

Alternative or complementary?

Two approaches to the Catholic thought in Economic Ethics

Raúl González Fabre

Abstract

Using the theory of elementary social relationships of Alan P. Fiske, we examine the place and meaning of justice at the microsocial level. Any Catholic attempt to impose on the market relationships conditions of justice taken from other types of relationship, is destined to fail because it breaks the characteristic informational and ethical economy of the former. In consequence, it would make market relationships less able to become the frontrunner of globalization they actually are. Exploring the application of a concept of justice specific to market relationships would make a more adequate way of development for the Catholic Social Teaching.

Keywords

Justice, Community, Luigino Bruni, Alan Page Fiske, Market, Globalization, Catholic Social Teaching.

A disclaimer

This article deals with the theoretical foundations of the Economy of Communion as explained by prof. Luigino Bruni, and with its possible limitations as a part of the core of the Social Teaching of the Church (CST).

Here the key word is 'theoretical'. I have nothing to observe regarding the practical initiative of the Focolarini, which prof. Bruni heads at this moment. I must only applaud it, moreover given that it comes at a time when most of the social initiatives taken under the CST during the XXth century (cooperatives, savings banks, trade unions, political parties, study centers, newspapers, etc.) are in a severe crisis of identity. Where they have been successful in their original economic and/or political purposes, they have left being Catholic for all practical and also most declarative purposes.

Young Catholic socially inclined, members of the clergy or lay people, prefer to express their faith publicly through NGO or through education better than becoming entrepreneurs, trade unionists or politicians. In such a practical shift to assistance-development and education, any entrepreneurial initiative must be most welcome. In my knowledge, the Economy of Communion is the biggest of such initiatives, congregating several hundred small and medium companies, what makes it worthy of all attention and support by the Catholic.

The question

Our main concern here is theoretical: in the traditional CST (the one that goes back to Saint Thomas Aquinas, at least) the main virtue pertaining the economy was justice within the frame of prudence (without which there is no virtue). In the XXth century CST, justice is a cardinal virtue that allows not only encounters but also cooperation,

both economic and political, with good-faith believers of different creeds and non-believers.

On the other hand, the Economy of Communion seems to be based on a theological virtue: love or charity. Of course, love does not imply here a sentimental affection but a form of reciprocity not necessarily mediated by market criteria or at least not only by market criteria, attentive to the situation of the other, ready to become agape when that situation so demands. In that form of reciprocity, what one receives and what one gives may not always keep the equivalence typical of commutative justice, or even be reducible to money.

Love is the theological virtue par excellence of Christian life (1 Cor 13). It is perfectly all right to assume it as the basis for a Christian initiative in the economy. The problem may appear when one tries to found on it a doctrine meant to speak to all good willing persons. Love seems to be a virtue of maximums while justice¹ seems to be a virtue of the minimums. In consequence, also a better place of encounter in practice with those who maybe do not share our conception of the maximums of human life but are closer to our conception of its minimums.

At first sight there are two reasons related to this theoretical preference for justice instead of love:

- Justice is rational while love is less so. The adequate terms of a just relationship can be objectively determined by the rational analysis of the relation and its context, while the terms of a loving relationship depend much more on the subjective affections between the parties.
- Justice to everyone is morally compulsory and justice from everyone can be strictly requested, while love neither is compulsory nor can be requested from any other. From the psychological point of view, we easily feel indignation in front of injustice even when it is suffered by someone unrelated to us. But we don't feel indignation when someone suffers lack of love (unless it is due love, like the one from parents to children, in which case the indignation arises from the injustice that a due love is not given). From an ethical point of view, we consider justice as due to everyone and love not. This obligatory character grants justice a certain moral necessity that is not found in other desirable qualities of social relationships. That also makes a difference from the political point of view: it is far easier to mobilize political forces from a sense of injustice than from a sense of lack of love.

These are *prima facie* theoretical implications of shifting from justice to love as the basis for CST. This article will try to explore in a more theoretical fashion whether that shift is happening if we take the Economy of Communion as a basis for CST. For that purpose, we shall use the social anthropology of Alan P. Fiske (professor at California Berkeley), though any anthropology complex enough would suffice for our purpose.

The point of departure

¹ There is such an ambiguity regarding the uses of justice and fairness, that we have chosen to use 'justice' basically as a moral (not a legal) property of relationships at the microsocial level. In that use, we follow the utilization of the word 'iustitia' in the Catholic tradition. We will speak of 'social justice', if needed, to refer to justice as a property of the societal arrangement as a whole.

