

## COMMENTS ON PROFESSOR DONATI'S PAPER

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The starting point for Professor Donati's thoughts is the general assertion on the state of crisis in intergenerational solidarity. The existing models of applied social policy have materially contributed to this state of crisis (This analysis coincides with the assertions set forth in the document prepared by the Social Affairs Committee in the German Episcopal Conference, the social state – questions to be considered. Our German colleagues have played a considerable role in preparing this document).

Professor Donati then analyzes the concept of generation while pointing out the misunderstandings that follow from the different definitions of this concept for policy models; he also conducts a theoretical and critical analysis of the existing models of intergenerational solidarity and the social policy models that are supposed to support intergenerational solidarity, while singling out their drawbacks and the adverse consequences related thereto in the area of attaining intergenerational solidarity.

Professor Donati's text, which depicts the interdependencies between the individual elements that exert an impact on the shape of social policy in an extraordinarily concise and succinct manner, constitutes the basis for a more profound reflection on the social policy crisis and the changes in the family's role in the exchange process between generations, including those states that have been traditionally referred to as social states (such as Germany). This compels one to conduct proprietary analyses and to search for solutions that could be applied in specific states.

It is against this backdrop that reflections come to mind on the group of what are referred to as the post-communist states, to which I would primarily like to devote my attention in this context.

When considering the proposed optimal models (pages 175-177 and 182-183 – the principle of subsidiarity based on its own model of action, that of reciprocity as a rule of social exchange), the question of this model's

universality arises, i.e. the ability to apply it in states with different experience from the free market experience. To be sure, Professor Donati's consideration revolves around market economy states, i.e. states that have never had a deformed economy, a command-control economic system, that is, a system which L. Balcerowicz once called a system of 'ravaged (destroyed) capitalism'. Even though the system based on a command-control economy belongs to the past (at least one can hope that this is true), its repercussions are nevertheless stronger than it might seem. It may therefore turn out that the model which appears to be optimal for states reared in a market economy may collapse or undergo some deformation in 'post-communist' states. In these states, on account of the experience with the previous system, individual words (notions), concepts, principles frequently have a different meaning, they frequently have a stronger political undercurrent and therefore are understood differently.

Above all, the state's role is always perceived much more strongly by society, by individual peoples; expectations of the state are also considerably stronger.

This was the ground concerning the state in which the word solidarity was cultivated. One may have impression that it had a (totally) different dimension and meaning from the one attributed to it in the traditional free-market economy. In the command-control system, in the system of real socialism, the word solidarity denoted a fairly unilaterally focused type of solidarity. It entailed solidarity seen through the omnipotence of the state, the state as the political, economic and social regulator. That is why it meant solidarity 'against', social solidarity focused against the state as a protest against the state's specific policy. It insisted that the state provide for a 'more just distribution of goods'. One could therefore acknowledge that in this sense it was a principle that referred to the attainment of a social policy. It did not, however, most certainly entail charity (I also have the impression that it was a very limited type of 'brotherhood'). However, the system in which it was applied, or in which it was supposed to have been applied in my opinion does not fit within any of the models described by Professor Donati. For this reason, solidarity understood in this way, apart from its political aspect, could not be the primary social policy regulator (It completely neglected the role of the family).

This inherited concept (understanding) of solidarity as an alliance against something, more specifically, against the state, has remained in the mentality of the post-communist societies. For this reason, the models that are successfully used in states with a well-shaped market economy may

undergo deformation in post-communist states. Consequently, on account of the past system's legacy, the system proposed by Professor Donati on page 178 (the subsidiarity model combines ...) may collapse and lead to populist demands in the direction of the deformed model described by Professor Donati as the interventionist approach...

The post-communist societies with their own negative baggage were quickly engulfed with the adverse phenomena that are characteristic of developed societies including, among others, the disintegration of intergenerational bonds linked to the progressive family crisis. In this sense, we are dealing with a similar phenomenon as the wealthy western social states. One may therefore claim that while they originate from different systems, the current welfare states and the poor post-communist states cross ways in 'eroding the old forms of solidarity'.<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon is important insofar as these states will meet one another in the framework of a single economic organism, namely the European Union and the system of reciprocal interaction will be very strong, while the negative baggage of each one of the states will have a material impact on the selection of the social policy model within the European Union and consequently on the nature of the intergenerational bond within the entire community.

