

## **“SI VIS PACEM, PARA CIVITATEM”: THE ROLE OF GIFT AS GRATUITOUSNESS**

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1. For some decades now, society has been undergoing continuous change at an increasing pace, both in developed and in emerging and developing countries. We have seen interrelations among people and nations multiply at a growing rate, changes in power balances between countries and blocs, new armed conflicts and terrorist threats, the intensification of migrations, a deep financial and economic recession, proposals to reappraise the State's role and suggestions for a new range of corporate social responsibilities, demands for new human rights, a growing awareness of the effects of poverty and economic inequality, new ways of conceiving leadership in our world.

All of this is changing our view of the sciences that we usually describe as social or human: economics, sociology, social psychology, history, law, political science, human geography, demography, philosophy... And this change is taking place at growing speed, due to the multiplication of events which overlap and interfere with each other, demanding rapid response by experts, politicians and social leaders. It is also a slow change, because social scientists continue to be influenced by the great ideas developed in the past, which in turn give strength to our respective disciplines' principles and methods. However, it also creates uncertainty and uneasiness, perhaps because those same principles and methods are not always able to adequately address the new challenges.

It is possible to view all this as justification for confrontation and disunion. However, it can also be seen as a challenge to take the best offered by the history of ideas, on the one hand, and to offer answers, perhaps tentative but well founded nevertheless, to the new problems, on the other. It is a work that must be done in a spirit of humility – there are no final answers in social science – but at the same time with ambition, open to all ideas and suggestions, without any arbitrary exclusions for ideological reasons of political correctness; interdisciplinary and intercultural; imaginative, creative, generous and without seeking any personal gain.

The emergence of a global economic order has come to represent the most characteristic feature of our age. Globalization entails many dimensions, but it is a fact that the creation of a global financial market constitutes the most relevant one. The increasing importance of the financial structure

with respect to the real side of the economy is posing a novel paradox. At a time when we would need more regulation, just because financial markets are intrinsically unstable, we have less, since international financial institutions are weaker, in relative terms, than domestic ones, or even non-existent. As we are reminded by Charles Kindleberger: "...If there is no authority to halt the disintermediation that comes with panics, with forced sales of commodities, securities, and other assets ... the fallacy of composition takes command. Each participant in the market, in trying to save himself, helps ruin all" (1996:146).

An important implication of the paradox noted above is revealed by the recent financial crisis which has shown a peculiar nature, reflecting one novel feature of international capital transactions. Although capital and goods markets are increasingly integrated, policymaking has largely remained a national matter. Most authors claim the relevance of institutions in the new global financial environment. The necessity to introduce a new global financial architecture can be seen as a first step in the direction of re-regulating the international monetary system.

Indeed, the conditions under which institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF were founded are no longer with us. There are structural flaws in the present-day system, which was conceived for the western world (and not for developing countries) to assist in adjustment of current account imbalances. Yet, there are too many different ideas on what institutions should be in place, what they should do and how. The frequency and magnitude of major disturbances such as international financial crises reflect the tremendous asymmetry existing between an increasingly sophisticated, yet unstable, international financial system, and the institutions that regulate it. The world lacks the types of institutions that financial globalization requires. The case for the provision of emergency lending by the international financial community, possibly by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), can be strongly made on theoretical grounds. More generally, a world in which large nations gear their macroeconomic policies to internal goals (and can afford to do so) and markets are integrated generates *externalities* for third countries, especially smaller developing economies. It is crucial that international economic organizations, international financial institutions in particular, play a leading role in internalizing the positive externalities and in mitigating the negative ones.

2. A pragmatic contradiction should be noted already at this stage. The proposals so far put forward for a new international financial architecture, while assigning to the G-8 a major role in the steering of the monetary sys-

tem, do not contemplate any form of policy coordination – not to mention cooperative behaviour – among the G-8 themselves. Yet, it cannot be denied that the international repercussions of the domestic policies of the eight largest countries are a major determinant of financial stability (Zamagni, 2011).

The increase in economic interdependence, associated with globalization, means that even large sections of a population can be negatively influenced by events that take place even in “distant” places. For example, side by side with the well-known “depression famines”, contemporary reality has also experienced “boom famines”. The expansion of the scope of the market – in itself a positive phenomenon – means that the capacity of a social group to gain access to food depends, often in an essential way, on what other social groups do. For example, the price of a primary commodity can also depend on what happens to the price of other products. The nation state, by adopting wrong economic policies, can undermine the capacity of certain sections of the population to gain access to food (the Soviet famine of the 1930s and that of Cambodia at the end of the 1970s are clear examples of this).

In essential terms, it should be recognized that today’s major social and economic problems are more a question connected to *institutional structures* than to resources and know-how. The institutions that are involved are not only economic institutions but also political and juridical institutions. To recognise this means to increase our responsibilities, since institutions are man-made.

History has shown that a new international order has always become established at the end of a war of hegemony. We can see the example of the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars, the Second World War. All these are events which, after destroying the old order, left behind *tabulae rasae*, on which the victorious powers were able to inscribe the rules of the new order. No such situation exists today. Firstly, there is no agreement on who actually won the Cold War (assuming that there was a winner). Secondly, there is no agreement on whether we are living in a unipolar or multipolar world, or on which countries should be counted among the great powers today. (Should military force or economic muscle be used as the yardstick for qualifying as a great power?).