In *Structures of Social Life*, Fiske proposes four basic models to understand social relationships. This proposal is supported by his own anthropological observations and by the readings within his theory of the findings of a big number of authors in several fields, which he calls an 'inductive' approach. The four models are kind of fundamental innate archetypes that all human cultures use — generally combining several of them— to define typical relationships and roles, which in turn are used to organize the different social environments. The four models are formal structures; as a whole they somehow constitute a generative grammar of social relationships, which is filled with concrete content by the tradition of each culture.

The four models are used by the participants in every society to co-ordinate their actions in significant social relationships: they structure the focal roles in society, they allow to explain, understand and forecast the action of others, thus to adjust to it in a way that the others can in turn identify and understand. On the other hand, they have a normative function (both moral and legal) inasmuch as they structure the mutual expectations of the participants in a relationship, and also what is expected from third parties (those who sustain other relationships with the participants and must eventually sanction transgressions) and from fourth parties (who observe whether the third parties fulfill their duty to sanction the transgressors).

The choice of one or another basic model to regulate a certain type of relationship, the specification of details that concretize the chosen abstract model, the recursion within the same model (nesting several levels of relationships based on it), and their combination with other models in the same dominium, account for the immense variety of human cultures. The existence of four common underlying models, on the other hand, makes possible mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue.

The elemental models proposed by Fiske are:

- Communal Sharing (CS): Equivalence relationship in which people "melt" for the purpose of the relationship, so that individual boundaries become irrelevant. People focus on group belonging and shared identity, not on individuality. They are concerned with the group, superior to each individual, the belonging to it, and the contrast with those who do not belong to it. They experience a sense of solidarity, unity among themselves and identification with the 'we', at the same time that difference and separation, not necessarily antagonistic, towards those outside the group boundaries.
- Authority Ranking (AR): Within the relationship each person is considered as one possessing an importance, a status or a social rank, according to a certain characteristic. Persons in highest social ranks control more resources; they are supposed to have more knowledge and dominion over events. There is often hierarchical inclusion of people in lower social ranks within the sphere of others in higher social ranks. Initiative is then in the hands of people in the highest social ranks, and there is also authority with its prerogatives. Inferiors show deference, loyalty and obedience; in exchange, they receive protection, help, and support from their leaders.
- Equality Matching (EM): Egalitarian relationship between peers, who are distinct and separate but taken as equal for the purpose of the relationship. Each agent's social

presence (contribution, benefits, influence) corresponds one-to-one with the other. This is expressed in taking turns, reciprocity in species, revenge an eye for an eye, distribution in equal portions, elections one person-one vote... To keep equality, the goods at stake must be qualitatively equal, or be made equivalent by a social agreement.

- Market Pricing (MP): Relationship measured by values determined by a market system. Individuals interact when it is rational to do so according to those values which define a universal metrics (in price, utility or time) with which persons and resources may be quantitatively compared, whether or not they are qualitatively similar. Evaluation of alternatives is expressed in terms of an exchange ratio, the price. Agents structure their interaction in a proportional manner based on the given exchange rate.

Along with these four elemental models, the Null and the Asocial interactions are also possible. In them, the agent does not consider others as valid social partners, but he rather acts as if they were not human. If he simply disregards them, the relationship is null; if he coerces or uses them through mere force, treating them as a means to his ends, the relationship is asocial. Asocial interaction is not a fifth model in Fiske's analysis. In his opinion, most of conflict and aggression are motivated, organized and judged by reference to the four basic models.

Fiske supports his theory on two plausible mathematical formalizations. We are not discussing them here. However, those formalizations allow him to show an essential property of these elemental relationships: they cannot be reduced one to another. The four models are sets of separated axioms, differentiated by the introduction of arbitrary axioms, not a set of interrelated theorems deriving from common axioms. As a consequence, they cannot be reduced to variants of a single model. In particular, Fiske emphasizes the impossibility of understanding all social relationships as market ones, a temptation of current Neoclassical thought.

On the other hand, Fiske does not find any internal axiom specifying when each model must be adopted. There could be no systematic and coherent mechanism to decide between them in situations where several would be applicable. In fact, human cultures show an amazing amount of variations and combinations of these elemental relationships, which are used to organize each basic social function . Historical experience tells each society which models or compositions thereof produce good results in their context, moving them to change the design as circumstances change. The author exemplifies with marriage, whose dominants traits have been those of a community, a hierarchy, an equalitarian system or a market, depending on times and places.

