumers, which is related to overcoming the unpredictable future. By purchasing or refraining from purchasing, the consumers shows his immediate preferences and wishes. They ultimately decide whether the enterprise meets the purpose for which it was created. The consumer's preferences can be criticized from a philosophical point of view, but the judgment of values is always a personal and subjective

matter. However, the consumer chooses what serves him best in pursuing his goals. No one is called to determine what can make a person happier or less happy. Consumer expectations may be wise or stupid, moral or immoral, but that in no way changes the servant role of producers.

### **Entrepreneur, capitalist and workers and consumers**

We can see that apart from the capitalist, the worker and the entrepreneur, Bocheński also distinguishes the recipient, who in Mises's *Human Action* is the consumer. Bocheński rightly emphasizes that the goals of all people creating an industrial enterprise can only be accomplished by achieving the goal of the enterprise for which it was established. Cooperation based on the division of work and voluntary exchange brings material benefits to everyone, and it is the foundation of the broadly understood social order.

The Dominican philosopher rightly notes that there are tensions in the enterprise and they are inscribed in its internal structure. They arise from the following features of the free-market economy: every acting man is his own means and an end at the same time; and that he is a means for other people in their attempts to achieve their own ends and benefits. Those tensions do not occur in a socialist system, where the role of the entrepreneur is replaced by the manager and where the uncertain and unknown future is replaced by the central planner's idea. Bocheński does not note that there may be no inventiveness and entrepreneurship in such a system.

Tensions also arise from the fact that the entrepreneur, capitalist, worker and consumer are not the living people we meet in the real world. These are – according to Mises – the terms for ideal types and catalectic categories. Man never belongs to only one social group. Every living and active man combines various functions – he is not only a consumer, but also an entrepreneur, capitalist and worker at the same time. Each of them pursues different goals at the same time.

When Bocheński speaks of the entrepreneur, he means the element that connects capital with labor. When Mises speaks of the entrepreneur, he means the aspect of human action that involves overcoming an unpredictable future. We thus see that entrepreneurship is an attribute of every human action and concerns every human being, because in the face of the unpredictable future, we all have to take risks. The Austrian economist aptly points out that risk and uncertainty give rise to entrepreneurship, and the very uncertainty results from human choices.

Tensions also arise from the fact that the enterprise is embedded in a time frame. Bocheński ignores this dimension. Whereas the Austrian economist points it out, he emphasizes that every human action is rooted in time and is speculative. Thus – according to Mises – everyone, not just the entrepreneur, is a speculator, because every person has to cope with the uncertain future. Inevitably, not only the entrepreneur and capitalist, but also workers and consumers, are speculators. Nobody participating in this exchange wants to lose. Everyone must to achieve their own primary goal, for whom the enterprise's immanent goal becomes only a means.

## **Production and profit**

Bocheński writes that generating profit is the goal of not only capitalists but also entrepreneurs, regardless of the political system. We cannot agree with him, and we have shown earlier. Every human action, as the Austrian economist correctly points out, is set in time and is essentially a speculation. The acting person takes into account current market data, as these conditions are constantly changing, as long the exchange takes place. Once an informed and free decision is made, it does not relate to hypothetical circumstances. The economy is not interested in unmade decisions, but in the actions taken as a result of those decisions – only the factual state of affairs has an impact on the behavior of the market. It is by no means cer-

tain that an enterprise will be profitable. An external observer does not decide about it, even if, in his view, the enterprise is needed.

Bocheński describes the enterprise as a dynamic system. This approach draws attention to how the individual elements of the system work together, but it should be noted that the interests of capitalists, entrepreneurs and workers may conflict with the interests of the consumers. The fact that everyone wants to sell at as high a price as possible and buy at as low a price as possible is one of the internal tensions that are inherent in an industrial enterprise. Assuming that the existence of state-owned enterprises is also possible, Bocheński does not see that the enterprise may bring losses and that its usefulness is not determined by the state, but by the “recipients”. Each consumer, by buying or not buying, shows immediate preferences and wishes, which also have an immediate effect. Not all enterprises bring profit and in a free market economy, those that are not needed from the viewpoint of consumers disappear from the market. Every penny spent by the consumer sets the direction of all production processes and has a significant impact on the organization of all business activities.

