

TOWARDS REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT

the
PROCEEDINGS
of

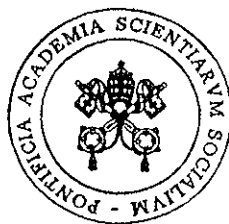
the Fifth Plenary Session of the
Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences
3-6 March 1999



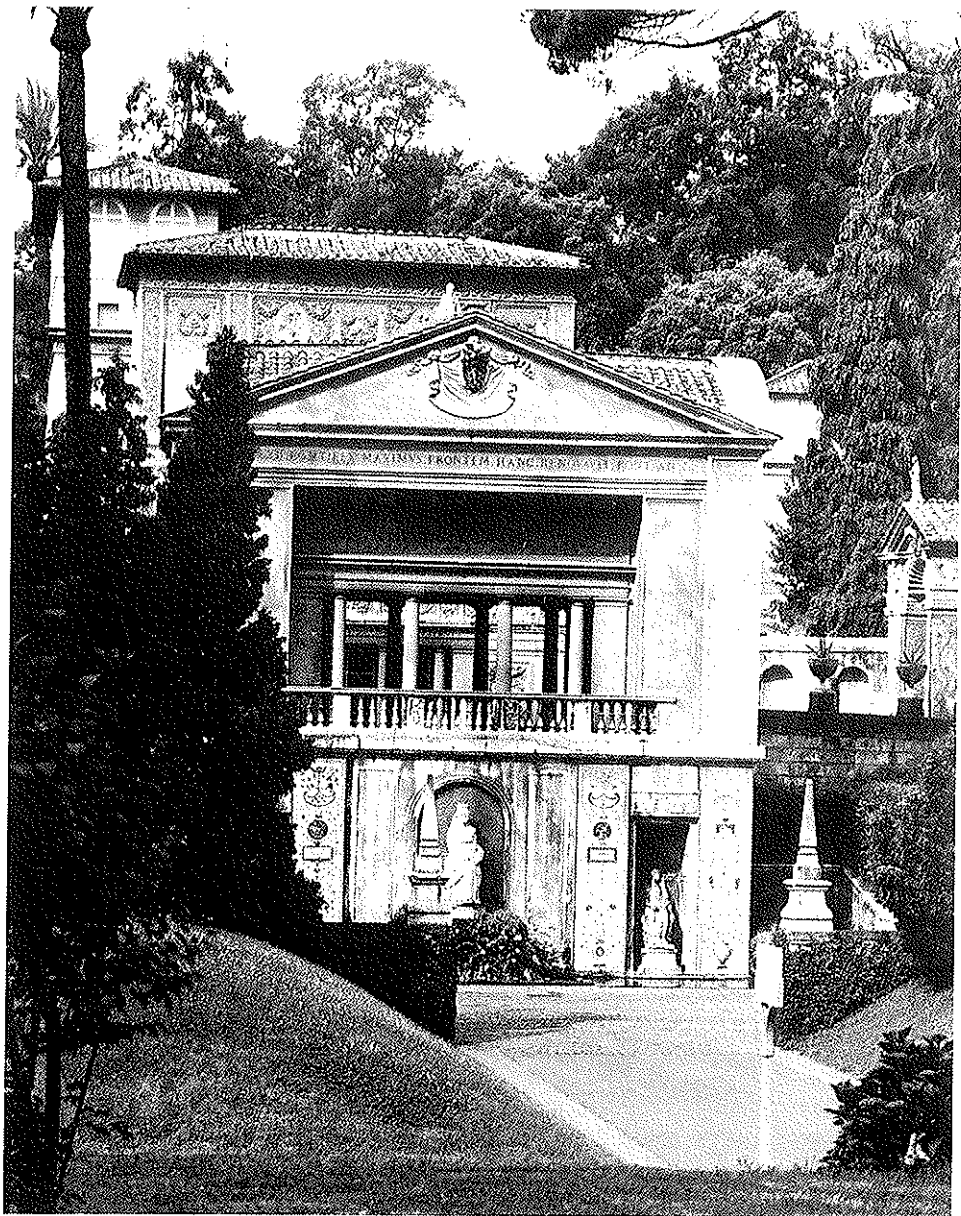
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VATICAN CITY 1999



Casina Pio IV - Vatican Gardens
Headquarters of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

The opinions freely expressed during the presentation of papers in the Plenary Session, although published by the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, only represent the points of view of the participants and not those of the Academy.

Editor of the Proceedings:

Prof. MARGARET S. ARCHER

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PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

VATICAN CITY

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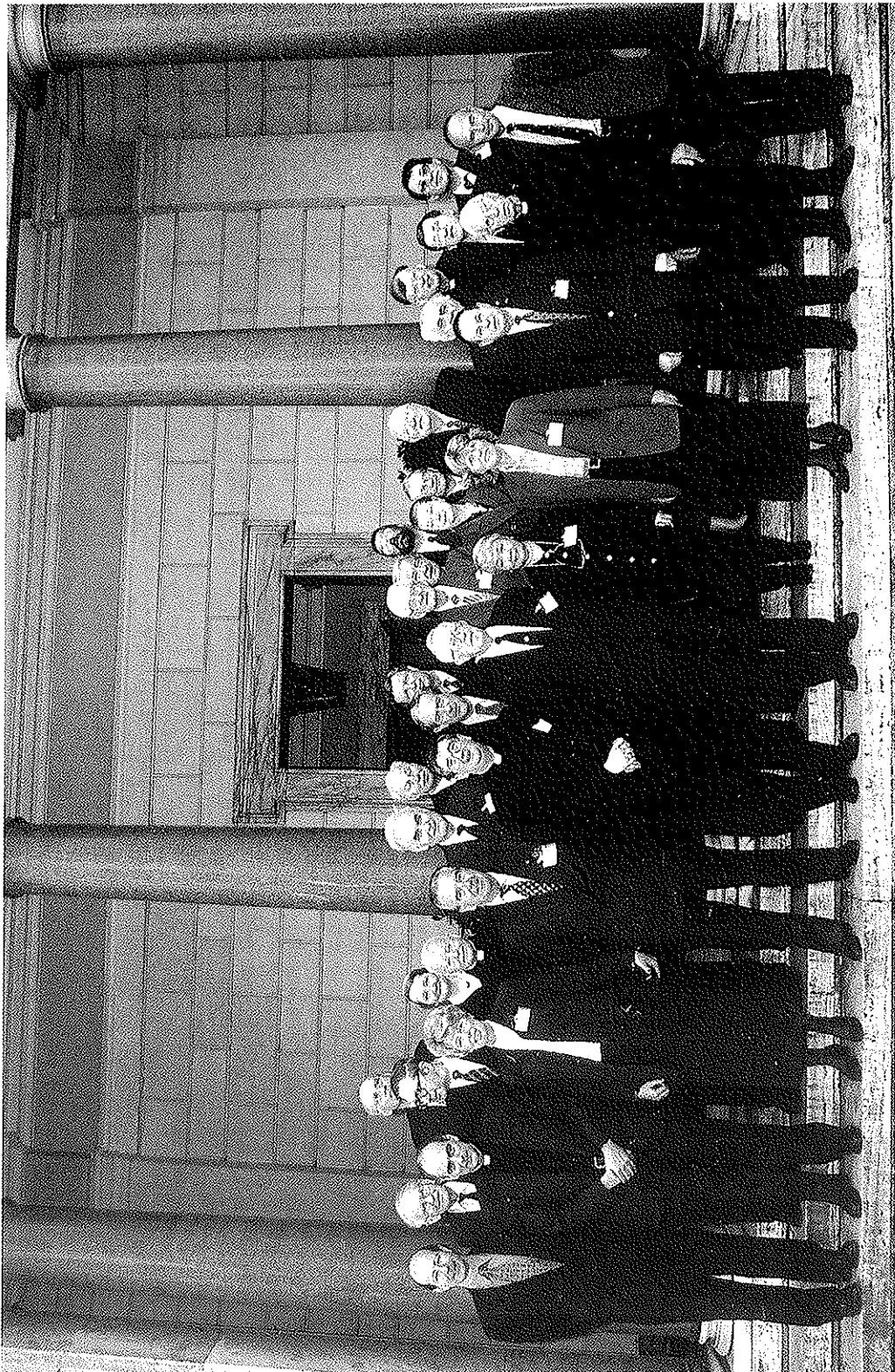
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PREFACE

During the first period of its activity the Academy devoted a considerable part of its reflections and activities to the questions of work and employment. These questions, indeed, are now acute throughout the world; they often challenge the social sciences; and they bear on the essence of the social teaching of the Church. It is probably fair to say that no other subject should have higher priority in the dialogue between the Church and the social sciences, a dialogue to which the Academy is called to devote its energies by the papal *Motu Proprio* which established it.

Two previous volumes of our proceedings published the papers discussed at our second and third Plenary Meetings: *The Future of Work and Work in the Future* (from the session held in 1996) and *The Right to Work: Towards Full Employment* (from the 1997 session). The present proceedings contain the papers delivered and discussed at the fifth Plenary Meeting held in 1999. Whereas reports of the discussions appeared in the two previous volumes mentioned above, the Academy decided this year to avoid the substantial delays involved in the preparation of such a report. The rich material, here published within twelve months of the meeting, deserved to be made available in printed form as soon as possible.

This preface gives the President of the Academy the opportunity to acknowledge warmly the debt owed to Professor Archer, who very carefully and diligently organized our scientific work for the three Plenary Meetings devoted to the study of work and employment. Not only did Professor Archer organize the respective responsibilities of Academicians with regard to the presentation of papers, she also obtained the participation at our meetings of a number of outstanding experts, to whom special thanks are here expressed. From all speakers she kindly solicited advanced availability of the papers so that a large majority of those could be circulated by mail and read before the meetings. As editor of the three volumes, Professor Archer dedicated very careful and skilful attention to a most difficult task, and gave much more of her time to dealing with detail than will be readily realized. Without such devotion, both scientific and less highbrow, the Academy would have been unable to have begun its activities with so much success.

EDMOND MALINVAUD

V PLENARY SESSION: 3-6 MARCH 1999

PROGRAMME

Tuesday 2 March

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 3 March

OPENING

President's address

Introduction by Professor MARGARET ARCHER (Pontifical Academician - University of Warwick)

Unemployment: social needs and economic tendencies. Scenarios for their ethical reconciliation

Part I - ECONOMIC ADAPTATIONS CONDUCIVE TO REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT

Professor PAVEL DEMBINSKI (University of Geneva)

Cost of capital and the uncertain pre-eminence of labour

Professor STEFANO ZAMAGNI (University of Bologna)

The significance of labour in a post-industrial society: unemployment and the role of the civil economy

Professor EDMOND MALINVAUD (President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences - Centre de Recherche en Economie et Statistique)

Dilemmas about wages and employment

Professor RICHARD HAUSER (Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität)

The Universal Basic Income: its contribution to reducing unemployment and relationship to Catholic Social Teaching on the 'family wage'

Closed session for Academicians

Thursday 4 March

Professor EMILIO REYNERI (University of Parma)

Ways and means of integrating the young unskilled into work

Part II - GLOBALIZATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Professor THOMAS PALLEY (AFL-CIO Washington DC)

The economics of globalization: problems and policy responses

Professor ELSE ØYEN (University of Bergen & UNESCO CROP programme on poverty) and Professor Francis Wilson (Cape Town University)

Only Connect: Unemployment and poverty; formal and informal economic activity in a divided world

Professor JACQUES DELCOURT (Louvain-la-Neuve)

The need for a new global and legal regulative framework for capital and labour

Professor DAVID LYON (Queen's University, Ontario)

The changing meaning and value of work in a globalized information society

Friday 5 March

Part III - THE SPIRITUAL ROLE OF WORK: CONTINUITY IN CHANGING CONTEXTS

Professor PIERPAOLO DONATI (Pontifical Academician - University of Bologna)

The changing meaning of work (secularized versus humanistic) and its implications for the 'new' society

H.E. Msgr. JOSEPH PITTAU, S.J. (Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education)

Ethical values and the Japanese economy

Professor ROLAND MINNERATH (Pontifical Academician - University of Strasbourg)

The Biblical vision of work and the contemporary context

Closed session

Meeting of committees

Saturday 6 March

General discussion

Papal Audience has been requested

Meeting of the Committee on Third World countries

Meeting of the Council

Monday 8 March

Meeting of the Committee on the Jubilee edition

Tuesday 9 March

Meeting of the Committee on the Jubilee edition

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
OF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE HOLY FATHER *

Très Saint-Père,

Quand Vous avez reçu l'Académie pontificale des Sciences sociales l'an dernier elle travaillait sur le thème de la démocratie, mais elle savait ne pas épuiser alors même la première phase de ses travaux sur le sujet. C'est pourquoi notre comité, présidé par le Professeur Zacher, prépare activement le programme que nous consacrerons en l'an 2000 à d'autres questions relatives à la démocratie, notamment à celles qui se posent concrètement dans les divers domaines où l'Etat est face à la société.

Nos échanges de cette année ont porté pour la troisième fois sur le travail et l'emploi. Comme aux deux précédentes sessions où nous avons traité de ce thème, notre programme a été préparé sous l'impulsion du Professeur Archer, qui a pris grand soin de combler diverses lacunes de nos réflexions antérieures. Elle l'a fait avec le souci de bien préparer ainsi l'ouvrage que nous voudrions publier comme la contribution de l'Académie au Jubilé de l'An 2000.

Certains des examens complémentaires auxquels nous avons procédé concernent le sens que revêt la conception catholique du travail et de l'emploi dans des contextes différents de ceux qui avaient pu l'inspirer jusqu'à présent, en application des principes permanents énoncés dans la Bible. Des théologiens et des chercheurs en sciences sociales s'interrogent sur les renouvellements conceptuels et les prolongements éthiques que les mutations techniques et sociales actuelles devraient susciter. Bien réfléchir sur les implications de ces analyses s'imposait à nous. De même que s'imposait de réfléchir sur les effets que la mondialisation économique et financière avait sur les rapports entre travail et capital.

* The following address was delivered by the President of the Academy, Prof. Edmond Malinvaud, at the Papal Audience on 6 March 1999.

Mais nous avons cherché aussi dans la présente session à étudier les dispositifs institutionnels et les politiques économiques ou sociales visant à améliorer l'emploi. Notre objectif ne pouvait évidemment pas être alors de proposer des solutions aux difficiles dilemmes qui confrontent les pouvoirs publics, mais plutôt d'en apprécier les raisons et l'importance, ainsi que de comprendre quels obstacles interdisent certains modes d'action et quelles chances de réussite subsistent pour certains autres.

Nous avons porté une attention particulière au sort des pauvres, victimes plus que d'autres des difficultés d'emploi dont souffrent nombre de pays. Nous avons pris connaissance de programmes de recherches très concrètes sur la pauvreté et nous avons examiné la réalisation de telles recherches concernant la corne Sud de l'Afrique. Nous nous sommes également préoccupés de l'insertion des jeunes dans le travail. Nous avons étudié certaines mesures destinées les unes à remédier à la pauvreté, les autres à stimuler l'emploi des jeunes.

Dans ces recherches nous n'avons pas perdu de vue, Très Saint-Père, les recommandations que Vous nous avez adressées il y a deux ans. Nous entendons préserver l'espoir suscité depuis des décennies par le modèle de l'*Etat social* et par l'application, pour y parvenir, des principes de subsidiarité et de solidarité. Nous pensons que certaines des difficultés actuelles proviennent d'une analyse incomplète, quant à la gamme des options ouvertes à nos sociétés et quant aux conséquences à attendre de chaque option si elle devait être choisie. Conscients de ce que nos spécialités concernent surtout l'observation des faits et la recherche des causes, nous visons à apporter à l'Eglise, aux moralistes et aux conseillers des gouvernements, les éléments fiables que Vous êtes en droit d'attendre des sciences sociales.

Après Vous avoir présenté l'objet de nos échanges de cette année, nous allons, Très Saint-Père, soigneusement écouter les recommandations que Vous voudrez bien, comme à l'accoutumée, nous donner.

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE FIFTH PLENARY SESSION *

Monsieur le Président,
Mesdames et Messieurs les Académiciens
Mesdames, Messieurs,

1. A l'occasion de la cinquième Assemblée générale de l'*Académie Pontificale des Sciences Sociales*, je suis heureux de vous accueillir. J'adresse mes vifs remerciements à Monsieur Edmond Malinvaud, votre Président, pour le message qu'il vient de m'adresser en votre nom à tous. Ma gratitude va aussi à Monseigneur Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo et à toutes les personnes qui, au long de l'année, s'attachent à coordonner vos travaux.

Pour la troisième année consécutive, vous poursuivez vos réflexions sur le thème du travail, montrant ainsi l'importance qu'il convient d'accorder à cette question, non seulement sur le plan économique mais aussi dans le domaine social et pour le développement et l'épanouissement des personnes et des peuples. L'homme doit être au centre de la question de l'emploi.

2. La société est soumise à de multiples transformations, en fonction des avancées scientifiques et technologiques, ainsi que de la mondialisation des marchés; autant d'éléments qui peuvent être positifs pour les travailleurs, car ils sont source de développement et de

* The following address was delivered by His Holiness John Paul II on 6 March 1999. It was published in *L'Osservatore Romano* on 7 March 1999.

progrès; mais ils peuvent aussi faire peser sur les personnes de nombreux risques, les mettant au service des rouages de l'économie et de la recherche effrénée de la productivité.

Le chômage est une source de détresse et «peut devenir une véritable calamité sociale» (encyclique *Laborem Exercens*, n. 18); il rend fragiles des hommes et des familles entières, leur donnant aussi le sentiment qu'ils sont marginalisés, car ils ont de la peine à subvenir à leurs besoins essentiels et ils ne se sentent ni reconnus ni utiles à la société; de là, naît la spirale de l'endettement, dont il est difficile de sortir et qui suppose cependant compréhension de la part des institutions publiques et sociales, soutien et solidarité de la part de la communauté nationale. Je vous sais gré de rechercher des voies nouvelles concernant la réduction du chômage; les solutions concrètes sont certes difficiles, car les ressorts de l'économie sont très complexes et sont d'ailleurs le plus souvent d'ordre politique et financier. Beaucoup de choses dépendent aussi des normes en vigueur dans le domaine fiscal et syndical.

3. L'emploi est certainement un défi majeur de la vie internationale. Il suppose une saine répartition du travail et la solidarité entre toutes les personnes en âge de travailler et aptes à le faire. Dans cet esprit, il n'est pas normal que des catégories professionnelles aient avant tout le souci de préserver des avantages acquis, ce qui ne peut qu'avoir des répercussions néfastes sur l'emploi au sein d'une nation. En outre, l'organisation parallèle du travail au noir lèse gravement l'économie d'un pays, car elle constitue un refus de participer à la vie nationale par les contributions sociales et par l'impôt; de même, elle place des travailleurs, en particulier des femmes et des enfants, dans une situation incontrôlable et inacceptable de soumission et de servilité, non seulement dans les pays pauvres mais aussi dans les pays industrialisés. Il est du devoir des Autorités de faire en sorte que, au regard de l'emploi et du code du travail, tous aient les mêmes possibilités.

4. Pour toute personne, le travail est un élément essentiel. Il contribue à l'édification de son être, car il fait partie intégrante de sa vie quotidienne. L'oïveté ne donne aucun ressort intérieur et ne permet pas d'envisager l'avenir; non seulement elle «amène la pauvreté et la pénurie» (*Tb* 4, 13), mais elle est aussi ennemie de la vie morale bonne (cf. *Si* 33, 29). Le travail donne aussi à tout individu une place dans la société, par le juste sentiment de se savoir utile à la communauté humaine et par le développement de relations fraternelles; il permet encore de participer de manière responsable à la vie de la nation et de contribuer à l'œuvre de la création.

5. Parmi les personnes douloureusement touchées par le chômage, se trouve un nombre important de jeunes. Au moment où ils se présentent sur le marché du travail, ils ont parfois l'impression qu'il leur sera difficile de trouver une place dans la société et d'être reconnus à leur juste valeur. Dans ce domaine, tous les protagonistes de la vie politique, économique et sociale sont appelés à redoubler d'efforts en faveur de la jeunesse, qui doit être considérée comme un des biens les plus précieux d'une nation, et à se concerter pour offrir des formations professionnelles toujours plus adaptées à la situation économique du moment et une politique plus vigoureusement encore orientée vers l'emploi pour tous. Ainsi, une confiance et une espérance renouvelées seront données aux jeunes, qui peuvent parfois avoir l'impression que la société n'a pas véritablement besoin d'eux; cela réduira sensiblement les disparités entre les classes sociales, ainsi que les phénomènes de violence, de prostitution, de drogue et de délinquance, qui ne cessent de se multiplier actuellement. J'encourage tous ceux qui ont un rôle dans la formation intellectuelle et professionnelle des jeunes à les accompagner, à les soutenir et à les encourager pour qu'ils puissent s'insérer dans le monde du travail. Un emploi sera pour eux la reconnaissance de leurs capacités et de leurs efforts, et leur ouvrira un avenir personnel, familial et social. De même, par une éducation appropriée et par les aides sociales nécessaires, il convient d'aider les familles en difficulté pour des raisons

professionnelles et d'apprendre aux personnes et aux familles à faibles revenus à savoir gérer leurs budgets et à ne pas se laisser attirer par des biens illusoires que propose la société de consommation. Le surendettement est une situation dont il est souvent difficile de sortir.

6. L'emploi ne pouvant pas augmenter indéfiniment, il importe d'envisager, en vertu de la solidarité humaine, une réorganisation et une meilleure répartition du travail, sans oublier le partage nécessaire des ressources avec ceux qui sont au chômage. La solidarité effective entre tous est plus que jamais requise, en particulier pour les chômeurs de longue durée et pour leur famille, qui ne peuvent rester dans la pauvreté et le dénuement sans que la communauté nationale ne se mobilise activement; personne ne doit se résigner à ce que certains restent sans emploi.

7. Au sein d'une entreprise, la richesse n'est pas constituée uniquement par les moyens de production, le capital et les bénéfices, mais elle provient avant tout des hommes qui, par leur travail, produisent ce qui devient ensuite des biens de consommation ou des services. De ce fait, tous les salariés, chacun à son échelon, doivent avoir leur part de responsabilité, concourant au bien commun de l'entreprise et, en définitive, de la société entière (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 38). Il est essentiel de faire confiance aux personnes, de développer un système qui privilégie le sens de l'innovation de la part des individus et des groupes, la participation et la solidarité (cf. *ibid*, n. 45), et qui favorise de manière primordiale l'emploi et la croissance. La mise en valeur des compétences des personnes est un élément moteur de l'économie. Percevoir une entreprise uniquement en termes économiques ou de compétitivité comporte des risques; cela met en danger l'équilibre humain.

8. Les chefs d'entreprise et les décideurs doivent avoir conscience qu'il est essentiel de fonder leur démarche sur le capital humain et sur les valeurs morales (cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, nn. 99-101), en particu-

lier sur le respect des personnes et leur besoin inaliénable d'avoir un travail et de vivre des fruits de leur activité professionnelle. Il ne faut pas oublier non plus la qualité de l'organisation des entreprises, la participation de tous à leur bonne marche, ainsi qu'une attention renouvelée à des relations sereines entre tous les travailleurs. J'appelle de mes vœux une mobilisation toujours plus profonde des différents acteurs de la vie sociale et de tous les partenaires sociaux, pour qu'ils s'engagent, à la place qui est la leur, à être des serviteurs de l'homme et de l'humanité, par des décisions dans lesquelles la personne humaine, en particulier la plus faible et la plus démunie, occupe la place centrale et soit véritablement reconnue dans sa responsabilité spécifique. La mondialisation de l'économie et du travail demande de la même manière une mondialisation des responsabilités.

9. Les déséquilibres entre les pays pauvres et les pays riches ne cessent de s'accroître. Les pays industrialisés ont un devoir de justice et une grave responsabilité envers les pays en voie de développement. Les disparités sont de plus en plus criantes. Paradoxalement, un certain nombre de pays ayant des richesses naturelles sur leur sol ou dans leur sous-sol sont l'objet d'une exploitation inacceptable par d'autres pays. De ce fait, des populations entières ne peuvent bénéficier des richesses de la terre qui leur appartient, ni de leur travail. Il convient d'offrir à ces nations la possibilité de se développer grâce à leurs propres ressources naturelles, en les associant plus étroitement aux mouvements de l'économie mondiale.

10. Au point de départ d'un renouveau de l'emploi, il y a un devoir éthique et la nécessité de changements fondamentaux des consciences. Tout développement économique qui ne prend pas en compte l'aspect humain et moral aura tendance à écraser l'homme. L'économie, le travail, l'entreprise sont avant tout au service des personnes. Les choix stratégiques ne peuvent se faire au détriment de ceux qui travaillent au sein de l'entreprise. Il importe d'offrir à tous nos contemporains un emploi, grâce à une répartition juste et res-

ponsable du travail. Sans doute est-il aussi envisageable de revoir le lien entre salaire et travail, pour revaloriser des emplois manuels qui sont souvent pénibles et considérés comme subalternes. En effet, la politique salariale suppose de prendre en compte non seulement le rendement de l'entreprise, mais aussi les personnes. Un écart trop important entre les salaires est injuste, car il déprécie un certain nombre d'emplois indispensables, et il creuse des disparités sociales dommageables pour tous.

11. Pour faire face aux défis que la société doit relever au seuil du troisième millénaire, j'appelle la communauté chrétienne à s'engager toujours davantage aux côtés des personnes qui luttent en faveur de l'emploi et à cheminer avec les hommes sur la voie d'une économie toujours plus humaine (cf. encyclique *Centesimus Annus*, n. 62).

Dans cet esprit, je vous remercie pour le service appréciable que vous rendez à l'Eglise en étant particulièrement attentifs aux phénomènes de société, qui sont importants pour l'homme et pour l'ensemble de l'humanité. En vous confiant à l'intercession de saint Joseph, patron des travailleurs, et de la Vierge Marie, je vous accorde volontiers la Bénédiction apostolique, ainsi qu'à vos familles et à toutes les personnes qui vous sont chères.

LES CINQ PREMIÈRES ANNÉES DE L'ACADÉMIE

EXPOSÉ INTRODUCTIF DU PRÉSIDENT LE 3 MARS 1999

Cet exposé nous offre l'occasion de tenter de faire le point et de savoir où nous en sommes, cinq ans après la création de notre Académie par le Saint Père. Il y a bientôt quatre ans et demi que nous nous réunissions pour la première fois et que nous commençons à prendre conscience du rôle qui nous était attribué et de la collectivité que nous pouvions former. Quatre ans et demi aussi que nous commençons à définir nos méthodes de travail. Vous pouvez à volonté dire que la période fut courte ou qu'elle fut longue. Quoi qu'il en soit, elle marque une première étape de notre existence. Il me paraît justifié et opportun que nous nous interrogiions sur ce que nous avons réussi à engager et sur ce à propos de quoi nous avons plutôt échoué. Il me paraît justifié et opportun que nous nous demandions s'il ne faut pas réviser nos objectifs, nos orientations, ou nos méthodes de travail. Rechercher entre nous les réponses à cette question devrait contribuer à définir notre propre doctrine sur ce que l'Académie peut et doit faire.

L'article 1 de nos statuts nous attribue deux fonctions: premièrement de promouvoir l'étude et le progrès des sciences sociales, deuxièmement d'offrir à l'Eglise les éléments qu'elle pourra utiliser dans le développement de sa doctrine sociale et de réfléchir sur l'application de cette doctrine dans la société contemporaine. Pour faire court il a souvent été dit que cette seconde fonction consistait à dialoguer avec l'Eglise sur le thème de son enseignement social.

I

Quant à la première fonction, celle nous demandant de contribuer au progrès des sciences sociales, il me paraît juste de dire que nous n'avons encore rien fait qui soit vraiment perceptible. La diffusion de nos publications est faible. Même à supposer que ces publications soient largement distribuées et étudiées, pourrions nous prétendre que les quatre volumes

publiés jusqu'ici soient aptes à influencer sensiblement le développement des sciences sociales? Ce serait bien hardi de le faire. Face à ce constat je me permets de faire deux commentaires.

D'abord le constat n'est pas surprenant. Nous ne pouvions réellement espérer rien de plus, durant nos cinq premières années. En effet contribuer au progrès des sciences sociales sera une tâche difficile et de longue haleine. Nous pouvons envisager deux types de contributions à ce progrès. Notre nature pluridisciplinaire peut nous prédestiner aux efforts d'unification des sciences sociales, sciences qui sont aujourd'hui éclatées entre disciplines et à l'intérieur des disciplines. Mais les efforts d'unification ont été nombreux depuis que nos sciences existent et ils ont eu bien peu de succès. Les rares succès que l'on pourrait citer ne sont pas venus, je crois, d'institutions comme la nôtre mais de quelques génies individuels, de génies qui ont créé leurs propres écoles. De plus, comme vous le savez, les idées propagées par ces écoles appellent bien des réserves aujourd'hui à l'intérieur des sciences sociales. Le Saint Père lui même nous en a averti dans le discours qu'Il nous a adressé lors de notre première session quand Il nous a dit: «Aucune science ne peut expliquer la totalité du réel. Dans le cas contraire, sortant de son statut de science, elle devient une idéologie qui prétend expliquer l'ensemble de l'univers et de l'histoire».

Bien entendu, nous pourrions envisager des efforts dont l'ambition ne serait pas immédiatement englobante, de ces efforts bien localisés qui se réalisent par milliers dans nos disciplines et qui peu à peu les contruisent. Nous pourrions envisager par exemple des efforts sur les aspects normatifs et moraux de tels ou tels phénomènes sociaux. Mais justement quand il s'agira de problèmes bien localisés, nous aurons peu de moyens collectifs à y consacrer, compte tenu de la dispersion de nos spécialités au niveau fin.

Mon second commentaire sur l'absence, jusqu'à présent, de contributions significatives de notre part au progrès des sciences sociales se doit d'évoquer notre projet consistant à publier en l'an 2000 un ouvrage destiné aux milieux académiques et universitaires. Cet ouvrage, que nous appelons entre nous l'Édition du Jubilé, portera précisément sur les problèmes du travail et de l'emploi. Il présentera l'examen auquel l'Académie aura procédé. Il bénéficiera beaucoup des travaux de cette session que nous allons consacrer à ces problèmes, pour la troisième fois. La mise au point, puis la diffusion, de l'ouvrage seront le test de notre aptitude à remplir la première fonction qui nous a été attribuée. Elles révéleront si nous commençons à être lus, compris et écoutés. Si nous pouvons faire un constat favorable, dans trois ans environ je suppose, cela démontrera que les difficultés de notre mission ne nous paralysent pas. Nous aurons réussi à mettre l'Académie sur une bonne voie.

Avant que j'en passe à notre seconde fonction, j'ajoute que, depuis nos débuts, le Conseil de l'Académie a eu la préoccupation de faire connaître notre institution au delà du Vatican, cela afin que des conditions favorables soient établies pour que nos publications présentes et futures soient lues. La préoccupation du Conseil s'est traduite par la préparation de communiqués de presse avant nos sessions. La diffusion en a été faible au total. Au Conseil nous nous sommes également interrogés sur la constitution d'une bonne liste de destinataires de nos publications. Nous avons alors surtout pris conscience de la difficulté de cette tâche. Par ailleurs nous savons qu'existe une demande latente pour un fascicule bien fait qui puisse présenter l'Académie, dès qu'elle commencera à se manifester plus qu'elle ne le fait actuellement. Mais mettre au point un tel fascicule est un travail.

Si je vous parle de ces difficultés c'est dans l'espoir que vous réfléchissiez à ce que l'Académie devrait faire pour les surmonter et dans l'espoir que vous nous fassiez des suggestions, même très ponctuelles.

II

S'agissant de notre rôle de représentant des sciences sociales dans leur dialogue avec l'Eglise, je voudrais d'abord vous rappeler sur quelles bases nous devrions le construire, puis examiner le choix des thèmes prioritaires dans ce dialogue, enfin vous faire part de mes sentiments sur le point où nous en sommes et sur ce que nous pourrions envisager pour les prochaines années.

Conscients de ce rôle qui nous était attribué, nous avons en 1995 pris une décision sur la proposition du Professeur Archer. Ce fut dès que nous aborderions l'étude d'un thème, de demander à un de nos confrères un rapport sur les traits les plus importants de l'enseignement social de l'Eglise relativement à ce thème. Le rapport identifierait les points sur lesquels cet enseignement pourrait être davantage élaboré. Il serait distribué à l'avance aux auteurs de communications avec la demande qu'ils se réfèrent à ceux des points ainsi identifiés qu'ils entendraient considérer.

L'objectif de cette décision, toujours valable, est d'orienter les travaux de l'Académie vers une évaluation constructive et utile de la doctrine sociale de l'Eglise. C'est en application de cette décision que fut demandé à notre confrère le Père Schasching de préparer un rapport sur l'enseignement social relativement au travail et à l'emploi, puis à notre confrère le Père Schooyans de préparer un rapport analogue sur le thème de la démocratie. Je profite de l'occasion pour remercier ces deux confrères du soin qu'ils ont mis à remplir le service qui leur était ainsi demandé. J'ajoute que

le rapport initial sur l'enseignement social de l'Eglise n'exclut pas la possibilité d'autres contributions sur cet enseignement, ainsi que vous le constatez dans le programme de cette année à propos du travail et de l'emploi, ainsi que vous le constaterez aussi dans le programme de l'an prochain à propos de la démocratie.

S'agissant de la conception que nous devrions avoir du dialogue entre l'Eglise et les sciences sociales, nous avons été éclairés en Mars 1996 à notre seconde session par ce que Monseigneur Martin nous en a dit. Ce dialogue, nous a-t-il expliqué, a trois parties. D'abord l'enseignement de l'Eglise peut contester les conclusions des sciences sociales, non parce que l'Eglise rejeterait la légitime autonomie de toute discipline scientifique, mais parce que parfois certains présupposés fondamentaux des disciplines peuvent être remis en question, par exemple une vision trop individualiste de la personne humaine. Ensuite l'enseignement social doit accepter les contributions apportées par les sciences sociales, sciences qui aident ainsi l'Eglise à appliquer correctement ses principes fondamentaux à une situation changeante qu'elle doit bien comprendre. Enfin les sciences sociales peuvent aussi, d'une certaine manière, contester l'enseignement social. Elles peuvent dire à l'Eglise: «Vous avez mal interprété la situation» ou «Vous n'avez pas réussi à trouver la réponse adéquate dans votre recherche des moyens pour servir la personne humaine».

A propos des thèmes sur lesquels nous avons travaillé au cours de ces cinq années, je vous rappelle d'abord que nous les avons identifiés comme prioritaires lors de notre première rencontre en novembre 1994, à la suite des suggestions écrites que nombre d'entre vous aviez faites et à l'issue de deux séances consacrées à ce choix. Je vous rappelle aussi que, lors du long discours qui avait marqué sa première audience, le Saint Père nous avait fait part des préoccupations de l'Eglise sur des problèmes assez divers dont je n'ai pas le loisir de vous donner maintenant la liste mais que vous pouvez retrouver dans le texte de ce discours, publié notamment dans les comptes-rendus de la session. Nous avons alors sélectionné trois thèmes prioritaires: «le travail et l'emploi», «la démocratie», enfin «la solidarité entre générations, l'Etat-providence et la famille».

Pour le moment nous n'avons travaillé que sur les deux premiers thèmes. Le Saint-Père nous a exprimé sa satisfaction vis-à-vis du choix de traiter les problèmes du travail et de l'emploi lors de son audience de mars 1996, et du choix de traiter les problèmes de la démocratie lors de son audience d'avril 1997. Quant à moi je ne regrette pas que nous ayons concentré nos efforts sur deux thèmes seulement. L'expérience me semble montrer que nous avons besoin de plus de deux réunions pour aboutir à une appréciation juste de l'état de nos disciplines sur un thème donné, qu'il s'agisse d'ailleurs du dialogue avec l'Eglise ou de notre contribution au progrès des sciences sociales.

C'est bien pourquoi notamment nous avons décidé de consacrer notre session plénière de mars 2000 une nouvelle fois à la démocratie. Sagissant de la session de mars 2001 nous avons décidé d'y traiter des «dimensions sociales de la mondialisation». Cette décision a résulté de la séance qu'ont tenu les Académiciens le 25 avril 1998. Deux arguments ont prévalu pour nous faire préférer ce nouveau thème au troisième de ceux sélectionnés en novembre 1994: d'une part le thème est partout l'objet de préoccupations croissantes; d'autre part il va nous obliger à placer au centre de notre réflexion les problèmes du Tiers Monde, alors que le troisième thème nous conduira sans doute, quand nous en traiterons, à donner encore une fois une grande place aux problèmes de l'Europe Occidentale. Je suis sûr, de plus, que le choix sera approuvé comme important pour le dialogue qui intéresse l'Eglise. Le Saint Père lui-même en a parlé à de multiples reprises, notamment quand il s'est adressé à nous.

Je vous ai annoncé en commençant que je vous donnerais mon sentiment sur ce que nous avons pu réussir à faire au cours de ces cinq premières années. S'agissant du dialogue avec l'Eglise, je crois que les conditions se réunissent peu à peu pour que ce dialogue s'engage. Je suis de fait plus optimiste que vis-à-vis de notre influence sur l'évolution des sciences sociales. Non pas que j'aie des preuves éclatantes pour justifier mon optimisme. Mais il me semble que, si mon diagnostic était faux, j'en serais averti, notamment par Monseigneur Martin qui sait parfaitement où nous en sommes.

Le problème réside probablement dans les formes que doit prendre notre voix dans le dialogue. Les comptes-rendus de nos sessions en sont une forme, mais peut-être indigeste. Des ouvrages tels que celui que nous entendons réaliser comme Edition du Jubilé en seraient une forme meilleure, notamment grâce au chapitre présentant les conclusions tirées par l'Académie d'un ensemble de contributions. Nous savons qu'un tel chapitre est difficile à rédiger. Nous comprenons aussi, je crois, que les conclusions y ont un genre intermédiaire: elles ne consistent pas en un ensemble de résolutions adoptées par l'Académie comme si elle constituait une assemblée politique; nos conclusions doivent s'y exprimer plutôt comme une synthèse réfléchie de ce que nous croyons avoir compris et de ce que nous laissons en suspens. Au fond ce genre n'est-il pas celui que le scientifique doit adopter vis-à-vis de tout interlocuteur avec qui il a mission de dialoguer?

Peut-être cependant l'orientation que nous avons prise nous conduit-elle à trop concentrer nos efforts sur des projets lourds et assez ambitieux. Il me semble qu'il devrait y avoir place aussi pour l'étude de sujets beaucoup plus étroits, sujets sur lesquels nous pourrions exprimer plus vite un avis, ou simplement donner plus vite une information pertinente, cela après

une petite table ronde bien ciblée. Mon penchant à l'optimisme me conduit à prévoir que la place pour de telles études légères se créera naturellement dès lors que nous aurons réussi à faire entendre une voix, certes modeste, mais claire et écoutée. Bien entendu certains d'entre vous peuvent penser que je crois trop à la génération spontanée et peuvent suggérer une réorientation délibérée.

A cet égard comme à d'autres, et après cinq années au cours desquelles l'Académie est devenue un objet réel, nous pourrions évidemment envisager des réorientations.

REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT

During the year following the Fourth Plenary Session and the Council Meeting of 25 April 1998, the Academy implemented the programme that had been decided upon at those meetings. The high point of the Academy's activities was the Fifth Plenary Session held on 3-6 March 1999. During those twelve months the Council held three meetings: on 10 November 1998, 2 March 1999 and 6 March 1999. This report will deal with the projects of the Academy concerning, first, the continuation of its study of democracy; second, the first stages of its study of the social dimension of globalization; and third, the organization of its on-going dialogue with the Church and its communications with the public.

The Study of Democracy

In March 1996 the General Assembly and the Council decided that the Academy should put the subject of democracy on its scientific agenda for future years under the guidance of a special committee which has been chaired by Professor Zacher since July 1996. A workshop was held in December 1996 in order to launch the project and its proceedings were then published.¹ The Fourth Plenary Session of the Academy, held in April 1998, devoted its full scientific programme to the project.² But clearly it could not then cover all the relevant issues. The committee had to make a selection and chose at the time the three following chief topics: 1. The value of democracy – democracy and values; 2. “Civil society” as the essence of democratic society; 3. Supranationality, internationality and democracy.

During the year under review, the committee drew up the programme of the Sixth Plenary Session of the year 2000, to be devoted once again to

¹ H. Zacher (ed.), *Democracy*, The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, *Miscellanea* No. 1, Vatican City, 1998.

² See H. Zacher (ed.), *Democracy: Some Acute Questions*, The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, *Acta* No. 4, Vatican City, 1999.

the subject of democracy. The committee then sought to implement the orientations chosen at the end of the fourth session, where it had been decided to organise the programme for the year 2000 in the following way: 1. Democracy in the social teaching of the Church – recent developments and special problems; 2. Democracy: strategies for values (how to advocate, foster and defend values in a pluralistic society by democratic means); 3. The ideal of democracy and democratic reality (the ever changing interplay between democratic structures and civil society); 4. Democracy and individual fields of encounter of the state and society: education, public opinion and the media, the economy, labour relations, the welfare state, religion and religious communities, ethnic structures.

The Social Dimension of Globalization

When on 25 April 1998 the decision was taken to introduce this new subject into the scientific activities of the Academy, it was explicitly stipulated that the intention was, on that occasion, to restore the balance in our agenda and to give more space to Third World problems and Third World specialists. Professor Sabourin was asked by the President to make precise proposals in order to launch the study of this subject and to chair a special committee which would have two principal functions: to foster the presence of Third World issues, and to guide the study of the new subject.

On 10 November 1998 the Council discussed a whole range of issues which had been prepared by an exchange of letters between Professor Sabourin and the President. A committee was instituted in order to broaden the interests and activities of the Academy in the general field of international development and to increase the participation of persons from Third World countries in the work and activities of the Academy. The committee was also to prepare the agenda for the study of the social dimension of globalization. Members were appointed to the committee and Professor Sabourin was made chairman. The Council decided that the committee would organize a workshop at the time of the 2000 Plenary Session with a view to defining the programme of the 2001 Plenary Session which would focus on the social dimension of globalization.

The committee met on 5-6 March 1999. It was able to draft a complete programme for the 2000 workshop, with a proposed list of speakers, some of whom immediately accepted.

The Dialogue with the Church and Information for the Public

Stimulated in the fifth session by the opening speech, in which the President reflected on the first five years of the Academy, the General Assembly, in its meeting of 5 March 1999, discussed how the Academy could more readily perform its mission, particularly in relation to the Church and her social teaching and to the public. The discussion was intended to produce a number of guidelines which would be implemented over the following few years, rather than to arrive at precise decisions. Academicians made a number of suggestions which contained a number of promising directions.

The General Assembly paid a great deal of attention to the organization of the dialogue with the Church, beyond that which would naturally take place as a result of the regular publication of the work of the Academy and the addresses of the Holy Father. Broad agreement seemed to emerge in favour of the idea of a "forum" where representatives of the Holy See could meet with Academicians in order to discuss some of the conclusions drawn from the Academy's scientific interchange. A meeting of the forum could be held when the Academy would be sufficiently advanced in the study of a subject to have reached well formulated conclusions on matters of interest to the Church. The completion of the Jubilee edition was expected to provide a good opportunity for a first meeting of this sort.

At each plenary session since 1996 communications to the public have been organized in the form of press releases to be published at the beginning of each plenary session. The suggestion that the Academy produce in the future a final document at each session was made and discussed. Some Academicians were enthusiastic about the suggestion, even saying that the document should be incisive. Others pointed to the difficulty of the exercise and to the fact that the document would have to be an expression of the Academy acting as an academy.

In its meeting of 6 March the Council discussed the same issues. It endorsed the project of setting up a "forum" for meetings with the relevant authorities of the Holy See. It decided to keep the project on its agenda and, first, to examine in 2000 whether and how publication of the Jubilee edition would provide the best opportunity for proposing the meeting of a forum to the Holy Father.

The Council was rather favourable to the idea of a final document to be produced and published at the end of each plenary session. In order to implement this idea, it did not see any other feasible course of action than the establishment of a small group which would draw up a summary of the deliberations and conclusions of the session. The group could perhaps even issue press releases during the session.

SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

on

TOWARDS REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

UNEMPLOYMENT: SOCIAL NEEDS AND ECONOMIC TENDENCIES. SCENARIOS FOR THEIR ETHICAL RECONCILIATION*

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“The right to work” is the first topic which the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences has taken up from the general brief to enter into a dialogue with the social teaching of the Church. It was chosen because of its centrality to the life of everyone, work being the means through which people realize themselves, becoming more human in the process (*Laborem Exercens* n. 9). As John Paul II reminded us at the beginning of the second Plenary Session (22 March 1996), devoted to ‘The Future of Work and Work in the Future’, the Academy’s aim is not to advance concrete socio-economic policies but to define the necessary social conditions which would offer the opportunity of personal fulfilment to all, in and through work.

After reviewing social teaching on labour, work and employment, (J. Schasching’s background paper) the Academy has begun by focusing on the crucially important topic of “unemployment” – selecting this because without work a high proportion of those throughout the world are denied dignity and self-realization, becoming socially marginal, and are a rising proportion of those in developing countries. The desirability of full employment was the starting point of our discussions whose ultimate objective is transcendently to define the conditions which would make it a real possibility.

The issue of full employment and the best way to approximate towards it entails the complete range of society’s institutions. Appreciation of this is of the utmost importance for it is precisely what has been neglected in many of the dominant approaches to the problem. In fact I would disengage three crucial implications from the need to take the full array of social institutions into account:

* Introduction to the 1999 Plenary Meeting.

(i) There can be no satisfactory approach to the problem of unemployment which is based upon a uni-factoral solution, that is one which envisages changes in a particular institution (most frequently in neo-liberalism it is the economy which is targeted) and does so without reference to its impact upon other social institutions.

(ii) Any such approach which is based upon transforming one institution fallaciously assumes that the institution in question is paradigmatic of all others and therefore that changes in one part of society will be automatically and harmoniously reflected by complementary transformations in the rest. Thus, underlying uni-factoral approaches are generic models of society which have generally been discredited, namely ones which assume organic institutional integration or which presume unwarranted homologies between vastly different social institutions (e.g. economy, polity, family, education etc.).

(iii) Any approach which is predicated upon institutional complementarity, such that the desired changes in one institution are presumed to have only felicitous consequences for others and therefore that no serious institutional conflicts will ensue, is equally erroneous. For it entails conservative assumptions that at most there will be transitional problems of adaptation or it involves traditional functionalist explanations of temporary dislocations which will disappear when 'cultural lags' are overcome.

Now I want to argue against all three assumptions – uni-factorality, homology and complementarity – and to maintain, in opposition to them, that there is a major divide between social needs and current economic tendencies which surfaces through the institutions in which they are respectively embedded and expressed. There are two levels at which this tension is manifested. (a) Firstly there is the level of 'actualism', which concerns those institutional incompatibilities which have surfaced as a matter of historical contingency but to which vested sectional interests have become attached (for example, the *positions prises* by advocates of labour deregulation on the one hand, and traditional Unionist defences of acquired rights to security of employment, on the other). Such 'actualism' seems to have the virtue of dealing with the existing institutional array and of explaining conflicts of interest in terms of the lack of goodness of fit between them. However, the drawback to an uncritical 'actualist' approach is that it confines us to the existing array of institutions and can only foresee solutions in terms of compromises and concessions taking place between them: it cannot envisage conflict or its transcendence in any other terms. (b) Secondly there is the level of real interests (i.e. what human beings by their nature require in order to flourish, as distinct from conditioned wants, demands or other

appetitive states), where these are seen as matters whose fulfilment is not conventionally married to the defence of existing institutional forms and can generally be envisaged as best being accommodated by new institutional structures. Thus whilst 'actualism' deals with traditional conflicts between historically emergent institutions which embody divergent vested interests, 'realism' considers the relationship between real social needs, anthropologically grounded in what we are, and the implications of various proposals to reduce unemployment and to create work opportunities.

Whilst 'actualism' is only contingently related (via pragmatism) to ethical considerations (since evaluation is confined to the competing legitimacy claims of clusters of institutions which have emerged historically, such as particular legal investment patterns or given systems of Social Security), realism broadens the ethical ground to consider the desirability of potential institutional arrangements, as it is linked to what is humanly needful rather than what is historically given.

What I seek to maintain in this introduction is that the work of the Academy in its previous two Plenary Sessions devoted to this theme has highlighted that there are four ineluctable contradictions between economic tendencies advanced as strategies to overcome unemployment, on the one hand, and conventional institutions defending social interests, on the other. By examining these four very schematically, I want to indicate the intransigence of these conflicts if considered solely at the level of 'actualism', i.e. that they are simply not resolvable by trade-offs between extant institutions. This is both an immanent critique of what is possible amongst existing institutional arrangements and also intended as a demonstration that any attempted institutional reconciliation at the actual level cannot satisfy the ethical requirement of introducing the universal right to work.

As an analysis it is intended to introduce the more radical approach to institutional innovation which needs serious consideration as the means of implementing work for all and thus meeting the ethical injunctions embedded in the Church's social teaching on work as a universal social need. Thus, presenting the four dimensions of contradiction is a way of recapitulating our work in 1996 and 1997 when the Academy largely confined its deliberations to the actualist level. Simultaneously, each dimension of irresolvable conflict is used to point the way to a discussion of more radical methods of transcendence by means of institutional transformations. Each of those pinpointed will constitute part of our discussions during this final Plenary Session on the theme of work and employment and is a response to the challenge of determining some of the conditions which would make work for all a real possibility.

The four contradictions in question are the following:

1. Free market development and deregulation of employment.
2. Finance markets and labour markets.
3. Globalization and local regulation.
4. Unemployment and social solidarity.

FOUR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRADICTIONS

1. *Free Market Development and the Deregulation of Employment*

Given the high correlation between rates of economic growth, which has maintained until recently, and rates of employment there is a strong tendency to (re)turn to (updated) conceptions of the free market as the mechanism whose ‘hidden hand’ will assure the best possible solution to problems of work and employment. As such its main tenets are minimalist state intervention and maximal deregulation of labour. Fundamentally, the argument is “to the effect that the market constitutes the paradigmatic social institution, and offers the privileged vantage point, in relation to which all other social institutions must be understood and assessed. It is this assumption which produces the conclusion – that whatever is worthwhile about democracy derives from the market, and whatever is threatening to the market can be traced to democracy” (Beetham p. 188).¹ This highlights the basic contradiction between the economic tendency which is currently widely promoted in neo-liberalism and the interests vested in two other social institutions – Trade Union organizations for collective bargaining and national systems of Social Security. Historically both of these emerged to offset the inegalitarian consequences of *laissez-faire* industrial development. Now advocates of neo-liberalism see the institutional conflict between economic growth and the vitality of such protective institutions as insuperable. Hence the conclusion, on the neo-liberal scenario, is that these acquired social rights must be dismantled as they act as fetters upon economic growth which generates employment.

This case hinges upon the free market as the motor of the relationship already noted between economic growth and full(er) employment. The argument itself merits considerable attention because the presentation of such an economy as the ‘paradigmatic institution’ has implications for other institutions which would have to be ethically endorsed if untrammelled

¹ David Beetham, ‘Four Theorems about the Market and Democracy’, *European Journal of Political Research*, 23, 1993, pp. 187-201.

market mechanisms are indeed central to generating the optimal scenario for full employment. Thus labour market rigidity is attributed to the accumulated body of law providing labour protection. Hence, protected employment (dismissal only for good cause, security of tenure, etc.) is held to discourage the creation of new jobs by employers, reluctant to extend such legal rights to a larger working population. Rigid employment protection increases the high cost of labour through collective bargaining (unions, it is held, having induced disproportionate increases in the wages of the less skilled) and through government intervention in the form of welfare benefits (as social security increases labour costs via higher taxation). The latter fails to stimulate production, as well, in the views of some, as introducing a "dependency culture" amongst workers.

The problem of unemployment, it follows, can only be rectified by the availability of more work and job creation follows economic growth in the absence of restrictions. In other words, the labour market needs to become more flexible and this is held to entail its deregulation, i.e. (i) a reduction of direct state intervention such that welfare payments are pegged below the level of low income employment (decreasing taxation which then becomes available for investment and increasing the incentive to take the employment available); (ii) measures be taken to ensure that pay settlements are not 'exceedingly' high, hence allowing pay differentials and thus work incentives to increase; and (iii) that greater geographical mobility be stimulated by loosening the ties to any given workplace.

In short, on the neo-liberal scenario the best protection for employees against arbitrary corporate action is not Unionization or regulation but full employment. The two are held to be increasingly in opposition to one another, because with the new international mobility of capital, aggressive wage bargaining merely drives investment abroad, and is thus counter-productive in outcome. Simultaneously, as far as the Unions are concerned, decreasing membership in developed countries (given quantitative and qualitative changes in employment) means that they consistently lose their traditional high ground as representatives of labour. Although an increasingly professionalized role is assumed by Unions in the intricacies of collective bargaining, meaning that institutional opposition continues, nevertheless this does not offer protection for the growing tracts of non-unionized employees, let alone the increasing numbers of the unemployed.

The other countervailing pressure which cushions against the rigours of free market forces is the welfare state. Yet Social Security systems are themselves threatened by a high rate of unemployment which leaves a diminishing active population to supply the needs of the young unemployed and the pensions of the old who now live longer. This is the second institutional

contradiction because there is a strong tendency in the liberal economic orthodoxy to see full employment and welfare state provisions as standing in a zero-sum relationship. High levels of unemployment have been met in post-war years by increased social security entitlements and state intervention for the preservation of jobs (e.g. especially in the mining industry). In the free market model, these are both deemed counter productive by (a) detracting from the investment income which would create new jobs elsewhere, (b) by inducing untaxed moonlighting among recipients of benefits and, (c) discouraging the more skilled from devoting more hours to the use of their productive expertise, due to the high tax levels their overtime would attract. The argument continues that the adaptive failure of labour markets now overloads the Welfare State and that governments react sensibly if they go down the path of retrenched benefits and deregulation policies.

However, there are two major problems raised by this course of action. On the one hand, deregulation at low wage levels when coupled with declining social security provisions is a formula for poverty. Added to this, prolonged unemployment on drastically reduced benefits affects not just the present population but entails inter-generational entrapment in poor nutrition, poor education, poor life chances in general; in short it projects unemployment into the next generation. On the other hand, the promise of the Welfare State was not simply as an economic safety-net, but was an essential plank in "social citizenship" (T.H. Marshall),² which would consolidate democracy by cutting across economic class divisions thus reinforcing social solidarity. Deprived of this role, the probabilities of social unrest then increase with attendant threats to democracy and the safety of life in civil society.

Yet it seems unlikely that there would be a wholesale dismantling of Social Security since advocates of the free market generally accede to the necessity of indispensable minimalist provisions. This is because a greater flexibility of labour (as desired) will automatically increase frictional unemployment and therefore *short-term* welfare support will be needed to protect against defaults on mortgage payments, etc. amongst the geographically mobile workers sought. Also it is generally accepted that state assistance will always be required for those whose unemployment derives from an *inability* to work. Moreover there is a stronger argument for an active welfare state in order to stimulate the growth of the service sector, thus generating new employment among the most needy category, the unskilled. Whilst economic orthodoxy holds that service sector growth which is

² T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (Cambridge University Press, 1950).

dependent upon subsidization (government employment) is self-defeating because of the mounting fiscal crisis, the alternative view maintains that, on the contrary, such a boost to employment stimulates the use of out-servicing by dual-earning couples, thus simultaneously defraying the costs involved, avoiding poverty, providing care facilities (children, the aged and chronically sick), utilizing the skills of the 'unskilled' and also protecting the replacement of the active population, by helping to arrest demographic decline in developed countries.

As John Paul II underlined in his address (March 22, 1996), prosperity and economic growth cannot be realized to the detriment of persons and people. Liberalism, like any other economic system, thus commits a grave injustice if it benefits the possessors of capital whilst making workers mere instruments of production. Moreover in 1997 (April 25th), the Pope underlined the fact that market freedom must not counteract '*le droit primordial de tout homme à avoir un travail*'.

In this context there are three compelling reasons which invite consideration of radical means for transcending this conflict between existing economic tendencies and social needs. Firstly there is the fact of the growing distinction between the crisis in employment and the crisis in production such that today in the West upturns in production are frequently accompanied by downturns in employment. There is a basic difficulty in pinpointing the contribution of labour to current economic activity and this indeterminate input also spells an indeterminacy between productivity/profitability and the actual income distribution. Secondly, attempts to treat the labour contribution as homological by applying productivity indices to it seriously discounts the problem of their inappropriateness for certain socially necessary forms of employment (teachers, doctors, the police, magistrates, etc.), whilst contributing to the commodification of production workers. The "utility criterion" leads directly to an enlarged conception of "work" and "employment" which embraces tasks that are of benefit to fellow human beings, but which are not susceptible to measurement by profitability/productivity criteria. Thirdly, this introduces an ethical challenge to the index of market success, where it is queried whether the *type* of employment associated with profitability should ever be taken to be automatically beneficial in nature. After all profitability can be higher in drugs and arms production than any other area, but these clear cases where economic growth is detrimental to persons highlights the problematic nature of this index which is also associated with the promotion of consumerism and materialism.

Because the crisis in employment is unlikely to decline even given moderate increases in productivity and profitability since economic growth

is increasingly related to the contributions of information technology and decreasingly associated with employment rates or measurable work inputs, then free market growth is not a mechanism which can be relied upon as a motor driving towards full-employment or an income distribution based upon anything other than power relationships. Productivity now increases with a reduced number of workers and this is the millennial expectation for the whole of the Economic Union. In turn this will leave an growing proportion of potential workers in a structurally diminished bargaining position (given that the unemployed generally fall outside the aegis of Union negotiations) and yet would make the sources of remuneration for a necessarily enlarged population, active in inter-personal services rather than productive work (e.g. education and health care), extremely dubious on an economic scenario which includes reduced public spending as one of the fundamental tenets of neo-liberalism.

Hence the need to consider radical measures that would transcend the present conflict between social needs and current economic tendencies and which will be undertaken in this Plenary Meeting. In particular, serious consideration should be given to proposals for a 'Universal Basic Income' (*'allocation universelle'*), financed not by income tax but by taxing value/profit created by firms. This would simultaneously reduce the difficulties which attend the financing of existing systems of Social Security, would place all people in a better bargaining position with potential employers, and would supply the means for remunerating those engaged in socially useful activities which by their nature cannot be assigned a value by market mechanisms.

2. *Finance Markets and Labour Markets*

Pivotal to the dynamism attributed to the free market are the workings of capital finance markets on a global basis. Investment is enhanced as derivatives enable the design of a better risk profile for businesses. This in turn introduces a higher level of globalized economic stability by ironing out regional disturbances (e.g. famine due to localized crop failures can be overcome by the world-wide integration of agricultural markets). This dynamism derives from the fact that there is no unemployment/underemployment of capital, since on the worst financial scenario capital markets will settle for low pay, but never for no pay, in an explicit contrast with the labour market.

A major difference is therefore highlighted between the innovative power of financial markets in job creation and the rigidity of labour markets which depress it. This contrast is particularly marked in the differential internationalization of the two: high for capital and low for labour.

However, any advocacy of a homology between finance and labour markets is extremely contentious. It is certainly true that most national labour markets are far removed from the deregulation process characteristic of financial markets, but it does not follow that deregulation's main effect is to reduce unemployment rather than to increase profits. Nor does a *blanket* advocacy of deregulation prove compatible with a civilized let alone Christian society. What arises from this issue is the question of whether the labour market (people) should be modelled upon the finance market (things). Indeed can the analogy be used at all? Information can now be transferred in practically zero real time, but people cannot move as fast as information. Consequently labour markets *can never* be as flexible as finance markets, and this is not to mention issues of family dislocation and the devolved costs upon labour of re-location (e.g. language acquisition, loss of citizenship rights, disenfranchisement, etc.). This is the fundamental contradiction.

Moreover, the flight of capital is always more welcome than the international mobility of labour (witness the condition of "guestworkers" throughout Europe). Intensifying this contradiction is the fact that the mobility of labour, particularly when coming from Less Developed Countries rarely touches the poverty-stricken who cannot afford the price of moving and thus it often serves merely to depopulate some of the more skilled workers from the South to the further advantage of the North. In addition, restrictive employment policies in the North not only intensify the North-South divide, but also raise moral and social questions when 'guestworkers' (and to an even greater extent, refugees) are usually denied full civil rights in host countries. The problem here is to integrate the *person* of the worker, transforming them from the objects of employment to working subjects, possessing the rights of citizenship and enabled to live in their family unit. Respect for the *person* entails repudiating the cost-benefit approach to migration and accepting the obligation to accord rights of entry to the family – whose short-term results will undoubtedly constitute a diminution in cost-effectiveness. This is the price of the non-commodification of labour. Should social teaching not encourage the payment of this price?

Thus it is important to consider radical scenarios on which the interests of labour may well be served by tighter regulation of finance markets. There is now a growing advocacy of the need for an international system of finance market supervision to avoid abuses. Some of these are well documented (e.g. the impact on the national debt of less developed countries and the manner in which the free circulation of capital effectively augments unequal exchange with the Third World rather than necessarily performing its assumed boosting function). What seems required here is a closer speci-

fication of those abuses rebounding upon employment, wage levels and international inequality, together with the kind of measures which would curb these without destroying beneficial competition. Furthermore the ethical issue of dramatic increases in trading and profits which are largely detached from real economic processes and from production needs to be addressed in terms of the fiscal measures appropriate to such capital gains, especially since it is precisely the representatives of such interests who are most vocal in calling for labour deregulation – with its attendant unemployment effects on the young and the unskilled.

Here the radical scenario hinges upon making the admittedly difficult distinction between investment finance and speculative capital gains, one which has become increasingly blurred with various developments like trading in futures and the derivatives market. Nevertheless, this is not to say that certain operations of the international finance markets are not unambiguously speculative, as for example in foreign exchange dealings. Given that each such transaction is logged electronically at source, the infra-structure for direct fiscal extraction already exists. What is required on this scenario, which will be addressed during this Plenary Meeting, is the development of a superstructural and over-arching agency, because this finance market is one for which internal governmental initiatives cannot suffice. Such an agency is an implicit requirement of proposals such as the ‘Tobin tax’ and the UNO report³ which proposes taxing the international flow of speculative capital for the creation of a global social network to protect against poverty and hunger. In other words we need to consider a regulative body at world level to parallel the unregulated emergence of global speculation and to operate as an equitable redistributive mechanism which functions to offset the increasing capital divide between the developed and the developing worlds.

3. Globalization and Internal Regulation

The third contradiction surrounding employment stems from economic globalization, that is the emergence of a single interlinked market for the production and delivery of goods, services and finance across the world. Although labour is the fourth element in the globalized forces of production, the effects of economic tendencies are to make it the subordinate and dependent element. If the nineteenth-century history of the developed world is one where the gradual unionization of labour brought about some

³ UNO (1992), *World Report of Human*

equilibration with the powers of capital, then late twentieth-century globalization has effectively reinstated the original imbalance between them.

Currently there is a massive shift in the global balance of power characterizing labour and capital in favour of the latter, which is attributable to the international expansion of multi-national companies and their intentional undermining of the nineteenth-century balance achieved in the developed world. Thus capital concentration in the multi-nationals (which in 1994 were roughly estimated to control one third of global private property) yields them an unprecedented hegemony over the job market (since the majority of new employment in developed countries is now generated by them). As a corollary, their power is now to set different sectors of the global job market in competition with one another and thus to install a general weakening of organized labour on a world-wide basis.

Hence on the one hand, mobile capital moves expressly to those parts of the world where labour costs are cheapest and where labour's organization and acquired legal rights are also lowest. The impact upon less developed countries is thus to freeze labour organization at the lowest possible level in 'exchange' for capital investment. Yet this non-reciprocal process does not even come with any promise of continued investment, since shifts in currency values mean that investment patterns track the lowest labour costs on a world-wide basis. Thus migratory capital systematically deserts existing locations in the interest of operating with the smallest wage bill. Because of the explicit avoidance of areas with any significant trend towards labour organization, those countries which are sequentially deserted are left with no institutional basis for defending workers who are now vulnerable to whatever it is that political forces attempt to do in the face of the local economic crises which they now confront.

On the other hand and simultaneously, the price of continued investment in developed countries is the intensified demand of capital for the progressive deregulation of the labour market and erosion of provisions for job security. In this way, developed and underdeveloped countries are effectively pitted against one another in a competition to reduce labour costs and to generate the type of deregulated labour market which is most conducive to the extraction of profit by multi-national investors.

The broad notion that global well-being is best promoted by a completely flexible world labour market which becomes homological to investment markets is predominantly ideological. Not only, as I have already argued, can people not display the same mobility as capital without incurring considerable costs of dislocation, but there are further social barriers to the neo-liberal ideal of a global labour market. Enduring racism in the West places severe limits on workers' mobility and social discrimination

generates undesirable consequences when it does occur, one of the most deleterious being the emergence of urban ghettos due to the workings of housing markets, which have knock-on effects for other social institutions, the most important being education which then largely reproduces the differential life-chances of different groups entering the system.

The contradiction occurs because few initiatives taken at the level of national policy are capable of counteracting the impact of multi-national companies, whose annual turnover now exceeds the national budget of the smaller European countries. Hence the paradox that although the right to work is a standard feature of some 160 national constitutions, yet global conditions are now more hostile than ever to the effective realization of full employment by measures taken at the level of nation states. Moreover, since investment patterns and the export of profits continue to reflect the contingencies of historical development and thus to protract the effects of neo-colonialism, the global consequence is a widening of the economic gulf between North and South which is particularly impervious to political action on the part of poorer governments.

The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) witnessed an acknowledgement of this global economic tendency both to generate wealth in absolute terms whilst simultaneously deepening the global divide between rich and poor nations and to increase the prosperity of some whilst exacerbating social disintegration in others. Yet the doubt remains whether it lies within the abilities of most developed countries to transcend the contradiction between untrammelled patterns of multi-national investment and the social needs which have no commensurate promotive agencies. Significantly the public debate surrounding G-8 policies has centred upon debt remission towards the twenty or so countries most negatively affected – something which, whilst desirable in itself, would do nothing structurally to preclude the immediate recurrence of indebtedness.

More radical proposals go beyond reliance upon the concerted goodwill of the most powerful national economies. A cause for cautious optimism is found by many in legal institutions which already transcend national borders. However, when such nascent developments are inspected, then neither the Economic Union nor the International Court of Human Rights have yet seriously begun to codify multi-national malpractice. Instead the suggestion is to build beyond the economic confines of current international agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund, by advocating an '*order démocratique planétaire*' (John Paul II, April 26th, 1997). Its concomitant institutions would be dedicated to the counter advancement of social interests which require representation and legislation without which they will remain in a state of glaring non-complementarity with the effects

of global economic operations. As was stressed in *Centesimus Annus* (n. 58), countervailing institutions are needed at the global level to ensure that '*les intérêts de la grande famille humaine soient équitablement représentés*'. As part of the general task of our Academy is to dialogue with the social teachings of the Church, it seems to me to be crucially important to signal those points, like the above, where our deliberations are in direct accord with the established corpus.

4. *Unemployment and Social Solidarity*

Unemployment constitutes a problem on a world-wide basis and one which has intensified since the 1970s in the West. For OECD countries, which largely succeeded in delivering full employment during the 25 years of post-war reconstruction, joblessness then increased with successive crises in the world economy in the 1970s (for OECD countries, unemployment increased from 10 million during 1950-73, to 30 million in 1983 and stood at 25 million in 1990). This high rate of unemployment, which peaked at 8.5% of the workforce, meant, for example, that a quarter of those under the age of 25 have never worked in some European countries. In Eastern Europe 'full employment' evaporated in the 1990s with the suppression of latent posts (formal and fictitious jobs), the closing of state enterprises and a disadvantageous export situation. In the Third World, although there is a strong relationship between the level of GNP, of waged employment and of standards of living with integration into the world economy (especially in Asia), unemployment rises due to national debt depressing the capacity to create work, certain declines in demand for raw materials (ironically due to Western re-cycling) and I.T. transfers which diminish labour intensiveness. Unemployment is reinforced by the strong general tendency for the growth of the active population to outstrip the possibilities of employment outside the primary sector (which now often furnishes diminishing levels of subsistence). In short the problem of unemployment is increasingly evident on a world-wide basis.

What this means is a contradiction between patterns of (un)employment and the social integration of large and important sections of the population. Since unemployment has been disproportionately concentrated in two major categories, the young and the unskilled, the contradiction with social integration entails the threat of a marginalized 'underclass' and the projection of disadvantage as an inter-generational phenomenon. What augments this undermining of social solidarity is discontent deriving from the relative underemployment of women in the workplace (through traditional patterns of discrimination together with enduring problems of maternity

leave and child-care), in conjunction with lasting overemployment of working women in domestic tasks within the home.

Since work contributes to the fulfilment of each person, by literally increasing their humanity, then the voluntaristic entry of women into employment should be welcomed, rather than regretting the demise of the female "domestic model". After all that model had only been characteristic of the more privileged sectors of developed societies for a relatively short historical period. Obviously this raises questions about the discharge of family responsibilities (particularly towards children and the aged), but it is *not* one which can be answered by concentrating exclusively upon *female* roles. A corollary of increased female participation (given the demographic tendency for the majority of women to marry) is that at the family level we are increasingly dealing with dual-income units in the developed world and with dual-worker units in the less developed. Given that this 'new' model appears to be here to stay, consideration has to be given to parallel changes in family requirements such as child-care and care for the aged.

In this context, job-sharing or partial working has been advanced to offset the marginalization of the unemployed, representing a solution to the problem of social solidarity which would also be highly compatible with women's needs to combine child bearing and occupational continuity. Fostering the trend towards a shorter working week could significantly alleviate medium term unemployment without negative consequences for productivity by dissociating the time during which the company operates (say a six day week) from the working week of employees (say four days). Such proposals have encountered at best a lukewarm reception in business circles because they are held to increase unit labour costs and thus are considered as inimical to economic recovery and growth.

A more radical solution to the problem of how to extend work to all, in the interests of both individual human fulfilment and also of social integration, would consist in a reconceptualization of the terms 'labour', 'work', and 'employment', together with the relations between them. It is often assumed that it is predominantly in traditional societies that 'labour' and 'work' (usually of subsistence nature and outside the monetary economy) are unconnected to employment (i.e. remuneration for holding a post). Equally 'employment', it is often forgotten, has certainly from the modern period often been completely dissociated from either 'labour' or 'work'. Not only are there late modernist equivalents of sinecure offices but increasingly less and less of the active employed population has even a distanced relation to production. Therefore after 200 years of privileging what is assumed to be productive employment, changed circumstances make it appropriate to consider redefining 'work and employment', such that the

emphasis is placed on the recognition and extension of 'work' rather than upon a fixed quantum of 'employment'.

The question is how to effect a real change such that proper recognition is given to those who make a contribution to society through 'work' rather than 'employment'. The types of work in mind are predominantly those falling into the category of caring (children, the aged, the homeless, migrants, the environment, etc.). This neither is, nor need become, professionalized. Indeed one of the significant factors about it is that it utilises 'skills' which people already possess or for which they require little additional training. Therefore to revalorize their contribution would have most impact upon the category registering the highest rates of unemployment, the so-called 'unskilled'. Simultaneously it would facilitate women's labour market integration by providing them with family services. The question remains of how this should be paid for. Fiscal benefits and welfare payments would arouse the familiar objections about increased tax burdens in relation to economic growth.

However, were a much more social and less economic notion of *radical flexibility* of the labour market to be entertained, then the sums can add up very differently. A radical notion of flexibility breaks both with the fixed distinction between 'work and employment' and equally with the outdated pre-war model of entry to the labour market dating from 'apprenticeship' and being continuous until 'retirement'. Existing changes include frequent moves to different employers and work sites, the increase of 'homeworking' which some see as heralding the 'virtual workplace', more self-employment and more contingent employment (part-time, limited contracts, cumulation of partial jobs, etc.). What would be acknowledged is a new concept of the division of labour, which is already coming into being, yet needs recognizing not just as a sporadic phenomenon confined to certain categories but as a generic life-cycle approach to conceptualizing the labour market. In other words the *majority* of people could be seen as shifting between 'work' and 'employment' (to use the traditional terms) at different points in the family life-cycle and in response to shifting preferences and economic circumstances. It would include some training of the unemployed for neglected social tasks but would be much more generalized (and gender unspecific) given the decline of factory-based production and the declining division between workplace and living-space.

To build upon this for all would not only preclude this from becoming a stigmatized sector for the less qualified, but would valorize voluntary work amongst the qualified and enable values other than unbridled careerism to be expressed throughout the life course. Simultaneously it could significantly contribute to the problem presented by our top heavy demographic

structures in developed countries. Here the pension bill escalates given the tendency towards earlier ages of retirement, with the old becoming the greatest consumers of welfare services and the least of market services. Yet the whole concept of retirement, applied to a younger age group who also live longer and more healthily, harks back to the "industrial society model". Now 30 years of 'leisure' is an intolerable burden to many who cannot fill each day but instead still need to make a valued social contribution.

Rather than become a reserve army of the post-employed, entry into voluntary work could be a normative expectation. This would increase the quality of auxiliary services (in schools, hospitals, prisons) where employed staff are too overstretched to supply the quality services needed. Here a basic level of remuneration could substitute for pensions amongst a category of the population whose peak expenditure period is over. Since continued 'work' would be time consuming it could reasonably be expected to boost use of market services amongst what would become a less leisured retired group. Modalities and costings would require close scrutiny, but the real key would lie in generalizing the normative expectation of making a continued social contribution. In turn this would facilitate the re-orientation of welfare state expenditure towards the skilling of the young and young unemployed adults.

To make the normative expectation of working central and universal is something which can be conditioned but not determined by structural adjustments in material elements like taxation and benefits, at least in the developed world. But the core inducement has to be the fulfilment derived from the experience of work itself. This brings us to the last section of papers to be presented during the Plenary Meeting, which are devoted to the spiritual dimension of employment and how this can be incorporated into a new culture of work despite the increasing fragmentation, isolation and personalization of employment. It introduces a final contradiction between the fragmentation of individualized work experience and the normative universalism of a theology (or even soterology) of experiencing work. This perhaps presents the greatest challenge of all to the task which the Academy has undertaken.

PART I
ECONOMIC ADAPTATIONS CONDUCTIVE
TO REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT

COST OF CAPITAL AND THE UNCERTAIN PRE-EMINENCE OF LABOUR

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One of the most important principles on which the whole body of Catholic Social Teaching is based is the pre-eminence of labour over capital. This principle was already clearly articulated in *Rerum Novarum*¹ and its importance has been reaffirmed ever since, especially in *Laborem Exercens*² where it is said "... labour is always a primary efficient cause, while 'capital', the whole collection of means of production, remains a mere instrument or instrumental cause". Taking this very general principle as given, the purpose of this paper is to shed some light on the economic – and to a lesser extent societal – mechanisms that govern the relationship between labour and capital in the present day world, more precisely in its most developed part.

The paper has three main parts. The introductory part brings some conceptual and methodological clarity into the complex issue of the labour-capital relationship. The second part is more empirical and presents some statistical evidence possibly useful for a better understanding of the central question addressed by the paper. The concluding part dwells on two sets of issues: technical and policy oriented conclusions, on the one hand, and

¹ J. Schasching S.J., 'Catholic Social Teaching and Labour', in *Pontifice Academiae Scientiarum Socialium - Acta 2*, ...; see also A. de Salins and F. Villeroy de Galhau, *Le Développement Moderne des Activités Financières au regard des Exigences Éthiques du Christianisme* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), 54 pp., especially pp. 19-22; see also P.H. Dembinski, 'Moralité du Travail: au Confluent des Préoccupations du Magistère et des Responsables de l'Europe de l'Est?', in *L'Enseignement Social Chrétien: Dimensions Actuelles* (coll. Prémices, Editions Universitaires de Fribourg, 1988), pp. 139-155.

² LE 12,1.

some suggestions as to the aspects of the present day capital-labour relationship that may necessitate or require specific attention by the Church.

I. LABOUR AND CAPITAL: BETWEEN COMPLEMENTARITY AND ANTAGONISM

A. *Multiple facets of "capital"*

According to standard economics, labour, land and capital are the three factors that are used, in varying conditions and proportions, in any productive activity or effort. Much of the attention of the founding fathers of "political economy" was devoted to discussions of rules and principles that govern, or should govern, the use and remuneration of these three factors, taking into account their essential differences.

Even for a newcomer to economics, the most fundamental difference between the three above mentioned factors of production is evident and has been stressed by Catholic Social Teaching on many occasions. Capital and land are objects while labour is a service provided by human persons. Capital and land are subject to specific property rights and can be transferred from one owner to another, whereas work is an inalienable capacity of the human person. As the economic importance of land as a factor of production is decreasing, for the sake of simplicity in the following pages it will be assimilated to capital.

Because of their natural differences, the methods of measuring labour and capital also differ. Labour is expressed in terms of quantity of hours during which productive services are granted. Land can either be expressed in physical terms as a surface, or in terms of its monetary equivalent, as a value with explicit or implicit reference to a price. Of the three factors of production, capital is the most problematic to define and to measure. Traditionally, this concept has been used to mean all the physical installations and devices needed for production.³ However, because of the genuine heterogeneity of means of production, the only way to measure physical capital is in value terms, i.e. with reference to prices.

Many methods of valuation of existing physical capital can be used: valuation at replacement costs or valuation at purchase prices. In the case of physical capital used by a specific enterprise, the corresponding amount will appear on the company balance sheet only to the extent that the equipment has not been depreciated. The corresponding value of physical

³ LE 12,1 for instance, see also H. Hageman, 'Capital', in *New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, vol. I.

capital appearing on the asset side of the company's balance sheet is usually called "tangible assets" and gives an incomplete view of the value of the physical capital used by the company.

When it comes to evaluating the existing stock of physical capital within the framework of the System of National Accounts, things are even more complicated than the level of the enterprise; and this for two different reasons. First, the System of National Accounts records, by definition, flows and not stocks. Thus, the value of capital stock is grasped only indirectly, in terms of increments, i.e. through the investment flow. Second, investment flow data are obtained by estimation rather by the proper measurement of business investment outlays. In consequence, only sparse estimates of capital stock exist.⁴

To complicate things further, the word "capital" is also used with reference to the liability side of a company's balance sheet. "Capital" becomes then a synonym and substitute for "financial capital" which may have two very different meanings in the financial context.

"Capital" in the financial sense is used to mean "equity capital", i.e. the value of the shareholders' commitment to the company. Capital in this sense describes the amount of money entitled to returns, i.e. the amount entitled to collect the residual – the profit.

According to classical financial management rules, equity capital was there to pay for the most risky assets, and tangible assets (physical capital) were considered to be such. In the industrial age, when finance was closely related to "real" economic processes and when production of goods and services was mostly based on physical capital, the two meanings of capital (equity and equipment) were rather narrow. Max Weber saw it clearly: capital is determined by what is on the enterprise capital account, i.e. anything against which the enterprise can raise external funds.⁵

Today this relationship between equity and physical capital no longer holds, especially in service firms which generate the most important part of the GDP of OECD countries. In the service sector, productive activities require more and more "intangible assets"⁶ that, in most cases do not

⁴ M. Zarinnejadan, 'L'Évaluation Financière et l'Investissement Privé en Suisse 1946-96', in *Revue Suisse d'Économie Politique et de Statistique*, Dec. 1989.

⁵ M. Weber, *Histoire Économique: Esquisse d'une Histoire Universelle de l'Économie et de la Société* (Paris, Gallimard, 1991; original 1923), p. 15: "Dresser un compte de capital signifie que, des biens d'une certaine valeur estimable en argent ayant été engagés dans une entreprise, on établit ... les gains et les pertes en argent lorsque l'entreprise s'arrête ou lorsqu'on arrive en fin d'un exercice budgétaire".

⁶ See *World Development Report: Knowledge for Development* (World Bank & Oxford University Press, 1998).

appear explicitly as such on the balance sheets, but have to be financed either by equity or by debts.

In the modern financial context “capital” means the “total liabilities” of a company, i.e. equity as well as debts. It means then the value of all financial commitments of third parties towards the company. When used in this context, the term “capital” has no relationship whatsoever with “physical capital” and is used to mean assets – whatever their form – employed in the process of production and appearing on a balance sheet of an enterprise. From the perspective of contemporary business practice, financial capital describes the value of all non-disposable items – tangible or intangible – used in production and financed by any kind of liability of the company. As far as capital remuneration is concerned, a twofold distinction has to be introduced. On the asset side, the allowance for the replacement of physical capital or tangible assets (depreciation); on the liabilities side remuneration of borrowed funds or debts (interest paid) and remuneration of the equity capital (residual claim or profit).

