# Influences of Religion in Fair Transport

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## Abstract

*Fair Transport represent a contemporary social movement whose aim is to highlight the necessity of promoting better conditions of work and employment in transport. Also, a focus is placed on environmental protection and on the quality of transport services. There are currently ongoing campaigns of international federations and associations of workers in transport dealing with such movement but the roots and causes for such movement date back to early times. This paper has the aim to investigate the role of religion in such international social context.*

**Key words:** equitable employment, ethics, European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)
**J.E.L. classification:** N3, N30

## 1. Introduction

Fair Transport represent a complex social movement aiming in attracting attention to several issues of transport, as: equitable employment, decent work conditions, environmental protection and quality services of transport.

The social movement of Fair Transport emerged from a pan-European action designed in 2018 by the European Transport Workers' Federation and is currently reaching an international, global response to the stringent needs of millions of transport workers for better work conditions and fair access to employment in the sector. The movement does not reflect only an acute manifestation of contemporary issues. The causes and the roots for such global movement are identified in a distant temporal context in history.

The aim of this paper is to establish evidence for a historical relation between religious beliefs and the ethical development of the transport sector.

## 2. Literature review on equity and ethics in transport

In this paper we use the term *equity* referring to transport ethics, with the understanding of being fair and impartial. The term *transportation equity* regards justice in urban transportation (Sanchez *et al*, 2017), although the term can be easily expanded to any type pf transport, no matter where is concentrated or when.

Although the definition of transportation equity might be updated in distance and in time, it is considered that an equitable transportation system should imply:
- equal transport opportunities for public
- public accountability
- financial transparency
- high-quality services for all communities
- adequate planning and governance of transport facilities, as "to revitalize poor and minority communities and to expand transportation infrastructure" (Sanchez *et al*, 2017).

The relation between equity and transportation planning was also raised since the passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the subsequent Department of Transportation directives (Golub *et al*, 2014, p. 10).

An analysis on the relation between social equity in urban transportation planning, environment and equity objectives indicate that "there has been significant progress since the early 2000s in acknowledging social equity issues as being important, and articulating social equity in addition to environmental and other goals and objectives" in the case of North-American policies for urban transport (Manaugh *et al*, 2014, pp. 167-176).

K. Martens (2017) has developed a theory of fairness in the domain of transportation and tried to define what is a fair transportation system, from the users' perspective. He analyzed the principles of justice in transport, emphasizing accessibility, starting from the observation that, in the last decades, transportation planning and policy are related to the performance of the transport system rather on the issues of persons using the transport system. Over time, stringent inequities and social disparities emerged. A set of principles of justice are proposed in a new approach for transportation planning (Martens, 2017, pp. 5, 149-180).

In particular, in maritime transport are analyzed four dimensions of fair transport, as questionable quality of service and environmental impact is added to gender bias issue and decent work conditions needed in transport. There is established a correspondence between maritime fair trade and maritime fair transport and are disseminated the results of a pilot study on the perception of consumers in boycotting products that are not transported by fair transport companies. (Dragomir *et al*, 2019, 272-277).

## 3. Research methodology

The research methodology of the paper consists in identifying evidence and premises for the ethical role of religious percepts to fair transport. For this desiderate, we have considered an historic approach of the ethical background generating contemporary fair transport movement: the ideology and ethical theories used as backbone for understanding justice and equity in transport.

We have made a religious and socio-economic approach on the ethical theories enlisted in a study by Pereira *et al* (2016) on justice and equity in transport. We have established a connection between the 5 theories of justice and equity in transportation: utilitarianism, libertarianism, intuitionism, Rawls' egalitarianism and capability approaches, their impact and implication in the development of society and further, we have identified similarities or common points between the analyzed ethical theories of justice and main aspects of Christian religious percepts. Results are synthetized in Table 1. In the last part of the study we concluded observations between similarities and particular aspects of theories of justice, religion and their implication connected to transport evolution and fair transport.

In Table 1 below we have described the main particularities for the key theories of justice, as approached by Pereira *et al* (2016, pp. 1-22).

*Table 1. Relation between ethical theories of justice and religion*

| Nr. crt. | Theory of justice | Ethical theory description | Implication in societal development | Relation between the theory of justice and religion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Utilitarianism | -„System of morality concerned with what is the most useful thing to do" (Riley, 2015) <br> - „an action is right if it tends to promote happiness and wrong if it tends to produce the reverse of happiness" (Duignan *et al*, 2019) | -Democratic systems of government are more likely to produce a greater amount of well-being for a greater number of people (Objection: occurrence of government forms where well-being of the majority is achieved by unfairly neglecting the rights and | -Religious doctrine (Holley, 1993, pp.27-45) <br> -Morality is dependent on outcomes <br> -Limitation due to lack of knowing consequences |

