

SOLIDARITY AND GOVERNANCE

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Introduction

Social Solidarity was a prominent concern in sociology from its origins, without the founding fathers being in any agreement about its role. The British industrial revolution and the French political revolution served to show both that solidarity could be lost but not that it was automatically regained. Marx foresaw matters getting worse (revolutionary class conflict) before they got better (in his sketch of Communist utopia) but never denied the importance of a balance between human needs, abilities and contributions in order for solidarity to be regained in the good society. To Weber, the progressive ‘disenchantment’ of the world entailed a weakening of social bonds previously sustained by a shared religious value system, for which the substitution of bureaucratic regulation represented bondage rather than bonding. It was Durkheim, sometimes called ‘the worried man of the Third Republic’ who showed the most pressing concern for the immediate reconstitution of social solidarity if the ‘Pathologies of the Division of Labour’ were not to unleash social conflicts destroying the social fabric in his day.

There are two points of durable importance in Durkheimian thinking about solidarity. Firstly, his conviction that social solidarity was a form of ‘cement’, universally necessary for any society to hold together, whether it was based upon the likeness of members to one another in early social formations (mechanical solidarity) or their differences that spelt their mutual interdependence within the division of labour (organic solidarity). Secondly, within nineteenth century modernity, creating the conditions for robust solidarity entailed social policy interventions because there was nothing automatic or homeostatic about its restoration. As far as his proposed ‘remedies’ were concerned, Durkheim has rarely been given credit for the radical and often relevant nature of his proposals. Structurally, he emphasised the need for job allocation and remuneration to be matched to ‘natural differences’ in people’s abilities and supported the abolition of inherited wealth in order to eliminate acquired advantages. This stress upon ‘fairness’ and minimizing gross material differentials remained two key planks in subsequent discussion of the requisites for social integration. Culturally, he advocated ‘occupational associations’ of all employees in an enterprise, civic education for all pupils, and earlier that divorce should be made more difficult in order to reinforce family stability. However, the point here is not to endorse the specific policies that he advo-

cated, but to acknowledge his rightness in viewing social solidarity as in need of fostering by appropriate social policy.

This is all the more important because as Parsons assimilated Durkheim (by translating his works), the necessary but problematic role of social solidarity retained its necessity (in any functioning social unit), but ceased to be problematic within 'normative functionalism'. Instead, the operation of a 'central value system' was postulated as unifying the *goals, means* and *norms* of different parts of the social system. Thus, culture consisted 'in patterned or ordered systems of symbols which are objects of the orientation of action, internalized components of the personalities of individual actors and institutionalized patterns of social systems'.¹ Hence, the three major social subsystems were always held to be compatible with one another.

Thus, the normative order was postulated as *constitutive* rather as regulative of the social order, earning Gouldner's critique that Parsons 'never seems to ask about the conditions under which moral values *will* be held in common; he never seems to notice that power differences (among others) are likely to be conducive to differences in moral values and will thus, within his own assumptions, undermine the stability of relationships in which they exist'.² In consequence, Parsons was chastised for considering culture as being shared (when much is imposed), as binding (when so many interpretations of convenience can always be made), and as producing consensus (when the differential accentuation of particular components can generate the most severe conflict) but never, until his days as a 'Marxist outlaw' did Gouldner challenge the existence of a *central value system*.

Solidarity: Based upon Shared Values or Ideological Compromises?

There are two stories to tell about the sources of solidarity endorsed in the social sciences of modernity, although this is not the place to examine their storylines in detail. Summarily they can be compressed into binary oppositions such as solutions based upon Individualism/Collectivism; Idealism/Materialism; Consensus/Power; Functional differentiation/Class hegemony; Complementarity/ Contradiction; Co-ordination/competition;

¹ Talcott Parsons (1951), *The Social System*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 327. Jeffrey Alexander (1983) later criticised the consensus and values held by agents being treated as 'specifications' of a common value system. *Theoretical Logic of Sociology*, vol. 4, Berkeley, University of California Press.

² Alvin Gouldner (1971), *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, London, Heinemann, p. 242.

Life World/System or, more generally, 'Lib'/'Lab'. Both stories had extremely long runs and underwent successive re-tooling to equip them to deal with the changing social circumstances over the century running roughly from 1850 to 1950.

Marxist and neo-Marxist collectivism in its many versions consistently located both the problem of social solidarity and its solution within the class divisions of modernity's capitalism, its quintessential competitiveness that worked in zero-sum terms to produce winners and losers, the use of ideology to legitimate gross material differences and the need for social class mobilization (a class *for* itself and not just *in* itself). As the revolutionary agenda ran out, what is significant for our present concern is that solidarity was never conceived of as *societal*. At best, in subsequent socialist thinking there would remain two 'solidary' groups, sufficiently organised and institutionalized, to mitigate one another's vested interests and supportive ideas (later 'discourses') in structured forms of 'right' versus 'left' negotiation, promoting an absence of overt conflict that fell far short of solidarity.