In the context of the discussed goals’ analysis, I would stress that the entrepreneur’s profit or loss is dependent first of all upon adapting products to the needs of consumers. The entrepreneur benefits only from being able to predict demand better than other entrepreneurs. If he or she fails to produce the cheapest and at the same time the best goods sought by consumers, he or she incurs losses and loses the position as an entrepreneur. The loss is also incurred by the capitalist who grants a loan.

Using an example of car washing, Bocheński draws attention to two types of goals of business enterprise: immanent and transcendent. He claims that its goals – except from production – are survival, size and profitability. They are immanent goals and subordinate to the transcendent one – yet once again it must be emphasized that the immanent goals will not be fulfilled unless there are external conditions, which include the institution of private property.

An entrepreneur will not appear in a planned economy, as the entrepreneur has non place there. Information on prices of consumer goods and of all factors of production will not be accurate because the tools needed for a proper economic calculation and a real price system will be missing.

### **Subjectivist theory of value**

Bocheński does not note that the starting point must be private property, which is the element of economic calculation and a point of reference for human acts of valuation. Criticizing the classical theory of enterprise, he does not get rid of thinking in terms of the classical theory of value. He does not mention it *expressis verbis*, but accepts the presence of state-owned enterprises. He would not have done so if he had known the subjectivist theory of value, which – according to Mises – is essential to explaining all economic phenomena.

The subjectivist theory of value explains the essence of economic exchange, which is the basic element of human action. According to Mises, exchange is receiving, by both parties, goods that are more valued by them and the disposal of goods that are less valued from their viewpoint at a given point of time. The value of market goods is therefore a relationship that is deeply rooted in personal, subjective acts of valuation and depends on individual judgment and a specific choice. For this reason, the value of capital, as mentioned above, is always judged subjectively from the point of view of the capitalist and the entrepreneur. It is their intuitive feeling of the overall market situation. Only the capitalist and entrepreneur who knows how to use his capital properly from the consumer's point of view is successful.

The Austrian economist showed that value is not contained in things, but it depends on the mutual consent of the buyer and the seller in the free market and is inextricably linked with the current choice. The value of a thing then depends on the goal that a man ascribes to his action and which is only known to him. The fact that

the value of a commodity results from subjective assessments of individual people has already been mentioned by Clement of Alexandria (†215), for whom material goods were morally indifferent and it was only up to the human being to use them well. Later on there was a Franciscan friar Peter of John Olivi (†1298), who emphasized the role of the freedom of parties in trade, but this position was balanced by the notion of „common estimation” (*communis aestimatio*). His concept was developed by St. Bernardine of Siena (†1444), who in one of his sermons solved the so-called water and diamond paradox. Saint Bernardine explained that water is cheap where there is a lot of it, but in the mountains, where there may be very little of it, it will be more valuable than gold because it is more needed for life at this moment. This theory was later followed by the aforementioned Menger without referring to the scholastics mentioned above. His theory contributed to the refutation of the value theory of classical economists who – using some objective measure – tried to base it on the amount of labor required to make a product or on the product’s utility. Marx thought similarly, and believed that labor automatically gives value to a product.

So we see that the value of market goods is a relation that is deeply rooted in personal, subjective acts of valuation and depends on individual judgment and a particular specific choice. The fact that a given enterprise has an important social function is not determined by the state – as Bocheński’s example of the state railway may suggest – but by the autonomous decisions of consumers. It should be emphasized that the praxeology of the Austrian school of economics does not judge human action from the point of view of its correctness, but only explains market behavior on the basis of the choices made. To Mises, value has only a purely formal function, and does not indicate whether an action itself is worthwhile. Economics does not contain any view of preferential ways of operating, assessing costs and benefits. The acting man asks only whether the chosen means serve to achieve his goals and acts according to his own order of values.