One should fully concur with Professor Donati's statement on page 164... At the same time, however, there are a number of doubts and questions. The view expressed by Professor Donati should be treated as a certain type of idea, as a certain type of expectation, while the process in the post-communist states appears to be moving in the opposite direction, a direction entailing the disappearance of the family's role as the mediator between the generations. This is associated both with misconceived modernity on the one hand (the family as an obsolete and unfashionable form) and the low level of per capita income on the other, i.e. a poor society in

<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon was accurately described by the Social Affairs Committee of the German Episcopal Conference:

The current structure of the social state has considerably contributed as the institutionalization of social solidarity to the absorption of the social threat inherent in the market economy (this part of the description refers only to western welfare states). On the other hand, the very same social state is today causing erosion in the foundations of social solidarity, especially through the fact that the social state's current distributive model weakens solidarity at the family level to a greater degree as opposed to strengthening it ... The decisive task will be to bolster the family as the first place where children are brought up, and thus as the guarantor of future generations, as well as to stimulate new forms of joint social security.

which there is fierce competition between the generations for access to financial resources from the state budget.

The fifteen years that have passed since the commencement of the process of the communist system's collapse show that the new Europe continually experimented in searching for new forms (it would be difficult to call them models) to carry out social policy. Evolution is fairly symptomatic, which testifies to the complexity of the problem and the difficulty to find the optimal model. The market's dominant regulatory role in social issues was first acknowledged. One may therefore say that this was an attempt at referencing a model referred to as a liberal model, which, of course, ended in protest and a negative reaction incensed by populists in a poor society, which was not at all prepared for this outcome. This elicited a diametrically opposite effect and efforts were made to find the way to reinstate the state's administration of social policy. Nevertheless, without a sufficiently strong budget and with weak market economy instruments, people began to use instruments that were reminiscent of real socialism, i.e. the distribution of deficit goods, which led to adverse budgetary repercussions on the one hand and completely destroyed intergenerational bonds on the other instead of bolstering them. For it created competition in gaining access to the very limited budgetary resources between retirees (older persons) and younger persons (education and earnings after university studies).

One should concur with Professor Donati's view on the importance of the principle of subsidiarity. It is symptomatic that this principle is to be found among the fundamental principles in what are referred to as the 'new democracies'. While the principle of solidarity was emphasized in the period prior to the fundamental breakthrough, i.e. during the reign of the communist system (especially in Poland), the principle of subsidiarity, after the fall of communism, became one of the important instruments for specifying the relationship between individual entities. It was seen as one of the instruments that shattered the centralized model of the state. Its introduction to the political system of the new states entailed introducing local autonomy. This was supposed to be the regulator in the split of powers between the central authorities and the local authorities, also in terms of administering social policy better, through the ability to utilize limited public funds better (In this sense, then, subsidiarity understood in this manner was also associated with the concept of reciprocity). It therefore fit in a certain sense in the model described by Professor Donati. These ideal assumptions, however, were not achieved in full and the principle of subsidiarity did not play the role that was expected of it, at least during the period of transformation to

date in the area of being the social policy regulator. The execution of this model requires social effort. There is therefore a major danger of ravaging it 'along the way' through social impatience and calling for state intervention. That is in fact what happened to a large degree. The legacy of the past system and the treatment of the state as the regulator of all social problems exerted a material influence. Under this approach, thinking about the family and the family's role within the framework of social institutions disappeared. This precipitated some degeneration in the accepted model. This cannot be treated, however as a negation of the model itself. Practice always validates certain ideal models. It is important not to transfer accountability to the model itself on account of the adverse practice. It is also important to be able to look for those instruments and forms within this framework whereby both subsidiarity and solidarity may be better achieved.

Therefore, while concurring with Professor Donati's final proposition (page 183), I am aware that the path to its attainment is a long one, while its effects depend upon the state's economic level and the mental preparation to think in new categories about the reciprocal relations between the individual entities (state – local self-government – family) while also depending on making oneself aware of the significance of intergenerational solidarity, which has not yet taken place in the post-communist states.