Macro-economic estimates of financial capital stock are even more tricky than the estimates of physical capital stock. Two main reasons should be mentioned. First, the absence of a widely accepted and coherent methodological framework. Second, the difficulties involved in avoiding double-counting because of the multi-layer and overlapping character of the pyramid of financial assets.

The above discussion shows that the gap in meanings is widening between “capital” in the classical and physical sense, and “capital” in the financial contemporary meaning. However, it seems that in its teachings and statements Catholic Social Teaching has not fully acknowledged this state of affairs. When the term “capital” appears in Catholic Social Teaching, it refers implicitly to its classical meaning which can bring many additional misunderstandings to an already complex situation. A new effort by Catholic Social Teaching to come to terms with the contemporary dominant meaning of capital and its social and also theological consequences would be particularly welcome.

Whatever ambiguities surround the notion of capital, it lies at the very bottom of our economic system, i.e. capitalism. Among the whole range of varieties of systemic settings based on the market mechanism and economic freedom that can, in theory at least, be thought of, the distinctive feature on which capitalism stands is the morally, legally and economically accepted principle of the autonomy of financial assets, i.e. financial capital. In fact the capitalist system is the only system where assets – objects of property rights – are morally and legally explicitly entitled to a specific remuneration, distinct and separate from the remuneration of labour. The level of remu-

neration depends on the kind of contract between the owner of the financial capital and the user of corresponding funds, and on the accounting outcomes of the enterprise.

The financial assets are, *de facto*, bundles of transferable property rights – contracts – on a set of goods, services or – as is more and more the case today – on ideas. Many of these rights cannot be enforced outside a very sophisticated and complex institutional system which, *de facto*, is the present framework of our societies and whose international extension is often referred to as “globalisation”.

Among the many social consequences of the continuous development of capitalism is the general aspiration to become as quickly as possible a “*rentier*” which means deriving one’s living not from labour but from the remuneration of one’s own financial assets.⁷ The drive towards a “*rentier society*”, enhanced by policies aiming at the generalisation of shareholding, leads in consequence to an ever stricter definition of property rights which in turn gives birth to ever new categories of financial assets.

Despite the fact that the autonomy of financial capital lies at the very foundation of capitalism, for many economic actors such as the self-employed, small family firms and many micro-enterprises in developing countries, the distinction between the remuneration of labour and capital is still meaningless.

B. Value Added

The concept of “value added” is central for understanding and analysing the functioning of our modern economies. Unlike “capital”, value added is a flow concept and thus can be recorded through a system of accounts either at macro or enterprise level. In the case of an enterprise, value added is defined as the contribution of this enterprise to the increase in the value of the intermediate goods it transforms. For example, the value added by an auto maker who turns a set of components into an automobile will be equal to the difference between the value, i.e. the price paid for the components, and the price at which finished car will be sold. In this accounting framework, the transaction – the act of selling the finished good to another owner – sanctions the amount of value added that has been incorporated into it. In consequence, when goods cannot be sold, despite the physical effort of producing them, value added is not acknowledged, and does not exist economically.

⁷ J. Smithin, *Macroeconomic Policy and the Future of Capitalism: The Revenge of the Rentiers* (Edward Elgar, 1996. ISBN: 1 85278 731 7).

The richness of the concept of “value added” is triple. First, unlike “capital”, its meaning is non-ambiguous. Second, it is one of few economic concepts that can be quantified within the existing accounting systems both at the macro-economic, national level (GNP), and at the enterprise level. Third, it captures the outcome of a joint production effort, i.e. the contribution of all factors of production, labour as well as capital. The concept of “value added” stresses – at least implicitly – the fundamental complementarity of factors of production. *Rerum Novarum* underlined the basic fact of economic life validated by everyday experience; “Capital cannot do without labour, nor labour without capital”.⁸ In the production process, labour and capital (land included) complement each other and jointly “add value” to the inputs used.

From this perspective, the double role – and responsibility – of the enterprise becomes crystal clear. On one hand, and in order to survive, it has to organise the production process, i.e. the co-operation of labour and capital, in such a way as to obtain, as its outcome, goods and services whose value the market will acknowledge. On the other side, however, the enterprise has also to manage and organise the distribution of created value added among the factors participating in the production process. Two faces of the same coin, the processes of creation and the distribution of value added, are dynamically interdependent.

The challenge to the enterprise – for the sake of simplicity let us stick to a joint stock company – in a capitalist environment, is to organise the dynamic interaction (co-operation and distribution) of factors of production so as to maximise the outcome – remuneration – for the stock of capital exposed to risk. However, every enterprise acts within a number of constraints: economic, technological but also legal. From this perspective the responsibility of the macro institutions – the state and other public bodies – double. On the one hand, they must provide the necessary conditions for the smooth continuation and extension of value-adding activities by the enterprises. On the other, they must ensure – by direct or indirect measures – the participation of all members of the society in value added sharing, through full employment or by any other means.

C. *Capital and Labour as Complements and Substitutes*

One of the most important and complex decisions that any contemporary enterprise has to take in its capacity as organiser of the dynamic inter-

⁸ RN, 15, quoted in Schasching, p. 55.

action of factors of production concerns the precise factor-mix it is going to use. Factor-mix means at the same time the absolute quantities of each factor of production used, their relative proportion, and the intrinsic quality of each of them. Factor-mix decisions are crucial for the two dimensions of the enterprise mission: the technological production process, and the distribution of value added. These decisions are complex because labour and capital are at the same time complements and substitutes.

It is supposed – by economists and external analysts – that each enterprise has a long-term view and coherent policy concerning its factor-mix. This may or may not be true. What is sure, is that factor-mix is not decided once for all. Each enterprise updates its factor-mix almost daily through a chain of decisions, some of which may be radical. These decisions concern the fields of liability management (i.e. financial capital structure management), investment (i.e. physical capital management, localisation policy, R&D policy) and employment policies (human resources policies, knowledge management etc.). When taking its business decisions in the field of factor-mix, the freedom of manoeuvre of the enterprise is broadly constrained in at least three ways:

- the core-business constraint. The enterprise requires a given product/service market (or set of markets) which can only be changed in the medium term;
- the technological constraint. The enterprise has a specific level of command in the field of technology relevant to its core business(es);
- factor market constraint. According to received common sense and standard economics, production factors – labour and physical capital – are in limited supply at specific prices.

Enterprise factor-mix will emerge, and will be updated, by the successive outcomes of an ongoing iteration process. The core-business constraint gives a more or less broad indication of prices at which the products or services of enterprises can be sold; technological constraint gives an idea of the scope of factors' combinations which the enterprise is able to manage. In other words, technology will determine the limits of factor substitution which is feasible for the enterprise, and – for each possible factor-mix – the level of productivity of capital and labour, i.e. the level of relative factor productivity.

Factor market constraint, i.e. relative factor prices as they appear on a broader market, will determine – out of the technologically feasible factor-mixes – those that are economically viable. Out of this last set – if it is not empty – the enterprise will choose the factor mix that maximises its objective in terms of value added distribution. In case of a joint stock company,

most probably the maximisation of returns on capital will serve as such an objective. According to the outcome of this iteration, the enterprise will hire or fire, will borrow or reduce its indebtedness, will buy new equipment or invest in new technologies.

This lengthy reasoning is perfectly in line with standard economics and boils down to two important statements:

- the feasible set of relative factor productivity is enterprise specific (because of product market and of technological command);
- relative factor prices are supposed to be objective, given by factor markets on which each enterprise is a price taker.

The conclusion is of the utmost importance: the factor-mix used by the same enterprise will change according to relative factor prices on the market. The lower the relative price of capital, the more capital-intensive the enterprise factor-mix. The same holds at a macro-level: the lower the relative price of labour, then the higher the employment level.

Economic theory argues that relative factor prices are country specific. They are influenced, on the demand side, by the needs and willingness of enterprises to pay, i.e. by the technological command of national enterprises, whereas on the supply side, the relative factor price is influenced by the relative scarcity of factors on a given market.

In fact, in an era when national market boundaries have collapsed, especially for financial capital, the reassuring picture presented by this theory has to be revised. It does not account for the changes that globalisation has introduced into the world financial landscape. A dual financial system is emerging world-wide: part of it is global and open to global players only, the rest is still compartmentalised in local sub-systems. In consequence, for instance, a very big *Fortune 500* company has more facility to access global capital markets and will obtain better conditions there when raising additional capital, than a small unknown enterprise without a track record seeking a local bank loan. Because of the duality of the financial system, the two enterprises face different relative factor prices. Thus, if the two enterprises have a similar command of technological processes, their factor-mix will look totally different – rather capital-intensive for the global enterprise, but labour intensive for the local one. Depending on how the product market and the respective technological command evolve, most probably one of the enterprises will be squeezed out of business because of relative factor prices.

The differences mentioned above will have a strong selective impact on “new entrants” into product markets. New or mature small enterprises look-

ing for new activities will most probably avoid fields and industries where competitors have access to global financial markets and the required factor-mix is capital-intensive. In fact, the capacity of the enterprise to obtain factors of production at specific prices and in specific quantities will determine the type of new (i.e. additional) activities the enterprise will choose to enter or develop and not the other way around as theory might suggest.

D. The Pre-eminence of Capital over Labour

Value added generated by an enterprise arises from the co-operation of the two factors of production, labour and capital. Beyond organising this co-operation and finding the appropriate factor-mix, any enterprise also has to manage the appropriate distribution of value added among the contributing factors.

In the short run, value added can be seen as a pie whose distribution is determined by contracts the enterprise has signed either with the providers of financial capital or with its employees. Once all the claims have been satisfied, the residual part of value added goes to the owners of financial capital exposed to risk. According to most of the world's legal systems, when value added is insufficient to cover all claims, labour's claims are privileged and have to be paid for first. The legal hierarchy of claims may suggest that contemporary business practice is consistent with the basic principle of Catholic Social Teaching, namely the predominance of labour over capital. In the short term perspective, a change in the market price of one of the factors of production, for instance a fall in interest rates, could be seen as good news for labour, because the remaining value added increases. This, however, is a misleading perception of enterprise behaviour. In order to understand it, the analysis must be extended to the long-term perspective.

As mentioned above, the expected return on invested capital required by the providers of funds is one of the most important parameters driving enterprise decisions in the field of factor-mix. Thus, in response to long term changes in factor prices, enterprises will modify their factor-mix, which in turn will affect the distribution of value added. For instance, when the relative price of capital for the enterprise is falling, all things being equal, the enterprise will be encouraged to adopt more capital-intensive technologies which will lead in turn – most probably – to the increase of the share of capital when value added is distributed. The shift toward more and more capital intensive technologies, due to easier and cheaper access to capital markets, explains the paradox according to which share prices rise when big enterprises announce massive layoffs.

In consequence, in the longer term perspective, labour appears as instrumental in producing a required level of returns on capital and the pre-eminence of capital over labour seems more to be the case than the reverse. This practice stands in contradiction to the basic principle of Catholic Social Teaching.

The share of labour in value added is higher by ten percentage points in small and medium enterprises than in big enterprises in Europe (64.7% and 73.1%) and by almost fifteen percentage points in Japan (57% and 73.4%). For the US, data do not exist. In a ten year perspective, the gap between the two populations of enterprises seems to be steadily widening in Europe at least.⁹

According to a recent study of the sources of European competitiveness “In the European Union, capital/labour substitution explains nearly half of the increase in labour productivity (i.e. total value added/amount of labour – PHD), whereas in the USA it has contributed only marginally to labour productivity growth. In Japan, it explains almost two thirds. ... There is evidence that the relative prices of labour rose faster in Europe than in the USA. Wages increased more than the prices of machinery and equipment. Real interest rates did not differ much between Europe and the USA in the last decade”.¹⁰

Although the European Commission’s conclusion acknowledges the importance of the drive towards a higher capital intensity due to falling relative prices of capital, the second part of the argument is not convincing, for two reasons at least. First, it focuses only on the changing level of wages to explain relative prices, without looking closely at the capital side where, according to our hypothesis, capital costs differ not so much across countries – because of the capital market globalisation process – but across categories of enterprises differentiated according to those that have access to global markets and the others. Second, the relevant capital price from the enterprise perspective is neither fully reflected by the “real interest rate” nor only by prices of equipment, but by the nominal cost of capital.

⁹ ‘Situation Financière des Entreprises Européennes’, in *Economie Européenne*, Supplément A, n. 7, Juillet 1997. The study in question was carried out the basis of the BACH data which bring together the information of the samples of companies of the eleven countries of the European Union. At the present time this is a pioneering work which was made possible by the phenomenal advance in the ways in which data can be utilised.

¹⁰ *The Competitiveness of European Industry: Report 1998* (European Commission, 1998, ISBN: 92-828-4964-3), pp. 12-13.

E. *The Creation of Financial Assets in Global Markets*¹¹

In the first paragraphs of this paper, attention is drawn to the dichotomy between the physical and financial meanings of capital. The conclusion was that from a business perspective, financial capital means more than equipment, especially in the present post-industrial world dominated by intangible assets.

According to standard economic theory, at a given moment in time the physical amount of total available capital is limited. As for any scarce resource, taking into account the stock of capital (real) in the economy, market forces of supply and demand will allocate it, and determine its price – interest rate for debts, required rate of return for equity – in accordance with its productivity and scarcity.

In real business life, where only financial capital counts, the critical question to ask is whether it makes sense to consider financial capital as a limited stock. If this were not the case, if there were reasons to consider the supply of capital as not being physically limited, then the classical price mechanism – postulated by theory – would have difficulties in operating. In consequence, the whole construct of “relative factor prices” as objective, i.e. not enterprise specific, would be put in question.

Financial assets are created when two actors exchange money for “a piece of paper” which stands for a bundle of property rights, either of physical goods or other financial assets. The difficulty in analysing the creation of financial assets comes from the fact that their almost infinite variety combines into a multi-layer pyramid. For instance, less than 10% of all transactions on stock markets generate financial flows that go to enterprises against new shares because 90% of these transactions are “second hand” transactions.

Without entering the tricky field of statistical measurement, a general point can be made. Due to prudential regulations, financial institutions cannot legally extend their lending infinitely, however, technically speaking, their margin of manoeuvre in this field is very important. The willingness to take additional risks is the only truly limiting factor in the creation of financial assets. In other terms, additional financial assets can be created instantly, solely by virtue of an agreement (contract) between two actors, each of them acting within a specific framework of constraints and objectives. In general, in times of increasing globalisation, providers of funds

¹¹ This part of the argument is developed in some length by P. Dembinski, ‘The Safe Landing of the Financial Balloon is not Impossible’, in *Finance & Bien Commun/Common*, autumn 1998.

seem to prefer certain types of clients to others: namely very large enterprises do not have any problems in raising additional funds, while small and lesser known companies are confronted with a kind of credit rationing.

The global capital market offers an almost unlimited supply of funds to the very big enterprises "the global players". Not only do these multinational companies have access to funds at very low costs, but they are also structurally able to locate their productive capacities in regions where labour costs are low. The drive to substitute capital for labour is only limited by ... the low cost of labour. In any case, for these enterprises, the cost of capital will determine the amount of labour used and not the other way around. The situation for the enterprises that do not have access to an unlimited supply of funds, but are exposed to more or less open rationing, is different: the limited amount of capital will determine the amount of labour used.

For each of the two groups of enterprises, the readiness to provide capital by financial institutions (price and quantity) will determine the relative factor prices, and thus, indirectly, the level of employment. For both groups the same capitalist logic applies, aiming at the highest possible return on invested capital. In both cases, as stated above, the principle of the primacy of labour over capital is violated. The only difference will be in the use of factor-mixes: the enterprises for which capital is cheaper will tend to substitute capital for more labour.

E. Relative Factor Prices Matter

Two preliminary conclusions can be drawn at this point. The first one refers to the structure of factor markets, the second to factor prices.

One of the least disputed effects of globalisation, is the emergence of a global capital market. The non-financial enterprises able to tap this market are no more than a couple of thousands world-wide. They are the biggest enterprises, the best known and also those with the best financial management. Below this global market a whole array of more limited, specialised or local markets exist. They differ in many ways but are all interdependent, linked to the global market by a pyramid of intermediaries. The access to these markets depends on the quality of the enterprise. In other words, the cost of capital today is much more enterprise specific than economic theory would suggest. The emerging new setting of the world financial system will have a strong impact on the type of activities that each of these groups of enterprises will be able to carry out.

The second conclusion is by no means new. It is simply to recall that the factor-mix, at the enterprise but also at the national level, depends on

relative factor prices. As the price of capital is more and more enterprise specific, the capacity of governments to steer the national relative factor prices by regulating the labour market alone are very limited. The effectiveness of this steering, and its impact on factor-mix used by national enterprises, depends as much on the evolution of capital prices as on labour regulation *per se*.

The empirical part of this paper presents some findings concerning the factor-mixes used and factor substitutability for two types of American enterprises: the non-financial enterprises that are listed on Wall Street (the New York Stock Exchange), and the rest of American non-financial enterprises.

II. FACTOR SUBSTITUABILITY AND FACTOR-MIX: THE AMERICAN CASE

A. *The Data Used*

Two sets of enterprises are used in this analysis:

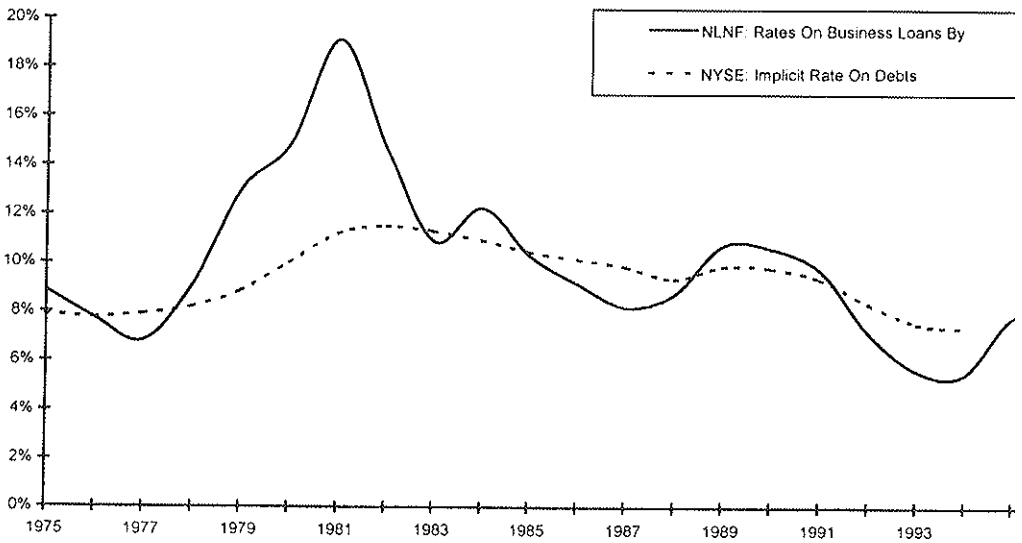
- The first set, called “NYSE”, contains all the non-financial enterprises that are listed on the New York Stock Exchange; the data are derived directly from their accounting reports thanks to the *Compustat* database.
- The second set, called “NLNF”, contains non-listed non-financial American enterprises: the data for these enterprises are derived by combining OECD/Federal Reserve data with the *Compustat* ones.¹²

B. *Cost Compared*

Funds borrowed within the financial system (debts) entail a cost to companies. The so-called “implicit interest rate” can be calculated by dividing total gross interest expenses by the companies’ outstanding debts. Chart 1 presents such calculation for NYSE companies and compares it with the rates which NLNF companies have paid for their debts. As OECD/Federal Reserve financial statistics record only net interest expenses, whereas gross expenses would be required to calculate implicit interest rates, the “rates on business loans by banks” published by the Federal Reserve, weighted according to NLNF capital structure, have been used as prudent approximations.

The evidence in Chart 1 is clear: NYSE are able to borrow at a lower, but above all, at a much smoother cost and to keep their financing costs

¹² For more methodological information see P.H. Dembinski, ‘Will the Financial Balloon Fly or Crash’, Observatoire de la Finance, Geneva, occasional paper n. 1/1998, to be published. This section draws heavily on the above mentioned work.



Source: S&P Compustat, Federal Reserve Bulletin

Chart 1: Costs of Borrowed Funds.

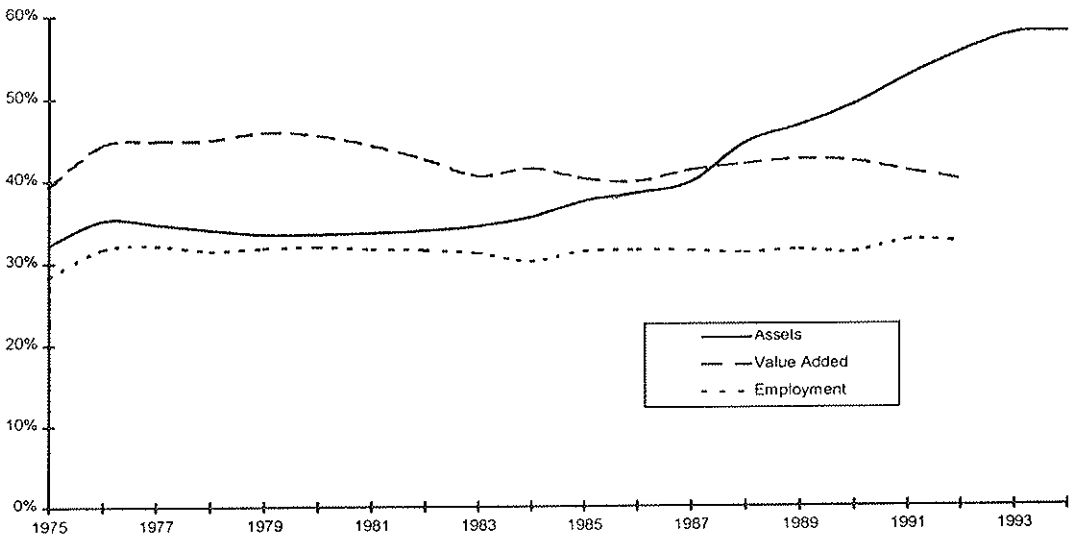
well below bank or market rates. On top of this, it seems that trade debt has eased the cost of debts to NSYE even further; this aspect however is not explicitly acknowledged here.

C. Factor Productivity Levels Compared

The amount of value added generated by NYSE companies has been calculated from their financial statements as the sum total of labour compensation costs, net interest payments and pre-tax profits. The contribution of NYSE-listed companies to the overall American Gross National Product appears to have fluctuated around 20% over the past 20 years (1975 to 1994), with a peak of over 23% in 1978.

Chart 2 contains three more specific pointers to the relative contribution of NYSE companies to the non-government and non-financial portion of the US economy.

- NYSE companies' contribution to value added has fluctuated between 45% and 40%, with a slight downward trend.
- In 1975, NYSE companies employed 13.2 million people out of 46.8 million working in all non-financial US companies, or 28%. By 1977



Source: S&P Compustat, OECD National Accounts II

Chart 2: Weight of NYSE in Total Non-financial Sector.

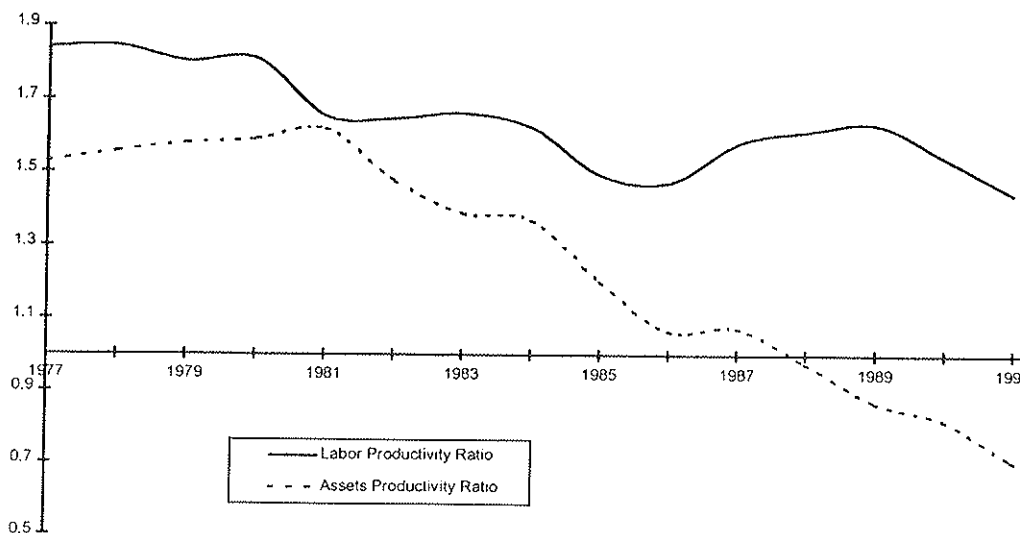
this proportion had risen slightly to 32%, and has fluctuated around this level ever since.

- The third element of comparison is NYSE companies' contribution to total assets in the non-financial sector.¹³ Until 1981, this was constantly lower than the same companies' contribution to value added. Between 1981 and 1994 the figure share shot up from 32% to almost 58% of the total.

Chart 2 shows that listed companies' share of value added and their share of employment has remained almost constant over the last twenty years, whereas their share of total assets has soared. This differing trend suggests that a major change may have taken place in the mix of production factors used by NYSE and NLNF companies. The chart shows that NYSE companies have been absorbing a growing proportion of the funds available to US companies, and that NYSE companies have been able to raise the necessary financial resources more cheaply than non-listed companies.

Chart 3 sheds additional light on the changes in factor-mix and factor

¹³ In calculating this ratio, total book-value assets – including working capital and financial assets – have been used for both sets.



Source: S&P Compustat, OECD National Accounts II

Chart 3: Factor Productivity Levels in Comparison (NYSE to NLNF).

productivity by comparing the NYSE and NLNF companies.¹⁴ It shows that labour productivity (value added per employee) has been significantly higher in NYSE companies than in NLNF companies, although this advantage is being eroded over time. In 1979, labour in listed companies was outperforming labour in the NLNF sector by 80%, but by the end of the period this advantage had been reduced by almost half.

Where asset productivity is concerned, the relative situation of the two groups of companies differs fundamentally. Until 1981/82, asset productivity in the NYSE set was at least 50% higher than in the NLNF set. From this point on, however, the capital productivity of listed companies tended to fall each year in relation to that of NLNF companies. By the late 1980s a reversal had occurred, and by the end of the period one dollar worth of assets was 45% more productive in NLNF than in NYSE companies.

Standard microeconomics suggests that the only reason why a production factor should be allowed to become less productive without the company concerned going bankrupt is a change in its relative price. All other

¹⁴ For reasons of data availability, the period under consideration is shorter than usual: from 1977 to 1991.

things being equal, a decrease in relative price means that the availability of the given factor will increase accordingly. This explanation is consistent with our earlier evidence concerning the conditions under which NYSE companies have had access to capital markets: the price they have been paying for capital is significantly lower than that paid by NLNF companies, and the availability of funding has been unlimited.

This shows that NYSE companies have been losing their advantage in terms of factor productivity since the beginning of the 1980s. Although labour is still clearly more productive in these companies than in the NLNF, assets are currently much more productive in the NLNF than in the NYSE companies.

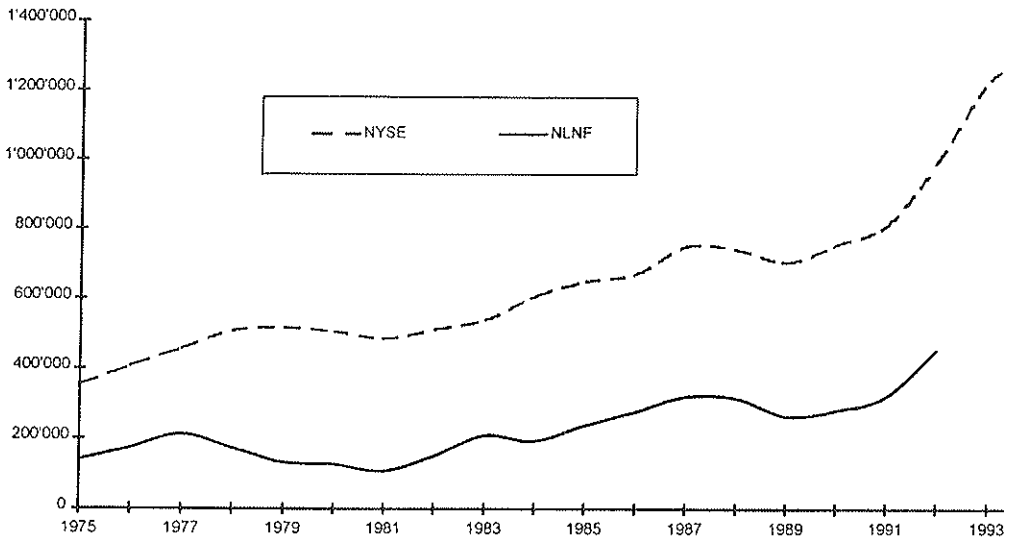
D. The Concept of "Combined Productivity"

In order to compare the productivity of sets of companies using a completely different factor-mix and operating in different factor markets, and particularly in different segments of the financial system, a new concept of productivity has to be developed. The concept of "combined productivity" presented below is an attempt in this direction. It has been devised and calculated for the NYSE and NLNF companies.

"Combined productivity" explicitly takes account of the specific costs groups of companies are paying for labour and capital, and measures the productivity of the factor-mix which a given company is using rather than the productivity of a single factor. This concept takes full account of the factor prices which every company is facing. The basic element involved in calculating combined productivity is the "asset equivalent of an employee" (AEE). AEE is an attempt to calculate the substitution rate, between labour and capital, specific to the enterprise. The value of the AEE is equal to the amount of additional debt (assets) that a given company could contract if, instead of hiring an additional employee in return for the average compensation package, it used the corresponding amount to pay interest on additional debt. In this sense the AEE can be seen as a proxy for the average factor substitution ratio. The value of the AEE depends on two variables which are related to factor costs: the average compensation package, and the interest rate which the company pays on its debts.

Chart 4 shows the AEE as calculated for NYSE and for NLNF companies.¹⁵ The chart reveals dramatic differences in the amount of additional assets that an additional compensation package can pay for: the AEE for

¹⁵ Average levels of compensation packages are derived from the Compustat database for NYSE companies, and estimated from OECD National Accounts for NLNF ones. The implicit interest rates on all liabilities are those used in Chart 1.



Source: S&P Compustat, OECD National Accounts II

Chart 4: Asset Equivalent of an Employee.

listed companies is consistently at least twice as high as for NLNF companies. This means that, whereas an average NLNF company has to choose between one additional employee and \$450,000 worth of additional assets, for NYSE companies the choice is between one additional employee or \$1,000,000 worth of additional assets.

The striking difference in relative factor prices explains why the two sets of companies behave very differently when confronted with decisions concerning their factor-mix. Because, in terms of assets, one additional employee is much more expensive for NYSE than for NLNF companies, the rational behaviour for NYSE companies is to be far more capital-intensive than NLNF ones. Conversely, NLNF companies are strongly biased towards a labour-intensive factor-mix.

It should be stressed that the aforementioned disparities in AAE strongly contradict one of the basic assumptions of received economic theory, namely that factor markets are undistorted and that all purchasing companies are consequently faced with the same factor prices.

In view of the fact that listed companies are highly capital-intensive (as shown above), their labour-force requirements will be specific and polarised. At the low end of the market, such companies will either replace

unskilled factory-floor workers in the US with fully automated equipment, or maintain labour-intensive production but transfer it abroad, where compensation packages are lower. At the high end of the labour market, where human capital is required either because it cannot be replaced for technical reasons or because the required capital expenditure would exceed the AEE, NYSE companies will hire highly qualified people and offer them excellent compensation packages. In other words, NYSE companies are logically shedding low-skilled jobs in the US and creating highly sophisticated ones piecemeal.

Faced with different factor market conditions, NLNF companies, which are mainly small and medium-sized, can pursue one of three different strategies in order to survive:

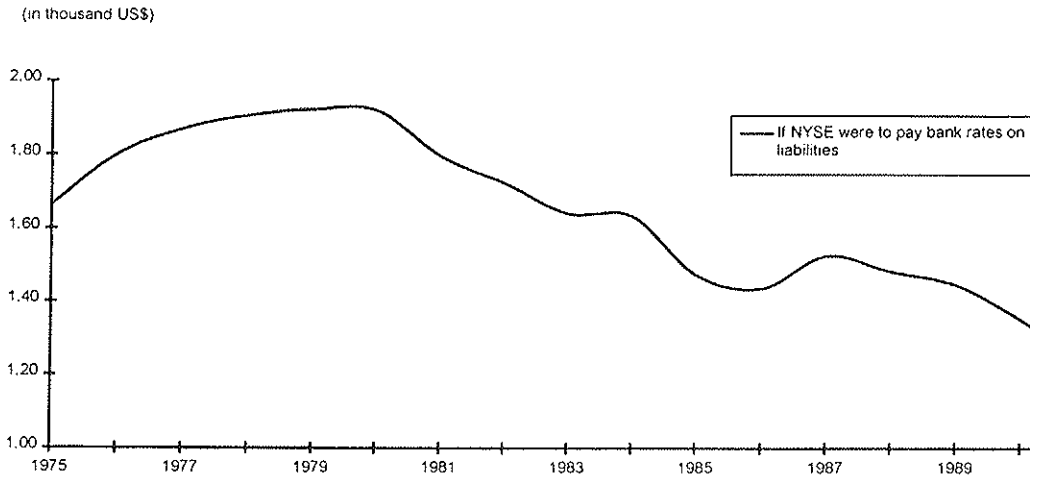
- They can occupy niches left by big companies in fields where skilled labour still cannot be replaced by capital. This will happen at the low end of the market in personal services and distribution, and will lead to the creation of new jobs whose quality is poor and whose sustainability is uncertain. At the high end of the market this will happen in imaginative high-tech ventures with highly motivated people whose skills have not (yet) been properly priced by the labour market.
- They can fight for access to capital markets (NASDAQ) and then develop along a capital-intensive path, with AEEs approaching those of NYSE companies;
- They can hope to be taken over by a listed company, failing which they will have to close down sooner or later.

The AEE is a first step towards “combined productivity”, in the sense that it acts as a bridge between the naturally heterogeneous factors labour and capital, at least for calculation purposes. In fact, the AEE concept allows either all of a company’s assets to be converted into employee-equivalents or all of its labour costs to be converted into asset-equivalents.¹⁶ Then AEE can then be added to the number of people actually employed, and finally the combined productivity can be calculated. The same procedure could be used to calculate combined productivity from the asset side.

Chart 5 compares combined productivity (based on employee-equivalents).

Combined productivity is higher in NYSE than in NLNF companies. However, the relative advantage of the NYSE companies is being eroded

¹⁶ The underlying hypothesis assumes that all assets are paid for as if they were all debts. This leads to an overestimate of the AEE in the case of many small companies where the owner’s income is a mixture of labour and equity capital remuneration.



Source: S&P Compustat, OECD National Accounts II, OECD Non-Financial Enterprises Financial Sta

Chart 5: Ratio of Combined Productivities (NYSE to NLNF).

over the long term. The strongly capital-intensive factor mix chosen by NYSE companies appears to be losing out to the more labour-intensive mix used by NLNF ones. The NYSE companies' lead in terms of combined productivity was reduced by half between 1975 and 1991. Two factors explain this difference: the privileged access of NYSE to capital markets and their ability to manage their balance-sheets more effectively, on both the asset and liability sides.

In conclusion, the analysis in this section has shown the following paradox: at a time when NYSE companies were losing their advantage over NLNF companies in terms of combined factor productivity, the financial system was granting them ever better financing terms and letting them have an unlimited quantity of funds. Relative factor prices have been diverging for the two sets of enterprises despite the opposite change in relative factor productivities.

Since 1975, listed companies have been able to raise funds at premium prices, owing on the one hand to the willingness of financial markets to provide what they want, and on the other hand to their strong negotiating position in relation to their suppliers. Premium pricing has been available even though the combined productivity of listed companies has been systematically falling as compared with the NLNF sector (which explains why their contribution to total value added – see Chart 2 – has not increased).

These facts call into question the efficiency of the financial system in

allocating available resources within the US economy. The critical role that capital markets, and the forces on the supply side that drive them, have in determining the factor price ratio for different enterprises has been studied in some depth in the US case. More research is needed to identify all the intricacies of this relationship, as well as to look at the situation in other parts of the world, especially Japan and the European Union. In the meantime, as the different hypothesis articulated in the first part of this paper have not been invalidated so far, and because they shed new light on the prevalent relationship between capital and labour, the concluding part of the paper aims at drawing a few preliminary conclusions.

III. AND SO WHAT?

Three sets of conclusions are drawn here. Those referring to a new program of research, those directed at economic policy on the labour market, and finally the most important ones directed towards Catholic Social Teaching.

A. *Unemployment Policy: Beyond the Deadlock*

The arguments developed in this paper suggest that relative factor prices are critical in determining the quantity of labour that enterprises producing within national boundaries will use. In order to increase the labour intensity of production, governments, especially European ones, strive to lower the price of labour. This, however, is only part of the story. The other avenue would be to modify the relative price of labour by increasing that of capital.

Answers to unemployment have to be looked for, in terms of policy response, not only in the labour market, but also in the capital market. It is not impossible that labour intensity of production would grow if real interest rates grew. Very little has been attempted in this direction. Even at the policy level, the prominence of capital is accepted as given, as a fatality.

	Labour regulated	Labour unregulated
Capital regulated	National solutions, prevalent until late 1970s, pre-eminence of labour over capital not impossible	To be experienced; in theory would allow for the pre-eminence of labour over capital
Capital unregulated	European situation - in most countries - since early 1970s - high unemployment; pre-eminence of capital over labour.	American situation: low level of unemployment leading to an apparently high level of « poor employment »; pre-eminence of capital over labour

Chart 6: Typology of factor.

Chart 6 presents a typology of the ways that factor-mix used by national enterprises could be influenced by different types of public interventions. This chart simplifies reality, but hopefully not beyond the point that would make it meaningless. Out of the four possible solutions, three of those shown have been experienced in practice. Since the early 1970s a trend in deregulation of financial and capital markets has begun in order to achieve a higher level of economic efficiency. The philosophical premises underlying this trend have not, until now, been properly analysed. As far as economic consequences are concerned, they have been more often than not taken for granted, but not properly assessed. The US evidence, presented in section two of this paper, suggests that the allocative efficiency of the financial system should not be taken for granted.

The argument presented in this paper has shown at least three lines for reflection and research:

- analyse closely and on the enterprise level the consequences that differing factor prices have on the factor-mix used;
- question more clearly the received but not properly investigated efficiency of financial markets in allocating capital;
- devise ways and methods – with regard to their social and economic consequences as well – that could increase the cost of capital to enterprises when lowering their labour cost. A more even sharing of the overall burden of taxation between the two factors could be a positive direction to take.

B. *Towards a New Research Programme*

The questions raised in this paper require a new approach to economic research. Economists, finance specialists and business specialists have to join forces because they are concerned with the same basic and fundamental questions, they look at the same phenomena, ask similar or complementary questions. However, today they live in three separate scientific worlds: each profession is using its own concepts, its own theories and models, its own data and its own methodologies to collect them. The resulting cacophony increases the quantity of ink used, but does not lead to any unified understanding of the contemporary economy, which has dramatically changed in the last twenty years.

Nation-states have lost a lot of their supremacy, many economic and financial phenomena are transnational and global. The multinational enterprises – global players – seem to be today the major structuring force of the world economy. The meaning and consequence of such a shift in impor-

tance from the state to markets and enterprises have to be properly grasped and conceptualised. The time is ripe to focus research on mechanisms of interdependence between national economies, global markets and the very big enterprises. These new realities require new concepts and data which, in turn, should be confronted in a constructive way with received economic theory, in order to up date it where possible. This is the only way to give policy makers the framework they require.

C. *Catholic Social Teaching and the Challenges of Finance in the Post-industrial Age*

Until now Catholic Social Teaching has kept outside of the world of finance. The time has come to recognise the crucial importance of finance in the present-day world, and the specific conditions under which the financial system operates. Capital today has little in common with the “tool of production” observed by Leo XIII when he was preparing *Rerum Novarum*. Present day capitalism is built on the pre-eminence of financial capital – whatever is its real counterpart over labour. This situation has many roots and consequences for the contemporary world. The time seems ripe for Catholic Social Teaching to take stock of these changes and to address these issues with its usual reserve and prudence. In taking up this challenge, Catholic Social Teaching would make a move towards meeting the expectations of many Christians and of professionals working in finance who strive to give a meaning to their everyday work.

Among many economic issues linked to the process of “financiarisation” that would require a fresh look by Catholic Social Teaching, three are specially worth mentioning.

- the question of financing intangible assets, of related property rights and particularly of “human capital”;
- the process of financial asset creation, which looks more and more like a creation *ex nihilo* of assets that, by their sheer existence, are entitled to returns;
- the aspiration, more and more widely spread across Western societies, to a future which is riskless because it is financially insured, should also be addressed.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LABOUR IN A POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY: UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL ECONOMY

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*Labor Deo Pareat,
opes parat,
laetitiam parit.*

1. *Motivation and Introduction*

Catholic Social Teaching has always dedicated a great deal of attention to the fundamental issue of labour and labour relations, at least from *Rerum Novarum* onwards. However, as the paper by J. Schasching (1997) clearly shows, it is possible to detect a novelty in the most recent elaboration of the Church's teaching, a novelty associated with the name of Pope John Paul II. This is a totally unconventional idea according to which labour "first and foremost unites people" (*Laborem Exercens*, 20), whence the invitation to think in terms of a "social ecology of labour" in the construction of "a culture of labour". To achieve such an objective, John Paul II deems it necessary to bring into play "the subjectivity of civil society" (*Centesimus Annus*, 49).

Fifty years ago, J.M. Keynes considered mass unemployment in affluent societies to be a shameful absurdity, one that it was quite possible to remove. Nowadays, our economies being three times as rich as they were then, Keynes would be justified in considering present unemployment to be three times as absurd and harmful, since in a society that is three times as rich, inequality and social exclusion caused by unemployment are at least three times as disruptive. Furthermore, it should be remembered that in the thirties we were experiencing the effects of the most devastating crisis that had ever hit industrial capitalism, one that halved German and US industry.

Today, instead, unemployment seems to have become instrumental to economic prosperity: dismissals occur much less frequently in endangered businesses than in thriving ones striving for broader margins of competitiveness. This is precisely what creates the problem: unemployment is no longer viewed as a symptom or consequence of a critical situation, but as a strategy adopted to compete successfully in the age of globalization. We know that the Social Doctrine of the Church – which “moves with mankind” – warns us that a social order which supinely incorporates among its mechanisms a strategic manipulation of unemployment is morally unacceptable. Neither, we can add, is it economically sustainable. We therefore have reason to wonder why, rather than tackling the issue piecemeal through a disparate collection of suggestions and measures, valid *per se* but together inadequate to the task, the urgent need for reflection upon the basic features of today’s model of growth is not recognized. (See the introductory paper by M.S. Archer in this volume).

In this vein, the thesis which will be defended in this paper is that *today’s* unemployment is the consequence of a social organization which is unable to articulate itself in a way which allows it to utilize all available human resources. It is a fact that the new technologies of the Third Industrial Revolution liberate more and more social time from the production processes, a time which the existing institutional set-up transforms into unemployment (in Europe) or into new forms of social exclusion (in the USA). In other words, the extraordinary increase at the macro level of the availability of time, instead of being utilized for a variety of different purposes, continues to be used for the production of commodities which people could happily stop consuming had they a real (as opposed to virtual) chance of spending their incomes on other categories of goods, such as relational goods or merit goods. The result of this stubborn blindness is that too much intellectual energy is devoted to finding solutions to the unemployment problem which are either illusory (i.e. only temporary) or which generate perverse effects (in the form of frustration; the working poor; consumeristic life-styles and so on), as we will see later on.

How do I account for the prevailing inability to solve the labour question without generating socially harmful and morally unacceptable trade-offs of the type: work for all versus a substantial reduction in social security for the workforce? I believe the answer is to be found in the fact that the process of development has been conceptualised and analysed within a theoretical framework which includes only two basic institutions: the state and the market. My argument, in this paper, is that we urgently need to contest this form of reductionism and to expand the frame of economic discourse by incorporating civil society. In particular, my ultimate target is to

contribute to the enlargement of the scope of economic inquiry by visualizing a market economy as composed of both a sphere of private economy and a sphere of civil economy. It will be shown, in the following pages, that a civil economy is constituted by a kind of contract, but not by a trade contract. A civil economy is founded on the principle of reciprocity, whereas a private economy is founded on the principle of the exchange of equivalents. As the literature on social capital has shown, successful societies are those which are capable of developing an efficient network of non-profit making concerns, voluntary organizations and cooperatives firms, so that the population ceases to look to paternalistic states for the provision of various kinds of social services. Above all, successful societies are those which enable people to undertake cooperative ventures for mutual advantage. Essentially, this means favouring the emergence of a new economic space, the space of a civil economy, which depends upon the creation of social structures capable of engendering a flow of voluntary exchanges on the basis of mutual expectations of reciprocity.¹

The route I suggest taking to enhance the emergence of a civil economy is one which makes explicit use of the principle of subsidiarity, a principle which, according to Catholic Social Teaching, states that recourse to a higher level of authority should be invoked only whenever it is absolutely necessary. More precisely, the twin ideas of horizontal relationships and devolution of sovereignty (i.e. poliarky) are represented by the notions of subsidiarity and federalism respectively. Not surprisingly, both concepts have been repeatedly invoked in the process of construction of the European Union since its inception. As Porta and Scazzieri (1997) correctly point out, subsidiarity, however, should not be confused with federalism or administrative decentralization. In fact, the principle of subsidiarity is rooted in a conception of sovereignty that is sharply different from the conception which attributes the monopoly of sovereignty to the nation-state; it reflects a view of diffused sovereignty in which the decentralization of government functions is simply a consequence. It follows that the principle of subsidiarity is rooted in a conception of the state which is different from both the notion of the “minimal state” and the notion of the “paternalistic

¹ It may be of interest to quote here a passage from a recent interview by 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).

state". In particular, subsidiarity entails a nested structure of governmental levels that cannot be reduced to a single encompassing hierarchy. The assignment of a particular governmental function to any given "higher order" agency does not preclude the "lower order" agency from entering other subsidiarity relationships with "higher order" agencies of a different type. Multiple allegiance is the rule rather than the exception, and government appears as a relatively loose structure, that is, as a pattern of "open governance" (in the words of Porta and Scazzieri, 1997), based upon the specialization of governmental functions and their separation from an encompassing conception of sovereignty. The notion of subsidiarity, when transferred to the realm of economic questions, translates itself into the notion of civil economy.

2. *The Damage Caused by Unemployment*

In order to give a broad perspective to the argument that follows, I will highlight what I consider to be the most serious harm caused by mass unemployment at both the individual and social level in this section. The long-lasting exclusion from productive work of millions of people not only demonstrates an inefficient allocation of resources, and thus a loss of aggregate output (as is obvious once we bear in mind that labour is a factor of production), but it introduces into our advanced societies a real rationing of freedom, as F. von Hayek acknowledges in his fundamental work *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960). Indeed, it is now generally established that in the long run jobless people endure psychological suffering, a condition that has nothing to do with decreased income, but is instead related to the ability to do and to learn. According to A. Sen's capabilities approach, this means that the functioning of those who are unemployed for a long time changes in that their actual capability to attain their goals declines dramatically – a circumstance that no official statistics will ever manage to reveal – indeed, nobody ever mentions it.

A serious consideration of freedom thus prevents us from putting income from wages and transfer income on the same plane – even if they are of the same amount – such as unemployment benefits or minimum guaranteed income or various forms of family support. The awareness of the source of one's income is not without significance when values such as self-esteem or personal autonomy are at stake. As Margalit (1996) remarks with great insight, striving for the creation of a just society is not enough. What we should seek on top of that is a "decent society", that is, one that does not humiliate its members by allocating benefits and advantages to them

whilst simultaneously denying their identity, as is the case when, for example, society disregards people's preferences or their cultural background. It should be noted that whenever this occurs – as regrettably is still the case – what invariably happens is a weakening of social values combined with the spreading of cynical practices. The latter occurrence, in turn, seriously impairs the effectiveness of measures of social sanctioning which are resorted to in order to combat deviant behaviour of one kind or the other. It should therefore come as no surprise that areas or regions with long-term mass unemployment display high rates of organized crime. This happens not only because the jobless find “work” – so to speak – within criminal organizations, but chiefly because others who do have a job, do not feel it to be their duty to enforce compliance with the social contract in a society which systematically marginalizes significant quotas of its members.²

I should like to mention a further, serious form of damage caused by unemployment. As A. Sen convincingly argues,³ if it is true that “people learn by doing”, it is no less true that they “un-learn by not-doing”, which is tantamount to saying that unemployment generates a loss of cognitive ability. Let me pause for an instant to clarify this point of paramount importance. One peculiar feature of the present epochal transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist society is the huge significance of knowledge as a vehicle of development even though, unlike goods, it does not immediately benefit those acquiring it. In fact, the new technologies embody and express a knowledge which is only partly codifiable, and therefore easily imitable and transferable; the remaining part is “tacit knowledge”, that is, specific to certain individuals and as such it can be acquired only through experience. This tacit component leads individuals and institutions to move along paths traced by past activities and learning and enables skills to improve through an accumulation process which is incremental in nature. Now, one channel conveying augmentation of technological capabilities is working activity itself. The relationship between technological capability and working activity is twofold: in the course of the working process acquired technological abilities are exploited, but further capabilities are also created.

A consequence of this is that keeping a person out of work for a long time means stifling his or her creativity, so much so that in our societies,

² In fact we know that the possibility to stabilize pro-social behaviour through sanctioning in a formal sense (coercion; territorial control; strengthened crime-controlling legal framework) can be practised only when pro-social forms of behaviour are relatively widely disseminated from the beginning. Otherwise, the formal sanction implies social costs so high as to make it in fact impossible.

³ A. Sen, ‘The Penalties of Unemployment’, Roma, Banca d’Italia, *Temi di discussione*, 307, 1997.

more and more people view unemployment not just as an unwanted interruption of their customary life-rhythm, but as an irretrievable loss to their personal biography. As far as yesterday's unemployment was concerned, the discourse of conjunctural cycles contained a very reassuring element in that it suggested that in a short time everything would fall back into its original place. Today's novelty is that such certitude is missing: instead we will surface from recession with an even higher unemployment rate. This is the main source of the "new uncertainty" as mentioned by A. Giddens in connection with the "second modern age:"⁴ new wealth creation is made possible by increasing endemic uncertainty at the level of the economic system. The person who loses a job becomes worthless because work is the pivotal value of society. (One should not forget that in the ancient Greek-Roman universe of values, work was considered inhuman, hence the lot of slaves, whereas the highest social esteem was given to contemplative life).⁵

A third highly negative element related to unemployment (one that is hardly ever mentioned in relevant discussions), has to do with the constraints unemployment exerts on the possibilities for businesses to adopt the most advanced technologies available. In brief, the following occurs. As we know, the present technological trajectory entails, among other things, a continuing adjustment by companies of their organizational structure to the changing situation of information technologies, as well as a practically uninterrupted restructuring of an incremental kind. To quote but one example, let us think of the relevance, in terms of business reorganization and restructuring, of the introduction of *lean production* and *just in time* methods. In the presence of high unemployment rates it is not easy for firms to carry out frictionless reorganizations and restructurings, for the obvious reason that such processes invariably entail at least temporary losses of jobs, which are opposed in various ways by working people. Matters are very different in the presence of near full employment because, although workers will always prefer to stay in the place in which they work, nevertheless the cost associated with changing jobs is far exceeded by the unemployment alternative.

As is adroitly pointed out by A. Sen (1997), unemployment contributes in this specific sense to technological conservatism, hence to making the organizational structure of the entrepreneurial system inflexible, and

⁴ "In advanced industrial societies however a second modernity is at work. It has been settling in the last ten to twenty years and is permeated by the clear awareness of limits, problems, contradictions" (p. 6), A. Giddens, "There is no Choice but Choosing", interview by J. Lan (ed.), *Reset*, May 1997.

⁵ On this specific point see the interesting contribution by R. Minnerath in this volume.

impairing the so-called X-efficiency. One could show that one cause of the recent success of the US economy lies precisely in the fact that high employability rates have allowed entrepreneurs in that country to undertake rapid restructuring and reorganization without undesirable protest costs, which in turn has enabled them to internalize the numerous advantages associated with the flow of innovations brought about by new information technologies. In fact one should bear in mind that technological change, being closely related to production activity, can be enhanced only by those activities that occur on the production site, i.e. within the institution that organizes the productive activity. The transfer of new technologies to appropriate centres for their subsequent dissemination among companies can only yield partial and suboptimal results. It is widely known that new information technologies can even be offered free of charge at the social level, but for them to be profitably adopted they have to be absorbed individually. That is to say that the toughest barriers to their dissemination is the limited capacity of absorbing new technologies. One can thus understand why unemployment at a time of remarkably accelerated technological progress seriously hampers the development process.

3. Full Occupation versus Full Employment.

I pass on now to highlight a few basic elements of the unemployment phenomenon. First, one should notice that unemployment is a peculiar feature of a capitalistic market economy. Indeed, it is not found – as history confirms – in pre-industrial nor in collectivist societies. The very notion of unemployment is meaningful only in a society in which labour, viewed as a primary factor of production, receives a reward whose determination is somehow left to the norms governing a specific market – the labour market. In such a society, namely a capitalistic market society, unemployment indicates a condition in which labour supply exceeds labour demand at the current level of the price of labour – i.e. the wage rate – that is considered adequate to the worker's skills and needs. When the labour market is in disequilibrium – say, there is an excess supply – there are subjects willing to be employed at current wage levels, but there are not sufficient employers prepared to employ them at those levels.

A second remark is called for. Unemployment spells insufficient workplaces, that is jobs, in the labour market. There are, however, several other labour demands and supplies that do not go through the labour market: domestic help; labour providing social services; labour in non-profit making organizations. All of these working activities are valued by society, as is

indicated by their legal recognition, with norms fixing standards and stating performance rules. Still these activities are not subject to the impersonal and anonymous rules of the labour market. What I mean is that one should draw a distinction between the concept of employment in the sense of having a job and the much broader notion of working activity. However, when experts talk about unemployment, reference is always and solely to the job category. It thus happens that our post-industrial societies, to a larger extent than in industrial ones may face a problem of insufficient jobs, i.e. unemployment, although they also face a problem of excess demand for working activities which finds no answer. That is to say, a country may at the same time present a sizeable amount of unemployment and an even greater unsatisfied demand for working activities.⁶

In each stage of its historical development, society through its institutions decides where to draw the line between the sphere of jobs and the sphere of working activities, namely, between labour rewarded according to labour market rules – i.e. waged labour – and work rewarded according to other norms and customs. One may remark in passing that before the advent of the (first) industrial revolution, labour as a working activity and labour as a job were equivalent: to have a job meant to carry on a working activity, and vice versa. It was only with the advent of the factory system that the social invention of the workplace came about and along with it the figure of the expert in labour organization whose specific task was to find for each person involved the best “place” within the working process in order to achieve the optimal allocation of resources. The English language has two terms: *job* meaning “workplace”, and *work* indicating “working activity”. A *job* is something one has; *work* is something one does. (The English language has recently acquired a new term, *dejobbing*, to indicate the diminution of the workplace category).

In view of the above, one is bound to notice that the dividing line between the sphere of jobs and that of working activities in the post-Fordist society is largely the same as the one existing during the long period of development of the Fordist society. This is the real rigidity that must quickly be overcome if one wants to start searching for a serious solution to the unemployment problem. In fact, thinking of finding a *job* for everybody today would be purely utopian or, which is even worse, a dangerous deception. Indeed, whereas in industrial society the expansion of consumption levels and slow rates of technological progress allowed the labour market

⁶ On this topic see E. Fontela, *Sfida per Giovani Economisti (A Challenge for Young Economists)* (Milan, Spirali, 1997).

both to absorb new labour and to re-absorb old labour which had been made redundant, in the postindustrial society these means of intervention are – as we shall see – practically nil. This is why there is no alternative to transforming the borderline which I referred to above.

If this is the case, why does it seem so difficult to master that rigidity? In other words, why is there such powerful resistance to acknowledging the fact that today unemployment essentially relates to the profound changes which are occurring in the very nature of labour? I find a most convincing answer in the argument that among experts the assumption is still widely disseminated (and accepted) that one can successfully affect unemployment by using traditional remedies, i.e. those resorted to in order to deal with the three major types of unemployment: the first connected with excessively high labour costs; the second generated by a shortage of effective demand; the third, the technological one. In order to show why the application of traditional remedies would not produce the desired effect today, let me briefly recall the essential features of these three types of unemployment.

Consider unemployment due to exceedingly high labour costs. The labour market, like any other market, experiences a demand and a supply from whose intersection an equilibrium price derives, representing the wage received by the worker, and to which all the other well known components of labour costs paid by the employer must be added. If for some reason the price of labour rises above the equilibrium level, labour demand will fall short of equilibrium demand and labour supply will be in excess: unemployment will then be measured by the gap between them. Therefore, if the main source of unemployment were excessive labour costs, action would have to be taken against all those labour market imperfections responsible for this (obsolete labour laws; inefficient public administration; non-cooperative attitudes of the trade-unions; labour-punitive fiscal systems; lack of flexibility). Hence the well-known economic policy recipe: to combat unemployment it is necessary to reduce labour cost in its various components (not necessarily wages) and this can be achieved primarily by increasing labour market flexibility.

Unemployment stemming from a shortage of effective demand was John M. Keynes's great discovery: when the economy is affected by a decrease of aggregate demand because of an abrupt change in what Keynes called the "confidence status" of entrepreneurs, it is followed by a labour demand decrease that has next to no connection with labour costs. If entrepreneurs expect to be unable to sell what they could produce, machines stand idle and so do workers' arms. In such cases the well-known Keynesian policy represents a certain treatment: a reduction of interest rates to provide an incentive for investment; public expenditure measures, whether or not of the infra-

structural kind the promotion of public consumption programmes; and so forth. (The famous Okun law states a precise connection between increases of GDP growth rate and reductions in the unemployment rate).⁷

Finally, I come to technological unemployment. Compensation theory is the oldest attempt in economic literature to explain the employment effects of the introduction into production of new technologies. The literature has so far indicated four compensatory effects.⁸ The first one is the price effect: the innovation adopted allows a reduction of costs which, by influencing price levels, will within a short time-span stimulate an expanded demand, and thus employment. The second effect is the income effect: technological progress improves the level of average incomes both as profits and as wages. This in turn will cause the demand for investment and consumption goods to rise, thereby increasing employment. The third effect is the multiplier effect of technologies: whenever technical progress is embodied in specific capital goods, innovation brings about an expansion of the sector involved, thus making possible a re-absorption of the workforce initially rejected by the sector adopting the innovation. Finally, there is the compensatory effect operating *via* new products: the structural change of demand, as made possible by the introduction into the market of new products, also makes possible a massive re-absorption of labour. Faced with technological unemployment, the measures proposed consist in accelerating firms' creative processes in innovative areas, and above all in furthering reconversion procedures for human capital (by continuing education; second level professional training; policies for technological and scientific research; and so forth).

There is no doubt that the present-day situation exhibits all three types of unemployment. Therefore a reform of social security and/or a reform of tax-systems which reduced the fiscal burden of wage-earning labour⁹ would contribute to coping with the first kind of unemployment. At the same time it is true that a resumption of a public-investment policy along the lines suggested by the "Delors Plan" could significantly help to reduce Keynesian unemployment. Furthermore, measures taken in the sphere of so-called active policies of labour would likewise combat technological unemploy-

⁷ In Europe, the Brussels Commission's White Book contains an articulate series of proposals based upon the Okun law and inspired by Keynesian logic. UE, *White Book: Growth, Competitiveness, Employment* (Brussels, 1993).

⁸ Cf. S. Zamagni, 'New Technologies, Unemployment, Time Organization Rules' (Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1996).

⁹ The recent Ecofin summit provided documentary evidence that in the space of fifteen years the rate for hired labour went from 34.9% to over 42% whilst for capital it sank from 45.5% to less than 35%. It was estimated that 4 percentage points of the present European unemployment rate are caused by the exceedingly high fiscal burden on hired labour.

ment. Yet, since all this is common knowledge, one wonders why the various levels of government do not act in consequence. In particular, why is it that most European governments have allowed unemployment to reach the present dramatic situation?

4. *The Political Unfeasibility of the New Golden Rule of Employment*

The answer to this question can be found in the following twofold consideration. On the one hand, national governments are bound today to waive part of their sovereignty due to the phenomenon of globalization that burdens national economic policies with constraints unknown as little as ten to fifteen years ago. On the other hand, the various, manifold measures which would be appropriate for the three types of unemployment I indicated above, if implemented simultaneously, would tend to produce perverse effects. I shall try to clarify this by starting from the first consideration.

One of the most momentous consequences of globalization is the fact that the economy nowadays is global in a way that politics is not. As we can all observe, the link between state, territory, population and wealth is fading away. The domestic agendas of competent authorities within national states are more and more constrained by interdependence and the degrees of freedom for political choices are dramatically reduced. What ensues is that, confronted with growing economic powers, more or less amiable Leviathans witness a shrinking of their sovereignty and authority. As a matter of fact, the latter are compromised by two interrelated constraints. The first is an internal one: the need – generated by democratic rule – to avoid extreme fiscal burdens on the middle classes in order to finance, for instance, investment projects or public consumption programmes. The second constraint is an external one: national states no longer manage to avoid confrontation with the expectations of international capital markets. Governments are subject to unrelenting demands for credibility from international finance – even modest differences shown by credibility indicators turn into intolerable differentials of interest rates. Under such circumstances, monetary sovereignty and fiscal sovereignty for national states have become almost null and void. Therefore, an employment scheme focusing on inflationary monetary policies or on deficit spending policies would be doomed to failure from the very beginning.¹⁰

¹⁰ For close perusal of the phenomenon of globalization and problems (and opportunities) related thereto, see my essay 'Globalization as Specificity of Post-industrial Economics: Economic Implications and Ethical Options', in R. Papini, A. Pavan and S. Zamagni (eds.), *Living in Global Society* (Napoli, ESI, 1997).

With regard to the other consideration, I maintain that it is certainly true that labour-cost reduction policies, combined with policies stimulating aggregate demand, might – in some sectors – promote production more rapidly than productivity increases, thus contributing to reducing unemployment. But at what price would such a positive result be achieved? As the US experience unmistakably shows, the price would be the acceptance of the rise of a new social class, that of the *working poor*. (On this, see E. Malinvaud's contribution to this volume). A recent statistical survey by the *U.S. Bureau of Census* reveals that in 1993 some forty million people (15% of the total US population) were below the poverty line and that the most numerous component of this group were working people whose tasks were such as not to allow them to command a pay level that would place them beyond poverty. In the pre-globalization epoch, such or similar situations could be – indeed were – avoided by fattening the economy's residual sector, i.e. the one not subject to international competition. When economies were still essentially national ones, alongside the sector facing international competition which employed the minimum number of workers compatible with competition, a sector was kept alive, protected by tariffs or institutional barriers, whose function was precisely the absorption of redundant labour. Suffice to think of the public sector or even the service sector: inefficient firms and non-profitable initiatives were kept alive as a sort of buffer or sponge. Globalization has practically done away with this duality of sectors: the establishment in Europe of the single market, as from 1993, opened up to international competition virtually all sectors of the economy. Moreover, the pervasive application of new technologies to the service sector itself, by determining sizeable productivity increases, no longer permits a conception of this sector as a sponge: de-localization also effects more and more tertiary sector activities, (for example, Swissair logistics are realized in India!).

One infers from the above that competitiveness is the horizon against which any discussion aimed at creating new jobs should be framed today. Only competitive firms can be created and prosper, thus generating employment; working activities increase along with firms' competitiveness margins: this is the new *golden rule of employment*. It is a novelty of great moment if one considers the recent past when, I should like to reiterate, (nearly) full employment could be ensured by keeping alive the economy's "dead branches". At the same time, however, this rule is an extremely difficult one to enforce in practice. Let us see why.

In the first place, this is because new technologies increase the system's average productivity more than they can increase the production of goods and services. It has been estimated that in OECD countries average pro-

ductivity rises by some 3% annually. One cannot help noticing the impossibility of raising year after year the average demand for goods by 3%. Think of what occurred in agriculture first, and then in basic industries (iron and steel, cement, the chemical industry etc.): an increase of productivity associated with a lower percentage increase of production has caused a dramatic reduction in employment. Indeed, if a society that is experiencing constant high rises in its average productivity does not want its employment rate to change, it should increase consumption by the same rate as its rise in productivity. But since the consumption of goods, and even more so of services, takes time to occur, consumption must move at a frenzied pace in order to keep the employment level unchanged. As early as 1970 Linder, in a celebrated essay, demonstrated the paradoxical outcome of growing consumption intensity: the aim of consuming ever increasing quantities of goods within the same time of consumption reduces, instead of enhancing, utility, that same utility which rational economic agents should try to maximize. As a matter of fact, aiming at a higher consumption intensity may be advisable in the very first stages of industrial development during which the mass production pattern asserts itself, but it tends to cause utility – i.e. welfare – to diminish once the process has been largely carried through.

A second significant reason why it is not feasible to comply with the new golden rule of employment is that the latter would eventually start a new form of competition in our societies, what Hirsch (1976) calls *positional competition*. Sony's founder Akio Morito provides an useful interpretation of the situation in a short story from his autobiography. An American and a Japanese who are walking through the forest suddenly hear the threatening roar of an approaching lion. The Japanese halts, takes out of his knapsack his tennis shoes and starts putting them on. The American instead takes flight, not without shouting to his companion "Fool! Do you think your tennis shoes will enable you to outrun the lion?", to which the Japanese retorts "I need not run faster than the lion; all I need do is to run faster than you".¹¹ What makes positional competition alarming indeed is that it exemplifies a real case of destructive competition, for it worsens both individual and social welfare levels in that it generates affluence wastage at the same time as it disrupts the social fabric. As in Tocqueville's perceptive comment, positional competition "arises as a prerequisite of equality and aims at overthrowing it: equality in principle sets in motion the pursuit of *de facto* inequality".¹² Unlike that which occurs in sporting competitions

¹¹ Quoted in D. De Masi, 'Jobless Growth', *Società dell'Informazione*, 4, 1993.

¹² Quoted in R. Orsini, 'La Domanda Posizionale e le Risposte del Mercato', *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali*, September, 1993.

and in the familiar market competition where there are certainly winners and losers, but everyone can resume the game at a later stage albeit in different conditions, in positional competition the loser is forever one.¹³

To sum up. It is not lack of know-how about possible measures to be taken, nor is it the absence of operative instruments that make providing a solution to the employment question so very difficult. The point is that, remaining within the conceptual schema that identifies full time occupation with full employment, the pursuit of this goal conflicts with the pursuit of other goals which are equally legitimate and significant, such as environmentally sustainable growth; or a model of consumption that does not alienate by frustrating individual preferences; a non-stratified and tendentially "inclusive" society. In other words, the ultimate limit to various suggestions which seek to mitigate the calamitous level of unemployment is that of the generation of dangerous trade-offs in our society: in order to distribute work to everyone, one has to encourage neo-consumeristic models, or one has to socially legitimize new forms of poverty, or one has to restrict the liberty of citizens. All this is ethically unacceptable within the context of Catholic Social Teaching. It is my belief that once appropriate levels of awareness are reached, one should take courage and try new paths.

5. A Way out of Trade-offs: the Idea of the Civil Economy

In order to highlight the essential elements of the notion of a civil economy one needs to start with the following clarification. According to the prevailing conceptualization of economic activity, all the functions the economic system is called upon to perform are accomplished within two traditional sectors, the state and the private market. As we know, activity in these two areas differs in two aspects: one is information, (i.e. messages about individual choices), the other aspect concerns the decisional rule by which results are obtained, given the available information set. Now, if we can identify the public economy with the set of activities organized and legitimized by coercive powers, and the private economy with the set of

¹³ This is a sort of "superstar effect" in the sense of Sherwin Rose according to whom in many spheres of today's economic life the winner takes all. This explains the progressive increase in the last twenty to twenty-five years of inequality associated with a much improved average wealth: a real paradox (and scandal) of our age of growth. For an interesting analysis explaining how knowledge-products to-day show "superstar dynamics", see D.T. Quah, 'The Weightless Economy in Growth', *The Business Economist*, 1, 1999. For an innovative analysis of the "added worker effect", see K. Basu, G. Genicot and J.E. Stiglitz, 'Household Labor Supply, Unemployment and Minimum Wage Legislation', The World Bank, WP 2049, February 1999.

profit-oriented activities organized according to the principle of exchange of equivalents, the civil economy is represented by all those activities in which neither coercion nor profit are the *primum movens* or the ultimate target. In other words, while in public and private spheres the principle of the legitimation of economic decisions is represented, in the former by the right of citizenship, in the latter by purchasing power, in the civil economy it is represented by the *reciprocity principle*. What is this?

In a recent study, Kolm (1994) formalizes the reciprocity relation as a series of bi-directional transfers, independent of one another yet interconnected. Independence implies that each transfer is in itself voluntary, which means free; in other words, no transfer is a prerequisite for the occurrence of the other as there is no external obligation whatsoever in the mind of the transferring subject. This characteristic differentiates reciprocity from the familiar market exchange which is also a set of voluntary bilateral transfers whose voluntariness is global in that it applies to the whole set of transfers, not to each single transfer in isolation. Put differently, the transfers implied by the exchange of equivalents are each the prerequisite of the other, so much so that the law can at any time intervene to enforce compliance with contractual obligations. This is not the case with reciprocity, even though market exchange and reciprocity alike both imply voluntariness and oppose command relations. At the same time, however, there is more freedom in reciprocity than in the exchange of equivalents, because in the latter transfer in one direction is made compulsory by transfer in the opposite direction. This is precisely why, with reference to freedom, one can claim that market exchange places itself in an intermediate position between coercion and reciprocity. Reciprocity's other characteristic – bi-directional transfers – is what distinguishes such a relation from pure altruism, expressing itself in isolated one-directional transfers. In both cases, however, transfers are independent and voluntary, hence one can infer that reciprocity takes up an intermediate position between market exchange and pure altruism.

The reciprocity relation also demands some kind of balance between what one gives and what one expects to obtain, a balance that is not expressed in a definite exchange relationship (or relative price) since it can vary according to the extent to which moral sentiments like sympathy and benevolence are practised by the subjects involved. Unlike market exchange and coercion, and like altruism, reciprocity in the end cannot be explained in terms of self-interest alone: dispositions are basic elements of the concept of reciprocity. This is why economic literature, fettered to the rational choice scheme, cannot account for reciprocity, nor can reciprocity be understood as a special case of a repeated game. One should recognize, however, that reciprocity has a strategic dimension of its own, as it occurs in any

interaction among subjects: “should the recipient of my transfer not reciprocate, at a later moment I will somehow put an end to our relationship”.

Where does the difference lie with reference to the exchange of equivalents? Such a difference is twofold. In market exchanges the determination of the exchange ratio (the so-called equilibrium price) logically precedes the transfer of the object exchanged – only after buyer and seller have agreed, say, on the house price, is the property right of the house transferred. In the reciprocity relation the transfer instead precedes, both logically and temporally, the reciprocated object. Under reciprocity, the person who initiates it has but one firm point: an expectation of reciprocation. In the economist’s language this means that the ties of reciprocity may modify the outcome of the economic game, whether by tending to stabilize cooperative behaviour by agents interacting within contexts of the prisoner’s dilemma kind, or because the reciprocity practice tends endogenously to modify the preferences themselves, that is to say the form of individuals’ objective-functions. (To quote but one example: if I need help under circumstances which would enable me to reciprocate only at a later time, while I cannot credibly commit myself, a rational agent in the sense of the rational choice paradigm, although she is in a position to help me will not do so if, knowing that I am such a self-interested individual, she expects that I will not have an interest in reciprocating her favour. Things will differ if my potential help-giver knows I practice or I have been educated within a culture of reciprocity).

The question now arises: to what extent is reciprocity practised and how significant is it in real life?¹⁴ Contrary to what one might assume, even a casual examination suggests that it is a very widespread phenomenon especially in advanced societies. Not only is it practised within families, in small informal groups, by associations of various kinds, but the network of transactions based on the practice of reciprocity as a ruling principle is present in all those enterprises that make-up the variegated non-profit-making world, from cooperatives in which reciprocity takes the form of mutuality, to voluntary organizations where reciprocity verges on altruism, on the free gift.

Indeed, the bulk of social life consists of interrelated other-oriented actions, motivations and sentiments which are neither purely self-interested “exchanges” nor pure unilateral gift-giving – both of which appear as bor-

¹⁴ See my ‘Social Paradoxes of Growth and Civil Economy’, in G. Gandolfo and F. Marzano (eds.), *Economic Theory and Social Justice* (London, Macmillan, 1997). See P. Sacco and S. Zamagni, ‘Civil Economy, Cultural Evolution and Participatory Development: a Theoretical Inquiry’, mimeo, University of Bologna, 1999. See also A. Ben-Ner and L. Putterman (eds.), *Economics, Values and Organisations* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), in particular the essay by E. Fehr and S. Gächter.

derline cases. This is the field of reciprocity, of which the gift/return-gift relation constitutes the simplest form and component, but which includes many more complex relations. Reciprocity is a major type of social interaction in all groups and organizations, especially in successful ones. Family life is essentially reciprocity, and only occasionally is there strict exchange or pure command which are, in fact, often embedded in a larger framework of reciprocity. Reciprocity is the cement of cooperation which explains why many failures in cooperation predicted by standard game theory often do not occur. Some of the most perceptive analyses of society (especially in anthropology and in sociology) have seen reciprocity as the basic social fact and the main glue that holds society's members together. Indeed, giving should be seen as the basic social act (since in taking and exchanging people treat others as things rather than as ends in themselves, they reify them), and reciprocity is the basic fact constitutive of a society and the door to intersubjectivity. Reciprocity often is the means and vector of mutual self-interest, but it is much more than this, as it also implies attitudes toward others which are intrinsically valuable and valued by all, such as gratitude, consideration, empathy, liking, fairness, and a sense of community.

This is why reciprocity and gift-giving have a particularly important normative function. The normative evaluation of economic transfers is a classic and prime concern of economics. However, the good society is made of good acts, not only of productive actions; it is made of good social relations, not only of profitable exchanges; and it is made of good people and not only of satisfied ones. Furthermore, the common conception of a good act or person values dispositions such as altruism and gratitude and condemns selfishness. On the other hand, the presence within a population of these dispositions can be affected by policy, since they depend not only on education and imitation but also on the institutional set-up prevailing at a certain moment of time, which can favour them by rewarding them, in one way or another. Hence, social ethics, and in particular normative economics, which fail to deal with the possibilities of reciprocity miss a major feature of their own area of inquiry.

This remark provides the opportunity to single out a far-reaching principle concerning the evolution of any society. Social evolution is always favourably influenced by the presence of diverse rules governing the various economic spheres. In fact, the famous principle of comparative advantage applies not only at the level of commodity exchange but also at the level of economic institutions. The market is much more than a mechanism driven by demand and supply forces alone. As a social institution, it embodies specific foundational rules, which in turn are the product of cultural matrices, conventions, and firmly established practices. On the other hand, citi-

zens' welfare is not just something that can be marginally influenced by human action. In reality, the relationship between observables like economic institutions and unobservables like individual dispositions is a two-way one: institutions and dispositions co-evolve through a complex and typically non-linear process which is history-dependent.

This is why it does not make sense, nor does it help, to pose the question as to the choice between the reciprocity principle and the equivalent-exchange principle. It does not make sense because we do not possess any indisputable criterion upon which to base our choice. To avoid any misunderstanding, Pareto efficiency cannot provide such a criterion because it does not apply by definition to an economic set-up resting upon the reciprocity principle. On the other hand, it does not help, indeed it causes harm, because an advanced economy requires a practical implementation of both principles. It is unrealistic to think that all kinds of economic transactions can be based upon the "culture of contract", namely, the exchange of equivalents. If this vision were to become the ruling one, individual responsibility would coincide with the terms contained in the contract, with grotesque consequences that can be easily imagined. If the culture of contract fails to be integrated with the "culture of reciprocity", the potential of the system as a whole is going to be damaged. Hence the urgent need to help the sphere of civil economy to take off.

6. The Constitutional Pre-requisites of the Civil Economy

In our daily life, the civil society that is so often talked about with so much rhetoric cannot be reduced to, or identified with, the plurality of so-called intermediate bodies capable of counterbalancing the power of the state, on the one hand, and the power of the private market, on the other. That is necessary to be sure, but it is not enough. Either civil society finds a way to express itself at an economic level, presenting itself as a force which is autonomous and independent of both the public and the private spheres, or it risks becoming little more than a vague expression, the object of a sort of wishful thinking. In other words, the central argument is that in the present post-Fordist era, civil society cannot just be a "requirement" for the proper conduct of the state and the efficient functioning of the private market: a civil society of this kind would be destined to experience a slow euthanasia. Since material and symbolic resources are needed to provide civil society with significant instruments for action, civil society urgently needs to take up the challenge of post-modernity and cannot help but include a vital civil economy.

The new questions that are nowadays commanding the attention of intellectuals and politicians are of the type: how much space is it advisable for civil society to occupy in the present division of the total social space between the state and the private market, if one admits that intermediate bodies need freedom to grow and develop, since they cannot tolerate having their ends defined by others? How can one oppose the increasing arrogation of totalizing functions both by the state and the private market when they manifest a temptation towards the achievement hegemony by constraining the area of operation of intermediate bodies? More specifically, which categories of goods and services do citizens want to be produced and distributed according to the rules of the private economy, and which according to the rules of the civil economy? The central question concerning the transition to the post-Fordist era, which is underway, is that of understanding how it can be made possible for collective subjects to decide freely on the ways of producing and offering the various categories of goods – from private goods to public goods, to merit goods, to relational goods¹⁵ – which these subjects seek, using their purchasing power. It is unthinkable to resolve the matter by referring to the principle of efficiency, as it is used in traditional economic theory. Indeed, what is at stake is not a problem of the optimal allocation of scarce resources, but a problem of liberty.

This brings me to a different, albeit related, question. A most startling paradox characterizing the present phase of structural change is that in spite of the apparent atomization of post-industrial economies, this epoch needs more, not less, collective decision-making 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 are only produced by the presence within the economic system of significant and solid networks of trust. In a well-known essay, Arrow writes: “One can plausibly maintain that most of the world’s backwardness can be explained by the lack of

¹⁵ Unlike a private good that can be enjoyed separately, and unlike a public good that can be enjoyed jointly by more subjects, a relational good presents a twofold connotation. As for as the production side is concerned, it demands sharing by all members of the organization, without participation terms being negotiable. This implies that the incentive stimulating people to participate in the production of the relational good cannot be extended to the relationship interconnecting the said subjects: the *identity* of the other does matter. (We need only think of what happens in a social cooperative or in a volunteer association). As regards the consumption side, the function of a relational good cannot be fulfilled by disregarding the biography of persons because the relationship to the other is vital to the act of consumption and determines its utility. See B. Gui, ‘Interpersonal Relations: a Disregarded Theme in the Debate on Ethics and Economics’, in L. Warneryd (ed.), *Ethics and Economic Affairs* (London, Routledge, 1994).

mutual trust".¹⁶ The reasoning underlying this proposition is simply that development demands high levels of cooperation and the latter, in turn, implies deep ties of trust among economic agents. The strong connection between trust and development opportunities has been established at the empirical level too. Suffice here to mention Robert Putnam's accurate research, updating results obtained by Harvard political scientists, and the conclusions reached by S. Knack, on behalf of the World Bank, on the connection between the degree of trust in personal relations and private investment. (As expected, it is found that most countries with an above-average level of trust also enjoy investments at higher levels than anticipated). In brief, one can safely state 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 journey.