## The perfect entrepreneur

According to Mises, a man in action is guided by his own scale of values when making decisions. On the basis of this scale, one first satisfies the need of the highest value. That, however, does not mean that the satisfaction of material needs is most important and entails automatically the satisfaction of everything else, including human happiness. This is what Bocheński accuses capitalism and socialism<sup>3</sup> of. However, profit is not just a purely economic concept. According to Mises, it is a universal category of thought, and its opposite is a loss. The economy based on a subjectivist theory of value does not reduce human action to economicism. *Homo oeconomicus*, who always seeks to maximize profits and acts solely for economic reasons, is according to Mises a fictitious image of a man with no real counterpart.

Bocheński concludes by expressing his wish that society needs an ideal entrepreneur who acts selflessly for the good of his enterprise. Once again, Bocheński does not quite distinguish between the concepts of entrepreneur and manager, using these terms interchangeably. Not diminishing the role of managers, the capitalist system is not a system run by managers, but a system of owners. Guided by own financial benefit each entrepreneur best supervises the implementation of all intangible goals of the enterprise in order to achieve the superior goal. Man cannot act selflessly, because that would mean that the action is without purpose.

Earlier, we said, referring to the social teaching of John Paul II, that without private property a person cannot understand own dignity. Mises's utilitarianism – based on the subjectivist theory of value and within private property – has a personalistic dimension. John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor*, showed that the ethics of personalism based on subjectivity does not weaken human action being in accordance with objective truth. Mises fittingly noted that man in action follows his own scale of values in

<sup>3</sup> Bocheński 1992: 65 (entry: "Kapitalizm").

making decisions. However, this has nothing to do with moral relativism. Bocheński's ideal entrepreneur who is not at the same time the owner of the enterprise, is at best only an ideal manager.

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They look at the enterprise in various ways. Bocheński does it as a philosopher, and Mises as an economist. There is also a theologian point of view, represented by John Paul II. If everyone uses logic and bases on the same anthropological assumptions that man is a rational, free and transcendent being, their different points of view will always complement each other and contribute to the broadening of the concept of the enterprise

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## STRESZCZENIE

**Filozofia przedsiębiorstwa przemysłowego  
z perspektywy prakseologicznej i personalistycznej**

Józef I. M. Bocheński OP (†1995) w tekście pt. *Zur Philosophie der industriellen Unternehmung / Uwagi filozoficzne o przedsiębiorstwie przemysłowym* dochodzi do odkrycia funkcji przedsiębiorcy, jako czynnika łączącego kapitał i siłę roboczą. Dominikański filozof nie zauważa jednak, że nie istnieje sztuczny podział na dobra konsumpcyjne i kapitałowe. O tym decyduje kalkulujący umysł działającego człowieka, którego punktem odniesienia jest własność prywatna. Jest ona koniecznym elementem kalkulacji ekonomicznej, bez której nie istnieje ekonomiczna racjonalność. Bocheński nie uwzględnił w swojej analizie własności prywatnej i dlatego nie odróżnia funkcji menadżera od funkcji przedsiębiorcy. Próba zdefiniowania przez dominikańskiego myśliciela przedsiębiorstwa na gruncie filozofii jest innowacyjna, oparta na antropologicznych zasadach zgodnych z chrześcijańskim personalizmem, ale niepełna. Z pomocą przychodzi tutaj Ludwig von Mises i szkoła austriacka ekonomii z subiektywistyczną teorią wartości, która tłumaczy istotę ekonomicznej wymiany w oparciu o własność prywatną. Autor niniejszego artykułu, jako teolog, sięga także do ekonomicznego personalizmu i Jana Pawła II, który nauczał, że bez własności prywatnej człowiek nie jest w stanie do końca zrozumieć swojej godności.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Józef M. Bocheński, Ludwig von Mises, Jan Paweł II, przedsiębiorstwo, przedsiębiorca, własność prywatna, subiektywistyczna teoria wartości, wolny rynek