Another major feature of this age is the number of *agents* that are seeking to play a major part in the process of building the foundations of a new international order. One might say that international affairs have become a “participatory democracy” issue, which helps to explain why it is becoming increasingly difficult to rapidly reach agreement. Bretton Woods and the Uruguay Round are a case in point. Bretton Woods was completed in a

few months by only two men (J.M. Keynes and H.D. White), while the Uruguay Round took ten years of bitter negotiations between a dozen major parties plus about 100 international governments in the background.

A third feature that is unambiguously typical of the present phase in our history is the radical change that has occurred in the international distribution of economic and military power. For over three centuries the international system had been dominated by the Western powers, with the centre of gravity in the North Atlantic. Even the Cold War was a struggle between two “visions” belonging to the same European civilization. Today, economic power has shifted towards the Pacific and East Asia areas that are now becoming the centre of gravity of world history, for better or for worse. This means that the emerging Asian powers will increasingly demand a part in designing the international institutions. But these (take the United Nations Security Council, the World Bank, the IMF etc.) are dominated by the ideas and the interests of the Western powers who are doing nothing to redress a situation that has now become untenable. As always occurs in international relations, where power and authority coincide, the emerging powers, dissatisfied with the status quo, are doing everything they can to change the situation (Zamagni, 2010 and 2011).

These considerations lead us to the vast issue of cultural relations in the global village. How are we to distinguish between cultural interaction and cultural imperialism? How can we organize cultural diversity to prevent a breakdown in communications and the development of potentially closed communities? The mismatch between centripetal globalization processes and centrifugal isolation processes, or between interaction and fragmentation, is certainly a danger and threatens to undermine the common destinies of the whole of humanity. It is not enough merely to condemn different forms of “fundamentalism” without asking how these have come about and without seeking to look at the dark side of our Western universalism.

3. So what is to be done? There are a variety of different ways of reacting to the challenges thrown down by globalization. There is the way that we might call “laissez-faire fundamentalism” that advocates a plan for technological transformation driven by self-regulated systems, with the abdication of politics and above all with the loss of scope for collective action. It is not difficult to see the risks of authoritarianism, resulting from the democratic deficit, that are inherent in such an approach.

A second way is the neo-statist approach, which postulates a strong demand for regulation at the level of national government. The idea here is to revive, albeit partially renewed and rationalized, the areas of public in-

tervention in the economy and in social spheres. But it is clear that this would not only produce undesirable effects but could even lead to disastrous consequences in the case of transition countries. For the implementation of new free-market policies would, under current conditions, damage the already low levels of prosperity in developing countries.

Lastly, there is the transnational civil society strategy, whose basic idea is to tackle globalization seriously both at the intellectual level and at the level of social action, entrusting its design to the "intermediate bodies" of civil society and relying on social consensus rather than automatic market and bureaucratic mechanisms. What are the distinctive features of this approach? I would identify five of them.

a) The economic calculus is compatible with the diversity of behavioural and institutional arrangements. It is therefore necessary to defend the less powerful varieties, to be set-aside for the purposes of learning, to be used in future. This means that the selection filter must certainly be present, but it should not be too subtle, precisely in order to make it possible for any solution that exceeds a certain efficiency threshold to survive. The global market must therefore become a place in which local varieties can be cross-fertilized, which means having to reject the determinist view, according to which there is only one way of operating on the global market.

It should not be forgotten that globalization inevitably levels down all the institutional varieties that exist in every country. There is nothing surprising about this, because the rules of free trade are unhappy with cultural variety and view institutional differences (for example: different welfare models, education systems, views of the family, the importance to be given to distributive justice, and so on) as a serious obstacle to their propagation. This is why it is essential to remain vigilant in order to ensure that the global market does not eventually constitute a serious threat to economic democracy.

b) The application of the principle of subsidiarity at the transnational level. This requires the organizations of civil society to be *recognized* and not *merely authorized* by the states. These organizations should perform more than a mere advocacy and denunciation function; they should play a fully-fledged role in monitoring the activities of the transnational corporations and the international institutions. What does this mean in practice? The organizations of civil society ought to play public roles and perform public functions. In particular, these organizations should bring pressure on the governments of the major countries to get them to subscribe an agreement which is capable of drastically curbing the benefits accruing to the sudden withdrawal of capital from the developing countries.

c) The nation states, particularly those belonging to the G8, must reach an agreement to modify the Constitutions and statutes of the international financial organizations, superseding the *Washington consensus*, which was created during the Eighties following the Latin American experience. What this basically entails is writing rules that translate the idea that efficiency is not only created by private ownership and free trade, but also by such policies as competition, transparency, technology transfer facility policies, and so on. Over-borrowing and domestic financial repression are the unfortunate consequences of the application by the IMF and the World Bank of this partial, distorted and one-sided view of things. It should be recalled that in a financially repressed economy inflationary pressure drives a wedge between domestic deposits and loan interest rates, with the result that national corporations are artificially induced to borrow abroad, while domestic savers are encouraged to deposit their funds abroad.