If so, the question poses itself: what conditions do we need for an economic system to generate and improve trust relations? It is the case that civil society is the privileged locus where dispositions of trust are fostered; this is not so in the private market which is rather a trust-consumer, and not a trust-producer. Indeed, the two fundamental elements of trust-mutual acknowledgement of identities and engagement not to cheat or betray even when they are 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. This is why it is misleading and ultimately scientifically unproductive to reduce trust which is a *relation* between agents – to reputation – which is an *asset*, and something that can be accumulated or depleted. Such a reduction would prevent economic research from inquiring into the strategies to be followed in order to reach that critical threshold of generalized trust beyond which the private market can subsequently act both as a reputation control device and as a reputation enhancing structure.¹⁷

So what must be done at constitutional level so that the sphere of the

¹⁶ K. Arrow, 'Gifts and Exchanges', in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, (1972) p. 343. See also J. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1990) and the most interesting paper by P. Dasgupta, 'Economic Development and the Idea of Social Capital', mimeo, Cambridge University, 1998. I should observe that the Italian word for trust is *fiducia*, which comes from the Latin word *fides* meaning "chord": the chord which unites two (or more) entities.

¹⁷ For a thorough investigation of the difference between trust and reputation see L. Bruni and R. Sudgen, 'Moral Canals. Trust and Social Capital in the Work of Hume, Smith and Genovesi', mimeo, University of East Anglia 1998.

civil economy can adequately expand to absorb labour set free from the sphere of private economy and to contribute to the creation of a thick network of trust relations? The answer is basically that it is necessary to overcome the neo-corporatist method of social ordering. According to this model, collective actors do not act separately from the state, but through it or with its recognition. It is the government, operating like a social mediator, that leads the representatives of various stakeholders in society towards a social equilibrium. Now, the gradual demise of the nation-state caused by well known reasons, leads to the crisis of the collective actors it legitimated. This is why the neo-corporatist approach can no longer be advocated. Despite its historical merits, it cannot function any longer today. Hence the two horns of the dilemma: the supporters of the liberal-individualistic position, looking upon the decline of the collective actors with favour, press for assignment of their tasks to individual agents in order to achieve social cohesion via the private market. But this path does not seem viable for the following basic reason. Our advanced societies nowadays all face a problem of the inadequate supply of relational goods and, since these are genuine goods, a society that could not ensure adequate supplies of them would have a lower level of well-being (regardless of the volume and quality of private goods that society would be able to secure). On the other hand, the production of relational goods can take place neither according to the rules of the private market – for the fundamental reason that no allocation of property rights can be properly defined for this category of goods – nor according to the rules of the state – indeed, coercion destroys relationality. It must therefore be concluded that *ad hoc* economic agents are needed – the agents constituting the civil economy.

The other horn of the dilemma, favoured by those who – like this writer – identify themselves with the liberal-personalist position, consists in putting civil society to work, in such a way that the intermediate bodies may form a new institutional infrastructure of the post-Fordist society. Within such a scheme a twofold role would fall to the government. On the one hand, it would recognize (and not grant!) the self-organization of collective agents in all those areas in which their members, in total autonomy, claim to have legitimate interests to protect. That corresponds to what the principle of subsidiarity, according to Catholic Social Teaching, requires: the upper body must not simply delegate or distribute quotas of sovereignty to the lower body – this would be a “granted” subsidiarity, that is to say political and administrative decentralization. It should instead recognize and therefore favour what the lower body is capable of accomplishing on its own.

On the other hand, government must enforce the rules of this self-organization (transparency, rules about access to the sources of financing;

tax schemes), in such a way as to have the dividing line between the civil and the private economies traced by competition and not by dirigistic decisions stemming from above, as is the case with the neo-corporatist model. The notion of competitive self-organization is what defines the model of social order defended here. It embraces the need to leave the individual and collective actors the power freely to decide upon the composition of the various categories of goods (e.g. more private goods or more relational goods), and the ways of supplying them (the utility that I derive from the consumption of a good or service does not depend solely on the objective characteristics of that good or service, but also on my degree of involvement and participation in the act itself of choosing). Ultimately, this is the deep meaning of an authentic economic democracy, for which pluralism in economic institutions is not enough; rather, it needs the pluralism *of* economic institutions themselves.

I am perfectly aware of the difficulties inherent in the practical realization of the model of competitive self-organization as a model of social order. Catholic Social Teaching knows the snares of the passage between the Scylla of neo-statism and its neo-corporatist method, and the Charybdis of neo-liberalism and its method of social atomism. As in all human endeavours, it would be naïve to think that new, radical processes do not entail conflict, even high levels of it. The interests and differences involved are enormous. Not without cause, a sort of distress concerning the future is spreading today in intermediate bodies. This distress is being used by those advocating the idea of the “culture of crisis”, as a political device producing, according to the circumstance, a market Machiavellism or a political Machiavellism. It is precisely against this neo-Machiavellism and its underlying ethical relativism that those who, like Christians, are the bearers of a specific message of hope, should put up a fight. Catholic Social Teaching acquires significance and credibility, even with the non-believer, whenever it is embodied in actual experiences which do not simply represent traditions of moral reflection, but turn into laboratories for innovative life-practices.

7. Concluding Remarks.

Let us now summarize the thread of our argument. I began by considering labour as a multi-faceted whole encompassing all activities necessary for human development, a development viewed in its entirety: doing, having, being-with. I then dwelt upon the reasons that today make obsolete or short-lived any attempt to find some sort of solution to the question of unemployment when one abides by a vision of society resting upon the state

– (private) market dichotomy. I finally came to recognize a solution to the problem in question in the form of a model of market economy resting upon the competitive interaction of a sphere of private economy with a sphere of civil economy. I have tried to highlight the peculiar economic and ethical features of this model. The recommendation stemming from this analysis is that we urgently need to stimulate the organization of a civil society, which is also capable of expressing itself at the level of economic relations. This means that the civil society we need cannot be envisaged as a mere “prerequisite” for the smooth and efficient operation of the state and the private market, both seen as unique regulatory centre of social order.

The principle of subsidiarity is nowadays witnessing a peculiar antinomic situation: the universal acknowledgement of its value and significance collides with substantial difficulties in its implementation. All are prepared to speak well about subsidiarity; but very few are prepared to translate this principle into action. As social scientists know very well, actions can have consequences different to those which are intended or anticipated. To be a responsible and accountable person you must consider the unintended consequences of your actions and evaluate their effects; and you must minimize unintended consequences that do harm. On this issue, Catholic Social Teaching parts company with those who emphasize the role of intentions at the expense of consequences in moral judgements. Although intentions matter, it is morally imperative to *do* right rather than merely to *intend* to do right. Thus, acquiring accurate relevant knowledge about the way the principle of subsidiarity works, and making accurate efforts to implement it in the form of a civil economy, are aspects of being morally responsible and accountable.

The main message from the argument developed above is twofold. The past few years have witnessed a remarkable upsurge of interest among economists in the problem of the anthropological foundation of economic discourse. This interest has been partly motivated by the recognition that a viable and effective strategy to cope with the unemployment problem presupposes overcoming the reductionist character of a great deal of contemporary economic theory – a reductionism which expresses itself in the fact that in modern economics relations among human beings are reduced to relations of exchange of equivalents, as if these were the only ones worthy of economic interest. As it is well known, the economic universe is made up of various economic realms, each characterized by the prevalence of a specific type of relationship. Yet the (ontological) assumption of reductionism in economics is that all types of social relations can be modelled as one variant or another of exchange relations. In so doing, the discipline is imposing upon itself a Nessus shirt that prevents a thorough investigation of eco-

conomic relations, which, although they do not appear to be of the exchange relations type, are of great economic relevance in our societies. As we have seen, this is the case with relations of reciprocity.

It is by now a recognized fact that market systems are compatible with many cultures defined as tractable patterns of behaviour. In turn, the degree of compatibility of market systems with cultures is not without effects on the global 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 individualism will produce different results from a culture of reciprocity. But cultures are not to be taken as given and beyond analysis. Cultures respond to the investment of resources in cultural patterns, so much so that in many circumstances it may be socially beneficial to engage in cultural engineering. The performance of an economic system is also dependent on whether certain conceptions and ways of thinking have achieved dominance, a dominance which is precarious in any case.¹⁸

The second message is to call for a deep rethinking of the identification, still prevalent within modern economics, of the category of happiness with that of utility. The most extreme expression of this identification is undoubtedly Gary Becker's research programme, whose logic tends however to produce a profound feeling of incongruity. The problem is that *homo Beckerianus* is a perfect specimen of the social idiot: a subject so completely devoted to rational pursuit of his own utility as to be unaware that in order to do so he has to manipulate, systematically and explicitly, other people's behaviours and choices. This is precisely the point: within the utilitarian perspective, as repeatedly stressed by, among others, A. Sen, we see the "other" as a mere *instrument* for the attainment of our utility goals. On the other hand, it is well known that happiness postulates the existence of the "other" as an end in itself: it takes two to be happy, whereas I can maximize my utility alone, just as Robinson Crusoe could do before he met Man Friday. As L. Pareyson writes, "Man is a relationship, not in that he stands in relation to, or entertains a relation with: man *is* a relationship, more specifically a relationship to the (ontological) being, to the other".¹⁹

¹⁸ We owe to Sen one of the first attempts to advance a relational approach to reciprocity. Cf. A. Sen, 'Isolation, Assurance and the Social Rate of Discount', *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 80, (1967), 112-124. See also A. Antoci and P. Sacco, 'Relational Capital and Social Evolution', mimeo, University of Bologna, 1999; and P. Sacco and S. Zamagni, 'An Evolutionary Dynamic Approach to Altruism', in F. Farina, F. Hahn and S. Vannucci (eds.), *Ethics and Economics*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

¹⁹ L. Pareyson, *Ontologia della Libertà* (SEI, Torino, 1995), p. 23.

The problem with the reduction of happiness to utility arises because a large number of social interactions and major existential decisions acquire significance merely thanks to the *lack* of instrumentality and are desirable in themselves. The meaning of a generous action towards a friend, a child or partner lies in its being gratuitous. If we were aware that it was prompted by a precise utility-oriented and manipulative logic, it would acquire a totally different meaning and substantially alter the way it is received and the behavioural responses it elicits. However, there is no room for this vision within a conceptual perspective in which the social dimension is the sum of the individual ones, whence the need to include behavioural purposefulness in a sort of individual accountancy. *Homo Beckerianus* is profoundly lonely, hence unhappy, even and above all when he/she worries about others, in that this solicitude is but an idiosyncrasy of his/her own preferences.

The reduction of human experience to the “accountancy” dimension of utilitarian calculus is not just an act of intellectual arrogance: it is first and foremost sheer methodological naïvety, as is well documented in a recent contribution by B. Frey.²⁰ I should observe, in this connection, that the early history of economic science was characterized by the centrality of happiness. Economics was essentially seen as the “science of happiness” whose fundamental *raison d’être* was to provide an answer to the question: “what should I do to be happy?”. Even the titles of the books of most of the economists of that period reveal such a concern – think of Ludovico Muratori’s *Della Felicità Pubblica* (*On public happiness*, 1749); Giuseppe Palmieri’s *Riflessioni sulla Pubblica Felicità* (*Reflections on Public Happiness*, 1805); Pietro Verri’s *Discorso sulla Felicità* (*Discourse on Happiness*, 1763). The same is true of Antonio Genovesi (1754), Maupertius, Quesnay, Turgot, Condorcet, Sismondi, David Hume and especially Adam Smith.²¹ As is well known, in the history of economic thought it is only with the “marginalistic revolution” that the category of utility completely superseded that of happiness within economic discourse. After that, as a foreseeable consequence, economics came to be called the “dismal science”.

²⁰ Frey, B., *Not Just for the Money. An Economic Theory of Personal Motivation* (Cheltenham, E. Elgar 1997). See also Antoci A., P. Sacco and S. Zamagni, ‘The Ecology of Altruistic Motivations in Triadic Social Environments’, in J.M. Ythier and S. Kolm (eds.), *The Economics of Reciprocity, Giving and Altruism* (London, Macmillan, 1999).

²¹ It is interesting to note that the November 1997 issue of *The Economic Journal*, (107) hosted a symposium on “Economics and Happiness”, with contributions by H. Dixon, A.J. Oswald, R.H. Frank and Y. Ng.

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DILEMMES CONCERNANT LES SALAIRES ET L'EMPLOI

EDMOND MALINVAUD

English Summary
Dilemmas about Wages and Employment

1. INTRODUCTION

What do just wages mean? Does maintaining a satisfactory employment level require an appropriate level of wages? How should we cope with the presence of the working poor in affluent societies? These three questions, among others, point to dilemmas which have been long standing. However, perceptions of these dilemmas have become more disquieting than thirty years ago. To a greater extent than was thought then, these are now held to challenge the durable implementation of Christian values.

The focus is placed here on the monetary reward received from work and on the right to work. The dilemmas involved have as their background the experience of deterioration over the last three decades: inequalities in wage rates have increased; inequalities in access to work have also increased; and the protection and insurance provided for workers by the welfare state have been found to be somewhat disappointing. The prognosis for measures which solve these dilemmas does not give grounds for expecting a substantial improvement. This paper does not claim to present solutions to these dilemmas, but rather to examine the implications of those advances in economic knowledge which are relevant to them.

2. JUST WAGES

Every employer has the duty to pay a just wage to each of his employees. This is a basic principle of Catholic social teaching, a principle directly related to another: the recognition due to the dignity of working persons. As a principle it seems to be widely accepted. But the exact meaning of the concept of a "just wage" deserves some attention. What are commonly meant by just wages, or in *de facto* terms by fair wages, in a given society at a given time, may be taken as being pretty well established and usually as being close to the current wage scales in use.

Why is this so? The argument starts with the concept of the just price which

was much discussed by scholastic philosophers in the Middle Ages. For St. Thomas Aquinas the just price for whoever was selling, perhaps in a quite “thin” market considering the conditions of the time, was the normal price holding more generally, something like a broader market price or, when a price control existed, the legal price. The main principle behind this definition was that, under normal cost conditions, the seller should not charge an exceptionally high price when he or she could do so, because the buyer could have an urgent need of the good, or could benefit considerably from holding the good. If we transpose this idea to the labour market, if we argue that the wage is the price for the service performed by labour, and if we consider that opportunities for exploitation are more frequent for employers than for employees, we are led to precisely the characterization given above for the just wage.

A tension nevertheless remains in the association between the idea of a just wage and that of a normal wage, particularly when wages¹ are generally low. Can we impose on individual employers the moral obligation to pay substantially higher wages than their competitors do? Would not the result often be that the employer would go out of business and his employees lose their jobs? Confronted with this dilemma we naturally tend to think about legal or regulatory interventions.

State intervention in labour markets changes the outcome of the economic law of supply and demand or of negotiations between employers and trade unions. What should the government do about wages? We cannot consider the issue in isolation because whatever is decided about wages will have effects on the fulfilment of other social objectives, whether positively or negatively, depending on the case. Our particular concern here is about effects on employment.

For the purpose of the organisation of the argument, we shall distinguish between various groups of questions. Section 3 will discuss the dilemmas surrounding the average real wage rate. Section 4 will consider two questions. What are the causes of the existence of large groups of poor workers? What dilemmas are faced by any government which seeks to raise their wages by instituting or raising legal minimum wages? Section 5 will discuss the option of dissociating relative labour costs from relative wage rates.

3. THE AVERAGE WAGE AND EMPLOYMENT

Economic analysis

Whenever and wherever the unemployment rate is high, the main cause lies in an insufficient demand for labour by potential employers, even though other causes may also contribute marginally. Numerous economists have argued in the past and some still argue today, that the main reason for an insufficient demand for labour

¹ Indeed in relation to low wages we must recall the permanent emphasis in the teaching of the Church since *Rerum Novarum* on the fact that a worker should receive a sufficient wage “for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing security for its future” (*Laborem Exercens*, 19). Any assessment of the exact level of this “family wage” has to refer to a standard for the minimum amount permitting a decent level of consumption, in relation to the norm specific to the country in question.

is always a level of real wages which is too high. If they are right, the proposition highlights a potentially important conflict of ethical objectives which is discussed at the end of this section. The proposition is, however, unduly one-sided. Indeed employers themselves often report that they would employ more people if the demand for their products or their services were higher, without any change in real wages taking place. Such an answer is important though it may well be superficial because the level of real wages and the demand for the products of firms are inter-dependent.

Decisions of any normal firm about its demand for labour depend on two factors, which we may respectively label profitability and demand (meaning demand for what the firm produces). Profitability and demand are in fact often correlated. However, it makes sense to distinguish them because there are significant cases in which demand exists but at the overly low mark-up currently prevailing. There are also, more frequently, cases in which current prices are profitable but buyers are not forthcoming and are not expected to be significantly attracted by lower prices. Thus business analysts recognize the distinction and use it in their comparisons between different countries and different periods.

When they occur, increases in wages boost demand for a while and diminish profitability. The first effect comes from the fact that incomes from labour are more quickly spent than other incomes, something which is particularly true in poor countries; this effect tends to vanish progressively with time. But it is favourable in the meantime, if indeed it was lack of demand which was preventing full employment. The second effect, diminishing profitability, is not a reason for concern if profitability was previously high. Even if the case is otherwise, inadequate profitability is slow to induce significant effects on employment. A government deciding what the objective of its policy should be with respect to wages requires, first, a diagnosis of the obstacles to better employment: is it dealing with a lack of demand for goods or a lack of profitability? Secondly, it also requires a time frame: the next year or so, or the next five years or beyond?

Two additional considerations should be kept in mind. In the first place, downward flexibility of the average wage level would be dangerous if it was high. It would indeed lead to downward flexibility of prices. Decreases in prices would raise the real cost of standing debts. Debtors would lose and creditors would gain. Since many employers have a net debt, they would have to reduce their activity in order to remain financially viable, and this precisely in a time of business depression, which would thus be made worse.

In the second place, countries in which unemployment is endemic cannot experience high growth rates of production; hence they cannot experience high growth rates in wages either. If unemployment is initially due to wages being too high, it often happens that the initial advantage accruing to employed wage earners turns out to be only temporary: a temporary gain is followed by a protracted loss. If unemployment was initially due to lack of demand, failure to include measures permitting wage rises in a package intended to stimulate activity may also mean missing an opportunity for turning a vicious depressive circle into a virtuous expansionary circle, in which increases in demand, in production, in employment and in wages would have gone hand in hand. Simplifying the argument but keeping its

main thrust, we may say that reference to the possibility of one or the other of these two opposing vicious circles explains the sentence contained in *Quadragesimo Anno* and already quoted by Father Schasching (op. cit.): "A scale of wages too low, no less than a scale excessively high, causes unemployment".

Ethical priorities

Everybody agrees that reducing unemployment, where it exceeds frictional unemployment, is an important social objective. But it is also common for an increase in the standard of living of wage earners to rank high among social objectives. Yet there are cases in which increasing wages still further would mean increasing unemployment, particularly if one looks beyond the first one or two years. This paper argues in favour of an explicit position of the Magisterium on how decisions should be oriented when a trade-off of this kind seems to exist.

This paper, however, recognizes the inaccuracies of macroeconometrics due to the many difficulties facing research in this field. This means that the terms of the trade-off in question cannot be assessed with precision. Any objective assessment will have to be qualified by restrictive clauses, showing that wide margins of uncertainty remain. The paper also raises a crucial question: will the next fifty years experience trends in standards of living that will be as favourable as trends have been in this respect during the last fifty years? Economists have only a limited ability to answer this question, which mainly turns on physical and biological potentialities. However, the worries currently expressed by many lead us to think that prudence recommends considering the possibility of a near stagnation in *per capita* standards of living. What then should be the choice between, on the one hand, employment and frugality for all and, on the other hand, a more inequitable future?

4. THE WORKING POOR

During the last two decades most Western European countries have resisted the trend towards declining real wages for unskilled jobs, so containing an increase in the number of working poor. Did they contain the increase in poverty in this manner? Is there any lesson to be drawn from this for other regions of the world, in particular for low income countries?

Trends and their explanation

We must distinguish the trend toward lower real wages for the unskilled in industrial countries from the trend toward increasing wage inequality throughout the wage scale. A natural explanation of the increase in wage inequality could be found if the trend in the structure of the labour supply by skill levels had been very different from the trend in the corresponding structure of the demand for labour. But during the past five decades, say, both structures have moved *grosso modo* in the same direction: toward higher skills in the supply of labour because of progress in education, training and diffusion of technical information, and simultaneously, toward higher skills demanded of labour because of the nature of technical progress and, in industrial countries, because of increasing competition from newly developing countries with regard to goods with a high unskilled labour content.

For a satisfactory explanation of decreasing wage inequality in the 1950s and 1960s, followed by increasing inequality since then, we need a rather precise assessment of the relative speeds of these two structural trends over time, corresponding respectively to the supply of labour and to the demand for labour. Such an assessment shows that the change in the relative speeds, from the early post-war period to the more recent decades, has not been dramatic. There also remains room for institutional factors to have played a role, particularly in the USA: namely the decline in the real value of the minimum wage, the decline in unionization and the movement towards economic deregulation.

Common wisdom among economists now claims that, although exposed to the same trends in the structural compositions of demand and supply on their labour markets, Western European countries reacted differently to the USA: they limited the increase in wage dispersion, in particular by maintaining the purchasing power of minimum wages, but, so the argument goes, the counterpart was that these countries had to accept high unemployment of the unskilled, a trend which the USA avoided. The argument is to some extent misleading because there is a better explanation for much of the increase in European unskilled unemployment, namely the greater importance of overall unemployment, which the USA has avoided thanks to its macroeconomic policy. However, the existence of a remaining trade-off appears likely and must be investigated.

Employment and poverty

Various possibilities are open to societies in order to cope with poverty. We shall, however, restrict attention to just one question: do minimum wages cause unemployment of the unskilled? Existence of a legal or conventional minimum wage in a country, in a region or in an industry may be justified as being the most effective way to prevent some employers from exploiting employees who have no other option than remaining in their job. But negative effects on employment might perhaps result, particularly where the levels of minimum wages are high enough to imply that a substantial proportion of workers receive a wage just equal to the minimum.

In the past, economists of different persuasions have frequently debated the possibility of such a negative effect, often arriving at radically different evaluations, and the debate still goes on. A large number of econometric studies have been undertaken during the last twenty years, but their results have been far from concordant. However, all things considered we may at least rule out the extreme thesis that gave a dominant role to minimum wages in explaining the level of overall unemployment. If contributing at all to unemployment, minimum wages are only one cause among others, a cause that can only apply to employment of the unskilled or of the young applicant to the labour market and a cause that cannot be significant where the levels of minimum wages are low.

This being said, anything that increases the unemployment of the unskilled is worrying because of the likely future evolution in the structures of supply and demand in the labour market, and because of the resulting increase in poverty and social exclusion. In addition, anything that increases unemployment of the young is worrying because of the importance at that age of a good start to work. Moralists

who have to face the dilemma between maintaining unchanged (at their low level) the real wages of the working poor or somewhat improving their employment would certainly like to know more precisely about the terms of the trade-off between them. An explanation of the difficulty of making this assessment may be the best way of conveying a sense of the real importance of the trade-off.

Firstly, econometric measurement generally faces difficulty in its attempt to attribute observed results to the various causes that play a part and then combine in their effects. This is an unfortunate fact of the scientific conditions in which economists find themselves. Secondly, some economists give an important role to minimum wages in generating overall unemployment. Protection of workers would contribute to making all workers less prone to accept "the verdict of the market"; where minimum wages are generous, workers would obtain wages which are too high, and so the argument goes, this would generate unemployment. From the discussion in section 3 above it appears that this argument is unlikely to have universal validity.

But, thirdly, the trade-off has an important time-dimension that may be neglected and ought not to be. If the minimum wage is lowered, the impact on the income of the workers concerned will be instantaneous, whereas the increase in the chances for unemployed unskilled people to find jobs will be slow. It will appear progressively, but over a period covering a decade and more. But where levels of the minimum wages are high, changes in these levels should eventually have quite significant effects on the employment of the category of persons affected by these changes.

Although no one should take my estimate as accurate, I venture to suggest that where the minimum wage rate is high, given present European prospects about future employment of persons with low skill, and everything else remaining unchanged, a decrease by 1 per cent in the minimum wage is likely to increase by 1 per cent in the long run (after not much more than a decade) the employment of the group directly effected by the initial decrease, a group amounting to something like 20 per cent of the labour force. Giving top priority to the right to work would imply an acceptance of this decrease in the minimum wage. Giving priority to maintaining the income of employed working poor would lead in the opposite decision.

5. LOWER WAGES OR LOWER LABOUR COSTS?

Faced with the dilemma just posed, a number of economists and persons holding public office in Western Europe have suggested that an escape could be found by a kind of fiscal manoeuvre. This occurred in late 1992 and in 1993, when it became clear that a serious depression was under way in our part of the world and that unemployment, which had been decreasing since the middle of the 1980s, would peak again, perhaps at a still higher level than before. Since most of our countries were financing a large part of their welfare transfers by a payroll tax, or something equivalent, the idea was to reduce the rate of the tax levied on low wages and to find alternative ways by which to replace the public funds thus lost. The minimum wage, and more generally the wages received by low-wage earners, could thus be maintained unchanged while the cost of labour to their employers would be lowered and the demand for low-skilled labour would be stimulated. The

policy would thus counteract, at least to some extent, the damaging effects of the depression on the working poor.

Now as the policy has been applied in a number of countries, we have a better understanding of the implementation, limits and chances of success of the idea. Here are the main conclusions.

1. Implementing cuts in payroll taxes is feasible, at least to some extent. But in order to be effective, the fiscal manoeuvre must be viewed as permanent.

2. A number of evaluations have been made of the long-term employment effect of permanent cuts in payroll taxes. Most of them have reached conclusions similar to that given by the following simple calculation: if the decrease in the labour cost affects 20 per cent of the labour force and is on average equal to 10 per cent, the expected increases in employment may be respectively those of 10 per cent for unskilled persons and of 2 per cent for the whole labour force.

3. Objections have been raised by some economists against the policy as now envisaged. Some have argued that a better policy is to upgrade skills in the population. Unfortunately, the diagnosis according to which it would be possible to do better in this respect in the future than is commonly assumed does not seem credible in Western European countries.

4. Other economists are worried by the distortion that cuts in payroll taxes introduce into our fiscal systems. The concern is serious. Present scales of payroll tax rates in some countries may hinder the promotion of low-wage workers as well as seniority bonuses being granted to them. These people might be then kept in a kind of "poverty trap".

5. In order to remedy this kind of distortion, we may consider a schedule which would make the increase in the labour cost, after a given rise in the take-home pay, equal to the same amount at all levels of wages. But then the move no longer appears as a small change in the taxation system; it should be viewed as a true fiscal reform and must be discussed as such.

6. With the flat-cut schedule described above, each full-time employee may be said to receive a "basic wage" exempt from payroll taxation. A schedule of this sort calls to mind the old proposal for a "negative income tax" or the more recent proposal for a "universal basic income". Since Western European welfare systems now contain a number of means-tested transfers, our countries may be said to stand half way down the road towards a universal basic income. Difficulties are already identified due to the fact that low take-home wages are in some cases hardly higher than the take-home income of those who are not working. This creates a disincentive, which may induce some people to prefer not to work. Such people are sometimes said to be kept in an "unemployment trap". The possible existence of this phenomenon, which would challenge Catholic teaching about the value of work, deserves attention.

Indeed, the possible roles of the so-called poverty trap and unemployment trap add further dilemmas to those on which attention has been focused in this paper, dilemmas which entail such ethical values as liberty, autonomy and confidentiality, on the one hand, and responsibility and solidarity on the other.

1. INTRODUCTION

Qu'entend-on par de justes salaires? Peut-on les définir indépendamment du souci du droit au travail? Maintenir un niveau satisfaisant d'emploi exige-t-il un niveau approprié des salaires? Ce niveau se réalise-t-il par la flexibilité du salaire moyen? Maintenir de bonnes perspectives d'emploi pour tous exige-t-il la flexibilité des salaires relatifs? Comment faire face à la présence de travailleurs pauvres dans les sociétés riches? L'existence d'un salaire minimum peut-elle nuire aux pauvres? La redistribution fiscale devrait-elle intervenir afin de dissocier les coûts du travail des salaires gagnés?

De telles questions révèlent des dilemmes qui se posent depuis longtemps. Elles sont très débattues dans les économies de marché développées, mais elles peuvent aussi concerner ceux des pays en transition ou en développement qui veulent remodeler leur système économique et social (ce que nous avons appris peut en effet être plus généralement pertinent). En raison d'un changement de contexte, la perception de ces dilemmes est devenue plus inquiétante qu'elle l'était il y a trente ans. Ils défient, plus qu'on le pensait alors, la réalisation durable des valeurs chrétiennes. C'est une raison suffisante pour considérer le sujet de cet article.

Nous pourrions même envisager celui-ci comme appartenant à un projet de recherche plus vaste, qui pourrait être motivé comme suit. Certaines formes d'organisation économique sont aujourd'hui hors jeu en raison de leurs échecs passés; elles ont peu de chance d'apparaître à nouveau attractives prochainement. Mais il reste des marges de choix. Nos institutions combinent, d'une manière complexe et variable, des droits économiques et sociaux, la concurrence sur les marchés ou entre groupes de pression, des normes sociales et des réglementations. Les spécialistes de sciences sociales doivent aujourd'hui énoncer ce que sont les performances respectives à long terme des divers types d'organisation se situant à l'intérieur de ces marges de choix. L'Académie Pontificale des Sciences Sociales aurait un rôle naturel à jouer dans ce vaste projet, celui de concentrer son attention sur les performances par rapport à des objectifs éthiques.

Le sujet est ici centré sur la rémunération monétaire du travail et sur le droit au travail. Les dilemmes se posent avec, à l'arrière plan, l'expérience des trois dernières décennies qui, à bien des égards, ont connu une détérioration: les inégalités de salaire ont crû; les inégalités quant aux chances d'emploi ont aussi crû; la protection et l'assurance fournies aux travailleurs par l'État-providence ont été jugées quelque peu décevantes. Alors que d'autres sujets d'inquiétude pourraient en large partie se résorber d'eux

mêmes, le diagnostic à propos des trois précédents ne conduit pas à prévoir une sensible amélioration.

L'exposé ne prétend pas présenter des solutions aux dilemmes, mais plutôt faire apparaître ce qu'implique toute avancée dans la connaissance économique qui pourrait être pertinente par rapport à ces dilemmes. Chacune des quatre sections qui vont suivre est centrée sur un problème principal.

2. DE JUSTES SALAIRES

2.1. *La relation entre salarié et employeur*

Tout employeur a le devoir de payer un juste salaire à chacun de ses salariés. C'est un principe de base dans l'enseignement social de l'Église, un principe directement rattaché à un autre: la reconnaissance due à la dignité de chaque personne dans son travail.² En tant que principe cela semble largement accepté. Mais le sens du concept de "juste salaire" mérite un peu d'attention. Avant de l'examiner, nous pouvons noter une idée voisine maintenant bien acceptée chez les économistes.

Indépendamment du principe moral, payer de justes salaires peut aussi être rentable pour l'employeur, parce que ce comportement conduit à une meilleure productivité des salariés (on parle en économie de "salaire d'efficacité"). Il est intéressant de noter que beaucoup d'économistes pensent aujourd'hui que la raison principale de cette productivité accrue doit être trouvée en dehors de leur discipline: ce n'est pas tant que les travailleurs seraient moins portés à rechercher des emplois mieux rémunérés et à quitter leur employeur ou que, par crainte de perdre leur emploi, il seraient moins portés à tirer au flanc; c'est plutôt parce que les salariés sentent un devoir moral de bien travailler quand ils sont bien payés.³ Cette raison a à voir avec le respect mutuel, la réciprocité et "l'échange des dons" en sociologie.

Ce que l'on entend par des salaires justes, dans une société donnée à un instant donné, semble être assez bien déterminé et se trouver le plus souvent proche de ce qui résulte des échelles de salaires couramment appliquées. Mais les raisons de cette identification méritent examen. Pourquoi en est-il ainsi? Je ne suis pas bien préparé à répondre à cette question, car

² Voir J. Schasching, "Catholic social teaching and labor", in *The future of Labour and Labour in the Future*, Proceedings of the Second Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Vatican city 1998, particulièrement pages 53, 64 and 65.

³ Pour les preuves empiriques voir T. Bewley, "Why not cut pay?", *European Economic Review*, May 1998.

je ne suis guère compétent en philosophie morale. En vue de stimuler la discussion je vais cependant avancer une brève argumentation.

Elle part du concept de juste prix qui a été beaucoup discuté, déjà par les philosophes scolastiques du Moyen Âge. Pour Saint Thomas d'Aquin le juste prix pour toute personne qui vendait, peut-être dans un marché très étroit considérant les conditions de l'époque, était le prix normal qui prévalait plus généralement, quelque chose comme un prix valant pour un plus vaste marché, ou quand existait un contrôle des prix, le prix légal. Le principe principal derrière cette identification était que, sous des conditions normales de coût, le vendeur ne devait pas appliquer un prix exceptionnellement élevé quand il ou elle en avait la possibilité du fait que l'acheteur avait un besoin particulièrement urgent du bien à vendre, ou même simplement que l'acheteur aurait tiré un bénéfice particulier de la détention du bien. Si nous transposons l'idée au marché du travail, si nous arguons de ce que le salaire est le prix du service du travail et si nous considérons que les opportunités pour exploiter des situations spéciales sont plus fréquentes pour les employeurs que pour les salariés, nous sommes conduits à préciser la caractérisation donnée ci-dessus du juste salaire.

Mais nous devons nous demander si la transposition ainsi esquissée n'entre pas en conflit avec le principe moral exigeant que nous ne traitions pas le travail comme s'il s'agissait d'une marchandise. Si le concept de juste salaire est en effet plus complexe que celui de juste prix, il semble que c'est pour deux raisons: parce qu'un salaire ou deux peuvent constituer le revenu total sur lequel une famille devra vivre, et parce que l'emploi signifie le plus souvent un lien durable avec l'employeur, ce qui crée au moins une dépendance économique. Dès lors l'employeur a des devoirs que les vendeurs n'ont pas normalement. Cependant la notion d'un salaire normal sera maintenue si y est ajouté que les conditions de travail doivent être de même normales pour le type d'emploi considéré et que, plus généralement, le travailleur doit recevoir un traitement respectant sa dignité.

Une tension subsiste cependant dans l'association entre l'idée d'un juste salaire et celle d'un salaire normal, particulièrement pour les salaires normalement bas.⁴ Mais pouvons nous imposer à un employeur isolé l'obli-

⁴ En effet c'est pour les bas salaires que nous devons rappeler la préoccupation, permanente dans l'enseignement de l'Église depuis *Rerum Novarum*, que le travailleur reçoive un salaire suffisant "pour établir et entretenir sa famille et pour lui assurer la sécurité dans l'avenir" (*Laborem Exercens*, 19). Toute évaluation quant au niveau précis du "salaire familial" doit se référer à une norme pour le montant minimum permettant une consommation décente, c'est-à-dire encore à une norme spécifique au pays en question.

gation morale de payer des salaires substantiellement plus élevés que ceux payés par ses concurrents? Cela n'aurait-il pas souvent pour effet d'obliger l'employeur à interrompre son activité et les salariés à perdre leurs emplois? Confrontés au dilemme nous pensons naturellement à des interventions légales ou réglementaires.

2.2. *L'Etat et des normes plus profondes de justice*

Il n'est pas nécessaire d'insister ici sur les justifications à l'existence du droit et de la réglementation du travail, en particulier pour protéger les travailleurs dans leurs relations avec les employeurs. L'Etat a ainsi à statuer sur le contenu, la conclusion et l'application des contrats de travail. Une telle fonction peut conduire à des règles permettant de contrôler que salaires et conditions de travail ne dévient pas substantiellement de ce qui serait normal.

L'intervention publique sur les marchés du travail va habituellement plus loin. A certains égards elle modifie ce qui aurait été le résultat normal de la loi économique de l'offre et de la demande ou des négociations entre employeurs et syndicats. Faisons abstraction ici pour simplifier de l'éventualité où les décisions publiques seraient entièrement inadéquates parce qu'elles résulteraient de mauvaises procédures ou de mauvaises motivations dans les choix étatiques. Notre sujet est ici de considérer les dilemmes devant lesquels se trouverait placé quiconque, inspiré par le souci de la justice, devrait dire précisément "ce que le gouvernement devrait faire" à propos des salaires et des relations de travail. Tel sera vraiment le sujet du reste de cet exposé.

Nous ne pouvons pas considérer la question isolément parce que tout ce qui sera décidé à propos des salaires et des conditions de travail aura des effets qui affecteront d'autres objectifs sociaux, plus ou moins directement, en mieux ou en pire, cela suivant le cas. Nous sommes particulièrement intéressés aux effets sur l'emploi, en raison de la valeur reconnue du droit au travail. Mais d'autres effets sociaux seront aussi cités par endroits.

Pour l'organisation de l'argument, nous allons distinguer divers groupes de questions. La section 3 examinera les deux suivantes. Quels dilemmes concernent le niveau moyen des salaires réels et les autres caractéristiques principales de la distribution statistique des taux de salaire par niveaux, à l'exception des bas niveaux examinés dans les sections ultérieures? Jusqu'à quel point les taux de salaire devraient-ils être flexibles de façon à s'adapter aux changements de l'environnement économique et social? La section 4 sera consacrée à deux questions. Comment s'explique

qu'existent autant de travailleurs pauvres? A quels dilemmes est confronté tout gouvernement qui vise à relever leurs salaires en instituant ou en augmentant des salaires minima? Etant donné ces dilemmes, la section 5 examinera l'option consistant à dissocier l'échelle des coûts du travail de l'échelle des taux de salaire. Nous nous arrêterons là, mentionnant simplement à la fin une question qui vient naturellement à l'esprit mais qui exigerait un article entier en elle-même: à supposer que les bas salaires qui tendraient à prévaloir soient incompatibles avec les normes éthiques sur les niveaux de vie comparés des gens, quels dilemmes confronterait l'intervention publique qui agirait par l'intermédiaire de la politique d'aide sociale ou de la redistribution fiscale des revenus et des richesses?

Un avertissement doit encore être donné: l'exposé sera délibérément bref sur les complications résultant de ce qu'il faut souvent distinguer entre les salaires réels, objet direct des préoccupations éthiques, et les salaires nominaux, sur lesquels portent les décisions au moment où elles sont prises. Quelques références seront faites à l'inflation, mais elles seront rares et brèves; aucune place ne sera réservée aux relations réciproques entre salaires nominaux, prix et chômage; en traiter entrainerait trop loin dans le domaine de la théorie économique.

3. NIVEAU DES SALAIRES, FLEXIBILITÉ DES SALAIRES ET EMPLOI

3.1. *Le salaire moyen et l'emploi*

Analyse économique

Quand et là où le taux de chômage est important, la cause principale réside dans une demande insuffisante de travail par les employeurs potentiels, bien que d'autres causes puissent aussi y contribuer. Pas mal d'économistes ont prétendu dans le passé, et certains économistes prétendent encore aujourd'hui, que la raison principale d'une demande trop faible de travail est toujours, quand elle se produit, un niveau trop élevé des salaires réels. Si elle est exacte, la proposition dramatise un important conflit potentiel entre objectifs éthiques, un conflit sur lequel nous reviendrons à la fin de cette sous-section.

La proposition est cependant indûment unilatérale. En effet les employeurs eux-mêmes disent souvent qu'ils emploieraient plus de gens si la demande pour leurs produits ou leurs services était plus abondante, cela sans aucun changement des salaires réels. Une telle déclaration est une information importante, mais elle pourrait être trop superficielle pour notre propos, car le niveau des salaires réels et la demande pour la production des entreprises sont interdépendants. Une analyse plus approfondie est

donc requise. Je vais essayer d'expliquer en mots simples les conclusions présentes des analyses faites sur cette question dans ma discipline au cours des quelques dernières décennies.⁵

Les décisions de toute entreprise normale à propos de sa demande de travail dépendent de deux facteurs, que nous pouvons appeler respectivement la rentabilité et la demande (entendant alors par là la demande pour ce que l'entreprise produit). La rentabilité se réfère à des considérations telles que: les productions actuelles couvrent-elles leurs pleins coûts? Le développement d'une nouvelle ligne de produits va-t-il être probablement rentable, ou le risque de pertes est-il trop important? La demande se réfère évidemment à l'importance des commandes en attente d'exécution ou du volume des stocks prêts à être livrés à d'éventuels acheteurs, ou des débouchés prévus pour des productions futures. La rentabilité et la demande sont en fait souvent corrélées; cependant cela a un sens de les distinguer parce qu'il y a des cas non négligeables dans lesquels la demande existe mais avec les marges bénéficiaires trop faibles qui se trouvent alors prévaloir; il y a aussi, et encore plus souvent, des cas où les prix courants sont rémunérateurs mais les clients ne sont pas là et on ne s'attend pas à ce qu'ils soient attirés sensiblement par des prix plus bas. C'est pourquoi les conjoncturistes reconnaissent la distinction et l'utilisent dans les comparaisons auxquels ils se livrent entre pays différents et périodes différentes.

Dans une économie fonctionnant bien la rentabilité et la demande sont toutes deux en moyenne juste aux niveaux appropriés pour le plein emploi des ressources humaines, mis à part l'effet d'un volant normal de "chômage frictionnel". L'histoire et l'observation de l'actualité donnent beaucoup d'exemples dans lesquels l'économie peut être dite avoir bien fonctionné ou bien fonctionner à cet égard. Mais il y a aussi d'autres exemples dans lesquels le dysfonctionnement a persisté, ou persiste, longtemps. Ces derniers exemples sont précisément ceux qui nous intéressent ici.

Plaçons nous donc dans le contexte de tels exemples où un chômage important et durable existerait. Une hausse des salaires améliorerait alors la demande pendant un temps, mais elle détériorerait la rentabilité. Le premier effet vient de ce que les revenus du travail sont plus rapidement

⁵ La question a été discutée dans nombre de publications, mais souvent de façon trop simplifiée ou, au contraire, par des développements trop techniques. Puisque le sujet a été l'un des rares thèmes principaux de mes préoccupations, il me sera sans doute permis de donner référence à deux de mes écrits, l'un en anglais, l'autre en français: "Real wages and employment - A decade of analysis" dans E. Malinvaud, *Diagnosing Unemployment*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, et "Le chômage. Quels enseignements émanent de la théorie économique", *Commentaire*, n. 45, printemps 1989, Paris.

dépensés que les autres revenus, ceci étant particulièrement vrai dans les pays pauvres; cet effet tend à disparaître progressivement avec le temps. Mais il a été favorable dans l'intervalle, si toutefois le manque de demande empêchait un meilleur niveau d'emploi. Le second effet, détérioration de la profitabilité, n'a pas à inquiéter si la profitabilité était élevée précédemment. Même si la situation était différente, une profitabilité trop faible est lente à produire des effets importants sur l'emploi: les affaires peuvent tourner pour un temps avec les capacités de production pré-existantes et avec une marge brute qui ne couvre pas en totalité les amortissements des équipements et autres frais avancés dans le passé; bien entendu l'entreprise va décider de ralentir ses investissements et ses embauches, mais cela ne produira pas beaucoup d'effet sur l'emploi avant un certain temps. Toutefois, après deux, trois ou davantage d'années, une profitabilité trop faible aura vraisemblablement des effets de plus en plus défavorable à l'emploi.

Pour un gouvernement décider ce que doit être l'objectif de sa politique quant aux salaires exige ainsi d'abord un diagnostic quant aux obstacles à un meilleur emploi: est-ce le manque de demande pour les productions des entreprises ou le manque de profitabilité? Cela exige ensuite le choix d'un horizon: la prochaine année à peu près, ou les cinq prochaines années et plus tard?

Trois considérations additionnelles doivent être présentes à l'esprit. Premièrement, la flexibilité à la baisse du niveau moyen des salaires serait dangereuse si elle était importante. Elle entraînerait en effet une flexibilité à la baisse des prix. La diminution des prix accroîtrait le coût réel des dettes. Les débiteurs y perdraient et les créanciers y gagneraient. Puisque beaucoup d'employeurs sont endettés, ils devraient réduire leur activité de façon à ce que leur affaire reste financièrement viable, et cela précisément à un moment où existerait une dépression, qui s'en trouverait ainsi aggravée.

Deuxièmement, le chômage peut être persistant. En effet, le manque de demande peut persister, par exemple dans les pays qui dépendent de leur exportations et dont la monnaie est surévaluée. Le manque de profitabilité aussi peut être persistant, par exemple dans les régions où les salaires sont maintenus à des niveaux trop élevés, par référence à d'autres régions du même pays ou à des pays voisins, ou en raison de charges annexes qui alourdissent les coûts du travail. De telles situations de chômage persistant, voire endémique, génèrent des cercles vicieux: puisque l'emploi est bas, la demande de biens et services est faible, la profitabilité et le développement des capacités productives sont faibles aussi; avec des capacités ainsi réduites tout relèvement favorable de la demande se heurte vite à la limite des capacités, pouvant alors entraîner une inflation, que les autorités monétaires contiendront en déprimant la demande; et ainsi de suite.

Troisièmement, les pays dans lesquels le chômage persiste ne peuvent pas connaître une rapide croissance de leur production; ils ne peuvent donc pas connaître non plus une croissance rapide de leurs salaires. Si le chômage était d'abord dû à des salaires trop élevés, il arrive alors souvent que l'avantage initial dont avait bénéficié les salariés employés s'avère juste temporaire et que, après quelques années, ces salariés se seraient trouvés dans une meilleure situation autrement: un gain temporaire est suivi par une perte prolongée. Si au contraire le chômage initial était dû à un manque de demande, avoir failli à introduire des mesures permettant la hausse des salaires dans un programme visant à stimuler l'activité peut de même signifier avoir manqué une occasion de changer un cercle vicieux dépressif en un cercle vertueux expansionniste, dans lequel les croissances de la demande, de la production, de l'emploi et des salaires se seraient mutuellement épaulées.

Cette dernière remarque doit être gardée présente à l'esprit parce qu'elle résume en quelque sorte le résultat de toute l'analyse économique précédente. En simplifiant le raisonnement mais en en gardant le sens, nous pouvons dire que la référence à la possibilité de l'un ou de l'autre des deux cercles vicieux explique bien la phrase contenue dans *Quadragesimo Anno* et déjà citée par le Père Schasching (op. cit.): "Une échelle des salaires trop basse, pas moins qu'une échelle des salaires trop élevée cause le chômage".

Priorités éthiques

Après les quelques alinéas précédents nous sommes en état de penser à un conflit possible de priorités éthiques. En effet, tout le monde est d'accord pour juger que réduire le chômage, là où il excède le chômage frictionnel, constitue un objectif social important. Mais il est habituel aussi de classer haut parmi les objectifs sociaux une élévation du niveau de vie des salariés. Sous quelles conditions les deux objectifs sont-ils compatibles? Et, s'ils ne le sont pas, auquel des deux donner la priorité?

En examinant ce que fut l'enseignement social de l'Eglise à propos de ce possible conflit d'objectifs, j'ai cru y percevoir certaines hésitations.⁶ Si nous acceptons l'analyse présentée ci-dessus, il y a des cas dans lesquels des

⁶ Voir ce que j'ai écrit en particulier à propos de *Mater et Magistra* à la page 86 de "On the Social Doctrine of the Church" dans *Social and Ethical Aspects of Economics*, Conseil Pontifical Justice et Paix, Cité du Vatican, 1992. J'ai suggéré que le texte pouvait être interprété comme plaidant pour des augmentations plus importantes des salaires moyens à un moment où les salaires croissaient déjà vite, au moins en Europe Occidentale. Aucune crainte n'était exprimée quant au chômage qui pourrait en résulter.

salaires croissant encore plus rapidement signifieraient un chômage croissant, particulièrement quand l'attention porte au delà d'une ou deux années dans le futur. Dans de tels cas je serais enclin personnellement à donner la priorité à l'emploi de préférence aux salaires des travailleurs employés. Surtout, je plaide pour que le Magistère prenne position explicitement sur l'orientation à donner aux décisions quand un arbitrage de ce type doit être effectué. Les deux remarques suivantes sont liées à deux aspects qui affectent souvent l'application des principes éthiques: l'incertitude quant aux termes présents de l'arbitrage, la question de savoir comment ces termes sont susceptibles d'évoluer dans le futur prévisible.

Malheureusement la macroéconométrie a une faible précision, essentiellement à cause des nombreuses difficultés qui confrontent la recherche dans son domaine. Ceci signifie que les termes de l'arbitrage en question ne peuvent pas être précisément donnés. Toute évaluation objective devrait être accompagnée de clauses restrictives montrant que, en fait, de grandes marges d'incertitude subsistent.

De plus, la question se pose de savoir si les cinquante prochaines années connaîtront une croissance des niveaux de vie aussi favorable qu'elle l'a été au cours des cinquante dernières années. Les économistes n'ont qu'une compétence limitée pour répondre à la question, qui concerne surtout les potentialités physiques et biologiques sur la terre. Mais les inquiétudes qui sont actuellement exprimées par beaucoup nous conduisent à penser qu'un comportement prudent recommanderait aux moralistes d'envisager l'éventualité d'une stagnation prochaine des niveaux de consommation par personne. Que devrait alors être le choix, s'il fallait le faire, entre d'un côté l'emploi et la frugalité pour tous et de l'autre une société future plus inéquitable en termes de revenus et d'emplois? La question peut paraître déplacée aujourd'hui dans bien des parties du monde. Essayer d'y répondre maintenant serait cependant, je crois, un bon exercice afin de savoir comment répondre au mieux au dilemme présent entre salaire et emploi, et comment préparer les sociétés modernes en vue de l'avenir ... pour le cas où.

3.2. La flexibilité des salaires relatifs

Nous pouvons passer vite sur les niveaux comparés des salaires dans les différents emplois, sachant que le dilemme principal entre salaires et emplois a maintenant été posé et que le cas des bas salaires sera traité dans les deux dernières sections de cette note. Le problème de la flexibilité des salaires relatifs concerne le choix des arrangements sociaux qui conviendraient le mieux pour que les individus aient la faculté d'organiser leur vie entière et de s'adapter, s'ils le doivent, à des changements imprévus. Le pro-

blème va au delà du travail et de l'emploi, car il concerne aussi les arrangements pour le logement, l'éducation et la protection sociale. Mais considérer ces autres aspects distendrait trop le sujet de cette note.

Je crois que la flexibilité des salaires relatifs appartiendra à l'arrangement éthiquement préféré, quelles que soient par ailleurs ses caractéristiques, cela bien entendu dans l'ensemble des arrangements réellement faisables. Pour un regard rapide sur la question nous devons reconnaître au départ que le choix d'une profession ou d'un emploi engage durablement l'avenir. Ce fait se traduit par une demande souvent exprimée dans le public, celle qu'existe une planification de l'enseignement qui conduise à la bonne répartition des étudiants entre les débouchés par qualifications et professions: cette répartition devrait coïncider avec celle qu'auront dans une, deux ou trois décennies les emplois offerts par les employeurs. Mais le fait est que les spécialistes de l'enseignement, de la technologie, de l'économie du travail, de la macroéconomie et d'autres domaines pertinents sont conjointement incapables de faire face à ce défi. Sauf pour quelques tendances principales, ces spécialistes s'estiment incapables de prévoir comment évolueront les demandes des services de ceux formés aux diverses qualifications et professions.⁷

Les évolutions respectives des taux de salaire pour les diverses qualifications fournissent en fait l'information principale pour l'objectif maintenant considéré. Certes, la pertinence de ces indicateurs provenant du marché est limitée: les employeurs eux-mêmes sont incapables de prévoir ce que leurs demandes de travail seront à échéance de deux ou trois décennies. Ainsi l'évolution des salaires relatifs n'est pas le prédicteur parfait dont nous souhaiterions disposer. Mais elle donne des signaux plus précoces que les autres sources d'information semblent être capables de le faire. De plus ces signaux sont en termes de gains relatifs, les termes qui sont les plus pertinents pour les étudiants, qui ont à décider si et comment poursuivre leurs études, et pour les travailleurs et cadres déjà employés, qui ont à décider s'ils doivent saisir des occasions pour changer d'emploi et, si oui, à choisir telle ou telle occasion qui paraît la plus prometteuse, étant donné leurs situations particulières, leurs capacités et leurs goûts.

Nous pouvons penser de plus que, sauf pour les bas salaires, la résistance à la flexibilité des salaires relatifs n'est pas justifiée sur la base de principes éthiques. De fait, la résistance la plus forte vient de ceux qui

⁷ Pour autant que je sache, seuls les résidents des Etats Unis disposent, publiées par le Bureau of Labor Statistics, de projections quelque peu détaillées de l'emploi par groupes de qualifications, cinq à dix ans à l'avance. Mais je ne sais pas si a été faite une évaluation de la qualité prévisionnelle de ces projections.

étaient antérieurement avantagés, de ceux dont les emplois sont les mieux protégés, de ceux qui sont organisés en groupes de pression et ont ainsi déjà obtenus des salaires comparativement favorables.

4. LES TRAVAILLEURS PAUVRES

Il existe des pauvres dans tous les pays et partout la plupart des adultes pauvres travaillent, mais souvent "au noir", dans l'économie cachée, ou au moins dans le secteur informel de l'économie. Les limites de notre sujet recommandent que le concept de travailleur pauvre soit utilisé ici pour désigner les personnes à faible revenu employées dans l'économie formelle, la seule à laquelle les politiques salariales s'appliquent.⁸

Pendant les deux dernières décennies la plupart des pays de l'Europe Occidentale ont résisté à la tendance à la baisse des salaires réels des emplois non-qualifiés, limitant ainsi la croissance du nombre des personnes employées à de bas salaires. Ont-ils ainsi limité la croissance de la pauvreté? Faut-il tirer des enseignements de cette expérience pour les autres régions du monde, particulièrement pour les pays à bas revenu? Telles sont les deux questions principales que je voudrais traiter dans le reste de cette note, tenant compte de la compétence particulière et limitée dont je dispose pour en parler. Nous commencerons par des éléments de diagnostic, avant d'engager l'étude des choix de politiques.

4.1. *Tendances et leur explication*

La tendance à la baisse des salaires réels des non-qualifiés a été la mieux documentée et la mieux étudiée aux États Unis. Ainsi qu'il arrive souvent en économie, le diagnostic est moins fermement établi, même pour les États Unis, que nous le souhaiterions. Il est cependant assez clair pour notre objet. Résumons le.

Nous devons d'abord distinguer entre la tendance vers de plus bas salaires réels pour les non-qualifiés dans les pays industriels et la tendance vers une inégalité croissante de l'échelle entière des salaires. Les deux ten-

⁸ Le choix de cette définition du concept conduirait à un biais important si le sujet principal de cet article était la pauvreté. Évidemment nous ne pourrions pas traiter de la pauvreté, surtout dans les pays pauvres, si nous ne considérions pas le secteur informel. Mais le sujet de la pauvreté dans les pays pauvres exigerait une approche totalement différente de celle adoptée ici, et nécessiterait, à vrai dire, de longs développements. Pour le comprendre il suffit de lire P. Dasgupta, *An Inquiry into Well-Being and Destitution*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993.

dances ont des conséquences différentes du point de vue éthique et elles ne défient pas de la même manière l'enseignement social catholique. Si elles sont rarement distinguées dans les études analytiques qui visent à les expliquer, ce n'est pas seulement parce qu'elles se produisirent simultanément, mais aussi parce que des explications persuasives et utiles nécessitent des analyses et des preuves plutôt précises, alors que les données à notre disposition sont souvent maigres en comparaison de ce dont nous aurions besoin.

Une explication naturelle de la croissance de l'inégalité des salaires pourrait être trouvée si la tendance de la structure de l'offre de travail par niveaux de qualification avait été très différente de la tendance de la structure correspondante de la demande de travail. Mais pendant les cinq dernières décennies, disons, les deux structures se sont déplacées *grosso modo* de la même façon: vers de plus hautes qualifications dans l'offre de travail en raison des progrès de l'enseignement, de la formation professionnelle et de la diffusion de l'information technique, vers de plus haute qualifications dans la demande de travail en raison de la nature du progrès technique et, dans les pays industriels, en raison de la concurrence croissante des pays en développement, concurrence sensible pour les biens ayant un fort contenu en travail non-qualifié. Pour une explication satisfaisante de la décroissance de l'inégalité des salaires dans les années 1950 et 1960, suivie par une croissance de l'inégalité depuis, nous avons besoin d'une estimation assez précise des vitesses des deux tendances structurelles l'une relativement à l'autre. Une telle estimation peut être donnée: elle montre que le changement dans les vitesses relatives, depuis les premières décennies de l'après-guerre jusqu'aux décennies récentes, n'a pas été énorme.⁹ Il y a place à l'intervention de facteurs institutionnels qui ont aussi joué un rôle, particulièrement aux Etats Unis: diminution de la valeur réelle du salaire minimum, diminution de la syndicalisation et mouvement de dérèglementation économique.¹⁰

L'opinion la plus répandue actuellement chez les économistes consiste à prétendre que, bien qu'exposés aux mêmes tendances quant aux structures de l'offre et de la demande sur leurs marchés du travail, les pays de l'Europe Occidentale ont réagi différemment des Etats Unis: ils ont limité la croissance de la dispersion des salaires, en particulier en maintenant le pouvoir d'achat des salaires minimum, mais, ainsi le dit l'opinion courante, la contrepartie fut que ces pays ont dû accepter un important chômage des

⁹ Voir O. Blanchard, "Macroeconomic and policy implications of shifts in the relative demand for skills", dans D. Snower and G de la Dehesa, ed., *Unemployment Policy*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

¹⁰ Voir N. Fortin and T. Lemieux, "Institutional changes and rising wage inequality: is there a linkage", in Symposium on wage inequality, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Spring 1997.

personnes non-qualifiées, une tendance que les Etats Unis ont évitée. O. Blanchard (op. cit.) montre que l'argument est, dans une certaine mesure, trompeur, car il y a une meilleure explication pour la plus grande partie du chômage non-qualifié européen, à savoir l'importance du chômage global, ce que les Etats Unis ont évité grâce à leur politique macroéconomique. En effet, il est bien connu que, en réponse au chômage global, les travailleurs qualifiés au chômage prennent des emplois qui auraient été autrement offerts à des travailleurs moins qualifiés.

Cependant, il est vraisemblable que subsiste bien une marge de choix et que la thèse en vogue a du vrai. Il faut donc l'étudier de plus près. Avant que nous voyons ce qui peut être dit à son sujet aujourd'hui, élargissons notre champ de vision de façon à placer la question dans une perspective plus large, qui devrait importer pour la réflexion sur les priorités éthiques.

4.2. *Emploi, pauvreté et exclusion*¹¹

Utilisant un indicateur qui est maintenant conventionnel dans les statistiques sur la pauvreté et nous référant seulement aux pays d'Europe Occidentale, nous voyons que les taux de pauvreté des ménages dont le chef est au chômage sont beaucoup plus élevés que les taux de pauvreté de ceux dont le chef a un emploi. Il le sont en général par un facteur de deux à quatre. Sur cette base nous pourrions nous attendre *a priori* à ce que l'augmentation du chômage ait entraîné une augmentation significative de la pauvreté. On le constata aux Etats Unis pour quelque temps: les données de la période allant de 1953 à 1983 avaient suggéré qu'une augmentation d'un point du taux de chômage des hommes adultes était associée à une augmentation d'environ un point du taux de pauvreté; mais, interprétée comme une loi simple, cette association aurait signifié que maintenant, après la forte baisse du chômage américain depuis 1983, le taux de pauvreté serait bien plus faible qu'il l'est effectivement. Les données statistiques disponibles pour l'Europe Occidentale suggèrent une association positive entre chômage et pauvreté, mais une association beaucoup plus faible, qui peut être mise en défaut par d'autres facteurs agissant sur la pauvreté.

Chômage et pauvreté entraînent l'un comme l'autre "l'exclusion sociale". Le sens exact de ces mots, qui ont pénétré récemment le discours sur les réalités sociales, n'est pas toujours clair. Cependant les experts sont d'accord pour penser qu'il est significatif de dire de certaines personnes

¹¹ J'utilise ici A.B. Atkinson, "Pauvreté et exclusion sociale en Europe", dans Conseil d'Analyse Economique, *Pauvreté et exclusion*, Documentation Française, Paris, 1998.

qu'elles sont socialement exclues et pour estimer qu'une mesure adéquate du phénomène devrait tenir compte de trois aspects. Premièrement, la notion est relative: les personnes en cause sont exclues d'une société donnée à une époque donnée. Deuxièmement, l'exclusion se traduit en actions, d'un ou de plusieurs agents: des personnes peuvent refuser des emplois parce qu'elles préfèrent vivre sur des indemnités de chômage, ou elles peuvent être exclues du travail par les actions tantôt de certains salariés déjà en place, tantôt des syndicats, tantôt des employeurs, tantôt du gouvernement (serait-ce seulement parce qu'il ne mènerait pas une politique adéquate). Troisièmement, la notion a un aspect dynamique: des personnes sont exclues non pas seulement parce qu'elles se trouvent alors sans emploi ou sans un revenu de base, mais aussi parce qu'elles ont peu de chance d'une amélioration future.

Ce dernier trait est aussi partie du concept de pauvreté, qui peut être considéré comme le résultat d'un processus cumulatif d'handicap social. Les structures et les comportements sociaux peuvent alors avoir de l'importance quand différentes sociétés sont comparées quant à l'étendue de la pauvreté et de l'exclusion sociale. S. Paugam a prétendu que cette dimension des structures et comportements sociaux jouait un rôle même à l'intérieur du groupe assez homogène des pays constituant l'Union Européenne.¹² Examinant des données tirées des statistiques régulières et d'enquêtes sociales qualitatives pour sept pays (Allemagne, Danemark, Espagne, France, Grande Bretagne, Italie, Pays-Bas), il nota une bonne convergence à certains égards: la précarité sur le marché du travail et dans la famille, un accès insuffisant aux services de santé et aux transferts sociaux publics sont partout corrélés avec la pauvreté. Mais Paugam a aussi identifié des cas notables de divergence entre pays dans les domaines qui traduisent la force des liens entre individus: la précarité de la consommation n'est pas partout corrélée avec le relâchement des liens familiaux ou l'absence de réseaux d'aide privée. Paugam a conclu que les résultats confirmaient l'hypothèse que la pauvreté se manifestait sous différentes formes dans différents pays, selon les spécificités du développement économique, du marché du travail, de la force des réseaux sociaux et du degré de l'intervention étatique dans la vie des personnes désavantagées.

En d'autres termes, des possibilités diverses sont ouvertes aux sociétés pour faire face à la pauvreté. Agir sur l'emploi peu qualifié et/ou sur les bas salaires est une approche, mais pas la seule concevable. Nous allons cepen-

¹² S. Paugam, "Poverty and social disqualification: a comparative analysis of cumulative social disadvantage in Europe", *Journal of European Social Policy*, 1996, vol. 6(4), p. 287-303.

dant revenir à notre sujet principal et restreindre l'attention à une seule question: les salaires minimum causent-ils le chômage des non-qualifiés? Nous élargirons à nouveau quelque peu le champ de notre discussion dans la dernière section de la note, où nous ferons référence aux programmes visant à apporter une aide au revenu de ceux qui sont dans le besoin.

4.3. *Salaires minimum et chômage non-qualifié*

L'existence d'un salaire minimum légal ou conventionnel dans un pays, une région ou un secteur peut être justifiée comme étant le moyen le plus efficace d'empêcher que certains employeurs exploitent des salariés n'ayant pas d'autre choix que de rester dans leur emploi. Mon intention n'est pas ici de remettre en cause cette existence, mais simplement de m'interroger quant à de possibles effets négatifs sur l'emploi, particulièrement là où le niveau du salaire minimum est assez élevé pour se marquer visiblement dans la distribution statistique des taux de salaire, c'est-à-dire là où une proportion substantielle des salariés reçoit un salaire exactement égal au minimum.

Pour être aussi clair que possible, je vais concentrer l'attention sur un cas simple, concernant un pays où existerait un salaire minimum national égal à x fois le salaire médian national. La question sera alors: quelle différence y aurait-il pour l'emploi si la valeur réelle du salaire minimum était de 1 pour cent plus faible? La réponse dépendra vraisemblablement de bien des caractéristiques du pays et de son marché du travail. En particulier nous pouvons nous attendre à ce qu'elle dépende de la valeur de x , étant peut-être "aucun effet significatif" là où $x = 1/3$ (typique de la situation présente aux États Unis) et "un effet bien sensible" là où $x = 2/3$ (à peu près le cas français actuel).

Les économistes de différentes tendances ont souvent débattu dans le passé sur la réponse à donner à une telle question, donnant souvent des réponses radicalement différentes, et ils en débattent encore. Un grand nombre d'études économétriques ont été faites durant les vingt dernières années, les résultats n'étant pas toujours concordants, ni toujours reçus comme donnant la réponse à la forme la plus pertinente de la question. Manque de concordance et manque possible de pertinence créent un problème qui sera expliqué dans une minute.

Cependant, tout bien considéré nous pouvons au moins éliminer la thèse extrême qui fut parfois émise et qui donnait un rôle dominant au salaire minimum pour expliquer le niveau du chômage global. À supposer même qu'il soit une cause du chômage, le salaire minimum n'est qu'une cause parmi beaucoup d'autres, une cause qui ne peut concerner directe-

ment que l'emploi des non-qualifiés ou des jeunes arrivant sur le marché du travail, une cause qui ne peut pas être significative là où le niveau du salaire minimum est bas. Cela dit, tout ce qui aggrave le chômage des non-qualifiés est inquiétant à cause des évolutions futures probables des structures des offres et des demandes sur le marché du travail, et à cause de la croissance qui en résultera pour la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale; également tout ce qui aggrave le chômage des jeunes est inquiétant à cause de l'importance à cet âge d'une bonne insertion dans le travail.

Les moralistes qui auront à faire face au dilemme entre maintenir inchangés à leur bas niveaux les salaires réels des travailleurs pauvres ou améliorer quelque peu leur emploi apprécieraient sûrement de connaître plus précisément les termes de l'arbitrage. Expliquer brièvement la difficulté d'une évaluation peut être la meilleure façon de communiquer une idée sur ces termes d'arbitrage. Je vais être rapide sur deux considérations et m'attarderai un peu plus longtemps sur une troisième.

D'abord, l'estimation économétrique éprouve le plus souvent de la difficulté quand elle cherche à allouer les résultats observés aux différentes causes qui sont intervenues et ont combiné leurs effets; la difficulté est habituellement constatée sauf quand il y a une cause vraiment dominante. C'est un aspect regrettable des conditions scientifiques dans lesquelles les économistes, et probablement aussi les chercheurs des autres sciences sociales, se trouvent placés.

Ensuite, certains économistes attribuent au salaire minimum un rôle indirect important dans la détermination de l'emploi global, de la même façon qu'ils attribuent un rôle indirect important aux indemnités de chômage: dans les deux cas la protection des travailleurs les conduiraient à être moins disposés à accepter "le verdict du marché"; là où le salaire minimum et les indemnités de chômage auraient des montants généreux, les salariés seraient relativement en position de force et obtiendraient des salaires trop élevés qui, ainsi le dit-on, engendreraient du chômage. Selon la discussion de la section 3 ci-dessus, il est peu probable que cet argument ait validité universelle; un diagnostic doit être porté dans chaque situation afin d'établir si les salaires moyens y sont vraiment trop élevés et, quand tel est le cas, afin de pouvoir agir plus directement sur les salaires moyens qu'en abandonnant la législation du salaire minimum et les régimes d'indemnisation du chômage.

Enfin, l'arbitrage a une dimension temporelle importante qui est souvent négligée, mais ne devrait pas l'être. Si le salaire minimum est abaissé, l'effet sur le revenu des salariés intéressés est instantané, tandis que l'accroissement des chances qu'auront les chômeurs non-qualifiés de trouver des emplois sera lent; il apparaîtra progressivement, ceci sur une période

qui couvrira une décennie ou plus. En effet la demande supplémentaire pour le travail non-qualifié viendra en partie de changements dans les méthodes de production, qui seront moins orientées vers l'économie de travail qu'elles l'auraient été autrement; elle viendra en partie de changements dans les habitudes de consommation après la baisse du prix relatif des biens et services dont la production incorpore un grand contenu de travail non-qualifié. De tels effets mettent du temps à se concrétiser. De tels effets sont particulièrement difficiles à mesurer par les études économétriques directes, car la difficulté signalée dans la première remarque faite ci-dessus se trouve aggravée par l'échelonnement des effets. Heureusement il est possible d'évaluer l'importance de l'effet final en utilisant d'autres sources d'information que ce qui a été observé juste après les changements du salaire minimum, des sources qui conviennent pour détecter les déterminants à long terme de la demande de travail. Ces sources conduisent à la conclusion que, là où le salaire minimum est élevé, des changements de son niveau devraient à terme avoir des effets tout à fait significatifs sur l'emploi de la catégorie des personnes concernées par ces changements.

Bien que personne ne devrait interpréter mon estimation comme précise, je crois devoir donner une réponse quantifiée à la question que j'ai posée il y a quelques alinéas. Alors je vais m'avancer et dire que, là où le salaire minimum est élevé ($x = 2/3$), étant donné de plus les perspectives européennes actuelles à propos de l'emploi des personnes peu qualifiées, et tout le reste étant inchangé, une diminution de 1 pour cent du salaire minimum provoquerait probablement une augmentation d'environ 1 pour cent à long terme (après pas beaucoup plus de dix ans) dans l'emploi des personnes du groupe directement concerné par la diminution en cause, un groupe qui représente à peu près 20 pour cent de la population salariée. Donner la priorité la plus élevée au droit au travail impliquerait alors d'accepter la diminution du salaire minimum. Donner la priorité au maintien du revenu des travailleurs pauvres employés conduirait à la décision opposée.

5. DE PLUS BAS SALAIRES OU DE PLUS BAS COÛTS DU TRAVAIL?

Confrontés au dilemme qui vient d'être posé, divers économistes et personnes détenant des responsabilités publiques ont fait valoir en Europe Occidentale qu'une manoeuvre fiscale permettrait d'éviter le problème. Des propositions dans ce sens furent faites surtout à la fin de 1992 et en 1993, alors qu'il était devenu évident qu'une dépression sérieuse était en cours dans notre partie du monde et que le chômage, qui avait diminué depuis le milieu des années 1980, allait croître à nouveau, peut-être jusqu'à des

niveaux encore plus élevés qu'auparavant. Puisque la plupart de nos pays finançaient une grande partie de leurs transferts sociaux par un prélèvement sur les salaires ou par quelque chose d'équivalent, l'idée était de réduire le taux du prélèvement sur les bas salaires et de trouver d'autres moyens pour remplacer les ressources publiques ainsi abandonnées. Le salaire minimum, ou plus généralement les gains alloués à ceux qui ne recevaient que de bas salaires, pouvaient être ainsi maintenus inchangés, tandis que le coût du travail pour leurs employeurs pouvait être abaissé et la demande de travail peu qualifié être stimulée. La politique ainsi conçue pouvait contrecarrer, au moins en partie, les effets dommageables de la dépression pour les travailleurs pauvres.

La Commission Européenne figurait parmi ceux qui plaidaient en faveur de la proposition, laquelle fut incluse dans un programme soumis aux ministres.¹³ Bien que le programme n'ait pas été accepté en tant que tel par l'Union Européenne, plusieurs pays effectuèrent la manoeuvre fiscale sous une forme ou une autre. Nous comprenons mieux aujourd'hui ce que peuvent être l'application, les limites et les chances de succès de la manoeuvre. Elles vont maintenant être résumées.¹⁴

1. Mettre en place des abattements des prélèvements sur les salaires est possible, tout au moins à l'intérieur d'une certaine marge. En France depuis 1995 l'abattement se traduit par une baisse du coût du travail de 13 pour cent pour les salariés payés au salaire minimum, et d'un pourcentage progressivement plus faible pour les salaires plus élevés jusqu'à 1,3 fois le salaire minimum. Cependant l'application actuelle n'est pas pleinement satisfaisante: l'abattement est décidé chaque année pour l'année suivante, sans garantie de renouvellement. Une telle pratique, qui est malheureusement fréquente pour les politiques de l'emploi, n'a pas de sens: elle renforce l'attente injustifiée d'effets rapides; elle laisse les employeurs dans le doute quant au fait de savoir s'ils doivent prendre des décisions irréversibles pour changer leurs méthodes de production et leurs opérations en employant davantage de travailleurs non-qualifiés.

¹³ Voir aussi J. Drèze, E. Malinvaud et al., "Growth and employment: the scope of a European initiative", *European Economy, Reports and Studies*, n° 1, 1994.

¹⁴ La question est discutée de façon plus précise dans plusieurs publications. Voir en particulier: J. Drèze and H. Sneessens, "Technological development, competition from low-wage economies and low-skilled unemployment" and S. Nickell and B. Bell, "Would cutting payroll taxes on the unskilled have a significant impact on unemployment?", tous les deux dans D. Snower and G. de la Dehesa, ed., *Unemployment policy: government options for the labour market*, Cambridge University Press, 1997. Voir aussi, pour le contexte français, pages 50 à 64 dans E. Malinvaud, *Les cotisations sociales à la charge des employeurs: analyse économique*, La Documentation Française, Paris, 1998.

2. Un certain nombre d'évaluations ont été faites quant aux effets qu'auraient à long terme des abattements permanents sur les taux de prélèvement au niveau des bas salaires. La plupart ont conduit à des résultats voisins de ceux donnés par le calcul simple suivant: si la baisse du coût du travail concerne 20 pour cent de la population employée et est en moyenne pour ce groupe égale à 10 pour cent, l'augmentation de l'emploi à attendre, sur la base de l'évaluation annoncée à la fin de la section précédente, peut être respectivement de 10 pour cent pour les personnes non-qualifiées et de 2 pour cent pour l'ensemble de la population employée.¹⁵ Le résultat n'est pas négligeable si nous considérons l'importance de l'emploi pour ceux qui se trouvent au chômage. Mais ce résultat exigera du temps; il ne conduira pas à des effets perceptibles à l'horizon de court terme que nos politiciens ont habituellement à l'esprit. De plus, en elle même cette action ne résoudra pas le problème de chômage que beaucoup de pays connaissent.

3. Certains ont objecté à la manoeuvre envisagée qu'une meilleure politique consisterait à hausser la qualification de la population. Malheureusement, le diagnostic selon lequel il serait possible de faire mieux dans l'avenir à cet égard que ce l'est déjà supposé ne paraît guère crédible dans les pays d'Europe Occidentale. Nous demandons à nos enseignants de se tenir à jour par rapport à l'évolution des techniques et de préparer pour la vie nos enfants et adolescents qui, en proportion croissante, grandissent dans des environnements familiaux et urbains défavorables. Lorsqu'ils examinent les défis posés à nos systèmes éducatifs, les spécialistes ne sont pas optimistes quant à l'insertion dans le travail d'une minorité significative de notre jeunesse; son insertion dépendra surtout de ce que se trouvera être la demande de travail non-qualifié.

4. D'autres économistes s'inquiètent de la distorsion que les abattements introduisent dans nos systèmes de prélèvements. La préoccupation est compréhensible: tant de dispositions spéciales ont été récemment insérées dans des systèmes qui avaient été antérieurement organisés en fonction

¹⁵ Certains lecteurs peuvent remarquer que le calcul néglige le fait que des ressources budgétaires de substitution doivent être trouvées pour compenser les abattements considérés et que la perception de ces ressources peut avoir des effets défavorables à l'emploi. C'est juste. Mais une étude précise montre que des possibilités existent pour trouver des ressources de substitution n'ayant que des effets beaucoup plus faibles sur l'emploi. De toute façon l'évaluation donnée ici ne peut pas prétendre être précise. Deux autres causes de surestimation existent: (1) les employeurs pourraient ne pas considérer comme permanente la modification intervenue dans le barème du prélèvement, (2) le chômage global pourrait décroître pour d'autres raisons pendant les années qui viennent, et cela à tel point que des tensions apparaissent dans certains secteurs du marché du travail, où l'emploi ne puisse plus croître.

de quelques principes simples! S'opposer à de nouveaux changements peut apparaître comme le choix d'une saine ligne de conduite. Si je n'adopte pas cette attitude dans le cas présent c'est que je considère l'enjeu comme trop important pour que nous soyons dogmatiques. Je dois cependant rendre compte de ce que nous pouvons bien voir une partie des dommages qui peuvent résulter de la distorsion en cause.

Par exemple avec le barème qui s'applique à présent en France, pour accorder une augmentation de 100 francs du gain net d'un salarié gagnant juste le salaire minimum, l'employeur doit supporter un coût de 260 francs, tandis que, pour accorder la même augmentation à un autre salarié gagnant 1,3 fois le salaire minimum, le coût pour l'employeur s'élève à 187 francs. Il y a ainsi une forte dissuasion face à l'idée d'une augmentation accordée au premier employé, que ce soit en raison de l'ancienneté ou pour un accès à une fonction plus élevée. A long terme un tel barème est susceptible de conduire au développement de pratiques malsaines dans la gestion des personnels de basse qualification. Les personnes en cause pourraient être maintenues dans une espèce de "trappe de pauvreté".

5. Pour remédier à ce type de distorsion, nous pouvons envisager un barème qui conduirait à la même augmentation du coût du travail, après une augmentation donnée du gain net du salarié, quel que soit le niveau antérieur de rémunération. De façon équivalente nous pourrions dire que l'abattement allégeant le coût du travail concernerait tous les niveaux de salaire et consisterait en une somme fixe pour tout salarié employé à plein temps. Le problème avec un tel barème est que, pour le même allègement du coût du travail des salariés gagnant le salaire minimum, il conduit à un bien plus grand manque à gagner pour les budgets publics; en conséquence la compensation par des ressources additionnelles d'une autre origine doit être bien plus importante aussi. L'introduction du nouveau barème n'est plus alors perçue comme un aménagement marginal; elle devient partie d'une véritable réforme fiscale et doit dès lors être examinée comme telle. Les décisions sont encore plus difficiles à prendre. Peut-être cependant l'examen d'une telle réforme serait-il une bonne chose à d'autres égards. Peut-être donnerait-il l'occasion d'un réexamen de tout le système des transferts sociaux, un réexamen que certains observateurs estiment comme de plus en plus inévitable.

6. Cet article doit éviter d'entrer dans un sujet aussi vaste, qui exigerait évidemment pas mal de place. Notons seulement que, avec le barème décrit ci-dessus et comportant un abattement d'un montant égal pour tous, nous pouvons dire que chaque salarié occupé à plein temps reçoit un "salaire de base" exempté de prélèvement. Un barème de ce type fait penser à l'an-

cienne proposition visant un “impôt négatif sur le revenu” ou à la proposition plus récente pour un “revenu universel de base”, une proposition étudiée par R. Hauser dans ce volume. Le barème envisagé ici est différent puisqu’il concerne le salarié pris individuellement plutôt que son ménage et puisqu’il n’est accordé en totalité qu’aux salariés à plein temps (sans doute aussi *pro rata temporis* aux autres). Il y a cependant bien des similitudes entre les discussions des avantages et des problèmes des deux systèmes.

Puisque, en Europe Occidentale, nos systèmes contiennent bien des transferts “soumis à des conditions de ressources” (“means tested” en anglais), nous pouvons dire que nos pays sont à mi-chemin sur la route conduisant à un revenu de base universel et nous voyons déjà les difficultés provenant de ce que les bas salaires nets sont, dans bien des cas, à peine supérieurs aux revenus de transfert reçus par des personnes ne travaillant pas. Cela crée une dissuasion qui peut pousser certaines personnes à préférer de ne pas travailler. On dit parfois que de telles personnes se trouvent prises dans une “trappe de chômage”. L’existence possible de ce phénomène, qui poserait question par rapport à l’enseignement social de l’Eglise quant à la valeur intrinsèque du travail, mérite attention.

Effectivement, les rôles possibles des soi-disantes trappes de pauvreté et trappes de chômage ajoutent des dilemmes à ceux sur lesquels l’attention a porté dans cet article, dilemmes dans lesquels interviennent des valeurs éthiques telles que la liberté, l’autonomie et la confidentialité d’un côté, la responsabilité et la solidarité d’un autre côté.

“DAS ALLGEMEINE GRUNDEINKOMMEN”: SEIN BEITRAG ZUR VERMINDERUNG VON ARBEITSLOSIGKEIT UND SEIN VERHÄLTNIS ZU DEM VON DER KATHOLISCHEN SOZIALLEHRE GEFORDERTEN FAMILIENLOHN

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English Summary

*'The Universal Basic Income': Its Contribution to Reducing Unemployment
and its Relationship to Catholic Social Teaching on the 'Family Wage'*

Catholic social teaching has developed several principles that are relevant for this study:

- The right to a decent life.
- The right to work.
- The obligation to work.
- The principle of a just wage that is sufficient to support a family, or complementary regulations that serve this purpose.
- The principle of the equal treatment of men and women.

