COMMENTS ON MARGARET ARCHER'S PAPER 'GLOBALISATION AND GOVERNANCE'[1]

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a) *General remarks*

Archer's brilliant paper is an excellent example of a sound sociological analysis combined with a humanistic concern for the destiny of human beings and the whole world.

Her argument is that globalisation defeats governance at any societal level and, in doing so, it is accompanied by very sad social changes, in so far as globalisation means the increasing of new inequalities, dependencies (colonization), forms of human alienation, and so on. She makes us more conscious about the understanding of possible different outcomes, at least in the long run.

Archer starts by observing that there is much rhetoric about globalisation (particularly the rhetoric of 'individualization' – emphasized by U. Beck, Z. Bauman, A. Giddens and others) and that we must get rid of it through a proper conceptual framework which can have an explanatory power, at both the theoretical and practical levels.

The instrument through which she is able to achieve a new comprehension of what is happening today in our societies, is represented by the sociological framework firstly elaborated by David Lockwood and later on refined by other scholars, including herself: the system/social integration scheme. For her, recent world history can be divided into two phases, Late Modernity and Nascent Globality or Early Globalisation, characterized by

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[1] I will divide my comments into two parts: a) general remarks and b) a few questions to Professor Archer.

a different combination of these two sides of the coin (society). In a word, globalisation is the disruption of the stable and mutual regulation between system and social integration which has been achieved in two centuries by modern advanced democracies (and established as a regime at the end of the Second World War). She defines globalisation as a state of society characterized by a low degree of system integration combined with a low degree of social integration: a configuration which seems to resemble a state of widespread socio-cultural anomie.

The distinctive feature of such a state of affairs is its 'penetration and penetrative potential', its pervasiveness, which is negatively correlated to social and political participation, so that globalisation comes to be synonymous with systematic dis-empowerment of people, at any societal level.

Seen in this way, globalisation can and must be considered a powerful challenge to modernity, in all its forms and dimensions. In particular globalisation erodes the historic compromise between the two pillars of modern society, the capitalist economic market and social democracy, a compromise which has taken up the form of the democratic welfare (nation) state. From now on, she seems to say, we have to abandon the idea of a fully-fledged, stable, nation-based *citizenship*, since we all become only denizens of one (improbable) world.

Does that mean that we have to give up any idea of citizenship? Archer claims that we can and must look for a *global citizenship*, which will be achieved through 'global governance'. The road to get to such a target is that of *transforming mutual (negative) dependence* between system institutions and (social relations in) civil society *into mutual (positive) regulation* between the two sides of any society, at the worldwide scale.

Archer looks at the new social movements as potential bearers (agents) of such an accomplishment, provided that they can elaborate a new culture, new social norms (regulations), new instrumental means, in conjunction with world 'political' institutions.

On the whole, Archer's analysis arrives at an ambivalent conclusion. She observes both negative and positive aspects in many social phenomena (upheavals?) going on around the world today. Although she seems to give room to some pessimistic notes here and there, on the whole her argument is that, in principle, we possess the (cultural, political, social) means to overcome the negative effects of globalisation. Globalised people and institutions can lead the world towards a global governance endowed with a correlated global citizenship.

b) *A few questions to Professor Archer*

(i) First, I would like to ask Professor Archer to say something about what could be misinterpreted as an apparent lack or even a contradiction in her analysis. On the one hand she claims that globalisation entails 'a gaping void between free-floating global networks and the atomized individual, the two being connected only by Internet'. This seems to be identical with claiming that society (in the shape of Late Modernity) is meeting a progressive destructuration. On the other hand she speaks of new social movements, which imply social connections, primary and secondary bonds, dialogue, exchanges, forms of social relatedness, which in any case cannot be reduced to Internet communication. Where lies the difference? Or, putting it in another way: to what extent the disruption of the old social order means only de-regulation and not re-regulation under some disguised form?

I am sure she can tell us more about the way new social movements try to fill the gap between the falling down of old institutions and the building up of new ones.

Besides all that, doesn't she believe that local contexts (local communities) are reacting to globalisation in very many different ways which are not only 'localist', or 'fundamentalist', but on the contrary able to combine cosmopolitan (universalistic) and localistic (particularistic) dimensions of social organization in daily life-worlds?

Perhaps Professor Archer could highlight the existence of 'local' social networks which are not yet alienated to the most 'systemic' forms of globalisation, and at the same time not yet fallen into some communitarian utopia, but able to express an 'after' or *trans*-modern society (I am thinking of new ways of life in local communities as positive examples of creating a good multicultural society, etc.).