d) The Bretton Woods institutions, the UNDP and the other international agencies should be encouraged by the organizations of civil society to include among their human development parameters wealth distribution indicators as well as indicators that quantify compliance with local specificities. These indicators must be taken into consideration, and given adequate weight, both when drawing up international league tables and when drafting intervention and assistance plans. Pressure should be brought to bear in order to gain acceptance for the idea that development must be *equitable, democratic and sustainable* (Dasgupta *et al.*, 2012).

e) Finally, a rich fabric of non-utilitarian experiences should be created on which to base consumption models and, in more general terms, lifestyles that are capable of enabling a *culture of reciprocity* to take root. In order to be believed, values have to be practised and not only voiced. This makes it fundamentally important that those who agree to take the path towards a transnational civil society must undertake to create organizations whose *modus operandi* hinges around the principle of reciprocity.

It is a fact that reducing human experience to the “accounting” dimension of economic rationality is not only an act of intellectual arrogance, but first and foremost it is a mark of crass methodological naivety. The real issue is to broaden a sustainable definition of rationality to include knowledge of the social sense of behaviour, which cannot ignore its own specific spatial, temporal and cultural context. The underlying reason for this unsatisfactory state of affairs, in my view, is that economic theories have focused on a description of human behaviour centred almost entirely around acquisition-related ends. From an economic point of view, human behaviour is important to the extent that it enables individuals to obtain “things” (goods

or services) which they do not yet have, and which can substantially increase their prosperity. The rational man is therefore the man who knows how to "procure what he needs". Whether or not the notion of rationality can also include an *existential* significance, and whether this can enter into a more or less radical conflict (or even merely interact to a significant degree) with the acquisition-related dimension of behaviour seems therefore to be a difficult question that must be sensibly translated into economic terms, or even merely into appropriate economic terminology (Dasgupta, 2012).

4. The main message I want to convey is the following. It is by now a well recognized fact that market systems are consistent with many cultures, conceived as tractable patterns of behaviour or, more generally, as organized systems of values. In turn, the type and degree of congruence of market systems with cultures is not without effects on the overall efficiency of the systems themselves: in general, the final outcome of market-coordination will vary from culture to culture. Thus one should expect that a culture of extreme individualism will produce different results from a culture of reciprocity where individuals, although motivated also by self-interest, entertain a sense of solidarity. In the same way, a culture of peace and harmony will certainly produce different results, on the economic front, from a culture of positional competition (Bruni and Zamagni, 2007).

But cultures are not to be taken for granted. Cultures respond to the investment of resources in cultural patterns, and in many circumstances it may be socially beneficial to engage in cultural engineering. Indeed, how good the performance of an economic system is depends also on whether certain conceptions and ways of life have achieved dominance. Contrary to what many economists continue to believe, economic phenomena have a primary interpersonal dimension. Individual behaviours are embedded in a pre-existing network of social relations which cannot be thought as a mere constraint; rather, they are one of the driving factors that prompt individual goals and motivations. People's aspirations are deeply conditioned by the conventional wisdom about what makes life worth living.

What we need is a new anthropological orientation within economics, capable of enlarging the scope of economic research in order to make it more relevant for the analysis both of policy means and of policy ends. In fact, what is called for today is a theoretical set-up by means of which one can explain how cultural factors and economic choices interact and how this interaction feeds back on the ongoing social relations. The key notion in this respect is that of co-evolutionary dynamics: individual behaviours and social norms evolve jointly as micro and macro changes in the latter

prompt adjustments in the former and vice versa. This is clearly a very complex and far-reaching scientific endeavour, which the most recent economic literature has just begun to explore. The various attempts to demonstrate the self-sufficiency of the categories of economic discourse do not help to expand its grip on reality. As is well known, during the last century, mainstream economic theory argued for the divorce of economic judgement from moral and political philosophy. This divorce was supported by the fact that economics should only be concerned with means and not with ends, which has rendered the discipline of little use for the understanding of social processes and for the analysis of structural change.

The second message is to call attention to a most startling paradox characterizing the present phase in international financial relations: in spite of the apparent atomization of post-industrial economies, this epoch needs more, not less, collective decision processes; more, and not less, cooperative efforts. Indeed, as the new political economy has convincingly demonstrated, at the bottom of each market failure we find the market inability to produce cooperative results, which in turn are the effect of the presence within the economic system of significant and solid networks of trust. In a well-known essay, Arrow (1972) writes: "One can plausibly maintain that most of the world's backwardness can be explained by the lack of mutual trust" (p. 343). The reasoning underlying this proposition is simply that development demands high levels of cooperation and the latter, in turn, implies deep trust ties among economic agents. The strong connection between trust and development opportunities has been ascertained at the empirical level too. Suffice it here to mention Robert Putnam's accurate research as well as the important work by Partha Dasgupta and the conclusions reached by Knack and Keefer (1995), on behalf of the World Bank, on the connection between the degree of trust in personal relations and private investment. As expected, these authors find that most countries with an above-average level of trust also present higher levels of investments. One can safely say that the market is an institution resting essentially upon trust, which means that trust must already be in existence before a market economy can start its functioning. In all societies an informal network evolves to structure interpersonal relations. The fabric of this framework is essentially made up of relations of trust, which, in a sense, provides a sort of common language for encoding and interpreting information for the agents.