We can, therefore, pose the question whether the idea of a universal basic income, one of several proposals under discussion for reforming the welfare regimes of highly industrialised countries, would be in agreement with these principles. These principles should not serve, however, as the only criteria for examining such a proposal. Additional criteria developed by students of economic and social policy should also be taken into account. In this paper this could only be done in a very selective manner.

A *universal basic income* is a transfer paid by the state to all citizens, from birth to grave, without any preconditions and without regard to other incomes of the beneficiary or his family in order to cover fully the socio-cultural minimum of subsistence. A *partial basic income* should be distinguished from a universal basic income because it covers only a fraction of the socio-cultural minimum of subsistence. A *conditional basic income* amounts to the full socio-cultural minimum of subsistence, but is only paid to certain groups of the population which can be selected by objective criteria that are simple to check. Besides a universal basic

income and a partial basic income the special case of a conditional basic income is examined in this paper. This is the *family-related conditional basic income* which consists of a transfer, at the level of the socio-cultural minimum of subsistence, to be paid only to all under-age children and for a limited period to one parent who has temporarily given up work to care for small children.

Close examination of these three types of a basic income shows the following. In a highly industrialised country a family wage, differentiated according to the size of the worker's family, would have such serious disadvantages and negative repercussions that it cannot be recommended. A *universal basic income* as well as a *family-related conditional basic income* could serve as a means of fulfilling the principles of Catholic social teaching. A partial basic income, however, would not fulfil these requirements because it would be too low, and, therefore, could not supplement wages sufficiently. A universal basic income would make a greater contribution to reducing unemployment than would a family-related conditional income. The financial burden caused by a universal basic income would be overwhelming, even if all social security benefits and tax-financed transfers were to be abolished. Taxes would have to be raised to such a high level that very serious negative repercussions would be unavoidable. Thus a radical reform substituting the whole system of social protection by a universal basic income scheme cannot be recommended. A family-related conditional basic income, however, seems to be feasible within the limits given by the financial burden. Such a family-related conditional basic income would be an effective means by which to share family burdens within society.

1. EINFÜHRUNG

Im Jahr 1943 schlug Lady Rhys-Williams¹ ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen in Form einer vom Staat finanzierten Transferzahlung an jeden Bürger vor. Auch James Edward Meade, Nobelpreisträger der Wirtschaftswissenschaften, plädierte für ein derartiges Grundeinkommen.² Die Grundidee ist jedoch schon viel früher vertreten worden. van Parijs³ nennt beispielsweise die Sozialphilosophen Thomas Paine (1796), Bertrand Russell (1918) sowie den Labour-Abgeordneten Denis Milner (1920). Im deutschsprachigen Raum hat Joseph Popper-Lynkeus Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts ähnliche Ideen propagiert.⁴ Verschiedene Bezeichnungen wurden für diesen radikalen Vorschlag zur Reform von Systemen der sozialen Sicherung

¹ Rhys-Williams (1943).

² Meade (1972).

³ Vgl. van Parijs (1992a), S. 6f.

⁴ Popper-Lynkeus (1912); dieser Vorschlag eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens ist jedoch mit einer Pflicht zu gemeinnütziger Arbeit für einen bestimmten Teil der Lebenszeit verbunden.

geprägt: "universal basic income", "social dividend" und "demogrant" im Englischen, "allgemeines Grundeinkommen" im Deutschen. Wenn auch bisher kein Land diesen Vorschlag verwirklichte, so ist er doch in der Diskussion um die künftige Gestaltung einer Gesellschaft, der angeblich die Erwerbsarbeit ausgeht, zu einem wichtigen Element geworden.⁵ Es ist daher wichtig, daß sich die Päpstliche Akademie der Sozialwissenschaften im Rahmen ihrer diesjährigen Konferenz über "Probleme der Arbeitslosigkeit" auch mit diesem Vorschlag beschäftigt.

Die Idee eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens weist Ähnlichkeiten mit einem anderen radikalen Reformvorschlag auf, nämlich mit der Einführung einer Negativen Einkommensteuer; sie ist aber damit nicht gleichzusetzen. Obwohl dieser ebenfalls von mehreren bekannten Ökonomen unterschiedlicher politischer Ausrichtung vertretene Vorschlag⁶ eine alternative Reformstrategie darstellt, der ebenfalls positive Wirkungen im Hinblick auf eine Verminderung der Arbeitslosigkeit und eine bessere Berücksichtigung des Familienzusammenhangs bei der Besteuerung und bei der Transfergewährung zugeschrieben werden, wird er hier nicht behandelt.

Mir hat man die Aufgabe gestellt, die Wirkung eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens im Hinblick auf eine Verminderung der Arbeitslosigkeit und sein Verhältnis zu dem in der katholischen Soziallehre geforderten Familienlohn zu untersuchen. Dabei beschränke ich die Überlegungen von vornherein auf hochentwickelte Industriestaaten. Die Probleme von Entwicklungsländern unterscheiden sich so stark, daß eine generalisierende Behandlung scheitern müßte. Um der gestellten Aufgabe gerecht zu werden, sind eine Reihe von Einzelfragen zu klären. Zunächst muß die Sicht der katholischen Soziallehre zu diesen Fragen skizziert werden. Anschließend ist zu erläutern, welche Varianten eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens vorstellbar sind und welche der Wirkungsanalyse zugrunde gelegt werden. Diese Darstellung bildet die Basis für eine Klärung des Verhältnisses zwischen Grundeinkommen und Familienlohn. Der letzte Hauptabschnitt ist dann der Wirkungsanalyse gewidmet. Hierbei sind sowohl die direkten Wirkungen der Transferzahlungen auf den Lebensstandard der Empfänger, auf ihr Arbeitsangebot, auf Substitutionsvorgänge zwischen Arbeit und Kapital und auf familiäre Entscheidungen als auch die indirekten Wirkungen, die durch die Aufbringung der Finanzierungsmittel hervorgerufen werden, zu diskutieren. Voraussetzung für diese Wirkungsanalyse ist eine

⁵ Seit 1986 besteht das Basic Income European Network (BIEN), das sich die weitere Erforschung und Propagierung eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens zum Ziel gesetzt hat.

⁶ Unter anderen durch die Nobelpreisträger Tobin (1965), Friedman (1966).

Spezifizierung der bei Einführung eines Grundeinkommens wegfallenden Sozialleistungen und der dadurch frei werdenden Finanzmittel. Ein Resümee beschließt die Überlegungen.

2. DIE SICHT DER KATHOLISCHEN SOZIALLEHRE ZU AUSGEWÄHLTEN THEMENRELEVANTEN FRAGEN

Die neuere katholische Soziallehre hat eine Reihe von normativen Prinzipien entwickelt, die für unsere Themenstellung relevant sind:⁷

1. Das Recht auf ein menschenwürdiges Leben.
2. Das Recht auf Arbeit.
3. Die Pflicht zur Arbeit.
4. Die Forderung nach einem gerechtem Lohn, der zum Unterhalt einer Familie ausreichen soll.
5. Das Prinzip der Gleichbehandlung von Mann und Frau.

Diese Prinzipien bedürfen der Präzisierung und der Interpretation, wenn sie zur Beurteilung eines konkreten Reformvorschlags brauchbar sein sollen.

Während das Recht auf Leben keiner weiteren Erläuterung bedarf, ist es notwendig, das Adjektiv "menschenwürdig" zu präzisieren. Unabhängig von allen weiteren Aspekten eines menschenwürdigen Lebens – wie etwa Freiheit, Recht auf Eigentum, Rechtsschutz, Schutz vor Gewalt und Tyrannei, demokratische Beteiligung u.ä. – gehört hierzu die Gewährleistung eines sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums,⁸ dessen Höhe vom durchschnittlichen Lebensstandard einer Gesellschaft abhängt. Gemeint ist hier also keineswegs ein physiologisches (absolutes) Existenzminimum, das nur das zum Überleben Nötige umfaßt, sondern ein relatives Existenzminimum, das eine, wenn auch bescheidene Teilhabe am Leben der Gesellschaft erlaubt und das ausreicht, um Marginalisierung, d. h. soziale Ausschließung, zu vermeiden.

Arbeit wird als zielgerichtete Betätigung, verstanden, die dazu dient, die eigenen Kräfte zu entfalten; denn ohne solche Betätigung verfällt der Mensch. Arbeit soll aber auch den Zusammenhalt der Gesellschaft fördern. Das Recht auf Arbeit versteht die katholische Soziallehre in dem gleichen einschränkenden Sinn, wie die in einigen Staaten bestehende Vollbeschäfti-

⁷ Dieser Abschnitt stützt sich insbesondere auf Schasching (1998) und Nell-Breuning (1985).

⁸ "Dem Menschen als gesellschaftlichem Wesen steht jedoch das sogenannte kulturelle Existenzminimum zu, das heißt so viel, daß er 'menschenwürdig' am Zusammenleben mit seinen Mitmenschen teilnehmen kann" (Nell-Breuning (1985), S. 241).

gungsgarantie ausgelegt wird: Nicht als individuelles, einklagbares Recht, sondern als Auftrag an die Politik und an die Arbeitsmarktparteien, die zur Herstellung von Vollbeschäftigung erforderlichen Maßnahmen zu ergreifen. "Dabei versäumt sie nicht, eigens darauf hinzuweisen, daß eine bloß 'formale' Vollbeschäftigung (daß alle irgend etwas tun und dafür bezahlt werden) nicht genügt, daß es vielmehr darauf ankommt, daß alle eine *sinnvolle* Tätigkeit ausüben, die für sie selbst befriedigend ist und anderen (der Allgemeinheit) Nutzen bringt".⁹ Arbeitslosigkeit wird als ein schweres Übel angesehen, insbesondere wenn sie junge Menschen trifft.

Die Pflicht zur Arbeit wird damit begründet, daß der Mensch nur durch eine Betätigung sich selbst verwirklicht und der Weiterentwicklung der Schöpfung dient.¹⁰ Bei einer engen Auslegung der Pflicht zur Arbeit würde diese Forderung nur auf selbstständige oder unselbstständige Erwerbsarbeit bezogen sein und Hausarbeit, Kindererziehung, ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit u.ä. ausschließen. Dies kann nicht gemeint sein; man muß diese Pflicht auf jede für einen selbst befriedigende und für andere nützliche Tätigkeit beziehen. Die Pflicht zur Arbeit wird aber durch die Forderung nach Beteiligung der unselbständig Beschäftigten an den Unternehmensentscheidungen und am Kapital oder Gewinn ergänzt.

Die Forderung nach einem gerechten Lohn bietet sicherlich die größten Auslegungsschwierigkeiten. Papst Johannes Paul II bezeichnet die Frage des gerechten Lohns als das "Schlüsselproblem der Sozialehtik".¹¹ Voraussetzung für das Zustandekommen eines gerechten Lohns ist ein ethisch vertretbares Wirtschaftssystem.¹² Im Laufe der Entwicklung der

⁹ Nell-Breuning (1985), S. 235.

¹⁰ Schasching, (1998), S. 61, zitiert die Enzyklika *Laborem Exercens* mit folgenden Worten: "because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and, indeed in a sense, becomes 'more a human being'".

¹¹ Zitiert nach Schasching (1998), S. 64).

¹² Schasching (1998), S. 63, faßt in Anlehnung an die Enzyklika *Centesimus Annus* den Anforderungskatalog für ein ethisch vertretbares Wirtschaftssystem folgendermaßen zusammen: "... firstly, private property which the encyclical stresses, 'has a social function ... based on the law of common purpose of goods' (30); secondly, free labor, which should enjoy co-responsibility and participation (32, 35); thirdly, the importance of economic initiative and entrepreneurship is noted (32); fourthly, the encyclical acknowledges the legitimacy of profit, which, it recognizes, is a regulator of the life of business, 'but cautions, is not the only one' (35); fifthly, to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole society are satisfied, the encyclical insists that the market and the economic process must be 'appropriately controlled by the forces of society and by the state' (35)". Aus der Enzyklika *Laborem Exercens* (14) ist überdies zu entnehmen, daß ein ethisch vertretbares Wirtschaftssystem auch die Beteiligung der unselbständig Tätigen in Form von "joint ownership of the means of work, sharing by the workers in the management and/or profits of businesses, so called shareholding by labor, etc." vorsehen sollte (Schasching 1998), S. 67. Weiter-

katholischen Soziallehre wurden weitere Kriterien zur Charakterisierung eines gerechten Lohns entwickelt:¹³

- Der Lohn soll sich am Beitrag des Arbeitnehmers zur ökonomischen Gesamtleistung orientieren.
- Der Lohn soll ausreichen, Frau und Kinder auf angemessenem Niveau zu unterhalten.
- Der Lohn soll auch ausreichen, eine sichere Zukunft der Familien zu gewährleisten.
- Löhne sollen weder zu niedrig, noch zu hoch sein, da in beiden Fällen Arbeitslosigkeit verursacht wird.
- Wenn ein Familienlohn nicht möglich ist, sollen besondere Regelungen eingeführt werden, um Familien gerecht zu werden.

Zur Frage der Gleichbehandlung von Mann und Frau im Erwerbsleben sind die Aussagen der Enzykliken ambivalent. Einerseits wird ausgeführt, daß es einer Gesellschaft gut anstehe, wenn sie es ermögliche, daß Mütter nicht aus finanziellen Gründen außerhalb ihres Haushalts arbeiten müssen. Andererseits wird konstatiert, daß in vielen Gesellschaften Frauen in fast jedem Lebensbereich arbeiten und daß sie nicht diskriminiert werden sollen.¹⁴

Neben diesen hier aufgeführten Prinzipien der katholischen Soziallehre müssen aber auch relevante Kriterien aus dem im Rahmen der theoretischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik entwickelten Zielkatalog zur Beurteilung herangezogen werden. Der Zielkatalog umfaßt die "Aufrechterhaltung eines gemischten Wirtschaftssystems", in dem ein Ausgleich zwischen Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit möglich ist, "Wachstumsförderung", "hoher Beschäftigungsstand", "Stabilität des Preisniveaus", "außenwirtschaftliches Gleichgewicht", "angemessene Versorgung mit öffentlichen Gütern", "Besteuerung nach der Leistungsfähigkeit" und "weitgehender Budgetausgleich", "bestmögliche Allokation der Produktionsfaktoren", "akzeptable Einkommens- und Vermögensverteilung", "regionaler Ausgleich innerhalb eines Staatsgebiets", "soziale Sicherheit", "Integration aller Gesellschaftsmitglieder" und "Schutz der natürlichen Umwelt" sowie "internationaler Ausgleich zwischen

reichende gesellschaftsphilosophische Überlegungen, die auch unmittelbar zur Begründung eines Rechts auf ein Grundeinkommen herangezogen werden, referiert van Parijs (1992a). Hierauf kann im folgenden nicht eingegangen werden.

¹³ Zusammenfassung verschiedener Aussagen der Enzykliken in Anlehnung an Schasching (1998), S. 64 und S. 65.

¹⁴ Zitiert nach Schasching (1998), S. 65, der sich in diesem Punkt auf die Enzyklika *Laborem Exercens* (19) stützt.

verschiedenen Gesellschaften". Diese zusätzlichen Aspekte können im folgenden nur ausschnittsweise berücksichtigt werden; aber sie müssen wenigstens genannt werden, um das gesamte Spektrum der eigentlich zu untersuchenden Auswirkungen einer so grundlegenden Umgestaltung auf wirtschafts- und sozialpolitische Ziele, wie sie die Einführung eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens darstellen würde, anzudeuten.

3. VARIANTEN EINES GRUNDEINKOMMENS

Eine Reihe von Merkmalen ist allen Varianten eines *allgemeinen Grundeinkommens* gemeinsam:¹⁵

- Der Rechtsanspruch auf ein Grundeinkommen basiert auf Staatsbürgerschaft oder auf legalem Wohnsitz.
- Der Rechtsanspruch auf ein Grundeinkommen steht jedem Individuum zu.
- Die Höhe des Grundeinkommens ist vom sonstigen eigenen Einkommen und Vermögen und vom Einkommen und Vermögen von Familienmitgliedern unabhängig.
- Das Grundeinkommen wird regelmäßig ausgezahlt.
- Das Grundeinkommen wird aus dem Steueraufkommen finanziert; es ist nicht von früheren Beitragszahlungen an Sozialversicherungen oder anderen individuellen Steuer- oder Abgabenzahlungen abhängig.

Varianten des allgemeinen Grundeinkommens unterscheiden sich vor allem dadurch,

- ob sie eine Leistungshöhe vorsehen, die zur vollen Deckung eines sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums für eine Person ohne Sonderbedarfe ausreicht;¹⁶
- ob sie eine Verpflichtung zu Erwerbsarbeit oder zu gesellschaftlich nützlichen Aktivitäten vorsehen;
- ob sie eine volle oder nur eine teilweise Integration mit der Einkommensteuer vorsehen;
- ob sie eine Abschaffung aller Sozialversicherungen und aller anderen steuerfinanzierten Sozialleistungen vorsehen;
- ob sie Bedarfsunterschiede zwischen Personen und Sonderbedarfe ein-

¹⁵ Vgl. Parker (1989), van Parijs (1992), S. 225f, Atkinson (1995).

¹⁶ Das sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimum muß auch die erforderlichen Beiträge zu einer gesetzlichen oder privaten Kranken- und Pflegeversicherung umfassen, sofern kein kostenlos in Anspruch zu nehmender staatlicher Gesundheitsdienst besteht.

zelner Personengruppen, die sich anhand objektiver Merkmale feststellen lassen (z.B. Lebensalter, Behinderung, Pflegebedürftigkeit) bei der Leistungsbemessung berücksichtigen.

Darüber hinaus gibt es Vorstellungen zur Einschränkung des Bezieherkreise eines Grundeinkommens, so daß es sich nicht mehr um ein *allgemeines*, sondern um ein *bedingtes Grundeinkommen* handelt.

Im folgenden werden drei ausgewählte Varianten skizziert: Eine erste Variante kann als die reine Form eines *allgemeinen Grundeinkommens* bezeichnet werden. Bei dieser Variante deckt das allgemeine Grundeinkommen das sozio-kulturelle Existenzminimum für jede Person voll ab, und es wird regelmäßig monatlich ausbezahlt. Die Berechtigten sind nach dem Wohnsitzprinzip abgegrenzt. Es gibt keinerlei Arbeitsverpflichtung. Das allgemeine Grundeinkommen ersetzt alle Sozialversicherungen und die bestehenden steuerfinanzierten Sozialleistungen. Es ist steuerfrei und soll mit einer individuellen Einkommensteuer, die auf jegliches Erwerbs- und Vermögenseinkommen erhoben wird, kombiniert werden. Es gibt keinerlei steuerliche Grundfreibeträge, d.h. sonstiges Einkommen unterliegt voll der Besteuerung. Eine Verrechnung von Steuerzahlung und Grundeinkommenszahlung findet nicht statt. Es gibt jedoch faktisch für alle Bezieher von Markteinkommen zwei gegenläufige Zahlungsströme, einerseits in Form der Grundeinkommenszahlung vom Staat an das Individuum und andererseits in Form der Steuerzahlung des Individuums an den Staat. Diese gegenläufigen Zahlungsströme sind nur für eine kleine Gruppe von Markteinkommensbeziehern, die sich an einer bestimmten Stelle des Einkommensteuertarifs befinden (break-even point), gleich hoch, so daß sich kein Saldo ergibt. In der Regel unterscheiden sie sich in ihrer Höhe von Person zu Person. Die Nettobegünstigung oder –belastung einer Person kann nur im nachhinein durch gegenseitige Aufrechnung der beiden Zahlungsströme festgestellt werden.

Eine zweite Variante bildet das *partielle Grundeinkommen* (Teilgrundeinkommen), wie es beispielsweise von Parker oder von Atkinson, bezogen auf das englische System der sozialen Sicherung, diskutiert wurde.¹⁷ Der

¹⁷ Vgl. Atkinson (1995), ch. 6. Eine radikalere Variante eines umfassenden partiellen Grundeinkommens wurde von Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams und Hermione Parker zur Umgestaltung des englischen Systems der sozialen Sicherung entwickelt (vgl. Parker (1989)). Derartige Varianten eines partiellen Grundeinkommens, die auf einem bereits bestehenden sozialen Sicherungssystem aufbauen, entziehen sich wegen ihrer Komplexität jedoch einer einfachen Analyse. Zur Ermittlung der Gewinner und Verlierer, des erforderlichen Finanzierungsaufwandes und der Auswirkungen von Anpassungsreaktionen sind umfangreiche Mikrosimulationsmodelle erforderlich. Nur mit Hilfe solcher Modelle können die Auswirkungen der verschiedenen institutionellen

Hauptunterschied zur reinen Form eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens besteht darin, daß das partielle Grundeinkommens nur einen Bruchteil des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums ausmacht. Daher müssen andere Sicherungseinrichtungen bestehen bleiben. Dies gilt auch für die bedarfs- und einkommensabhängige Sozialhilfe. Ein Teil der Leistungen der Sozialversicherungen werden jedoch zu Grundeinkommensleistungen erklärt, die nicht der Besteuerung unterliegen. Auch bei dieser Variante findet eine Individualbesteuerung statt. Der steuerliche Grundfreibetrag wird jedoch um die Höhe des partiellen Grundeinkommens gekürzt. Unterschreitet das zu versteuernde Markteinkommen den Grundfreibetrag, so wird die Differenz zusätzlich an den Steuerzahler ausgezahlt. Überdies soll die steuerliche Bemessungsgrundlage durch Streichung verschiedener Steuervergünstigungen und Absetzungsmöglichkeiten verbreitert werden. Ein derartige Variante kann als ein Mittelweg zwischen den bestehenden Systemen der sozialen Sicherung und einem allgemeinen Grundeinkommen angesehen werden.

Eine dritte Variante stellt das *bedingte Grundeinkommen* dar, das in Höhe eines sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums nur an bestimmte, anhand objektiver Kriterien leicht abgrenzbare Bevölkerungsgruppen gezahlt wird. Auch hierbei handelt es sich um einen individuellen Grundeinkommensanspruch, der von direkten Vorleistungen und vom sonstigen Einkommen unabhängig ist und aus Steuermitteln finanziert wird. Es kann eine mehr oder minder große Zahl von Empfängergruppen gebildet werden. Naheliegender ist eine Abgrenzung nach dem Lebensalter (Kinder und Jugendliche, alte Menschen), nach der Erwerbsfähigkeit (Erwerbsunfähige), nach objektiv feststellbaren, besonderen und dauerhaften Bedarfssituationen (Blinde, Personen mit anderen starken, körperlichen oder geistigen Behinderungen) oder nach gesellschaftlich anerkannten Gründen einer Erwerbsverhinderung (Kindererziehung, Pflege von Pflegebedürftigen oder andere, anerkannte ehrenamtliche und unbezahlte Tätigkeiten). Ein Doppelbezug von Grundeinkommen bei gleichzeitiger Erfüllung von zwei oder mehr Anspruchskriterien muß ausgeschlossen sein. Ein solches Grundeinkommen kann zusammen mit anderen Einkommen einer ebenfalls nach dem Prinzip der Individualbesteuerung gestalteten Einkommensteuer unterworfen werden, wobei der Einkommensteuertarif aber einen Grundfreibetrag in Höhe des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums enthalten muß. Außerdem können sämtliche anderen steuerliche Begünstigungen und Freibe-

Änderungen simuliert werden. Bei Atkinson wird ein derartiges, noch recht einfaches Modell beschrieben. Komplexere Modelle sind beispielsweise im Sonderforschungsbereich 3 der Universitäten Frankfurt und Mannheim entwickelt und u.a. zur Analyse von Rentenreformvorschlägen angewandt worden (vgl. Hauser 1994).

träge, die auf die genannten Schutztatbestände gezielt sind, wegfallen. Beitragsfinanzierte Pflichtsozialversicherungen für die durch Grundeinkommen abgesicherten Schutztatbestände können entweder entfallen oder nur noch als reduzierte Zusatzsicherung fortbestehen. Für weitere gesellschaftlich anerkannte, aber nicht durch Grundeinkommen abgesicherte Schutztatbestände sind entweder beitragsfinanzierte Sozialversicherungen oder steuerfinanzierte Transfers, die in Form einer Sozialhilfe nur bedarfs- und einkommensabhängig gewährt werden, erforderlich.

Ein *bedingtes Grundeinkommen* verletzt eine der Bedingungen, die für die Charakterisierung einer Sozialleistung als *allgemeines Grundeinkommen* genannt wurden; denn es steht nicht jedem Mitglied der Wohnsitzbevölkerung zu, sondern nur ausgewählten Gruppen. Der Einbau von Elementen eines bedingten Grundeinkommens in bestehende Steuer- und Transfersysteme kann jedoch sehr eng begrenzt oder auf immer größere Bevölkerungsgruppen ausgedehnt werden, so daß man sich auf lange Sicht dem Extremfall des *allgemeinen und unbedingten Grundeinkommens* beliebig annähern kann, sofern dies gewünscht wird. Wie weit man sich annähern will, hängt ab von Erwägungen über die Finanzierbarkeit, die Anerkennung von Schutztatbeständen, das erwünschte Ausmaß an Absicherung, die Einschätzung von unerwünschten Verhaltensreaktionen und ökonomischen Auswirkungen, aber auch von den Problemen des Übergangs vom jeweils bestehenden Sicherungssystem zu einem stärker auf Grundsicherungselementen basierenden System.

4. ZUM VERHÄLTNIS VON GRUNDEINKOMMEN UND FAMILIENLOHN

Alle hochindustrialisierten Staaten haben sich in diesem Jahrhundert zu Wohlfahrtsstaaten (*welfare states*) entwickelt.¹⁸ Diese sind durch überwiegend marktwirtschaftlich organisierte Wirtschaftssysteme mit regulierten Arbeitsmärkten, durch ausgebaute Systeme der sozialen Sicherung sowie durch Umverteilungsaspekte einbeziehende Steuersysteme gekennzeichnet. Die staatliche Regulierung des Arbeitsmärkte hat jedoch auch in Wohlfahrtsstaaten enge Grenzen, wenn sie über den Arbeitsschutz hinausgehen und die Lohnhöhe beeinflussen will. Diese Grenzen einer staatlichen Steu-

¹⁸ Hier wird die international übliche Terminologie verwendet. Im Deutschen wird nochmals zwischen einem Wohlfahrtsstaat mit besonders starker staatlicher Aktivität und weitgehenden Versorgungsleistungen und dem stärker auf Selbstvorsorge ausgerichteten Sozialstaat unterschieden. Die Einführung eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens oder eines breit ausgebauten bedingten Grundeinkommens würde in der deutschen sozialpolitischen Diskussion als ein Übergang vom Sozialstaat zum Wohlfahrtsstaat interpretiert werden.

rung der Arbeitsmärkte werden durch die Integration der Nationalstaaten in umfassendere Wirtschafts- und Währungsunionen und durch die Globalisierung der Wirtschaftsbeziehungen weiter verengt. Die staatliche Festsetzung eines Mindestlohnes, der zum Unterhalt einer vierköpfigen oder fünfköpfigen Familie oberhalb des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums ausreichen würde, ist unter diesen Rahmenbedingungen kaum möglich, wenn nicht eine hohe Arbeitslosigkeit von gering qualifizierten oder wegen gesundheitlicher Einschränkungen weniger leistungsfähigen Arbeitnehmern verursacht werden soll. Noch weit problematischer wäre es, wenn der Staat vorschreiben würde, daß die Höhe eines Mindestlohnes bei gleicher Leistung nach Familienstand und Kinderzahl gestaffelt sein sollte. Auch der Erzwingung von Familienlöhnen durch gewerkschaftliche Machtmittel sind enge Grenzen gesetzt, insbesondere, wenn eine Differenzierung der Stunden- oder Monatslöhne nach Familienstand oder Kinderzahl verlangt würde. Sofort würde sich ein marktmäßiger Ausleseprozeß mit einer Bevorzugung der "billigeren" alleinstehenden Arbeitskräfte, verbunden mit einer entsprechenden Diskriminierung von Familienvätern und -müttern sowie höheren Arbeitslosenquoten dieser Gruppe ergeben. In früherer Zeit, in der fast jeder Erwachsene verheiratet war und Kinder hatte, mag dieses Problem noch gering gewesen sein. Inzwischen sind jedoch die Bevölkerungsanteile der Alleinstehenden und der kinderlosen Ehepaare in den meisten Industrieländern stark gewachsen, so daß die erwähnten, nicht zu verhindernden Arbeitsmarkteffekte zu einer schweren Gefahr für die Familien werden würden; dies würde dem angestrebten Ziel einer Förderung von Familien völlig zuwider laufen. Aus diesen hier nur knapp skizzierten Gründen ist die Einführung von Löhnen, die nach Familienstand und Kinderzahl differenziert sind, abzulehnen. Familienstand und Kinderzahl können im Rahmen der herrschenden gemischten Wirtschaftsordnung nur durch einen umfassenden staatlichen Familienlastenausgleich oder allenfalls durch Ausgleichseinrichtungen, die alle Unternehmen einer Branche einbeziehen, berücksichtigt werden. Damit erhebt sich die Frage, inwieweit die drei hier zu untersuchenden Varianten eines Grundeinkommens im Sinne der katholischen Soziallehre als Beispiele für "besondere Regelungen, die den Familien gerecht werden", dienen könnten?

Das *allgemeine Grundeinkommen* deckt das sozio-kulturelle Existenzminimum der Kinder und auch der wegen der Kinderbetreuung nicht erwerbstätigen Ehegatten, aber auch von erwerbstätigen Ehegatten ab. Da es gleichermaßen an Männer und Frauen gewährt wird, vermeidet es auch jegliche Diskriminierung. Es stellt damit eine Alternative zu dem nicht zu realisierenden Mindestlohn dar, der nach Familiengröße und Erwerbstätigkeit des Ehegatten differenziert ist. Es leistet das Gleiche auch für Alleiner-

ziehende und für Waisenkinder, und ebenso für Familien, in denen kein Mitglied durch Erwerbstätigkeit für den Familienunterhalt sorgen kann. Ein über diese Mindestversorgung in Höhe des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums hinausgehender Lebensstandard von Familien kann allerdings nur durch Aufnahme einer Erwerbstätigkeit oder durch Einkommen aus vorhandenem Vermögen erreicht werden.

Ein allgemeines individuelles Grundeinkommen setzt überdies Anreize zur Änderung demographischer Verhaltensweisen: Soweit sich Ehepaare aus ökonomischen Gründen einen Kinderwunsch versagt haben, fällt dieser Hinderungsgrund weg. Da das gemeinsame Wirtschaften von zwei oder mehr Personen in einem einzigen Haushalt deutlich geringere Ressourcen erfordert als die Unterhaltung von getrennten Haushalten und da diese Einsparungen in Form einer Lebensstandarderhöhung den zusammen wirtschaftenden Personen zugute kommen, anstatt daß sie – wie beispielsweise bei der Sozialhilfe – durch geringere Leistungen für weitere erwachsene Familienmitglieder abgeschöpft werden, entsteht ein Anreiz zu gemeinsamer Haushaltsführung, der ehefördernd wirkt. Andererseits wirkt jedoch die mit einem allgemeinen Grundeinkommen verbundene Individualbesteuerung bei progressivem Steuertarif dahingehend, daß beide Ehegatten aus Gründen der Steuerersparnis möglichst gleich hohe Erwerbseinkommen anstreben, so daß eine Tendenz zur Erwerbsbeteiligung von Müttern mit kleinen Kindern oder zur Halbtags-tätigkeit beider Ehegatten entsteht.

Ein besonderes Problem stellt die Vereinbarkeit eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens mit der von der katholischen Soziallehre geforderten *Pflicht zur Arbeit* dar. Einerseits ermöglicht es der Bezug eines Grundeinkommens auf Erwerbsarbeit zu verzichten, wenn man sich mit dem bescheidenen Lebensstandard, den das Grundeinkommen gewährleistet, begnügt. Damit würde einer Pflicht zur Arbeit nicht Folge geleistet. Andererseits ermöglicht es die Absicherung des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums durch das allgemeine Grundeinkommen gerade, daß der Arbeitnehmer sich für eine sinnvolle und auch ihn selbst befriedigende Tätigkeit entscheiden kann, ohne daß er aus Existenzgründen allzu sehr auf die Lohnhöhe achten muß. Auch eine unbezahlte ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit würde durch ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen erleichtert. Da die Forderung nach sinnvoller Tätigkeit von der katholischen Soziallehre ebenfalls vorgetragen wird, erhält man unter diesen verschiedenen Aspekten ein ambivalentes Ergebnis.

Zusammenfassend kann man feststellen, daß ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen die Forderung der katholischen Soziallehre nach einem Familienlohn bzw. einer adäquaten Ersatzregelung erfüllen würde. In Bezug auf die Pflicht zur Arbeit und die Sinnhaftigkeit von Arbeit muß man jedoch zwischen zwei widerstreitenden Aspekten abwägen. Allerdings sind damit bei

weitem noch nicht alle erforderlichen Beurteilungskriterien erfüllt. Weitere Aspekte werden im folgenden Abschnitt erörtert.

Der Zahlbetrag eines *partiellen Grundeinkommens* liegt deutlich unter der Höhe des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums eines Erwachsenen bzw. eines Kindes – beispielsweise bei einem Drittel oder der Hälfte. Wie noch zu zeigen sein wird, liegt der ausschlaggebende Grund hierfür in den extrem hohen Finanzierungslasten, die ein existenzminimumsicherndes *allgemeines Grundeinkommen* mit sich bringen würde. Ein derartiges partielles Grundeinkommen würde einen gegebenenfalls bisher bestehenden, aus Steuermitteln finanzierten Familienlastenausgleich ersetzen. Je nachdem, inwieweit das bisherige System Kindergeld und Erziehungsgeld für nicht erwerbstätige Mütter vorsah, kann es zu einer Verbesserung oder einer Verschlechterung der Situation von Familien mit Kindern in den einzelnen Einkommenschichten kommen. Diese Wirkungen auf der individuellen Ebene hängen völlig von dem in einem Land bereits bestehenden System der sozialen Sicherung, das nicht völlig ersetzt werden kann, sowie von der individuellen Ausgangslage einzelner Familien ab.¹⁹ Selbst wenn man diese unterschiedlichen Effekte um der Einführung eines transparenten Systems willen hinzunehmen bereit wäre, bleibt jedoch der Einwand der zu geringen Höhe bestehen. Dieser Einwand wird auch nicht dadurch entkräftet, daß auf die Einsparungen beim gemeinsamen Wirtschaften in einer Familie verwiesen wird. Hieraus folgt: Ein partielles Grundeinkommen kann wegen seiner geringen Höhe nicht als eine Regelung angesehen werden, die wenigstens bei den unteren Lohngruppen die Lohneinkommen in einer Weise ergänzen würde, daß sich aus dieser Kombination ein von der katholischen Soziallehre geforderter Familienlohn ergäbe. Bei der Wirkungsanalyse in Abschnitt 5 wird diese Grundeinkommensvariante daher auch nicht mehr behandelt.

Eine der denkbaren Varianten eines *bedingten Grundeinkommens* besteht in einer steuerfinanzierten staatlichen Sozialleistung, deren Empfängerkreis auf die Gruppe der minderjährigen Kinder und auf die wegen der Betreuung ihrer Kinder nicht erwerbstätigen Ehegatten und Alleinerziehenden beschränkt ist und die in Höhe des sozio-kulturellen Existenzmini-

¹⁹ Simulationsrechnungen, die diese unterschiedlichen Effekte bei der hypothetischen Einführung eines partiellen Grundeinkommens in Großbritannien zeigen, finden sich in Atkinson (1995), ch. 6. Verbesserungen und Verschlechterungen im Vergleich zum Ausgangszustand streuen über die gesamte Einkommensskala, wenn auch die unteren Einkommensschichten *im Durchschnitt* begünstigt und die oberen *im Durchschnitt* belastet werden. Derartige differenzierte Effekte sind für alle vorstellbaren Ausgestaltungsformen eines partiellen Grundeinkommens typisch; sie sind daher nur schwer mit generellen verteilungspolitischen Zielen, insbesondere mit dem Ziel eines systematischen Familienlastenausgleichs, in Übereinstimmung zu bringen.

mums ohne Berücksichtigung des sonstigen eigenen Einkommens und des Einkommens von Ehegatten gezahlt wird. Dies wäre ein *familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen*. Bisher vorhandene Sozialleistungen, die dem Familienlastenausgleich dienten, müßten wegfallen. Ein in diese Weise gestaltetes familienbezogenes Grundeinkommen wäre nicht einmal zwingend mit einer Individualbesteuerung der Einkommen verbunden. Eine gemeinsame Veranlagung von Ehepaaren oder sogar von Ehepaaren und Kindern wäre ebenfalls möglich, sofern für jedes Mitglied der Steuereinheit ein steuerfreier Grundfreibetrag in Höhe des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums berücksichtigt würde.

Ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen würde eine den Lohn ergänzende Regelung darstellen, die den Forderungen der katholischen Soziallehre im Hinblick auf einen Familienlohn voll gerecht würde. Da dieses Grundeinkommen nur für minderjährige Kinder (oder sogar nur für Kinder bis zum Ende der Pflichtschulzeit) und für die Tätigkeit der Kindererziehung gewährt würde, träte auch kein Widerspruch zu der geforderten "Pflicht zur Arbeit" auf. Eine Diskriminierung von Frauen kann dadurch vermieden werden, daß ein derartiges Grundeinkommen geschlechtsneutral an den kindererziehenden Elternteil gewährt und zusätzlich die Wahlmöglichkeit eingeräumt wird, die Aufgabe der Kindererziehung zu teilen und dies auch durch Halbtags-tätigkeit beider Ehegatten zu dokumentieren. Ähnlich wie ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen würde ein solches familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen ökonomische Hinderungsgründe für die Erfüllung eines Kinderwunsches weitgehend beseitigen; es hätte jedoch eine schwächere ehedfördernde Wirkung als das allgemeine Grundeinkommen, weil für den Bezug zusätzliche Voraussetzungen zu erfüllen wären.

Zusammenfassend kann man feststellen, daß ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen den Forderungen der katholischen Soziallehre voll entsprechen würde. Für ein Gesamturteil über die Erwünschtheit und Machbarkeit einer derartigen Regelung müssen jedoch noch weitere Beurteilungskriterien herangezogen werden, die im folgenden Abschnitt zu diskutieren sind.

5. AUSGEWÄHLTE PROBLEME UND WIRKUNGEN EINES ALLGEMEINEN UND EINES FAMILIENBEZOGENEN BEDINGTEN GRUNDEINKOMMENS

5.1. *Ein Analyseabmen*

Für die Analyse einer grundlegenden wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Reform, wie sie die Einführung eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens darstellen würde, muß man als erstes entscheiden, ob man von einer reinen Marktwirtschaft

ohne jegliches staatliches System der sozialen Sicherung ausgeht, in der erstmals ein System der sozialen Sicherung in Form eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens eingeführt wird, oder ob man als Ausgangslage einen typischen modernen Wohlfahrtsstaat mit einem ausgebauten System der sozialen Sicherung annimmt, in dem das vorhandene System der sozialen Sicherung abgeschafft und durch das allgemeine Grundeinkommen ersetzt werden soll. Manche Mißverständnisse in der Diskussion um ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen lassen sich darauf zurückführen, daß die Entscheidung für eine dieser grundlegenden Annahmen nicht explizit gemacht wurde oder daß sogar die Argumente vermischt werden. In gleicher Weise muß man auch den Ausgangszustand definieren, wenn die Wirkungen eines familienbezogenen bedingten Grundeinkommens analysiert werden sollen.

Als zweiter methodischer Aspekt ist hervorzuheben, daß im Prinzip zwei künftige *Zeitpfade* miteinander verglichen werden müssen: Zum einen der Zeitpfad der Entwicklung mit dem vorhandenen System der sozialen Sicherung (Status-quo-Zeitpfad) und zum anderen der Zeitpfad der Entwicklung mit dem reformierten System (Reformzeitpfad). Beide Zeitpfade lassen sich nur mit mehr oder minder großer Unsicherheit bestimmen; damit muß jede Analyse einer tiefgreifenden Reform leben. Methodisch verfehlt wäre es jedoch, die hypothetische Entwicklung, die sich bei einem reformierten System ergeben würde (Reformzeitpfad) ohne Begründung nur mit dem Ausgangszustand bei gegebenem System der sozialen Sicherung oder gar mit dem Modell einer reinen Marktwirtschaft zu vergleichen; denn der Status quo muß künftig keineswegs unverändert fortbestehen. Nur wenn man unverändertes Fortbestehen mit guten Gründen behaupten kann, ist diese Vorgehensweise vertretbar. Der Vergleich mit einer reinen Marktwirtschaft ohne Staat (oder mit einem Minimalstaat ohne System der sozialen Sicherung) wäre erst recht methodisch unhaltbar; die abgeleiteten Ergebnisse wären irrelevant.

Ein dritter methodischer Aspekt muß bei tiefgreifenden Reformen, mit denen ein beträchtlicher Teil des Bruttosozialprodukts eines Landes anders verteilt werden soll, beachtet werden. Die möglichen Auswirkungen einer solchen Reform können nur dann richtig beurteilt werden, wenn gleichzeitig die Leistungsseite und die Aufbringungsseite des Finanzvolumens betrachtet wird und die häufig gegenläufigen Effekte simultan abgeschätzt werden. Dabei sind sowohl wegfallende Transfers, Sozialabgaben und Steuern als auch neu hinzukommende Transfers, Sozialabgaben und Steuern in den Vergleich einzubeziehen.

Ein vierter Gesichtspunkt taucht auf, wenn man sich den Fall des Ersatzes eines bestehenden Systems der sozialen Sicherung durch ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen oder ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundein-

kommen vor Augen führt. Da bestehende Systeme der sozialen Sicherung meist auch Sozialversicherungen umfassen, in denen die Versicherten durch Beitragszahlungen Ansprüche erworben haben, die sie in ihrer Lebensplanung berücksichtigen, kann man nicht einfach von einer sofortigen Abschaffung derartiger Sicherungssysteme ausgehen; denn damit würden die bisher akkumulierten Ansprüche der Beitragszahler enteignet. Es sind vielmehr lange Übergangsfristen erforderlich, die insbesondere bei den Alterssicherungssystemen mindestens eine Generation umfassen müßten. Komplexe Übergangsregelungen wären in einem solchen Fall erforderlich, wenn die verschiedenen sozial- und wirtschaftspolitischen Ziele nicht zeitweise verfehlt werden sollen. Auf diese Übergangsproblematik kann hier nur hingewiesen werden; sie wird im folgenden nicht behandelt. Eine Politikempfehlung müßte sie jedoch berücksichtigen.

Es wurde bereits angedeutet, daß die Verfolgung der vielfältigen und zum Teil gegenläufigen Auswirkungen einer grundlegenden Reform nur mit Hilfe eines mikroanalytischen Simulationsmodells möglich wäre, das einerseits die institutionelle Struktur des betrachteten Landes und andererseits auf Stichprobenbasis die Bevölkerungsstruktur abbildet. Unentbehrlich ist diese Vorgehensweise insbesondere, wenn die Auswirkungen von Verhaltensreaktionen der Wirtschaftssubjekte auf die Reform ermittelt und in die Beurteilung einbezogen werden sollen. Die Entwicklung derartiger Modelle erfordert eine jahrelange Arbeit von größeren Forschergruppen;²⁰ mein beschränkter Rahmen erlaubt es daher nur, im folgenden einige grundlegende Einzelaspekte anzusprechen. Aber ich möchte festhalten, daß eine verantwortungsbewußte Politik, die tatsächlich derart grundlegende Reformen realisieren möchte, sich derartiger Analysen bedienen müßte.

Die folgenden Überlegungen gehen von einem Wohlfahrtsstaat aus, in dem ein bestehendes System der sozialen Sicherung vollständig oder teilweise durch ein aus dem Mittelaufkommen der Einkommensteuer finanziertes, allgemeines oder familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen ersetzt werden soll. Dementsprechend sind die Veränderungen bei der Einkommensteuer, bei den Sozialversicherungsbeiträgen und bei den wegfallenden und neu hinzukommenden Sozialleistungen gleichzeitig in den Blick zu nehmen. Übergangsprobleme können nur sporadisch angedeutet werden. Die künftige Entwicklung unter Status-quo-Bedingungen, d.h. bei Fortbestehen der gegenwärtigen Regelungen, kann nur in der Weise berücksichtigt werden, daß auf einige bereits sichtbar gewordene Trends hingewiesen wird.

²⁰ Vgl. Fußnoten 17 und 19.

5.2. Einige Überlegungen zum Finanzaufwand für ein allgemeines oder ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen

Um eine grobe Abschätzung des für ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen erforderlichen Finanzaufwandes vornehmen zu können, ist eine Annahme über die Höhe dieses Grundeinkommens nötig. Hier wird in Anlehnung an die international vergleichende Armutsforschung ein relatives sozio-kulturelles Existenzminimum in Höhe von 50% des privaten Verbrauchs pro Kopf der Bevölkerung zugrunde gelegt, das mit dem allgemeinen Grundeinkommen gedeckt und steuerfrei zur Verfügung gestellt werden sollte. Dies bedeutet, daß allein für das Grundeinkommen Mittel in dieser Höhe durch Steuern aufgebracht werden müssen. Hinzu kommt der Mittelbedarf für allgemeine Staatsaufgaben. Um dies am Beispiel Deutschlands für das Jahr 1997 zu exemplifizieren: Der für das Grundeinkommen erforderliche Finanzaufwand betrüge die Hälfte der Ausgaben für privaten Verbrauch, d.h. 1.047,6 Mrd. DM.²¹ Die gesamten Übertragungen der Sozialversicherungen und des Staates in Form von steuerfinanzierten Sozialleistungen an die privaten Haushalte betragen lediglich 827,6 Mrd. DM.²² Wenn man den Mittelbedarf für die übrigen Staatsaufgaben als gegeben unterstellt, so bleibt trotz Abschaffung aller Sozialleistungen eine Deckungslücke von etwa einem Viertel. Diese Lücke würde sich etwa um ein Sechstel verringern, wenn man für minderjährige Kinder im Durchschnitt nur einen Betrag von zwei Dritteln des für einen Erwachsenen ermittelten Wertes ansetzte. Die verbleibende Deckungslücke müßte durch Erhöhung der Einkommen- und Körperschaftsteuer über das bisherige Maß hinaus geschlossen werden. Angesichts der bereits sehr hohen Abgabenquote dürfte eine weitere beträchtliche Steuererhöhung zur Finanzierung eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens zu vielfältigen negativen Anreizeffekten und ernsthaften Störungen des Wirtschaftsprozesse führen und auch politisch kaum durchsetzbar sein. Diese simple Beispielsrechnung würde auch für andere Länder zu ähnlichen Ergebnissen führen. Wesentlich differenziertere Abschätzungen des erforderlichen Finanzaufwandes durch Parker (1989) und Atkinson (1995) zeigten ein ähnliches Bild: Es wären Steuererhöhungen in einem kaum tragbaren Ausmaß und mit unabsehbaren negativen Auswirkungen

²¹ Der Monatsbetrag eines auf diese Weise berechneten allgemeinen Grundeinkommens hätte sich im Jahr 1997 auf DM 1.058. – belaufen; dieser Betrag liegt etwa in Höhe des vom Bundesverfassungsgericht angesetzten sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimum, das von der Einkommensteuer freigestellt sein muß.

²² Vgl. Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung (1998), S. 356 und 358.

erforderlich. Die Schlußfolgerung von Parker und auch von Atkinson war, daß allenfalls ein partielles Grundeinkommen finanzierbar wäre. Dies ist jedoch in unserem Zusammenhang aus anderen Gründen problematisch.

Damit erhebt sich die Frage, ob der für ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen erforderliche Finanzaufwand weit niedriger wäre und in einer Größenordnung läge, die sich im Rahmen des Finanzierbaren bewegt. Auch hierfür kann an dieser Stelle nur eine sehr grobe Abschätzung anhand des deutschen Beispiels vorgenommen werden. Der Anteil der Kinder und Jugendlichen an der Bevölkerung beträgt etwa ein Fünftel. Wenn man für diese Altersgruppe im Durchschnitt ein Grundeinkommen von $\frac{2}{3}$ des Betrages für einen Erwachsenen ansetzt (d.h.ca. DM 700.-), lägen die erforderlichen Mittel bei etwa 13% des Betrages, der für ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen anzusetzen wäre, d.h. bei etwa 140 Mrd. DM pro Jahr. Hinzu kommt das Grundeinkommen für den nicht-erwerbstätigen kindererziehenden Elternteil. Hierfür könnte man eine Befristung, z. B. bis zum Erreichen des dritten Lebensjahres des jüngsten Kindes, vorsehen. Unterstellt man, daß entweder eine Frau oder ein Mann im Durchschnitt 6 Jahre ihres Lebens der Erziehung kleiner Kinder widmet und damit während dieser Zeit einen Anspruch auf ein bedingtes Grundeinkommen hat, so gelangt man zu einer geschätzten Ausgabensumme von 35 Mrd. pro Jahr,²³ d.h. also für Eltern und Kinder zusammen ca. 175 Mrd. DM pro Jahr. Dieser Summe kann wiederum um das wegfallende Kinder- und Erziehungsgeld und um andere familienbezogene Sozialleistungen und kindbedingte Zuschläge sowie um die Einnahmen aus dem der Besteuerung unterliegenden bedingten Grundeinkommen vermindert werden.²⁴ Legt man deutsche Verhältnisse zugrunde, so kann man sagen, daß der größte Teil dieser Gesamtsumme durch die wegfallenden familienbedingten Transfers kompensiert werden würde. Dies bedeutet, daß ein derartiges familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen nicht außerhalb jeglicher finanzieller Möglichkeiten läge. Diese Aussage dürfte – gegebenenfalls mit Modifikationen – auch für andere hochentwickelte Industrieländer gelten. Für Entwicklungsländer, die hier überhaupt nicht behandelt wurden, stellt sich die Situation selbstverständlich anders dar.

²³ Dieser Schätzung liegt ein monatliches Grundeinkommen von DM 1058.– zugrunde. Da bei weitem nicht alle Mütter oder Väter ihre Erwerbstätigkeit für durchschnittlich sechs Jahre unterbrechen würden, stellt diese Gesamtsumme eine Obergrenze dar, die deutlich unterschritten werden würde. Eine weitere Reduzierung ergäbe sich, wenn man das Grundeinkommen für Kinder lediglich bis zum Ende der Pflichtschulzeit zahlen würde.

²⁴ Gemäß dem Sozialbericht 1997 der Bundesregierung wurden für Familien und Kinder im Jahr 1996 162 Mrd. DM aufgewendet (Bundesregierung 1998, S. 282). Ein wesentlicher Teil dieser familienbezogenen Sozialausgaben würde durch ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen ersetzt werden und damit wegfallen.

5.3. Ausgewählte weitere Aspekte zur Beurteilung eines allgemeinen und eines familienbezogenen bedingten Grundeinkommens

5.3.1. Sicherung des Lebensstandards bei Eintritt sozialer Risiken?

Ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen würde die Familien mit Kindern deutlich besser stellen als das gegenwärtige System. Es würde aber das in vielen Staaten anerkannte Ziel der Sicherung des Lebensstandards, d.h. der Aufrechterhaltung der relativen Position im Einkommensgefüge, grob verletzen; denn da es lediglich eine Mindestsicherung garantiert, ist der Einkommensrückgang bei Eintritt eines sozialen Risikos, das mit einem Ausfall des Arbeitseinkommens verbunden ist, wie zum Beispiel Arbeitslosigkeit, Berufsunfall, Erwerbsunfähigkeit, Krankheit, Alter, Tod des Hauptverdieners, um so größer, je höher vorher das Arbeitseinkommen war. Dieser Rückgang des Einkommens könnte nur durch freiwillige private Vorsorgemaßnahmen teilweise aufgefangen werden; hierfür wäre aber angesichts der hohen Steuerlast nur geringer Spielraum vorhanden. Nur aus einer egalitären Sicht könnte man eine derartige Minimalabsicherung befürworten.

Ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen wirft dieses Problem nicht auf. Es würde nur die Einkommenslage von Familien mit Kindern entscheidend verbessern und damit gerade einen ansonsten durch die Geburt von Kindern und die zeitweise Aufgabe einer Erwerbstätigkeit durch einen Elternteil hervorgerufenen Abstieg in der Einkommenshierarchie wesentlich dämpfen.

5.3.2. Einfluß auf Arbeitslosigkeit?

Die Einführung eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens würde zu einer Reduktion des Arbeitsangebots führen. Dies hat zwei Gründe: Erstens würde ein Teil der gegenwärtig erwerbstätigen Bevölkerung entweder seine Arbeitszeit reduzieren oder temporär oder dauerhaft aus dem Arbeitsmarkt ausscheiden, weil ein Mindestlebensunterhalt gesichert ist. Dies gilt insbesondere für Personen mit geringem Einkommenspotential, deren Arbeitslosenquoten besonders hoch sind und bei denen man ein durch Strukturwandlungen bedingtes weiteres Ansteigen der Arbeitslosigkeit erwartet. Auch das Arbeitsangebot von Ehepaaren mit Kindern dürfte sich reduzieren, soweit es vor allem durch die Notwendigkeit, einen ausreichenden Lebensunterhalt zu sichern, bedingt war. Zweitens wären die für die Finanzierung eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens erforderlichen Steuersätze so hoch, daß vermutlich auch die Arbeitsbereitschaft von Personen mit hohem Einkommenspotential deutlich zurückgehen würde. Auf der Seite der Arbeitgeber könnte man wegen der höheren Kaufkraft unterer Einkommenschichten

aber mit einer gesteigerten Arbeitsnachfrage rechnen. Insgesamt gesehen würde in einer Volkswirtschaft ohne Außenwirtschaftsbeziehungen das Produktionspotential wegen der geringeren Erwerbsbeteiligung vermutlich zurückgehen, aber besser ausgelastet sein. Auf längere Sicht würde wegen der wesentlich erhöhten Steuerlast die Investitionsquote vermutlich niedriger liegen und damit auch ein geringeres Wirtschaftswachstum herbeiführen.

In einer offenen Volkswirtschaft mit starken internationalen Verflechtungen – wie beispielsweise im EU-Raum – muß auch der Anreizeffekt eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens für Zuwanderung berücksichtigt werden. Zuwanderung würde zum einen die finanziellen Lasten eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens erhöhen und zum anderen seinem arbeitslosigkeitsreduzierenden Effekt entgegenwirken. Dem könnte man nur durch eine scharfe Zuwanderungsbeschränkung oder durch einen Ausschluß der Zuwanderer vom Bezug eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens begegnen.

Ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen würde vermutlich zu einem stärkeren Rückgang des Arbeitsangebots von Eltern mit kleinen Kindern aus unteren Einkommensschichten als von Eltern aus oberen Einkommensschichten führen, weil das für alle Elternteile gleich hohe Grundeinkommen einen größeren Prozentsatz des temporär entfallenden Erwerbseinkommens ersetzt. Dies ist angesichts der höheren Arbeitslosigkeitsquoten von Geringqualifizierten auch erwünscht. Ob hierdurch die Arbeitslosigkeit von Frauen oder von Männern stärker zurückgeht, hängt davon ab, wie die durch das familienbezogene bedingte Grundeinkommen begünstigten Ehepaare mit kleinen Kindern die Erziehungs- und Betreuungsaufgaben untereinander aufteilen. Dabei ist auch wichtig, daß ein temporärer Rückzug aus dem Arbeitsmarkt langfristige negative Auswirkungen auf die künftigen Beschäftigungschancen und die Einkommenserzielungsmöglichkeiten hat. Aus diesen Gründen kann es zu einer Diskriminierung von Frauen kommen, sofern an der traditionellen Rollenaufteilung festgehalten wird. Ein merklicher Einfluß auf die Arbeitsnachfrage der Arbeitgeber ist von einem familienbezogenen bedingten Grundeinkommen kaum zu erwarten. Auch der Anreiz zu gesteigerter Zuwanderung wäre weit geringer als im Falle des allgemeinen Grundeinkommens.

5.3.3. *Einfluß auf die Lohnstruktur?*

Ein allgemeines Grundeinkommen würde Raum schaffen für eine Senkung der unteren Lohnsätze, da das Existenzminimum gesichert wäre und Erwerbseinkommen nur noch ein Zusatz einkommen darstellen würde. Dies könnte einen weiteren beschäftigungsfördernden Effekt für Geringqualifizierte mit niedriger Produktivität hervorrufen. Allerdings bedürfte

eine solche Strategie der Zustimmung der Gewerkschaften, die aus Furcht vor einer generellen Senkung des durchschnittlichen Lohnniveaus vermutlich nur schwer zu erreichen wäre. Diese Furcht wäre auch nicht unbegründet; denn derart weitreichende Reformen des Systems der sozialen Sicherung wären unweigerlich mit kaum abschätzbaren Vorwältungs- und Rückwältungsvorgängen verbunden. Es ist keineswegs ausgeschlossen, daß die stark erhöhte Steuerlast auf längere Sicht im wesentlichen von den unselbständig Beschäftigten getragen werden müßte.

Ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen würde ebenfalls Raum schaffen für eine Senkung der unteren Lohnsätze; die Auswirkungen würden sich aber deutlich unterscheiden. Während Familien mit Kindern und Alleinerziehende eine Kompensation für ein niedrigeres Arbeitseinkommen in Form eines bedingten Grundeinkommens erhielten, müßten Alleinstehenden und die Ehepaare ohne Kinder sowie Ehepaare mit älteren Kindern den durch die Lohnsatzsenkung bedingten Einkommenrückgang selbst tragen. Dies würde vermutlich einen sehr starken Widerstand der Gewerkschaften hervorrufen. Tritt aber keine Absenkung der unteren Lohnsätze ein, dann wird auch kein beschäftigungssteigernder Effekt in diesem Bereich ausgelöst.

6. ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die neuere katholische Soziallehre hat unter anderem die folgenden Prinzipien entwickelt:

- Das Recht auf ein menschenwürdiges Leben.
- Das Recht auf Arbeit.
- Die Pflicht zur Arbeit.
- Die Forderung nach einem gerechten, zum Unterhalt einer Familie ausreichenden Lohn oder nach ergänzenden, den Familienunterhalt sichernden Regelungen.
- Das Prinzip der Gleichbehandlung von Mann und Frau.

Damit stellt sich die Frage, ob der seit Jahrzehnten in der sozialstaatlichen Reformdiskussion auftauchende Vorschlag eines allgemeinen Grundeinkommens ein Weg zur Erfüllung der Forderungen der katholischen Soziallehre wäre. Bei der Untersuchung dieser Frage sind auch die in der Theorie der Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik erarbeiteten Ziele zu berücksichtigen.

Unter einem *allgemeinen Grundeinkommen* versteht man eine Sozialleistung in Höhe des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums, die an jedem Bürger von der Geburt bis zum Tod ohne Vorleistung und ohne Rücksicht auf sein sonstiges Einkommen oder das Einkommen seiner Familie gezahlt

wird. Ein *partielles Grundeinkommen* unterscheidet sich von einem allgemeinen Grundeinkommen dadurch, daß es nur einen Teil des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums abdeckt. Ein *bedingtes Grundeinkommen* erreicht zwar die volle Höhe des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums, wird aber nur an ausgewählte Bevölkerungsgruppen gezahlt.

Neben dem allgemeinen Grundeinkommen und dem partiellen Grundeinkommen wird in dieser Studie auch ein Spezialfall des bedingten Grundeinkommens behandelt: Das *familienbezogene bedingte Grundeinkommen*, das in Höhe des sozio-kulturellen Existenzminimums nur an minderjährige Kinder und an den kindererziehenden und nicht arbeitenden Ehegatten und an Alleinerziehende für einen begrenzten Zeitraum gezahlt wird.

Bei genauerer Untersuchung zeigt sich: Ein Familienlohn, der die Größe der zu unterhaltenden Familie berücksichtigt, ist in einem überwiegend marktwirtschaftlich organisierten Wirtschaftssystem, wie es in den hochentwickelten Industrie- und Wohlfahrtsstaaten herrscht, nicht ohne extrem negative Rückwirkungen möglich. Sowohl das *allgemeine Grundeinkommen* als auch ein *familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen* sind ergänzende Regelungen, die die Forderung der katholischen Soziallehre nach einem Familienlohn erfüllen würden. Ein *partielles Grundeinkommen* genügt diesen Anforderungen nicht. Von einem *allgemeinen Grundeinkommen* könnte man überdies einen größeren Beitrag zur Verminderung der Arbeitslosigkeit erwarten als von einem *familienbezogenen bedingten Grundeinkommen*. Die finanziellen Lasten eines *allgemeinen Grundeinkommens*, die durch Wegfall aller anderen Sozialleistungen (einschließlich der Sozialversicherungen) und durch eine starke Steuererhöhung gedeckt werden müßten, sind jedoch so groß, daß eine Umstellung der herrschenden Systeme der sozialen Sicherung auf ein *allgemeines Grundeinkommen* nicht verantwortet werden kann. Dagegen wäre ein familienbezogenes bedingtes Grundeinkommen eine im Bereich des finanziell Möglichen liegende Alternative. Ein derartiges bedingtes Grundeinkommen kann als eine wesentliche Verstärkung des Familienlastenausgleichs verstanden werden.

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WAYS AND MEANS OF INTEGRATING THE YOUNG UNSKILLED INTO WORK

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1. Focusing on the Developed Countries, with some Extensions

We must make a necessary premise in order to define the limits of the issue. In underdeveloped countries, the problems facing young people and unskilled workers are, of course, linked to more general problems of economic and social development. In contrast, these problems are a specific issue in developed countries. It is precisely the difficulties encountered by youths and unskilled workers in today's labour market that underscore some negative aspects of the economy in developed countries, which widespread affluence is nevertheless unable to solve.

However, in an increasingly global economy, even the labour market problems of developed countries are not completely independent of events in underdeveloped ones, especially if we focus on young people and unskilled workers. In fact, wealthy nations have always "imported" a young labour force from the poorer countries, inserting them in the lowest rungs of the job ladder. Currently, the developed countries are feeling the effects of past immigration: second-generation immigrant youths and ethnic minorities constitute one of the more pressing social problems in these countries. But new migratory movements are ongoing, and other youths, from poor countries, fill the rich nations' demand for unskilled, poorly-paid labour, and working conditions have worsened, too. As the jobs these new immigrants do are "low-profile" ones, the countries of destination tend to deny their existence and close their frontiers, attributing the new migratory flows solely to a push-effect from the poverty of their countries of origin. This leaves the new immigrants only the underground economy, which

exerts a powerful attraction on those who do not manage to obtain the proper documentation to enter the rich countries.¹

When we speak of the problems young people and unskilled workers face in finding work in developed countries, we cannot consider only those who have been living in these countries for many generations. Nor can we overlook, unfortunately, the sharp differences in social integration and ethnic origins, although this complicates the issue and makes it more difficult to propose economic solutions that are socially acceptable.

2. *Youths and Unskilled Workers in a Critical Situation*

In all the developed countries except Germany, young people have higher (sometimes much higher) rates of unemployment than prime aged people. In countries like Italy and Spain there are enormous differences in the unemployment rates for different age classes. In addition, when they do work, young people have fixed term jobs or occasional activities much more frequently than is the case for prime aged people. These differences hold true for both genders, but if we compare the same age groups, women are always worse off than men (except with regard to the risk of being unemployed in Great Britain).²

As far as the risk of being unemployed according to level of education is concerned,³ there is an important distinction in Europe between finding first jobs at the entry into the labour market, which concern young people, and retaining jobs afterwards, which concerns prime aged and elderly workers. Among the latter, the poorly educated are at a considerable disadvantage. Among prime aged and elderly workers, the well educated run a very low risk of unemployment, even when the level of unemployment among their poorly educated counterparts is relatively high. Instead, among

¹ This is actually the case also for high unemployment countries: see E. Reyneri, 'The Role of the Underground Economy in Irregular Migration to Italy: Cause or Effect?', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 24, No. 2, (April 1998).

² E. Reyneri, 'Unemployment Patterns in the European Countries: a Comparative View', *DML on-line*, n. 1/1999 (www.lex.unict.it/dml-online).

³ The distinction between well and poorly educated people is only rough, without any reference to specific levels of education, because the relationship between those levels and the occupational ladder is changing over time and can be different from country to country. However, a strict relationship between educational levels and the occupational ladder does exist in all countries. Thus we can make reference to a general and relative concept of differences between well and poorly educated persons, although in different countries those differences may have largely dissimilar characteristics.

the young, the differences are less sharp, and in some countries, such as those of Southern Europe, the gap is minimal.⁴

We can, therefore, affirm that well educated prime aged people risk losing their job much less frequently than poorly educated ones, whereas young people have more or less the same difficulty in finding an entry-level position, regardless of their level of education. This is true for Europe, whereas in the U.S.A. well-educated youths are at a considerable advantage in comparison with their poorly educated counterparts. However, in the case of Europe, it may be that the statistics showing that well educated youths have almost the same difficulty in locating an entry-level job may not reflect the true state of affairs. Almost no country provides unemployment benefits for those looking for their first job, but well-educated youths are often able to wait for a job opportunity that is more suited to their professional aspirations, thanks to the support of their families, while this is not the case for poorly educated youths, who usually belong to the lower socio-economic classes. On the contrary, in the United States (as in the most similar European country, Great Britain) well-educated young people tend to compete with their less educated counterparts for unskilled jobs, thus shortening the waiting time before their first job, to the disadvantage of the less educated. This "displacement" effect is rarer in continental Europe, where every job has a clear place in the social status hierarchy, as well as on the pay scale and in the professional ranks, which are the only distinctions between jobs in Anglo-Saxon societies.⁵

The root cause of this difference lies in the different functioning of the respective labour markets. In countries where a worker is likely to improve his job status over time, the temporary nature of the various "rungs" on the career ladder does not allow each level to "crystallise" into a corresponding social status. Instead, the exact opposite occurs in countries where upward occupational mobility is relatively unusual and a worker's first job is often at the same level as his last, fixing his social status for a relatively long period. The situation of poorly educated youths is poor in both cases, in the short and long term. In fact, on the one hand, the "displacement" effect cuts into the jobs available to poorly educated youths, on the other the lack of upward job mobility reveals a segmented market, where unskilled, poorly educated workers are destined to remain at the lowest rungs of the career ladder for their entire working lives.

Therefore, better educated people have problems of insertion in the regular labour market only at the entry-level stage, when they may have to

⁴ E. Reyneri, *op. cit.*

⁵ Ph. D'Iribarne, *Le Chomage Paradoxale* (Paris, Puf, 1990).

wait for extended periods for a position that corresponds to their social ambitions and professional goals, or perhaps because they temporarily carry out relatively low skilled jobs. But in the reasonable future it is highly likely that they will obtain a qualified position and subsequently hold on to it. They too, however, are subject to three new problems which, as I shall specify later, are affecting the entire labour market in the developed nations: the casualisation of jobs, the use of personal relationships to find work and the risk for workers that they will commit their whole personality either to the firms' organisation or to customers.

On the contrary, we see a strikingly worse situation for poorly educated youths, or for those who, having completed their higher education, are subject to a pervasive discrimination that blocks their access to the higher level jobs. I am referring to young immigrants or the children of immigrants, and to ethnic minorities in general. In developed countries, the poorly educated have far more formal schooling and professional training than their counterparts in the past, but they continue to occupy the lowest rungs of the educational scale in a society that calls for greater and greater general and versatile skills. Their weakness is exacerbated by the fact that those at the lowest educational levels, for the most part, also lack sufficient personal resources, and they are well aware of this, because the educational system is less socially exclusive than in the past, and it is based on a meritocratic approach. This exposes them to a greater risk of social and occupational exclusion, like their older poorly educated fellows who face enormous difficulty in finding another job, if they lose their job and are unable to obtain pre-retirement benefits because technological progress has made their old working skills obsolete.

Among recently arrived immigrants, a sizeable number have considerable schooling, as they come from the élite youth of the poor countries, attracted by the lifestyle of the western metropolis. But they, too, are excluded from the upper job brackets because they often lack documents or they are still scarcely integrated in the receiving society. Nevertheless, as long as their situation remains precarious and they compare their life to the one they would be leading in their home country, the new situation is often seen as an improvement, at least financially.

This is certainly not the case for young second-generation immigrants or members of ethnic minorities. Whether they have been penalized by the educational system or have been able to acquire a good level of education, these youths have higher professional and social ambitions than their parents, but, paradoxically, they are often unable to reach the same level because the jobs their parents hold have been eliminated by the de-industrialization process. This points to a broader issue.

3. *The Trade-off between Unskilled and Permanent Occupations in the Affluent Industrial Society*

Even in modern industrial societies, those which developed rapidly after the end of WW II, peaking in the mid '70s, unskilled youths, who were present in far greater numbers, could only hope to get the lowest level manual jobs, but these had some small advantages. To those who came from the perennial uncertainty of agricultural jobs, construction or micro-industries and artisan workshops, a lifetime contract job in assembly-line plants of large companies had its attractions. Being employed by a large firm, even as an unskilled blue-collar worker, was a step up, socially, confirmed by improved living conditions, which counter-balanced the monotonous nature of the job itself and the non-existent possibility of moving up the job ladder. Furthermore, in large factories and in the working-class neighbourhoods, the constant contact and common situation led to significant forms of social cohesion and a sense of belonging to a community.

For some time now, this trade-off between unskilled work and a permanent job, with an associated good social status, has no longer been available. The large manufacturing firms have closed down, or have been dramatically restructured: the great numbers of relatively unskilled workers have been replaced by far smaller numbers of technicians, white-collar workers and skilled blue-collar workers. In the developed countries, unskilled jobs remain only in the small manufacturing firms, which provide neither lifetime employment nor the corresponding social status, except in some special areas (for example, Italian industrial districts), where near full employment provides job security and the possibility of moving up the career ladder for those willing to take the risk, giving them the opportunity to become self-employed sub-contractors.

The current demand for unskilled labour has not diminished, but now it comes from the service sector instead of manufacturing, and there is no discernible compensation associated with it. Instead, there is a serious risk that job insecurity, stigmatisation and social exclusion will go along with a lack of skills and a lack of meaningful content in the work.

4. *The New Opportunities for Jobs: from which Service Sectors?*

In almost every advanced country most of the employment growth in the last twenty-five years has come from services: from business services and even more so from personal and household services (health care, education, safety, entertainment, the retail trade, catering, house maintenance,

appliance repair, etc.).⁶ The scenario in the advanced countries should already be clear: to industry at large (including business services) goes the task of creating growth and wealth, to the other services that of creating employment.

Employment growth in personal services depends on the approach taken by a society to three main problems: how to guarantee safety and social order, how to keep the members of the society healthy and, lastly, how to reproduce the culture of a society, i.e. its lifestyle and knowledge. These social reproduction functions can be carried out by almost every member in the society, inside families or communities, or they can be "specialised", that is they can be carried out by certain people as a paid job. Thus, the trend of labour demand in personal services does not depend on the needs of social reproduction functions only, but also on how much these functions are performed by the users themselves and how much by specialised structures (either firms or public agencies).⁷

The greater complexity of modern societies increases the need for knowledge, regulation and, unfortunately, for security. Furthermore, both the greater number of working women and the ageing of the population increase care needs for children and elderly people. Apart from household structure (single person households or working women resorting less to self-service), which alternative is chosen between services, either offered by the state or privately, and self-service, depends on how daily life is organised: let us take, for example, fast food (whose development is tied to the metropolitan way of life), and the problem of urban waste and personal safety. Lastly, state policies should also be considered. High levels of public spending, which favour the offer of collective services, obviously create employment in social services, while, if money transfers to households prevail or if public spending is low, there is a greater trend either towards self-service or private customer services.⁸

Combining the alternative of personal services versus self-service economy and that between the service suppliers, which can be private or public, we have three possible cases: (a) a heavy tax load and extensive public serv-

⁶ Leaving the traditional economic point of view behind, even vehicle and appliance repair workshops, and house maintenance, can be considered "services" which are needed to improve the quality of life and to reproduce a society. Furthermore, just as in personal services proper, these sectors are not internationally traded ones and their consumers are households. Both sectors, finally, are little interested in technological innovation, so they have a high proportion of unskilled labour and stagnant work productivity: another aspect common to most personal services.

⁷ J.I. Gershuny, *After Industrial Society? The Emerging Self-service Economy* (London, Macmillan, 1987), M. Paci, *Il Mutamento della Struttura Sociale in Italia* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1992).

⁸ G. Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990).

ices; (b) a middle to high tax load and money transfers to households more than social services; (c) a low tax load and services supplied largely by the private sector. The first case can be found in Sweden and the third in the U.S. and Japan, while the second one is typical of almost all European countries, although Germany is closer to Sweden and Great Britain to the U.S. This typology is important because of its impact on the skill structure of employment in personal services.

While in industrial and business services work productivity is growing at rapid rates, in most other services productivity, at least till now, has remained at low levels, especially if the aim is to offer a high quality service to the consumer. Stagnant productivity and labour intensive activities, however, are the only common features, since among those employed in these activities there are huge differences concerning professional qualification, wages, social prestige and working conditions. Already at work in industrial production, the tendency to polarise occupational structures is even more pronounced in services, especially if we also consider underground employment.

In fact, social services (education, health care and welfare) are the sectors that employ the lowest proportion of unskilled workers, apart from business services, while the percentage is much higher in consumer-oriented private services (the retail trade, catering, laundering, housekeeping, etc.). Thus, the overall labour market is proportionately more skilled, on the average, in countries where there are more social service jobs, in comparison with those with greater employment in the private services, although there are a sizeable number of highly skilled private service jobs, too. Moreover, in social services unskilled workers enjoy job security and part-time work very widespread among women and to some extent also among young people, is regulated fairly insofar as possible. This is not the case for those working in private services, as we shall see. In countries with low tax burdens, the labour cost is also reduced by lower social security payments, so the growth of employment in private services can be explained by low labour costs, besides the wide availability of unqualified female and ethnic labour. This makes it unnecessary to further lower the cost of labour by employing unregistered workers.

Unregistered employment is, instead, common in those countries where a medium to high level of public spending is more oriented towards money transfers to households than towards social services. As the high cost of labour handicaps private services paid at union rates, people have no alternative to self-producing personal services inside the households or buying them from unregistered workers in order to save on the social contributions and taxes of a regular labour contract. This is clearly the worst solution for unskilled service workers, depriving them of any rights and subjecting them to a wide range of risks.

5. *Increasing Employment in Low Level Services to Face the Growth in Female Labour Supply: Europe vs. the United States*

Even in European countries where unemployment has increased dramatically, employment has not decreased in the last twenty-five years. The increase of unemployment is actually due to the large growth in the labour supply caused by steadily increasing female activity rates. The growth in services (especially private community, social and personal services) and in the retail trade is similar to what has happened in the same years in the U.S., if the relative populations are considered. Nevertheless, while the trends are similar, the result is different: the employment rate, and especially that of people employed in services, is lower in Europe than in the U.S.⁹

This could be due to a time lag. Once past the industrial society stage, the growth of demand for personal services is largely due to women's participation in paid work, creating at the same time a higher labour supply and demand as well. In the U.S. the growth of female participation in paid work started earlier and grew more slowly than in European countries; hence, the adjustment process between a higher labour supply and a higher demand for personal services, substituting those usually performed inside the households, happened without sudden shocks. If this hypothesis were completely true, it would be enough to wait for a stabilisation of the changes inside the households so that a reduction in female household work could cause a higher demand for personal services, either from the public or the private sector.

This is not the case, however, because the process in Europe not only was quicker than in the U.S. but it also occurred later and in a different economic and institutional context. First, from an economic point of view, during recent years the gap in work productivity between industry and most of the personal services has increased dramatically. Second, from an institutional point of view, wage differentials in Europe are far narrower than in the U.S. and less and less related to productivity differentials (either because of trade union bargaining or legislated minimum wage levels), so that in labour-intensive and low productivity activities, such as personal services, the labour cost is too high and demand too low, leaving needs unsatisfied and favouring self-service.

Therefore, the greater flexibility in wages and working conditions

⁹ A. Glyn, 'The Assessment: Unemployment and Inequality', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, vol. 11, No. 1, (1996); S. Nickell and B. Bell, 'The Collapse in Demand for the Unskilled and Unemployment Across the OECD', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, vol. 11, No. 1, (1996).

(added to a poor income support for job-losers) has allowed the U.S. to employ many people in low productivity and low income jobs, mainly in personal services. These are the so-called "working poor", who are employed and yet cannot escape their condition of poverty. On the contrary, in Europe, wage rigidity and generous unemployment benefits, on the one hand have reduced the demand for poorly qualified and low productivity labour, while, on the other, they have allowed unskilled workers to remain unemployed for long periods.

In most European countries, nevertheless, the story is not over, because we must take the underground economy as well into account. Measuring "black labour", i.e. those paid and legal activities which do not comply with taxation, social security and labour laws, is not an easy task. Yet estimates agree that these activities are increasing, even in countries where they were almost unknown till a short time ago. The great majority of "black workers" are employed in unskilled and low productivity personal and customer services, although many of them are employed by building sub-contractors, small manufacturing firms and in agriculture, too. Thus, the flexibility in wages and working conditions that was not formally achieved because the labour market was strictly regulated by trade unions and/or the state, has been achieved in an informal way.

In the European underground economy we can roughly differentiate three areas. The first one, the highest as far as wages and skill level are concerned, is generally restricted to early retired people and double-jobholders, whose number is supposedly increasing, although surveys devoted to "moonlighting" are still scarce. Local youths largely work in the second area, whose working conditions are worse, although not as poor as in the third one, to which the ethnic minorities and the new immigrants are usually relegated, many of them without the necessary permits. The development of an underground economy is an endogenous phenomenon in European host countries and it cannot be ascribed to illegal immigration. On the contrary, the opportunity to make money without holding a permit of stay is one of the main reasons behind clandestine migration, apart from refugees. Nevertheless, a vast supply of people ready to work in worse conditions than those provided by law and trade unions has provided strong support for the growth of the submerged economy in developed countries.

6. *From an Informalised Labour Market to a "Market for Life"?*

Apart from the underground economy, in recent years the regular labour market in the developed countries has also undergone significant de-

regulation. The parallel processes of downsizing and outsourcing of production tasks have dramatically reduced the importance of large companies and increased the proportion of small and very small firms, where employee turnover is far higher. The temporary, unstable nature of working conditions is further increased by the spread of non-standard working relationships: fixed time contracts, temporary work, part time, sub-contracting, self-employed workers, seasonal work and internships.¹⁰ These forms of regular yet precarious work have almost replaced the traditional, full-time, permanent labour contract for young people and are increasingly common among women of all ages.

Those who believe that increased market flexibility creates jobs may object that jobs that are precarious in theory may not be so in practice. In fact, a worker may have no legal rights with respect to job security but be more or less certain that he will not remain unemployed for long if another job is relatively easy to find, as is the case in economies operating at near full employment. However, if the level of unemployment remains high only some workers will be able to find another job rapidly: those with a relatively "strong" market position, thanks to either their skills or their network of personal contacts, or both. Their career may actually benefit from the different experiences they accumulate through their various positions. This is what is commonly referred to as the professionalisation of the workforce, referring to technicians, skilled workers and professionals.

The scenario is quite different for unskilled workers, who rarely have the opportunity to better themselves professionally or improve their position. For them, a certain amount of uncertainty may be tolerable, economically and psychologically, as long as they are still young. But the initial effect is the delay in starting a family until economic conditions stabilise and permit young workers to face the costs associated with raising children. In the past, unskilled young workers faced the same job insecurities at their entry into the labour market, but then, thanks to the trade-off offered by an affluent industrial society, they achieved a measure of job security sufficient to start a family.

What does the future hold for the unskilled youths who currently hold precarious jobs or, still worse, unregistered jobs? We do not know, because the changing economic landscape makes forecasting difficult, and we cannot draw our data from the experiences of recent generations. In any case, we should not be so worried about the twenty-year-old who is cur-

¹⁰ G. Rodgers and J. Rodgers (eds.), *Les Emplois Précaires dans la Régulation du Marché du Travail. La Croissance du Travail Atypique en l'Europe de l'Ouest* (Genève, Bit).

rently working in a casual job: he is still supported by a family network and is up to the task, psychologically, too. It is his future that is worrying: as he approaches thirty, he will require greater guarantees, both financially and psychologically. Unfortunately, this issue is never raised in the economic debate over flexibility, which ignores the fact that workers experience their relationship to the market differently, according to their social status and gender, their age and their family situation.