Economic justice

As described by Fiske, these elemental models are relevant to economic justice when they are applied to transactions of economic goods. Each model is used as a pattern to define forms of acknowledgement of and coordination with other persons as valid social subjects. Only the Null and Asocial interactions prescind from the other, by ignoring him or by using him as a mere instrument. In all other interactions, there is some acknowledgement of the counterpart, with rights and duties which spring from the framework of the corresponding elemental model (and that may obviously be

respected or violated). Thus, each model generates from within itself specific concepts of justice, which require adjusting the acknowledgement granted to the other to what is due according to the nature of the relationship.

Such concepts of justice include two basic elements: which objects and agents are included in the relationships regulated by them; and which are the distributive criteria that apply to the goods and burdens dealt within those relationships. Therefore there is injustice when a certain social function is managed with a model different from the one socially agreed on; when an agent is unduly included or excluded from the relationships according to a certain model; or when the distribution rules intrinsic to the model are violated with regard to the goods and agents involved.

Each elemental model has thus inscribed as just a distribution rule, which must be applied when economic goods are managed within the model. *Grosso modo*:

- In communal sharing, distribution follows the need of the agents. The idea born in the community of Jerusalem (Acts 2,44-45) applies: To each according to his needs; or better its actualization by Marx (1875 [1978:531]): From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Obviously there will be an injustice when someone does not contribute according to his/her capacity or does not receive according to his/her need.
- In authority ranking, distribution goes according to some form of merit or rank. Very often, the kinds of goods exchanged are different (loyalty and obedience in exchange for responsibility and care for the common good, for example). But even when they are the same kind of goods (economic ones, for example) there must be some criterion of proportionality in collecting those goods (the progressivity of taxes, for example) and some criterion of efficiency in the production of the common good when spending them. Both criteria, taken together, allow us to qualify a certain hierarchical system as just.
- In equality matching all must receive the same, at least symbolically. This has become a characteristic principle of social life after the French Revolution and successive ones. Before, societies were more hierarchical in principle and it was more easily accepted that certain groups had a different law, courts, etc.. After the pressure of socialism and anarchism it has become less acceptable not only the difference in rules among social groups but also the differences in opportunities and even in results. Justice in equality matching has become a synonym of citizenship in most modern societies.
- In market pricing each one should receive in proportion to his/her contribution to each precise transaction. The reference for evaluation of contributions is the system of prices, when this is fully impersonal (based on concurrency and/or production costs) or when it is defined looking only at the common good (in the case of regulated prices). This is the general idea of commutative justice.

Need, merit, equality and contribution are indeed four key distributive criteria. It must be seen that distributions are reciprocal: each one gives and receives. The equilibrium adequate to each form of reciprocity is the justice that can be realized in it. Choosing one or other model to manage the distribution of economic goods in each social

situation makes an important part of the definition of justice in that relationship. Economic justice can thus be thought of differently at the level of different elemental relationships. Some form of composition will produce a more complex concept of justice for more complex relationships, whose various aspects are governed by diverse elementary models.

Motivations

We now leave Fiske behind but continue using the categories and ideas of his we have just presented.

A first question is the subjective motivation behind the participation of the person in each of these four elementary models of social cooperation. We have just seen that inscribed within each model there is a certain concept of justice which expresses the kind of reciprocity (or equilibrium) adequate to that model. The corresponding concept of justice applies to someone as soon as that one enters in cooperation using a certain model. On which grounds would someone choose to cooperate with some other on a certain model? Some plausible hypothesis would be:

- The subjective motivation behind communities is love. Communities provide a sense of safety to people. The greatest safety one can provide another is the safety that one is ready to give his/her life for the other. But that can only be willingly done out of love.
- The subjective motivation behind a political hierarchy is provided by a shared project of persecution of the common good. Being either governant or governed, the corresponding responsibility or obedience is assumed because it helps to the common good. (A more Hobbesian thought would propose fear, but we will put that aside).
- The subjective motivation behind a scheme of citizen equality is the feeling of equality itself: being equal in dignity with the others without forming part of the same community of love.
- The subjective motivation behind a market is economic self-interest. One could say that some form of self-interest is involved in each voluntary participation in cooperation relationships. However, only in the market the self-interest has to take an immediately economic form.

Let us notice that love is a motivation central for forming communities, that may be absent in other kinds of elementary cooperation relationships. Love is not opposite or different from justice, nor a second step once justice has been done, as some Encyclical letters seem to say. Love is the subjective motivation for entering a communitarian relationship of colaboration, which has its own concept of justice, based on need and ability. In other relationships, love is not necessary for cooperation to happen: a different concept of justice applies depending on the nature of the relationship.

