

**ANTI-CONSUMERISM.  
THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PERSPECTIVE**

**Summary**

The studies carried out in this dissertation was aimed at developing a coherent position resulting from the social teaching of the Church in relation to the phenomena of consumerism and anti-consumerism. One of the intentions was also to present the concept of the "culture of temperance" resultant from the social teaching of the Church (analysis of postulates expressed, among others, in social encyclicals *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus*, *Caritas in veritate*, *Laudato si'*, *Fratelli tutti*), in order to finally compare the postulates/lifestyles of "secular" ideologies with the social teaching of the Church. The question to be answered was: Do the postulates of the contestationist (anti-consumerist) movements have the same scope of meaning as the "culture of temperance" postulated by the social teaching of the Church? If these scopes are not the same, then what makes them different? If they do overlap, on what level can and should a dialogue between them take place? Is a universal synthesis of this postulate coming from two different (economic-social and theological-moral) worlds possible? In order to accomplish the main aim of the conducted studies, the layout of the thesis, which has a theoretical character and consists of four chapters, has been framed. The structure of the dissertation is to reflect the causal sequence illustrating how morally neutral consumption became the foundation of morally disordered consumerism - a social, cultural and economic phenomenon in which consumption became the main pursuit and determinant of the meaning of most actions, relations and interactions. This nature of the development of the meaning of consumption then became the object of contestation (anti-consumerism), which, like consumerism itself, can and should be subject to moral valuation.

The first chapter, entitled "To consume in order to live", attempts to define consumption as a process of satisfying human needs. The segments of consumption presented in this chapter are discussed from the perspective of economic and psychological research achievements. The chapter focuses on such problems as the hierarchy of human needs (with particular emphasis on Abraham Maslow's concept), consumer motivation, modification of the objects of consumption (showing the

transformation from the consumption of material goods to the consumption of experiences), and the psychological, social, economic, cultural and ethical consequences of satisfying human needs.

The second chapter, "To live in order to consume", presents how the overestimation of consumption influences the lives of individuals and whole societies. This part of the thesis attempts to define the phenomenon of consumptionism and presents numerous attempts to explain it. The theories described can be treated in the category of ideological solutions. Consumerism has also been analyzed in terms of its economic significance. The second part of the chapter is devoted to presenting specific examples of attempts - often arid - to satisfy needs in the world of consumption.

The third chapter shows the seemingly spontaneous nature of the social response to the existing socio-economic order. The title of the chapter, "Retaliation against the demon of consumption", is supposed to reflect the character of consumption for its adversaries. The putting of excessive consumption in the dock is accompanied by the presentation of a long list of consumption's sins. An attempt has been made to define the phenomenon of anti-consumerism. This part of the dissertation also presents the history of the rise of contestationist moods and the most important alternative proposals. The review of anti-consumerist behaviors is supplemented by their analysis through the prism of positions explaining consumerism. Then the social and economic functions resulting from the current and potential spread of anti-consumerist attitudes were indicated. The chapter concludes with an overview of the process of satisfying needs according to anti-consumerist patterns.

The fourth chapter, "Consumerism and Anti-consumerism in the perspective of the social teaching of the Church," is devoted to the attitude of the Church's social teaching - directly to the phenomenon of consumerism and indirectly to anti-consumerism. Taking into consideration the fact that in the space of Catholic social teaching the phenomena created on the basis of the anti-consumerist ideology are not directly referred to, an evaluation of them was made using fundamental tools helpful in making a diagnosis (according to the method of Catholic social teaching). Thus, after the presentation of the sins of consumerism (presented in the schema of relationality) and an attempt to explain the reasons for the emergence of social contestation, an assessment was made of the phenomenon of anti-consumerism from the perspective of Catholic social teaching principles and values. The chapter concludes with an attempt to present a practical and Catholic response to the phenomenon of consumerism and anti-consumerism. It was indispensable here to refer to the Christian ascetic traditions and to explain how on the grounds of Catholic philosophy and ethics the virtue of temperance is understood. The chapter concludes by delineating criteria that may serve for a proper

discernment of the compatibility of anti-consumerism with the social teaching of the Church and with the preservation of social peace.

The dissertation ends with a summary, in which the final conclusions are presented, confronting them with the theses presented at the beginning: Thesis 1. It is unjustified to reduce consumptionism solely to a reevaluation of material consumption motivated by hedonism; Thesis 2: Giving up on possessions does not in itself perfect human, if it does not contribute to his moral development and enrichment of his "being"; Thesis 3: The postulates of anti-consumerist ideology do not have the same scope of meaning as the "anti-consumerist" postulates flowing from the Catholic social teaching; Thesis 4: No coherent alternative to anti-consumerism has arisen in the space of Catholic social teaching.