In labour markets that are less and less regulated by the state and/or large industry, "strong" workers often benefit from extensive networks of contacts, which allow them to find a new job rapidly. It is proverbial that people look for work in many ways, but find it in one way only, thanks to personal relationships and relatives: "who you know". Survey data confirms this adage. But this is neither an effective nor a fair solution. First of all, these networks, no matter how extensive they may be, are by definition limited. So we are dealing with a *second best* choice, profoundly conditioned by the size of the network. Secondly, not everybody has equal access to the web of relations and the information it transmits. This leads to a new form of discrimination between the well connected and those on the margins. Particularly cut off from adequate information are the weaker brackets of the labour force (the least skilled, the most recently arrived), who have fewer contacts and less experience to rely on.

But this system can prove even more unfair in countries where strong ties prevail over more casual relationships, which give more people access to information about available jobs, and do it more rapidly as well.¹¹ In contrast, strong ties, typically family-based or based on friendships, circulate the same information in a much more restricted environment, but guarantee the reliability and loyalty of the worker in question. This type of recruitment works for both low-skilled workers, whose willingness to work hard is difficult to evaluate in job interviews, but can be guaranteed by someone who knows him well, and many skilled workers, when belonging to certain networks or social groups is important to the success of the tasks involved.

Apart from questions of fairness about a selection process based on inherited rather than acquired characteristics, the personal relationships between demand and supply can facilitate the development of "community-businesses" where employers and employees collaborate in a context of reciprocal consideration. But it can also have less positive effects, when the companies continue to exploit their workers. In these cases, friendships and

¹¹ As it is the case for South European countries: see P. Barbieri, 'Non c'è Rete senza Nodi. Il Ruolo del Capitale Sociale nel Mercato del Lavoro', *Stato e Mercato*, n. 49, (April 1997).

family ties serve to guarantee the worker's submission. Here we can talk about a "market for life", in which not only skills are exchanged, but also a worker's entire personality, all his personal relationships. This is almost always the case for the two lowest brackets of the underground economy, where the network of contacts serve almost exclusively to ensure the employers that the workers will accept irregular working conditions without protesting.

A similar ambiguity also occurs in many jobs in industry and services. The skills that an ever increasing number of workers of all kinds must have include teamwork, participating in achieving objectives above and beyond one's specific tasks, manipulating personal relationships both within the organisation and outside it and the willingness to identify with their job. "Savoir faire" rather than "know how". Apart from those who must "lead" other workers, a sizeable and still growing number of workers must deal with the public or look after the sick, the aged and the young. All these situations also stimulate a community type of social integration. However, if sharp disparities remain in working conditions, status and power, there is a strong risk that the worker will become alienated not only in terms of his job but also with regard to his personality. The risk is clearly greater for unskilled workers, who are threatened with a return to serf status in a service economy.

7. What Form of Participation for Unskilled and Precarious Workers?

All this raises broad questions about worker participation, particularly for those without professional skills, when companies "de-structure" into micro-units which utilise workers with whom there are no full-time, permanent work relationships. These employees have a high rate of turnover and many of them even move back and forth between employee status and freelancing. If they are able to do so, they build a career based on moving from one job to another, so that they cannot form an identity based on their job in the company, but must base it on the professional community or on the local labour market.

For workers it has always been essential to be able to alter not only the conditions in which they work but also the variables that affect their careers and the future of the company, factors which traditionally influence both working conditions and career possibilities. The new state of affairs is that the latter is separate from the former, because it occurs in a different context, the labour market, and in addition, the higher rates of intercompany mobility make this second moment more important than the first. In

modern labour markets, demand and supply are interdependent, so workers have considerable freedom to decide how they will act, within a set of constraints deriving not only from the companies' systems but also from the vast network of social, cultural and political relationships. The outcome of their participation cannot, therefore, be taken for granted, in the same way as in the traditional, company-dominated context. The problems that arise are, however, quite different.

It is important to distinguish between the two moments of participation: the traditional, but temporary, one that occurs within the company and the new, oft-repeated one, when changing jobs in the labour market. In the first, there is a risk of a separation between "internal" and "external" workers in the company. Often, with the consent of the "insiders", the "outsiders" are excluded from any type of participation. Those whose professional skills are strong enough to give them autonomy have no problems with this, but those without high-level skills risk a dangerous exclusion.

The possible forms of participation available pose still greater difficulties to workers in the labour market. Here, the key points are two: training processes, where job skills are acquired and maintained, and employment agencies, which assist in passing workers from one job to another. It is therefore necessary that these new "contingent" workers be able to have an effect on the decisions made concerning job training and employment services. This is not likely because workers are usually isolated in these contexts and, in addition, they are commonly faced with the most frustratingly bureaucratic aspects of their union organisations.

8. *No Jobs, Poor Jobs, Fair Jobs*

In order to combat the high rates of European unemployment, which hit unskilled youths the hardest, the "American" model is often held up as an example to follow. Thanks to greater flexibility in wages and working conditions, it appears to have reduced unemployment sharply, even among the less skilled. The results obtained in this way are, however, well known, so we must decide if it is better, from a social and ethical point of view, to have a class of working poor, with registered, but precarious jobs, or a mix of unemployed, which is more or less assisted, and workers employed by the underground economy. In practice, the gradual de-regulation of European labour markets is moving in the American direction.

Given that the outcome may be a reduction in unemployment and a shrinking of the underground economy, this solution does not provide an exit from the split society, a "two tier" society where the high standard of

living of most people is based on a large underclass of servants. This is not only unacceptable ethically, but unlikely in a European context which, at least till now, has been based on social cohesion, which explains both the considerable support (coming either from the state or families) provided for unemployed people, and the narrow wage ladder aimed at protecting less skilled workers in spite of their low productivity.

It is also unacceptable to wait until the demographic decline reduces the labour supply, and therefore unemployment, even if the demand for workers does not increase. This option ignores the fact that unemployment is also the result of a mismatch between demand and supply and that, whether they wish to or not, the rich, developed nations are unable to stem the tide of immigration from poorer countries. In fact, in an ageing society, the demand for personal services, particularly the less skilled ones, is destined to increase. Faced with a decreasing supply of workers from within its borders, the only option is to attract ever-greater numbers of immigrants willing to work at these jobs. Therefore, the current problems will not go away; only those who have to face them will change: fewer and fewer native youths and more and more immigrants or children of ethnic minorities. There is, instead, a risk of worsening the inequalities, if we add ethnic barriers to the existing economic and social ones, as some countries are already noting.

The key point is that we cannot solve the problem of unemployment among unskilled youths without also facing the problems posed by bad jobs. Both problems must be faced without the illusion that the development of technology and the growth of a de-regulated economy will provide spontaneous solutions. This raises the question of which economic, social and employment policies should be implemented by the state and by the social partners so that all those who wish to carry out a paid job can have a fair job: that is, a job not only fairly paid, but also providing good working conditions, as well as an acceptable social status and a sense of meaning for people's lives.

9. Reducing the Costs of Unskilled Labour and Redistributing Jobs

According to an old proposal, the public budget should take on almost all non-wage costs (taxes and social contributions) for unskilled and low-wage jobs. This way the cost of regular labour would become almost equal to irregular labour, since the "savings" in unregistered work are generally on non-wage labour costs, which in most European countries account for up to 40% of total costs. The impact would be both to create more employment for less qualified workers and "to regularise" a large portion of workers active in the

underground economy. As customers would be able to buy services from regular workers at the same cost as from irregular ones, they should be discouraged from using irregular labour. The benefits of satisfying many needs with the self-service economy should decrease, too, and labour demand for services would increase. Finally, the pull effect on illegal immigration would weaken and prospects for legal migratory inflows would open up.

Another possible solution that has been hotly debated is to re-distribute work by reducing working hours for all full-time workers and/or favouring part-time employment, not just for women, but also for young people and older workers of both genders. This proposal is costly not for the state budget, as the previous one was, but for the budget of workers, who would take home less in salaries. However a re-distribution is inevitable when the economy spontaneously produces a strong polarisation in earnings and wealth. The problem is the achievement of a social and political consensus for a kind of solidarity that may appear increasingly costly and aimed at people of different cultural origins, as inevitably happens in a fragmented and global society.

Apart from the above difficulties, reduced working hours and, above all, part-time work may have undesirable effects. More leisure time might cause a contrasting effect, since it favours the use of many services, but it also makes self-service easier and may favour moonlighting, as well. Furthermore, if there is no financial compensation, the poorest families may become even more excluded, as is shown by the high unemployment rates among immigrants in the country that has almost totally eliminated domestic unemployment, thanks to the enormous diffusion of part-time and part wage jobs. Finally, re-distributing working hours does not solve the problem of quality of work for the unskilled jobs and might even worsen the situation.

Even where they are quite common, jobs involving shorter hours discriminate against those who hold them, blocking them from increasing their professional skills and advancing in their careers. This situation is balanced by the spread of a strictly utilitarian attitude towards work, so that the worker does not suffer unduly. However, we must ask ourselves whether this attitude, which reduces work to a simple source of income, is congruent with man's inclinations. The quality of the work performed is also likely to suffer. In fact, in services to a person or to a family, even in those that seem to require the least skills, the worker's commitment is essential.

10. *A Mix of Labour and Social Policies*

The proposals indicated above, which involve solely the economic aspects, are therefore necessary, in large part, although not sufficient in themselves. On the other hand, it is unlikely that unskilled work in services

in general will be re-evaluated, as was attempted, largely unsuccessfully, for low-skilled manufacturing workers before automation and computerisation radically changed the face of those industries. Instead, economic measures must be coupled with social policies and labour legislation aimed at changing the situation of unskilled workers, particularly in the service sector.

The first measure is to make those jobs so transitory as to favour upward job mobility. Increasing occupational mobility prospects may make unskilled and low social status jobs acceptable even for young people who would like have a fair degree of work commitment. In the long run, it will be necessary to emphasise, as regards wages and social status, a basic factor for quality in personal services: the ability to make relations with users "warm", which means relations not only characterised by a total availability, but also by the commitment to the needs to be satisfied. This means re-evaluating skills wrongly considered innate rather than professional, such as relational ones, which can be acquired along with a higher overall cultural level.

High rates of job mobility, even if aimed at improving one's position, necessarily involve insecurity, especially at first, and this would be very difficult to alter. What can be done is to legislatively strengthen the position of workers who are not covered by unemployment benefits. A basic level of financial security can be guaranteed by minimum income payments, freed from the past constraints relating to the most recent job held, which was often not held for a period long enough to qualify for traditional unemployment benefits. Furthermore, job-training courses can provide a new type of guarantee, which is *de facto* rather than formal. These should, however, be different from the usual training courses, which are usually held within a company. In fact, it will be especially difficult to persuade companies to participate: since stable relationships with workers will not be the rule, companies would be even less prone to invest in training. Finally, the networks of relationships, or more directly, the worker's ability to find a new job to replace the one he has lost, could also be affected. Reducing waiting times to the minimum is another way of protecting workers and is just as effective as guaranteeing benefits.

Yet for many services it is possible, at least partly, to forget the market point of view, thanks to the "third sector": from associations to co-operatives. Although it is a mistake to think that these structures can work without being supported by public spending, their advantage should be not only greater flexibility and the fact that they would offer transitory jobs, but also the commitment of the workers themselves. The commitment, even a limited one, in the management and in the "assistance and care" field should make the relationship with the consumer, individual or household, more "personal", and it should improve the quality of service as well as favouring a meaningful sense of work for the workers themselves.

PART II
GLOBALIZATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

THE ECONOMICS OF GLOBALIZATION: PROBLEMS AND POLICY RESPONSES

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Summary

This paper explores the economic process known as globalization. This process extends to the international arena many of the processes that have driven the formation of unified national economies. Globalization is driven by the market forces of profit maximization, cross-country price arbitrage, and technological and organizational innovation. It is also driven by policy initiatives that have reduced barriers to international movement of goods and financial capital. Globalization is changing the economic environment in a manner that shifts the balance of power away from national governments and labor toward business, and makes the conduct of autonomous national economic policy more difficult. It is also changing the pattern of incentives facing private actors in a manner that resembles the infamous prisoners's dilemma. This promotes socially sub-optimal outcomes. Fixing this problem requires a range of policy interventions that involve coordinated international agreement and remove the private incentive to make socially sub-optimal choices. These interventions include coordinated cross-country macroeconomic policy, new rules for international financial markets, and the adoption and enforcement of core labor standards.

I. GLOBALIZATION AND THE RELEVANCE OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON LABOR

Nations and communities around the world are today confronting the process of globalization. This process refers to the creation of a unified global economy through the breaking down of barriers between national economies. Globalization is creating both new opportunities and problems. The opportunities include the possibility of raising global economic productivity and advancing economic development in under-developed countries, thereby raising standards of living around the world. The dangers

include the introduction of new sources of economic instability, and a shift in the relative bargaining power of labor and capital that risks lowering wage incomes for the benefit of profit. These dangers have been brutally illustrated by the suffering caused by east Asia's economic crisis, and by the subsequent spread of the crisis to Russia and Brazil.

The concerns raised by globalization resonate deeply with the long history of Catholic social teaching on labor.¹ This teaching emphasizes the concept of a "right to work" at a "just wage", with work being such that it is consistent with "human dignity" and contributes to "fulfillment as a human being". Globalization has unleashed forces that potentially impinge negatively on every dimension of this teaching. Thus, increased international integration has unleashed forces of wage competition which have contributed to lowering wages in industrialized countries, and this threatens the payment of just wages. It has also facilitated companies taking advantage of retrograde employment conditions in countries where workers are denied rights of free association and collective bargaining, thereby threatening the realization of human dignity through work. Finally, international financial integration has unleashed new forces of economic instability that have undermined the ability to achieve and sustain full employment, and this threatens the notion of a right to work.

How to make Catholic social teaching on labor an economic reality is a major task. To this end, the Church has acknowledged a need for dialogue with the social sciences. In participating in this dialogue, economists are implicitly asked to adopt an instrumentalist approach whereby their understanding can be used to help make Catholic teaching a concrete reality. It is in this spirit that the current paper has been written. Thus, the paper analyzes the economic foundation of globalization, and proposes a series of policy responses designed to preserve the opportunities of globalization while curbing the threats.

II. THE ORIGINS OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization refers to the increased international integration of national goods, financial, and labor markets. This process of integration is being driven by firms' competitive search for new markets and by the law of market arbitrage which has profit maximizing firms equalizing the price of similar goods and services across markets.

¹ The history of Catholic social teaching on labor is surveyed by Schasching (1998).

In many regards, globalization represents a logical extension of the processes that have driven domestic economic development. Thus, the formation of a unified national market in 19th century America was also driven by the search for new markets and the law of market arbitrage. Similarly, the emergence of wage competition between the U.S. economy's "sun" and "rust" belts in the 1970s, has parallels with wage competition between developing and industrialized countries today. However, globalization transcends national boundaries, whereas earlier periods of economic integration tended to take place within the context of the national unit.

The process of globalization is girded by technological and organizational innovations that enhance the mobility of capital, thereby allowing business to operate on a global scale. These innovations are the product of "Schumpeterian" market forces that reflect the workings of a dynamic capitalist economy. Business seeks to maximize and increase profits, and it does so through technological and organizational innovation. Firms can gain a competitive advantage over rival firms by capturing a greater share of the existing market, or they can create a new market that destroys the old. They can also innovate in ways that redistribute income from labor to capital. This latter form of innovation amounts to re-slicing the economic pie rather than increasing it. Both forms of innovation are visible in the process of globalization. Thus, firms use the global economy both to lower their costs to gain competitive advantage over rivals, and they also use the threat of international job relocation to win wage concessions from domestic labor.

Globalization has also been fostered by economic policy which has removed barriers to international trade, investment, and financial flows. Though these policies appear to be exogenous changes, they can also be viewed as the endogenous outcome of corporate "political" innovation. Just as business has an incentive to innovate with regard to products, technique, and location of production, so too it has an incentive to capture government policy so as to change existing laws and regulations to its competitive advantage. Such political innovation is clearly evident in business' advocacy of the North American Free Trade Agreement, "fast track" trade negotiating authority, and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

Over the last decade, globalization has become an increasingly contested matter. The impulse behind this new found contested status is the spreading realization that globalization creates both winners and losers, that in many instances the losers are large in number, and that the winners seldom compensate the losers. On the positive side, globalization has increased international goods market competition, thereby lowering consumer prices, increasing consumer choice, and increasing productive efficiency. The integration of financial markets has also facilitated the provision

of financing to developing countries, which has opened the potential for them to grow faster. On the negative side, it has contributed to the transfer of U.S. manufacturing jobs to developing countries, wage stagnation, and the worsening of income inequality. It has also promoted the emergence of extreme financial instability in the international economy.

The fact that globalization brings both benefits and costs has made it a contested issue. Almost all agree that the process of globalization cannot be stopped, and nor is it desirable to do so. The real debate is about the balance of benefits and costs under the existing process, and the policy adjustments needed to enhance the benefits and reduce the costs. One view – call it the optimists' view – maintains that the benefits clearly outweigh the costs under existing arrangements, and that these benefits would be even larger if national economies were more open and markets more flexible. A second view – call it the pessimists' view – sees the process of globalization as problematic, with the balance of benefits and costs more finely balanced. Moreover, the costs are large, and could get larger as globalization matures. What is needed is a change in the rules and institutions of the international economy that would alter existing patterns of incentives, thereby discouraging economic actions that generate costs and promoting actions that bring benefits.

III. A VIEW FROM THE OPTIMISTS: GLOBALIZATION AS PERFECTION OF THE MARKET PROCESS

The optimists' position on globalization is eloquently stated by Tietmeyer (1998). For Tietmeyer, the existing process of globalization represents a positive and largely unproblematic development. The opening of national capital markets and their integration into the international financial system ensures that scarce capital is allocated to its globally most productive use, and this improved allocation raises global welfare. The globalization of goods markets, brought about by increased international trade, is also unproblematic. Countries are induced to specialize in the production of those goods and services in which they have comparative advantage, so that resources are used more efficiently. At the same time, there is never a shortage of demand because the act of production always ensures that sufficient income is forthcoming to buy whatever is produced.

Though much less affected than goods and financial markets, globalization is also largely unproblematic for labor markets. This is because the forces of competition guard against exploitation and ensure that workers are paid their worth. If there is a problem with unemployment, then it is to be found in imperfections and rigidities within labor markets. These result from exces-

sive minimum wages, laws granting workers excessive job protections, trade unions that price workers out of jobs, and from the immobility of workers who refuse to move where the jobs are. To the extent that globalization competes away these imperfections and rigidities, it is even more beneficial.

IV. A VIEW FROM THE PESSIMISTS: GLOBALIZATION AND THE PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC LEAKINESS²

An alternative view of globalization casts the process in terms of the creation of a “leaky” economic environment in which national economies are no longer sealed off from one and other (Palley, 1998). This new environment is marked by a pattern of incentives that can give rise to bad economic outcomes, as well as making it difficult to implement effective policy responses. Three different types of leakiness can be identified:

(1) *Macroeconomic leakiness* refers to the tendency for aggregate demand to leak out of national economies owing to a larger propensity to import. It is the result of increased international trade which has changed patterns of spending. The increase in macroeconomic leakiness is captured in table 1 which shows the degree of country “openness” as measured by the ratio of imports plus exports to total gross domestic product. A measure of 0 corresponds to a totally closed economy which has no imports or exports. Economic openness has increased almost everywhere, and in the U.S. it has increased 152% over the last thirty years.³

(2) *Microeconomic leakiness* refers to the tendency for jobs to leak out of an economy if labor markets are not sufficiently flexible, labor costs are too high relative to other countries, or profit taxes are relatively unfavorable. This form of leakiness has greatly increased owing to greater mobility of production, itself the product of reduced transportation costs and changed technologies that have facilitated new structures of production. Costs of transporting goods have fallen dramatically. In the 1960s, the cost of sea freight was 5-10% of the value of goods: today, it is around 1.5%. Costs of foreign production have fallen because tariff barriers have been reduced, thereby

² This section is based on the chapter titled ‘Structural Keynesianism and Globalization’ in Palley (1998).

³ For Europe as a whole, the degree of openness is similar to that of the U.S. Individual European countries engage in significant intra-European trade which raises European country levels of openness. Once these intra-European trade flows are netted out, European openness reduces to U.S., levels.

TABLE 1 - Openness of OECD countries, 1966-1995. Openness = [Exports + Imports]/GDP.

	1966	1995	Change 1966-1995
United States	9.9%	23.6%	138%
Canada	39.1%	72.3%	95%
Japan	19.4%	16.8%*	-13%
Germany	51.1%+	63.4%*	24%
United Kingdom	37.8%	57.3%	52%
France	25.0%	44.5%	78%
Italy	28.1%	43.2%*	54%
Austria	51.4%	76.2%	48%
Belgium	73.5%	137.2%*	87%
Denmark	58.5%	63.3%	8%
Finland	41.3%	67.5%	63%
Netherlands	89.8%	100.0%	11%
Norway	83.2%	70.6%	-15%
Portugal	54.1%	61.0%*	13%
Spain	20.2%	47.3%	134%
Sweden	43.8%	75.3%	72%
Switzerland	58.7%	66.9%	14%
G-7	30.1%	45.9%	53%
Europe	51.2%	69.6%	36%

Source: Author's calculations using IMF statistics. G-7 and Europe computed using population weights. * = 1994 data.

making it less costly to produce goods in one country and sell them in another. Costs of coordinating production in different locations have also fallen owing to improved communication and production technologies. Thus, whereas factories used to be marked by management's offices sitting directly above and looking out over the factory floor, today, management can be located in New York while production takes place in Guangdong, China.

(3) *Financial leakiness* refers to the increased international mobility of financial capital. Innovations in electronic communications and money

transfer, combined with the abolition of capital controls, have made it easier to shift money between countries. As a result, financial capital now moves in response to small differences in cross-country interest rates and perceived future rates of return, and to differences in national economic policies and inflation rates.

These three forms of leakiness have changed significantly the economic structure and the pattern of incentives facing business. They have also made the conduct of domestic economic stabilization policy more problematic, as well as creating perverse incentives for policy makers to follow contractionary policies. The new pattern of incentives has similarities with the prisoner's dilemma. The market sends signals encouraging a particular type of behavior, and when one market participant adopts such behavior they are made better off: however, when all adopt the behavior, all are made worse off.

Macroeconomic leakiness

Increased international trade means that exports and imports now constitute a larger share of GDP. This has numerous important implications. First, the increased reliance on exports as a source of aggregate demand (AD) means that countries are more exposed to economic shocks originating in other countries. This is visible in the manner in which east Asia's recession has impacted U.S. manufacturing employment.

Second, increased reliance on imported goods results in a greater leakage of demand out of national economies. Consequently, expansionary fiscal policy is less effective in stimulating domestic economic activity and has a larger negative effect on the trade balance. As is discussed below, this in combination with increased financial leakiness, sets up an incentive for policy makers to shift toward less expansionary policies.

Third, with imports constituting a larger share of spending, imports also constitute a larger share of the consumer price index. Domestic inflation is therefore more subject to the vagaries of foreign inflation and movements in the exchange rate. In 1998, the U.S. inflation rate fell from 2.7% to 1.5% despite a twenty five year low unemployment rate of 4.5%. This inflation performance significantly reflected the lower price of imports resulting from a strong dollar and severe recession in east Asia. However, just as inflation can now fall when unemployment is low, so too it may rise in future when unemployment is high, thereby presenting a significant policy dilemma.

Exposure to foreign inflation and exchange rates has been further exacerbated by the stance of anti-trust policy which has allowed greater concentration of industry on the grounds that markets are now global in scope. However, the price discipline of foreign competition depends on

exchange rates, and a weakening of the dollar could result in increased monopoly pricing power for domestic producers.

Microeconomic leakiness

Increased mobility of production has increased the options available to business, and this has increased the bargaining power of firms *vis-à-vis* both labor and government. This increased bargaining power has in turn been used to win concessions from both labor and government. The result has been to shift the distribution of income in favor of profits over wages, and to shift the burden of taxes away from capital income on to wage income.

The impact of changed bargaining power on wages and the distribution of income is formally examined in the appendix using a Kaleckian mark-up pricing model. The effects of increased microeconomic leakiness operate through three different channels. The increased threat of job transfer lowers both the real wage and the wage share of income. The presence of such an effect has been documented by Bronfenbrenner (1996) who shows that after the enactment of NAFTA, American firms increased their use of the threat of relocation to Mexico to win wage and benefit concessions. The foreign price competition effect raises both the real wage and wage share. It does so by giving consumers additional choice options in goods markets, thereby reducing domestic producers' monopoly power and lowering prices. Finally, the foreign competition production efficiency effect also raises both the real wage and wage share, with enhanced foreign competition prompting domestic firms to seek out more efficient production techniques and eliminate Leibenstein (1978) X-inefficiencies.

Such an analysis shows how increased microeconomic leakiness brings both benefits and costs. The benefits are associated with the introduction of more competition in goods markets which lowers prices and stimulates productivity and quality improvements, while the costs are associated with the ability of firms to place domestic wages in competition with foreign wages. Globalization optimists tend to emphasize the former, whereas pessimists emphasize the latter.⁴

Increased mobility of production has also had negative effects on government's ability to tax capital. Increased mobility gives capital the option

⁴ The above analysis is aggregate in nature. In practice, the extent of product versus wage competition likely differs according to the countries one trades with, as well as differing by sector. Trade between developed countries likely tends to generate greater price competition and efficiency gains, whereas trade between developed and developing countries likely has a stronger wage competition dimension.

to exit, taking with it jobs. Capital can therefore use this threat to win tax concessions, and government is also given an incentive to pursue policies that lower taxes on capital with the hope of becoming relatively more attractive to business.

There is solid evidence that such a process is underway. Rodrik (1996) documents the decline since the early 1980s of tax rates on capital relative to labor in France, the U.S., the U.K., and Germany. Palley (1998) details how European governments and state governments in the U.S. have engaged in tax auctions to attract new investment. These auctions involve giving tax relief to companies in return for new investment. The key feature is that business plays one government off against another, thereby engaging them in a tax relief bidding war.

Such tax competition has significant macroeconomic and distributional effects. The governments budget constraint is given by

$$(1) \quad D = G - T_W - T_K$$

where D = budget deficit/surplus G = government spending

T_W = taxes on labor incomes T_K = taxes on capital incomes

Tax competition drives down T_K . If government is constrained in its ability to deficit finance, then spending (G) must decrease or taxes on wages (T_W) increase. If T_W increases, then capital's ability to move results in a shifting of tax burdens that lowers after tax wages and worsens the distribution of income. Alternatively, government can cut down on its provision of services. However, both reduced G and increased T_W have deflationary macroeconomic consequences. Reduced government spending reduces aggregate demand, while lower wages depress household consumption demand.⁵

Analytically, tax competition corresponds to a prisoner's dilemma. It is illustrated in figure 1.

Countries can choose either to hold capital taxes at existing levels or to lower them. If one country lowers and the other holds, then it gains investment from the other country and is made better off, while the country that holds loses investment and is made worse off. The optimal outcome is if both hold, as tax revenues are maintained and neither country loses investment. The sub-optimal outcome is when both lower, as both lose tax rev-

⁵ The net effect of such tax shifting depends on the relative marginal propensities to consume out of wage and profit income. Palley (1997a) provides several theoretical arguments as to why the MPC out of wage income likely exceeds that out of profit income.

		Country A	
		Hold the line on taxes	Cut taxes
Country B	Hold the line on taxes	A. Tax harmonization	B.
	Cut taxes	C.	D. Tax Competition

Figure 1. The tax competition as an example of prisoner's dilemma.

venues and neither gains investment from the other. Unfortunately, the structure of incentives is such that each country has a private incentive to lower, thereby realizing the sub-optimal equilibrium.

Microeconomic leakiness also promotes a tendency which can be termed "systems competition".⁶ Economies are complex social systems that embody different forms of labor market governance and social protection. Examples of difference include the scope of employee rights and employment protections, work place safety regulation, environmental protection legislation, and requirements on firms to provide health and pension benefits. These system differences significantly impact upon costs of production, and they can confer a competitive disadvantage on firms in international markets. To stay competitive, firms in countries with higher systems costs will try to lower costs, and this can unleash pressures for the undoing of arrangements that provide social protections. Capital will either tend to exit so as to avoid meeting requirements, or it will blame such requirements for loss of jobs in the hope of generating political momentum for their repeal. This possibility is evidenced in Europe where there is much debate over the viability of the European model of social protection. Lastly, the proclivity toward systems competition rises as the degree of economic openness increases because gaining international cost advantage becomes ever more important. This indicates how different types of leakiness may interact synergistically.

⁶ The notion of systems competition is introduced in Palley (1998a).

As with tax competition, systems competition also partakes of the prisoner's dilemma. Each country has an incentive to try and attract capital and win a competitive advantage in international markets by lowering standards. This is the hallmark of the "race to the bottom".

*Financial leakiness*⁷

The third form of leakiness is financial leakiness. It too has been driven by technological innovations and policy changes. Improvements in electronic communications and money transfer technologies have greatly lowered the cost of transferring funds between countries, which has hugely increased the extent of such transfers. Elimination of official controls on capital flows between countries has also increased the extent of transfers. Thus, according to the Bank of International Settlements, the ratio of foreign exchange (FX) trading to world trade was 10:1 in 1980; by 1992 it was 50:1, and by 1995 it was 70:1.

This expansion of international financial flows has increased the risk of financial instability and reduced the scope for economic policy autonomy. The increased risk of instability arises because of greater speculation in capital markets. Sudden changes in portfolio preferences can cause abrupt changes in asset prices. A loss of investor confidence in one country can cause a capital outflow, and as investors sell off their holdings they drive up interest rates while their currency sales drive the exchange rate down. Such shifts are particularly problematic if a country is a net foreign debtor whose debts are denominated in foreign currency. In this case, the fall in the exchange rate increases the burden of foreign debt service.

Moreover, it is not just the country from which investors are exiting that suffers. The exchange rate rises in countries experiencing capital inflows, and this can profoundly affect their competitiveness in international goods markets. Consequently, employment in trade related sectors may be severely impacted despite no change in factory floor productivity.

Keynes (1936) described speculation through a metaphor whereby financial investing was akin to the newspaper beauty contest in which contestants picked the person they thought other contestants thought the most beautiful, rather than the person they truly thought the most beautiful. The same may hold in stock markets where the trick is to buy stock that others are buying rather than the stock of the soundest company. The theory of

⁷ The problems of financial leakiness and possible solutions are examined in detail in Palley (1998c).

rational asset price bubbles explains how asset price bubbles can be self-sustaining through expectations that become self-fulfilling. De Long *et al.* (1990) explain how “noise” traders, who trade randomly and disrupt market signals, can survive in the long run: all that is needed is that noise traders be less risk averse than “fundamentals” traders and therefore purchase assets with slightly higher expected returns. The problems of speculation are compounded by herd behavior that is rooted in rational maximizing behavior. Banerjee (1992) presents a model of herd behavior in which the actions of others are believed to convey information that is valuable in one’s own private decision making, and this results in “follow the leader” behavior. Palley (1995) presents an alternative “safety in numbers” model of herd behavior whereby managers have an incentive to behave like other managers to avoid the risk of being singled out for bad performance. All that is needed is some degree of risk aversion and that pay be based on relative performance.

These microeconomic accounts of speculation and herd behavior provide the behavioral foundation that explains why international financial speculation can be a significant threat to economic stability. This claim is strongly supported by recent events in east Asia. In the early 1990s, financial investors acquired a taste for “emerging markets”. They were initially rewarded with spectacular rewards, which attracted even larger flows of funds and produced a herd-like move into east Asia. These moves were facilitated by the elimination of controls on capital flows into and out of many countries in the region. In 1997, a combination of growing current account deficits and a realization that much of the capital inflow consisted of short term lending that was up for repayment, prompted investors to begin to exit. This then triggered a rush for the exits, with investors seeking to protect the value of their holdings by reconverting them back into hard currencies. This selling drove asset prices down and depreciated east Asian exchange rates, thereby raising the burden of east Asia’s foreign currency denominated debt. The increase in debt burdens caused widespread bankruptcy and pushed east Asia into deep recession.

Another problem resulting from increased financial leakiness is loss of national policy autonomy. The precise nature of the limitations on policy depend importantly on the exchange rate regime. In the Fleming (1962) - Mundell (1963) model, when exchange rates are fixed international financial capital mobility neutralizes monetary policy but leaves fiscal policy intact. Conversely, when exchange rates are flexible, fiscal policy is neutralized but monetary policy remains effective.

Fixed exchange rates mean that monetary policy is ineffective. The gain is supposed to be that they bring exchange rate stability. However, financial

leakiness can undo this and render a system of fixed exchange rates highly unstable. One source of difficulty is that countries differ in their rates of inflation and productivity growth, and this necessitates periodic exchange rate adjustments to ensure that countries do not become internationally uncompetitive. These adjustments in turn open the door to speculation. In effect, speculators are offered a "one-way" option. The weak currencies are easily identifiable on the basis of economic fundamentals. Consequently, there is an incentive to sell these currencies and buy back-in after the devaluation. If a devaluation occurs, speculators win big: if not, all they lose are the transactions costs which are increasingly negligible. This one-way option is what Mr. Soros exploited in 1992 when he speculated against the pound sterling.

The above argument is that speculation can force premature abandonment of a fixed exchange rate, but fundamentals would have required this anyway at a later date. Morris and Shin (1998) show that speculation can force abandonment of a fixed exchange rate even where it would have been sustainable on a fundamentals basis. Given the finite holdings of reserves by central banks, speculators can simply out-sell the bank forcing a devaluation. Moreover, this has become easier to do given the decline in transactions costs and the growth in financial markets' capacity to leverage assets. Thus, under current procedures for defending currencies whereby each central bank defends its own currency, fixed exchange rates may no longer be a viable option.

Flexible exchange rates preserve the effectiveness of monetary policy, but here too financial leakiness is problematic. Increased economic openness means that countries are more prone to imported inflation caused by sudden exchange rate depreciation. To guard against depreciation, governments are prompted to follow policies that are viewed favorably by financial markets. Given financial markets' dislike of inflation, policy makers therefore incline toward policies that are more anti-inflationary and carry slightly higher unemployment. Moreover, to the extent that financial markets dislike budget deficits, policy makers also incline toward greater fiscal austerity. To the extent that financial markets dislike trade deficits, this provides an additional incentive toward austerity. Moreover, this incentive is strengthened by increased macroeconomic leakiness because now expansionary policy has a smaller impact on domestic employment, so that the benefits foregone are smaller. Finally, there may also be a prisoners' dilemma regarding interest rate policy. Each central bank has an incentive to raise interest rates marginally above the global average to guard against capital flight and support its exchange rate. However, when all pursue this policy, the result is higher interest rates everywhere. None gain a relative advantage, and all are pushed in a deflationary direction.

Finally, these arguments reveal how the three different types of leakiness interact in a negative fashion. Macroeconomic leakiness reduces the scale of the employment multiplier which reduces the benefit while raising the cost of expansionary macroeconomic policy. It also makes economies more subject to imported inflation. Financial leakiness, in combination with macroeconomic leakiness, then gives policy makers an incentive to tilt policy in a deflationary direction. This includes an incentive to reduce budget deficits in order to placate financial markets. Reduced budget deficits then amplify the problem of tax burden shifting posed by microeconomic leakiness, requiring either less government spending or higher taxes on labor.

V. POLICY RESPONSES TO INCREASED LEAKINESS

Increased economic leakiness poses serious challenges for policy makers. Each type of leakiness is a problem in its own right, but the problem is worsened by the fact that the different forms of leakiness interact synergistically. This means that a comprehensive policy response is required.

The benefits of globalization are real. They result from increased international trade, and from the channeling of funds to worthwhile investment projects in the developing world. Such investments are profitable for investors and contribute to economic development. However, absent a response to the problems of leakiness, these benefits of globalization may be overwhelmed by costs. Increased leakiness threatens to exert a deflationary influence on economic policy that raises unemployment through higher interest rates and lower government spending. It also threatens to shift the burden of taxes away from capital income on to labor income, and this may occur at a time when the wage share of income is already subject to downward pressure. Systems competition also threatens to gradually degrade national systems of social protection. Lastly, there is evidence that increased financial openness has created greater financial instability.

Increased macroeconomic leakiness means that economic activity is more inter-linked across countries, and this calls for improved macroeconomic policy coordination. This need is further increased owing to greater financial leakiness which makes financial capital more responsive to small interest rate differentials. In this new environment, coordinated interest rate adjustment becomes particularly important in order to avoid destabilizing capital inflows and outflows.

Increased macroeconomic leakiness has also made it more difficult to unilaterally pursue policies of domestic demand-led growth, and this has

encouraged a switch to policies of export-led growth. However, though such policies can work for one country acting in isolation, they cannot work when all pursue them. One country's exports represent another's imports, so that not all can run trade surpluses. If all try to grow on the basis of demand in other countries, none expand demand and the result is a global shortage of demand and recession.⁸ Furthermore, export-led growth also tilts firms' strategic focus toward wage cutting to gain a competitive cost advantage, and it exacerbates "race to the bottom" systems competition for similar reasons. Work place standards, employee protections, and environmental standards can raise costs, giving firms an incentive to lobby for their elimination on the grounds that they result in reduced international competitiveness.

For these reasons, policy makers should abandon their focus on export-led growth and switch to policies encouraging domestic demand-led growth. This applies particularly forcefully to the IMF which has consistently recommended that developing countries pursue export-led growth strategies. This has contributed to job loss in developed countries, enhanced the extent of global wage and systems competition, and aggravated the long-standing trend deterioration in developing country terms of trade. A new policy mix that fosters economic development through domestic demand growth is needed.

One component of this new policy mix must include debt relief and the provision of credit on easier terms. This is necessary to finance the import of capital goods needed for development, and to provide relief from interest service payments which force countries to export to earn the necessary income. There are also benefits to developed economies in the form of increased demand for exports of capital goods.

Having developing countries move to a domestic demand-led growth path also requires rising wages to support domestic consumption, and this necessitates leveling the playing field between business and labor. Core labor standards that give workers rights of free association and allow them to form unions and bargain collectively are essential. Rather than being a market distortion, independent trade unions are the private sector solution to the current imbalance of power created by capital's new found mobility. Evidence that democracy and labor standards positively affect economic outcomes is provided by Rodrik (1998) and Palley (1998b). Rodrik reports clear evidence that democracies pay higher wages. Palley reports evidence

⁸ Once again, the incentives correspond to the prisoners' dilemma. Export-led growth is favorably received by financial markets, and it therefore has a private incentive to shift toward export-led growth, but when all do it becomes mutually destructive.

showing that countries instituting changes giving workers the right of free association experience faster growth.

Core labor standards also benefit workers in developed countries by lessening the incentive for firms to engage in systems competition. This stands to subtly alter the dynamics of trade in a welfare improving fashion since the focus of competition would be pushed away from wages and workplace standards toward labor productivity, product quality, and business mark-ups.

Finally, labor rights and the right to form strong independent trade unions are also vital for reasons of governance. The IMF has increasingly emphasized the problem of political corruption and economic cronyism, which has given rise to misallocation of borrowed resources. It has proposed solving this problem through greater market discipline imposed by increased financial transparency and further financial liberalization. The argument is that market competition will compete cronyism away. However, to the extent that cronyism is politically sponsored, eliminating it requires political reform that puts place counter-veiling forces that can block it. Human and labor rights, that give workers the right to free association and confer the ability to organize independent trade unions, are the foundation of such reforms.

Microeconomic leakiness also pits business against government, and it endangers the public sector by undercutting governments ability to tax capital income. This also worsens the distribution of income, as well as giving a deflationary tilt to fiscal policy. Tax competition is the problem, and eliminating such competition requires greater harmonization of tax rates across countries.

Financial leakiness is the third area demanding a policy response, and east Asia's financial crisis has clearly shown the dangers of such leakiness. The conventional wisdom is that the crisis resulted from inadequate financial transparency, and the problem can be fixed by improved accounting standards, increased transparency, and further capital account liberalization. However, this diagnosis fails to recognize the problems of increased financial instability and loss of policy autonomy posed by increased financial leakiness.

Improved transparency and accounting standards are desirable, but they do not address the problem of financial leakiness. There is a need to reduce speculation and get investors to invest with an eye to the long term with proper regard to risk. Tobin taxes (Tobin 1978) that reduce currency market speculation are needed, as are Chilean style speed bumps that oblige investors to commit for a minimum time period. Not only do these measures reduce the incentive for destabilizing speculation, they can also help restore

domestic policy autonomy. By adding a small friction, financial capital will be rendered less mobile and therefore less able to veto policies it dislikes. Asset based reserve requirements (Palley, 1997b) can also help enhance domestic monetary control, as well as being useful for discouraging short term international lending which has proved so destructive in east Asia.

Finally, new arrangements are needed for defending currencies against speculative attack. Under the existing system, each central bank is responsible for defending its own currency, and this places the onus of defense on weak currency central banks. Given their finite holdings of foreign reserves, and given the capacity of modern financial markets to leverage positions, central banks can now be bankrupted of foreign reserves by market speculators. A new system is needed. If the onus of defense were placed on central banks whose currency is appreciating, then central banks would be restored to a dominant position. In place of defending a currency with limited supplies of foreign reserves, central banks would have the unlimited supply of the printing press, thereby restoring dominance over foreign currency speculators.⁹

VI. ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATION FOR CONSENSUAL RESPONSE TO GLOBALIZATION

In many regards, the process of globalization is a logical extension of the economic process that created unified national economic systems. In the U.S., the creation of a successful national economy that delivered widespread and stable prosperity required national economic institutions. Labor law was codified through the Wagner Act, the National Labor Relations Board was established to govern relations between business and labor, a national minimum wage was established to prevent worker exploitation, and national child labor laws were established to prevent exploitation of children. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration was established to ensure work place safety, while the Environmental Protection Agency works to secure a clean environment. In financial markets, the Securities Exchange Commission helps ensure probity in financial markets, while the Federal Reserve is responsible for the governance of the banking system. These institutions contributed to the making of an efficient unified national economy. In a sense, they addressed the problems of macroeconomic, microeconomic, and financial leakiness as they applied within the domestic economy. Just as the creation of a unified national economy

⁹ A comprehensive reform program for addressing the problem of international financial flows is detailed in Palley (1998c).

required new institutions of economic governance, so too does the new global economy. Such institutions are needed to bar unacceptable dimensions of competition and behaviors which generate destructive instability.

Recognition of this need leads to recognition of a larger abstract point. Proponents of the existing model of globalization argue for more open trade, greater deregulation, reduced government involvement in the economy, and more liberalized financial markets. These calls are couched in terms of creation of a global free market, which carries great rhetorical appeal. However, the reality is that they too aim to establish new institutions and rules such as the World Trade Organization and the Multilateral Agreement on investment. All economies require rules, and this applies as much to a global economy fashioned under the Washington consensus as it does to the economy fashioned under the New Deal. The implication is clear: globalization is not a natural process that has to be fatalistically accepted. In the words of John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO, "The global economy is not a natural outgrowth of the workings of an invisible hand. It is an act of man, not of God". The problem is that the new global economy has been made to benefit some at the expense of others. Hence, President Sweeney notes that it has been "created by government muscle, wielded behind closed doors, largely on behalf of the most powerful corporate and financial interests".

This leads to a closing point. The new institutions required by the global economy depend critically on how we understand the economic world. Economists tend to assume that markets are perfectly competitive, and in such markets power is absent. It is not a matter of agents being equally powerful, but rather a matter of complete absence of power on the part of all. In such an environment, market competition serves to protect market participants from exploitation. Agents get paid their economic worth because perfect information ensures competitors will bid for their services, and because perfect mobility allows them to move and do business with others if they face exploitation. In this world, frictions are undesirable because they inhibit mutually beneficial exchange and because they inhibit mobility. It is this thinking that has prompted economists to push for elimination of tariff barriers, capital market openness, and deregulation of labor markets that includes lowering minimum wages and weakening unions.

However, if the real world is characterized by power and bargaining rather than perfect competition, frictions and transactions costs acquire a totally different economic significance. Simply eliminating frictions, as has been the policy recommendation of the Washington consensus, does not create an efficient perfectly competitive market. Instead, it serves to redistribute bargaining power and alter patterns of incentives. In this environ-

ment, frictions can be a good thing that remedy market failure arising from grossly unequal distributions of market power. The forces of technological and organizational innovation have been tearing down barriers and frictions that previously restrained capital, and policy makers have indiscriminately abetted this process. However, in a world of bargaining power, the proper policy response is to discriminate between frictions, distinguishing between those that diminish public well-being and those that enhance it. In some areas policy should aim to reduce friction, in other areas it may need to augment them. This is an intellectually very different conception of the economy from that which guides policy today.

APPENDIX

The appendix presents a simple Kaleckian mark-up pricing model that illuminates how changes in bargaining power impact the distribution of income. The definition of variables is as follows:

- P = price level
 m = mark-up
 W = nominal wage
 w = real wage
 a = average product of labor y = real output n = employment
 t_1 = job relocation threat effect on labor
 t_2 = effect of foreign competition on pricing in goods market
 t_3 = effect of foreign competition on production efficiency

Signs above functional arguments represent signs of partial derivatives. Prices are a mark-up over average unit labor costs, and are given by

$$(1) P = [1 + m(t_1, t_2)]W/a(t_3)$$

Output is determined by a linear production process given by

$$(2) y = an$$

Rearranging equation (1) yields the real wage which is given by

$$(3) w = a(t_3)/[1 + m(t_1, t_2)]$$

Combining (2) and (3) then yields the wage share which is given by

$$(4) s_w = 1/[1 + m(t_1, t_2)]$$

The effects of increased microeconomic leakiness are captured by the variables t_1 , t_2 , and t_3 . These effects operate through three different channels. The increased job threat effect resulting from increased mobility of production operates through t_1 , and it serves to lower both the real wage and the wage share of income. The foreign price competition effect operates through t_2 , and it raises both the real wage and wage share. It does so by giving consumers additional choice options in goods markets, thereby reducing domestic producers' monopoly power and lowering prices. Finally, the foreign competition production efficiency effect operates through t_3 , and it also raises both the real wage and wage share.

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ONLY CONNECT: UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY; FORMAL AND INFORMAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN A DIVIDED WORLD

THE ROLE OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN ALLEVIATING
UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY IN THE THIRD WORLD

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“There is no sight that so impressively advertises the existence of poverty as does that of the garbage picker at work. If anything represents the employment and income problems of a developing economy then it is – ‘bone grubbers’ or Cali’s ‘vultures’ as they sort through what other people have chosen to throw away –. But what is strange is that we tend to look at this occupation as an expression of poverty and not as a cause of it. We see the garbage picker as being forced into this activity by the lack of opportunities elsewhere in the urban economy, whilst we tend to forget that he is working”.¹

Strategies against poverty should, it is often argued, focus primarily on expansion of employment in the formal sector of an economy. But there are a number of assumptions underlying this view which require examination. Work itself does not necessarily guarantee a way out of poverty. The income received from many kinds of jobs is below the locally relevant poverty line. The further implicit assumption that unemployment should be reduced because work has an inherent moral value of its own is derived from the

¹ Chris Birkbeck, ‘Garbage, Industry, and the Vultures of Cali, Columbia’, in Ray Bromley and Chris Gerry (eds.), *Casual Work and Poverty in Third World Cities* (Chichester, 1979), p. 161.

theological understanding of the human calling to participate in the process of creation.² But this does not apply in all circumstances. Compelling children to work long hours in harsh and dangerous conditions is widely regarded as morally wrong. Hence the legislation in country after country, starting with Britain in the mid-19th. century, to declare it illegal even though (as opponents of the legislation like to point out) it reduces employment and increases the poverty of the households concerned. Nor is the argument confined to the 19th. century. On the threshold of the 21st century we realise that work in the formal sector may also produce its own kind of poverty, through low paid jobs, long working hours, unhealthy environments and the use of unprotected labour. Finally, before assuming that formal sector employment is always preferable to work elsewhere, one must note that some informal sector activities are not only financially more rewarding but also less vulnerable to political and economic crises on the macro level.

Moreover an expansion and acceptance of the informal sector in the so-called developing countries may create more income for the poorer part of the population than new and more costly jobs in the formal sector. In the context of the industrialised world the informal sector is seen as a symbol of the past.³ But the present reality in the developing world is very different in both in economic and cultural terms.

Analysis of the relationship between the formal and the informal sector with regard to employment as a major strategy for poverty reduction must include not only a historical understanding of the impact of the industrialising process in the developing world compared with what happened in the developed world. What is also needed is a political and ethical understanding of the forces set in motion when an employment strategy is proposed as a desirable social change. Industrialised countries need to sort out their motives for pushing the growth of the formal sector in the developing countries. Is this but another Western solution to a Western way of thinking? Is this a better way to expand Western modes of production and increase Western markets? Or, is this a genuine strategy to reduce poverty in the developing countries? It may well be all three. But if a new strategy for poverty reduction is to be successful, it has to be built on trust and the conviction in the developing world that reduction of poverty is the major goal, not the transfer of Western ideas about how the third world can be transformed to suit a Western economy.

² Johannes Schasching S.J., 'Catholic Social Teaching and Labor', *Pontificiae Academiae Scientiarum Socialium Acta* - 2, p. 61.

³ Keith B. Griffin, *Studies in Globalization of Economic Transition* (Houndmills, 1996), p. 137.

THE NEED FOR CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Some of the fuzziness in the global poverty debate stems from lack of clarity of definition. Many of the concepts used represent a complex spectrum made up of several variables which are dynamically related and partially intertwined. At times, these variables interact across the spectra making the analysis still more complex.⁴

The formal sector may be the easiest to define. Essentially, it is linked to a contractual agreement between an employer and an employee which guarantees a regular wage in exchange for the labour provided. However, the variations on this theme are manifold, and the entire history of the labour movements bears witness to struggles to define the rights of the workers and the contents of their contracts. Another approach has been to define the formal sector as composed of larger and well established units with many employees and standard contracts setting out rights and duties of the workers. The income generated in the formal sector can be measured and makes part of national budgeting. The formal sector is that part of the economy where people are either paid wages or earn money for work done in an enterprise which keeps proper records, pays taxes at whatever threshold is legally required, and is publicly accountable.

The concept of employment is closely tied to the concept of the formal sector; that is, a person's labour, knowledge and expertise is exchanged for a regular income under terms which show a large variation. They range from formal contracts on wages, health benefits and workers' rights, regulated by the state or the labour unions, to no protection against sudden dismissal, unreasonable wages, an unsafe industrial environment or no provisions concerning the right to strike and expression of discontent.

The concept of non-employment covers all those who are at present not employed, those who are not employable, and those who find their income in the heterogeneous informal sector. Although many of the people in the informal sector are working hard, their labouring is not officially termed 'work'. In South Africa definitions of unemployment have tended to vary between 'narrow' (e.g. counting as unemployed only those persons, aged 15-64, if male, and 15-59, if female, who had worked not more than five hours in the previous week; who had actively looked for work in the previous month; and who were willing to start a job in the next week) and 'broad' definitions which, in addition to all of the above, include persons even if they have not actively sought work in the previous month but still

⁴ Op. cit., p. 174.

want it if they can find it. But even the narrowest of definitions is subject to ambiguity depending on what exactly the person concerned counts as work in the five hours that may or may not have been undertaken in the previous week. Since there are many ways of defining unemployment, its precise measurement will depend on the definition used.⁵

Poverty vs. non-poverty is another difficult concept to dichotomise. The spectrum can only be divided through the cut-off point used by official sources on poverty, which are always arbitrary. Otherwise poverty is a conglomerate of several variables, most of which are continuous. So far at least two hundred different definitions of poverty have been identified.⁶ The choice of one definition over another changes any poverty analysis, and sometime dramatically so. For those who choose to see poverty as purely an economic issue, employment of the poor in a formal sector which is forbidding in terms of political expression or which offers an unsafe environment, may seem a good prospect because they are likely to overlook those other aspects of poverty which come across when we listen and hear the assessments of people who themselves endure the conditions being described or defined. "Poverty", said Mrs. Witbooi in a much quoted answer to a question posed by a visiting researcher to a small community in the isolated Karoo of South Africa "is not knowing where your next meal is going to come from, and always wondering when the council is going to put your furniture out and always praying that your husband must not lose his job. To me that is poverty".⁷ At the heart of that hard-earned insight is the gnawing uncertainty of daily life: vulnerability, and recognition of the fact that poverty can not be reduced to a single number but is a reality with many dimensions or faces.⁸

While much analytical work has been done on the previous concepts, the concept of the *informal sector* was first defined as a "residual" category, that is, all those income generating activities that did not take place in the formal sector belonged to the informal sector. As it turned out, the major-

⁵ For further discussion on this issue see E. Wilson and M. Ramphela, *Uprooting Poverty: The South African Challenge* (Cape Town, 1989), pp. 84 ff.

⁶ David Gordon and Paul Spicker, *The International Glossary of Poverty* (CROP International Series in Poverty Research, Zed Books, London 1999).

⁷ Recorded by Mary-Jane Morifi, 'Life among the Poor in Philipstown' (Carnegie Conference Paper no. 33, Cape Town, 1984), p. 34.

⁸ Including, for example, malnutrition; lack of access to clean drinking water; inadequate housing; lack of education. For a global discussion see Else Øyen, S.M. Miller and Syed Abdus Samad (eds.); *Poverty: A Global Review. Handbook on International Poverty Research* (Scandinavian University Press and UNESCO, 1996), pp. 620. For recent South African discussion see the *Report on Poverty and Inequality in South Africa*, 1998, especially pp. 39-42.

ity of the world's population could be found in the informal sector. In the developing countries home based activities or the 'backyard economy' (i.e. the home production of vegetables and other plants on a small plot of land in the city or elsewhere for home consumption and bartering, but also different kinds of small-scale home production and sale of items generated, for example, through garbage picking) forms a significant and so far invisible contribution to the national economy. Small landholders, self-employed people, occasional labourers, people living off criminal and semi-criminal activities likewise form part of the informal sector. Use of child labour in the formal economy is likely to be referred to the informal sector, partly to make it invisible to the regulations of the formal economy. The unpaid work women perform in the home and on the farm can be defined as belonging to the informal sector. Only during the feminist revolution did unpaid housework in the Western world become visible through a new kind of accounting which showed its significant contribution to the national economy.⁹

Although sufficient data are not available, it can be argued convincingly that a very large part of the incomes which sustain poor people are largely found in their activities in the informal sector. Let it be added, that many non-poor people likewise find their income in the informal sector, whether it be through criminal activities or within legally defined activities.

The International Labour Organization, writing in the Asian context, drew attention to the fact that the whole concept of the 'informal sector' was loose and could mean different things depending on the circumstances. It, "*manifests itself in different ways in different countries, in different cities within the same country, and even in different parts of the same city*".¹⁰

Like "unemployment" the concept of the "informal sector" seems to have been given two meanings: one broad; the other narrow. In terms of the broad definition the informal sector is defined in the literature to include virtually all unrecorded economic activities both large and small scale;¹¹ both legal and illegal.

Without going as far as those who exclude rural activities from the

⁹ United Nations, 'Methods of Measuring Women's Participation and Production in the Informal Sector', *Studies in Methods*, Series F No. 46, New York, 1990.

¹⁰ ILO, 'Development of the urban informal sector: Policies and strategies, Paper prepared for the Asian Sub-regional Seminar on Employment policies for the urban informal sector in East and South-east Asia, Bangkok, October 1992' Cited by Christian M. Rogerson, *Rethinking the Informal Economy of South Africa* (DBSA, Halfway House, 1996), p. 2.

¹¹ Janet MacGaffey, *The Real Economy of Zaire: The Contribution of Smuggling and other Unofficial Activities to National Wealth* (London, 1991), p. 1.

narrow definition of the informal sector, it is nevertheless clear that a working definition of the term can not usefully be as broad as to include all that is covered in MacGaffey's study¹² which includes trade in stolen fuel, poaching, and smuggling on a massive scale. One useful approach was that adopted by Natrass in a South African field study. "*In most cases*", she writes, "[T]he informal sector has been described as consisting of all those people outside formal wage employment in the large-scale officially recognised and regulated sector, as well as all enterprises which function outside government rules and regulations and which operate on a small scale using labour intensive technology ... [A]s a general rule, one should argue that an informal sector enterprise must manifest at least two of these three characteristics".¹³

Rogerson equates the concept with what in the 1990s has been identified as the 'micro-enterprise economy'.¹⁴ In Zimbabwe, Kaliyati, arguing along similar though not identical lines, identifies the informal sector as a sub-set of the small-enterprise/business sector. By 'informal' what is meant that its operations are not registered and "normally escape official statistics".¹⁵

For the purposes of this paper we shall work with a narrower definition of the informal sector which will not encompass the full range of "second economy" activities as described by MacGaffey and by Maliyamkono and Bagachwa.¹⁶ Nor shall we include organised crime but will concentrate on that narrower definition of the informal sector as the micro-enterprise sector which is seen by many writers as containing the potential for generating the jobs necessary to reduce the massive levels of unemployment and poverty found in so many parts of the world. Broadly speaking the focus is on small-scale, labour intensive economic activity whether within or beyond the scope of official rules and regulations. Note that there is no suggestion that all such informal sector activities must be confined to the urban areas although it may well be that the majority of them are in practice concentrated there.

¹² MacGaffey, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹³ Nicoli Natrass, 'Street Trading in Transkei: A Struggle against Poverty, Persecution & Prosecution' (Carnegie Conference Paper No. 237, Cape Town, 1984), p. 6.

¹⁴ Christian M. Rogerson, 'Rethinking the Informal Economy of South Africa' (Development Bank of Southern Africa Development Paper 84, Halfway House, 1998).

¹⁵ Jacob Kaliyati, 'The Informal Sector and Small Business Development', in Minnie Venter (ed.), *Prospects for Progress: Critical Choices for Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1994), p. 153.

¹⁶ MacGaffey, *op. cit.*, and T.L. Maliyamkono and M.S.D. Bagachwa, *The Second Economy in Tanzania* (London, 1990).

THE CASE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

The following table provides a brief economic profile, over the past thirty years, of the 12 mainland countries¹⁷ which in 1999 are members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Table 1. *Southern Africa: Population, Urbanisation and Economic Growth* (Av. Annual Growth: GNP per capita).

Country	1965-1984	1985-1994	Population 1994 Millions	% Urban
Botswana	8.4	6.6	1.4	30
Mozambique	N.A.	3.8	15.5	33
Namibia	N.A.	3.3	1.5	36
Tanzania	0.6	0.8	28.8	24
Lesotho	5.9	0.6	1.9	22
Sub-total			49.1	
Zimbabwe	1.5	-0.5	10.8	31
Malawi	1.7	-0.7	9.5	13
Congo (Zaire)	N.A.	-1.0	42.5	N.A.
Swaziland	4.1	-1.2	0.9	N.A.
South Africa	1.4	-1.3	40.5	50
Zambia	-1.3	-1.4	9.2	43
Angola	N.A.	-6.8	10.4	N.A.
Sub-total			123.8	
TOTAL			172.9	

Source: World Development Reports, annual.

¹⁷ i.e. Excluding Mauritius and Seychelles.

This table reflects a number of realities – and masks others. First we should note the enormous variation between countries even in one region of the so-called Third World. There must inevitably be considerable scepticism about the usefulness of any economic generalisation across a sub-set of countries whose populations range from less than 1 million to over 40 million; whose average annual growth rates vary from over 8% per annum over 20 years to a continuing decline of almost 7% per annum over the same period.

Secondly, that over the past thirty years, throughout virtually the entire region there is likely to have been an increase in unemployment as population has risen faster than jobs in the formal sector. This includes industrialised South Africa.¹⁸

Thirdly, the reduction in GNP per capita in over two-thirds of the population of the SADC points to the failure of the economy to halt the steady impoverishment of the region with the exception of Botswana and, in more recent years, of Mozambique whose economy finally seemed to touch bottom at the end of the 1980s.¹⁹ Elsewhere on the continent the economic record is similarly mixed; but universally the impact of war has been devastating. Statistics²⁰ are hard to come by and are not always reliable but in Angola three decades of virtually uninterrupted civil war, both caused and fuelled in large measure by the battles for control of the country's diamond and oil resources, continues to devastate an economy with vast potential.

One important conclusion is that despite all the hopes pinned upon political independence from the beginning of the 1960s on; despite all the analysis and proposals by developmental economists and others; and despite all the practical efforts by governments, business people, workers, and farmers (whether large- or small- scale) economic well-being has not been fostered amongst the bottom 25% to 50% of the population of the 12 countries of Southern Africa, with the possible exception of Botswana whose total population is less than 1.5 million and for whose poorest fraction the spectacular economic growth of the past quarter century seems to have done surprisingly little.²¹

¹⁸ Peter Fallon and Luiz A. Pereira de Silva, *South Africa: Economic Performance and Policies* (The World Bank, Washington, 1994), p. 37.

¹⁹ F. Tarp and M.I. Lau, 'Mozambique: Macroeconomic Performance and Critical Development Issues' in Lennart Petersson (ed.), *Post-Apartheid Southern Africa: Economic Challenges and Policies for the Future* (London, 1998), pp. 288-309.

²⁰ World Development Report, 1997.

²¹ For discussion of this point (from different perspectives) see papers on Botswana delivered at two CROP workshops on the role of the state in poverty alleviation held in Gaborone (1997) and Cape Town (1998) including those by K. Good and P. Molutsi; by Arnon A. Bar-On; and by C.K. Kerapeletswe and T. Moremi.

But the statistics themselves do not tell the whole story.²² Indeed the very definition of the informal sector discussed above warrants our taking into account that economic activity which is excluded from the official accounts. At the same time it is important to recognise that the fact that a significant informal sector (or even second economy) may exist does not necessarily imply that it does. We are thus driven to recognizing the importance of estimating the relative size of the informal sector, which may vary considerably from country to country.

There are two further changes affecting the whole region whose impact is not yet captured in the economic profiles of the 12 countries.

The first is the extent of HIV infection. The evidence now available points to a "new wave of impoverishment"²³ particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Life expectancy throughout the region is falling dramatically. In 18 of the 22 (mainly) Sub-Saharan African countries studied "*HIV/AIDS would reduce life expectancy by at least 10 years and in 14 it would push child mortality up by at least 50 deaths per 1000 live births*".²⁴ There is no doubt now, write the authors of the World Development Report, "*(T)hat AIDS is closely linked to poverty. Poverty offers a fertile breeding ground for the epidemic's spread, and infection sets off a cascade of economic and social disintegration and impoverishment*".²⁵ In the absence of a breakthrough in the treatment of HIV infection, the emerging scenario of populations (led in many instances by the young, economically active, better educated sections) dying en masse of AIDS requires a paradigm shift in strategic planning, whether with regard to job creation, the role of the informal sector, or anything else.

The second major shift in any new thinking about unemployment and the informal sector is the acceleration in the process of globalisation. This has happened in the 1990s through the combination of a number of factors including the establishment of the World Trade Organization with the ending of the Uruguay Round of GATT in 1994; the information revolution including the development of the internet (based on the diffusion of personal computers); and the not unrelated growth of the global financial market in a world that no longer sleeps.

From the perspective of the informal sector, or of job-creation generally, the impact of globalisation can be felt in a number of important ways including (on the positive side) the possibility of accessing wider markets.

²² MacGaffey, op. cit., p. 7.

²³ *Human Development Report 1997*, p. 67.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Op. cit., p. 67.

More immediately, and on the negative side from the producer's point of view, is a downward pressure (due to competition resulting from the lowering of tariff barriers) on prices of some of the goods most likely to be made in the informal sector. Another type of impact relates to the macro-consequences in individual countries of the sudden, relatively large flows of short-term speculative capital either into or out of the local stock market. These flows over which the individual country has little if any control can wreak havoc with the most careful plans regarding appropriate exchange and interest rates to stimulate economic growth so as to generate more jobs.

It is against this background that the struggle of entrepreneurs in the informal sector is played out. In Southern Africa, as in many other parts of the world, there is a growing belief that the small enterprise sector has great potential to alleviate unemployment and to spur economic growth in times of recession.

There have been a number of attempts to gauge the relative size of this small-enterprise informal sector in the various countries of Southern Africa.²⁶ How significant is the informal sector in South Africa, for example?²⁷ Working with the narrow definition which focuses on small enterprises and tends to ignore criminal activity such as robbery or drug dealing whilst including all those enterprises which, because of tax evasion, operate effectively on the wrong side of the law, the consensus has been that the contribution of the informal sector is somewhere under 12% of GDP with Rogerson suggesting a best estimate of 9% and an absorption of some four to five million workers.²⁸ However the estimates vary widely with some ranging as high as 40% of GDP, though most observers believe this figure is far too high.²⁹ The absence of reliable and meaningful data is widely recognised and is referred to by the ILO, "as a core problem in employment planning for the informal sector".³⁰

But there is one part of the informal sector in South Africa about which there is now (post-1993) considerably more information than in the past. This is that part of the economy made up by the self-employed.³¹

²⁶ See for example Jacob Kaliyati *ibid.*, Kirsten and Sindane *op. cit.*, and Christian M. Rogerson *op. cit.*

²⁷ E. Preston-Whyte and C. Rogerson (eds.), *South Africa's Informal Economy* (Cape Town, 1991).

²⁸ Kirsten and Sindane, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168; Rogerson, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

²⁹ Rogerson, *op. cit.*, p. 5. See also Kirsten 'A Quantitative Assessment of the Informal Sector' in Preston-Whyte and Rogerson, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-158.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³¹ H. Bhorat and M. Leibbrandt, 'Poverty Amongst the Self-Employed', *J. Stud. Econ. Econometrics*, 22(3), (1998).

Whilst there are significant numbers of self-employed persons (such as doctors and lawyers) who are clearly not part of the informal sector, there is nevertheless considerable overlap between the self-employed and the informal sector, particularly at lower income levels. The total number of self-employed individuals in South Africa in 1993 is estimated from the Saldru random sample survey of 9000 households³² at 1.1 million which compares with the Central Statistical Services' estimate of 1.2 million persons employed in the informal sector. But this is very different from the Rogerson estimate of four times as many. Of the 1.1 million self-employed estimated from the Saldru survey, two-thirds (66.6%) were found in only five occupations: street-seller (23,3%); shopkeeper (12,8%); shebeen³³ operator (11,4%); sewing/selling clothes (9,8%); artisan (9,3%). Bhorat and Leibbrandt point also to the 'notable' fact that less than 1% (0,77%) of the self-employed works in manufacturing.³⁴

Given the lack of systematic information about the informal sector as a whole (including ventures employing more than one person) can anything meaningful be said about it? Rogerson, for example, drawing on the empirical studies that have been done draws attention to two fundamentally different types of activity in the informal sector: bare survival activities, on the one hand, and dynamic expansionist enterprise, on the other. "The mass of informal enterprises in South Africa's large cities, towns and rural areas fall within the category of survivalist enterprises. Typical examples are urban cultivators, child-minders, street barbers or garbage scavengers, rural collectors of traditional herbs and the ubiquitous township retail operations of spazas and hawkers. Also included in the category of survivalist enterprise are the rash of urban rural co-operatives that have appeared over the past decade" [1984-1994]³⁵ One further finding that seems to hold true in all the South African studies is that, relative to other countries (including those of the SADC), manufacturing activities are relatively under-developed in the micro-enterprise or informal sector, especially in the urban areas. Thus it is estimated that in urban South Africa manufacturing accounts for only 17% of micro-enterprise activity whilst in Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe the shares are 28%, 33% and no less than 65% respectively.³⁶ The

³² *South Africans Rich and Poor* (Baseline Household Statistics, Saldru, Cape Town, 1994).

³³ A shebeen was the name given to the illegal bars or pubs operating largely in the black townships of the old South Africa. The name has stuck and is used for bars patronised primarily by blacks.

³⁴ Bhorat and Leibbrandt, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

major reason for this urban backwardness within South Africa seems to be the repressive legislation of the Apartheid era which discouraged black initiated economic activity in the urban areas of the economy until as late as the 1980s: by 1992 however these regulatory constraints were no longer seen as important obstacles.³⁷

The precise impact of the informal sector on unemployment in South Africa is by no means clear. Consider the following table.

Table 2. *Unemployment in South Africa, 1993 [%]*.

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
All	39	21	11	5	30
Male	34	17	8	4	26
Female	44	25	17	6	35
Rural	42	10	—	4	40
Urban	35	26	10	4	26
Metro	34	19	12	5	22
16-24yrs	65	41	24	11	53
55-64yrs	20	9	5	2	15

Source: *South Africans Rich and Poor* (Baseline Household Statistics, Saldru, Cape Town, 1994).

Assuming that those who were employed in the informal sector in 1993 declared themselves to be employed and not 'looking for work' these figures represent the level of unemployment in the country, including those who said that they wanted work but had given up looking for it. The level averaged 30%. It is possible that, in the marginal world where work in the informal sector may imply waiting at home for somebody to come and buy some apples, the figures may not be quite as precise as they look.³⁸ The

³⁷ World Bank Study cited by Rogerson, p. 21.

³⁸ Issues of measurement are discussed in Charles Simkins, 'Employment, Unemployment and Growth in South Africa 1961-1979', Saldru Working paper No. 4, Cape Town, 1976, and

findings, confirmed by other studies, are striking. Overall unemployment is high and, compared with earlier years, rising. But it varies widely by race; by gender; by age; and by urban versus rural geographic location. Variations range from a mere 2% for white males, in the last decade of their economically active lives, to no less than two-thirds (65%) for young black men and women under the age of 25, not studying and in need of work.

SOME COMMENTS ON STRATEGIES AHEAD

These figures drive home the fact that the need for expansion of the informal sector varies widely even within one economy, certainly one as fragmented as South Africa's. In outlining a possible strategy for encouraging the development of the informal sector in South Africa we can start from the macro-perspective which is very clear.³⁹ For a whole combination of reasons including poor educational and training policies and a failure to invest appropriately, growth of the South African economy by the end of the 1970s had slowed dramatically. This trend continued during the 1980s until by the end of the decade growth it had virtually ground to a halt, so that *per capita* income was falling and the gap between new jobs in the formal sector and the net number of new people coming onto the labour market each year was widening alarmingly.⁴⁰ In this situation of massive unemployment and in the absence of any kind of social security for new entrants to the labour market and for many older job-seekers (particularly women), the only recourse was to some form of informal subsistence activity.

Despite some improvement in the economy following the political settlement and the successful transition to democratic rule in 1994, this trend of a widening gap between net additions to the labour market as a result of population growth and the tiny number of new jobs in the formal sector (including government) seems to have continued. Meanwhile the pressure for expanding the informal sector continues unabated as more unemployed people crowd in to existing activities such as commuter taxis, for example. But this very process implies that less workers are being employed in the formal sector, hence the demand for taxi services decreases at the very moment that people are trying to provide more. This implies a falling level

Charles Simkins, 'Measuring and Predicting Unemployment in South Africa, 1960-1977' in C. Simkins and D. Clarke, *Structural Unemployment in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, 1978). Also Charles Simkins, 'Structural Unemployment Revisited', Saldru Fact Sheet No. 1, Cape Town.

³⁹ Fallon and de Silva, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 53-72.

⁴⁰ In this analysis we draw heavily upon Rogerson, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

of profitability in such informal sector activities. Thus, paradoxically, the very pressures leading to an increase of the informal sector eventually lead on to its contraction.

Rogerson identifies a second factor in the growth of the informal economy which is also due, to some extent to pressures on the formal sector. This is the process of 'informalisation' where, by circumventing labour regulations and avoiding trade union monitoring, "formal factory jobs are increasingly displaced by jobs in unregistered plants, and in homeworking".⁴¹ In the shoe industry, for example, during the 1980s, if not earlier, major manufacturers were deliberately organising the expansion of at least part of their production on a "putting-out" or "cottage-industry" basis. By the mid-1990s it was estimated that no less than 20% of total output [some 10 million pairs of shoes *per annum*] was being produced in the informal sector in this way.⁴²

The debate about the value of expanding the informal sector in this manner is riven with contradictions. At one end of the spectrum informalisation could be a process whereby ruthless employers evade hard-won (but costly) protective factory legislation against dangerous and/or environmentally damaging production methods by sub-contracting to small groups which may work at home or elsewhere. At the other end, informalisation could be a process whereby unnecessarily high production costs (including wages pushed well above market rates by militant trade union action) are cut sharply thus leading to significantly increased sales and hence employment. In practice any process of informalisation is likely to lie somewhere between these two ends of the spectrum. But there is one further consideration. Costs in a particular sub-sector of a national economy may be such that the product is undercut by one from some other country as a result of a reduction in tariffs due to agreements with the World Trade Organisation. This particular impact of globalisation can benefit consumers as a result of lower prices, but this can be at the expense of a massive loss of jobs by producers. The pros and cons of increasing trade by means of lowering tariff (and non-tariff) barriers requires careful assessment in terms of the particular circumstances and also of the timing.

There is evidence to suggest that whilst an increase of trade can be shown theoretically to increase general welfare this does not necessarily imply that a particular group (or even country) will benefit as a result. In this context it is worth noting that preliminary analysis of the impact of the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations [December 1993] and the

⁴¹ Rogerson, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

establishment of the World Trade Organisation under the Marrakesh Agreement in April 1994 suggests that Africa stands to lose rather than to gain, at least in the short run.⁴³ But the continent has virtually no power at the international bargaining tables and can do little other than accept the terms which others have set. In this context it is surprising to find South Africa pursuing trade liberalisation (by reducing tariffs) at a pace faster than that required by the agreements in the multilateral trade negotiations.⁴⁴ It is also worth noting that a century ago when its economy was much weaker relative to that of industrialised Europe, the United States passed the McKinley Act [1890] to ensure heavily protective tariffs [of the order of 50%] against imports of all types of industrial goods which Europe could, at that stage, produce more cheaply. But it is clear from the South African case study that the impact of globalisation on unemployment, particularly of unskilled workers and hence on the informal sector, is such as to require very careful strategic policy objectives being developed at a macro-level with regard to tariffs, labour market policy, social security, and taxation.⁴⁵

Despite the ambiguities and despite the assessment of some analysts that the advance of flexible specialisation in South Africa holds greater potential for the 'informalisation' – or break-up – of large enterprises into low-cost, non-unionised sweatshops than for the clustering of small enterprises that are engaged in constant innovation⁴⁶ there is widespread consensus about the necessity for government policy to support the further growth of the informal sector.

But a crucial distinction is drawn between 'survivalist' enterprise (which is estimated to constitute 80% of the small enterprises in South Africa) and viable or growth micro-enterprises. With regard to the former the argument is that state assistance should be considered primarily as "a form of poverty relief or welfare support"⁴⁷ which should be sustained until such time as the economy picks up and such enterprises acquire a new dynamic of their own or people find they no longer need them as they move into an expanding formal sector. With regard to the latter there are a number of practical sug-

⁴³ P. Evans and J. Walsh, *The Economist Intelligence Unit Guide to the New Gatt* (London, 1994), p. 118.

⁴⁴ N. Nattrass, 'Globalisation and the South African Labour Market', *J. Stud. Econ. Econometrics*, 22(3), (1998), p. 87 citing T. Bell and N. Cattaneo, *Foreign Trade and Employment in South African Manufacturing Industry*, Occasional Report No. 4, Employment and Training Dept., I.L.O., Geneva, 1998.

⁴⁵ Nattrass, 1998, op. cit.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

gestions as to how supportive intervention might take place particularly in the construction industry and in the manufacturing sector. To these we would add the belief, not widely shared by those concerned with development in South Africa, that rethinking the use of the land for the expansion, not least for export purposes, of small scale agriculture and horticulture holds considerable potential for job creation at reasonable levels of income.

CONCLUSION

There is room to draw together a few conclusions.

1. Differences not only between countries, such as those of Southern Africa (to say nothing of the wider 'Third World') but also within individual countries are such as to render virtually useless any general analysis as to how best to develop the 'informal sector'. Strategies have to be devised which are specific to particular circumstances in each case.

2. Contrasting South Africa with other countries in the region, it is obvious that, for policy purposes, a clear distinction needs to be drawn between those which are largely industrialised, with a majority of the population in the urban areas, and those which remain largely rural, with farming – whether for subsistence or for commercial purposes – as the major occupation.

3. For an industrial country like South Africa, whose citizens are under pressure from widespread and increasing unemployment, intelligent and meaningful support of the urban informal sector is vitally important. At the same time it is necessary to recognise that expansion of the informal sector is not enough. Even (perhaps particularly) in the more industrialised countries such as those in western Europe and elsewhere there is recognition of the fact that not even a combination of the formal and the informal sectors will provide sufficient income for all citizens in the 21st century.

4. Another possibility for income generation which is not necessarily classified as part of either the formal or the informal sector lies in the growth of grass-roots co-operatives. Whilst many have failed, there are some notable successes (such as Mondragon,⁴⁸ Amul Dairy,⁴⁹ or the Grameen Bank)⁵⁰ which can inspire hope for the poor.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Roy Morrison, *We Build the Road As We Travel* (Philadelphia, 1991).

⁴⁹ Amul, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, Annual Report 1997-98 on <http://www.amul.com/annual.htm>

⁵⁰ Andreas Fuglesang & Dale Chandler, *Participation as Process: Process as Growth* (Dhaka, 1993).

⁵¹ Albert O. Hirschman, *Getting Ahead Collectively: Grassroots Experiences in Latin America* (New York, 1984).

5. Finally, for those who are unable to obtain jobs in the formal economy or to create them through either some form of micro-enterprise or some imaginative co-operative initiative, some support via the state seems increasingly likely to become a political necessity in the economies of the future. What forms that support should take – whether conventional public works programmes, negative income tax or other forms of a guaranteed minimum income, public subsidy of privately organised service activities such as care of the aged, or whatever – lie (as do the co-operatives) beyond the scope of this paper.

Our task has been to focus on the informal sector; to analyse its ambiguities; and to draw attention to its potential (and limitations) in reducing poverty through generating employment, particularly in poorer countries. While it is not possible to ignore the huge energy waiting to be tapped in the lives of poor people around the world, it is difficult to conclude that a transfer of the working capacity of poor people from the formal sector to the informal sector is the easy answer to effective poverty reduction.

LA NÉCESSITÉ D'UNE NOUVELLE ARCHITECTURE LÉGALE ET GLOBALE DE RÉGULATION DU CAPITAL ET DU TRAVAIL

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English Summary *The Need for a New Global Legal Regulative Framework for Capital and Labour*

The need for a new global legal regulative framework derives not so much from a change in the concepts or principles defining what would be a 'true' development respecting man, humanity and the environment, but from the accelerating trends towards world-wide markets and competition, towards global corporations and production systems developing world-wide connections and flows and thus global interdependencies. In fact the need to adopt a new architecture for capital and labour relations arises from the increasing mobility or more precisely from the differential mobility of capital and labour, but also of information and knowledge: a part of what is labelled non-material or intangible capital.

World-wide mobility is greatest for money and finance and thus for capital which moves from one country to another at the speed of light; the same may be said about information and knowledge. At some point they become footloose. Distance is no longer a problem. This is caused by the improved speed and capacity of transportation and communication systems but also by trade deregulation and the pursuit of free-flowing capital and investment around the world. Whatever the case, corporations and governments work together to open up trade, to promote export-led growth and to extend deregulation world-wide; so capital and firms are decreasingly hindered by the social costs of moving when they decide to disinvest or to relocate.

It is an undeniable fact that labour and population migrations are increasing world-wide, and specifically in the direction of the advanced economies of the North, to Japan and its satellites, North America and Western Europe, but also to Australia, the oil producing countries, particularly of the Arab world, and to the NICs. Many explanations are given for this migration. It explodes as a result of crises or conflicts at the political, economic, cultural or religious levels. It increases

in the wake of under- and unemployment. A jobless economy and low growth will promote the mobility of labour.

Nevertheless, people and labour are much less mobile than capital because of the social, familial and physical costs involved. Other reasons for lesser mobility are: the territoriality and the nationality principles that govern labour laws and contracts, social agreements and protection, but also the national and regional character of trade unions. This all militates against the mobility and solidarity of labour the world over. The differential mobility of capital and labour provides the fundamental explanation for the power imbalance between an essentially international capital market and national labour forces.

But besides labour and capital mobility, flows of information and knowledge, as intangible capital, must also be taken into account. To face world-wide competition and perform in an organisationally and functionally interdependent economic system, innovation, in its large Schumpeterian sense, is becoming central. In an innovation economy, based on advanced information and communication technologies, driven by the accumulation of scientific and technical knowledge, and backed by educational and cultural emancipation, non-material and human investment and capital become more and more important as regards physical or material investment and capital.

In a world-wide system of production and innovation, it becomes strategic to capitalise on information, knowledge and culture, to promote human and labour development, to train and to re-train. In an uncertain and highly competitive economy, innovation and knowledge must be developed at an increased speed, but also with rising costs and risks. This constitutes a major challenge for capital, but also for labour all around the world. For labour, commodification and capitalization in the fields of information, knowledge and culture set a price on everything it wants to learn or know. Free access is less and less guaranteed.