If so, the following question needs to be raised: which conditions should be met for an economic system to generate and improve trust relations? It is the case that civil society is the privileged locus where trust inclinations are fostered; not so much the market itself which is rather a "trust-con-

sumer", not a "trust-producer". Indeed, the two fundamental elements of trust – mutual acknowledgement of identities and engagement not to cheat nor betray even when it is feasible at no cost – cannot be generated via a reputational mechanism, since they must be offered initially as "free gifts" by the agents involved when the market process starts. If this were not so, people would never enter agreements that are not fully enforceable. It may be of interest to report the following passage from an interview to Peter Drucker: "Above all, we are learning very fast that the belief that the free market is all it takes to have a functioning society – or even a functioning economy – is pure delusion. Unless there's first a functioning civil society, the market can produce economic results for a very short time – maybe three or five years. For anything beyond these five years a functioning civil society – based on organizations like churches, independent universities, or peasant cooperatives – is needed for the market to function in its economic role, let alone its social role" (*Ottawa Citizen*, 31 December 1996).

This is why it is conceptually misleading and practically unproductive to reduce trust (which is a *relation* between agents) to reputation (which is an *asset*), since it would prevent economic research from inquiring about the strategies to be followed in order to reach that critical threshold of generalized trust among agents beyond which the market can subsequently act both as a reputation control and as a reputation enhancing device.

The specific nature of the "tragedy" of transition economies – think of the case of Russia for all – lies in the following disquieting paradox: in spite of the fact that it is in everybody's interest that transition to a market-type society is obtained, the cultural matrix prevailing in society and the nature of social dynamics of individual behaviours might be such that multiple equilibria exist that can take the economy in many directions, including decline. In view of this, we cannot but fully agree with D. North (1997): "If the institutional matrices of economies did not result in path dependence ... and if instrumental rationality characterized the way choices were made, then institutions would not matter, and overnight the policy maker could impose efficient rules upon an economy and overnight alter its directions to a productive economy. Such, in essence, are the problems of transition economies". There is no doubt that the fact that modern economics stubbornly continues to forget about the social acceptability (i.e. the justice dimension) of market outcomes bears a certain responsibility in the generation of those perverse results which we observe in many Third World or transition economies (Zamagni, 2002).

5. The great merit of *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) is to establish a strong link between peace and the construction of institutions of peace. How? By plac-

ing the principle of gift as gratuitousness at the centre of practical knowledge, Benedict XVI shows, persuasively, that in today's historical situation, interpreting the terms of the couples independence-affiliation, freedom-justice, efficiency-fairness, self-interest-solidarity as alternatives is wrong. In other words, it is wrong to think that any strengthening of the sense of belonging must be interpreted as a limitation of the independence of the individual; any progress in efficiency as a threat to fairness; any improvement of individual interest as a weakening of solidarity. That this is not a self-evident or insignificant cultural operation, we know from the fact that gratuitousness is attacked both by today's free marketeers and by neo-statalists, albeit with diametrically opposite intent. The former appeal to the maximum possible extension of the exercise of gift as donation to underpin the idea of "compassionate conservatism" in order to grant a minimum level of social services to the poorest groups of the population who, with the dismantling of the welfare state that these conservatives advocate, would otherwise be left with no assistance whatsoever. This is not, however, the proper sense of donation, as we can see when we consider that attention to the needy is not objectual but personal. The humiliation of being treated as an "object", even if the object of philanthropy or of compassionate attention, is the most severe limitation of the neo-free-market theory.

The attack by neo-statalist theory is not that different. Supposing that there is strong solidarity among the citizens to achieve their so-called citizenship rights, the State makes some types of behaviour compulsory. In so doing, however, it displaces the principle of gratuitousness, practically denying, within the *public* sphere, any scope for principles other than solidarity. Nonetheless a society which glorifies gratuitousness in words but then does not acknowledge its value in the most varied places of need is a society that sooner or later will fall into contradiction. If we admit that the gift has a prophetic function or, proverbially, that it "is more blessed to give than to receive", but do not allow this function to be manifest in the public sphere, because everyone and everything is taken care of by the State, it is clear that the civic virtue par excellence, the spirit of gift, will slowly atrophy.

Assistance which is exclusive to the State tends to produce subjects who are, indeed, assisted but who are not respected, as it cannot but fall into the trap of "reproduced dependency". It is most singular that people cannot see how neostatalism is similar to market fundamentalism in identifying the space in which to place gratuitousness. Both schools of thought, as a matter of fact, consign gratuitousness to the *private* sphere, expelling it from the public sphere: the market ideology by claiming that welfare can be achieved by means of contracts, incentives and clearly established (and enforced) rules

of the game alone; neostatalism by maintaining that solidarity can be realized by the Welfare State as such, which can, indeed, appeal to justice but certainly not to gratuitousness.

The challenge that *Caritas in Veritate* invites us to take up is to fight to bring the principle of gratuitousness back into the *public* sphere. Genuine gift, by asserting the primacy of relationship over its cancellation, of the intersubjective bond over the object given, of personal identity over utility, must be able to find a way to express itself everywhere, in every field of human action, including the economy. Above all in the economy, indeed, where it is of the utmost urgency to create and protect places where gratuitousness can be borne witness to, that is to say acted.