The weight of relationships

Each of the four models of elementary relationships has different weights in two aspects decisive for our purpose: information needed for cooperating with other and

commitment with that other acquired through the relationship. In both aspects, market pricing relationships are more economical than any other. A fruitful cooperation through the market can be established using the fingers, without knowing the language of the other. Bernstein (2008:21) quotes Herodotus saying that it may happen even if we don't get any physical contact with the other, simply through the goods exchanged and the consents expressed with facts. We need not know anything about the other, his/her situation or project: it's enough with knowing what he/she has to offer and what he/she wants to receive in exchange.

On the other hand, in market cooperation each agent commits him/herself to the other only for the duration and in the specific terms of the contract. That's correlative with the previous point: no more information is needed because no more commitment is going to be undertaken. As a result market relationships are especially light.

At the other extreme, family or close friendship can be examples of communal sharing relationships. To be established fruitfully they require knowing who the other is personally, having some access to his/her intimacy. In consequence, a common language able for sharing feelings is necessary.

Communal sharing relationships involve the biggest commitment with the counterpart of all four models. As we are able to share even the deepest feelings, they may produce lifelong commitments that answer in an open way to varying and unpredictable needs of the other. Actually my commitment in those relationships is not to a certain need or kind of needs of the other, but to the other him/herself, whatever he/she may need and be able to offer at each moment.

In between these two extremes we find the hierarchical and the equalitarian relationships. In fact a combination of the two makes the modern, after-revolutionary State: the Law is the same for all (EM) but it is made and enforced through vote schemes that create a hierarchy of decision power (HR). To make part of the same citizenship more information about the other is needed than to exchange with him/her in a market, but less than to marry him/her.

A law can be understood as an open, public contract accepted through the mechanisms of political legitimacy by most parts affected, and imposed on the rest. A common language is precise regarding events with a public dimension, mainly words and behaviors, but there is no need for sharing private feelings in order to be under the same law.

The commitment to the other is also shallower in citizenship than in a community, but deeper than in a market contract. That commitment happens only in the extension required by law, thus not involving fully the other person and his/her potentially changing circumstances and needs; it mainly affects his/her public life. But it is neither a closed contract from which, when fulfilled, one can walk away without further commitment to the other. Political contracts are typically open and they do not cease when some estipulated objectives of the parties are reached.

The quantity of people

So, market relationships are the lightest of the four models from the informational and the ethical points of view, and community relationships are the heaviest. Curiously

enough, history seems to go from the heaviest to the lightest. In human history, communities (bands, tribes) predominated during hundreds of thousands of years, to the point of defining some of our most basic evolutionary affections, the affections we are hardwired for, so to speak. Most of us feel safer and more comfortable in true communities than everywhere else. Christians even think of Heaven as a universal community based solely on love.

We notice community-comfort in the fact that disguising any relationship into a community (never mind how fake) is a way to make it more palatable. The first advice to a professional seller is to make friends with his/her patrons, because keeping a customer through a community bond is far easier and less expensive than making a new one. Companies (or nations), even when they take decisions as a hierarchy, may easily call themselves "big families" in their discourses addressed to employees and customers. On the other hand, among all the public servants people tend to appreciate more those who cover a basic personal need (health, education, security) than the administrative personnel who make the Law work the same for all.

Whatever our evolutionary preference for community relationships, the true is that from the Neolithic onwards the development of agricultural surpluses allowed for the dominance of hierarchical schemes (cities, empires, national states) for some thousands years². With the French revolution those hierarchical schemes were broken and a more equalitarian citizenship appeared to stay as the leitmotiv for several class and nationality revolutions, and the resulting national states. Finally with the acceleration of globalization during the XXth century we have seen how relations among people belonging to different countries multiply. Most of them are market exchanges, to the point that being successful nowadays means being successful in the global markets, whatever the fate of our state of nationality.

The explanation for this apparent anomaly –the inversion that the heaviest relationships come historically first– can be found in the number of people to which we relate. In primitive societies, these were basically a few hundred persons, the number of people whose personal lives we may know. Because they are so few, we can assume the informational and ethical cost of making a community with them.

When we move from the hundreds to the thousands, hundreds of thousands or millions, it is cognitively and ethically impossible to form a community properly with all of them. We need a more impersonal arrangement to foster cooperation: an impersonal law by means of which anyone may know how to cooperate with anyone else without knowing who he/she is personally.

The French revolution can be understood under this key. When there are so many levels in a hierarchical society as it arrived to be in the late Ancien Régime, there may be need for a radical simplification. Not only impersonal laws are needed but also the same laws for everybody, so that we know how to cooperate adequately with anyone in the same political unit without any regard to his/her social position.

Of course, when our cooperation goes beyond our country, that is, beyond the limits covered by the same civil law, only the market relationships are initially available. We

² An interesting witness of this transit, and the corresponding discomfort, can be found in 1Sa 8,4-20.