To conceive of a new global legal architecture for labour and capital, one needs to reflect on their respective mobility, but even if labour is less mobile than capital and if the free flow of labour remains illusory, some authorities still maintain that it can be compensated for by the free flow of information, knowledge and culture. But is this not a Utopian approach?

“Dieu a donné la terre à tout le genre humain pour qu’elle fasse vivre tous ses membres, sans exclure ni privilégier personne. C’est là l’origine de la destination universelle des biens”.

Jean-Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 31

D’entrée de jeu, soulignons que la nécessité d’une nouvelle architecture légale et globale de régulation du capital et du travail ne se justifie pas d’abord en partant d’une conception nouvelle des objectifs et critères du développement véritable.

Sa justification se trouve dans la transformation accélérée du contexte dans lequel s’opère la gestion du capital et du travail, ainsi que de leurs rapports. La nécessité d’une nouvelle régulation globale découle du fait “que la question sociale a acquis une dimension mondiale”. Cela “ne signifie pas pour autant qu’elle ait perdu son impact ou son importance à l’échelon régional et local. Cela veut dire, au contraire, que les problèmes dans les entreprises ou dans le mouvement ouvrier et syndical d’un pays donné ou d’une région déterminée ne doivent plus être considérés comme des phénomènes isolés sans lien entre eux, mais qu’ils dépendent de plus en plus de facteurs dont l’influence s’étend au delà des limites régionales ou des frontières nationales” (SRS 9).

La nécessité de cette nouvelle architecture se déduit du jeu des processus de mondialisation et globalisation des échanges, des marchés, de la concurrence, ainsi que des systèmes de production et de communication. Dans une situation caractérisée, d’une part, par la mondialisation et donc par l’extension spatiale et transnationale des activités économiques et, d’autre part, par la globalisation, c’est-à-dire par la multiplication des interdépendances fonctionnelles, la régulation du capital, du travail et de leurs rapports ne peut plus être pensée dans le cadre unique des Etats-nations mais doit l’être sur une base plus large: internationale, continentale et mondiale. En effet, ces macroprocessus ont des incidences respectivement sur la mobilité et la flexibilité du travail et du capital, de même que sur la transférabilité de l’information, du savoir, du savoir-faire et de la culture.

C’est en partant de la mobilité différentielle de ces trois facteurs: travail, capital et savoir qu’il faut tenter de dessiner une nouvelle architecture légale et globale des rapports entre capital et travail, et donc aussi entre le capital matériel et tangible et, par ailleurs, le capital immatériel.

Première partie

LE CONTEXTE NOUVEAU DU DÉVELOPPEMENT

1. RAPPEL DES OBJECTIFS ET CRITÈRES D'UN DÉVELOPPEMENT VÉRITABLE ET DURABLE

Il ne peut y avoir de développement véritable séparément de la poursuite du bien commun. Comme l'exprimait Paul VI, cette poursuite implique la recherche du développement de l'homme, de tout l'homme, de tous les hommes, donc de l'humanité et des générations à naître.

Pour correspondre à l'objectif de bien commun, le véritable développement doit être, à la fois, équitable, soutenable et participatif.

Le développement économique contribue au développement de l'homme mais il ne peut y parvenir sans considération pour la justice sociale. L'économie libérale de marché permet sans doute d'atteindre une bonne efficacité dans l'allocation des ressources. Elle favorise l'accumulation du capital mais elle ne garantit ni une bonne répartition des richesses, ni la justice sociale. Telle est d'ailleurs la raison pour laquelle la justice sociale est placée à la base du fonctionnement de l'Organisation Internationale du Travail depuis sa création en 1914.

Le problème de la justice se retrouve à deux niveaux différents: d'une part, celui de la justice commutative; d'autre part, de la justice distributive dont les néolibéraux, comme F. Hayek, par exemple, nient l'utilité et l'efficacité.

Pour rappel, la justice commutative régit les transactions. Elle tend à répartir les revenus en fonction des apports et prestations de chacun, ou encore des qualifications et des mérites de chacun.

Quant à la justice distributive, elle régit les transferts de richesse et de revenu et se base sur le droit de chacun à obtenir ce qui lui est nécessaire en vue de couvrir ses besoins primordiaux. Elle implique que quiconque, en cas d'incapacité de travail, reçoive le nécessaire pour lui et ses dépendants. On en est loin. Sur le plan mondial, "nous sommes (...) en présence d'un grave problème d'inégalité dans la répartition des moyens de subsistance destinés à l'origine à tous les hommes" (SRS 9). La justice distributive requiert, en outre, un accès suffisamment égalitaire aux biens et services collectifs indispensables à la vie et la survie des personnes et communautés. Ces principes justifient les impositions fiscales et sociales.

Un pas plus loin, la poursuite du bien commun et de la justice des transactions, comme des transferts implique que chacun soit libre de défendre ses intérêts en s'alliant éventuellement à d'autres. Un équilibre s'impose donc entre la recherche de l'efficacité et de l'efficience sur le plan économique, la poursuite de la justice sociale et la liberté individuelle d'entre-

prendre mais aussi de s'associer à d'autres. Tel est le fondement de la liberté d'association et notamment de la liberté syndicale, car les mécanismes du marché ne peuvent à eux seuls correspondre à la diversité des intérêts et des problèmes découlant de la vie en société.

Le développement doit aussi être soutenable. Il implique le respect absolu de l'homme sur le plan physique, intellectuel et spirituel et, parallèlement, la protection du patrimoine culturel. Celui-ci comprend les ensembles de savoir, d'idées, de valeurs et de normes régissant ou ayant régi la relation de l'homme à lui-même, aux autres, à Dieu (l'être suprême, le grand architecte), ainsi qu'à l'environnement. Ce patrimoine culturel comprend, en outre, l'ensemble des biens accumulés par les civilisations successives. Ils constituent le legs visible des générations passées à transmettre aux générations futures.

Le développement véritable ne se conçoit pas non plus sans une protection efficace de la nature, du patrimoine génétique, notamment humain mais aussi du patrimoine naturel ou de l'environnement, c'est-à-dire de l'ensemble des biens qui font partie de la nature et permettent la vie sur la planète. Un développement soutenable et durable implique une exploitation rationnelle et prudente des ressources naturelles,

Ce développement équitable et soutenable ne peut se concevoir en dehors du concept de développement intégré et intégral. Dans cette optique, le développement ne peut se limiter à la dimension économique. Le développement économique doit contribuer au développement social et celui-ci, par ricochet, aider au développement économique. Mais un développement intégré implique aussi de prendre en compte les autres dimensions: politique, sociale, écologique, religieuse et culturelle du développement. C'est sans doute la raison pour laquelle, le vrai développement doit aussi être participatif.

Pour que le cercle du développement soit vertueux, il doit promouvoir l'initiative, la responsabilité et l'épanouissement des personnes mais aussi être participatif et donc s'accompagner d'une gestion démocratique, de formes de participation directe ou représentative. De ce point de vue, on est sans doute loin de compte au niveau des entreprises, notamment transnationales et mondiales. Si l'on se plie simplement à la logique des marchés et à la rationalité économique qui président à l'accumulation du capital, la logique de la participation ne s'impose que si elle rapporte plus qu'elle ne coûte.

Du point de vue néolibéral, cela n'est pas choquant puisqu'à terme, la croissance économique a toutes chances d'engendrer un progrès social et par là, d'accroître les possibilités de participation et de gestion démocratiques, et donc de multiplier les occasions d'affirmation et d'expression citoyennes.

Selon ce courant de pensée, le développement économique et la démocratie politique se développeraient de concert. Dans les faits, les rapports entre économie libérale et démocratie politique sont loin d'être aussi clairs.

Il n'est pas rare qu'une économie libre s'assortisse d'un régime autoritaire, voire dictatorial. Par ailleurs, sur le plan, international et mondial, les instances de gouvernance, notamment celles de type économique qui se sont développées dans le sillage des accords de Bretton Woods, sont loin de fonctionner selon des normes démocratiques. Ces instances représentatives des États échappent de droit à toute forme de contrôle démocratique. Elles oeuvrent à belle distance par rapport aux "citoyens du monde".

Dans l'optique libérale, l'individualisme et la poursuite par chacun de son intérêt personnel et privé constituent une base acceptable et efficace dans la promotion de la croissance économique et dans la construction de la société. Dans la réalité, le développement économique engendré sur base du libéralisme n'a pas que des effets heureux. Sur le plan mondial, il se traduit en une inégalité croissante des chances, des revenus et des richesses. Il s'accompagne d'une concentration géographique des activités économiques et industrielles, d'une métropolisation. Cette concentration métropolitaine et souvent portuaire et maritime des activités, crée un déséquilibre dans les chances de développement des régions et nations. En favorisant un exode massif des campagnes vers les villes, elle conduit à une déstructuration des communautés de base, à une désarticulation des systèmes traditionnels d'activités, de qualification et de relation. Les efforts et les investissements engagés par les régions et les pays en développement qui cherchent à prendre place dans la course, n'accroissent pas simplement le déséquilibre dans les chances de développement des régions et des pays, en cherchant à obtenir un maximum de crédits, les pays les plus pauvres se retrouvent face à un endettement et à des remboursements insupportables.

Dans le même temps, le développement technologique mis au service du développement économique mondial et de l'accumulation mondiale du capital, révolutionne de manière radicale et continue la gamme des qualifications professionnelles requises par le système économique et, dans le même temps, engendre un sous-emploi et un chômage croissants. Ce qui, à son tour, réduit le droit au travail pourtant essentiel à la vie et à la survie des personnes et des familles et porte atteinte au respect et à la dignité de l'homme. Dans de telles conditions, le développement économique aiguise les oppositions d'intérêts, multiplie les occasions de conflit social et a toutes chances de conduire à une gestion autoritaire des sociétés.

Au contraire, si l'on accepte de se mettre à la recherche d'un développement véritable et à la poursuite du bien commun de l'homme et de l'humanité, la primauté devrait être donnée au travail sur le capital, au développement de l'homme sur l'accumulation du capital, aux ressources humaines sur les autres ressources naturelles et matérielles. Ce n'est pourtant pas dans cette perspective que sont définies les logiques de gestion du capital et du

travail. Ce n'est pas dans cette optique que leurs rapports sont réglés. Tel n'est non plus le sens dans lequel s'orientent spontanément les évolutions ...

Dans les faits, l'économie de marché et de libre concurrence ne répond pas nécessairement aux besoins les plus urgents. Elle ne respecte pas d'office la hiérarchie des besoins de l'ensemble des consommateurs ou travailleurs. Elle n'assure pas spontanément un bon équilibre entre les besoins des divers groupes de consommateurs, de travailleurs ou de citoyens. En réalité, l'économie capitaliste libérale ne fonctionne vraiment qu'en rapport avec les besoins solvables des consommateurs. Elle ignore les besoins de ceux qui, pour une quelconque raison (handicap ou maladie grave, par exemple), sont insolvable. Par ailleurs, elle ne correspond aux besoins des travailleurs que si cette prise en compte contribue au relèvement de la productivité et de la rentabilité. Elle peut aussi créer de faux besoins, des assuétudes. Finalement, cette économie paraît d'abord servir les riches et les puissants, les investisseurs et les financiers.

En bonne logique, l'orientation du développement en fonction des impératifs de vie et de survie de l'homme et de l'humanité et, parallèlement, en fonction des exigences de protection de l'environnement, exigerait une régulation nouvelle du capital et du travail, ainsi que des rapports entre capital et travail au niveau de l'entreprise et du secteur d'activité, de la région et de la nation, et enfin, au niveau transnational et mondial, car il n'y a pas d'autre moyen de répondre aux problèmes posés par la transnationalisation des systèmes d'approvisionnement, de production et de commercialisation.

L'utilisation et l'accumulation privées de la propriété et du capital constituent sans aucun doute le moteur de l'économie, de la croissance et du développement. Le droit à la propriété garantit le droit à l'initiative et à la libre entreprise. Mais pour être socialement efficace, cette appropriation privée ne peut s'exercer à l'encontre de la destination universelle des biens. La fonction de la propriété est de garantir l'autonomie des personnes, leur droit à l'initiative responsable, mais l'exercice de ce droit est soumis à la poursuite du bien commun. Ce droit ne peut s'exercer sans considération des besoins des travailleurs et de bien être des personnes, familles et communautés.

En d'autres mots, le véritable développement de l'homme et de l'humanité, la protection efficace de la vie et de la survie des générations présentes et futures, ne peuvent être obtenus par la simple soumission de l'homme et de ses actions aux purs principes de la rationalité économique et à la logique de l'accumulation du capital. En effet, dans le sillage de cette logique qui envahit le monde, force est de constater une disjonction croissante entre les intérêts du capital et du travail. Cette disjonction se manifestait déjà dans le cadre des économies nationales. C'est ce qui a conduit au développement des systèmes nationaux de régulation. Mais la mondialisation et la globalisa-

tion sur le plan économique ont évidemment affecté le fonctionnement de ces systèmes de régulation et appellent à un dépassement.

Cette nécessité de compléter les systèmes de régulation traditionnels du capital et du travail, ne découle donc pas d'abord d'un changement dans les objectifs du véritable développement toujours à la recherche du plus grand bien de l'homme et du bien commun de l'humanité mais bien de la montée en force des processus de mondialisation et de globalisation.

2. LES DEUX POINTS DE VUE SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT: LE LOCAL ET LE GLOBAL

Même si un certain consensus pouvait se dégager sur les objectifs d'un véritable développement, il n'est pas sûr que tous s'accorderaient sur les régulations du capital et du travail qui pourraient en découler.

Selon les uns, la définition et la poursuite du développement est d'abord le fait du local, de la volonté dégagée à ce niveau. Le développement intégré et intégral, soutenable, équitable, participatif ne peut être que local parce qu'il résulte d'un fonctionnement systémique; parce qu'il est le résultat d'une multiplicité d'interactions quotidiennes. En outre, le développement véritable implique avant tout la mobilisation des communautés de base. Il ne peut donc se construire que localement dans le respect absolu des droits de l'homme.

Dans cette ligne du développement alternatif, le mandat d'institutions mondiales telles que le Fonds Monétaire International ou la Banque Mondiale, pourrait être carrément réduit. En effet, en favorisant dans le sillage des entreprises transnationales, la mondialisation et la globalisation des systèmes de production, ces organismes menacent ce qui, sur le plan local, assure la variété et la diversité, ce qui est source d'initiative, ce qui pourrait être objet de mobilisation collective et démocratique.

Sans nier l'importance de la mobilisation des communautés de base dans le développement, ni l'intérêt de l'engagement citoyen sur le plan local, il faut bien reconnaître que l'on n'arrêtera pas les processus de mondialisation et de globalisation de cette façon. Le problème est de parvenir à travers une nouvelle régulation à assurer complémentirement le jeu de cette initiative et de ce contrôle à la base et, par ailleurs, la construction d'une autorité mondiale capable de contrôler les flux économiques mondiaux et d'éviter qu'ils ne déstabilisent et déséquilibrent les économies nationales. Ce qui corrélativement implique de nouvelles formes de régulation des rapports entre capital et travail, car les processus en cours sur le plan mondial déséquilibrent profondément les rapports de force: ils renforcent le capital et affaiblissent le travail et accentuent la subordination du social aux impératifs économiques.

En tout cas, une nouvelle architecture des relations entre capital et travail doit impérativement être pensée en fonction d'une cohérence suffisante entre les divers niveaux: local ou régional, national, continental et mondial, dans une cohérence aussi entre les rôles de travailleur, de consommateur et de citoyen.

3. LES TRANSFORMATIONS DANS LE CONTEXTE GLOBAL

3.1. *La nécessaire distinction entre les processus de mondialisation et de globalisation*

Au cours des vingt dernières années, les travailleurs, les peuples et les États, se sont trouvés confrontés à l'accélération des processus de mondialisation et de globalisation. Même si ces termes sont souvent pris comme des synonymes, il importe dans l'analyse de les distinguer. La mondialisation centre l'attention sur l'extension géographique des phénomènes, des marchés et des entreprises. La globalisation caractérise avant tout les interdépendances et les connexions. Elle se focalise sur "l'interopérationalité" et la coordination d'ensemble d'unités ou de réseaux, sur les liaisons intra- et inter-organisationnelles, sur les interfaces à établir entre les fonctions de conception des produits et des processus comme entre les fonctions d'approvisionnement, de production et de commercialisation. Ainsi, une entreprise comme Coca-Cola est mondiale parce qu'elle dispose d'unités partout dans le monde. Elle n'est pas nécessairement globale dans la mesure où chaque unité est largement indépendante. Une entreprise est globale lorsque l'interdépendance entre les unités est construite sur base d'une gestion qui se veut globale. Cette interopérationalité et ces connexions entre les fonctions et entre les unités sont d'autant plus nécessaires qu'il s'agit de concevoir et de diffuser des produits complexes et sophistiqués: des servo-produits combinant des ensembles de biens physiques et de services, comme l'ordinateur, par exemple; d'élaborer et d'exécuter des macroprojets, tel le tunnel sous la Manche ou l'installation d'un port de mer, ou encore de construire des entreprises "clé sur porte".

Mondialisation et globalisation sont donc bien des processus complémentaires mais distincts. A travers eux, l'interdépendance se développe entre les nations, les peuples et les cultures du monde.

3.2. *Les effets positifs et négatifs des processus de mondialisation et de globalisation*

Malgré les réticences et oppositions qu'ils engendrent, ces processus de mondialisation et de globalisation ont incontestablement de multiples effets positifs. Ils s'accompagnent de la diffusion d'une large gamme de biens et de

services qui accroissent le confort, la qualité de vie et du loisir à destination d'un nombre croissant de personnes dans le monde. Ils aident à la diffusion d'une gamme de soins et de services médicaux et de santé. Ces processus favorisent la croissance et une efficacité économiques supérieures grâce à une nouvelle division internationale du travail et celle-ci ne peut se comprendre séparément de multiples formes nouvelles de diffusion internationale d'informations, de messages, de connaissances et donc de transferts de techniques et d'innovations. La multiplication des échanges, des communications et des relations contribue, en outre, à une interpénétration et une hybridation des cultures. On assiste à l'éveil d'une intelligence et d'une conscience planétaires. De nouvelles formes de communautés transnationales et transculturelles apparaissent à travers, notamment, la multiplicité et la diversité croissante des organisations non-gouvernementales transnationales.

Mais s'il y a un côté du mur au soleil, l'autre côté se trouve à l'ombre. Les effets de la mondialisation et de la globalisation ne sont pas tous positifs. Même si ces processus développent les interdépendances et favorisent l'universalisation de biens et services tant individuels que collectifs, dans le même temps, ils contribuent à la diffusion internationale d'une série de problèmes et de risques.

A l'analyse, on constate que les processus qui contribuent à la production de richesse et à la distribution de revenus, creusent les écarts entre les riches et les pauvres. La mondialisation de la prospérité et celle de la pauvreté se développent en parallèle. Ce qui renforce l'urgence d'une régulation mondiale et globale des problèmes du développement, de la production et de la répartition des richesses. Ce qui implique aussi de nouveaux modes de gestion du capital, du travail et de leurs rapports.

Les problèmes et dangers engendrés par les processus de mondialisation et de globalisation ne s'arrêtent pas là. Des effets négatifs se retrouvent sur le plan écologique à travers des pollutions et des risques devenus planétaires, comme ceux qui résultent des utilisations de l'énergie nucléaire qu'elles soient pacifiques ou militaires. Le développement économique dans un cadre de concurrence mondiale ne fournit pas une garantie de respect de l'environnement ou encore d'un développement humain.

Des effets négatifs découlent de la mondialisation parallèle des commerces légaux et illégaux parmi lesquels ceux de la drogue, des organes, des être humains et des armes. L'économie informelle, soustraite à toute règle de travail, de sécurité, de statut et de protection à court et à long terme croît au côté de l'économie formelle.

Sur le plan culturel, l'imposition et la domination culturelles se développent par le biais des moyens de diffusion et de communication à la fois individuels et collectifs.

Sur le plan des migrations, les effets pervers se manifestent dans des exodes massifs, volontaires ou contraints de millions de personnes de tous horizons et de toutes couleurs.

Sur le plan médical, on constate, à travers le monde, la multiplication d'épidémies et d'épizooties, comme le sida par exemple.

Sur le plan militaire, la mondialisation s'accompagne du développement au service des plus forts de l'ensemble des moyens de surveillance mondiale par satellites ...

3.3. *Les disjonctions entre capital et travail*

Une mondialisation et une globalisation non régulées de la concurrence, des marchés et des systèmes de production renforcent les disjonctions entre les exigences de l'accumulation du capital et les exigences du développement économique. La mondialisation de la circulation de l'argent et du capital n'induit pas d'office des investissements productifs en proportion des masses financières véhiculées dans le monde; ni des volumes d'emplois en proportion des montants d'investissement.

Sur le plan mondial, divers facteurs tendent à renforcer la disjonction entre les intérêts du travail et du capital, comme par exemple la différence toujours plus grande entre la mobilité et la fluidité du capital et celles du travail: facteur souvent très refermé sur son territoire, voire enfermé dans ses frontières. Ce différentiel de mobilité n'est pas systématiquement compensé par une accélération de la circulation des savoir et savoir-faire.

Le décalage entre les mobilités respectives du travail et du capital ne joue évidemment pas dans le sens d'un équilibre des pouvoirs entre ces deux facteurs. D'autant mieux qu'une disjonction s'introduit du côté du travail lui-même entre les cadres qui constituent une élite dénationalisée et transnationalisée et la masse des travailleurs dont l'ancrage reste national. Aujourd'hui, le déséquilibre de pouvoir entre travail et capital est d'autant plus grand que les entreprises peuvent désinvestir et se délocaliser sans beaucoup d'égards aux problèmes sociaux qui en découlent pour les forces de travail et les populations locales. Le déséquilibre de pouvoir est d'autant plus important que les vagues successives d'innovations conduisent à des réductions drastiques d'emplois et à des économies de travail. La croissance et la permanence du chômage handicapent incontestablement la force de négociation des travailleurs et représentants syndicaux, tout en permettant la gestion séparée du capital et son accumulation accélérée. Dans le sillage du sous-emploi et d'un chômage perdurable, la misère envahit. Tous les ingrédients favorables au développement d'une économie informelle sont ainsi réunis. Le risque est donc grand de voir se former des communautés à l'écart de l'économie formelle, de voir

naître des clans et des mafias engagés dans une kyrielle de commerces à la limite de la légalité, sinon illégaux, avec en prime la menace de corruptions en chaîne, et le danger d'une déstabilisation de l'économie formelle par l'informelle. Cette menace est d'autant plus grande que les pays sont plus pauvres.

Les problèmes soulevés par les rapports entre travail et capital et la recherche d'un équilibre dans ces rapports sont considérables mais ne concernent pas que les travailleurs et leurs représentants. La disjonction entre la mobilité du travail et du capital assure à ce dernier une capacité de contournement non seulement des bastions syndicaux, mais aussi des associations de consommateurs, des mouvements écologistes, de même que des États. En effet, la mobilité supérieure du capital lui permet, s'il le veut, de se soustraire aux règles édictées nationalement que ce soit en matière de travail, de protection du milieu ou encore aux impositions sociales et fiscales en laissant comptablement apparaître des déficits là où les profits sont les plus taxés pour ne les laisser émerger que là où les prélèvements sont les plus bas, notamment par le biais des prix de transfert des composants fournis d'une unité à l'autre, ainsi que par le canal des sièges installés dans divers paradis fiscaux. Par ces différents biais, la concurrence se développe entre les divers systèmes fiscaux.

3.4. Les disjonctions entre capital matériel et immatériel

Dans la régulation du travail et du capital, il faut tenir compte de cette différence dans la mobilité physique du capital que l'on cherche à attirer et celle du travail ou plutôt des travailleurs dont les migrations à partir de lointains pays sont loin d'être souhaitées. Mais dans le même temps, il importe d'être attentif à la transformation des rapports entre le capital matériel et physique, et le capital immatériel et humain dont le développement découle des apports des sciences et des techniques, ainsi que de l'abondance des réservoirs d'intelligence, voire de culture que forment les diverses catégories de travailleurs au service de l'entreprise et de la nation.

A travers la mondialisation et la globalisation des activités et des réseaux, l'interdépendance s'est accrue entre les nations mais aussi la concurrence. Interdépendance et concurrence jouent dans le sens de l'innovation qui devient un enjeu primordial et, à terme, sans doute la seule véritable source de profit et d'accumulation.

A son tour, l'hyperconcurrence mondiale à la base du développement des économies d'innovation, du savoir, de la connaissance ou encore de l'intelligence implique une régulation des rapports entre les propriétaires des biens capitaux mobiliers et immobiliers et, par ailleurs, les détenteurs de savoir et de savoir-faire, les porteurs d'intelligence et de culture que consti-

tuent les travailleurs. En effet, dans le cadre d'économies travaillées par la concurrence et donc centrées sur l'innovation, les besoins d'adaptation continue et de reconversion des travailleurs sont croissants.

Les disjonctions entre ces types de capitaux matériels et immatériels découlent principalement du caractère inappropriable du capital humain dont seuls les services peuvent être achetés. Non seulement les détenteurs de capitaux et d'argent n'ont pas intérêt à investir dans ce qui n'est pas appropriable, mais dans un grand nombre de cas, la rentabilité des investissements en hommes ne se traduit que tardivement parce que le temps d'incubation du capital humain dépasse généralement l'horizon temporel de l'investisseur capitaliste.

D'où le fait que, par delà l'emploi et le salaire, l'enjeu des négociations professionnelles concerne de plus en plus souvent la valorisation et l'adaptation des connaissances et compétences des travailleurs.

Mondialisation et globalisation constituent donc des enjeux importants du point de vue des travailleurs, d'abord sur le plan de la mobilité physique; ensuite, sur le plan de l'acquisition et de l'adaptation des connaissances et compétences au cours de la vie et de la carrière professionnelle.

Le besoin d'une gestion et d'une régulation globales du travail, du capital et de leurs rapports, ne résulte pas seulement de la nécessité de contrôler les processus de mondialisation et de globalisation mais dérivent avant tout des transformations dans les formes de concurrence, des problèmes qui surgissent suite aux disjonctions manifestes entre la mobilité transnationale du capital et du travail, comme entre le rythme de développement de l'emploi et celui d'application des nouvelles technologies. L'impérieuse nécessité d'une régulation globale provient aussi des problèmes qui surgissent en raison des combinaisons inadéquates entre les capitaux matériels (mobiliers et immobiliers) et immatériel: constitués par le savoir et le savoir-faire des travailleurs, par les connaissances et compétences accumulées par eux dans ou hors de l'entreprise.

En bonne application du principe de subsidiarité: les initiatives qu'il n'est pas possible de développer efficacement en partant des Etats-nations, notamment en raison de leurs intérêts divergents, doivent être confiées à des instances supérieures de gouvernance mais évidemment, sous le contrôle des instances étatiques et des processus démocratiques.

En tout cas, dans un contexte d'interdépendance croissante, les régulations locales et nationales apparaissent rapidement étriquées. Le développement ne peut plus se concevoir dans le cadre limité d'une nation, mais doit être pensé à des niveaux qui dépassent le local et le national pour atteindre les limites du monde. De nouvelles régulations s'imposent visant complémentairement au respect des droits de l'homme et du travailleur, au développement de

l'emploi, à une couverture des besoins vitaux, y compris sociaux, à l'élargissement des protections sociales, au respect de la nature et de l'environnement ... Mais pour que de telles régulations soient fonctionnelles, il est nécessaire de mieux connaître à la fois les évolutions, les aspirations et réactions qu'elles suscitent, ainsi que les logiques contradictoires qui inspirent les divers acteurs.

Deuxième partie

LA MOBILITÉ INTERNATIONALE DIFFÉRENTIELLE DES PRODUITS ET FACTEURS DE PRODUCTION

1. EXAMEN DES PROCESSUS DE MONDIALISATION ET DE GLOBALISATION

Même si ces processus ne sont pas vraiment nouveaux puisqu'ils se sont enclenchés dès la naissance du capitalisme, mondialisation et globalisation sont en pleine accélération.

Parmi les explications de cette accélération, il y a d'abord, le développement des facilités de transport et de communication, ainsi que des connexions entre les divers réseaux, comme aussi des politiques volontaires ou contraintes d'ouverture des économies nationales que ce soit en application de traités, de recommandations, de décisions ou d'impositions d'une série d'instances internationales, comme l'Union européenne ou le G7, ou encore d'instances mondiales, comme l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce, la Banque Mondiale, le Fonds Monétaire International ou la Banque des Règlements Internationaux. En d'autres termes, l'ouverture des marchés et l'interpénétration des économies ne sont pas une conséquence déterministe et incontournable d'une évolution des technologies de transport et de communication. Elles ne s'imposent pas à l'homme comme le font les forces de la nature. Elles sont, au contraire, le résultat de choix, de politiques délibérées, d'ententes entre représentants des États dans ou hors des grandes instances internationales. Les aides économiques sont liées à certaines conditions, à des mesures visant à l'ouverture des marchés et à l'adoption de formes occidentales de démocratie.

Au cours des vingt dernières années mais déjà avant, dans le sillage des institutions issues de Bretton Woods, les instances chargées primordialement de la gestion planétaire des problèmes monétaires, financiers et économiques, ont inspiré ou mené des politiques de tendance libérale sans beaucoup d'égards vis-à-vis d'autres instances, plus culturelles, plus sociales et représentatives, telles l'UNESCO ou l'Organisation Internationale du Travail, laquelle rassemble les représentants des États, ainsi que les délégués des organisations représentatives des employeurs et des travailleurs, ou encore l'Organisation des Nations-Unies auprès de laquelle les ONG (orga-

nisations non-gouvernementales) ont la possibilité de faire entendre leur voix et de transmettre leurs avis et où, au moment des votes, les pays membres, petits et grands, se trouvent sur pied d'égalité.

En d'autres termes, la mondialisation et la globalisation ne sont pas des processus anonymes découlant simplement des facilités accrues de transport et de communication ou encore de l'abaissement des prix. Ils ne sont pas seulement la conséquence de la montée en puissance de firmes transnationales, voire mondiales et globales. Ils sont aussi le résultat de politiques et de réglementations décrétées à partir de multiples instances internationales dont la coordination n'est pas assurée et dont le contrôle démocratique est lacunaire.

Outre l'absence de coordination et les divergences de point de vue entre les instances de gouvernance mondiale quant aux politiques à mener en faveur du libre-échange et du développement, il importe de dénoncer le déficit démocratique dont ces instances économiques et financières mondiales souffrent en raison de la faible transparence des enjeux et des débats qui y sont menés. La plupart de ces instances fonctionnent à distance considérable des citoyens, sinon des États et ne cherchent d'ailleurs pas à se soumettre à des formes démocratiques et sociales de débat et de contrôle qui feraient obstacle à ce qu'elles définissent comme économiquement rationnel ou efficace.

Généralement, les débats sur le développement mondial ne dépassent pas les cercles d'intellectuels ou encore, ceux composés par quelques ONG et les communautés virtuelles qu'elles animent à travers le monde.

Toutefois, quelles que soient les divergences entre les instances mondiales, le manque de coordination entre leurs décisions et actions, ou le déficit démocratique dont souffrent ces institutions, il semble évident que le développement doit à l'avenir être pensé dans un cadre mondial et global, même si nombre d'experts croient à raison qu'on ne peut réussir un développement véritable sans parier sur le local.

Sur le plan mondial, il s'agit de substituer au système de pouvoir qui régit le développement économique mondial, un système régulé au service d'un développement intégré qui place la poursuite du bien commun par dessus les intérêts privés du capital économique et financier.

2. L'ÉVEIL ET LE TRAILLEMENT DES CONSCIENCES FACE AUX PROCESSUS ET PROBLÈMES DU DÉVELOPPEMENT MONDIAL

Même si le débat démocratique reste le plus souvent exclu des instances internationales, la conscience des personnes et des peuples s'est aiguisée par rapport aux processus de mondialisation et de globalisation. Ces processus prennent de plus en plus de place non seulement dans les

événements au quotidien mais dans les discours et les consciences, à la fois, dans les pays d'économie avancée et dans les pays en développement.

Aujourd'hui, les citoyens, quel que soit le pays auquel ils appartiennent, se trouvent sur le plan économique soumis directement ou indirectement à un nombre croissant de décisions et de règles, de stipulations du droit international, de conditions et de contraintes émanant de l'extérieur et qui s'imposent à eux à travers le jeu des instances supraétatiques ou par le biais de traités et de conventions dans lesquels les États se sont engagés.

La conscience des citoyens est, en outre, travaillée par les nombreux discours sur l'incontournable mondialisation et globalisation de l'économie, sur les exigences des instances internationales en matière de politique économique. Ces discours imposent un mode de lecture et de perception des transformations du monde avant même que les processus de mondialisation et de globalisation aient atteint toute leur ampleur. Ils cherchent à convaincre les citoyens de la nécessité de se rallier au "laisser faire et laisser passer", et donc de se soumettre au jeu de la concurrence mondiale en recherchant le minimum d'interventions politiques dans le domaine économique.

Partant d'une analyse parfois sommaire de ces macroprocessus et de leurs conséquences sociales, les économistes néolibéraux ne manquent pas de dénoncer les rôles encore trop nombreux remplis par les États dans les domaines économique et social. Aujourd'hui pourtant, certains acceptent de reconnaître qu'une politique par trop libérale entraîne, en parallèle, la mondialisation de la pauvreté, comme de la prospérité. En effet, même si globalement la richesse s'étend, les écarts se creusent entre les pays riches, les anciens et nouveaux pays industriels et, par ailleurs, les pays pauvres; entre les régions d'un pays, car elles n'ont pas des chances égales d'insertion dans les courants et réseaux internationaux, de même qu'entre riches et pauvres au sein de chaque pays.

Pendant longtemps, le FMI s'est montré peu soucieux des conséquences sociales de ses programmes d'ajustements structurels et des conditionnalités auxquelles les aides étaient soumises. Aujourd'hui, il reconnaît l'utilité de soutenir le rôle des États, notamment dans la promotion de l'éducation et de la santé. Il n'empêche que, préoccupé de la compétitivité internationale, les mesures budgétaires préconisées par le FMI visent directement ou indirectement les protections et dépenses sociales considérées comme un handicap par rapport aux objectifs économiques.

La montée de conscience par rapport à la mondialisation et à l'interdépendance générale ne résulte pas simplement des discours. Si les consciences s'aiguisent, c'est aussi parce que ces processus servent d'argument pour justifier des mesures impopulaires, telles les fermetures d'entreprises, les réductions d'emploi ou des dépenses sociales dénoncées comme

un obstacle dans le cadre de la concurrence mondiale. Les travailleurs sont d'ailleurs de plus en plus nombreux à être confrontés à des faillites, des fermetures d'entreprises, à des réductions drastiques d'emploi, à des délocalisations qui s'accompagnent de longues périodes de chômage ou de reconversion professionnelle, voire d'un appauvrissement sensible. Partant de la menace qui pèse partout sur emploi, tous se voient menacés dans leur capacité à subvenir à leurs besoins et à ceux de leur famille.

Les travailleurs ne sont pas seuls à prendre conscience des effets de l'ouverture des économies nationales au vent de la concurrence mondiale. Les consommateurs voient affluer des produits en provenance de tous horizons. Sur le plan des loisirs et temps libres, les médias inondent l'espace d'informations, d'images et de messages venus de partout.

Quant aux populations, principalement celles des grandes villes et des zones industrielles qui voient arriver des personnes étrangères en grand nombre, il leur suffit d'ouvrir les yeux et les oreilles pour constater les flux croissants de personnes fuyant la pauvreté et la famine, les luttes et purifications ethniques, les conflits locaux, les guerres civiles ... L'arrivée en masse de réfugiés et demandeurs d'asiles pose évidemment la question de savoir pourquoi tant des personnes sont contraintes à fuir leur pays et conduit chacun à s'interroger sur les causes de ces immigrations et à découvrir qu'elles sont, la plupart du temps, la conséquence de la déstructuration des réseaux et tissus de vie traditionnels au niveau des communautés de base découlant des processus de mondialisation et de globalisation. Ces migrations, pas toujours bienvenues, sont incontestablement le corollaire "d'un grave problème dans la répartition des moyens de subsistance destinés à l'origine à tous les hommes". Dans ces conditions, "les foules humaines privées des biens et des services apportés par le développement sont beaucoup plus nombreuses que celles qui en disposent" (SRS 9).

Si il est faux de nier les effets positifs de la mondialisation et de la globalisation sur les transferts de savoir et de savoir-faire, les possibilités de dialogue interculturel et les interdépendances motrices entre les économies et les nations, on ne peut occulter la transnationalisation et la mondialisation parallèles de nombreux risques: ceux qui surgissent d'accidents nucléaires (comme à Tchernobyl), des dégradations de l'environnement planétaire, de la surexploitation de ressources naturelles ...

Tels sont quelques chemins par lesquels les travailleurs, les consommateurs et citoyens sont rendus conscients de l'importance de la mondialisation et de la globalisation. Telles sont aussi les voies par lesquelles les aspirations à de nouvelles régulations se développent. D'autant mieux que nombre d'États se trouvent complètement désarmés face à des processus qui, dans les structures actuelles de faible régulation internationale, leur échappent presque entièrement.

Mais jusqu'à ce jour, la montée de conscience par rapport à l'interdépendance globale ne s'inscrit pas nécessairement dans un engagement plus net à la recherche du bien commun mondial et global. Malgré le développement spectaculaire du nombre des ONG actives sur le plan international et la naissance de mouvements sociaux nouveaux transnationaux, l'interdépendance croissante entre les économies et les nations ne se traduit pas dans des élans de solidarité plus larges.

Face au global ressenti comme une menace, on constate des phénomènes de retrait, de repli et de retour vers le local. Ils s'expliquent en partie au moins par les risques d'écrasement des cultures, des langues et des religions, ou encore des divers types de minorités, ainsi que par les menaces de déstructuration et de déculturation par le "global". Ainsi, partout dans le monde, on constate la résurgence du local, une exacerbation des identités, la revendication d'un droit à la différence, la recherche des racines et un retour aux traditions qui n'est pas simplement folklorique, même si, par ailleurs, les interdépendances globales sont réelles.

Parallèlement, dans un nombre important de régions du monde, on assiste à la résurgence de conflits liés à des appartenances ethniques, linguistiques ou religieuses. Michaël Huntington prévoit même la possibilité de chocs de civilisations, comme si le "doux commerce" n'avait pas les effets pacificateurs que les théoriciens libéraux lui accordent. Dans les faits, les interpénétrations et les interdépendances naissant des échanges commerciaux ne sont pas nécessairement pacifiantes. Les effets sont inévitablement multiples. Soumises à des influences et des contraintes extérieures, les communautés jusqu'à isolées se sentent envahies, ne serait-ce que par les moyens de communication sociale, l'arrivée des touristes, le jeu des lois du marché.

Cette présentation générale des processus de mondialisation et de globalisation, de même que l'analyse des chemins par lesquels la conscience humaine s'aiguise par rapport à eux ne fournit pas une explication suffisante de ce qui change fondamentalement et pourquoi?

C'est dans l'analyse d'un ensemble de disjonctions dans l'évolution du capital et du travail ainsi que de leurs effets que l'on peut le mieux comprendre ce qui se passe. C'est en reconnaissant les degrés différents de mobilité des facteurs: capital, travail et savoir, que l'on peut expliquer le déséquilibre mondial entre les pouvoirs du capital et du travail.

3. LA MOBILITÉ DIFFÉRENTIELLE DU CAPITAL ET DU TRAVAIL

Le jeu des processus de mondialisation et de globalisation sur le plan économique et financier a radicalement rompu l'équilibre entre le travail et le

capital dans le monde. Le déséquilibre entre les forces et pouvoirs du capital et du travail a sans doute de multiples explications mais n'est pas sans rapport avec les mobilités réelles et potentielles différentes de ces facteurs. De manière générale, l'argent et le capital sont largement plus mobiles et fluides que le travail encore régi par la territorialité. La fuite internationale des capitaux est plus aisée que l'exode des travailleurs ou des cerveaux, même si les nombres de migrants ne sont pas négligeables. De nos jours l'argent circule à la vitesse de la lumière. Le coût de cette mobilité a été très sensiblement réduit. Ce qui facilite le contournement et l'évitement des pressions syndicales et locales; ce qui permet de se soustraire aux obligations découlant des conventions collectives et du droit du travail et assure au capital une capacité à contourner les impositions fiscales et sociales jugées trop lourdes.

Cette mobilité mondiale du capital est une condition de croissance et de développement économiques dans le monde. Plus la mobilité monétaire et financière est grande, plus il est aisé de saisir les opportunités d'investissement où que ce soit sur la planète. Encore faudrait-il démontrer que cette mobilité croissante s'explique vraiment par la recherche d'occasions d'investissement et de profit, et qu'elle ne résulte pas simplement d'un meilleur management des risques, de la recherche d'une "sécurisation" des avoirs, ou encore des opportunités de spéculation.

De nos jours, capital et argent circulent dans le monde sans grandes entraves. Argent et capital occupent une belle place sur l'échelle de la mobilité mondiale, à l'instar de l'information et de la publicité sur les produits ou encore des biens et services destinés au divertissement ou aux loisirs, d'ailleurs faiblement pondéreux. Au cours de ce vingtième siècle, les révolutions scientifiques et techniques dans les communications et les transports, ainsi que dans leurs modes de connexion et de coordination, ont favorisé l'accélération des échanges mondiaux qu'ils concernent les images, les messages publicitaires ou autres, les connaissances, les idées... Ces révolutions ont permis un fonctionnement fluide des marchés mondiaux des matières premières, semi-produits et produits. Elles ont facilité la mise en place de systèmes de production transnationaux, la multiplication des entreprises transnationales et mondiales, comme encore la constitution de réseaux mondiaux d'entreprises. Elles ont accru la vitesse des transactions financières, la circulabilité et la fluidité de l'argent, la mobilité des capitaux, la flexibilité des investissements.

Sur le marché de l'argent et du capital, l'électronique et l'informatique aboutissent à une annihilation de l'espace. Grâce aux technologies nouvelles, ces éléments sont aisément transférables à travers le monde. Ils peuvent, en outre, se transformer aisément d'un produit financier en un autre. La transférabilité et la transmutabilité sur le plan monétaire et financier

sont quasi parfaites, d'autant que la plupart des économies et des pays sont ouverts au grand vent de la concurrence et de la mondialisation. Dans de très nombreux pays, tout est fait en vue de faciliter la circulation de l'argent, d'attirer les capitaux en provenance de l'étranger en permettant, notamment, le rapatriement des bénéficiaires.

Les révolutions dans les transports et les communications n'ont pas seulement augmenté la mobilité et la flexibilité de l'argent et du capital, mais aussi celles des différents facteurs engagés dans le développement de l'économie-monde.

Grâce à ces révolutions, "des facteurs réputés immobiles deviennent (presque) aussi mobiles dans l'espace international que dans l'espace national" (P. Veltz, p. 98). Il n'empêche que tous ne circulent pas partout à la même vitesse et avec la même facilité.

Ainsi, une importante disjonction apparaît aujourd'hui entre les opportunités respectives de mobilité du capital et du travail, même si la mobilité du travail a été sensiblement accrue par rapport au passé. Dans l'Union européenne, par exemple, la libre circulation a été décrétée. Mais ce ne sont pas les migrations à l'intérieur d'un continent qui sont les plus spectaculaires. Quels que soient les multiples obstacles aux migrations, elles se développent à partir des pays pauvres et des pays déstabilisés par des conflits à destination des pays d'économie avancée de l'Europe et des États-Unis, des pays pétroliers, des nouveaux pays en développement, ainsi que de l'Australie.

Cela explique pourquoi, dans les pays les plus développés, les entrées et les frontières restent strictement contrôlées sauf en ce qui concerne les cadres, notamment parce que l'expatriation momentanée ou durable de cadres favorise la valorisation internationale de leurs compétences et, par là-même, celle des capitaux. Fin de mandat, ces cadres peuvent d'ailleurs se faire rapatrier sans problèmes.

Pour les autres catégories de travailleurs, les migrations internationales posent d'énormes problèmes et donc, de manière générale, on refuse l'entrée à ceux qui cherchent à s'installer là où ils pourraient se nourrir et échapper à la famine, travailler et jouir de revenus comparativement élevés. Sur le plan strict de la rationalité économique, leur raisonnement est correct, mais si ils entrent clandestinement, il n'est pas rare de les voir reconduire aux frontières.

On comprend ainsi comment le capital dispose d'un degré de fluidité et d'un taux de mobilité toujours plus élevé que les travailleurs. Ces derniers sont d'autant moins mobiles qu'ils ont charge de famille. L'universalité du marché de l'argent et du capital contraste avec la fragmentation des marchés du travail dans le monde. Le principe de territorialité régit le travail, mais pas le capital, même si certains traités comme celui de l'Union européenne, déclarent vouloir organiser la libre circulation des travailleurs.

La territorialité du travail ne serait pas un problème si la mobilité de l'argent et du capital alimentait vraiment l'investissement et le développement dans les divers pays et régions. A notre époque, le capital va et vient sans grande considération pour les conséquences sociales des décisions de délocalisation ou de désinvestissement.

La faible mobilité géographique du travail pourrait être compensée par une meilleure diffusion des connaissances et pratiques, ainsi que par la généralisation de l'éducation de base et des formations au long de la vie.

4. LE CAPITAL MOBILE ET FLUIDE: UNE SOURCE DE SPÉCULATION OU DE DÉVELOPPEMENT?

Au cours des vingt dernières années, dans le sillage de la mondialisation des marchés économiques et financiers, on a pu constater une industrialisation accélérée de nombre de pays en développement que ce soit à travers l'accueil d'investissements étrangers ou de projets de développement autonomes réalisés par les autochtones, grâce ou non à la collaboration et au cofinancement de la part de l'État ou d'instances internationales. L'ouverture des économies et leurs possibilités d'accès au marché mondial ont permis la mobilisation d'importants capitaux et l'accueil d'investissements étrangers. De ce fait, quelques nouveaux pays industriels ont connu une croissance rapide du PNB, jusqu'en 1997 tout au moins. En un minimum de temps, une kyrielle de nouveaux pays industriels ont émergé, particulièrement dans le cadre du continent asiatique. Non seulement le PNB par habitant y a progressé rapidement, mais leur croissance économique accélérée a permis de les classer favorablement sur l'indicateur de développement humain.

Cette réussite économique des NPI a constitué un argument de poids à l'appui de l'idée que mondialisation financière et industrialisation périphérique allaient de pair. Mais est-ce bien sûr? Le retournement que l'on a connu permet de se poser quelques questions.

4.1. *L'éventail des destinations des flux d'argent et de capital*

Dès avant la crise asiatique, nombre d'experts analysant les divers indices relatifs à l'évolution de la capitalisation des bourses dans le monde, leurs chiffres d'affaires, la valeur des transactions de change, constataient que ces indicateurs croissaient tous à des rythmes bien plus élevés que les PNB des pays de l'OCDE ou que la valeur du commerce mondial, par exemple. Dans le monde, l'investissement financier prend ainsi le pas sur l'investissement productif. A cet égard, la revue "Finance et bien commun"

publiée par l'Observatoire de la finance à Genève, constitue une importante source de données de base et de réflexions indispensables en vue d'une analyse approfondie.

Sur base des chiffres disponibles, on peut constater que les nouvelles émissions, soit environ 10% des transactions boursières, concernent des entreprises plutôt grandes et intensives en capital. La mondialisation financière risque donc de se faire au détriment du financement des petites et moyennes entreprises dont seul un fort petit nombre sont cotées en bourse.

Par ailleurs les analyses de l'OCDE montrent que les investissements directs à l'étranger se répartissent pour le principal entre les pays de la "triade": l'Europe, l'Amérique du Nord, le Japon et ses satellites. Il apparaît, en outre, qu'en dehors de ces zones ces investissements concernent les secteurs du commerce et des services qui leurs sont associés, comme l'entretien et la réparation ...

Une première question lancinante posée par la mondialisation de l'argent et du capital est de savoir si la fonction principale du marché en ces domaines, à savoir l'allocation mondiale optimale du capital et des investissements, est correctement remplie. Dans un univers de spéculations visant d'abord à optimiser les rendements financiers dans la gestion des patrimoines, ainsi que des portefeuilles d'entreprises et d'institutions, cela n'est pas du tout certain. Pourtant, seule cette allocation correcte des ressources en argent et en capital pourrait constituer une garantie du point de vue du développement économique et de l'emploi dans le monde.

Enfin, s'il existe un rapport entre l'ampleur et le rythme de la mondialisation financière et de la mondialisation économique, cela ne signifie pas que le choix des lieux d'implantation des unités composant une entreprise transnationale soit indifférent. Même si, par facilité, on disserte volontiers de la mondialisation de la production et systèmes de production, toutes les régions du monde n'ont pas des chances égales de développement, ni aujourd'hui, ni dans l'avenir. Elles sont loin d'être toutes également attractives du point de vue des investissements et des capitaux.

4.2. *La métropolisation du développement*

Même si, au sein des économies modernes, les flux se développent facilement grâce aux réseaux établis entre les unités ou les entreprises dispersées dans le monde et même si le commerce international se compose pour une large part de flux transfrontaliers quoiqu'internes aux firmes, cela ne veut pas dire que le choix des lieux d'implantation ou d'investissement soit indifférent.

Dans la réalité, plutôt que de mondialisation de la production, il faudrait parler de sa métropolisation. Plutôt que de parler de la diffusion mondiale des systèmes de production, il faudrait dénoncer leur concentration massive dans un petit nombre de régions urbaines et industrielles, dans des enclaves de développement bien interconnectées aux autres. En effet, dans une économie mondiale ouverte, ce sont les portes d'entrée des continents qui polarisent le développement, comme aussi les lieux de croisement des grandes voies mondiales qu'elles soient aériennes, maritimes ou terrestres. C'est en partant de ce double processus de maritimisation et de métropolisation des économies en mondialisation que l'on peut comprendre la fragmentation et la profonde dualisation au sein des pays et des continents, entre les régions en développement et celles qui demeurent à la traîne. Loin d'éliminer les différences entre les hommes et les régions, leurs chances de développement sont moins égales que jamais.

Dans le choix des implantations à l'étranger, les investisseurs s'orientent sans doute vers les régions où il est possible de faire des économies sur les coûts du travail, mais surtout vers les pôles disposant d'un éventail suffisamment large de travailleurs qualifiés ou aisément qualifiables, vers des enclaves contrôlables et contrôlées où l'on dispose de la panoplie de services logistiques et des administrations compétentes à cet effet. Ainsi s'explique le caractère métropolitain et enclavé du développement économique mondial. Une nuance s'impose pourtant. En effet, si les chances de développement et d'emploi ne sont pas égales selon les régions, la dispersion interrégionale des revenus est souvent plus grande que celle des activités économiques et des emplois, sans doute en raison de la dispersion plus grande des lieux de résidence mais aussi des mécanismes de redistribution et de répartition des revenus.

4.3. Les rapports entre les volumes d'investissement et d'emploi

Idéalement, la circulation internationale de l'argent et du capital doit conduire à l'allocation la plus efficace des ressources économiques dans le monde. De même, la libre circulation des marchandises devrait permettre de faire face aux pénuries ou raretés où qu'elles se manifestent. En conséquence, il ne devrait plus y avoir de famines dans le monde... De même encore, le libre investissement devrait permettre d'éponger le sous-emploi et de résorber les poches de chômage.

Dans les circonstances présentes et suite à l'introduction de nouvelles technologies, les investissements directs ont cessé d'être intensifs en travail. Même si ils sont en croissance dans le monde, ils s'accompagnent de la création de proportionnellement moins d'emplois que par le passé.

4.4. *Les coûts sociaux de la mobilité des capitaux*

Si le développement économique implique une mobilité plus grande du capital, on ne peut oublier les coûts sociaux qu'entraîne cette mobilité accrue, surtout lorsqu'elle constitue le moyen d'éviter et de contourner des obligations et des responsabilités sociales?

Divers mouvements de capitaux s'expliquent par des désinvestissements, des délocalisations et relocalisations résultant de la comparaison des coûts de production pour l'entreprise en fonction des lieux possibles d'implantation. La libre circulation de l'argent et des capitaux permet la poursuite des occasions de profit où qu'elles se trouvent.

Cette mobilité est d'autant plus forte que les États n'hésitent pas à se faire concurrence dans l'attraction des entreprises et des investissements. Sur ce plan, il n'est pas rare que la surenchère se développe entre les États, voire entre les régions au sein d'un État. Outre des facilités de financement, les terrains et bâtiments offerts, l'aide aux entreprises nouvelles consiste souvent en une panoplie d'infrastructures installées par l'État. Il s'agit là de dépenses publiques dont les entreprises ne se sentent pas nécessairement redevables au moment où des opportunités nouvelles s'ouvrent à elles en d'autres lieux, d'autres pays.

Parmi les personnes intéressées ou touchées par ces flux de capitaux, parfois induits de manière artificielle et spéculative, les unes peuvent être favorisées, au détriment d'autres. En effet, il n'est pas rare que la décision de mobilité et donc de désinvestir soit préférée en raison de l'opportunité qu'elle offre de se soustraire à un ensemble de responsabilités sociales et d'échapper à temps à des obligations, telles que celles concernant le réaménagement du site d'implantation, par exemple. Cela paraît tout profit pour les actionnaires ou les investisseurs, mais rarement pour les travailleurs, les familles et les communautés locales liés au territoire. En outre, à terme, les ruines industrielles vont constituer un handicap au redéveloppement: ce qui affectera le bien-être des générations futures.

5. LES FACTEURS INHIBITEURS DE LA MOBILITÉ DU TRAVAIL DANS L'EXPLICATION DE LA FRAGMENTATION DES MARCHÉS DU TRAVAIL

Par comparaison avec ce qui se passe pour la monnaie et le capital, ainsi que pour les marchandises et les services, la mobilité, la flexibilité et l'adaptabilité du travail et des travailleurs sont limitées à la fois géographiquement et professionnellement. Les degrés de mobilité de l'argent et du capital sont sensiblement plus élevés que ceux des travailleurs. Du point de vue du capital, on n'est pas à "la fin de l'histoire" mais à la "fin de la géographie".

Sans nier aucunement l'importance des flux migratoires humains, il faut reconnaître que le facteur travail ne jouit pas de la mobilité et de la flexibilité qui caractérisent les marchés de l'argent et des capitaux, voire les divers autres marchés.

D'abord parce que les qualifications, connaissances et compétences requises dans les emplois s'inscrivent le plus souvent dans des hiérarchies professionnelles et des stratifications sociales différentes d'un pays à l'autre. La division du travail ne s'est pas opérée partout de la même manière.

De même, les modes géographiques, professionnels et sectoriels de regroupement des travailleurs sont variables selon les pays et notamment de leur dimension. Les contours des organisations syndicales et des catégories de travailleurs qu'elles défendent varient aussi de pays à pays, comme les niveaux et les structures de négociation entre partenaires sociaux, les employeurs et les travailleurs, comme encore les structures de concertation avec les pouvoirs publics et l'État. Tout cela induit des différences importantes dans les droits des travailleurs et des syndicats. Les spécificités nationales des structures syndicales ne sont pas un facteur facilitateur lorsqu'il s'agit de concevoir des alliances et des regroupements transnationaux de travailleurs ou de syndicats. Elles ne sont pas particulièrement propices à l'établissement de cahiers communs de revendications, ou à l'entame d'actions transnationales, à l'instauration de systèmes de solidarités transnationaux.

Il n'empêche qu'au niveau du discours, on continue à prôner la libre circulation des travailleurs, à l'instar de ce qui se passe pour le capital. Aujourd'hui, il est aisé de divulguer transnationalement les offres et les demandes d'emploi, d'assurer la transparence sur les marchés du travail mais la communicabilité et l'accessibilité des données n'abolit pas l'ensemble des obstacles non seulement à la mobilité du travail, mais aussi à la compréhension, la collaboration et la solidarité sur le plan de l'Union européenne d'abord, du monde ensuite.

Dans les faits, la mobilité géographique des travailleurs reste largement entravée par les différences de langue (comme dans le cadre de l'Union européenne), par la culture, par les frontières (particulièrement celles qui subsistent aux frontières de l'Union européenne, par exemple), par les mesures de protection contre l'immigration (ouverte ou clandestine), par les attitudes racistes et xénophobes de nombreuses populations, par la "ghettoisation" de certaines populations étrangères installées sur le territoire national, par les obstacles à l'accompagnement et au regroupement des familles, par les systèmes de protection sociale enfermés dans le cadre de territoires nationaux par l'application stricte du principe de subsidiarité dans la gestion des droits et systèmes. Mais il est encore bien d'autres obstacles à la mobilité du travail, telles la rupture des contacts et des relations

avec les parents, les amis, tant pour les adultes que pour les enfants et, par ailleurs, la nécessité de créer de nouveaux circuits de relation et de s'engager dans une nouvelle socialisation; tels les coûts d'abandon d'un logement et de réaménagement d'un autre; telle la perte de divers droits liés à la citoyenneté et à la nationalité.

Si les opportunités ouvertes à la circulation de l'argent et du capital sont grandes, la mobilité représente des coûts importants et des risques pour les travailleurs, d'autant plus qu'ils sont amenés à vivre sous la menace d'une délocalisation du capital toujours plus mobile.

La capacité de "déterritorialisation" du capital contraste avec la "territorialisation" persistante du travail. Dans ces conditions, côté capital, on joue à fond la carte de la mobilité transnationale mais lorsqu'il s'agit de régler les problèmes du travail, tout doit se régler localement. Dans la gestion des ressources humaines, le capital prône d'ailleurs une gestion décentralisée vers l'entreprise, seule au contact journalier avec les travailleurs ...

Il ne faut donc pas s'étonner de la fragmentation mondiale du marché du travail qui par rapport au capital reste géré en termes de lieux plutôt que de flux. Dans la gestion des problèmes du travail, le principe de subsidiarité est de rigueur, éventuellement à l'encontre de formes de solidarité plus larges entre les travailleurs des différentes régions mais surtout des différents pays en sein d'un continent et du monde.

Dans une concurrence devenue mondiale et au sein d'économies en globalisation, l'application de logiques différentes selon qu'il s'agit de la gestion du capital ou du travail, se traduit fatalement en un "détricotage" des protections sociales, en une déréglementation, une privatisation d'activités et de secteurs jusque-là attelés au développement des biens collectifs, tels l'éducation et la santé, par exemple. Tels furent d'ailleurs les effets des prescriptions imposées par le FMI dans le cadre des recommandations et des programmes d'ajustement structurel généralement peu soucieux des conséquences sociales des politiques et mesures imposées. Ce n'est qu'au cours des dernières années que le Fonds a accepté qu'on ne touche plus aux dépenses dans les secteurs d'éducation et de santé.

Mais la gestion des ressources humaines ne pose pas qu'un problème de mobilité géographique. Dans une situation d'hyperconcurrence mondiale et dans une économie de l'innovation, le problème du transfert et de l'adaptation des connaissances et compétences devient stratégique, tant du point de vue du travail que du capital. Une panoplie de technologies nouvelles permettent de stocker le savoir sous toutes ses formes et de les faire circuler à la vitesse de la lumière et donc de multiplier à l'infini les échanges de savoir et, par là-même, de promouvoir la croissance constante de la connaissance (G. Berthoud, 1998, p. 8).

Troisième partie

LES RAPPORTS ENTRE LE CAPITAL MATÉRIEL ET IMMATÉRIEL

De nos jours, l'investissement et le capital immatériels prennent le pas sur l'investissement physique, mobilier et immobilier, sur le capital matériel. Le capital immatériel devient le véritable moteur du développement. Cela transforme fondamentalement la concurrence.

1. LA TRANSFORMATION DES FORMES DE CONCURRENCE

Les révolutions techniques successives ont permis de réduire les prix et la durée des transports et des communications. Par là-même, les zones d'interpénétration des économies et les espaces de concurrence ont été sensiblement accrus. Dans le même temps, les politiques poursuivies par les instances internationales ont forcé l'ouverture des économies et des marchés nationaux. La mondialisation de la concurrence, suite au décroïsonnement des économies et des marchés nationaux, a favorisé l'accroissement des échanges monétaires, économiques et financiers à travers le monde, les investissements directs à l'étranger, ainsi que la multiplication des entreprises transnationales. Ces évolutions ont étendu les espaces de concurrence et en ont transformé le jeu, même si cela se mesure difficilement.

L'élargissement des zones de concurrence s'explique aussi par la fin de l'affrontement entre l'Est et l'Ouest. La chute du mur de Berlin a clos la période d'opposition entre les systèmes communiste et capitaliste. Cette fin de l'opposition entre les deux grands blocs a profondément transformé les relations entre les pays du Nord et du Sud, jusque-là partagés entre les alignés sur l'Est, sur l'Ouest et les non-alignés. Ces distinctions ont perdu de leur pertinence. De ce fait, nous sommes entrés dans une nouvelle ère de concurrence caractérisée par la montée en force d'une série de nouveaux pays industriels et l'entrée sur la scène mondiale de régions et de populations non occidentales.

Cette nouvelle ère se caractérise aussi par l'émulation entre les diverses formes de capitalisme avec, d'un côté, un capitalisme de combat et, de l'autre, un capitalisme "à visage humain" (M. Albert, 1991).

Le capitalisme de combat est centré avant tout sur des valeurs individualistes, la satisfaction du consommateur, la maximisation du profit, la rémunération du capital et donc des actionnaires. Les hérauts de ce premier type sont les États-Unis et le Royaume Uni. Dans cette forme de capitalisme libéral pur et dur, les travailleurs doivent être mobiles géographiquement et professionnellement. Ils n'ont pas mission de s'attacher à une entreprise pour une longue période. Ils ne lui doivent pas fidélité. Ils ont d'ailleurs tout inté-

rêt à développer une stratégie personnelle de formation et de mobilité séparément de l'entreprise qui les occupe. Le marché du travail doit être fluide. Dans le capitalisme libéral, le rapport entre le capital et le travail s'organise à travers le fonctionnement le plus libre du marché du travail. On cherche une individualisation des contrats de travail et d'emploi. On s'écarte autant que possible de la négociation collective. L'État doit devenir aussi maigre que possible et maintenir les taux de prélèvement sur le PNB aussi bas que possible, comme aux États-Unis: soit 30%, contre 58% en Suède ...

L'autre capitalisme dit rhénan, celui de l'économie sociale de marché, se veut ouvert à des valeurs sociales, solidaires et communautaires. On y est favorable à des contrats de travail et d'emploi stables, voire à des emplois à vie, à des politiques visant au maintien de l'employabilité des travailleurs. On est en faveur d'une participation des travailleurs dans l'entreprise et des formes d'actionnariat y sont promues. Parallèlement, on attend de l'État qu'il n'intervienne pas seulement à l'appui de la compétitivité et de l'innovation, mais aussi de la formation de base et continue des personnes, dans et hors des entreprises en correspondance avec les évolutions continues des sciences et des techniques. On souhaite qu'il veille à la réadaptation et à la reconversion des travailleurs mis en difficulté par les évolutions économiques et technologiques. Globalement, on souhaite qu'il assure une sécurisation suffisante des personnes et des familles face aux divers risques de la vie dans et hors du travail. Dans le capitalisme social, on cherche à encadrer les contrats individuels par des conventions collectives établies à divers niveaux au sein de systèmes de relation et de négociation collectives entre représentants des employeurs et des travailleurs et à encadrer le développement économique à travers une concertation entre les partenaires sociaux et l'État.

Mais, à terme, que va produire cette émulation entre deux formes de capitalisme dans un système mondial de production où la concurrence entre les géants économiques devient frontale? A terme, le danger serait d'assister au triomphe du capitalisme libéral avec, en conséquence, le "détricotage" des systèmes de protection et de solidarité sociales; la fragmentation, voire la dualisation des statuts avec, d'un côté, ceux qui ont du travail et confiance dans leur avenir et, d'un autre côté, ceux qui risquent de perdre leur emploi et ne savent ni où, ni comment en trouver un autre; ceux qui l'ont déjà perdu et qui végètent en chômage, même si ils continuent à chercher du travail; et enfin ceux qui, contre leur gré, se trouvent définitivement exclus, en marge du travail et du chômage et parfois même en marge de toute relation sociale signifiante ...

Mais cette opposition entre capitalisme libéral et social, de même que les révolutions techniques et scientifiques, n'expliquent pas vraiment pourquoi la concurrence dont les effets paraissaient heureux, change de forme et se mue en une concurrence ruineuse.

Selon Lester Thurow (1993), fin du vingtième siècle, la concurrence se transforme radicalement et donc aussi ses résultats. Selon lui, la concurrence fut longtemps un jeu dont tout le monde sortait gagnant parce qu'elle se développait entre des lignes de production spécialisées les unes par rapport aux autres: entre des "niches", et donc entre des concurrents inégaux et différents. Dans une telle concurrence, ce qui est une production à hauts salaires au Japon peut être une production à bas salaires en Allemagne; ce qui est une production à hauts salaires en Allemagne, peut être une production à relativement bas salaires aux États-Unis. Selon Thurow, tel était le cas il y a vingt ans, lorsque le Japon passait maître dans la production des matériels informatiques et électroniques grand public, pendant que l'Allemagne développait la fabrication d'automobiles de luxe, et que les États-Unis triomphaient dans la production d'avions-courriers à longue portée. Durant le vingtième siècle, la concurrence s'exerçant entre nations à travers une diversité de créneaux provoquait des échanges dans lesquels, in fine, chacun gagnait. Thurow parle d'une "win-win competition", d'un jeu gagnant/gagnant.

En cette fin de siècle, la situation concurrentielle a profondément évolué. La concurrence se développe entre des partenaires relativement égaux au sein de la "triade" avec d'un côté le Japon et ses satellites (même si ils se trouvent momentanément en difficulté); d'un autre côté, les pays composant l'Union européenne; d'un autre côté encore, les États nord-américains. Non seulement les PNB par habitant au sein de ces entités se sont rapprochés mais les compétences de chacun lui permettent de concurrencer l'autre en un quelconque domaine. En conséquence, écrit Thurow, la concurrence devient frontale (head to head) et ruineuse. En effet, ce que l'un gagne dans un domaine, l'autre le perd. On entre dans une "win-lose competition" dont l'exemple le plus frappant se trouve dans l'aéronautique où, en un peu moins de vingt ans, les États-Unis ont perdu des parts importantes de marché que ce soit dans l'aviation civile au militaire.

De telles analyses sont sans doute suggestives mais ne permettent pas vraiment de saisir les changements qualitatifs en cours au sein d'économies en voie de mondialisation et de globalisation. A notre avis, ces réflexions sur l'évolution de la concurrence doivent être complétées par une analyse de son objet fondamental: l'innovation.

2. L'INSTITUTIONNALISATION DE L'INNOVATION

On ne sort de la concurrence frontale que par l'innovation, par son institutionnalisation dans la société: en en faisant un processus continu et global concernant indistinctement toutes les fonctions de l'entreprise,

depuis la conception des produits jusqu'au débouché sur les marchés; depuis l'invention des processus jusqu'à leur utilisation rentable.

La concurrence devient globale, lorsque le développement des sciences et des techniques permet de concevoir des produits substituts; lorsque les fibres artificielles remplacent des fibres naturelles; lorsque le plastique est substitué dans diverses applications à l'acier ou divers métaux; ou encore lorsque l'ingénierie biologique permet la production de clones en laboratoire, ou lorsque la fibre optique remplace le fil de cuivre accroissant à l'infini les capacités de transmission de données. Ainsi, les formes de concurrence deviennent inter- et multisectorielles.

L'innovation consiste aussi à trouver de nouvelles sources d'approvisionnement, de nouveaux matériaux; de nouveaux modes d'organisation du travail et des entreprises; de nouveaux marchés et de nouvelles relations aux consommateurs; de nouvelles formes institutionnelles axées sur le partenariat, des accords de sous-traitances, de nouvelles alliances.

De nos jours, la concurrence ne porte plus seulement sur les temps et les coûts de production mais sur les temps et les coûts de mise au point et d'introduction des innovations. Ces coûts sont d'ailleurs rapidement croissants. En effet, plus on cherche, plus on trouve mais aussi plus de questions complexes et diverses surgissent et plus les découvertes deviennent ardues. Ainsi se développe un système dans lequel les entreprises, pour sortir de la concurrence, doivent non seulement continuer à innover mais y réussir avant les autres. D'où la place stratégique que prennent, au sein des entreprises, les bureaux de recherche et de développement, ainsi que les laboratoires. D'où la multiplication des entreprises de recherche, y compris de recherche fondamentale, hors des entreprises et des universités. Pour sortir de la concurrence, il faut toujours plus de découvertes brevetables, ouvrant l'exclusivité des droits et leur exploitation; ou alors, il faut, à temps et par des achats, enrichir son portefeuille de licences et de brevets nouveaux.

3. L'IMPORTANCE CROISSANTE DES QUALIFICATIONS DANS UNE ÉCONOMIE DE L'INNOVATION

De nos jours, les processus de fabrication sont de moins en moins séparables des processus de constitution, de transmission et d'assimilation de savoir. L'évolution des produits et des processus est en dépendance de plus en plus étroite des processus de conception et de transmission des savoir et savoir-faire.

Pour survivre dans la concurrence mondiale et malgré la montée des

coûts de la recherche et de découverte, les entreprises doivent de manière continue produire, importer ou acquérir du savoir, du savoir-faire, de la connaissance et de la culture. Toute entreprise qui se veut innovante doit être tout à la fois importatrice, productrice et distributrice de savoir et donc être éduquante et qualifiante. Dès aujourd'hui d'ailleurs, dans nombre d'entreprises, "des processus de développement ont été mis en oeuvre centrés moins sur la valorisation des ressources matérielles que sur celle des ressources humaines" (CA 33).

"Si, autrefois, le facteur décisif de la production", ... "était le capital, compris comme l'ensemble des machines et des instruments de production; aujourd'hui, le facteur décisif est de plus en plus l'homme lui-même, c'est-à-dire sa capacité d'innovation qui apparaît dans le savoir scientifique, sa capacité d'organisation solidaire et sa capacité de saisir et de satisfaire les besoins des autres" (CA 32).

A notre époque où le savoir est devenu une force productive, il faut investir en hommes. Les capacités de recherche et de développement d'un pays, les capacités d'innovation dans le travail journalier ou dans le long terme, dépendent "in fine" des investissements en éducation et formation. Ainsi, l'éducation et la formation, la gestion du capital immatériel, la gestion du personnel et le développement des ressources humaines deviennent un enjeu stratégique pour les entreprises, comme pour les États et les travailleurs qu'ils appartiennent à des entreprises publiques ou privées, nationales ou transnationales.

Dans une situation d'hyperconcurrence, les impératifs de qualité et d'innovation ne concernent pas que les pays développés. D'ailleurs, où que les entreprises s'installent et se développent dans le monde, leur choix tient compte des niveaux d'éducation et de formation des travailleurs disponibles sur les marchés du travail, comme encore des sacrifices et dépenses consentis par les particuliers et les États en vue de l'adaptation récurrente et continue des connaissances et des combinaisons de compétences. Ce n'est pas tellement la pléthore de travailleurs peu ou pas qualifiés qui oriente le choix de l'implantation ou la décision de délocalisation des entreprises, ni les salaires à leur payer et le niveau des coûts de travail mais le plus souvent la disponibilité, la qualité et la diversité des ressources humaines.

Fondamentalement, en matière de travail et de ressources humaines, la mobilité géographique des travailleurs n'est pas le problème primordial mais bien de pouvoir faire appel à des travailleurs suffisamment qualifiés, ou encore qualifiables et adaptables au travers du temps.

Ainsi, dans un système où l'innovation se veut permanente, la libre circulation de l'information et du savoir devient un problème primordial. Dans un tel système, l'éducation, l'apprentissage et la formation deviennent

un enjeu majeur en vue de la rentabilité et de l'accumulation du capital. Dans une économie d'innovation, pour être et rester innovantes, les entreprises doivent devenir qualifiantes et, dans ce but, promouvoir de manière continue l'apprentissage, l'autoformation et la formation des personnes et diverses catégories de travailleurs, soit seules, soit en collaboration avec des instances extérieures actives sur le marché de l'éducation et de la formation. D'où la multiplication des espaces et institutions de formation à la fois dans et hors des entreprises.

La question de la libre circulation du savoir interfère donc avec celles posées par la libre circulation du travail et du capital. La circulation des informations et connaissances, ainsi que les transferts de technique constituent un enjeu considérable dans la concurrence et la gestion du capital, du travail et du personnel. D'autant mieux qu'à l'instar des monnaies et de l'argent, les messages, quels qu'ils soient, peuvent circuler mondialement à la vitesse de la lumière.

4. LES CONVERGENCES ET CONNIVENCES ENTRE SOCIÉTÉ D'INNOVATION ET D'INFORMATION

De nos jours, le développement des ressources humaines et l'accumulation de capital humain sont une des conditions indispensables à l'accumulation du capital physique et matériel. Peu à peu, l'investissement en capital immatériel, comme aussi dans la formation et le développement du personnel, devient moteur par rapport à l'investissement en capital physique, même si ce sont les ressources financières disponibles qui permettent aux entreprises de constituer ou d'acquérir le capital immatériel et intellectuel.

Si le facteur travail et donc les travailleurs sont géographiquement moins mobiles que l'argent et le capital, cette moindre mobilité géographique peut être compensée par la fluidité et la "diffusabilité" des connaissances et compétences. Ces possibilités constituent un atout majeur dans l'entretien et le développement de la "professionnalité" des travailleurs. Un bon exemple d'utilisation de cette communicabilité se trouve dans le télétravail et la téléformation qui permettent aux entreprises d'acheter le travail et de former les travailleurs là où il se trouvent.

Du point de vue du travailleur, l'acquisition de connaissances et compétences productives et créatives sont incontestablement des atouts, même si trop souvent, les qualifications mobilisées par les entreprises restent confinées dans des ensembles de tâches et fonctions limitées, sans que les entreprises cherchent à développer la participation plus large du travailleur à leur organisation compris du travail, sans qu'elles veillent à étendre et

adapter à temps ses connaissances et compétences, notamment celles qui lui permettraient de s'engager avec d'autres, au service du développement de l'homme et de l'humanité et dans la recherche du bien commun ... L'entreprise n'utilise et ne développe les compétences que si, "in fine", elles contribuent à relever sa rentabilité.

Par ailleurs, même si les savoirs se diffusent à travers le monde plus facilement que les travailleurs, pourtant plus mobiles qu'autrefois, le développement économique où que ce soit dans le monde nécessite la constitution, l'assemblage et la coordination de noyaux de compétences. A défaut d'obtenir une mobilité suffisante de la part des travailleurs, le développement simultané d'une gamme d'industries et de services dans une ou plusieurs régions ou dans un ou divers pays du monde, suppose des transferts et des greffes de savoir, de savoir-faire et de technologies.

Quelle que soit la localisation, la dimension ou le secteur d'activité des entreprises, celles-ci sont donc intéressées par la fluidité et diffusabilité des connaissances, car rares sont les activités qui échappent aux révolutions scientifiques et techniques dans la production, la communication ou la commercialisation. Même les administrations publiques ne peuvent s'y soustraire.

L'accélération du développement des sciences et des techniques résulte de la croissance exponentielle des informations, des connaissances et des idées, des capacités de traitement et de stockage des données dans des mémoires superpuissantes, des possibilités de diffusion instantanée et tous azimuts via divers canaux, supports médiatiques et multimédiatiques mis au service de la communication et de la "vulgarisation" du savoir, du savoir-faire et de la culture.

Dans ces possibilités d'une diffusion planétaire immédiate des informations et messages, certains voient l'occasion de répondre à la soif de savoir qui gagne l'univers. Ils n'hésitent pas à parler de la mise en branle d'un processus d'intellectualisation planétaire, d'une seconde "cérébralisation" résultant de la multiplication des réseaux, de leurs interconnexions, ainsi que des interactions entre les personnes et donc les cerveaux humains. L'instantanéité et la bilatéralité des communications, de même que l'abaissement des prix favorisent toutes les formes d'échange d'information mais aussi de savoir; tous les modes de formation à distance, comme encore de formulation individuelle ou collective de questions et réponses. Grâce aux échanges de savoir et savoir-faire, les communicateurs composent des communautés virtuelles, des communautés de savants-cybernautes, mais aussi d'apprenants. Aujourd'hui le savoir est disponible "on line" (en ligne), en même temps que la possibilité de dialoguer grâce à l'interactivité incluse dans les nouveaux appareils. Certains y voient la genèse d'une infosphère

ou d'une noosphère. D'autres, comme Pierre Lévy, parlent de l'émergence d'un cyberspace, d'une cyberculture ..., d'une intelligence collective. Encore faut-il imaginer que les hommes disposent de récepteurs performants, branchés sur le bon émetteur, diffuseur ou communicateur de savoir.

Nous sommes donc entrés dans une société du savoir, comme le proclame l'OCDE à Paris; dans une société de l'intelligence et de la culture; une société attelée au développement de la connaissance, selon une expression chère à la Commission européenne.

Partant de ces évolutions, un discours de caractère utopique voudrait faire croire que, dès aujourd'hui ou alors demain, tout savoir est devenu accessible à tous, partout et à tout moment dans la vie de l'homme.

La possibilité de divulgation à l'infini de la connaissance dérive des capacités accrues de mise en extériorité du savoir par rapport au sachant ou enseignant. Cette dissociation donne à l'émetteur ou au diffuseur, un large pouvoir par rapport au producteur de savoir, à l'instar de ce qui se passe dans le domaine culturel où ce sont finalement l'émetteur, le diffuseur ou le vendeur qui commandent le créateur. Sans doute parce que, dans le même temps et parallèlement, nous sommes entrés dans une ère où le savoir et la culture sont devenus marchandise et capital; une société dans laquelle toutes les institutions de recherche et de formation, y compris les universités et les hautes écoles, sont pour ainsi dire forcées à adopter un point de vue commercial.

5. DES LECTURES CONTRASTÉES DE L'ÉVOLUTION ET DE SES EFFETS

Les analyses des experts sont loin d'être convergentes quant à la réalité de l'avènement d'une société du savoir et de la culture, ainsi que sur les effets de la mondialisation de la société de l'information et de la communication.

Certains pensent que l'informatique et les moyens médiatiques contribuent avant tout à l'installation d'une société du spectacle. Pour eux, la société médiatique est d'abord publicitaire et spectaculaire. C'est une société de l'information, de l'image, de l'imaginaire, du virtuel avant d'être une société du savoir vouée au développement planétaire de l'intelligence tant individuelle que collective qui ne peut résulter que de capacités relationnelles et de frayages entre personnes et entre groupes et qui se traduisent en des hybridations intellectuelles et culturelles. "In concreto", l'évolution apparaît à double tranchant. Elle se poursuit dans les deux directions à la fois en servant le loisir et le divertissement, et en nourrissant l'intelligence et la culture et en ouvrant de nouvelles voies d'accès.

D'autres à l'instar de Jean-François Lyotard, pensent que les champs

du savoir et de la culture voient leur évolution de plus en plus déterminée par la rationalité économique, par la marchandisation, la mercantilisation et la capitalisation du savoir et du savoir-faire et de la culture. Ils dénoncent la vénalité qui s'infiltré au niveau du savoir et de la culture à travers la prolifération des échanges marchands; à travers l'élargissement continu des marchés où diffuseurs et usagers de la connaissance, où fournisseurs et acheteurs de brevets et de licences, se rencontrent.

Subordonnés à l'impératif de la rentabilité, les produits du savoir et de la culture, telles les informations, les connaissances techniques et scientifiques, ainsi que les idées deviennent des marchandises au même titre que les autres biens ou services mais aussi facteur de production et donc capital. Dans ce climat, les entreprises attelées à la recherche et au développement du savoir et de la culture, et parfois même les plus nobles d'entre elles, telles les grandes écoles et les universités, se mettent à l'affût des canaux et moyens qui leur assureront une valorisation économique.

A la lumière de ces évolutions, on comprend les énormes investissements et les efforts stratégiques consentis par le secteur privé, et notamment des grandes entreprises transnationales de l'électronique, de l'informatique et du secteur médiatique, en vue de produire cours et lexiques, didacticiels et supports multimédiatiques qui leur permettront d'envahir les marchés publics et privés de la formation de base et continue qu'elle soit organisée dans ou hors des entreprises.

