

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The main objective of the project is to present critical interpretations of the neoliberal capitalism developed in the contemporary Protestant social teaching, and to assess their impact on the contemporary political and social debate on a global scale, especially in the light of the diagnosis of the profound changes facing the world.

The initial inspiration to undertake the research intended in the project is the growing divergence between the stereotypical belief in the interdependence of the Protestant theological tradition and capitalism, and the sharp criticism of the capitalist order that is increasingly being formulated within various Protestant communities. This discrepancy often leads to overgeneralization and, as a consequence, provides a false or at least incomplete picture of the relationship between the religious, political and social sphere. In addition, the social concepts developed by Protestant theologians frequently display a rather surprising freshness of thought, even if at times they may sound almost revolutionary. They are also a testimony to the reflection carried out in the light of the main principles of the Protestant theology in different parts of the world, and in different cultures, political and economic systems. Consequently, their presentation helps to reveal the experience of other societies, which, however, are described in understandable categories and concepts.

The interpretation of the Protestant criticism of capitalism is intended to create a meta-critical approach consisting of the collection, comparison and evaluation of a number of sources in which a critical stance of Protestant Churches towards the dominant socioeconomic order has been formulated. However, these approaches are not widely known outside selected contexts, so there is a cognitive gap that ignores important voices in the debate on the condition of modernity. Their weak reception is determined not only by certain objective factors, such as the position of Protestantism in a given country or secularization processes that increasingly limit the influence of a theological discourse, but also a methodological factor – the lack of a certain compendium that would facilitate access to the content of numerous Church and religious documents, and theological interpretations

The research covers a wide range of materials which can be categorised into four main areas. The first refers to the history of the Protestant social science, starting with the Reformation, but with particular reference to the criticism of capitalism developed since the end of the 19th century. The second area includes the main contemporary directions of the Protestant concept of society, with an emphasis on all the differences existing between denominations. The third, and the most crucial, dimension of the project concerns the current, often a few years old, documents and interpretations which contain more or less categorical criticism of the capitalist order. The fourth area, which complements the third one, will outline the differences between various theological traditions, especially between those generally understood as historical Churches and Evangelicalism.

The planned research will be first to systematise and interpret the Protestant criticism of capitalism, especially as it will often refer to texts and documents which are still at the stage of reception. In addition, the project fits very broadly into the pursuit of interdisciplinary research, using the methodology and nomenclature of several scientific disciplines, such as theology, sociology, axiology, political science, social policy, economics or history, and has a goal that goes beyond the construction of a theoretical structure, especially considering that it can be used in a pastoral perspective. Summing up, it can be said that the systematics of the Protestant criticism of capitalism would provide a useful tool for theologians and pastoralists, political scientists and politicians, sociologists and people involved in civil society institutions, and also for ecumenists