Europeans can buy and sell with the Chinese. It is highly unlikely that we'll have the same effective social or environmental national law with them in any foreseeable future. And forming a single community (for example through inter-marriage) will continue to be exceptional. The reason is that market relationships are lighter and thus more expansive than political or community relationships. Only through them we can cooperate by now with billions of people.

Of course, it can be said that unless we have deeper political relationships allowing for common centralized decisions, there is little hope for the humanity to survive some very pressing global challenges (see Rischard (2002), for example). That's one thing; a different one is to say that political or communitarian relationships have to precede economic ones. They actually have not. As the number of people we cooperate with increases, the easiest, less expensive, first relationship available is the market one.

For that reason we can expect that global cooperation will happen first through the dominance of market relationships, after which political relationships of common citizenship and common political hierarchies will be built, and finally some kind of global community (a community of communities) will appear, maybe centuries later. The lighter horse will cross first the goal line. Heavier and more ambitious horses will pass later in the same order in which their requirements are bigger and bigger.

The meaning of Christianity

There is still the point of whether this 'realism' does not mean to abandon the Christian message of getting involved with the other even when no previous knowledge of him/herself is available. That kind of universal solidarity is remembered in a lot of Christian documents written when societies were already big and complex enough to make personal relationships with everybody impossible. To start with, many times in the very Gospel: see for example the parable of the Good Samaritan in Lc 10, 25-37.

One ideological possibility is certainly to try and make dominant one relational model over the three others. For example, Liberalism would try to extend market relationships, managing as many aspects of social life as possible through markets. A Republican, whatever his/her political brand, may consider national citizenship as the relationship through which most aspects of social life must be managed. A fascist, again whatever his political name, will prefer the hierarchical model of the authoritarian State as the dominant one. And so on.

In each case, a certain bond that allows for cooperation is given regulatory priority over other possible ones. The corresponding personal motivations are considered somehow ethically superior to other possible motivations for cooperating. Free agreement based on self-interest may be the bond preferred by the defenders of the expansion of the market. Loyalty-responsibility is perhaps the cooperation bond promoted through the expansion of the hierarchical State. And equality (absolute before the Law, as a trend in material possessions) will connect people in a scheme that gives priority to the cooperation through citizenship.

In the case of Christianity, two sources can be identified. If we go to the Gospels and in general to any kind of utopic Christianity, the regulatory relationship is certainly communitarian. Of course, Christianity is aware of the above mentioned informational

limitations of community relationships. That implies that other kinds of relationship are also necessary. But community relationships must be extended as far as possible to manage aspects of cooperation even if they could also be managed through other different relationships. The communitarian elementary model has to occupy all terrain where it can be effective, so to speak. That includes introducing communitarian traits, intentions or mechanisms to handle some aspects or cases of situations for the rest managed through other relational models. All relationships must be fecundated by the communitarian spirit.

Wherever a relation or a relational dimension is governed by the communitarian elementary model, the concept of justiced mentioned above applies: what one gives is proportional to what one can contribute; what one receives is proportional to what one needs. Reciprocity in communitarian relationships does not imply a ratio between what ones gives and receives.

A fruitful cooperation requires then an accurate assessment of needs and capacities. Sincerity is the informational condition for a fruitful communication. But this kind of sincerity is a personal moral quality, subject to all kinds of unconcious biases and of concious treasons. It actually requires a lot of personal implication among the parties, up to the point of trusting what the counterparty says about his/her situation (see Act 5,1-11). Love is the most likely motivation for establishing a communitarian bond, because it implies both knowledge of the other's interiority and deep moral commitment to him/her.

This first variant of Christianity may thus be understood as giving theological precedence to love as a motivation and in consequence to community relationships, where love, or at least openness to agape when the other is in need, has a most prominent role. Is this utopic? Only when it is presented as mandatory. There is no reality problem in carrying communitarian relationships out as far as practicable in each social context. Also there is no problem in thinking that love will be the only relational motivation that will survive death³ and thus it must be cultivated as much as possible already in this life, social life included. As we will see the problem arises when a community bond is declared needed for an economic relationship to be morally legitimate.

On the other hand, there is also a second variant of Christianity coming from the Middle Ages. When the Church had to organize a society the size of a continent, it didn't give priority to love and communitarian bonds among people. It actually gave regulatory priority to a complex hierarchical structure, at which pinnacle, holding the final legitimacy power, stood the Pope. This situation lasted for one millenium, half the time that Christianity has been with Mankind. It cannot be thought of as accidental or without consequences on the Catholic thought.