The theme of the opposite story is that of 'institutionalized individualism', a formula advanced by Parsons and tinkered with ever since. Fundamentally, it accepts the inevitability and often the desirability of the progressive individuation of social subjects but places them in a normative context such that institutionalized structures would secure the complementarity of their expectations. This proved a resilient line of thought, passing from functionalism, through Systems theory and accentuated by Niklas Luhmann,³ to a diluted version in Ulrich Beck⁴ as well as dominating mainstream economics (Gary Becker's 'economic approach',⁵ Rational Choice Theory and Rational Action Theory) in which an acceptable level of social integration was the aggregate outcome rather than the pre-condition of individuals' instrumental rationality. As the class threat slowly dissolved, given the political incorporation of trade unionism and the later fall of Soviet State Socialism, Beck could lay the gravestone on class warfare by declaring that social classes had become 'zombie categories', henceforth allowing attention to turn towards the governance of cosmopolitan individualism.

³ In Luhmann's formula normatively institutionalized structures secure the complementarity of expectations. Niklas Luhmann (1982) *The Differentiation of Society*, New York, Colombia University Press.

⁴ Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization*, London, Sage, 2002, 'Preface', p. xxi.

⁵ G. Becker, *The Economic Approach to Human Behaviour*, Chicago University Press, 1976, p. 8.

Post-Second World War Europe – the zenith of Solidarity

Post-war reconstruction in Europe was also national reconstruction. For three decades, the pre-eminence of the nation states made the national sub-systems of considerably more importance than any of the early and tentative moves towards globalization because there were more internal linkages and dependencies within each nation than between them. Countries were reliant on their national labour markets, upon which their national economies were heavily dependent; national legal systems, whose definitions of rights and duties extended throughout the *pays légal*e but not beyond it; national systems of public education, the validity of whose credentials was largely restricted to the country (and its dependencies); and a variable national demarcation between the powers of church and state. Such was the magnitude of these differences that they fostered comparative sociology as a comparison of nation states, or what was later criticized as ‘methodological nationalism’.

After the Second World War, the developed democracies in the European nation states, their institutional configurations and particularly their economies all manifested enduring contestation, dating back to the (French) political revolution and the (British) industrial revolution. After centuries of conflict, with elites attempting to limit political participation in order to be able to regulate the people and the popular classes seeking to extend their democratic access in order to regulate the elites, the post war formula of social democracy, citizenship and variants upon the welfare state was a compromise in which mutual regulation took the revolutionary edge off enduring class divisions.

Thus, in the post war economies, after two centuries of struggle between entrepreneurs trying to control wages, hours and conditions and workers responding with Luddism, syndicalism, unionization, strikes and lock-outs, there was still unfinished business on both sides. Capitalism remained unwaveringly and necessarily competitive, holding itself threatened as national unionized workforces flexed their organized muscles. After various show-downs, the progressive incorporation of the unions into political parties and into industrial management itself was the compromise that inserted the ‘neo’ into capitalism.

The compromise derived from their mutual regulation, because in both the polity and the economy, the state of opposition mattered to the governing elites and vice versa, just as the state of managerial control mattered to organized labour and vice versa. Some even generalized this result to mean that every modern industrial state is a welfare state. However, can we call the ‘post-war formula’ *in toto* [social democracy + neo-capitalism + welfare state] a recipe for social solidarity?

Take the following four specifications of the conditions representing ‘social integration’, which were frequently used during the period and are presented in descending order of conceptual thickness:

1. Absence of major social conflict based on class (or class, status and power)
2. Achievement of formal political representation for all
3. A low level of social provisions for old age, sickness, accident and children
4. A redistributive welfare state system

The first is a social version of the economists’ ‘revealed preferences’ but, in fact, the absence of conflict reveals nothing about the presence of solidarity. Similarly, the second tells us that the formal condition of enfranchisement has been granted universally, but nothing about the existence of organizations enabling solidary groups to use it. The third relates to what used to be called the ‘decent minimum’ in Britain and, apart from the family allowance, was paid on an individual basis. The fourth only seriously pertained in Scandinavia,⁶ but again worked more on the removal of manifest grievances than contributing positively towards social solidarity.

In short, none of the above referents actually reveal anything about the promotion of solidarity. In themselves they do nothing to engender social bonds; at most they remove obstacles to their formation; and their main inflection in terms of values accentuates fairness towards individuals. Instead, solidarity is never unilateral, that is, something ‘won’ or ‘bestowed’. Its three features are:

- *the acceptance of common responsibility between two parties* for some state of affairs,
- *the recognition of their interdependence*, and
- *a response entailing reciprocity* not exchange, coercion or strategic concession of one to the other.⁷

Solidarity is thus intrinsically relational; it is about reciprocal orientation rather than the empirical outcomes listed in 1–4. Nonetheless, the above outcomes were an achievement and, indeed, proved a temporary high point in Europe’s history.

⁶ Gøsta Esping-Anderson, 1990, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Polity, Oxford.