The most common keyword in *Caritas in Veritate* is “fraternity” (see chapter III of the encyclical), originally a watchword of the French Revolution, but which the post-revolutionary order later abandoned – for well-known reasons – so thoroughly that it was eventually erased from the vocabulary of politics and economics. It was the Franciscan school of thought that gave this term the sense it has kept over time: that of complementing and at the same time transcending the principle of solidarity. In fact, where solidarity is the social organizing principle that enables unequals to become equals, fraternity is the social organizing principle that enables equals to be diverse. Fraternity enables people who are equals in dignity and with the same fundamental rights to express freely their life plan or their charisma. The past centuries, the 19<sup>th</sup> and especially the 20<sup>th</sup>, were characterized by major cultural and political battles in the name of solidarity, and this was a good thing; think of the history of trade unions and of the civil rights movements. The point is that a good society cannot content itself with the horizon of solidarity, because a society that is based only on solidarity but is not also fraternal, would be a society from which anyone would want to escape. The fact is that while a fraternal society is also one of solidarity, the opposite does not necessarily hold.

Having forgotten that no human society is sustainable where the sense of fraternity is extinguished and where everything is reduced, on the one hand, to improving transactions based on the exchange of equivalents principle and, on the other, to increasing transfers by public welfare institutes explains why, in spite of the quality of the intellectual resources deployed we have not yet come to a credible solution of the great trade-off between efficiency and equity. The society in which the principle of fraternity is dissolved is not capable of a future; in other words, a society where there exists only “giving in order to get” or “giving out of duty” cannot progress. This is why neither the liberal-individualist vision of the world, where everything

(or nearly everything) is trade, nor the state-centred vision of society, where everything (or almost) is duty is a safe guide to lead us out of the shallows in which our societies are grounded today.

What is it that suggests that the project to restore the common good to the public sphere – and to the economic sphere in particular – is something more than just a consolatory utopia? The ever-growing dissatisfaction with the way the principle of freedom is interpreted. As everybody knows, freedom has three dimensions: autonomy, immunity and empowerment. Autonomy has to do with freedom of choice: you are not free if you are not in the position to make a choice. Immunity has to do with the absence of coercion on the part of an external agent. It is, in brief, the negative freedom (that is to say the “freedom from”) cited by Isaiah Berlin. Empowerment has to do with the capability to choose, that is to say to reach goals that are set, at least in part or to some extent, by the person himself. One is not free if he/she is never (at least partially) able to fulfil his/her own life plan. The liberal-free-market approach wants to secure the first and second dimensions of freedom at the expense of the third, while the state-centred approach, both in the version of the mixed economy and of market socialism, tends to value the second and third at the expense of the first dimension. Free-market liberalism is of course capable of spurring change, but not so capable of handling the negative consequences stemming from the marked time asymmetry between the distribution of the costs and the benefits. Costs are instant and they tend to fall on the weakest part of the population; benefits come later in time and they tend to go to the most talented. Schumpeter was among the first to recognize that the heart of the capitalist system is the mechanism of creative destruction – which destroys “the old” to create “the new” and creates “the new” to destroy “the old” but also its Achilles’ heel. On the other hand, market socialism – in its multiple versions – while it proposes the State as the subject in charge of coping with the time asymmetry, does not refute the logic of the capitalist market; it simply narrows its area of action and influence. The *proprium* of the paradigm of the common good is the effort to hold the three dimensions of freedom together: this is the reason why the principle of common good – as opposed to the principle of total good – is so worthwhile to explore.

6. Before concluding I would like to draw attention to a major challenge to the cause of peace, today. It has to do with the phenomenon of new migration. It is possible to outline it in terms of three questions (this paragraph is adapted from Zamagni [2004]). Having realized that our societies tend to become societies of immigration and emigration, how can we shape the re-

lation between multiculturalism and identity? That is to say, to what extent can and must a politics of identity go if we wish that the plurality of cultures present in a country turns out to be compatible with a social order that guarantees social peace and the reasons of liberty? Second, having recognized that the growing gap between the economic citizenship and socio-political citizenship of the immigrant has by now reached a level that is no longer able to guarantee the dignity of the human person, what can we do to reconcile the economic inclusion of the immigrant – the inclusion in the labour market and in the system of production of the host country – with his/her exclusion from social and political rights? Third, if specific reasons of principle, as well as practical reasons, advise against new editions, more or less brought up to date, a) of the assimilationist model of French design, that tends to make the diverse person one of us, b) of the model of pushing immigrants to the edge of society (i.e. of their *apartheid*), c) the model of self-government of minorities (i.e. the model of the Balkanization of society), then the only way left is the integration of the new comers in the host society. But what integration model do we intend to set up?

Needless to say until the thorny issue concerning the choice of integration model is resolved, it will never be possible to free a good many of our people from a serious cognitive dissonance: a dissonance according to which the immigrant is sought for and appreciated as long as he/she is in the workplace, where he/she contributes to the production of wealth; but he/she is kept at a distance, and humiliated, once he/she emerges from it. This is to say, the ideal many people cultivate is a socio-political order whereby the immigrants remain "visible" to the residents while they operate in the labour market, especially the black one, to disappear from sight, and no longer be worthy of any attention as far as citizenship goes, as soon as they enter into the other spheres of life. It is quite astonishing that not a few careful observers, and even expert scholars, are unable to perceive that a pragmatic contradiction of this kind is not only unsustainable, but it is also a major impediment to the cause of peace.

