

## COMMENT ON THE PAPER BY MARCELO SUÁREZ OROZCO

ROCCO BUTTIGLIONE

I wish to bring the point of view of an immigrant – I have been for a large part of my life an immigrant myself – the point of view of a citizen of a country that has been a country of great migration and is now a country of great immigration. Until the 70s Italians still used to wander through the world seeking jobs. And now we are a country of great immigration. And I wish also to bring you perhaps a more practical point of view, being, among other things, a politician.

So, first of all, I wish to problematize the concept of immigrant: who is an immigrant? It is not so clear who is an immigrant. When I was in Liechtenstein, as a professor, a person coming from Feldkirch, just beyond the Austrian border, a person who spoke the same language, who had the same education or capacitation as a true Liechtensteinian, was a foreigner, an immigrant in Liechtenstein. Just in the same way as a man coming from Ceylon? Just in the same way as a man coming from Turkey? Perhaps not. And if you look at immigrants in Italy today, it is easy to make clear-cut distinctions. On the one hand we have those coming from countries belonging to the European Union, I do not know whether we should still consider them as immigrants, to a very large extent they have the same rights as the Italian workers. Then, you can rank those who come from countries that have a civilisation that is very similar to ours or that is mainly the same as ours. Then you have people coming from countries that are further away and very different from ours. This has a tremendous impact on the possibility of integrating people. Let us imagine that people coming from other countries belonging to the European Union are still immigrants or foreigners. I imagine that many of you know the name of Yves Montand. Yves Montand is one of the idols of my youth, his songs have been sung by almost everybody throughout Europe and most people think he is a Frenchman: that is not

so, he is an Italian. What does that mean? That after twenty years an Italian can become a Frenchman, still remaining an Italian somehow. But we know that people coming from Turkey, in Germany, after three generations can still be Turks. You have difficulties in integration; different is the capacity for integration. If you consider the rate of criminality as an index of the capacity for integration you see that people coming from the Philippines, this is rather odd, but they are very easily integrated, they have less criminality than Italian-born people. Is that because they are mainly Christian? Is that because they are mainly women? Perhaps. It is a matter of fact that they are easily integrated. If you take people coming from Latin American countries it is a little bit more difficult, they are not as good as those coming from the Philippines, but, after all, they are not much worse than Italians. If you put 1 as the index of the Italians, they make 1.2. If you consider the stress of immigration and that sort of things, they are easy, comparatively easy to integrate with the exception of one Latin American country, which I will not name, but there are particular reasons for this exception. But if you take people coming from Maghreb, from Islamic countries, you can have twenty, thirty, forty times the rate of criminality of Italians.

And here, from this very simple matter of fact, a first or a second question arises. Do we have a right to select immigrants, to facilitate immigrants who come from countries that stand nearer to us from a cultural point of view and can be more easily integrated, or not? Should we have a legislation that makes distinctions? Some of you know Cardinal Biffi, he said very bluntly, we should facilitate the integration of Christian immigrants. I shall not put it so bluntly, I shall say it in a more politically correct way, shall we have a right of allowing more easily people who stand near to our civilisation and can be more easily integrated? We could make even further distinctions, take Argentinians: most Argentinians have at least one Italian grandfather or grandmother. Should we facilitate them? Perhaps yes, perhaps not, but in any case this is a first milestone for an immigration policy, whether we have the right to select immigrants. Another way of selecting immigrants may be that of selecting those who can be more easily integrated because they have a higher level of education. It goes without saying that another criterion is those who can more easily find a job in our country. And here we enter into another domain that needs careful consideration. We want people who come to work with us and for us, but they are men and they bring with them their families, and these families are made up of human being who have rights. We want workers but what really arrives are

---

men. And here we have, I think, a distinction between two kinds of countries. There are countries in which you have comparatively high wages and comparatively low welfare. What is due to the worker is given to the worker completely or almost completely. The United States is a liberal country in which you have low welfare and it is easy to find a job, and most of what is due to the worker is given directly to them and the use he or she makes of it is his or her own business. And you have countries in which you have comparatively low wages and high social benefits. And so you have two categories of immigrants: those who come to work and receive wages, and those who come and assert a right to welfare, to social benefits. Shall we allow under the same rules the first and the second kind of immigrants? Can we make a distinction between the first and the second kind of immigrants? What kind of distinction? How should we manage the permission to enter into our countries? This is important not only from the point of view of the relation between legal and illegal immigration, because you must not imagine that if we say, you will not come, they will really not come, some of them will come anyway and you will have a different proportion between legal and illegal immigration, but this is one of the few questions that a politician would ask.