(ii) The second remark is on the concept (and practice) of governance. Professor Archer defines governance in terms of 'guidance and participation' (i.e. having a voice and channels through which one can express it). I wonder whether this concept owes too much to the modern understanding of politics, i.e. follows the old scheme State (=guidance) + civil society (=participation, advocacy, etc.). As a matter of fact, governance basically means *co-ordination* (among actors in different networks, according to different symbolic codes: political, social, economic, cultural). Social coordination is peculiar to civil society. Political governance pertains to the political system. Economic governance is proper to corporations, etc. (here I am referring to scholars such as Renate Mayntz and Günther Teubner, *Global*

Private Regimes: Neo-spontaneous Law and Dual Constitution of Autonomous Sectors in World Society?, in K.H. Ladeur (ed.), *Globalisation and Public Governance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000). If so, political institutions which must provide for world governance should be differentiated from other forms of coordination. I think this perspective is implicit in Archer's paper, but it would be interesting to know her opinion more in detail.

(iii) The conceptual framework put forward by Margaret Archer seems very fruitful for further elaborations. Let me make myself clearer.

The scheme drawn in Archer's paper, although in an implicit way, implies the existence of four possible 'states of society' (see fig. 1): A, B, C, D.

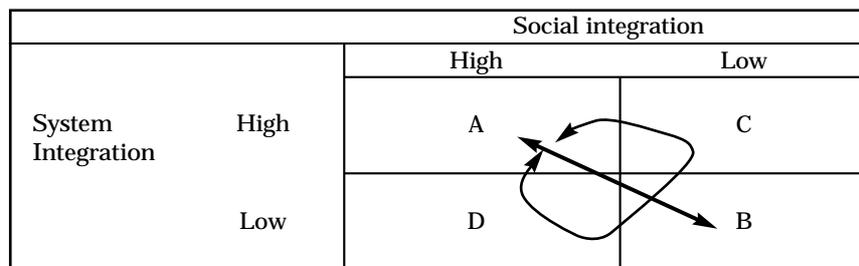|		Social integration	
		High	Low
System Integration	High	A	C
	Low	D	B

Figure 1. *Legenda*: A= strong (good) mutual regulation; B= no mutual regulation (or mutual de-regulation); C= priority of system regulation over social regulation; D= priority of social regulation over system regulation

Now, Archer's argument is based upon the transition from 'state A' to 'state B'. Of course, for reasons of space and time, she could not elaborate the dynamics in a more complex way. But let us consider that the transition from A to B can be not so rapid and direct as succinctly depicted in the paper. Professor Archer is perfectly aware of that. She knows that other configurations, particularly configurations C and D, do exist in fact. Notwithstanding all that, my question is: if we consider these alternative configurations, and their dynamics, more closely and analytically, what can we see? We could perhaps see what follows:

1) Many societies are organized according to C or D still today (and possibly they will resist against an evolution from A to B);

2) In many cases, the shift from A to B involves the passage through C and/or D (A can be destructured *via* societal transformations in which sys-

tem integration dominates over social integration or, vice versa, social integration dominates over system integration): are these 'states of transition' necessarily unstable?;

3) Many different paths are deemed to be possible in order to go from A to B or to go back from B to A, and so it is possible to have many different relatively lasting societal conditions;

4) Perhaps, in Western countries the present situation is a combination (*concordia discors*) of D and C: a new civil society tries to change the old systemic institutions and the old systemic institutions try to mould an emerging (but not well understood, nor self-conscious) new civil society.

To my mind, all these 'possibilities' demonstrate the usefulness of Archer's conceptual framework and its promises for a further understanding of the issue.

(iv) In the last part of her paper, Archer envisages a 'global order' beyond a 'divided world', not without specifying many conditions required for achieving that purpose.

I cannot but share her views and hopes. What is at stake is the chance to foster a new human conscience (culture) particularly sensitive to what Archer calls 'global finitude' and the need for a secular recognition of one people in one world, of 'humanity' and our common interests, rights and obligations (*contra* what is well known as methodological individualism). In particular I share her point on the need for controlled national de-militarization.

Relying precisely upon her analysis, I would like to underline a point. What can 'global citizenship' mean? To my mind, we cannot conceive of global citizenship simply as an extension (a generalization or universalization) of the nation-state citizenship as modern thinkers (such as I. Kant) did in fact think or suppose.

To me, the scenario is really one of a morphogenetic character (and Professor Archer knows that very well). This means that 'political constitutionalism' (as practiced in modernity) is over, and that we must look for what can be called the '*constitutionalization of the private spheres*', e.g. the construction of a new social order based upon a complex of rules suited to the self-government of the private spheres (linked to the so-called new social movements, but of a different stuff, like the third sector organizations) which constitute the new world civil society. In other words: the civil society arising at the global level needs its own institutions and a regulatory system of its own. World governance, after all, does not mean world government.

We can envisage many reforms for the UNO institutions (first: the abolition of the veto power; second: a composition of the Security Council

which must be really representative of the constituency of the member-states, and so on; something quite close is now required in the writing of the Constitution for the building up of the new EU). But, if we stopped here, it would be a very reductionist operation, it would mean believing in political engineering. Besides political engineering, – and Archer's paper is a great achievement along this line –, we need to re-enter the basic distinction system/social integration within both the political system (or 'world government', e.g. UNO) and the civil society at the worldwide scale.

I will be glad to know Professor Archer's opinion on that.