What basic principles does a model of integration that assumes the intercultural perspective have to satisfy, a perspective that rejects taking into consideration only the differences that separate the immigrants from the autochthonous, to arrive at more or less marked forms of Balkanization of society, and also rejects the existence of significant differences among immigrants and autochthonous, ending up with more or less explicit and forced assimilation? Put another way, what principles have to be the foundation of a position that wishes to guarantee the satisfaction of fundamental human rights for everyone, and at the same time guarantee a public space,

in which subjects who bring with them a different cultural identity from that of the host country, can compare their respective positions in a peaceful way, and above all can arrive at a consensual agreement about the limits within which they can hold on to them? I shall indicate five.

First, the primacy of the person both over the State and over the community. There is no need to lose time over the primacy of the person over the State; it is an acquired, firmly established principle, at least in our western societies. The other relation, between the person and the community, is worth pausing over. Sandel, a leading exponent of radical communitarianism, thinking of community identity as something that belongs to the self-realization of the subject, and not to his free choice, writes: “The community says not only what they have as citizens, but also what they are; not a relation they choose (as happens with voluntary associations), but an attachment they discover; not simply an attribute but a constitutive feature of their identity”. The community, and hence identity, comes “before” the person that chooses, and hence “before” the reason that guides the choice.

It does not take much to realize why people who identify themselves with the positions of personalist philosophy – expressed with such splendid authority in *Man and the State* by Jacques Maritain and in more recent times by Emmanuel Levinas – cannot accept a similar inversion of the connection between person and community. On the whole, it is the subjectivity of the person that is the foundation of the community relationship, which has to be built or re-invented starting from subjects who are able and free to choose and hence capable of assuming responsibility for their own destiny. It is of course true that the isolated individual is pure abstraction, and that as we shall shortly be saying, the individual identity cannot ignore the network of relationships that link individuals to their community. But the collective common denominator never manages to define fully the individual person, who is always a set of unique attributes. Concerning this, M. Novak recalls the famous diatribe between Thomas Aquinas and the Averroists about the negation by the latter of personal responsibility and the ability to choose, to indicate one of the great difficulties that Islamic philosophy has always come up against on trying to establish a philosophy of freedom. To sum up, freedom from need (the equivalent, in substance, of negative liberty in Isaiah Berlin’s sense) is not enough. This is nevertheless how the communitarians do think, because for them subjects are free to the extent to which they identify with (i.e. discover their own identity in) the community, given that it is the latter, in practice, that ensures freedom from need to the individual. But either communities act with respect towards human rights or else they decline into forms, more or less marked, of neo-tribalism, against which personalist thought can only fight.

At the same time, however, liberty – and this is the second principle – is not fully such if it does not go beyond mere self-determination, “doing what one likes”. This idea is too fragile to be compatible with the personalist statute. In fact the person, unlike the individual, is defined *also* by the culture in which he/she has grown up and in which he/she *chooses* to recognize him/her self. In truth, what is typical of the human person is the aspect of relationship, which postulates that the other person becomes a “you”. If my being in relation with the other finds its explanation only in considerations of convenience – to obtain consensus or be able to resolve conflicts – I will never be able to get out of that “unsociable sociableness” of which Kant speaks. Thus I shall be free in the sense of self-determination, but not in the much more robust sense of self-realization, since freedom as self-realization requires the relation with the other to be a value in itself. If it is true that, today, no one is disposed to dissolve his/her “I” into any kind of “us”, it is equally true that the alternative cannot be the social atom, so dear to individualistic thought, but an “I-person” who does not accept dissolving him/her self into any mechanism, not even into that of the market.

The full realization of personal identity cannot thus restrict itself to the simple respect of other people’s liberty, as the neo-liberal position claims, for which living in common is an option. We know perfectly well of course that for each one of us this is not the case. The choice is never between living in solitude or living in society, but between living in a society held together by one set of rules or another. For the more powerful notion of liberty it is too little to think of an individuality that ignores the relationship with the other person. This is why cultures deserve protection and recognition *also* at the level of the public sphere. If it is true that personal identity is born dialogically as a reply to our relationships with others, then a society authentically respectful of the rights of liberty cannot deny that the preservation of a secure cultural context, i.e. neither threatened nor denied, constitutes a primary good on which the basic interest of individuals turns. And if this has to be the case, then it is necessary to go as far as the public recognition of cultural particularities.

The third principle is that of the neutrality – not indifference, it must be stressed – of the State towards the cultures that are “carried” by those who live in it. Let us briefly clarify the issue. It is a well-known fact, though often removed from our consciousness, that modernity has eroded in the course of time the relational foundation of values, which have ended up by acquiring an increasingly private dimension, becoming almost an optional. By subjectivizing our values, or relegating them to the level of individual preferences or tastes, this vision has denied or diminished the social weight

that values always have. The relativistic vision of liberty typical of individualistic liberalism, by reducing liberty to mere private permissiveness, has encouraged the confusion between “secular State”, i.e. a State neutral towards the various cultures present within it, and “indifferent State”, a State that declares itself to be incapable of choosing between different cultures or establishing what the differences are. If neutrality speaks of the impartiality with which the State must treat the various identities, indifferentism speaks of the impossibility of fixing an order between different cultural demands or requirements, because there is no objective criterion of choice.