In fact, while we would be at pains to find an official Catholic proposal giving regulatory priority to citizenship or to the markets, that difficulty does not exist with hierarchies. Even if making communities is the final end of all social organization, when we feel more realistic regarding steps in that direction, the Catholic answer is a global hierarchy. As Benedictus XVI said in his last Encyclical Letter:

³ See 1Co 13,8-13.

To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority. (CV 67)

The word 'regulatory' is here essential. The current CST can be understood as proposing a certain equilibrium of all four elementary relational models, where the practical potentialities and limitations of each one are acknowledged. That equilibrium would be governed by a global hierarchical scheme, that is, by global politics with global participation under the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. But it would tend to move towards a community of communities, following a cultural change in Mankind brought about by a moral change in many persons⁴.

The problem revisited

We are now in conditions to understand better the central question of this article. The classical CST was focused on justice, that is, in a condition common to all relational models because it consists of the equilibrium that allows for sustained cooperation in them. That equilibrium must be understood in a different way according to the nature of the aspect of the relationship controlled under a certain model. Justice in a market is a different condition from justice in a community.

If we give regulatory priority to a certain relational model over the other three, let us say community over the rest, that implies giving priority to the corresponding concept of justice (to each one according to his/her needs; from each one according to his/her capacities) over other possible ones, more adequate to other kinds of relationships; and giving priority to one cooperation bond –love- over others also possible. Those priorities may be theologically motivated and may not be shared by believers in other religions and non-believers.

In that sense, the obligations emerging from love follow the insertion of the person into a community, do not precede them. They can only be requested from someone to the extent in which he/she is into that community and in the terms adequate to it. Love can not be requested from someone with relation to some other with whom doesn't belong into the same community. Justice in the relationship, however, is compulsory for all relationships. It can be requested from whoever cooperates with others, in terms adequate to the cooperation models chosen.

This argument can be better developed if we consider the informational aspect of market ethics.

The informational question in the Neoclassical approach

As we have seen above, you don't need know much about the other in order to cooperate fruitfully with him/her through the market. You don't need even know how many they are, for example. And your mutual cooperation may be limited to the terms of the commercial contract. When those terms are fulfilled, the contracting parties can walk away from each other without further mutual commitment, something much more

⁴ See González Fabre (2013).

difficult to do in a communitarian relationship like the family, or in a political relationship like common citizenship.

For those reasons, prof. Bruni (2012) has written about *immunitas* in the Neoclassical market as opposed to the *solidaritas* realized in more dense and permanent kinds of relationships. In fact, *immunitas* is extended by L. Bruni to all impersonal relationships, whatever its nature, whatever its mediator (God, the people in power, the law of the land...). Obviously, that *immunitas* is possible because it doesn't threaten but rather helps the functioning of the market.

As we have also seen, those informative and affective economies make the market relationships especially prone to expansion. The first attempt of globalization was war, in its very nature non-cooperative. Think of Napoleon and Hitler in Europe, of the Cold War in the whole world. War is a failed champion of globalization, because aggression generates opposition and thus a union of many against the aggressor. At most it's a win-lose relationship not called to repeat itself.

The second attempt of globalization was through the markets. A reasonable market relationship is a form of cooperation, a win-win relationship called to reproduce itself. Market relationships reproduce easily because they happen to be the lightest form of cooperation. We have thus the logical order of globalization we have spoken about above: first come market relationships; the problems created by those promote more of a common political order; the founding limitations of this political order generate in time more traits of a shared community. There are so many global problems requiring global cooperation that, if human species is going to survive the XXIst century, it is difficult not to envision a quick progress in the way of cooperation from the market to more political forms.

However, for the market relationship to operate with the epistemological and moral economies we have mentioned, and in consequence to get its position in globalization, the functional knowledge each party needs about the other has to be very small. The Neoclassical view of the market supposes a minimal ethics in this sense. The basic requirements for the market to operate well are basically of two kinds:

- respect for private property and for the corresponding jurisdictional decisions when there is a disagreement about who owns what; and
- freedom to contract without coercion and fulfillment of the commitments acquired through voluntary contracts.

That given, each party is free to pursue his/her self-interest in the market relationship, according to the Neoclassical idea. Knowing more about the counterpart would suppose more knowledge than the strictly necessary to establish the relationship in a fruitful, cooperative manner. If we proclaim morally necessary to know more, that would break the informational economy of the market relationship. It would make it heavier, increasing its transaction costs. The required information about the other may not be available, if available it may not be confirmed, and, in any case, it would not be necessary in order to cooperate genuinely through the relationship. Getting that information about the counterpart would be an added, costly requirement.