Du même coup, ces mégaentreprises médiatiques entrent en concurrence avec les institutions traditionnelles non-marchandes attelées à la production et la distribution du savoir. D'autant plus facilement que ces grandes entreprises des industries et secteurs culturels ont accès pour la diffusion de leurs produits à l'ensemble des réseaux alimentés par câbles, fibres optiques, ondes hertziennes ou satellites. D'autant mieux qu'en aval de ces industries culturelles, les secteurs de l'impression ont été totalement transformés par les nouvelles technologies. Toutes les conditions sont ainsi réunies pour entamer le contournement des institutions traditionnelles de production et de transmission du savoir et commencer la conquête vénale des esprits sans grand souci de l'égalité des chances, contrairement à ce que la pensée utopique permet d'imaginer.

6. LES INÉGALITÉS DANS LES CHANCES D'ACCÈS AU SAVOIR ET À LA CULTURE

Les révolutions techniques dans les modes de diffusion et de communication à distance, de même que dans les capacités à créer et à produire des savoir, à exposer et à promouvoir l'assimilation des connaissances, ont

incontestablement des effets positifs. Mais permettent-elles ou permettront-elles "l'accès de tous au savoir de tous" comme l'exprime Pierre Lévy?

A l'analyse, on constate rapidement la distance qui se creuse par rapport à l'idéal de la communication et de la diffusion ubiquistes du savoir de la culture. Cette distance grandet d'autant plus que savoir et culture se distribuent sur une base marchande. En théorie pourtant, le savoir et la culture sont des services et des richesses que l'on peut transmettre sans s'appauvrir, puisque celui qui enseigne ou transmet conserve son acquis, son capital.

Dans les faits, toute transmission et toute assimilation d'un savoir ou d'un fragment de culture supposent un effort et entraînent des coûts y compris d'opportunité, car on ne peut tout apprendre. En conséquence, tout savoir n'est pas accessible à tous, à n'importe quel moment ou période de la vie ainsi que le discours utopique le ferait croire.

De prime abord, compte tenu de l'ensemble des moyens et des ressources disponibles, on pourrait imaginer que les chances d'accès au savoir et à la culture s'élargissent et s'égalisent. A l'examen, on constate que les écarts d'information, de savoir et de culture se creusent toujours davantage entre les personnes, comme entre les catégories sociales, entre les régions centrales et périphériques, métropolitaines et non métropolitaines, de même qu'entre les pays développés et les pays en développement. D'ailleurs, dans le monde contemporain, celui de la connaissance instrumentalisée, soumise aux lois du marché, de la concurrence et du profit, la stratification sociale se calque toujours davantage sur la distribution du savoir et de la culture. Aujourd'hui, l'entreprise qui paie la force de travail du travailleur achète aussi ses savoir et savoir-faire et calcule sa rémunération en fonction de ses compétences et de l'utilisation qu'elle peut en faire.

Ainsi, à notre époque, pour les pauvres, comme l'écrit Jean-Paul II, "s'est ajoutée à la pénurie de biens matériels, celle du savoir et des connaissances qui les empêche de sortir de leur état d'humiliante subordination" (CA 33).

Parmi les explications du développement des inégalités culturelles il y a inévitablement la cumulativité des connaissances: le fait que l'accès à un savoir spécialisé implique souvent des informations de base préalables. En outre, de nos jours, l'accès au savoir et à la culture n'est pas libre et gratuit. Il nécessite de disposer d'outils et d'appareils parfois coûteux. Enfin, on n'y accède que si l'on parvient à sauter une série de barrières culturelles et économiques. A la vérité, le droit universel au savoir est donc loin d'être acquis.

Si du point de vue de la personne, l'enjeu primordial est d'abord le droit au travail ou le droit à une garantie de revenu lorsque, pour une raison quelconque, il n'est pas possible de travailler, cela n'empêche pas que le travail et l'emploi se trouvent en dépendance de plus en plus étroite

de la qualification. Sans elle, le travailleur se voit offrir des salaires en dessous du niveau de subsistance. D'autant plus facilement que le travail le moins qualifié subit une double concurrence: celle qui résulte de l'automatisation et l'informatisation, et celle qui découle de la pléthore de main-d'oeuvre peu qualifiée. En outre, dans un monde où la production de connaissances et d'idées se développe exponentiellement, l'objectif du travailleur n'est plus seulement d'atteindre, à un moment donné de sa vie, un niveau de qualification déterminé mais de conserver son employabilité à travers le temps en consentant, à travers la vie, des efforts récurrents, sinon continus en vue de l'acquisition des connaissances et compétences adaptées aux nouvelles exigences de la production.

Les différences dans les chances d'accès au savoir et à la culture ont bien d'autres explications et notamment les droits de propriété intellectuelle: "la propriété de la connaissance, de la technique et du savoir" (CA 32), comme encore les capacités accrues de créer des réseaux de circulation du savoir en circuit fermé et donc d'en réserver l'accès.

7. L'EXTENSION DES DROITS DE PROPRIÉTÉ INTELLECTUELLE

Les inégalités croissantes dans les chances d'accès au savoir et à la culture, et donc de développement de la personne, dépendent aussi des formes de propriété intellectuelle, de la brevetabilité des savoir et savoir-faire, de l'extension des possibilités de brevetage à toute découverte, innovation, image, expression ou représentation, à toute idée ou élément culturel nouveau. Aujourd'hui, le brevetage est un des moyens de protection de la propriété intellectuelle. Son utilisation peut s'étendre à l'infini, comme dans le cadre de la biogénétique, aux découvertes de la "génomique" et, notamment, à celles qui concernent le génome humain. La création d'un droit d'exclusivité au profit de l'inventeur, le brevetage permettent de monopoliser durant un temps la production/reproduction de tout processus, de tout ou partie composant d'un bien ou service. C'est par ce biais que savoir et culture deviennent à la fois capital et marchandise au service du propriétaire: une personne physique ou une institution.

L'extension indéfinie des formes d'appropriation privée se justifie par la nécessité de promouvoir l'innovation en tous domaines, y compris le savoir et la culture. Ainsi s'expliquent l'instrumentalisation et l'accaparement progressifs de tout ce qui constitue la technique, la science et la culture par les centres et laboratoires de recherche installés dans ou hors des entreprises. Par là se comprend également l'importance des ressources financières engagées par les entreprises dans les opérations de brevetage ou

dans l'achat de brevets et de licences. Ainsi s'explique aussi la volonté des entreprises d'accaparer et de se réserver les services de personnes expertes ou encore d'acquérir les clés d'accès à une multiplicité de banques de données, notamment, celles concernant les innovations .

Dans ces conditions, on ne peut s'étonner du fait que les processus de production et de diffusion des savoir et savoir-faire, mais aussi les processus de réception et d'assimilation, se trouvent globalement régis par la rationalité économique et, par là, soumis à la contrainte du profit et des lois du marché.

8. LES FORMES DE CLÔTURE DE L'ACCÈS AU SAVOIR ET À LA CULTURE

Technique, science et culture peuvent être l'objet d'une production et d'une circulation marchandes ou, au contraire, voir leur accessibilité limitée de diverses manières, lorsque la diffusion n'en paraît pas opportune du point de vue du propriétaire ou des entreprises, parmi lesquelles les entreprises "cognitives" et celles appartenant à l'ensemble complexe des industries culturelles.

Dès lors que la production et la diffusion de connaissances et compétences intellectuelles et culturelles passent par la grille des marchés et les choix des entreprises, il paraît normal que ces processus soient voués à l'instrumentalisation du savoir, à la recherche de sa rentabilisation, tantôt par le biais de "marchandisation", tantôt par la réservation de son utilisation au bénéfice de son détenteur, car la rentabilité ne se trouve pas nécessairement dans l'échange direct et marchand de fragments de savoir ou de culture. Tout dépend de l'intérêt que le détenteur du titre de propriété: une personne ou une entreprise, trouve à sa diffusion ou, au contraire, à sa réservation et sa monopolisation. De ce fait, il est certain que tous les éléments composant le savoir et la culture ne passent pas nécessairement par les marchés. L'accès peut en être ouvert ou réservé. Tout dépend de ce qui sert le mieux la rentabilité et, par là, l'accumulation du capital

Globalement, le développement économique mondial et la mondialisation du système de production ne sont possibles qu'à la condition de réussir, en parallèle, l'instillation d'une culture de la production et du travail, des transferts de savoir et de savoir-faire, l'assimilation par les travailleurs d'informations et des connaissances nouvelles, en même temps que la combinaison et la coordination d'ensembles de compétences. Toutefois, cela ne signifie pas que tout sera transmis sur le plan des connaissances et compétences ou encore que tout sera mis en oeuvre en vue de l'adaptation des connaissances et compétences des travailleurs au long de leur vie professionnelle.

Dans un monde hyperconcurrentiel, l'entreprise peut avoir intérêt à la rétention d'un savoir à valeur productive, ou encore à n'en faire qu'une distribution restreinte. Nombre de transferts de connaissances et de technologies ne se développent d'ailleurs qu'en circuit fermé entre des unités, sans passer par le marché et se limitent à ce qui est rigoureusement indispensable aux activités économiques des entités de production délocalisées ou des entreprises coopérantes ou sous-traitantes. Ainsi, lorsque des transferts de connaissances et de technologies sont consentis, ils ne concernent généralement qu'un produit ou un segment de la production ou encore un ou quelques composants que l'entreprise commanditaire se chargera, selon les cas, de vendre ou d'assembler. De cette manière, chaque unité de production d'une grande entreprise transnationale n'a accès qu'à une fraction du savoir global détenu par elle. En veillant à disperser la production de ses produits ou composants dans un ensemble de pays différents, l'entreprise transnationale ou mondiale a toutes chances de conserver la maîtrise sur la totalité de la filière technologique qu'elle travaille. Finalement, chaque siège, unité ou niveau de l'entreprise globale n'a accès qu'à des informations, des savoir et savoir-faire limités. Ainsi donc, si des transferts de connaissances et compétences sont indispensables, ils ne s'opèrent qu'entre les entreprises interconnectées sur le plan mondial, entre les grandes zones métropolitaines et industrielles du monde.

CONCLUSION

LA SOLIDARITÉ: BASE INDISPENSABLE D'UNE RÉGULATION GLOBALE ET LÉGALE DU CAPITAL ET DU TRAVAIL

L'interdépendance spatiale et fonctionnelle est un fait. La chute de dominos engendrée par la crise financière asiatique l'a démontré à souhait. Mais cette interdépendance organique croissante ne signifie pas que la solidarité entre nations se développe en parallèle.

Au cours des dernières décades, sur les divers plans: national, continental et mondial, on a opté pour un minimum de régulation du capital et du travail. La pensée néolibérale dominante affirmait qu'un vrai développement découlerait du ralliement d'un nombre croissant de pays aux principes de l'économie de marché et de la démocratie libérale. Aujourd'hui, la plupart des pays ont adopté ces principes. Les interventions de l'État ont été freinées et réduites.

En outre, au niveau planétaire, on croyait que le développement pouvait être promu sans grande coordination entre les institutions mondiales

spécialisées: chacune se contentant d'intervenir dans sa sphère de compétence sans grand souci du travail des autres. Le manque de coordination se manifeste particulièrement entre les organisations actives sur le plan économique et financier mondial et les autres organisations.

Au cours de cette seconde moitié du siècle, le monde a sans doute échappé à de nouvelles conflagrations mondiales, mais aujourd'hui il apparaît clairement qu'une gestion libérale nationale et une régulation minimale mondiale augmentent la richesse globale mais qu'elles n'ont pu donner réponse aux problèmes les plus lancinants de l'inégalité, de la faim, de la sous-alimentation, de la misère, de la maladie. L'analphabétisme est croissant dans le monde et, dans de nombreux pays en développement, les taux de scolarisation sont en recul. Le développement apparaît donc plus déséquilibré que jamais entre les pays développés et le monde en développement; entre les régions et les pays au sein des divers continents; entre les diverses catégories sociales en raison du sous-emploi et du chômage endémiques et de l'exclusion qui affectent un nombre croissant de personnes dans le monde.

Dans le sillage de ce déséquilibre, on assiste à la prolifération de l'économie informelle, à son installation en marge des circuits légaux et des institutions, soumise à la loi de la jungle, souvent à l'écart de toute forme de solidarité dépassant le niveau local.

En outre, là où les activités industrielles et servicielles se sont développées, elles le furent avant tout dans des agglomérations urbaines, dans des zones industrielles tentaculaires, construites au mépris des formes d'urbanisme et des principes d'aménagement du territoire, le plus souvent sans considération pour l'environnement, sans respect pour les ressources naturelles et humaines. Ce qui se traduit trop souvent dans des dégâts écologiques irréversibles.

Quel que soit le dédain que l'on peut avoir par rapport au mot "plan", il n'y aura de développement mondial sans plan mondial pour l'emploi visant à répondre en première urgence aux problèmes sociaux engendrés dans le monde par une économie qui ne raisonne qu'en fonction des besoins solvables; sans respect pour l'homme, sa vie, sa famille; sans considération pour les communautés humaines de base déstructurées par un développement géographiquement concentré, sans préoccupation pour l'environnement, les pollutions, l'accumulation des déchets, les risques macro-écologiques qui peu à peu menacent le patrimoine commun de l'humanité.

L'efficacité d'un tel plan pour le développement et l'emploi dépend évidemment de la capacité d'organiser un véritable dialogue par delà les frontières de la triade Europe, États-Unis, Japon et d'entamer une négociation

collective tripartite non seulement entre les grandes nations mais mondiale et donc entre les forces du capital et du travail en collaboration avec les États. Jamais on n'atteindra un niveau de solidarité efficace au service d'un vrai développement sans cet accord fondamental entre les forces du capital et du travail.

Une régulation globale devrait en tout cas viser à ce que les flux d'argent et de capital qui circulent dans le monde servent à l'investissement, à un développement économique réel au service de tous en tenant compte du bien-être des générations futures et donc des effets intergénérationnels des investissements et productions développées dans le présent.

Par ailleurs, les migrations ne sont pas sans poser de problèmes, d'abord en raison de leur multiplication mais aussi parce qu'elles gênent les populations autochtones au sein desquelles elles suscitent des expressions et des attitudes racistes que l'on croyait dépassées. Ces préoccupations ne devraient pas ruiner la générosité et les élans de solidarité indispensables à l'accueil de personnes à la recherche d'un asile et d'un emploi. La liberté et la libre circulation ne peuvent pas ne profiter qu'aux riches et aux cadres, alors qu'un nombre croissant de mesures conduiraient au refoulement des migrants demandeurs d'asile ou d'emploi, et contrecarreraient leur intégration convenable et le regroupement des familles.

Le problème le plus important du point de vue des travailleurs n'est peut être pas celui de la mobilité géographique. Son organisation ne constitue pas le problème le plus complexe. Par contre, une régulation globale des relations entre capital et travail devrait viser à développer l'accès au savoir et à la culture pour le plus grand nombre, à développer l'adaptabilité sans laquelle le cycle de vie professionnel risque de se dérouler de manière chaotique. En effet, dans l'avenir, l'analphabétisme, l'illétrisme, l'exclusion de l'accès au savoir, à l'éducation s'accompagneront de grands risques d'exclusion du travail et de l'emploi et, de ce fait, se traduiront en des formes d'exclusion sociale.

La présente contribution a tenté de montrer, d'une part, l'importance croissante des disjonctions entre les modes globaux de gestion du capital et de la finance dans le monde et les modes territoriaux et locaux de gestion des problèmes du travail et, d'autre part, le caractère stratégique de la symbiose entre le développement de la capitalisation physique et celui de la qualité et de l'adaptabilité des ressources humaines, si l'on veut maintenir le seuil d'employabilité du plus grand nombre de travailleurs.

Une régulation globale des problèmes supposerait des organisations syndicales mondiales qui seraient capables de transcender les nationalismes, régionalismes et localismes, de fédérer des travailleurs et des groupes de

travailleurs répartis dans une gamme toujours plus étendue de métiers et de professions; des organisations qui seraient suffisamment expertes pour lutter efficacement contre la "désolidarisation" qui découle de diverses formes de fragmentation et de dualisation qui se manifestent entre les qualifiés et les peu qualifiés, entre les travailleurs en emploi et en chômage, entre les travailleurs d'origine nationale et étrangère; entre ceux des pays riches et ceux des pays pauvres, entre les travailleurs des régions en industrialisation et ceux des régions à la traîne.

Cette nouvelle régulation ne verra le jour que lorsqu'un nombre suffisant de leaders syndicaux et de travailleurs dans le monde seront devenus conscients d'une nécessaire solidarité globale qui pourra alors entraîner le capital à se montrer solidaire dans la poursuite d'un vrai développement.

A l'heure présente, il apparaît bien que les conditions d'un dialogue mondial et d'une telle négociation globale ne sont pas toutes réunies.

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THE CHANGING MEANING AND VALUE OF WORK IN A GLOBALIZED INFORMATION SOCIETY

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“The pressure today is to *dismantle* the habits of permanent, round-the-clock, steady and regular work; what else may the slogan of ‘flexible labour’ mean?” (Bauman 1997: 112). The key requirement of the so-called global information society is “flexibility” in the workforce, and this has huge ramifications for the “meaning and value” of work. The old “work ethic” that modern industrial societies sought to inculcate in their workers assumed that work was a matter of spending time on a daily, routine, full-time and long-term basis, in paid productive activity, usually in the company of the same group of people, in the same place. Would-be workers today are encouraged to forget just those habits and assumptions in the name of “flexibility”. Work at the start of the twenty-first century is characterized by its mutability in time and space, by multiple careers, or, at the other end of the scale, by casualization. You are more likely to be working on your own, and with less sense of entitlement to payment and acceptable working conditions, and less prospect of continuing indefinitely in the same job, than your post-Second-World-War counterpart in the North Atlantic region.

These are major changes, and it is widely suggested that the turn of the twenty-first century marks a moment within a process of radical transformation of work, relating above all to the adoption of communication and information technologies (CITs) and in turn, closely related with this, to globalization. Work is being decentralized, an increasing proportion of workers experience a growing autonomy – in self-employment, outsourcing, and downsizing – and old organizational structures are being replaced with dynamic processes (LaPointe 1996). Increasingly, at least in the affluent societies, appeals are made to management to aid the process of adaptation to what is seen as inevitable, ubiquitous change. The critical slogan of the 1980s was

“automate or liquidate” (McLoughlin and Clark 1994: 4) but this hardly captures the subtleties and varieties of change that accompany technological changes in the workplace, either then or now. Management, labour unions, and workforces all play a role in determining which “human factors” are held to be important at any given moment. But while the variety of factors involved is often acknowledged, management approaches can deal only with discrete organizational aspects of work. The broader context of alterations in the very culture of work, consequent upon CIT-induced changes, cannot seriously be addressed merely by management-based approaches.

The other major context of, and feature of, changes in the meaning of work is globalization. Work is increasingly organized on an international level. The structure, stability, remuneration, and availability of work is often determined beyond national boundaries. Workers in the least developed countries scarcely have a toehold in the global economy, and those in developing countries are often restricted to work in export production that may mean little for national development. In the highly industrialized countries workers face greater uncertainties in the pattern of work and the expectation that longer periods of time will be spent in training for what employment there is (see Hodson 1997). Capital and labour flows are accelerating in pace and diversifying in pattern, especially as workers move from less industrialized nations to those such as the USA, Singapore, and Saudi Arabia. CIT-affected productive processes are spreading almost everywhere. Women are entering the international labour force in unprecedented proportion, often taking up low-paid production jobs. And organizational systems are in international competition, between for example, German co-determination, Japanese continuous improvement, and American flexibility.

In his illuminating work on the “information age”, Manuel Castells emphasizes the importance of these two factors – the informational and the global – and the ways that they are mutually implicated with each other, in his analysis of the “network society”. He writes that the new economy is

... *informational* because the productivity and competitiveness of units or agents in this economy (be it firms, regions, or nations) fundamentally depend on their capacity to generate, process, and apply efficiently knowledge-based information. It is *global*

because

the core activities of production, consumption, and circulation, as well as their components (capital, labour, raw materials, management, information, technology, markets) are organized on a global scale ... It is informational *and* global because, under the new historical conditions,

productivity is generated through and competition is played out in a global network of interaction. (1996: 66)

The resulting situation is one in which an asymmetrically interdependent world, organized around three major economic regions is “increasingly polarized along an axis of opposition between productive, information-rich, affluent areas, and impoverished areas, economically devalued and socially excluded” (Castells 1996: 145). But because the technological infrastructure of the informational economy is organized in “networks and flows”, one’s position in the international division of labour does not depend simply on region. All countries are penetrated by all four positions in which economic agents find themselves, and these are: “producers of high value, based on informational labour; the producers of high volume, based on lower-cost labour; the producers of raw materials, based on natural endowments, and the redundant producers, reduced to devalued labour” (147).

In the light of the foregoing, it is not surprising that these two aspects of contemporary changes – CITs and globalization – together have huge consequences for the meaning and value of work. Jobs available and the skills needed to do them are changing constantly, as the new technologies are adopted. But the global movement of capital and labour also affects work profoundly. As Hodson observes, “The large-scale migration of production facilities to locations with cheaper labour is dramatically changing the mix of jobs available in both the nations receiving production jobs and in the nations losing these jobs” (1997: xiii). It is one thing for governments to try to generate skilled labour, supportive infrastructures, and efficient organizations, in quest of long-term growth and stability. It is another to explore questions of how the meaning and value of work themselves should be reappraised in a global information age.

Castells argues persuasively that the fundamental transformation is not the growth of a global labour force, or changing employment levels, or even social polarization resulting from the global, informational economy, but rather “the individualization of work and the fragmentation of societies” (1996: 201). This represents a reversal of the historical trend within industrial societies of the salarization of work and the socialization of production. Now management is decentralized, work is individualized, and markets are customized.

New information technologies allow at the same time for the decentralization of work tasks, and for their coordination in an interactive network of communication in real time, be it between continents or between floors of the same building. The emergence of lean production methods goes hand-in-hand with widespread business practices of subcontracting, outsourcing, offshoring, consulting, downsizing, and customizing (1996: 265).

So what the new technologies make possible, namely the flexibility and adaptability of the productive process, meets little resistance from increasingly mobile capital, but this highlights the relative inflexibility of labour. Workers become more and more vulnerable to the system, and though some retain institutional protection, bargaining is individualized. This is why Castells sees the disaggregation of labour as being more significant than its polarization.

Workers everywhere are forced to be flexible. They must be prepared to move geographically, within or even beyond their own country if they wish to keep their jobs or find new ones. And they must adjust to flexible schedules, add time, or reduce time, in what amounts to a “just-in-time-labour” system. As Castells reminds us, life working time is also affected which, given the centrality of work to the structuring of social time, affects in turn social life patterns. Against the long-term international trend towards more similar work times, the flexible network enterprise is producing quite a range of different work schedule outcomes in different countries. Thus, as Frédéric de Coninck argues, while *work* is more integrated at the level of the enterprise, workers themselves are at the mercy of a multitude of different work time-and-space situations, leading to *societal* disintegration (Coninck 1995).

Integrated work: fractured society

The striking thesis of Coninck is that two simultaneous processes are occurring in the global information society. At the level of the enterprise, work is increasingly integrated. At the level of the social relations of workers, breakdown (*éclatement*) is the trend. In the modern world, people inhabit increasingly plural worlds, with multiple places of socialization. The number of social contexts, each with its own logic, and in which the individual finds herself, grows constantly. In each context the bonds of relationship are weakened, for the simple reason that the individual self-investment in each context is spread more thinly. We are all confronted with this variety of calls, interests, and responsibilities, and only in small ways can we contribute to or control each sphere. Even more significantly, suggests de Coninck, what is missing is those “markers” (*repères*) that make sense of each situation.

The story of modernity, argues Coninck, is a story of growing specialization, and of a widening gap between public and private life. Social relationships have become more fragile in all areas. It's not necessarily that there is complete social collapse, as some communitarians fear, but that the

technologically advanced societies have developed what Robert Wuthnow calls “loose connections” (Wuthnow 1998). But all this happens – and here is the irony – at a time when work processes, which for centuries have served to structure social life, are becoming more tightly integrated. Companies control production processes over vast geographical areas – garment makers such as Levi-Strauss or Benetton coordinate all their factories and distribution channels throughout the world – shifting resources like pieces on a chessboard. The enterprise expects a broader range of competences in the individual, leading to a workforce polarized between the knowledgeable salariat and those with relatively low educational and skills levels, and tries to hold these individuals together by means of “human resources” departments. Workers assume that someone, somewhere, knows what is going on, and companies, often without knowing local details, assume that diverse work contexts are orchestrated into an overall pattern.

The sense that someone, somewhere, knows what is going on is reinforced by the experience of workplace surveillance, using techniques that are increasingly dependent on electronics-based communication and information technologies. Forms of workplace surveillance have increased in intensity and diminished in visibility since the introduction of automation and what Shoshana Zuboff calls “informatization” (Zuboff 1986). Although management may be physically absent, if not geographically remote from the workplace, this does nothing to lessen the feeling that the “boss is watching”.

Wherever e-mail, telephones, and the Internet are used in work situations, they are vulnerable to monitoring. Movements are observed by video and CCTV cameras, which may be trained on production sites and parking lots. Keystrokes are counted, emotional labor – such as smiling or being “chirpy” at call centres – is monitored, and active badges or smart cards pinpoint the worker’s whereabouts at any given time in the day. The over-seeing may also be done directly by shareholders rather than managers. One Ontario company has placed a webcam in a call centre so that any interested party may check what workers are up to at any time of day or night. And workers at a midlands (UK) Toyota plant were surprised to discover that washroom urinalysis is a routine way of verifying the health of workers. In a globalized economy, workplace surveillance is also globalized (Elger 1994).

Before one ever obtains employment, it is more and more likely that employment screening methods will be used to pre-check the suitability, reliability, trustworthiness, and health of potential employees. Risk management is practised in many corporations, and in particular the likely health profile of intending employees is of vital interest to employers. This can be

checked using methods that include genetic screening. The mobile worker may well have left health records in another state, province or country. But the capacity to detect and predict disorders that could potentially affect work performance is not limited by geography. All these forms of workplace monitoring and surveillance are tied directly to the increasing integration of work, and flexibilization of labour. Indeed, the more employees are involved in flexible forms of labour, involving irregular schedules or travel and homeworking, for example, the more employers wish to keep tabs on their activities, their condition, and their department.

Depending on the type of workplace then, many employees feel the effects of "global information society" as an impersonal means of coordinating and tracking their paid time and their productive activities. What is less frequently apparent, however, is that rising levels of workplace surveillance do not necessarily arise from the desire of management more tightly to control or discipline their workers. They may be less personally interested in workers than the workers imagine. Indeed, as Rule and Brantley point out, workplace surveillance is often a by-product of computerization for other purposes (cited in Lyon 1994: 132). Just-in-time management or Total Quality Control produce surveillance effects that are experienced by the workers (who will discipline themselves in order to comply) but the purpose of these methods has to do with the flexibility or quality of production, rather than with an interest in how workers themselves perform. It is work that is integrated by these and other means. Whether or not workers are integrated socially within or beyond the workplace is, on present showing, a question whose answer certainly cannot be read off workplace experiences in any direct fashion.

The dominant techno-economic rationality of firms that determines and marshalls the locations and timings of work within the network society simultaneously disrupts the patterns of life of the workers it employs. Temporalities are torn apart, spaces of work are split, with the result that workers are more isolated, individualized, segregated from each other. Yet paradoxically, Coninck notes, as firms seek more fluidity, flexibility, and mobility, they depend even more on those traits that take time – communication skills, and trust, for instance – and that are enhanced by stability and rootedness in place (Coninck 1995: 285). Indeed, for all the talk of informational cities and virtual communities, the evidence suggest that as urban areas become more media-intensive, they also require better transit systems so that those crucial management decisions can still be made face-to-face (Graham 1997).

One of those areas of social life deeply affected by these shifts is the family, and relationships between men and women. The changing location

and timing of work, related to CITs, is especially marked in areas where women are most prominently involved. In Europe and North America, where the emphasis has been on raising the productivity of white collar workers, women have experienced a marked shift towards part-time rather than full-time work, more temporary work, and towards homeworking, moving from urban to rural areas, and beyond national boundaries. Only 50% of the UK labour force, for example, has a full-time, permanent job. And in the European Union, 83% of part-time jobs are held by women. Again, flexibility is the watchword behind these changes. In stark contrast to classic industrial situations, expectations about where work is done are as much subject to variation as expectations about when they are to be done. Within this situation one can also differentiate between the experience of, say, white and black women. Many of the latter are obliged by economic necessity to find full-time jobs, but tend to find themselves disadvantaged within those positions. A qualitatively different sexual division of labour is emerging with the widespread application of CITs in the context of restructuring. The old permanent workforce is dying, says Juliet Webster (1996: 109), and we are "in a period of unparalleled growth in insecure, contingent work in occupations of all kinds".

At first glance, it may appear that flexibility could offer real gains for family life, permitting shared work schedules to match shared domestic responsibilities. However, this promise does not appear to have been realized yet. As Juliet Webster points out, it is not new technologies that somehow bring about innovations such as teleworking. They merely enable it to happen. One has to look at restructuring strategies that lie behind it – and they seldom have the aim of supporting more meaningful and stable family life! When decisions are made affecting "operating units" (persons) from within "human resources" (personnel) departments, often remote from actual work-sites, it is hardly surprising that a sense of what workers actually do with their lives is missing. The overall effect may be as bleak as Sylvia Walby fears. It is to reinforce capitalist patriarchal labour relations; employers gain cheap labour, and men retain their domestic labourers (quoted in Webster p. 103-4).

At present, it does not seem that the flexible work structures emerging within global, informational settings are being used to increase the incidence of domestic work-sharing, economic partnership, and shared parenting responsibilities. And of course, those structures cannot entirely be blamed for this situation either. But what it does show is this. The growing flexibility of work does not automatically support particular kinds of preferred social arrangements. If stable and equitable family relationships are valued, then changes must be sought at the domestic level as well as within

the policies of firms, and through the supporting structures that government can offer through social programs such as child-care and fair pay legislation. Flexibilization may present more challenges than comforts to those committed to secure family life, but this means that the struggle must be engaged on many fronts at the same time.

Another way in which flexibilization has a social impact is in what might be called "life working time". Lifelong working hours have been decreasing in the technologically advanced societies during the past few decades, but growing flexibility has further ramifications. If, as Castells (and others) suggests, "*paid working time structures social time*", then when people do and do not work, and at what points in the life-course work plays greater and smaller roles, will affect how the rest of life is perceived, enjoyed, or endured. Working time and working schedules seem to be increasingly diversified, in parallel with the disaggregation of labour (Castells 1996: 441). Alongside this is the dramatic shortening of the number of years of working life, again in the technologically advanced societies, such that in Germany, the USA, France and the UK, the activity rate of men between the ages of 55 and 65 has dropped by anything from 43%-65% in the last twenty years! (p. 443) This means that of a potential lifespan of 75-80 years, only 30 (age 24-54) might be spent in paid work, thus diminishing – at least in principle – work's centrality to life.

This has implications, already being felt in several countries, for the systems of social support for those not in paid employment. Productivity increases would have to be substantial, as would the willingness to engage in greater intergenerational redistribution, in order to offset the accounting crises consequent on this shift. This leads Castells to propose that new social contracts are urgently required, in order to avoid the clash generated by the shrinkage of valuable working time on the one hand, and the accelerated obsolescence of labour, on the other. Intergenerational conflict, and the further breakdown of social solidarity, could be the result.

Work, meaning, and identity

If the overall trend, consequent on informationalizing and globalizing forces, is correctly construed as the individualization of work and the fragmentation of societies, then how might the meaning and value of work be altering? One thing is clear, work is being decentered from the nodal position it once held within modern industrial societies. In the technologically advanced societies it no longer fills the same amount of available time in either day-to-day life, or over the lifecourse. And while this might yet be as

evident in newly industrialized countries, still less in the "fourth world", the trends towards individualization and fragmentation are already evident in some places. To what extent, then, can work be expected to offer some structure to social life, or a sense of identity to the person? Clearly, if Coninck is right, work is playing a diminishing role in the structuring of social life. Destructuring or breakdown appears more likely. But what about the realm of work and identity-formation?

Ray Pahl argues (from a British context, but aware of global dimensions of change) that with the radical transformation that has overtaken paid employment, at least in the West, old expectations have crumbled. Whereas once, for most people, work would form a relatively secure feature of social life, for which preparation was made through specialized education or training, and which would remain fairly constant until retirement. Now casualization, multiple careers, unemployment, and the unprecedented incorporation of women into the labour market has led to work being seen as a source of fragmentation, insecurity, and uncertainty. The old parts, that could clearly be played by men or women, that related to roots in place or in kinship, or that formed a connecting thread through a lifelong occupation or career, are far less readily available. As Pahl notes, "many labels, scripts, and narratives that served as boundary markers for identity construction in the past have come to the end of their useful lives" (Pahl 1995: 120).

It is well known that for someone like Daniel Bell, the "cultural contradictions of capitalism" are seen in part at least in the creation of a consumer culture, in which rather than finding identity and purpose in the old industrial work ethic of modernity, these items are sought hedonistically in the gratifications of an "untrammelled self" (Bell 1976). Perhaps it is here that we must look for the ways in which identity is sought in an era when work is losing its power to integrate or to offer identity. For Mike Featherstone, changes in the mode of production, consumption and circulation of symbolic goods do indeed relate to the development of new means of orientation and identity structures (Featherstone 1991: 11) at a time when the older work ethic is in demise. But Zygmunt Bauman takes this far further, suggesting that consuming is actually supplanting work from its older cultural and social role. He argues that consumer conduct is becoming at once "the cognitive and moral focus of life, the integrative bond of society, and the focus of systemic management" (1992: 49).

These ideas fit well with globalizing tendencies of capitalism, now geared to consumption as a social and cultural process, and to consumerism as its ideological support system. As Robert Bocoock says, "capitalism continues to play a major role, but work in industrial organizations is not seen as determining the social, cultural processes surrounding consumption, nor

the construction of identities” (Bocock 1993: 79). Work, too, continues to play a role in identity construction, but now it is a secondary role. Work provides money for purchasing consumer goods that are required for constructing and maintaining identity, and the work role is thus demoted as a source of meaning. This may turn out to be one of the key ways in which work is changing its meaning and value in a global information society.

Of course, if these are thought of as key dimensions of a postmodern condition (see Lyon 1999) they remain only hints, intimations, of the possible shape of things to come. But they resonate sufficiently strongly with what empirical evidence is available regarding the structuring of social life around consumption, the establishment of social bridges and boundaries through consumption, and the intense management – indeed, production of – consumers, to sense that Bauman, Featherstone and Bocock are not entirely missing the mark in their sociological analysis. If they are right, then the decentring of work from its erstwhile position as a key contributor to social structuring and to identity formation may be paralleled by the rising social and cultural significance of consumption as a source of meanings and references that might once have been sought in the experience of work.

Inclusion/exclusion

Of course, the foregoing remarks will no doubt sound rather hollow to those for whom the opportunity to find meaning in work, let alone a chance to consume as many do in the affluent societies, is entirely remote. I refer to those for whom capitalist restructuring processes, including the informatizing of production, has led to marginalization, and even misery. The new international division of labour is split and segmented, such that in all countries, says Castells, one can find a new “fourth world” existing in the “black holes” of the global network society. Informationalism, states Castells, does “create a sharp divide between valuable and non-valuable peoples and locales” (1998: 161).

But it is not only a divide. Informational capitalism tends to relegate whole areas to structural irrelevance. And in those areas, escape from pain and destruction seems a somewhat forlorn hope. The black holes of social exclusion may exist anywhere, but are especially common in sub-Saharan Africa, and certain countries in Latin America and Asia. Those who are excluded may find alternative modes of response in, for example, criminal economies (and Castells documents the rise of some of these). They may also rise against the excluders in some places, perhaps using as justification some form of fundamentalism. Equally, of course, the excluded may

develop their own cultures, in which consumerism scarcely features at all, and in which other sources of meaning and hope compensate for the lack of paid employment or purchasing power. Poor Pentecostal groups in Brazil are a case in point (Martin 1996: 39-40).

What Castells says less about is the possibilities for other kinds of action within the socially marginalized and effectively "switched off" areas of the fourth world. Swasti Mitter, for instance, while she also sees the restructuring process in terms that are very negatively experienced in the fourth world, finds that, ironically, the attempt to create subservient and docile (largely female) labour forces among peripheral workers has become "instrumental in creating the basis for a new sense of social solidarity among women workers ..." (Mitter 1986: 24). Mitter brings examples from all over the world of how, albeit in small and piecemeal ways, alternatives to the fate offered by global informational capitalism are being forged by women's cooperatives, local community initiatives, and so on.

The global polarization of work and employment, enabled by the same processes of informational restructuring, raises challenges of different kinds in different places. For those who see them as challenges, because they fly in the face of some profound commitments to the dignity of labour, or to social solidarity, or to the social responsibility of owners and managers of corporations, there are clearly no easy answers, no simple solutions. It would be particularly odious if armchair academics, who by definition are associated with the affluent, global, privileged parts of the world, proposed programs for change without ever being involved in the pain of poverty and unemployment or the draining demands of drudgery. On the other hand, complacency seems quite out of place as well. The weakest social conscience could scarcely fail to be struck not only by the enormity of the changes currently taking place, but also by their deeply human dimensions.

A "culture of labour" in a global information society?

In an epigram at the start of his recent book, *Timequake*, Kurt Vonnegut comments that "Any person, alive or dead, is purely coincidental" (Vonnegut 1998). In his wry way, Vonnegut puts his finger on something significant, not unrelated to the effect of some informatized work situations, in both global (mobile) and local (fixed) contexts. Meaning and value is not something necessarily associated with work today. With the growing flexibility, fragmentation, and deregulation of work, it would not be surprising to find more people feeling that they are "coincidental" to the labour process. Alienation, so far from going away, appears to have been augmented by

these processes. Whatever the real gains of flexibility, communicative capability, or sheer safety in some informatized work situations, few seem to deny that work today is becoming more and more individualized, and that this is at least one of the most important trends, if not the most important. Alongside this are the new spatial distributions of work and global, national, and sexual divisions of labour that are, as Pahl says, "creating new tensions and forms of social polarization" (Pahl 1988: 608). The combination of technological change with capitalist restructuring helps to create a world within which the very idea of a culture of labour seems out of place.

For those, however, for whom the idea of a culture of labour (Schasching 1998) is a goal worth seeking, several things may be said that connect this theme with work in a global information society. The culture of labour comprises a personal, economic, social, and spiritual dimension. The first stresses the intrinsically human character of work, and the role of meaningful activity for a fulfilled life. The second relates to a threefold "human right", to work, to a just wage, and to property ownership. The third supposes that work contributes to solidarity and community, through finding appropriate relations with capital, not least through labour organizations. The fourth makes reference to creativity and responsibility, as well as to modes of interpreting the experience of work in terms of a religious world-view that lends overarching meaning and purpose to the task.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss how a culture of labour may be sought in relation to item one (though it is relevant), but some comment seems called for regarding the second, third, and fourth items. First, a brief comment on the second. As Bauman astutely observes, current poverty is aggravated by both economic growth and non-growth. Today, economic growth depends upon the flexible labor that I have been discussing, that produces structural uncertainty and reduces the volume of employment. But poverty is also aggravated by economic growth in the sense that the richest – "those paragons of consumer virtue" (Bauman 1998: 41) – get richer, thus increasing the pain, and stigma that go along with the feeling of insufficiency among those who cannot work, let alone consume. This connects with item two. The informational and global influences on work in the present do seem to militate strongly against the desire for solidary social relations. It is clear that, as currently organized in an increasing range of contexts, work does anything but contribute to social solidarity. And at the same time, these processes tend to erode the capacity of labour to organize effectively. To the contrary, as Coninck says, while work processes become more integrated, social relations of work move in precisely the opposite direction.

But while it is true that the informational and global tend at present to create a climate uncondusive to the strengthening of communal and social

bonds, those processes are not immutable or inevitable. The ways in which the “informational” develops does not depend upon some autonomous technology, but at least in part upon the social and economic relations within which it is designed and implemented. And the “global” is not merely something that happens to us – an “intractable fate” – as Bauman says (though, undoubtedly, many do experience it that way). The global is a process of spaces and flows, that is ever dependent upon and imbricated with the local. These observations are not meant somehow to soften the impact of the analysis that suggests that work is becoming more individualized, or to hint that the resolution to some of the most pressing tensions of our time is found in some alternative social analysis. Rather, by opening the “black box” of apparently “closed” concepts, ways of at least addressing the problem may be made visible.

With regard to the informational influences on work, it has become clear over the past two decades that new technologies may be applied in a number of different ways, that may variously enhance or degrade the work situation. New technology agreements, for instance, that flourished in some industries and some countries in the 1980s, showed that alternatives ways of implementing technological change were possible (Lyon 1988: 77-82). The pace was set by the Swedish *Joint Regulation in Working Life Act* which obliges different parties to agree prior to the implementation of new technologies. With the increased pace of change and reduced power of labour unions since then, it is harder to imagine how such agreements could work now, but this is no reason to abandon the spirit of such agreements in today’s industrial relations. Other kinds of agreements are still possible, especially those that appeal less to “quality of working life” or “job redesign”, and more to the value of self-determination, or even privacy, in the workplace. Thus, for instance, debates over modes of workplace surveillance are becoming increasingly central within industrial relations. These can be addressed in ways that speak to the human impact of significant aspects of informational capitalism.

As far as the “global” is concerned, I have suggested that, for a start, the global and the local must be seen in relation to each other. A major feature of much of Ray Pahl’s work has been his insistence that within the new global economy the strategies of employers *and* of households be examined to see how they interact in any given setting. The new divisions of labour are *both* at the global level of the four dimensions outlined by Castells, cited above, *and* at the local level of intra-household dynamics and processes. More than ever before, opportunities are arising for the renegotiation of household relationships, consequent upon the growing flexibilization of work. As with New Technology Agreements, much militates against such renegotiations on the basis of fairness and mutuality, but this does not

reduce their relevance or attractiveness as means of pursuing fulfilling work situations and appropriate sharing of domestic tasks. It also connects with the need for fair pay policies, adequate benefits and childcare, and, in many cases, for a re-emphasis on workplace-based and full-time employment. If conditions are to be improved, men have to be involved just as much as women. As Webster (1996: 188) says, "As long as women the world over continue to hold responsibility for the domestic sphere, because men's contribution remains relatively minimal, they will be unable to benefit in a systematic way from the potential opportunities in the workplace which information technologies might otherwise offer them".

Turning to the fourth dimension of the culture of labour – its location within a world-view – let me conclude by referring to some questions raised once more by Coninck. He finishes his book with some reflections on the relevance to *travail intégré – société éclatée* of the story of Babel. After commenting on the use of Babel by Walter Benjamin (language confusion), Franz Kafka (fragmentation and the assumption by workers that someone knows what's happening), and Luis Borges (the loss of a consensual viewpoint) Coninck proposes that the crisis of work be rethought as a communication problem. Fragmentation may paradoxically point to new opportunities, to deal with otherness, or alterity. While it may be hard to know how anyone can confront a global hegemony of technical and economic rationality, the alterity that makes a common project unviable – because no one speaks the same language, as it were – can be addressed. Communicational work is required at the heart of the processes of technical rationality. But this in turn requires a commitment to the ethical, in this case to seeing work as aspect of a religious world-view and approach to life.

Coninck shows how alterity is inscribed in the very practices of corporate rationality, that produce fractured and heterogeneous temporalities and fragmented social relations. Some optimists see the chance for an increase in rational communication and a promise of sharing through negotiation. But greater specialization, exclusion, and isolation are equally possible, insists Coninck. The problem, as he sees it, is that in social temporalities older traditions that once provided overarching meaning for many have lost their earlier influence. With social solidarity eroded at several levels, meaning is increasingly sought at the level of the individual self (hence the search for meaning and identity through consuming rather than through working). And while this is true of modernity at large, it is especially true of the world of work. In this world, where techno-economic rationality rules without sharing, questions of intersubjectivity become key. Alterity has never appeared so starkly, or with it the challenge to both respect difference and to discover the bases of commonality through restored communication.

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PART III

THE SPIRITUAL ROLE OF WORK:
CONTINUITY IN CHANGING CONTEXTS

THE CHANGING MEANING OF WORK (SECULARIZED VS HUMANISTIC) AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NEW SOCIETY

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1. WORK/UNEMPLOYMENT AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL PROBLEM.

1.1. At the end of the twentieth century, the problem of unemployment appears in entirely new terms. The foundations of that specific “civilization of work” which have characterized modernity must be abandoned and, with them, the conceptualization of unemployment that has prevailed until now.

The unemployment issue is not only imperative because of the fact that international statistics show that the phenomenon persists and indeed is worsening on a world-wide scale in all its forms (ILO 1997). Nor does this new feature come from a renewed awareness that unemployment is the product of profound social injustices and that it leads to socially disastrous effects inasmuch as it includes social exclusion, breaks down the fabric of human relations and erodes the bases of social solidarity. We already knew all this, although recent research has provided new evidence and shed light on new manifestations of these general processes.

What makes the problem of unemployment radically new is the fact that, in it and through it, an epochal historic change is revealed that is upsetting the entire working world and with it the whole of society. The quantitative-qualitative characteristics which unemployment is taking on reveal: i) that a process is underway *making work precarious on a universal scale*; ii) that the traditional boundaries between work and non-work are falling or shifting and, more generally, that *radical changes in the connections between work and social action* are emerging.

If we continue to be prisoners of the old work/unemployment

dichotomy, meaning “real work” as a stable, regular, long-term occupation, and unemployment as a lack of “real work”, we will find ourselves in a situation filled with unsolvable paradoxes. These paradoxes cannot be taken care of with *lib-lab* solutions (a mix between liberalism and socialism), i.e. through remedies based on balancing the de-regulation (freedom, flexibility) and the re-regulation (security, control) of work among the state and market actors. In this framework (*lib-lab*), despite all the efforts made, unemployment continues to increase. We have to ask ourselves, then, if the conceptual framework in which the problem of work is understood and tackled is not intrinsically distorted or at least insufficient. In my opinion, the answer to this must be in the affirmative. In order to understand the new terms of the unemployment issue it is necessary to redefine work, but in order to do this it is necessary to rise above the cultural framework in which modernity has conceptualized work.

In this paper, I do not intend to make an inventory, even in a synthetic way, of the literature on this subject. The task I have set for myself is to redefine the subject field in a dual sense: (i) on the one hand, from a negative viewpoint, I would like to put the framework which currently dominates the subject of work/unemployment up for discussion; (ii) on the other, from a positive viewpoint, I would like to support the thesis that the search for remedies to the problem of unemployment ought to be entrusted to approaches and instruments that consider work as a fully and properly social activity.¹

In other words, I intend to tackle the theme of unemployment starting from the problem of the meaning of work. This theme has been somewhat neglected in the past two decades (Castillo 1997). Only recently has this theme recaptured some vigor (Casey 1995; Gamst 1995; Simpson and Harper Simpson 1995; Morandé Court 1998). I would like to show how and why the struggle against unemployment will depend primarily on the way in which a culture understands the *meaning of work*, and the implications that are drawn from this for the organization of society.

1.2. The problem of a lack of work is defined today essentially in terms of economic scarcity. Everyone holds that secure and satisfying work is becoming an increasingly scarce resource and life chance. With regard to this observation, two theses provide competing interpretations in this area.

¹ To say that work is a “social fact” is to observe that it has relevant economic, political, juridical and cultural dimensions, but that it cannot be reduced to any of these inasmuch as it pertains to a *sui generis* order of reality. In its essence, what is social is a fact of “moral life” (in a sociological sense) which refers both to persons and to society.

i) On the one hand, there are those who hold that precisely because “real” work is becoming increasingly scarce it is becoming ever more important and discriminating in forging the destinies and life processes of human beings. Unemployment is seen above all as a problem of social justice in the distribution and redistribution of resources, and thus as a problem of social struggle, especially on the part of the disadvantaged (youth, women, professionally unqualified social groups) (Pahl ed. 1988; Kieselback ed. 1997).

ii) On the other hand, there are those who hold on the contrary that we are approaching “the end of the society of work” (*Arbeitsgesellschaft*),² or the “end of work” (Rifkin 1995) in the sense that the plan of society “centered on work” is becoming outmoded. Those who support this thesis – which is presented with many different formulations – hold that it will be necessary to abandon the concept of work and they propose to substitute the concept of “activities” or similar terms (Dahrendorf 1988). The unemployed (those who are dismissed from the system of “real” work) could be eliminated by giving value to activities of all kinds of a non-competitive character, with a different production logic from those proper to the “central” occupational sectors of the past (well remunerated and guaranteed in terms of their security), and by giving more importance to what is called “active *otium*”, to free time, and to the quality of life outside of work (not oriented toward work).

Who is right? Obviously the confrontation between these two theses must be set up correctly. In order to do this, the meaning of work to which we are referring must be clarified. The authors are not always explicit in this regard. The debate is often set up badly because cultural conceptions of work are used which cannot be compared. Furthermore, what sense is there in defining work as a scarce commodity that should leave room for “free activities”?

If the traditional meaning of work is kept as defined in the Taylor-Fordist industrial society, it is obvious that a problem of scarcity exists. But we must ask ourselves if only that type of work is “real work”. The first thesis (which is widely supported by the labour unions) retains the modern conception of work: this can be necessary for societies in the process of modernization and still in the stage of industrialization, but it is no longer suitable for societies that are already modernized. The second thesis proposes abandoning the concept of work as a required activity and exalts flex-

² The term was coined in the 1980s by various authors: cf. Offe (1983), Dahrendorf (1988), Gorz (1988).

ibility and creativity, but it often seems to speak the language of a culture that has nothing to do with work because it refers to expressive activities or to economically marginal occupations which do not seem capable of supporting an economy of real development. Those who support this second thesis look toward a society that is hardly decipherable in terms of human characteristics.

In this contribution, I would like to support a *third* thesis, different from the two that have just been mentioned. Against the first thesis, I observe that the transformations of work in the advanced economies are now so radical that we cannot avoid abandoning the modern definition of work. Against the second thesis, I observe that the concept of "activity" amplifies and differentiates the concept and reality of work in a morphogenetic way but it cannot substitute anything for it. The society of the future will be one which will stress even more than in the past the importance of work, but for this reason the meaning and form of work will have to be radically changed. This will have enormous consequences for the system of social rights connected with work and for the whole configuration of society. The area of choices and tensions is marked by the alternative between mass unemployment and the liberation *of* work (and not the liberation *from* work).

1.3. The red thread running through the arguments presented here is the following. First, it is a question of understanding unemployment as a specific product of modern culture (which has "invented" work and unemployment as mechanical and abstract categories) in order to see if the categories of work/unemployment can be redefined in a context of post-modernity (Part 2).

Second, I will analyse the cultural and structural changes of work which are underway today in the more advanced societies and their possible impact on the reorganization of society. I hold that the differentiation of the cultures of work and in particular the division between secularized and humanistic cultures will become a central feature in the arrangement of society (Part 3).

Third, I will develop the basic argument of my contribution. My thesis is that whereas *in the pre-modern eras* work was principally a servile activity of organic interchange with nature, *and in the modern industrial era* above all a marketable performance for the production of goods and services in the sense of "objects" (manufactured goods, artificial constructions), *in the post-modern era* work is primarily taking on a value of a social relation in that it is given value because of the relational qualities it offers and implies, and, as such, is differentiated into different activities. This is true both for

those who work and for those who enjoy the fruits of work, and also for the forms of interaction/intertwining between producer and consumer. Of course, the preceding work cultures are not completely superseded and they continue to characterize the more traditional segments of advanced societies and the broad strata of people in those societies engaged in a process of modernization. But work is differentiated in various cultures that are asymmetric to one another, for it is derived from a process of social morphogenesis of work that is both cultural and structural beyond the industrial organization of society. In order to compare and evaluate the new cultures of work, it is necessary to grasp the basic criteria with which each of them evaluates work in relation to the broader array of spiritual and material criteria that characterize each culture (Part 4).

The conclusion of this paper holds that if the prevailing conception of work continues to be that of the industrial era, as is still the case in most of the world, the problem of unemployment is being tackled with old instruments. These are characterized by the search for new forms of regulation of the interests and transactions occurring between economic and political actors, and work through the intertwining relations between the state and the market which are intrinsically inadequate of the task confronting the problem of unemployment (since they deal with unemployment as a mechanical issue without social content). In order to face up to the structural and cultural changes underway, a new framework is needed which will consider work as a reciprocal activity between subjects interacting as producers-distributors-consumers in a "civil" economy (civil here means generally capable of civilization, and not equivalent to synonymous with the so-called third sector).

Substantially, my thesis is that with the decline of the industrial (Fordist) order regulated by the post-war welfare state, the progressive reduction of Fordist work will not mean the "end" of work nor the exaltation of free time and voluntary activity, but the redefinition of work as a significant, communicative activity in highly differentiated production-distribution-consumption networks whose dynamics we must understand.

2. THE MODERN CULTURE OF WORK AND THE PHENOMENON OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

2.1. We must start from the fact that unemployment is not a "natural fact" but a social construction. How and why is unemployment socially constructed?

In his/her natural condition, a human being is *naturaliter* led to carry out activities from which he/she derives the support necessary for his/her

existence. When human beings do not find the resources in nature, they create the instruments themselves to meet their needs. If they cannot do this, it is because other human beings impede them from doing so by appropriating resources or by creating social bonds and barriers.

We can also say that whereas work is a natural activity for a human being, and as such a need and a resource that is not scarce, it is society that gives shape to the conditions under which work can become an unmet need and a scarce resource. This was both the “discovery” and the construction of modernity (Rousseau, Marx, etc.) which should not be forgotten. In fact, the concept of unemployment was unknown in pre-modern societies and was born with the modern era. It should also be observed that in modernity unemployment has been continuously redefined terms of its symbolic and technical referents (in that it must always have the character of a non-voluntary condition).

2.2. Through very complex historical processes, which I do not have time to examine here,³ the conception of work comes down to us with characteristics which we can summarize as follows.

a) *The modern culture of work intensifies its own contradictions.*

Modernity has introduced profound tensions into the meaning of work in that it has detached it from community activity and made it a commodity. By taking away from work a great part of the social mediations which it connotes it has created the figure of the abstract worker ready for any use whatsoever. This conception, which has developed gradually, has intensified conflicts, ambivalences and contradictions inherent in work. Concretely, it has accentuated the tension between the instrumental and expressive components of work, between the abstract notion of value and the practical devaluation of its human aspects; it has made contradictions grow between work as a functional service and work as self-realization of the subject, creating an antithesis between the abstract work which produces values to be exchanged and concrete work which produces value to be used.

The debate over working time (the number of working hours) has always been emblematic in this regard. The requests to reduce working hours, on the one hand, and for greater flexibility in working time, on the other, reveal all these conflicts. Today we are witnessing the rejection of these antitheses. Behind this rejection can be seen the *end of the assump-*

³ In a longer version of this essay I developed an analysis of the historical cultures of work which I cannot report here because of the space allotted.

tions that have supported the specifically modern culture of work. We can mention three fundamental presuppositions:

First: whereas pre-modern societies treated work as a social relation in which the private and public spheres met and overlapped (community activity), modernity has invented work in its purest form, separated from other areas of social action and functions. It concentrates and polarizes work in the public sphere as opposed to private life. Enormous tensions are then generated between public and private life. One sign of the crisis in the modern order lies precisely in that fact that today society is asking for work to be reconnected to private life in a significant way. New relations are originating between the working sphere and the sphere of private life. New tensions are growing up between the working sphere and the sphere of private life which manifest needs for connections and interactions which modernity has denied or simply forgotten. We can no longer return to the *Gemeinschaft*. However, it is obvious that present-day work is incompatible with the "public" characterization of it as abstract merchandise, which it took on in the classical capitalist era. Work is becoming once again an area of encounter and overlapping between needs of private and public life.

Second: the hierarchy between "humble" and "noble" work proper to the ancient cultures which was reflected in the majority of European languages (*ponos/ergon*, *labor/opus*, *travail/oeuvre*, *labour/work*, *Mühe/Werk*, *lavoro/opera*), was levelled and even overturned following the Protestant Reformation, the theoretical elaboration of the political economy, and the bourgeois revolution. As Saint-Simon said, the imperative is to struggle against the parasites, against those who do not work, against the dominion of the unproductive classes. As Durkheim would say at the end of the nineteenth century, it is the ('organic') division of labour that becomes the principal source of social solidarity. In the place of the seigniorial ethic the universal work ethic takes over, and this is something which requires specialization. However, over the course of the past three decades this culture of work has also begun to decline. Both the Socialist and Marxist labour ideology, which personified work in the social type of the "worker", and the functional vision of "organic" work, have entered into an ever deeper crisis ("de-motivation", "allergy", "refusal" to work have been spoken about). The modern ideology which saw the primary and almost absolute reference point for personal and social identity in work and the only claim to legitimate belonging in society (Accornero 1980) is undergoing a radical breakdown and is no longer at the centre of the cultural system. From being a duty, work is becoming a right. However, the point is that the worker is becoming problematic as a measure of the human person's value and as the title for his/her recognition as a member of society. The modern anthropology of work is no longer sustainable

and must be replaced with the idea that work is not man's essence but one of man's essential dimensions as a relational being.

Third: modernity has given shape to work following a type of rationality aimed at the goal of the *technical* component (pursuit of the goal in the interplay between man and nature), and the *strategic-economic* component (in the interplay between economic actors). Marx made a distinction between these two processes by calling them respectively "*work process*" and "*evaluation process*". He showed how modernity makes them interdependent and concomitant. Today, however, they tend to be more and more differentiated, and this places the modern conception (going back to Marx and the Socialists) in crisis which makes salaried work (in the opposition of salaried workers *vs* owners) the paradigm of the micro and macro sociological arrangement of society. The economic rationality of the firm and the market no longer represents the paradigm on which the whole society can be shaped. In other words, work and the position of workers in the production process are no longer considered the fundamental organizational principles of social structures. The dynamics of societal development are no longer conceptualized in terms of consequences of the intra-entrepreneurial power conflicts extended to the entire economic system. Social rationality can no longer be defined on the basis of the "labour" model which conceives of it as the optimization of the relationship between technical-organizational means and economic ends.

b) *Unemployment appears less and less as a "functional" phenomenon and more and more as a paradoxical phenomenon.*

If it is true that unemployment is only one chapter in the more general history of labour, then it can be instructive to see how the meaning of unemployment changes gradually as the culture of work changes.

Modern economic theory conceives of unemployment predominantly in a "functional" way in that it refers to those workers who must be dismissed for reasons beyond their control and which are technically related to economic progress (such as the adoption of new technologies, the restructuring of firms, etc.). However, since their number and the problems which they raise are becoming a "social problem", the "functional" considerations of the economic theory no longer hold and must be opened up for discussion.

In a technical sense, the term 'unemployment' – as defined by international organizations (cf. EU Report 1998) – appears at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴ It refers to a condition of having lost one's job in a partic-

⁴ Although the term *unemployment* also appeared previously (Oxford English Dictionary of 1882), it was defined in a modern sense by John Hobson (1896), followed by W.H. Beveridge

ular social structure and culture. The social structure consists of a real and proper labour market that is formally free and with a high social mobility by means of which work can be obtained and lost. Bargaining is rather relational (Williamson 1985) but this relational quality is reduced to utility. The culture requires work to be conceived of as a buyable and sellable thing; negotiable, like a transformable activity in an acquisitive sense (so as not to be bound to ascribed, affective, particular, local and community oriented characteristics).

We know that in certain societies unemployment was reduced or even formally eliminated through the use of totalitarian political power (such as in the former USSR). But this way of proceeding led to catastrophic economic results (low salaries, low productivity, low consumption, etc.) and, above all, it devalued the meaning and ethic of work. In the market economies, unemployment has been kept under control for decades through systems of social security which have tempered its negative effects, both through income compensations (or other benefits) and through incentives for re-employment (professional retraining and up-dating, fiscal breaks for firms, etc.). The fact is that today these welfare state regulations are becoming more and more costly and problematic. Their marginal utility is decreasing. The experience of states with a neo-corporate welfare regime shows that despite all efforts to give public support for employment, the hopes of entering or re-entering the “central” labour market are diminishing day by day. By becoming a structural phenomenon, unemployment reveals social paradoxes (Accornero and Carnignani 1986) which can be synthesized as follows:

— There can be economic development even without greater employment; on the contrary, in the advanced economies, it is becoming normal for economic growth to be accompanied by an increase in unemployment;

— To the extent that work becomes less central in the system of social compensations, there is the paradox of the growing feminization of work. Obviously, women’s entrance into the working world has been a largely positive fact and useful for their emancipation, but one must ask oneself why (and with what consequences) women are largely taking on jobs that have been abandoned by men (often those which are less remunerated and less protected);

— The equation “unemployed = poor” is no longer true; to be unem-

(1909). The unemployed no longer referred – as it had done previously – to those who are simply “not employed”, inactive or idle (as Marx still defined them using the word *Unbeschäftigte*), but those who have unwillingly lost a job (*Arbeitslosigkeit*) and are distinct from the poor (the unemployed are not necessarily indigent and, if they are, their indigence is not due to laziness).

ployed no longer necessarily implies a state of material poverty; on the contrary, the category of poor employed persons is growing; this highlights, contrary to prevailing cultural representations, that work does not primarily have an instrumental valence;

— The interaction between the supply and demand for work shows contradictions often due to the rigidity with which it is pursued within the industrial model. A new *job competition* opens up which now requires greater degrees of freedom and a much more elastic contractual set-up than in the past, in which the need is for diversified, alternating phases in life, made up of numerous transitions between formation-work-other activities; this only increases the sense of uneasiness, anxiety, uncertainty and fear of unemployment.

It is clear that it is the concept of unemployment itself that needs to be redefined and re-regulated. We can only get out of these paradoxes by changing the concepts of social development, of relations between the labour market and other spheres of life, and of social rationality; in brief, the systems of exchange on which work in a broad sense is organized. Above all, the need is manifested to build production-distribution-consumption networks in which everyone can be more of a subject, both as producer and consumer, or as both together (*pro-sumer*).

c) *The cleavage surfacing between secularized and humanistic cultures of work.*

Modernity leaves us heirs to a fundamental conflict in the meaning and the experience of work: the conflict is between secularization processes and humanization processes. Let us clarify the terms of this discussion and the meaning of this confrontation.

In general, a culture is secularized if, and to the extent that it is, opposed to a religiously inspired culture. 'Secularized' means that which is not concerned with spiritual or religious affairs (i.e., purely earthly, worldly) and which therefore sees work as an activity that has no religious valence or foundations. A secularized culture is led to subject work to the market or the state as opposed to the orientation given by religion. There is no doubt that the modern culture of work has basically followed this direction. However, it does not seem, despite the many positive fruits there may have been in the past, that the final outcome is satisfying. If work is deprived of transcendental (religious) meanings, it loses something which is essential to it in order to produce meaning and, in turn, to make one act with meaning and to regenerate one's motivation.

Undoubtedly, secularized conceptions of work have won out over the

other cultures of work. Today, however, the process of the secularization of work shows profound signs of crisis, especially because the motivational and symbolic bases which favored it are declining. Secularized cultures are finding themselves at the crossroads: they can take the path towards a further secularization or become de-secularized. Both of these paths are being taken. The first follows the direction of a “secularization of secularization” which leads work to be depreciated as a place of humanization. The second way is a re-enchantment of the world, and with it of work, which leads to a new concern for the “other” cultures of work which understand it as a *naturaliter* human activity, and which attribute intrinsically positive, and not primarily instrumental meanings to it, but which express primary needs of the human being and of society. These are the humanistic conceptions of work which consider it as a non “surmountable” condition for the human being, albeit historically modifiable, and as such essential – in every place and era – for the development of the person and as a title for belonging to a society (in the concrete social formations in which this work is done). The guiding principle of the humanistic conception lies in the vision of work as a social relation in a full sense, and not only in its economic valence (as in the secularized conception). A culture is humanistic if, and to the extent that it values the properly human elements (subjective and intentional) as opposed to those characteristics which are not distinctive of the human species but can also pertain to other living beings or to machines (such as physical strength or mechanical skills).

The West has interpreted and constructed the *humanistic/non-humanistic* distinction in a particular way: namely, accentuating the distinction between a value orientation and an instrumental orientation. So, we can say that a culture of work is instrumental (oriented to instrumental rationality) when it essentially sees work as goal-oriented to instrumental and consumer purposes, such as income (economic power) and social prestige (status symbol), with connected fringe benefits, consumption and free time. On the other hand, we can say that a culture is value oriented (to substantive rationality) when it sees values in work itself which express and realize the humanity of the person and the common good. Work is a good end in itself (creative activity) for the subject who does it and for others (it is an end that serves other persons and other ultimate ends – not mere situational purposes).

The modern era has only given nominal value to the humanization of work while in practice it has denied it. The conflict between humanized and non-humanized work is surfacing today precisely in the form of the death of a dream (especially the Marxist), that is to say of a synthesis between nature and humanity mediated by technology (so-called “technological humanism”).

2.3. For the purposes of the arguments presented here, it can be useful to try and make a conceptual classification. A secularized culture can be oriented both in an instrumental and a substantive sense, and the same is true for a religious culture. If we intersect these two axes (secularized/religious, instrumental/humanistic), we have four cells: secularized-instrumental, secularized-humanistic, religious-instrumental, religious-humanistic.

Historical examples of the cultures of work can then be allocated to these cells.

1) In the *secularized-instrumental* box we can place those cultures which see work as a pure material fact, namely a “biological” exchange with nature, both with regard to the society as a whole and to the individual worker (as in a great deal of positivist and Marxist thinking);⁵

2) in the *religious-instrumental* box we can place those cultures of work which consider it as a religious duty but not expressive of a process of humanization (see the Protestant ethic according to the Weberian interpretation);

3) in the *secularized-humanistic* box we can place those cultures that see essential and positive values for humanity in work, without any reference to transcendence (here many interpretations of nineteenth century liberal and socialist thinking and certain Marxist versions, not least of which are those which combine Marxism with humanistic currents, such as Catholic-Marxists);

4) in the *religious-humanistic* box we can place those cultures which consider work as a *link* between the human and the divine, as a place and means of humanization which is not opposed but rather leads – through work – to God; here the post-Vatican II Catholic ethic is placed.

From the empirical viewpoint, we observe that cultures 2 and 3 show a high instability; they tend to become polarized toward cultures 1 and 4. The religious-instrumental cultures (such as the Protestant ethic described

⁵ In this cell, some authors are also placed who are apparently far from it, such as Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas, who understand work only as a relationship with nature. It should be pointed out that Habermas (1990) sees a *dualism* between *work* (defined as an instrumental activity, for production and exchanges, which characterize the market) and *interaction* (defined as an activity of dialogue, of an expressive nature and which characterizes politics). This dualism is misleading in that it is derived from a romanticization of the concepts of “action” (praxis) and of a public sphere in Aristotle which Habermas uses to oppose strategic action and communicative action to each other. Far from helping to clarify the nature of work as a social relation, an approach such as this keeps work in the area of alienation (according to the classic Marxist scheme, shared also by Méda, 1995).

by Weber) tends toward the secularized-instrumental type or, albeit to a lesser extent, toward the religious-humanistic type. The secularized-humanistic cultures tend to accentuate their secularization or, although to a lesser extent, move toward a new religiosity.

This indicates that the more important distinctions are represented by culture 1 (which I will simply call *secularized*) and culture 4 (which I will call simply *humanistic*). This is the distinction that guides the modern evolution of the culture of work and comes down to us in the distinction between:

a) a *secularized culture* which understands work as a merely instrumental activity aimed at deriving resources from it for a decent or more decent life; according to this point of view, work must be done unless these resources can be obtained in another way (such as the enjoyment of a private income or the availability of welfare benefits);

b) a *humanistic culture* that understands work ultimately as a subjective activity, with a human meaning which a person cannot do without, not only because of an abstract social obligation, but rather because the lack of work decreases or leads to the loss of one's own humanity. This kind of orientation implies a vision of the human person as a subject capable of transcendence.

Mixtures of these cultures are always possible, but the distinction is essential in order to understand the phenomenology and the different outcomes of these two paradigmatic ways of seeing work which are embodied in complex, empirical systems (organizations of work) that are entirely different. We can analyze them by means of a diagram (Fig. 1) which interprets work as a social relation with four dimensions: material conditions (resources and technical means), practical goals (situational objectives), contractual norms (rules of justice), and the meaning of the activity with reference to its "ultimate" value.

The secularized and the humanistic cultures do not differ from one another so much because they propose different material conditions and different goal sets. In fact, both aim at improving material as well as physical conditions (see ergonomic studies and the concern for a healthy working environment, etc.), and technical means. The set goals of the practical activity (the objectives, the work plans, etc.) are also shared to a great extent by secularized and humanistic cultures alike.

What clearly distinguishes the secularized culture from the humanistic culture has to do instead with: (i) the subject of work, (ii) the characteristics of the work relations (with reference to the conception of commutative, distributive and redistributive justice and thus to the nature of contracts),

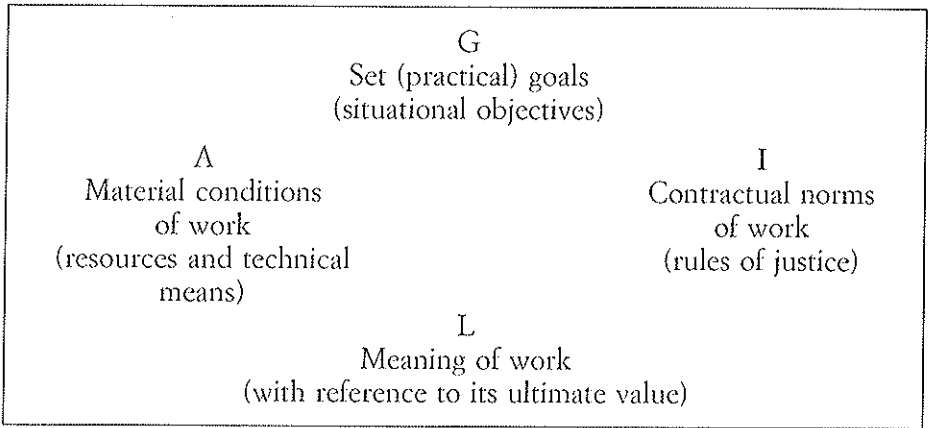


Fig. 1 - Work as a social relation (complex relational system between four fundamental dimensions).

and (iii) the meaning of work (in that it is linked to the ultimate value of the human person).

In fact, *the secularized conception* sees the subject of work in the individual as such and/or in the collective organizations; it has a utilitarian conception of the work relation (and thus of justice and contracts), and it values work in relation to the self-realization of the individual as such. *The humanistic conception*, on the other hand, sees the subject of work in the person as an individual-in-relation to “significant others”; it has a conception of the work relation as a “total social fact” (which implies a substantive conception of justice and of contracts aimed at fulfilling basic human rights-duties), and it values work as a common good, indeed as a relational good. Therefore, it maintains the importance of primary and secondary social bonds, and of the intermediate social – also labour – formations because it holds that if the person is not integrated socially, starting from the enterprise as a social organization, the person’s problems of humanization are not solved and thus the prime end of work is annulled or distorted.

2.4. The different visions of unemployment can be understood in the light of this framework. In the case of secularized visions, unemployment is the result of the play of utility. In the case of a humanistic vision, unemployment is the symptom of a moral distortion in society.

To use the words of A. Margalit (1996), a society is decent if it does not humiliate the man who – in his work – depends on another man. In a decent society there can also be exploitation of the worker (limited to the

material conditions, set goals and contractual conditions), but not his humiliation. In order not to humiliate him, the worker must be recognized in his dignity as a person.

In my relational approach, this requires work to refer to the human person and thus to be understood as a non-instrumental fact but one with a properly human ultimate value. A society becomes ethically *civil* not only to the extent that there is no humiliation but when, between those who give and receive work, there is *reciprocal promotion*. This means that the contractual conditions of work and its compensations must be set up in a fair way.

In the area of the cultural and structural contradictions proper to modernity, unemployment is both a manifestation and a need to overcome the conflict between secularized and humanistic visions of work.

Is it necessary to work? Only for income or for individual self-realization? But if the instrumental goal of income can be obtained in another way, why is it necessary to work? And if one can realize oneself in other ways, why is it necessary to work? It is on this terrain that the present-day debate is being waged.

2.5. It is worthwhile mentioning the fact that these dilemmas have run through the Christian world itself, since its beginning. To make a long story short, let me recall that, between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, we see a deep gap. On the one hand, the Protestant ethic considers work as a task (*beruf, calling*) imposed upon man as a servant of God. In the Calvinist version it evaluates man and work on the basis of the results interpreted as an external sign of salvation or condemnation; it considers unemployment (like poverty) as a sign of personal inability (*blaming the victim*), and in this way gives a strong and concrete impulse to so-called secular activities.

On the other hand, the Catholic ethic considers work as a task required from man as a child of God; here *the human vocation encompasses the professional vocation*; this view evaluates work for its subjective moral aspect (its intentionality as distinct from the results); it gives an ethical evaluation of work which subordinates market criteria to non-market criteria; it considers unemployment (like poverty) as an ethical failure of those who have a responsibility to create and/or give work, and thus it requires social subjects to make efforts to give work, although not forced and unproductive work, to those who have none. Nonetheless, it has the limitation of proclaiming an a-historical notion of work and of considering it again – in an Aristotelian way – as “inferior” to the activity which is carried out by those who have made the choice of the religious life.

Subsequent developments, from the 1960s until today, have led to dif-

ferences and some convergencies. The differences between Protestant and Catholic ethics are found in the fact that whereas in the Protestant world the theology and ethic of work have been increasingly secularized (Seligman 1992), in the Catholic world a new social doctrine has grown up which recognizes the essentially positive character of work to the point of describing it as a divine *co-creation* and a specific way of sanctification. This way is distinct because of its charisma from the strictly religious vocation (conceived as detachment from the world, *contemptus mundi*), but it is no longer seen as lacking in religious commitment since work itself – as a lay activity – is a divine vocation.⁶

Convergences are found in the common evaluation of work as an instrument of social progress and peace (US Catholic Bishops 1986; Schasching 1998; Carlotti 1998). However, in these convergences, it is not always clear that the secularization/humanization division is not external to the Christian world as a whole but runs through each of the Christian Churches to the extent that they accept the compromise between liberalism and socialism (*lib/lab*) or, on the contrary, tend towards humanistic alternatives. At the practical level of economic activity, it is noted that the different religious denominations in any case continue to support different business ethics (Kennedy and Lawton 1998).

Perhaps new solutions to the contradictions within Christian culture are only beginning to be seen today when it is necessary to overcome the dilemmas that arise when one is confronted with the choice between the traditional religious ascesis that seeks salvation “outside of the world” (mystical practice proper to monastic Christianity), and the intra-worldly ascesis that seeks salvation in the transformation of the world (proper to some secularized or utopian currents). In contrast to the past, in recent times *a new way has been opened up*: namely the salvation sought through the sanctification of work as a place and occasion for encounter with God, but as children and no longer as servants. This approach does not coincide with a kind of Christian blessing of capitalism. It cannot be limited to showing the reconcilability between the Catholic ethic and the spirit of capitalism (Novak 1996), but rather it should propose a vision of work that is profoundly different from the capitalistic vision. It is a question of creating a culture which is both religiously inspired and has a secular, but not a secularized vision of work.

The English language is not very sensitive to the distinction between ‘secularized’ and ‘secular’ which has been developed in the Latin world.

⁶ This occurs starting from the Second Vatican Council (*Gaudium et Spes*) and is made explicit in John Paul II’s Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. Among the precursors of this “turning point”, there is the thinking of Blessed Josémaría Escrivà (cfr. Llanes 1980).

Whereas in the Anglo-Saxon language 'secular' is opposed to religious (the layman is made similar to the non-believer), in Latin culture the concept of 'secular' is not opposed to the religious but indicates a Christian lay person who sanctifies him/herself in the world through work by means of an *ultra*-worldly ascetic theology (Del Portillo 1969). This is an enormously important point because it indicates the guiding principle of a new way of living out work that goes beyond the dilemmas of modernity.

3. CURRENT CHANGES IN THE MEANINGS OF WORK AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE REORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY.

3.1. Modernity has created unemployment through a specific secularized-instrumental culture of work and a related social structure. There is a rather close correspondence between conceiving of work as a service by an abstract individual (which can be bought and sold on a formally free market) and considering unemployment as a functional need inherent in the division of labour (social stratification). Today we are witnessing the crisis of this order, although it is very far from being transcended. We thus wonder whether or not the problems historically generated in this way can still be tackled with the cultural and structural instruments of modernity.

The response can only be complex but, in a rather important way, I hold that it tends to be a negative one. We are in the presence of new interactions between cultural models and organizational structures, mediated by the interactions between social agents-actors, which are completely transforming the meaning and functions of work and thus of unemployment.⁷

i) Social studies show that three major processes are underway: the end of the Taylor-Fordist division of labour, the inappropriateness of the cultural metaphors that sustained industrial work, and *the emergence of a new subjectivity of work*. Let us take a look at them in a very synthetic way.

ii) The process of morphogenesis of work structures in industrial organization (social division of labour, according to Marxist terminology) and in society (division of labour, according to Durkheim's terminology) occurs roughly in this way:

⁷ The analytical pattern that I have in mind refers to that of morphostasis/morphogenesis (Archer 1995) and is based on three major processes: i) the modifications of the social structures of work, ii) the modifications of the cultures of work, iii) the interactions between actors-agents which lead the structures (social and cultural) to new configurations. These changes take place in three, analytically and empirically distinct subsequent time phases (T1), (T2), (T3). Among the processes i), ii), iii) there are not, and cannot be, determining relations, but there are reciprocal influences.

(T1) given a structure of the micro (enterprise) and macro (societal) economic system, modelled on the Taylorist and Fordist organization,

(T2) through structural interactions between roles and organizational systems,

(T3) there is a passage to new work roles and organizational schemes and thus to new professions which become less and less hierarchical, dependent, specialized, and rigid, and more and more circular, autonomous, adaptive and flexible.

The division of labour that results from this is no longer polarized between capitalist and proletariat (as at the time of the first industrial revolution), or stratified between white and blue collared workers, but rather takes on a reticulated character made up of interactions and interdependencies between work roles which are both relatively more autonomous and yet more inter-related than in the past, within a vast network constituted by highly “de-centered” communications and transactions.

iii) The cultural modifications follow a rather analogous morpho-genetic process in the sense that:

(T1) starting from a general cultural system inspired by the metaphor of the machine (Rabinbach 1998),

(T2) through interactions with new cultural models which are inspired by values, representations and non-machine-like metaphors that use a symbolic language which is less instrumental and more expressive,

(T3) there is a passage to new ways of understanding both the meaning of work (as bearer and solver of subjective needs) and professional identities (more fragmented but also more autonomous).

Modern culture loses its “center” and becomes highly “dis-located” (Featherstone 1995) and this is reflected in the working world. If the private spheres (such as those of the family and life worlds) are de-institutionalized and fragmented, this also has enormous repercussions on work institutions. Work becomes generalized and differentiated: now the generic term for work includes both employment and occupation, in the sense of a professional activity (EU Report 1998, p. 45).

iv) How do the agents-actors change in these processes of structural and cultural morphogenesis?

Surveys on personal satisfaction and the subjective meaning of work, reveal how the agents-actors modify the structures and cultural *patterns* through their free, but conditioned acts. In general it can be said that:

(T1) at the start, the agents-actors are inserted into an industrialized system which strongly conditions their values, desires and expectations in a “mechanical” sense,

(T2) through their interactions, the agents-actors create new more competitive, free and participative relations,

(T3) then there is a passage to a situation in which the agents-actors are decidedly more demanding and re-oriented with respect to the former order; the agent-actor is less tied down than in the past, more mobile and at the same time more insecure, more inter-active, more oriented to the quality of life and the quality of work, the product and consumption.

i) Objective and subjective transformations of work, on the micro (enterprise) level as well as on the macro (economic system) level, change the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of work (Perret 1995). Orientations, attitudes and expectations are transformed in at least three fundamental directions;

ii) preferences grow for autonomous and atypical work, or, where work is unchanged, needs increase for a broader autonomy, even if this includes a greater inter-dependence and often has the danger (or conceals the existence of) new dependencies;

iii) expectations grow for more creative work;

iv) preferences increase for a more balanced relation between life and work in terms of time and transactions (with less asymmetry between them) and with more reversible and less traumatic passages between the two. Work, from being a specialized service functional to production alone, draws much closer to a paradigm of subjectively intentional action with a social valence.

In brief, the morphogenesis of work expresses tendencies which lead work in the following directions: from salaried to autonomous; from abstract to concrete; from rigid to flexible; from instrumental to expressive; from individually useful to socially useful; from being measured in terms of quantitative time to being evaluated in terms of qualitative time.