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| 4 | | - "the most ethical choice is the one that produce the greatest good for the greatest number" of people (Texas McCombs)<br>- The role of punishment is to prevent further crimes (by reforming the criminal or by protecting society from him) and to discourage other crimes through the fear of punishment. | interests of minorities)<br>-Justifies war<br>-Moral reasoning in business | |
| 2 | Liberta rianis m | -political doctrine that upholds the rights of individuals to acquire, retain and exchange their own property<br><br>- "self-help, mutual aid, charity, and economic growth do more to alleviate poverty than government social-welfare programs" (Boaz, 2004) | -everyone's property rights must be systematically respected.<br><br>-justify the legitimate power of government in terms of natural or God-given individual rights (life, liberty, private property, freedom of speech and association, freedom of worship, government by consent, equality under the law, and moral autonomy)" (Boaz, 2004) | - humans possess free will<br>- The doctrine is simillar to Christian beliefs of free will, human nature, and God-given inalienable rights |
| 3 | Intuitio nism | -Philosophical theory that opposes intuition to reason, conceived as a faculty analogous to instinct, artistic sense or divine revelation, considering that intuition penetrates directly into the essence of objects.<br>-Subjective idealistic view that argues that moral notions can only be grounded intuitively.<br>- "There are real objective moral truths that are independent of human beings. Humans can discover these truths by using their minds in a particular, intuitive way." (BBC)<br>-Has some similarities to utilitarianism | -used in normative ethics | According to intuitionism: "humans can find moral truths for themselves" in an intuitive way (BBC)<br>-„Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings" (BBC) |
| 4 | Rawls' | - Philosopher John Rawls, | "A just society, according to | There are |

| | egalita rianis m | "the most important political philosopher of the 20th century" (Duignan, 2005) approached a nonutilitarian justification of democratic political order, characterized by fairness, equality, and individual rights (Dahl, 1998). <br> - differences between utilitarian and intuitionist conceptions and justice as fairness (Rawls, 1971, p.3) | Rawls, would be a "property-owning democracy" in which ownership of the means of production is widely distributed and those who are worst off are prosperous enough to be economically independent" (Duignan, 2005.) | contemporary debates over inclusion or exclusion of religion in politics – Debates on "proliferation of religions in political life" and liberalism (Bailey *et al*, 2015) |
| 5 | Capabi lity Appro aches | - new theoretical framework about well-being, development and justice. <br> - freedom to achieve well-being is a matter of what people are able to do and to be, and thus the kind of life they are effectively able to lead. | | |

*Source:* Authors' contribution

Based on the reviewed literature on the five theories of justice, as synthetized in the table above, we have delivered a critical evaluation of the concepts analyzed and we have concluded the following findings related to common ground of justice theories and their relation to religion.

1. All the analyzed ethical theories have long historical origins. However, their expression is manifested more accurate and epistemologically in society around the 18th-19th centuries.
2. There are several schools of thought with a diverse approach of the basic theory. Such schools have re-interpreted the primary theory, leading to further evolution in the thinking and understanding.
3. Contemporary perception of the analyzed theories is influenced by the societal, political, technological and economic context.
4. All the theories of justice face criticism. For example, in the case of utilitarianism, criticism underlines the possibility to disadvantage individual rights of a minority, if such decision brings more benefit for the majority. Applied to transportation, we can consider the case of allocation of urban transport routes in the city centers while neglecting suburbs routes; higher fees for transport affecting the unemployed or the low-incomed beneficiaries of transport.
5. A criticism to intuitionism is made around the existence of objective moral truths exist, as well as the process of moral intuition. If all humans would prove intuitionism, then everyone would reach the same moral actions and results of thinking.

## 4. Findings

Analyzing the five justice theories in relation to fair transport we have observed evidence in supporting the assumptions that fair transport has historical background in ethical theories of justice and such theories are related to the religious percepts of free will, human rights or moral truth.

Applied to fair transport, utilitarianism, on one hand, will justify human need for equitable employment and decent work conditions as *right actions* having as consequence achieving happiness. However, in relation to fair transport, the discontent that led to contemporary fair transport campaigns might have evolved from the focus of the head or administration of the transport companies placed on the utility of the transport (moving cargo or passenger for a place to

another) and on the utility of the business output (obtaining profit) instead on the utility and satisfaction that a transport worker would benefit as being employed in the transport company.

In libertarianism is approached the idea of mutual aid and charity to alleviate poverty, hence the contemporary association in unions, non-governmental organizations and federations of transport workers for mutual aid and strength in solving affecting problems, e.g.: European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) which have generated fair transport campaigns.

## 5. Conclusions

Fair Transport represent a contemporary social movement whose aim is to highlight the necessity of promoting transport justice, equity and fairness (Dragomir *et al*, 2019, 273). Our study indicate that such new paradigm met in transport is based on principles of justice, inexhaustive discussed in this paper, and also is influenced by some religious interferences.

Based on the reviewed literature on five of the theories of justice, we have established a common time period when the analyzed ethical theories started to manifest an impact in the society (around the $18^{th}$-$19^{th}$ centuries. The basic theories are re-interpreted in time and their public perception is influenced by the societal, political, technological and economic context. Utilitarianism thinking stands for the justification of equitable employment and decent work conditions as right actions having as consequence achieving happiness. The ideas of mutual aid and charity met in libertarianism stand for the contemporary action of federations of unions tackling work problems of transport employees.

Further research can expand the analysis by approaching ethics in the relation between equity in transport and certain types of religion, beside Christianity.

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