The concept of laity (secularity) is more demanding than multiculturalism, since the secular principle “does not restrict itself to neutralizing the claims of the various cultures and religions to incorrectly occupy or monopolize the terrain of the public sphere, nor does it restrict itself to affirming the principle of a benevolent tolerance, but positively demands a reciprocal bond on which to construct a political community that is based on solidarity, in that it faithfully recognizes itself in the principles, rules and institutions that exist independently of specific cultural roots”. (Rusconi, 2004). Unlike the principle of laity, indifferentism is the offspring of cultural relativism, i.e. of the now fashionable thesis that all cultures are equal, since each of them constructs for itself its own value system. In its turn, cultural relativism follows on both from cognitive relativism – certainties backed up by scientific objectivity do not exist – and from ethical relativism – we do not possess an “external” criterion with which to fix hierarchies of value. And yet, it is not difficult to see the aporias of a similar line of thought. In a recent essay, Boudon convincingly shows what the consequences stemming from certain principles or values confirming or invalidating those principles or values may be. And hence that the non-existence of absolute principles or values does not in any way legitimate the fall into relativism. When certain moral principles are shown to be capable, in reality, of generating results that are “positive” or superior to those results that derive from other principles, it becomes practically impossible to not recognize their objective pre-eminence. It is precisely the factual proof that decrees whether certain principles have more foundation than others and hence to sanction a sort of hierarchy among principles. This is an important application of the thesis of “enriched” consequentialism according to which, from the point of view of morality, consequences are evaluated not only in terms of satisfied preferences, but also in terms of satisfied human rights. It is in view of that that it makes sense to speak of “moral progress”, as Boudon calls it. The idea of the inviolability of human life, or the principle of universal equality, are eloquent examples of moral progress.

It is important to realize the difference between the relativity of cultures and cultural relativism. The latter, in the name of the mere plurality of cultures, denies the existence of objective values that inform or are behind the various cultures. Relativism thus leads straight to the impossibility of cultural dialogue. Why should subjects belonging to different cultures enter into a dialogue with one another, if no one believes in moral progress, in the possibility that through the honest, straightforward and respectful comparison of the positions at stake, one may arrive at an improvement of one's respective starting points? The thesis of cultural relativity, on the other hand, says that what is relative is the specific *translation* into the ways of a certain culture of values and principles that preserve an objective cogency. Lorenzetti clarifies the point well when he writes that the relative with respect to the absolute is one thing, quite another is the claim that nothing is absolute, as relativism would have it. It is for this that the Christian faith is properly transcultural, because while not identifying itself with any particular culture, so as to legitimate or validate it, it can be incarnate (i.e. translate itself) into all cultures as a critical-prophetic force.

The fourth principle states that the secular (i.e. neutral) State, in pursuing its objective of integrating the ethno-cultural minorities within a national common culture, adopts as a premise for the possibility of integration that the cultures present in the country all converge on a hard core of values that as such are valid for everyone, whatever specific culture people belong to. The values I am referring to cannot but be those of the universal rights of man which have been recently revived, in a masterly way, by John Rawls in his *Laws of the People* (1999). The question at once arises, since it is never acceptable to judge one culture using another as a unit of measurement, and since the universal rights of man are a (recent) acquisition of western culture, isn't there perhaps the risk that the fourth principle may lead to cultural imperialism? As Palazzani correctly observes, the fact that values such as human dignity and theories such as those of the rights of man use the language of western culture is not the mark of ethnocentric prejudice. It is rather the indication of the fact that the West arrived at an awareness of these values before other contexts, giving them a foundation on rational bases. And therefore, precisely because they are justified through reason, these values can be extended, in principle, to everyone. In other words, the notion of human rights is not linked to the West, even if the charters of rights were born here. The content of these rights is not specific to a particular culture, though it is true that today one cultural model of human rights is dominant, the western one, in fact.

As Amy Gutman points out, in order to respect a demand we do not need to share it; rather, we have to ascertain whether it mirrors a moral per-

spective, that while not coinciding with our own, not only does not contradict the fundamental human rights, but is a progressive way of translating them. The demands that can be shared, on the other hand, are those that fulfil a project of true cultural hybridization, or what was called recently by the Council of Europe “integration with interaction”. To give some clarifying examples: whereas one can tolerate, but certainly not respect, nor even less so share, the expression of religious ideas that discriminate against women, the praxis stemming from that expression cannot be tolerated at all. Again, whereas we can tolerate the position of those religious or cultural movements that would like to re-found the *demos* (the democratic principle) in the *logos* (religious truth), the demand of those who wish to bring back political forms to some kind of sacred foundation is certainly not to be respected or once again even less to be shared. Again, while we may share the demand to reshape a school curriculum (history and literature, for example) to give some recognition to the cultural contributions of the ethno-cultural minorities, we should be stopping at the level of respect for what concerns the revision of the ways of working, of the rules of dress, of the adaptation of workplaces, etc.