Thus, in the Neoclassical view each party in a contract takes care of his/her own interest, which he/she will know better than anyone because after all it is an internal event depending on personal preferences (see Hayek (1998)). The ethical adequacy of the relationship –the win-win cooperation– is provided by the freedom with which the parties enter it. An old Roman saying goes: *Volente non fit injuria* (to whom enters voluntarily, no injustice is done). Freedom is then the moral guarantee of the market relationship because if both parties contract voluntarily they cannot be suffering injustice.

Of course, ensuring the complete freedom of the counterpart in a market transaction would require entering deeper into his/her life than strictly necessary to establish the relationship. For that reason, a proxy is used: instead of making sure that the other does not suffer any restriction of his/her liberty to contract, it is enough to ensure that we don't cause that restriction, in case that exists. The moral point is then our action, something we can know and control better than his/her situation. This is actually an example of the heuristics of answering a related question when it would be very expensive to answer the actual question (see Kahneman (2011:ch. 8)). It shows us how important is the informational economy in market relationships, when the market of reference is global.

The informational question in the traditional justice approach

This is the context where the traditional theory of justice⁵ in market transactions enters into scene. That theory aims at keeping as much as possible that informational economy characteristic of market relationships, while at the same time imposing a (moral) equilibrium condition more exigent than the mere *prima facie* voluntariness of the parties involved. That condition is a certain just price, formed through a social reference (a perfect competition market, the prices of production, a political decision of the State...), that must be respected by any fair party (see González Fabre (1998)).

Respecting a just price out of control of any of the parties, does not imply to take charge of the situation of the other. The requisites of justice for an equilibrated transaction of this kind depend on one's actions and on the distribution of economic goods in the transaction, not on the other's situation. Basically, I have to read the same signals necessary for establishing the market relationship, so no loss of informational economy happens.

If done in an ethical manner, concerned with justice in the transaction, that reading is different from the Neoclassical. The difference is not in the data to be read but in the process that generates the judgement about the moral acceptability of a proposed transaction. In the Neoclassical scheme, we saw above, the transaction was morally acceptable if I fulfilled my commitments, I respected the other's private property and I was not the cause of any loss of liberty he could suffer (as a proxy of the real condition). That provided, I could maximize my self-interest in the market transaction with a clean moral conscience. In the traditional Christian theory of justice, a third condition has to be added: the price of the transaction must be within the boundaries

⁵ Here we'll call 'traditional' the Scholastic theory of justice, which has been the backbone of the social teaching of the Church since the Low Middle Ages.

of a just price. That is, a certain equilibrium among the interests of all parties must happen, as objectivized by a system of prices out of control of any of the parties.

The difference is obvious: If I have the power to dictate the price or otherwise incline the price of the transaction in my favour while at the same time keeping the other party interested in that transaction by his/her self-interest, that's fine with the Neoclassical ethical system. To the extension that it may be not so fine from the efficiency point of view, it becomes a political matter: free competition markets would have to be promoted. But that is a political objective, not a personal one. Nobody is supposed or expected to act as if the market were competitive and/or as if he/she didn't have the market power he/she has (See Smith(2000: IV, ch. II, par. IX)).

This is very different in the traditional justice theory: There you are expected to act in a just way, whatever the market structure and whatever your power in it. All the same as in the Neoclassical theory you are expected to respect the other's private property even if you had the strength to take it away.

Of course, it may happen that the relative positions of the two potential counterparts make them unsuitable for a market relationship. A small baby won't establish a market but a community relationship with his/her parents. A person in strong need may require obtaining from his/her quality of citizen the support from the others he/she cannot obtain from the market. And so on.

Actually, that possibility was contemplated in the traditional Christian theory of justice through the so-called 'state of need'. When life or dignified social integration was threatened and to the degree it was, private property ceased to exist. Private property, as we have seen, is one of the essential requisites for market relations to be possible. When it disappears, only the other three elementary relationships are possible. In consequence, only the other three concepts of justice make sense and only the other three bonds of cooperation have meaning.

If that is not the case, the market relationship is an available possibility for giving and getting cooperation from others with its characteristic lightness and consequent easiness to be established. As we have seen, the traditional concept of justice applicable does not make the relationship much heavier. The equilibrium required by justice has to be reached between the economic values of the goods exchanged, measured with regard to an impersonal price system. But that calculation of values is done anyway by the parties in a market exchange. No new information is needed and only a calculus of equilibrium has to be added to the calculus of consent that the Liberals suppose. Particularly, commutative justice in the market exchange does not involve the other as a person: it does not need take charge of his/her condition or situation. As in any impersonal relationship, *immunitas* is kept and that's the reason why we can trade with almost anyone, knowing very little about him/her.

