

New york mta



Traditional market structure suggests that all market decisions should be based on utilitarian theory. We often witness market decisions which neglect other important aspects of the market activity. As a result, we appear under the impact of one-side unbalanced decisions which ultimately neglect the principles of morality and moral theology of the marketplace.

Rising fares and tolls by MTA “ After an unusually vigorous and spirited debate, the board of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority voted to raise fares on subways, buses and commuter railroads and tolls on bridges and tunnels” (Chan, 2007a). Why is it so surprising that not all members of the MTA board wanted to turn into the proponents of fares and tolls’ increase? Does this mean that more and more political and business players realize the importance of morality in taking market decisions?

Evidently, the situation is much worse than one may imagine. One may initially think that increasing the fares will lead to less traffic congestion, and will urge more people to use public transport; yet, the public transport fares are being raised, too. From the viewpoint of those who vote for raising fares and tolls in New York, this decision is the first step towards “ fiscalresponsibility. The authority had for long applied windfalls and real estate taxes hoping that someone would bail us out and turning a blind eye to our responsibility to put this MTA on a firm future monetary structure” (Chan, 2007a).

Simultaneously, from the viewpoint of morality and theology of the marketplace, commercial activity is not limited by rational market decisions, but also “ confronts us with the moral predicaments” (Gregg, 2004). The major concern within this situation is that the decision to raise fares has

completely neglected the position of those whom we traditionally consider to be vulnerable populations. The representative of Working Families Party is confident that raising fares will seriously hit working people (Benjamin, 2007). " Today, once again middle class New Yorkers and those struggling to make it, are bearing the cost", Rep. Anthony Weiner said (Benjamin, 2007).

" A fare hike now is the wrong choice for New York. It would hit many people who are struggling hard to make ends meet and hurt the region's economy. [...] This fare hike will hit 86 percent of the riding public who use fare discounts. These include pay-per-ride bonus MetroCards and 7- and 30-day unlimited-ride passes. It's also a double whammy for most L. I. R. R. and Metro-North commuters whose railroad fares would go up!" (Chan, 2007b)

The discussed fare hike will also cause the bonuses' decrease for riders (from 20 to 15 percent), and the discounted fare will cost \$1. 74 instead of \$1. 67 (Chan, 2007b). The problem is that New Yorkers pay more than they have to for the transport they use. " In 2005, riders paid 55 percent of the costs of running the subways and buses" (Chan, 2007b). Objectively, this is much higher than the riders in other cities pay: those in Boston do not compensate more than 29 percent of the discussed costs, and those in Philadelphia pay no more than 37 percent (Chan, 2007b).

As the M. T. A reports \$140 million reductions, does this mean that they will make the riders pay this amount through higher fares and tolls? Doubtlessly, the suggested fares and tolls increase will help compensate the under-financing of the MTA by the state Government, but if the decision framework remains unchanged, this compensation will actually take place for the account of the already mentioned vulnerable populations. " To rely upon

utilitarianism as the moral - philosophical foundation of the case for the market creates tremendous difficulties for Catholics" (Gregg, 2004).

The utilitarian desire to find the greatest good and to satisfy the masses does not meet the ethical and moral criteria of religion. Those who were taking the decision to raise the fares and tolls in New York have neglected one essential aspect in their decision making: when one looks for the means to produce the greatest pleasure for the greatest number of people, one has to perform numerous calculations and to produce the decision which satisfies everyone. From the viewpoint of moral theology, such calculations in market decision-making are simply impossible. " No person can make such an assessment without admitting a tremendous degree of ignorance about all the possible effects that might proceed from a freely chosen act" (Gregg, 2004).

The MTA governors have evidently gone beyond their reasonable abilities, trying to persuade us that that the future with raised fares and tolls for everyone was better than other possible alternatives. The MTA board members view the increased tolls and fares as the means to close the gaps in MTA's budget and to provide safe and reliable system of transportation for the New York's citizens. However, it is not the ultimate goal for those who use public transport and belong to vulnerable layers of the city population.

Conclusion

The moral theology of marketplace rejects any uniform measures in defining the goals of decision making. This is why the governors should have considered the financial opportunities of those who cannot afford paying more for using public transport. The diversified structure of prices would

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resolve all moral and ethical issues, and would not create serious obstacles on the way towards better functioning of the city's transportation systems.

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