I very much wish to emphasize that the identification of these three levels of judgment (tolerability, respect and sharing) produces practical consequences of very great moment, offering a criterion on the basis of which we can proceed to the attribution of public resources to the various groups of ethno-cultural minorities present in the country. It could indeed be established that the demands deemed tolerable do not receive resources, either in money or in other ways, from the State and other public organizations. The demands judged to be worthy of respect receive recognition at the administrative level, i.e. they enter into the administrative arrangements of the State. The demands judged to be worth sharing become included in the legal order of the host country, with all that this means in terms of allocation of public resources.

Finally, what about those cultures that ask to participate in the intercultural project, but that do not accept transforming themselves in conformity with the statute of fundamental rights? The fifth principle gives the answer to this: the State, in the name of the citizenship rights (which unlike the rights of man, are not founded in natural law) will direct resources to groups who are carriers of those cultures to help them evolve towards positions enabling them to accept the fundamental human rights. This is the meaning of what I call the principle of “conditional tolerance”: I help you so that you can provide room, within your own cultural matrix and in ways that are part of your culture, for the acceptance of fundamental rights. It is well

known that cultures have a tendency to adapt themselves to the evolution of situations; they are not something static. Intercultural education must therefore allow all individuals to affirm their own cultural identity and to go beyond if they do not demonstrate they are able to grasp the universality of fundamental rights.

What is the sense of a principle of this kind? Is it something capable of leading to practical results or is it pure utopia? To be more specific, is there hope that also the strictly observing Moslem may modify over time his own position regarding the acceptance of that hard core of values we spoke of above? The importance of these questions lies in the fact that in the case of a negative answer, the fifth principle would be emptied of meaning, indeed vacuous. In seeking an answer, of great help is Francesco Viola's position according to which the rights of man are no longer defined independently of the differences (of gender, religion, race, or culture) but as actual rights of differences (Viola, 2000). The history of rights is moving towards their gradual contextualization, and the abstract universalism of a human self-uprooted from reference of some existential context no longer holds. If things stand like this, it must be agreed that, at least in principle, the project of fostering a path of convergence for all cultures is feasible; it may be a road of variable length, but at the end of it we should expect a convergence on a common basis of shared values.

This is why I consider the principle of "conditional tolerance" the most advanced point of equilibrium between, on the one hand, the need to bear in mind the difficulties of rapid adaptation to the new cultural context in which the immigrants find themselves, and, on the other, to make no compromises, with those who ask or intend to integrate into the host society, on central issues like those concerning the universal human rights (Glendon, 2000).

7. The approach here briefly sketched shows a marked integrationist purpose, since the groups of immigrants present in the host country are not encouraged to feel they are self-governing "separate nations", as we see with the Amish and with the Lubavic community (at Brooklyn) in the USA. Unlike what would happen with the acceptance of the communitarian position, an intercultural policy such as the one outlined here of course involves a revision of the terms of integration, but not a rejection in itself of integration into the host country, because such a policy does not accept treating the various cultures as "cognitive islands" that cannot communicate with each other. At the same time, intercultural politics is able to defuse the risk the supporters of the neo-liberal position are afraid of, the risk that the recognition of the ethno-cultural identity of the im-

migrants may lead to separatism and thus to the diluting of a national identity. This is not the case because as has been emphasized before, the recognition of which we are speaking occurs within the existing institutions common to all. So what changes are not the regulative principles of the institutions themselves, which remain unchanged, but the traditional ways of applying those principles, the ways dictated by a specific cultural tradition. Only those who cultivated a static and hence obsolete conception of national identity would be led to defend the purity of their own traditions from contagion by other traditions.

It is obvious to everyone that the search for an equilibrium between a common code of coexistence for living together satisfactorily and the demand for cultural multiplicity poses delicate problems of very great proportions. We should not hide from ourselves that questions concerning identity always provoke fear in those to whom they are addressed. Sometimes, these fears take the route of the annihilation or negation of the identity of the other; sometimes they lead to the adoption of paternalistic practices that humiliate the people they are directed at, because they destroy their self-esteem. The task I have tried to fulfil in this essay has been to place on the table the proposal for a route capable of avoiding the Scylla of cultural imperialism, leading to the assimilation of cultures different from the dominant one, and the Charybdis of cultural relativism, that leads to the Balkanization of society.

The model of intercultural integration I have set out here is founded on the idea of recognition of the degree of truth present in every vision of the world, an idea that allows us to make the principle of intercultural equality (applied to universal rights) coexist with the principle of cultural difference (applied to ways of translating those rights into legal practice). This approach of recognition of the truth is based on just one condition, the “civic reasonableness” of which W. Galston speaks: all those who ask to participate in the intercultural project have to be able to provide *reasons* for their political demands; no one is authorized to restrict himself/herself to stating what he/she prefers or, worse, to make threats. And these reasons must be of a public nature – in this lies the “civic quality” – in the sense that they must be justified through terms that people of different faith or culture can understand and accept as reasonable and hence tolerable, even if not fully respectable or able to be shared. Only in this way, I believe, can differences of identity be made immune to conflict and regression.

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