Deciding with additional information

As soon as we try to make a condition for the moral acceptance of the market relationship something that cannot be obtained from the information needed to establish the relationship itself, we make it heavier: more difficult to establish and less prone to expansion. By attaching to the market exchange moral requisites coming from

a civil relationship or a communitarian one, we diminish its ability to become the forefront of cooperation in a global environment.

This kind of problem only comes up with the Civil Economy or the Economy of Communion if they intend to propose an universal requisite of ethicity. There is no problem whatsoever with building commercial relationships on the basis of preexisting civilities or faith communities. In fact, just the opposite of a problem happens: As far as preexisting deeper relationships ensure more trust among the possible parties in a market relationship, they reinforce the basic morals required for it to work as a cooperation relationship.

This basic, minimum morals of the market include respect for the private property, for the liberty to contract of the counterparty, and for the word given in contract. All of them are events in the future which demand trust in the behavior of the counterparty. If we have an ongoing, longer lasting relationship of a different nature with the possible market counterparty, that would surely help to better found that trust. In other words, if we belong to the same civic society or to the same faith community as him/her, more exigent cognitive and moral commitments are already taking place than the necessary for a market relationship. Though it is not automatic, we have some experiential reason to trust him/her also in the marketplace. In the somehow extreme words of Aristotle: *"when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality"* (EN 1155a26-28).

In consequence, the civic and/or the religious links may be very helpful for having more ethical market relationships. But this is different from implying that a civic or a religious commitment to the other is required to establish an ethically adequate market relationship. The latter would overcharge the market relationship with informational and moral requirements taken from other elementary relationship models. It would make it heavier, losing its capacity to channel cooperation with a minimum of mutual commitment that make them the first cooperative step in any relationship between people who don't know each other. The latter would happen if one tries to change a concept of the morally good or convenient (forming a community together) into a concept of the morally necessary, a concept of the just. Then whatever moral conditions emerge from community love are applied to justice, and viceversa.

That may be a problem with Luigi's discourse about *solidaritas* and *immunitas*. Certainly we are more vulnerable to people the closer and the more involved in a community with them we are. But that doesn't make the *immunitas* of impersonal relationships (including market ones) morally undesirable. Just the opposite, we can interact personally with only a few people because only about a few we can know enough to control directly our vulnerability to their actions. With the rest of billions of existing people, we cannot develop the same personal control of vulnerability. In consequence we establish an institutional control and that's all right from a moral point of view: *Ad impossibilia nemo tenetur*.

Thanks to that institutional control, we can cooperate effectively with many millions of people not even knowing them, not even having seen them once. That impersonal cooperation is what has made national States and global markets, and what must

continue until we have also a global political mechanism able for checking and balancing the global markets.

The regulatory concept corresponding to those institutional devices is justice: Justice as an equilibrium among the parties, different for different relationships, that ensures genuine cooperation of all concerned by each relationship. There is a concept of justice for the communitarian aspects of any relationship; there are other different concepts for the hierarchical, the civic and the market aspects even of the same relationship.

Conclusion

Introducing community or civic aspects in an economic operation is a good idea. If finally that operation performs well in a fair market, it will establish a pole at which others, both for-profit and non-profit operations can look for inspiration. That is our understanding of the Economy of Communion and of the place of similar initiatives in the current CST as expressed in *Caritas in Veritate*. So to speak, a positive, pull role.

However, the general concept of justice has a real push strength, both ethical and political, derived from the indignation it produces to see it violated against oneself or against others. We have tried to show that if one were to use that push strength in order to promote the above mentioned initiatives, one would make a theoretical mistake. That mistake would consist of imposing on all of forms of human cooperation the informational and ethical requirements of community relationships. As a consequence, market relationships would become much heavier than they need be and they would not become a practicable way of globalization for whoever accepts this way of thinking.

The CST must be careful to study and propose different concepts of justice adequate to the different forms of human cooperation. Actually that is the tradition of the Church: communities such as the family have a certain concept of justice based on the requirements of love; hierarchies such as a Government have a different concept based on the responsibilities for the common good; and there is also a concept of justice in the market, developed at least from the Middle Ages.

Very likely, that concept requires to be thought again in the current circumstances. The challenge posed by Marxism, Keynesianism and other schools of thought moved the CST maybe too much towards the macrosocial scale, leaving in the dark the fact that there is an important Church tradition on microeconomic justice in the market operations. Bruni and other contributors to *Caritas in Veritate*, by reintroducing in the CST the concept of an ethics of the for-profit company, have helped to recover the role of that tradition. It is most important that the Church continues their work studying how to apply to the current conditions a concept of justice adequate to market cooperation.

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