Work no longer takes its value from the number of hours it absorbs (as in the manufacturing-industrial era of Marx), but from the human quality incorporated (quality of the worker and the product, including technical perfection) and thus from qualitative time in the sense of attention, creativity, development of human skills and sensitivities. Quantitative time is certainly reduced both because of the processes of automation and for the purpose of distributing it among more subjects. But quantitative time is reduced above all because the value of work depends more and more on the quality of life of the subject who carries it out with respect to the conditions of the working process and the use of the final product.

In the economy based upon information and services, a new "subjectivity of work" is emerging in the sense that work is becoming less and less the domain of a wage-earning proletariat, but a society of producers—and—

consumers with higher subjective needs for self-realization and influence on the economic processes. The guiding criterion for these changes lies in shaping work in such a way as to obtain qualitatively better products from many important viewpoints, both on the part of those who work and of those who use the products of work.

From many points of view, a new anthropology of work is making strides which places in synergy the non-material (intellectual) dimension and the practical (manual labour) dimension, the managerial and executive dimension, among which a circular interaction is set up which was unknown in previous eras. Work can be oriented more toward the wholeness of the human person in a way that was not possible (nor was it socially sought) previously.

3.2. The current processes of morphogenesis of work have enormous repercussions on the more general social organization and in particular they bring about (Fig. 2):

— The de-institutionalization of life processes (professional and non-professional) which formerly conformed to the sequence: formation→work→retirement; alternating periods become possible between formation, occupation and non-working time; the phenomenon exalts the diversity of occupations, makes the processes more uncertain and the stages of transition more critical, but it also constitutes a *pool* of new meanings and opportunities for work; work now requires a more personal, entrepreneurial spirit and a greater capacity to handle risk;

— the end of the “labour welfare state”, i.e., the model of a social state based upon work for giving access to the institutions of social well-being; it becomes necessary to think of a progressive detachment between work and guarantees related to human and social rights (Martini 1999);

— the end of the vision of the worker as an individual from a collective body and the emergence of a new vision of the worker as a personal subject within reticulated social formations; from the language of needs there is a passage to a language of the worker’s human rights-duties.

The triangle formed between occupation, life processes (professional and non-professional) and welfare rights typical of the industrial order is being radically changed. In the new order these three poles must no longer correspond to the functional primacy of work, but to the rights-duties of the human person. The fundamental need becomes that of “personalizing the person” of the worker.

If there is an authentically human meaning in the growing need to personalize work, this meaning is to be seen in the new relations (input-output and trade-offs) between these four polarities: work, life processes, welfare,

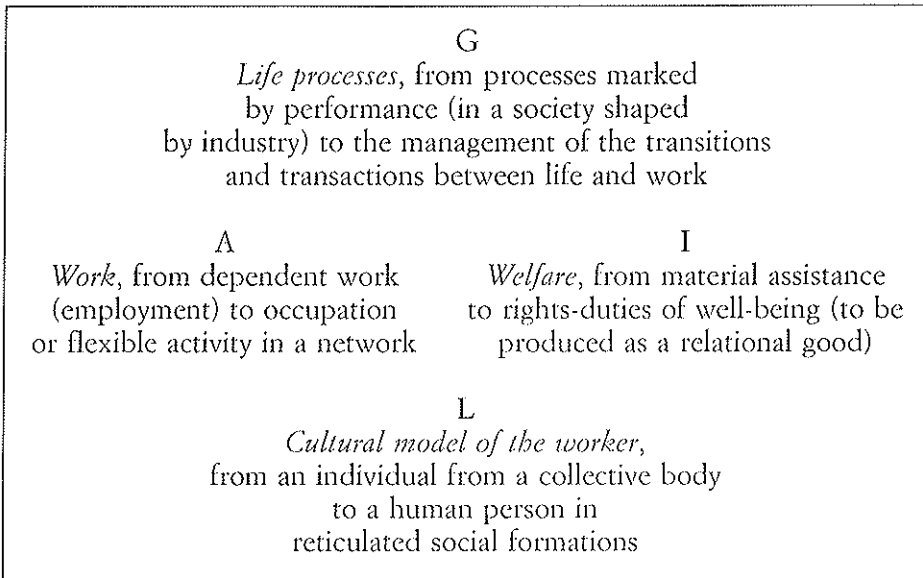


Fig. 2 - The old and new shape of relations between work and societal organization.

human person (Fig. 2). The instrumental dimension (A) is no longer the guiding criterion that gives meaning and norms to the other relations; it must put itself in relation to the cultural model of the worker subject (L) who takes on a guiding role in the post-Fordist order of society.

More generally, every term in the discussion takes on a relational character. The *work-welfare link*, for example, changes because the relations change between the other terms of the discussion such as between the definition of a worker and of life processes.

3.3. How then is the current meaning of unemployment changing and the ways in which the social and cultural systems try to tackle it? Unemployment is taking on many new faces and many meanings.⁸

a) First of all, it is necessary to make a distinction between unemployment as a lack of work due to entirely involuntary external constraints (e.g., being fired), or due to subjective needs of the worker in one of the life tran-

⁸ Fig. 2 can constitute a map for investigating these meanings: unemployment can be defined in relation to each of the four poles (A,G,I,L), i.e., unemployment respectively as a lack of work for reasons inherent in the economic system, as a lack of work because of a life process, as a distorting effect of certain welfare measures, or as related to problems of subjective identity.

sitions or transactions between work and other activities (but always of an involuntary nature). The collections of official statistical data are still not adequate to grasp these distinctions. There are different forms of unemployment which require differentiated evaluations and interventions.

b) Next, it is necessary to make a distinction between the subjective experience of unemployment (feeling excluded from work and the social consequences of this), and the collective experience (or the collective representation) of unemployment: How are the unemployed culturally defined? Once they were seen as "lazy" and "undeserving poor" (this characterization is still strong in countries with a Protestant culture). Today we are less inclined to look down on the victims but rather to have pity on them or draw up new rights related to the different situations typical of unemployment (courses for professional re-qualification, professional counseling services, allocation of temporary income support, etc.). With regard to the meaning of work, it is decisive whether these rights are recognized as a gracious concession from the social state or, following the principle of subsidiarity, represent the fruit of a mature civil society which draws them up and manages them on its own. In any case, we must make a distinction between the unemployed in a strict sense (involuntary) and those who have no work because they refuse it (those who exclude themselves from the working world such as vagrants or the voluntarily homeless, etc.), thus removing themselves from the rights-duties of social solidarity. We still know very little about the so-called "cultures of non-work".

c) Since in a considerable part of the industrially advanced countries unemployment is no longer synonymous with poverty, a distinction must be made between the poor unemployed and the unemployed who are not poor because poverty and unemployment are the result of different living conditions and processes.

In what way and to what extent does the configuration of systems aimed at fighting unemployment (Fig. 3) take these distinctions into account? It could be said rather little, although research is under way which is attempting to depict the figure of the "(true) unemployed at risk", i.e., at risk of social exclusion.⁹ We are interested in particular in understanding

⁹ Present sociological surveys reveal that unemployment leads to social exclusion if the individuals affected: are very long-term unemployed with the risk of continuous unemployment, suffer from severe financial hardship, are not able to structure their time in a meaningful way, show a loss of self-esteem due to high employment orientations and the irrelevance of other areas of life from which to derive self-esteem, display feelings of shame as a result of experiencing stigmatization and internal attributions of blame, lack social support (on individual, group, family and institutional levels).

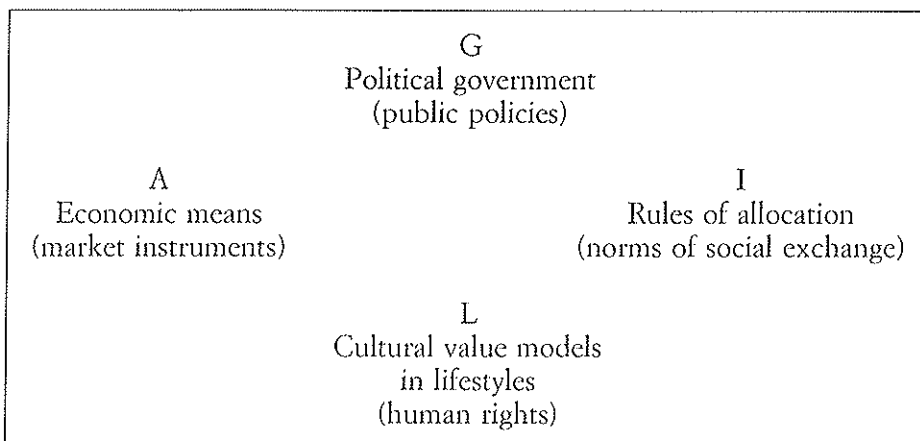


Fig. 3 - Systems for fighting unemployment: analytical elements (and, in parenthesis, empirical elements).

the role of culture (meanings of work and unemployment) in the ways of combating unemployment.

The remedies for unemployment:

a. can all be internal to each sub-system (A,G,I,L); for example, everything can be entrusted to public policies (G) or to the market (A), or be based on norms of social exchange (I), or on the enforcement of certain lifestyles (L); this way is the least valid because it is entrusted to only one dimension;

b. two or more of these sub-systems can be combined; in fact, the predominant solutions today foresee political regulations of the market in the search for a balance between social guarantees and freedom of initiative; these solutions have a limited validity because they do not change the normative and cultural assumptions at the heart of unemployment;

c. all of these dimensions and their relations can be taken into consideration; in the most complete case, the political regulation of the market refers to norms of exchange between the subjects of work and to cultural models in work and life styles; these are the most valid solutions.

In principle, seeing unemployment as a cultural fact derived from the adoption of certain lifestyles and evaluating it as a product of particular rules of allocation in social exchanges can be just as, if not more instructive than considering it simply as a functional need of the market or a failure of the system of political government.

3.4. There is much discussion about whether there is a universal "right to work" or not (Archer and Malinvaud eds. 1998). This is men-

tioned in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948 (“Everyone has the right to work, to freely choose his/her profession, to fair and advantageous working conditions and to protection from unemployment”), and in a similar way in many national constitutions and international treaties. But the question, “Is there a right to work?” still raises more doubts and perplexities.

Jon Elster (1988) voiced the thesis according to which there is not and cannot be a “right to work” as a positive right. His argument is that in order to show that a value ought to be given as a right, it would be necessary to show that it is individually possible to do so and that this value is so important as to have priority over other rights that are opposed to it. The reasoning he uses in order to verify this thesis is based on some restrictive premises. First, real rights are only those produced legally by democratic decision-making processes (Elster excludes natural human rights) and concretely the right to work is a problem of an intersection between democratic theory and the theory of the welfare state. Second, the right to work can only be justified on the basis of a demonstration that it has a priority value different from that of the right to have an income because of the fact that it provides advantages and responds to needs that are prior to a simple income, such as esteem for self and others, social contacts needed for social integration, a non-alienating structure of daily life, and the self-realization that is required by human nature.

On the basis of these assumptions, Elster argues that: first, the right to work cannot be a legal right (imposed by law) because this is not compatible with the market based on contracts between individuals; in brief, the argument is that democracy cannot be reduced to a welfare state; second, in his opinion empirical surveys indicate that human nature adapts both to work and to non-work and so the primary advantages invoked to justify the right (self-esteem, social integration, etc.) are not necessarily ensured by work.

His conclusion is that “the right to work that could be created is not a right that may be worthwhile having”. I personally feel that this position is very debatable. One could agree with Elster about the fact, conceptually and practically, that the right to work is not of the same kind as the rights to welfare.¹⁰ It certainly has to do first and foremost with a moral right.

¹⁰ The justification that I hold of such difference is nonetheless different from the one put forward by Elster. Elster holds that the fundamental difference between the rights to welfare and the right to work lies in the fact that whereas the values of welfare (health, insurance, personal services, education, lodging, etc.) can be provided indifferently *in cash and in kind* (since, in any case, money can buy them), the opposite occurs for work which cannot be bought. In my opinion, the difference lies rather in the fact that the right to work has to do with human rights and not the social rights to welfare (for the distinction, see Donati 1993, conclusions).

However, the fact that it is primarily moral does not mean that it is abstract nor that it cannot be expressed in economic and political terms and hence in juridical norms too. The fact that it is primarily a moral right does not mean that there are no concrete subjects who ought to observe it and ensure its observation. It means instead, and properly speaking, that it has to do with a human right in the sociological meaning of the term.

In the light of my outline (Fig. 3), the limit of Elster's argumentation lies in the fact that he seeks the remedy for unemployment only through economic (A) and political-juridical (G) instruments, completely apart from the social problems of justice (I) and the cultural models, the lifestyles and, in the final analysis, the human rights (L) which are made residual and are purely derived from the economic and political-juridical needs.

It is obvious, however, that human rights do not work alone. They are reference points for the other components of the systems for fighting unemployment and thus constitute only one element which must be combined with the solutions advanced in the other sub-systems. In this light, it then also becomes clearer that it would be better to speak about a "duty of all the social subjects" (firms, state, etc.) to ensure the conditions that give value to work instead of speaking about a "(subjective) right to work" as an abstract right which has no concrete empirical referent responsible for guaranteeing it. In the same way a "subjective right to health" cannot be spoken about, but rather a duty on the part of society to ensure the existence of the environmental conditions and the health services necessary for combating ill-health. To speak about a right to work implies recognizing a right of social subjects to give value to all the relations that create work and not only to regulating their effects (we have yet to understand how a *promotional regulation* of all forms of work can be undertaken).

It is here that the *cleavage* between secularized and humanistic conceptions of work comes back into play. One must ask oneself whether the market system of work can be "goal-oriented" to human values and rights, or whether it ought to be left to the evolutionary logic inherent in the economic system. The answers which scholars and governments give to this question are still very ambiguous. To a great extent they mix a purely adaptive (functional) vision and a finalistic (humanistic) vision which cannot really be reconciled. It often has to do with rhetoric which, behind a veil of humanistic appearances, hides a substantive functionalism.

a) The adaptive (secularized) vision sees work as an instrument for objectives which, although they may include meta-economic ends (such as social cohesion), are nonetheless evaluated in an economic way. Even when cultural models referring to the person and to human rights are spoken

about, they are interpreted economically. Along these lines, work is only an expression of human energy which can and must be made more efficient through more suitable instruments, and this can also be avoided if an individual possesses a patrimony or sufficient benefits to live without working.

A great part of the logic regulating work and the struggle against unemployment follows a *lib/lab* mode (Donati 1998) of compromise between freedom and social justice (or security) which has as its objective a further modernization of work (including the forms of so-called black, underground, gray, informal and often illegal work). This is the apotheosis of neo-functionalism: "*A l'avenir, une capacité d'adaption accrue sera la clé du succès*" [In the future, an increased ability to adapt will be the key to success] (European Commission 1998, p. 7). But what does the "ability to adapt" mean?

When the *lib/lab* model tries to take the meaning of work into consideration, what is looked at is still and as always the economic (rules of the market) and political (interventions by the welfare state) mechanisms; therefore, the discussion about the meaning of work disappears in the solutions proposed as remedies for unemployment. New slogans are coined which have the character of oxymorons, such as "flexible rigidity" (coined by Ronald Dore in reference to Japan), or counterpoints to the right to work such as the "right to leisure" (Lafargue and Russel), or the "right to active leisure" (Domenico De Masi).

The fact is that the secularized approach does not know what *human* meaning to give to work. This vision thus ends up giving work the character of a mere social obligation (the English case and the Dutch model are two current examples), or it virtualizes work in that it refers to the worker as an impersonal subject who must be available and adaptable in everything.

b) The finalist (humanistic) vision sees work as a social activity among subjects who are in relations of exchange. Work is considered as a means but with particular qualities and a dignity of its own within a more complex relational system of action. Work is first of all a moral right/duty of the person, and society ought to give it value as such, and not subject it to adaptive processes which are extraneous to it. The meaning of work is not to represent man's end but, on the contrary, to manifest his being (work is for the expansion of the human person and not vice versa). Relations with life processes and with welfare measures should not introduce new forms of alienation but, rather tend toward the liberation of work by promoting the self-teleological subjectivity of the human person (Wojtyła 1995). Work is thus configured as a "system of meaning" and as a crucial relation for the fabric of the community (Zampetti 1997). In the end, this perspective

insists that there is an urgency to the task of analyzing and understanding the interdependence and interplay between market and society and to regulating markets *so that they can do what they are intended to do* and can be prevented from unintentionally – and unnecessarily – generating tragedies.

Today the discussion about work and unemployment is becoming more and more a question of a confrontation between the secularized interpretation (*lib/lab* order based on social guarantees for a freedom seen as “freedom from”), and the humanistic interpretation (which claims an order of substantial justice in which freedom will be configured in a positive sense, as “freedom to”, according to the well known distinction made by Amartya Sen). The “third way”, theorized by Anthony Giddens and Tony Blair, is an example of a *lib/lab* conception, whereas the social doctrine of the Church represents part of the humanistic alternative. The difference lies in the fact that whereas the “third way” is a mix of capitalism (*lib*) and of socialism (*lab*), Catholic social doctrine proposes an order that transcends both liberalism and socialism.

4. WORK AS A SOCIAL RELATION: NEW HORIZONS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.

4.1. From a broad sociological perspective, work (as an occupation) can be defined as: (i) *a personal activity aimed at a socially useful end*, (ii) *from which resources are obtained for living for those who do it and/or for those to whom this subject may wish to distribute them*. The definition seems obvious but it is not so by any means. It places the emphasis on two characteristics, one general and one specific, which are matters of dispute.

i) There are some who deny, in theory or in practice, the goal-oriented character of work by saying that it is only a functional service (performance), a kind of vital extrinsic expression (this is the nucleus of the secularized approach). There are those who recognize its finalist character but see the purpose only in terms of instrumental compensations (money, prestige, etc.), i.e., they adopt a utilitarian ethic. On the other hand, there are those who recognize that work is a human action and thus have recourse to a non-utilitarian ethic (this is the nucleus of the humanistic approach). The latter holds that, properly speaking, the ethic begins where and at the moment when the human being conceives of his/her life – and thus of work – as a task (Utz 1998).

The purely empirical observation that many persons – the majority according to opinion polls (see the reports of the *International Social Survey Programme*: ISSP 1997) – are not aware of the ethical character of work but only consider it for its usefulness, does not belie the sociological definition of work that I have given. For this it would be sufficient to analyse people's

lives in a little more depth from a sociological viewpoint. This can be seen, for example, in the research on the effects of unemployment which shed light on the drama of unemployed persons precisely as an extinguishing of their moral life (see the investigations by Kelvin and Jarrett 1985, Kieselbach 1997). In a complex society, it is the lack of work which shows the ethical contents of work *a posteriori*.

ii) The characteristic that distinguishes work from all other goal-oriented relations, or the specific characteristic that underlies its meaning (guiding distinction) is the fact that obtaining the resources necessary for living depends on this activity. If this were not the case, the activity would not be work but another type of relation.

Until now there has been a direct connection between work and resources obtained directly in the market relations, although they are regulated by the political system and channeled by collective organizations, such as labour unions. The new fact is that the connection is becoming less and less direct (on the market) and increasingly indirect, i.e., mediated by a third party. A third party assures the obtaining of the resources for living. In the past decades, the role of this third party has been taken on by the welfare state but it has absorbed too many mediating functions of safeguarding workers, generated perverse effects, and has management problems today. Could there be other agencies, mechanisms or relations that would take on this role? I think that precisely on this point we are witnessing the birth of a new societal configuration. Work cannot be detached from its goal-oriented character in order to obtain the necessities of life, but the connection can be mediated by new systems of social relations which will reshape the freedom of work, on the one hand, and security in life, on the other, through new associative agencies which are different from the state.

My thesis is that the post-modern era will tend to put more and more emphasis on the relational aspects of work both – so to speak – the “*external*” aspects (visible in the relations of exchange), and – so to speak – “*internal*” aspects that have to do with the fact that the goal of the activity and the way of performing it are socially mediated through the subjectivity of individual persons.

In order to present this vision, I will use two arguments. The first concerns the empirical transformations of work as a social relation; the second has to do with the current morphogenesis of the professions.

4.2. In a general way, work is being transformed because its boundaries are shifting and becoming intertwined with activities that do not fall within the modern definition of work. We are moving towards a kind of society in which a plurality of theoretical conceptions and practical cultures

of work will co-exist in competition with one another. They can be distinguished and classified on the basis of the meanings that stress: work as a value of exchange (commodity), as an activity that is legitimized for political purposes of de-commodification (goals not conditioned by the market), as a communicative relation of reciprocal service, as a virtuous action that responds to primary human needs (Fig. 4). In this last meaning a certain process of cultural and perhaps also religious re-enchantment is revealed.

Interpreted in an analytical sense, these meanings correspond to four fundamental dimensions of work as a social relation. Everywhere and in every case work implies – even if only in a latent way – a value of exchange (A), a situational end of an extra-economic type (G), a form of communication for reciprocal social integration (I), a response to primary human needs according to use values (L).

Interpreted in an empirical sense, these meanings can lead to identifying material areas in which each of the four symbolic codes prevails. For example, one possible translation of Fig. 4 into empirical terms is the following: A corresponds to market work, G to civic work (civic obligations), I to work in networks of an associative kind (third sector, voluntary service, *économique solidaire*, etc.), L to work of a domestic kind and in informal networks.

How are these different meanings of work differentiated and how are they integrated? To respond to this question, it is necessary to have a *gen-*

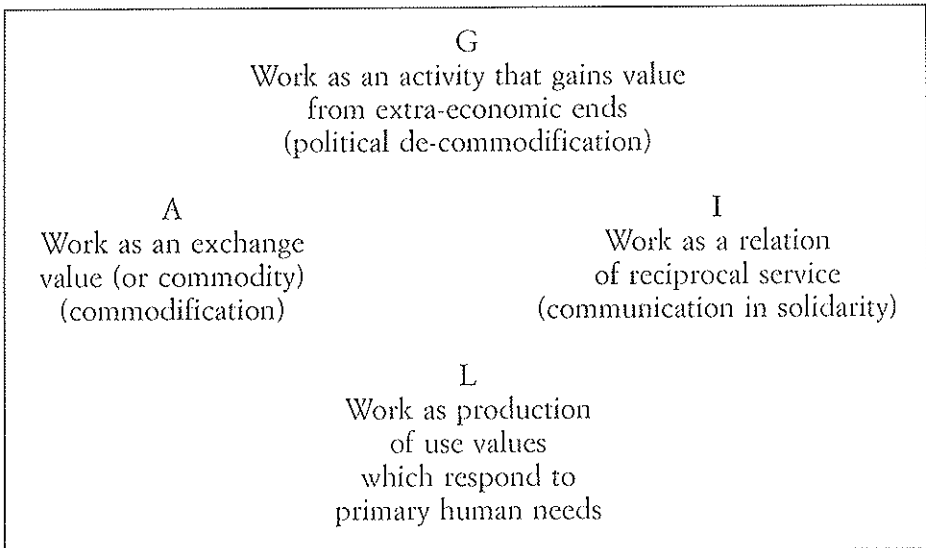


Fig. 4 - Differentiation in the meanings of work.

eralized theory of work as a social relation. From this vantage point (as a relation), work can be interpreted through three major semantic codes: i.e., a symbolic reference, a structural bond, and an emerging phenomenon.

a) As a symbolic reference (*refero*), work is a search for meaning. This can be seen very clearly in young people for whom work has the main value of being involved in the search for existential meanings: the search for one's first job means making the choice of a symbolic commitment which can – above all – offer a human meaning. For instance, empirical investigations reveal how the younger generations in Europe emphasise detachment from the instrumental value of mere profit and instead stress the values of intense human relations with work companions and/or with a client.

b) As a social bond (*religo*), work is the structural resource that makes up the fabric connecting agents with a system of expectations, rules and common interactive patterns. It is thus an essential basis of social cohesion.

c) As an effect of exchange (*wechselwirkung*), work is what emerges from the reciprocal interaction between the workers and between those who work and those who make use of the products. As an emerging effect of these systems of exchange, work shows its functional character (and not mere functional service) in that it regenerates social bonds among the members of the production-consumption network.

Looking at the *gendered* character of work is also part of this theory. In fact, everything that we have said about the new cultures of work and, in particular, about the importance of not using strictly economic and political criteria for giving value to work, can also be seen as a manifestation and effect of the crisis in male work (or, of male models of industrial work) with respect to the emergence of women's work. The male ethic emphasizes the capacity for individual performance, the instrumental value of the task, the hierarchical structure of command, power, the value of the service, in brief, instrumental achievement. The female ethic accentuates the expressive value of the task, the process, the relationality, the care, the quality both of the product and of the service, in brief, work as a coordinated, less segmented accomplishment that is attentive to the fact that autonomy is expressed in responsibility. In a better way than men, women connect the quality of the work with its results and grasp the social usefulness of work.

This is not a matter of affirming the supremacy of one cultural mode of working over another, or of blocking the *sex typing* of work or inverting it. It is rather an observation that the mass entrance of women into the labour market, which has taken place in the past decades, has contributed to great shifts in the meanings of work and also in the end to the "destiny of gender" in assigning one type of work to one gender or another. The

attempts to institutionalize this new situation through work "quotas" reserved to one of the two genders, or the adoption of an "an-affective paradigm" (affective neutrality) of work have proved to be a disappointment and a failure.

The value and symbolic patterns to work carried out according to gender allow interesting developments be expected in the emergence of new cultures of work.

To hold that transformations of work are shaping it more and more as a social relation means asserting that:

a) work is increasingly being socially mediated, even in relation to nature and to the material things produced there: it assumes relations; it takes place within social relations; it leads to social relations. Therefore, society is intervening more and more in work activity and giving it value (compensations and sanctions) according to new rules.

b) Present-day society emphasizes the importance which work has in the relations between the subject who acts and the one to whom he/she turns (employer, client or user in general) and the type of bond that exists between those who create the goods and those who make use of them. A new civil economy is born; cultures of *fair trade* are affirmed.

These new mediations and the relative changes in the process of devaluing certain forms of work and of giving value to other forms of culture must be taken seriously.

4.3. The second argument considers these transformations as a morphogenesis of occupations and professions. A synthetic glance over the changes in occupations, jobs and professions shows that today: (A) in the market, (G) in civic occupations, (I) in the third sector (economy of relations), (L) in the informal networks, there is an explosion of new profiles and working styles which the existing juridical regulations cannot control and which the labour unions themselves and the structures of neo-corporativism cannot manage (Donati ed. 1993; Chiesi 1997).

Few see in these processes the emergence of a new social relationality. The cultures of work are still to a great extent conditioned by an old approach that tends to define work on the basis of the different material and formal contents of functional performances, whereas there is a significant lack of a relational vision of work. Relationality is seen at most in that part of the so-called social economy which produces caring services.

These processes have given rise to theories about the end of work (as employment) and a transition has been noted from the status of "job" to the status of being "active" (Boissonat Report 1995; Priestly 1995; Gaudu

1995). A shift of this kind seems to many to be impracticable. What seems correct and possible is to generalize the concept of work from employment to “work activity” in the sense that *it refers to an action that is binding by contract*, whether this contract is taken on voluntarily or results from a social role that is binding for the person, thereby keeping the concept of work distinct from that of a simple activity which does not imply juridical obligations related to a contract (EU Report 1998, paragraphs 205-209).

The relational approach is in agreement with this viewpoint with one proviso: the work contract must be the regulative expression of a relation which is not merely instrumental but community-oriented as well. Work refers more and more to exchange circuits which involve the common good (as a relational good)¹¹ of a network of producers and consumers who occupy increasingly interactive and even reversible roles.

4.4. The insurmountable limit of modern ethics (bourgeois and Marxist, liberal and socialist) and thus the structural limit of the *lib/lab* solutions which are so much in fashion today, lies in the fact that they seek the meaning of work outside its relational contents, or at least they do not see the human richness of work as a social relation. They do not see how the category of work is central when work is no longer defined as a relation of exploitation with nature, or in terms of the relationship between servant and owner, worker and capitalist, or worker and employer, but as a complex exchange relationship between human persons and between their communities.

Ever since Aristotle’s time, the West has made one fateful distinction with perverse outcomes: namely, the distinction between man’s activity as a *bios practicos* and human activity as a *bios teoreticos*, the former meaning labour (tiresome and necessary), and the latter, a free and unconditioned activity (“action”, as Hannah Arendt calls it). Marx draws all the consequences from this separation which had grown up over the course of the ages, and delineated his antithesis between alienated work and man’s vital activity (*menschliche Lebenstätigkeit*), conscious (*bewusste Tätigkeit*) or free (*freie Tätigkeit*) activity. On this basis, through mere dialectical antithesis, he develops his theory about the end of work and of the society of work.

Hannah Arendt (1964) derived her ideas from thinking that we are living in a society of work from which work could be absent. However, by thinking in this way, Arendt too remains a prisoner of the categories of

¹¹ On the theory of the “relational good” as a specific way to understand the common good see Donati 1993, chapter 2.

Greek thought and gives free rein to the idea that it is possible to live in a society without work. In sympathetic vein, Dominique Méda (1965) holds that it is necessary to “disenchant” work, in the sense of taking away the symbolic weight which modernity has attached to it (as an instrument of progress and as synonymous with human essence), and reduce it to one of the many components of the individual’s and the collective body’s lifetime.

In reality, the Aristotelian distinctions and the Marxist antitheses, with reference to which a great part of liberal thinking has also been defined, are now behind us. These categories of thought lose meaning when we think of work as a social relation that implies simultaneously and interactively an *active life and a contemplative life (bios practicos and bios teoreticos)*, because it involves the entirety of the human person more and more. Even Kant’s antithesis between autonomous action and heteronomous acting disappears because in the work relation (we should say: in work as a social relation) both of these are present and cannot be separated theoretically or practically.

To liberate work in this way means to see it as an “action among” subjects, which is inter-subjectively qualified. The turning point lies in the fact that work is no longer undertaken simply to obtain a salary for survival or for the production of a good to be given in commodity exchange; it is rather done to produce a good on which both producers and consumers depend for their lives. This does not happen everywhere, but only where it is possible “to goal-orient” work.

When conceived of and undertaken in this way, work becomes not only a “*merit want*”, but also and above all a “*relational want*” (Donati 1993, chapter 2). And this is so not only because the system of relations for the activity that is defined as work conditions its meaning, but because work comes to consist of (“and is made up of”) social relations on which all those who are involved depend.

4.5. If we start from the idea that work is a social relation, we can get out of the conceptual framework that has imprisoned Western culture in which work has been defined as an instrumental service, that is the object of appropriation and/or contract in the dialectics between servant/owner, proletariat/bourgeoisie, worker/employer.

We can then see work as an activity in exchange systems which are differentiated from one another, which have (or could have) different forms of currency, with different rules of equivalency, commutation and redistribution. What we usually call “money” is only *one* of the possible forms of *instruments of credit* for acquiring goods and services. The differentiation of society brings with it the rise of differentiated spheres with their own sym-

bolic codes of transaction and thus with their own "currencies" and rules of exchange. These spheres are not necessarily separate but can (or could) in turn also be associated or reach an agreement with one another through further forms of exchange which would make goods and services accessible to all the members through forms of conversion of the individual currencies in force in each relational sphere where work takes on its own means of being carried out, organized and valued.

The idea of the Citizen's Minimum Wage is not only compatible with this view of things but favors it. In fact, supposing that individuals can enjoy a minimum income in cash, they could add to this income a whole series of "instruments of credit" (other forms of money) which each person obtains through his/her activity in various spheres of life and work, in the form of access to benefits, goods and services that are not and cannot be given monetary value (in terms of currency).

The transition process to this new economy of work is favored by the fact that in the exchange spheres regulated on the basis of those activities that are different from work in a traditional sense (occupation is the principal source of income), the social relation which work expresses in a broad sense (and which is contained in it) is revalued and enormously strengthened. Here the work-relation becomes a good in itself and a dimension comparable to other dimensions in terms of the usefulness and of the "money" (instruments of credit) it provides.

This perspective can be criticized and opposed by one fundamental objection which still expresses all the abstract and mechanical weight of modernity. The objection states that monetary money (the instrument of credit expressed in currency) is far more advantageous than all the other forms of "money" because it has the quality of abstraction, i.e., it can be exchanged with any other good without being subordinated to relational conditions; indeed, it works precisely on the condition that it can be transferred only if it maintains or increases the possibilities of being used without any extra-economic bond, i.e., if it increases the conditions of communicative contingency (as expressed by Niklas Luhmann 1984).

However, in my opinion, the objection is not seriously detrimental. We can keep the advantages of "money" as a generalized, symbolic means of exchange, produced as an "evolutionary universal" by modernity, while giving life to new systems of exchange different from the typically capitalistic market. This can be done for some good reasons:

(i) first, because the process of unlimited financing of the economy through currency produces perverse effects (e.g., the phenomena of instability of world financial markets are well known and the ruin of entire areas

of the globe through simple monetary decisions taken in places which have no relation to the areas involved in the financial movements); these perverse effects indicate that there are thresholds beyond which the extension of only one currency on a worldwide scale should not go (limits of utilization of the currency as a virtual currency and cybermoney);

(ii) second, because forms of generalized use of non-monetary instruments of credit can also be found (e.g., the time used in "time banks" could be transferred from one bank to another);

(iii) because the balancing between the abstraction and concreteness of instruments of credit can be more appropriate in areas of exchange precisely where we want to limit the commodification of what is exchanged, as in the case of merit, positional and relational goods, and in general of non-negotiable human goods (non-marketable).

In brief, thinking that systems of exchange can be created with different forms of money does not mean to hold that work can be recognized only if it pertains to a specific social group or to particular, limited and exclusive social circles. Of course, opening up the 'economy' to the relational dimension does not imply going back to an economy of barter or to a pre-modern type. On the contrary, it means inventing post-modern forms of complex exchanges in which work itself is seen as a complex activity (management of one's own time in differentiated spheres). It means holding that work can be valued to the maximum degree as a relation with a *sui generis* meaning in each of the different social circles.

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ETHICAL VALUES AND THE JAPANESE ECONOMY

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Since 1868 the Japanese economy has risen and fallen. Japan's modern rise began with the sweeping nineteenth century reforms brought about by the Meiji Restoration whose goal was to catch up with the industrialized West. Military defeat in 1945 marked the end of this period which was followed by another dramatic economic rise. The aim was to catch up with, and possibly surpass, the West. The 1992 collapse of the "bubble economy" heralded another collapse which highlighted some dangerous rigidities in politics, society and the economy and showed that at the moment when the Japanese thought that they had caught up with the West and had surpassed it, Japan was dangerously weak. Now Japan is on the rise again, but it has to catch up with itself: Japan must reinvent itself.

To understand the present crisis of Japan and the Asian crisis as a whole, we must understand the ethical-religious principles which have inspired first the Japanese and later the Southeast Asian peoples in their economic achievement.

As a general principle, Western business society grew from Christian ethics pertaining to individuals and organizations and based on universal principles – monotheism, and the individual human person. Japanese society is based upon the Confucian ethic of relationships, which is particularistic in scope (family, group, nation) and collectivistic in its quality.

More than any other religion or ideology, Confucianism has been influential in forming Japanese work and business ethical attitudes. At the decisive moments of Japanese history, Confucianism with its ethical orientation has been the key element in forging the political and economic system of Japan. The Taika Reform, with the Seventeen-Article Constitution of Shotoku Taishi in 604, the unification of the country under the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1868), the Meiji Restoration (1868) and its consequent radical changes, and finally, the post-war period (1945-) have always had Confucianism as their ideological inspiration and ethical orientation. Con-

fucianism, even more than Shintoism and Buddhism, has provided the ethical principles on which to base fundamental reforms.

We have to be clear that the influential ideology is "Japanese" Confucianism, that is to say, Confucianism interpreted in a Japanese manner. Originally, it was an inspiring philosophy that preached simple maxims of brotherhood and justice founded on respect for customs, on ceremonies and on community relationships. It stressed harmony between people rather than belief in a transcendental God or gods. In the basic five relationships, there was no cult of the individual, whether between father and son, ruler and subject, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, or friend and friend. The faith of Confucius was inseparable from a belief in community. The relationship, not the individual himself, was the measure of things.

Confucianism was imported into Japan in the fourth century A.D., and successive waves of scholars produced later modifications. It has been a permanent quality of the Japanese introduction of foreign religions, ideas, or even technologies that in the process of acceptance these religions or currents of thought are filtered, re-interpreted, and Japanized. Whereas in China, Confucianism had benevolence as its central virtue, in Japan, loyalty became the central virtue. Loyalty means total devotion to one's lord or group, firm, or company; it is the will to serve, even at the sacrifice of one's own life. Loyalty, together with filial piety and respect for elders, form the triad of values which regulate the social, hierarchical relationships. In such an ethical system, individualism does not flourish. Japanese Confucianism demands obedience to superiors, service to parents, reverence towards elders and conformity with the majority. There is very little room left for the problem of the individual conscience or for a universal norm.

The Confucian orientation appears very clearly in the Seventeen-Article Constitution of Shotoku Taishi, promulgated in 604. In Article I, the Constitution states that Japanese society must be based on the fundamental principle of *wa*, or harmony.

"Harmony is to be honoured, and discord to be averted. However, everyone has his personal interpretations and biases, and few are farsighted. Hence there are those who disobey their lords and fathers, and who quarrel with their neighbours. When concord and union are maintained between those above and below, and harmony rules in the discussion of affairs, right reason will prevail by itself and anything can be accomplished".

Nobody is allowed to form opposition subgroups within the community. Affairs should be discussed in a spirit of calm until a reasonable decision, the most desirable from the point of view of the whole community, is

reached. In Articles X and XVII, dictatorship is rejected. In order to achieve harmony, rulers should discuss important matters with their subjects and should reach decisions in a democratic way. Article II states the need to propagate Buddhism in order to elevate the moral level of the individual.

According to Shotoku's model, Japanese society is composed of the Emperor, the state officials, and the people. Article XII decrees that local governors are not rulers but civil servants. Other specific norms for the administration are: state officials must obey imperial edicts (Art. III), understand that decorum (ceremony, manners) is the foundation of law and order (Art. IV), and administer political justice, without which loyalty to the Emperor and benevolence to others would be impossible (Art. VI). Bureaucrats must respect sincerity, which is the mother of justice (Art. IX). They should not accept bribes (Art. V). The right person should be appointed to the right job (Art. VII)). They should arrive at the office as early as possible and be ready to work overtime (Art. VIII). They should be guided by the principle that work will be rewarded (Art. XI). The people should be served without delay (Art. XIII). They should not feel jealous of a colleague's success (Art. XIV). Finally, during the busy agricultural season, other burdens should not be imposed on farmers (Art. XVI).

Although Article II speaks explicitly of Buddhism, the Shotoku Constitution is essentially Confucian. Harmony, decorum (good manners), loyalty, benevolence, sincerity, justice are all Confucian rather than Buddhist virtues. The Constitution stresses that decisions must be made democratically. At the same time the people must obey the imperial edicts unconditionally. This seeming paradox between a democratic decision-making process and the absoluteness of imperial commands is easily resolved because the Emperor can communicate only those orders which have been democratically decided.

One can say that even today some of these fundamental orientations are still valid and form the ethical underpinnings of the Japanese economy. Buddhism and Shintoism, and now Christianity, have influenced Japanese ethical behavior, but it is still fundamentally Confucian.

From this Confucian attitude we could say that the Japanese see themselves primarily as members of groups, in which specific intragroup or intergroup relationships take precedence. In other words, ethics are more relativistic or situational rather than universal.

These intergroup and intragroup relationships are clear in the Japanese employment system, particularly in large corporations. The following are some of its characteristic expressions:

- education, and education tested by a long series of examinations, will provide a basis for selection and recruitment;

- employment will be a life-long job with the same company;
- promotion will be based on length of service;
- the relationship between superior and subordinate and between employer and employee will be quasi-familial;
- the rights and duties of employer and employee are extended to their families;
- the company will provide most of the employee's basic needs, including housing, work canteens, and medical, educational, and recreational facilities.

In such a system, loyalty is the most important virtue. The employee not only feels obliged to stay on in the same company even if he is offered a more attractive job elsewhere, but he cannot afford to move. There is little chance that he will be offered a job by another company. Choice and competition in a free market is made at the start of one's career. The Japanese do not wish to move wherever and whenever an opportunity for advancement presents itself. It is not culturally acceptable for an employer to hire or steal someone else's employee. No company wants to hire someone who already has an internalized loyalty to another company.

The assumption, in large companies, that employment for both management and labour will be for life, breeds a strong sense of loyalty in both groups, which the company assiduously cultivates. Initial in-service training includes a great deal of company indoctrination and relations of intimacy and trust are encouraged between superiors and those below them. Sports teams and other group activities are sponsored by the company in order to make the lives of the young workers center on the company as much as possible.

The permanent work force of a company becomes, for the individual, a group to which they are proud to belong. Their loyalty to the company assures it of an enthusiastic labour force, which takes pride and satisfaction in its work, is happy to work overtime, and does not even take full advantage of the vacation provisions made by the company.

The identification of the workers with the company, and not with their fellow craft workers, meant that as labour unions developed, these were not organized by crafts but by companies. The workers saw no need to oppose technological progress for they knew that the company would train them in new skills if their old company-acquired skills were no longer useful. Labour in Japan has not opposed technological advances, as it has often done in the West.

A final benefit of the system has been the avoidance of periodic rises in unemployment, since companies do their best to keep all their permanent workers even during an economic turndown. During the thirty years of

rapid economic development, unemployment in Japan remained below 2%; it should be pointed out that the Japanese way of reporting unemployment differs from ours. For the economy as a whole and even for the taxpaying companies, it was no more burdensome to retain employees during slack period than to pay unemployment benefits financed largely through taxes on the companies. For the individual worker, the resulting job security gave him self-respect.

Life-long employment by, and total commitment to, the company demand a careful examination of all companies before a decision to join a particular company is made. There is strong competition among candidates to join the most desirable company. The company, for its part, must carefully screen prospective employees since the offer of employment is an offer of total protection. In education, there is a fierce entrance examination system to enter the best educational institutions, which prepare the students for the top occupational groups.

What we have said so far applies mainly to large companies; small and middle-size companies do not guarantee lifetime employment.

The Japanese executive tends to think of himself as a community builder as much as a profit-maker and considerations of prestige and social responsibility can weigh as heavily with him as monetary reward. He cherishes harmony rather than justice as the highest social good. His idea of community service, however, is a narrow one; it is concentrated on a single industry or a single company, often to the exclusion of everything else. His ideal is to encourage those under him to take decisions and to feel loyalty to and responsible for the whole concern.

This Japanese system is not without its flaws and weaknesses. The pressures in a society that stresses harmony and loyalty above everything can bear heavily on individuals, especially the gifted. There is the loss of creativity, the stifling of an individual's own feelings, the homage paid to mediocrity in high positions, the gap between what the Japanese call the *tatema*, the desired appearance of things, and the *honne*, the actual condition, the real thought, the motives that one really has.

The members of any Japanese group linked by a web of mutual obligations are apt to forget their manners when they have to deal with other unrelated groups. They still communicate poorly with non-Japanese and can be too diffident. Their lack of response comes from a genuine perplexity at how to deal with foreigners who are by definition outside their web of commitments. Some affect an extraordinary tunnel vision, which enables them to go about their job of enriching the company with blithe disregard for the feelings or interests of other companies or other countries, and often even for the feelings or interests of their own families. There is also a lack

of transparency, which can cause grave social, ecological and individual damage both within the company and in the country at large. The “company first” mentality forces people to hide ecological or financial tragedies, hoping that nobody will notice them.

So far I have dealt mainly with the influence of Confucianism. But Buddhism and Shintoism have also provided some important elements of the economic and business attitudes of the Japanese. Zen Buddhism in particular has become a method of training in perfection, a method of concentration and self-control, a training in efficiency, in aesthetic appreciation and in creativity. Outside Japan it is rare to find techniques of mysticism practised by many without the reward of a religious mystic experience; yet here it is practised by policemen and soldiers, sportsmen, artists and businessmen as a superior way of reaching perfection in their chosen way of life. Through the practice of Zen, one reaches complete denial of the self (*muga*, *mushin*, i.e. non-existence of the self).

New employees of big firms are often sent on some kind of Zen spiritual exercises with the aim of reaching a plane of expertise, beyond and above their normal professional competence. The tea ceremony, flower arrangement, traditional calligraphy, bonsai, martial arts such as judo, kendo, aikido, and others are deeply influenced by Zen and are ways to attain that state of total concentration and total freedom which engenders the “naturalness” of perfection, the awareness of the least details, and the search for beauty and simplicity.

Shinto’s special contribution is what we might call the ‘sense of vitalism’ in Japanese work ethics and economic behavior. Shinto emphatically affirms the primacy, nobility, beauty, and wonder of life. The Japanese generally call Buddhist *bonzes* for a funeral, but they marry with Shinto rites and present the newly born to the local Shinto shrine. A celebration of fertility is implicit in many of the solemn rites held at the imperial court, and a cult of fertility is explicit in many riotous festivals (*matsuri*) which take place at all seasons in the countryside.

The world and man, in Shinto myths, are not created, but generated by the gods. The concepts of life (*inochi*) and birth, accomplishment, combination (*musubi*) are central to Shinto thought. Creative evolutionary development forms the basis of the Shinto work-view. At the back of the Japanese mind lies a deep and comforting feeling that the generation of beings, the production of things, doing, organizing, creating, adding, innovating, enriching are all fundamentally good actions, and that by working, transforming and expanding, one is fulfilling the fundamental law of the universe.

Work for the Japanese is not the punitive result of original sin but an aspect of *musubi*, production, generation, combination. Shintoism provides

the inspiration for the Japanese characteristic we foreigners often call “workaholism”, but the Japanese themselves see work as the real aspect of life. Work is, after all, making things as the gods made the worlds.

CONCLUSION

Japan ended the 1980s and entered the 1990s as *The Japan that can say NO* – the title of a best-selling book by Sony’s then-chairman Morita Akio and a prominent author and politician Ishihara Shintaro. The idea was that Japan should stand up to pressure from the United States of America on trade and other issues. Japan was “number one” and should not be bullied by anybody.

Japanese confidence then began to erode. Surging land prices made many rich but left others with bigger bills to pay. The great tradition of harmony, uniformity and loyalty to the elders and to the group was crumbling. In politics, corruption was endemic, and, while the economy was healthy, the country at large looked the other way. But when recession hit in 1992 and the Nikkei share average plunged to just 40% of its 1989 peak of 38,916, everybody realized that something was wrong. In the general election of 1993 voters threw out the Liberal Democratic Party after 38 years of uninterrupted rule.

The close relationship between politicians, government bureaucrats and businessmen that had been one of the main reasons for the rapid economic development of the post-war period could not survive the confusion of coalition politics. Investigations of the behavior of high-rank bureaucrats who so far had been represented as professionally well prepared, highly competent, and morally incorruptible, were carried out and a number were condemned and jailed. This should have been the moment to find new leaders in the business world. But the tradition of harmony, loyalty, and the ideology of the company as a family has prevented a shake-up and the recession has continued. In moments of crisis the traditional oriental values have been a hindrance in the process of finding new leaders. When innovation, creativity and personal responsibility are required, the Confucian values are not enough.

Changes are taking place. Previously everybody would stick with the system. Life would be difficult unless one bought what everyone else bought. Now there is a more personal, individual touch in fashion; once again there is a certain sense of humility or modesty. The Japanese businessmen are now less arrogant; they no longer believe anymore that Japan is number one. They are ready to start again and to learn from other countries.

The moment for a new start has arrived. Traditional values are still strong, but there is some doubt about their superiority.

LA VISION BIBLIQUE DU TRAVAIL ET LE CONTEXTE CONTEMPORAIN

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English summary

The current concept of work in the Western world is partly a result of the secularization of Biblical values. This process began in modern Europe with the aim of interpreting human activity in terms of a Promethean individual or collective act of self-realization. Liberalism and Marxism represented work – even when emphasizing the antagonist relationship between capital and labour – as the source of value in a purely economic sense. In contradistinction, the Biblical understanding of human work is as a relationship between man and God, between creation and eschatology, between man's freedom and God's grace.

I. God's activity is a continuous 'work' in creation and history (*bara*: Gn 1,1; Ps 115,15). God put man in the garden of Eden in order to keep it and cultivate it (Gn 2,15). This is the first glance the Bible takes at human work: a joyful cooperation with God's creative activity. God uses human intelligence to complete and further the order of his creation. A second insight is revealed in Gn 3,14-19: after Adam's rebellion against God's sovereignty over His creation, he is condemned to work in order to survive. Working becomes a painful and hard necessity. The third point concerns the Sabbath. God orders this as a time to refrain from working on the seventh day as he did Himself (Gn, 2-3). This rest day allows the human worker to reorient his efforts in cooperation with God and to insert them into God's project by prayer and contemplation. This day should liberate all from the alienation of work and the temptation to make it an absolute.

II. Jesus praised human work as a necessity inherent in human life. He defined His own messianic mission as a 'work' (*ergon*, Mt 11,2; Jn 17) done to accomplish the 'work of God' (Jn 4,34; 5,36; 14,10). The Son of God is master over the Sabbath (Mc 2,27-28). The Sabbath as a sign of God's sovereignty over creation and human activity is fulfilled by Christ's saving deed which inaugurates the Kingdom of God. The deed of Christ is expressed as a *diakonia*, a saving service,

including the gift of His own life (cf. Mc 10,45; Jn 13,4-16). Working is putting one's skill and energy at the service of others as an act of cooperation with the saving deed of Christ (cf. Mt 20,28). Thus, all human activity centred on itself and on human self-exaltation is implicitly condemned (cf. Ap 8,22). Work by itself cannot save man but only enslave him. The aim of work is not to replace God's creative power but to cooperate with it.

III. The New Testament and subsequent Christian reflection have elaborated a set of principles on work. St. Paul sets forth a double norm: nobody should rely on the work of another, but rather work to sustain himself and the needs of those who are unable to work. Idleness is severely condemned (cf. 1 Th 4,11-12; 5,14; 2 Th 3,6-12), even under the pretext of eschatology. All ministries or services in the community are seen as a burden, as 'hard work', to be undertaken as such (1 Th 2,9; 5,12-13; Rm 16,12; 1 Co 15,58).

Christian ethics of work develop from these Biblical sources. Work is a joyful cooperation with God's creation and at the same time hard and painful. The Sabbath day restores human work to its full meaning, and recalls that human work requires the redemption (Rm 8,20-25) realized by Christ in His self-obliteration. The aim of work is to foster both autonomy and solidarity. Work must be done under humanly acceptable conditions. Slavery and all forms of degrading work are not acceptable. Technology must be at the service of mankind and not the contrary. The Bible gives the first example of legal protective measures for workers. It fully supports the dignity of manual work, unlike its disparagement in the Greco-Roman environment. Work cannot aim at the absolute autonomy of man from God. Through human work, God continues to put order into his creation. Work cannot aspire to an absolute domination or exploitation of nature. The human worker is only God's trustee. Not all human activity is work. Promethean activity leads to an idolatry of man's own products (cf. Rm 1,23-25). Using human skill to destroy nature, to produce weapons of mass-destruction, to experiment on human embryos, to increase the economic gap between the poor and wealthy and the like, serve to illustrate how human work may surrender to the power of death. The Biblical insight challenges us to organize the economic system in such a way that all human persons may have a share in work and work in such a way that creation in all its dimensions may be cultivated rather than destroyed and manipulated by a human creature who would usurp the place of God.

1. Avant l'ère industrielle, la Réforme protestante avait proposé une revalorisation biblique du travail – historiquement la dernière en termes de création d'archétype – qui devait bientôt ouvrir la voie à l'éthique individualiste et sécularisée de la société industrielle. Luther avait retenu de la Bible l'accent mis sur la peine et la condamnation attachées au travail après la chute. Il insistait aussi sur l'incapacité radicale de l'homme à se sauver

par ses propres oeuvres. Le travail est apprécié dans la perspective de la foi, par rapport à laquelle il est relativisé. Il ne procure pas le salut. Il ne faut pas attendre de lui des assurances ultimes pour cette vie. Il faut à la fois travailler et tout attendre de Dieu seul. Nous ne pouvons réaliser que ce que Dieu veut faire par nous. Le travail n'est pas donc une fin en soi. Dieu a appelé chacun à son poste. Le travail devient un *Beruf*, un appel, une vocation. Tout travail a même valeur humaine s'il est accompli dans la liberté de la foi. L'activité professionnelle ou le service exercé dans la communauté répondent à un don spécifique du Créateur. Travailler est une nécessité pour tous. La vie contemplative assimilée à l'oisiveté n'est pas admise.

Calvin voit dans les fruits du travail un signe de la bénédiction de Dieu. Sans la bénédiction de Dieu, tout travail est vain. Les élus sont prédestinés au salut, sans aucun mérite de leur part. Comme l'incertitude demeure au sujet de la prédestination, les chrétiens réformés se lancent dans le travail avec plus d'ardeur encore, pour lire dans la prospérité acquise un signe de leur élection. La doctrine calviniste insiste sur l'effort, l'épargne, la capitalisation, la privation de la jouissance des fruits du travail aujourd'hui pour assurer l'avenir, un avenir toujours repoussé à plus tard. Max Weber a fait la théorie de l'éthique protestante et du capitalisme, non sans erreurs ni préjugés comme l'ont montré les travaux récents de Michael Novak. La Réforme protestante a placé le travail sur un fond d'eschatologie. Il a pour centre Dieu et sa gloire, non le royaume de l'homme. La modernité retirera Dieu de la perspective et fera du travail la valeur humaine et sociale de l'homme prométhéen.

2. Dès le début de l'ère moderne, l'idée de travail était soumise à un processus de sécularisation dont les conséquences se déploient encore sous nos yeux. Elle s'est progressivement dégagée de son imprégnation biblique pour devenir le concept porteur de la société industrielle. Déjà à la Renaissance, *scientia et potentia* sont les deux leviers par lesquels l'homme s'émancipe de toute référence à Dieu et entreprend de transformer la nature. Le travail est exalté depuis le XVII^e siècle comme activité de la raison autonome, moyen de l'autoréalisation de l'homme, centre de l'univers. L'économie politique libérale l'analyse comme un facteur de production, à côté de la terre et du capital. La valorisation humaine et éthique du travail laisse peu à peu la place à une appréhension purement économique. Facteur de production, la force de travail est rémunérée au niveau du minimum nécessaire pour se reconstituer. Le travail est divisé et organisé selon les besoins de la production, l'avancée des technologies. Il s'achète, se rejette, se vend comme une marchandise.

La parcellisation des procédures du travail industriel et la prolétarisa-

tion des travailleurs industriels ont éveillé les premières critiques. Sans rien renier de l'optimisme de Hegel pour qui le travail humain hâte le devenir de l'Esprit, rend libre et heureux, Marx est obsédé par la condition aliénante du travail industriel et du système social qu'il impose. Il a cependant une approche quantitative du travail, analysé comme plus-value incorporée dans le produit final. Le travail a toujours été selon lui exploité par les systèmes économiques: travail servile, travail salarié. Il souhaite renverser la logique exploiteur-exploité et envisage une société où tous les biens seraient communs et le travail la libre contribution créatrice de chacun.

Le projet de Marx avait été l'émancipation du travailleur. Il n'y a pas réussi, prisonnier des prémisses des Lumières et du libéralisme qui réduisaient l'homme au travail productif, tout en exaltant sa capacité de transformer l'univers. Le travail fait l'homme, et l'histoire humaine est la production de l'homme par le travail humain. On a dit que l'utopie marxienne a été une sécularisation de l'eschatologie biblique. Au lieu d'une incarnation moderne de l'idée biblique, nous avons eu une idéologie prométhéenne athée et un système social totalitaire.

3. Dans la crise actuelle liée à la globalisation des marchés, le travail rémunéré est devenu pour beaucoup un bien rare, recherché et inaccessible. L'homme contemporain s'identifie de moins en moins avec son travail. Il n'en maîtrise plus le contenu ni la destination, encore moins la stabilité. Il est amené à exercer plusieurs jobs successivement. Dans ce contexte, on ne perçoit guère de place pour une philosophie, encore moins pour une théologie du travail. En même temps, l'activité humaine a poussé sa domination de la nature, homme et cosmos, jusqu'au pouvoir d'en disposer totalement.

La Bible a-t-elle encore une espérance à délivrer aux travailleurs et aux chômeurs d'aujourd'hui? Il ne faut certes pas lui demander des solutions techniques ni un modèle transposable dans les conditions du travail moderne. La Bible nous livre un horizon de sens et une hiérarchie de valeurs, dans lesquelles interviennent la personne, la société et Dieu. Ce triangle, la philosophie sociale contemporaine l'a perdu de vue depuis longtemps. Libéralisme et socialisme ont commencé par écarter Dieu, le reste en découle. Le libéralisme s'est concentré sur l'individu, et le socialisme sur la collectivité. L'un et l'autre ont hypertrophié l'importance du travail productif, comme expression de la totale autonomie. La Bible rappelle une équation simple: toute activité vient de Dieu et ramène à lui.

I. "LE PERE TRAVAILLE TOUJOURS" (cf. Jn 5,17)

4. La première page de la Bible nous montre le Créateur à l'oeuvre. Depuis le commencement, il crée, "fait le ciel et la terre". La Bible utilise le verbe *bara* pour désigner l'activité de Dieu dans la création matérielle (Ps 115,15; 121,2; 134,6) comme d'ailleurs dans l'histoire du salut (cf. Ps 66,3; 106,13; 107,22). Dieu a "fait" son peuple (Dt 32,6). La création est un travail continu. Dieu a suscité toutes choses du rien (2 M 7,28) et tout subsiste de par sa volonté. Il maintient et conserve les êtres qu'il a créés (Sg 11,25; Jb 34,13-15). L'homme façonné par lui est placé au milieu de la création pour qu'il coopère à l'oeuvre de Dieu. Selon le récit jahviste (Gn 2,8.15), l'homme fut placé dans le jardin d'Eden ou paradis pour qu'il le cultive et le garde (Gn 2,15). Le travail n'est pas conséquence de la chute. Dès l'origine la raison d'être de l'homme est de coopérer à l'activité créatrice de Dieu. Dieu donne l'irrigation, les plantes et les fruits, mais son paradis a besoin du travail intelligent de l'homme pour mettre toutes ces ressources en valeur. A travers l'homme Dieu continue son activité créatrice. Dieu reste le seul maître du monde, dans lequel il a placé l'homme comme administrateur de ses biens (Ps 24,1; 50,10). La terre produit d'ailleurs ses fruits indépendamment des efforts de l'homme, à l'infini. Le récit sacerdotal, quant à lui, insiste sur le pouvoir donné à l'homme de se soumettre la création, comme associé du Créateur, pour achever les oeuvres que Dieu lui-même a laissées en friche. Pour dominer le monde et le rendre fécond (Ps 8, 3-8), Dieu y a placé l'homme et la femme, qui forment ensemble "son image et ressemblance" (Gn 1,26). Tel aurait pu être le rapport entre Dieu, l'homme et le travail. Cette vision optimiste du travail tranche avec les mythes du Proche-Orient où les hommes sont faits pour servir les dieux et travailler comme des esclaves à leur service.

5. Le deuxième tableau met en lumière un autre aspect de l'homme au travail. La désobéissance à Dieu a provoqué une rupture entre l'homme et son Créateur, qui rejaillit immédiatement sur son rapport avec l'univers. Le travail ne sera plus un jeu avec Dieu. Gn 3, 14-19 montre les conséquences de la chute sur le travail de l'homme. Il sera maintenant caractérisé par la "peine". Il sera une dure nécessité. La terre ne sera pas toujours fertile. Il coûtera à l'homme sueur et efforts pour en tirer ses moyens de subsistance. Cependant, malgré la rupture de la désobéissance et la souffrance désormais attachée à ses efforts (Gn 3,17-18), l'homme est maintenu dans sa vocation d'associé du Créateur. Le travail n'est pas la conséquence du péché, car il lui est antérieur. Le travail lui-même n'est pas objet de malédiction, mais le sol (Gn 3,17) qui ne sera profitable à l'homme qu'au prix

de son effort. Cette malédiction sera levée lorsque Noé, dans un geste de religion naturelle, offrira un sacrifice à Dieu (Gn 8,22). Dieu pourvoira à ce que l'homme trouve dans la création ce qui lui est nécessaire pour vivre. Il en ressort que le travail appartient à la nature même de l'homme créé à l'image de Dieu, que nul n'a le droit de vivre aux dépens du travail des autres, et que chacun doit pouvoir vivre, avec sa famille, de son travail. Chaque être humain a un droit inné au travail.

6. Troisième donnée: le sabbat (cf. Gn 2,1-3; Ex 31,15-17; 20,8-11). Il n'est concevable qu'après la chute, comme complément de la nécessité de peiner pour gagner sa vie. Dieu ne commande nulle part de travailler. C'est une nécessité qui s'impose d'elle-même. Mais il commande de s'arrêter de travailler. Le septième jour "tu ne feras aucun ouvrage" (Ex 20,9-10). Car le septième jour Dieu se repose de son travail (Gn 2,2-3). L'hébreu pareillement travaillera six jours et le septième il se reposera (*iom hasabbat*, jour de la cessation du travail: Ex 23,12; 20,8; 34,21). La raison première est de reprendre souffle, de respirer, de redevenir *nepheš hayya*, l'"être vivant" de Gn 2,7. La législation deutéronomique protège l'esclave et l'étranger. Dt 5,12-15 exige que le septième jour l'esclave se repose comme le maître, "car tu as été esclave en Egypte et Dieu t'en a libéré". Le travail n'est pas la condition permanente de l'homme. Tous les sept jours les hommes retrouvent liberté et dignité originaires; une égalité fondamentale est rétablie. Le repos hebdomadaire libère de l'aspect aliénant, deshumanisant du travail.

Le sabbat est motivé, dans la tradition sacerdotale, par le repos du Créateur (Gn 2,3; Ex 20,11). Le repos n'est pas seulement un moyen de reprendre des forces pour retourner au travail, mais il ouvre sur la transcendance. Le septième jour est celui de l'achèvement de la création, jour béni et sanctifié. Le repos de Dieu n'est pas vu en fonction du travail qu'il a accompli, mais le travail est vu en fonction du repos. Dieu contemple son oeuvre et la trouve bonne. Le repos est le moment de la contemplation par l'intelligence du sens du travail accompli. Le repos devient synonyme de paix, de possession tranquille (cf. 1 R 8,5; Jr 30,10, etc.). Le précepte du décalogue (Ex 20,8) invite à sanctifier ce jour, en le réservant pour les rapports avec Dieu, pour entretenir la conscience que Dieu est créateur. Dieu a béni le sabbat pour le rendre fécond (cf. Gn 1,21,28). Le peuple renoue l'alliance avec la créateur, source de vie. Le sabbat est fécond parce qu'il rend présent au milieu du peuple le Créateur.

La création avait consisté à mettre de l'ordre dans le chaos, à disposer le cadre de l'univers et les êtres chacun à sa place. Dieu donne vie. Le septième jour l'homme se recharge de la richesse de vie dont regorge la création. Puis, pendant six jours l'homme retournera à son travail, pour mode-

ler l'univers, y introduire plus d'ordre, en évitant de se vider de lui-même et de perdre de vue le lien qui le relie au Créateur. Si le sabbat est fécond, l'homme réinjecte dans la création l'énergie reçue du Créateur. Le travail de l'homme devient alors instrument de l'activité créatrice de Dieu. La justification du travail est de donner vie et ordre, de faire régner la justice et la paix, non de créer des oeuvres de mort.

Le sabbat recompose mystiquement les conditions du jardin d'Eden et en anticipe la reconstitution à la fin des temps. Dans cette optique, le travail redevient joie et participation au labeur créateur. Mais la fracture de la chute reste là. Seul le Serviteur de Dieu se chargeant des péchés des autres, par sa souffrance, réconciliera la multitude des pécheurs (cf. Is 53,11). La tradition juive a développé une appréciation positive du travail et a tiré du sabbat tous les éléments d'un véritable droit du travail, comme aucun autre peuple de l'Antiquité. Le dimanche chrétien recueille tout le sens du sabbat juif et le transfigure dans le mémorial de la Pâque du Christ, et l'anticipation du règne de Dieu inauguré pour nous.

II. "MOI AUSSI JE TRAVAILLE" (cf. Jn 5,17)

7. Jésus était *tekton* (Mc 6,3), fils de *tekton* (Mt 13,55), un "artisan", selon la tradition un charpentier. En Israël, les rabbins exerçaient un métier manuel. Durant son ministère, soutenu par l'aumône et les biens des femmes qui les suivaient (cf. Lc 8,2-3), lui et les siens se considéraient *ergatai*, travailleurs méritant leur salaire (Lc 10,7). Le monde du travail affleure dans les paraboles de Jésus, comme celle de l'ouvrier de la onzième heure (Mt 20,1-16). Les oisifs sont mal vus. Le sens du travail est à découvrir dans sa tension vers le monde à venir (Mt 25,14-30). Pour Jésus, comme pour l'Ancien Testament, le travail est chose naturelle à l'homme. Il n'est pas une fin en soi. Il ne doit pas détourner de l'écoute de la parole de Dieu (Lc 10,40-42), ni de la recherche prioritaire du règne de Dieu et de sa justice (Mt 6,21-34). Jésus est dur pour ceux qui accumulent des richesses égoïstement et s'en remettent à la sécurité qu'elles procurent (Lc 12,21). Lorsqu'elles deviennent une fin en soi, la vie de l'homme bascule sous le joug de Mammon (Lc 16,13).

8. Jésus utilise le langage du travail pour accéder à une autre réalité. Sa mission messianique est désignée comme un travail (*ergon*). Les signes par lesquels il montre que le Règne est inauguré sont ses *erga* (Mt 11,2), ou ses *dynameis*, "ses oeuvres de puissance". Jean parle de *semeia* et d'*erga*. Jésus réalisant ces oeuvres, travaille (*ergazomai*, Jn 5,17). Ceux qui travaillent avec

lui à la moisson sont des ouvriers (*ergatai*). Dieu, qui les envoie, les rétribuera (Mt 9,37; Mt 10,10). Les pêcheurs du lac deviennent "pêcheurs d'hommes" (Mc 1,16-17; Lc 5,1-11). Le travail, condition naturelle de l'homme, est élevé au plan du salut. Jésus travaille aux oeuvres de Dieu pour le salut des hommes. Il choisit et envoie les apôtres travailler pour étendre son oeuvre.

"Mon Père travaille toujours et, moi aussi je travaille" (Jn 5,17), dit Jésus à ceux qui lui reprochaient de guérir un infirme le jour du sabbat. Dieu s'était reposé le septième jour, mais il continue de gouverner le monde. Les rabbins admettaient que Dieu se reposait comme créateur mais travaillait comme juge. "Le sabbat a été fait pour l'homme et non l'homme pour le sabbat. Le Fils de l'homme est maître même du sabbat" (Mc 2,27-28). Le sabbat comme signe devait s'effacer devant le règne de Dieu déjà à l'oeuvre dans la personne de Jésus.

Le quatrième évangile dévoile la connexion étroite entre l'activité humaine et l'activité du Christ et même du Père.

a) Pour Jésus le comportement du Père est la norme absolue: "Le Fils ne peut faire de lui-même rien qu'il ne voie faire au Père" (Jn 5,19). L'activité de Jésus dérive de sa contemplation du Père. En fait, le Père lui a "donné des oeuvres (*erga*) à accomplir" (Jn 5,36). Il doit "accomplir l'oeuvre" du Père (Jn 4,34). Jésus considère ces oeuvres comme un don du Père qu'il reçoit et exécute librement (cf. Jn 17,4). Ces oeuvres remplissent toute la vie de Jésus, dont émergent celles que l'évangéliste appelle les signes/*semeia*. Les oeuvres manifestent qui il est. En agissant il dévoile le Père. "Le Père qui demeure en moi accomplit les oeuvres" (Jn 14,10). Ses oeuvres suscitent la foi en lui (cf. Jn 14,11).

b) Jn 5,17. Le Père est à l'oeuvre continuellement, puisqu'il suscite et maintient tous les êtres. Même durant les sabbats du temps humain, l'activité créatrice de Dieu se poursuit. L'oeuvre du Père par excellence, est de faire en sorte que les hommes croient en celui qu'il a envoyé (Jn 6,29).

c) Les disciples sont aussi assimilés à leurs oeuvres. Le jugement venu dans le monde dévoile les oeuvres de chacun: mauvaises (*ponera*) pour ceux qui font le mal, "faites en Dieu" pour ceux qui ont agi dans la vérité (Jn 3,19-21). Seule la foi permet aux hommes, à la suite du Christ, d'accomplir leurs oeuvres en Dieu. "Celui qui croit, fera, lui aussi, les oeuvres que je fais" (Jn 14,12). Alors l'activité de l'homme plaît au Père et s'inscrit dans son projet créateur. Il pourra percevoir les oeuvres à accomplir comme des dons du Père, et les concevoir comme une mission, un appel, un *Beruf*. L'homme est invité à scruter le message que le Père lui envoie, à travers son Esprit, dans les circonstances de la vie. Le travail n'est qu'une partie de

l'activité humaine, la plus significative. Il peut être inséré dans la continuité de l'action créatrice du Père, grâce à l'action rédemptrice du Fils. Alors il ouvre sur la perspective libératrice de la nouvelle Jérusalem.

9. Le Nouveau Testament a fait de *diakonos*, *diakonein* un terme technique pour exprimer le sens de sa vie comme don de soi (Mc 10,45; Mt 20,28). Le renversement de perspective où le seigneur et maître lave les pieds de ses disciples (cf. Jn 13,4-16; Lc 22,27) est devenu la charte de la communauté qu'il a fondée (Jn 13,14-15; Mc 10,42-45). Le travail messianique du Christ est un service qui sauve. Il est donné, sans attendre de retour. Le verbe servir, *diakonein*, résume tout le discours de Jésus sur le jugement dernier (cf. Mt 25,44). Se mettre au service des autres, voilà sur quoi les disciples de Jésus seront jugés. Avec le Christ, le travail ainsi conçu acquiert la dimension du service qui sauve.

Contemplant Babylone devenue la proie des flammes, la cité symbole du pouvoir humain qui se divinise, le voyant de l'*Apocalypse* se lamente sur sa ruine: on ne verra plus chez toi les artisans (*teknitès*) de tous métiers, la voix de la meule ne s'entendra plus (Ap 18,22). Le travail humain coupé de Dieu et mis au service d'un monde qui s'absolutise conduit à la destruction. Le sabbat de l'ancienne alliance est considéré comme le type du repos éternel (He 3,7-4,11). Il redimensionne le travail qui n'est pas une fin en soi, ni le dernier but de l'existence. Il ne doit pas devenir service de Mammon (Mt 6, 24; Lc 14,15-24). Le travail ne peut pas fournir la dernière sécurité, car ce serait une sécurité illusoire (Lc 12,16-21). Il porte du fruit lorsqu'il est accompli dans la confiance en Dieu (Mt 6,25). Il est plus important d'écouter la parole de Dieu (Lc 10,38-42). Elle dévoile que la fin du travail est le repos du septième jour éternel partagé avec Dieu. Ce repos est activité dans la plénitude de l'adoration.

III. "TRAVAILLER POUR NE PAS ÊTRE A CHARGE" (2 Th 3,8)

10. Paul a travaillé (*ergazesthai*) de ses mains pendant sa mission apostolique pour n'être à la charge de personne, comme fabricant de tentes (cf. 1 Th 2,9; 2 Th 3,7-8; Ph 4,11; 1 Co 4,12; 2 Co 11,9; Ac 18,3; 20,33-35). Ce travail manuel il l'appelle *kopos* (peine) et *mochthos* (fatigue, cf. 1 Co 4,13; 2 Co 6,5; 1 Th 2,9). Dans sa *1 Thessaloniens*, à ses lecteurs saisis par la tentation de l'oisiveté eschatologique, il recommande, comme un "progrès" à réaliser en matière de charité fraternelle, "de vivre calmes, de vous occuper chacun de ses affaires, de travailler de vos mains, comme nous vous l'avons ordonné. Ainsi vous mènerez une vie honorable aux yeux de ceux du dehors

et vous n'aurez besoin de personne" (1 Th 4,11-12). Le travail assure l'autonomie et permet de secourir les vrais indigents. En conclusion, Paul demande encore de reprendre les oisifs, les "dé-réglés" qui ne suivent pas la règle (*taxis*) donnée par l'Apôtre (1 Th 5,14). Tel est l'enseignement, la *paradosis* que l'Apôtre a laissée à sa communauté (cf. 1 Th 4,1-2).

Dans la 2 *Thessaloniens*, Paul reviendra avec plus d'insistance sur les *ataktoi*, les oisifs, dans le long passage de 2 Th 3,6-12. La fièvre eschatologique en a gagné plus d'un, source de désordres (cf. 2 Th 2,2). L'oisiveté n'est pas conforme à la tradition que l'Apôtre a enseignée. A juste titre, Paul peut se proposer, sur ce point, comme un modèle à imiter (2 Th 3,9). Paul a fait du travail une règle. "Si quelqu'un ne veut pas travailler, qu'il ne mange pas non plus"! Paul interdit de flaner à ne rien faire et à décourager ceux qui travaillent. Il demande qu'on les tienne à l'écart de la communauté jusqu'à ce qu'ils se laissent reprendre. L'attente de la fin, jugée proche, ne doit pas détourner de la condition présente, mais entretenir l'espérance. Le travail est la seule occupation décente, qui permet de ne pas abuser de la solidarité des autres et de contribuer à un climat communautaire constructif.

11. A remarquer que Paul considère les ministères exercés dans les communautés comme un *kopos*, un labeur pénible. Ceux qui "peinent (*kopiao*)" à leur service, en particulier ceux qui assument des fonctions de présidence de la communauté, méritent d'être considérés "en raison de leur travail (*ergon*)" (1 Th 5,12-13). Travail pénible et service de la communauté sont synonymes (*kopos*: cf. Mt 9,37; 1 Th 2,9; Rm 16,12; 1 Co 15,58). L'un et l'autre sont à accomplir "dans le Seigneur" (1 Co 15,10.50; Ep 6,5-8). De fait, les communautés entretenaient leurs ministres qui devaient renoncer à leur travail. L'Eglise primitive rejetait les prédicateurs itinérants qui abusaient de l'hospitalité, et condamnait l'oisiveté (*Didachè* 12,3). Pendant les trois premiers siècles, les métiers liés à l'immoralité ou à l'idolâtrie étaient interdits à qui demandait le baptême (*Tradition Apostolique* 16). Le baptisé ne peut se livrer à n'importe quelle activité, même si elle est admise par la société. L'attitude des chrétiens se démarquait du mépris des Anciens pour le travail manuel (cf. 1 *Clément* 49,5; Origène, *Contre Celse* III 55). Elle introduisait des changements réels dans la vie sociale. Une nouvelle éthique du travail était en train de naître.

12. L'éthique chrétienne du travail reprendra à la tradition biblique les éléments suivants:

a) Par nature, le travail est participation joyeuse à la souveraineté de Dieu sur l'univers; il est mise en ordre et gestion des ressources de la création.

b) Conséquence de la rupture de l'homme d'avec Dieu, il est aussi peine et expiation. Le sabbat permet à l'homme de recentrer sa vie et son oeuvre sur le créateur. Tenté de se prendre pour le centre de l'univers et d'oublier Dieu, le travail a besoin de rédemption (cf. Rm 8,20-25).

c) Le Christ dont le sacrifice est un "travail" et un "service" qui sauve rétablit l'alliance avec Dieu. L'homme peut coopérer par ses oeuvres à la grâce imméritée du Christ qui purifie, donne sens et achèvement à son travail.

d) Le premier but du travail est de rendre la personne socialement autonome et de ne pas être à charge des autres. Le deuxième but du travail est d'aider ceux qui ne peuvent se subvenir à eux-mêmes: soulager veuves et orphelins, non entretenir les oisifs. Autonomie et solidarité vont de pair. Les biens de la création sont destinés indistinctement à tous les hommes. Ils doivent être administrés au service du bien commun (cf. Lc 16,1-18).

e) La Bible condamne le travail qui abrutit. Le travail doit être libre. Le travail forcé est condamné. L'hébreu ne peut maintenir un hébreu en esclavage que six ans; il doit le payer, lui assurer le repos sabbatique, et lui donner la liberté et les moyens de son autonomie la septième année (Dt 15,12-18; Lv 25,35-43; Ex 20,10). Le sabbat redonne au travail sa dimension humanisante, parce que l'homme est fait pour Dieu non pour le travail qui déshumanise. La technologie doit être au service de l'homme qui travaille et non l'inverse.

L'Ancien Testament contient les éléments d'une législation protectrice du travailleur. Il n'est pas permis de l'exploiter, de différer le paiement de son salaire journalier (Dt 24,15; Lv 19,13; Jb 7,2). Un crime comparable à l'homicide est celui de retenir le salaire de l'ouvrier (Lv 19,13; Dt 24,14). C'est le comble de l'iniquité (Jr 22,13). Le salaire doit couvrir les nécessités de la vie (Lc 10,7; 1 Tm 5,18).

f) La Bible ne connaît pas l'otium gréco-latin, et n'a aucune indulgence pour l'oisiveté. Passer son temps à jouir des fruits de son travail n'est pas non plus satisfaisant (Qo 2,24-25). La Bible ne partage pas le préjugé grec selon lequel seul le travail intellectuel est digne de l'homme libre. Le rabbin ne dédaignait pas de travailler de ses mains pour gagner sa vie. Jésus avait fait de même. Paul demandera qu'on l'imite sur ce point (1 Co 4,12). Le travail n'est pas une fin en soi. Amasser des richesses pour elles-mêmes est condamné. Le travail pour le travail est vanité, observe Qohelet (Qo 2,4-11).

g) La Bible condamne le travail qui se fait sans et contre Dieu, le travail absolument autonome. L'entreprise de Babel mène à la confusion et à la division de l'humanité (Gn 11,7-8). La Bible répète que si Dieu n'est pas l'auteur originel de toute oeuvre humaine, celle-ci n'a aucune consistance

(Ps 127,1; Mt 7,26). Par contre, insérer son travail dans l'oeuvre créatrice de Dieu est source de félicité. Le travail n'est pas un moyen de puissance pour affirmer la domination illimitée de l'homme sur la nature. Il doit s'inscrire dans la création qu'il est appelé à cultiver, entretenir, guérir, mettre en ordre, non détruire. Pour rester humain, la travail doit constamment s'arracher aux tentations de l'absolutisation prométhéenne, à l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme, à l'exploitation sans scrupule des ressources de la nature. Toutes ces considérations ne sont possibles que si le travail est une relation avec Dieu. Or, avec le Christ, le travail humain est entré dans l'économie de la grâce.

h) Il ne suffit pas de veiller à la dignité du travail subjectif par lequel l'homme exprime sa créativité et son talent. Le travail objectif est inscrit par la Bible dans des limites précises. N'est pas indifférent ce que l'homme fait par son travail. Il est appelé à mettre de l'ordre dans la création, à en tirer ce qu'elle peut produire. L'homme peut aussi renverser la perspective, et utiliser sa force de travail et de transformation de l'univers à ses propres fins. Alors il peut en venir à se fabriquer des idoles, des dieux faits de mains d'homme, qui le font se détourner du créateur, et adorer ses propres oeuvres (Dt 4,15-16). La fabrication d'idoles est condamnée (Dt 4,28). S. Paul y verra la démarche de l'humanité qui s'est éloignée de la révélation naturelle de Dieu dans sa création, pour adorer une créature plutôt que le créateur (Rm 1,23-25). Toute activité de transformation du monde n'est pas une activité humaine. Compromettre durablement les grands équilibres écologiques, produire des armes de destruction de masse, manipuler l'embryon humain à des fins expérimentales et commerciales, pratiquer le clonage animal puis humain sont des activités par lesquelles l'homme détourne au service de sa démesure les biens de la création divine. Toute activité qui mène à la mort est l'illustration de la désobéissance originelle. Toute activité qui suscite, entretient, guérit et donne sens à la vie est une activité qui coopère avec le Créateur.

i) Le problème contemporain est double: aménager le système économique de sorte que tous les humains puissent y insérer leur participation par un travail. Et aussi: aménager la création sans la dévaster, produire ce qui est nécessaire pour une vie humainement digne pour tous. Pour éviter les impasses, il faut se laisser guider par la boussole interne que le Créateur a placée dans notre conscience morale, nous souvenant que le Christ nous a déjà délivrés de notre penchant à dominer et à détruire, et inauguré pour nous la création nouvelle, libérée de la mort, que Dieu destine au bonheur de tous les hommes.

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