⁷ See Pierpaolo Donati, 2008, ‘Discovering the Relational Character of the Common Good’, in Margaret S. Archer and Pierpaolo Donati, *Pursuing the Common Good: How Solidarity and Subsidiarity can Work Together*, 14th Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Vatican City Press, esp. pp. 670–73.

Taken collectively, as removing some of the major impediments to social solidarity, what can be learned about the conditions of their production? In the quarter of a century following the Second World War, the generative mechanism in the developed democracies was the robust nature of the *mutual regulation* maintaining between their institutional orders and their social orders, between the ‘parts’ of society and its members. The social order remained profoundly *relationally contested* and these societies were far from being fair, egalitarian or fully democratic. What had been gained represented concession, conciliation and compromise rather than the out-workings of solidarity. Nevertheless, the two-way regulation established between system and society was better than it had been throughout modernity. This conjuncture held the promise of further mutual regulation, such that fairer societies might be progressively and peacefully negotiated: ones where societal guidance and participation were increasingly interlinked. All of that promise depended upon the nation-state remaining co-extensive with ‘society’.

Another way of putting this is that a state of ‘constraining contradiction’ prevailed in this brief period. Mutual regulation derived from mutual dependence. Without that, industrial interests would have pursued the *situational logic of competition* that is inherent in capitalism and their political supporters would have done everything to buttress the liberal free-market economy. Wage rates would have been held down without any safety-net of welfare provisions in the absence of real and threatened industrial militancy. Correspondingly, the unions would have followed their *situational logic of elimination* (actually ‘holding the country to ransom’) had there been alternative sources of employment or had the steep differentials in wealth distribution not left the co-operative movement, for example, consistently undercapitalized.

The mechanism advanced here for this ‘golden interlude’ consisted in the successful if stressful emergence of mutual regulation between the institutional and social orders. Thus, the necessary but not sufficient conditions for mutual regulation were rooted in the nation-state itself. When the state’s boundaries also largely defined the outer skin of society, then the necessary interplay between the systemic and the social within the same territorial confines ineluctably meant that the state of the one mattered to the state of the other. That was the case whilst ever the nation state remained co-extensive with a ‘society’. It diminished as this boundary reduced in importance with increasing ‘globalization’.

Mutual regulation had operated largely as a *morphostatic* mechanism,⁸

⁸ Walter Buckley defines ‘morphogenesis’ as ‘those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system’s given form, structure or state, or state’ as contrasted with morpho-

one producing a balance between the existing institutional and social orders that stabilized relations between them. Such stabilization neither precluded negotiated change (welfarism was rightly hailed as a humanitarian advance) but nor did it eliminate outbursts of social conflict. The French *événements* of 1968 were significant for how in a highly centralized state, grievances from disparate groups could make common cause and almost succeeded in toppling the Fifth Republic. The British miners' strike in 1974 brought down the Conservative government (Edward Heath's) but the projected pit closures (1984) led Margaret Thatcher's government to respond with force – enforced until union strike funds ran dry. These events signalled that the 'post war formula' represented a formal truce rather than a substantial increase in social solidarity.

Indeed, the fact that the British 1984/5 miners' strike was the first in which welfare benefits to the families of strikers were cut indicates that the post-war settlement was not inviolate. Equally, the fact that the Government justified the use of force on the grounds that the strike had not been preceded by a national ballot of members, whilst union leaders defended themselves by appeal to direct democracy, potently signified the role that bureaucratic regulation was to play in the future. However, probably the biggest portent was the quietest; the governmental formulation of a plan to reduce British reliance on domestically mined coal, given that it could be imported more cheaply from Australia and Colombia at the time.

The Role of Multi-national Enterprises

'Globalization' is merely a portmanteau term for a great variety of interrelated changes and not itself a causal generative mechanism. (Analysts often seem unsure whether they are discussing cause or effect). Instead, and in quest of a real mechanism, it seems important to begin with how pursuit of the situational logic of competition increasingly promoted multi-national corporations (for production rather than trade) as a means of sloughing off the compromises inherent in the 'constraining contradiction' in which the market had been embedded in the post-war years.⁹

static processes 'that tend to preserve or maintain a system's form, organization, or state'. Walter Buckley, 1967, *Sociology and Modern Systems Theory*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, p. 58.

⁹ I have maintained that structural and cultural formations can be described and analysed in the same terms because the same four types of second-order emergent properties obtain in culture as in structure, despite their substantive differences ('necessary complementarities', 'necessary incompatibilities', 'contingent incompatibilities' and 'con-

The delinking of the economy from the confines of the nation state is vital, because with it, the source of mutual regulation based on the state of the national workforce mattering to corporate economic leadership and vice versa largely disappeared. Because the managerial elite no longer depended upon one (mainly) national workforce, their concern vanished about whether or not multinational practices were endorsed within any particular country, which in the past had meant accepting conciliatory regulation 'at home'. Instead, enterprises moved parts of their operations to employ personnel throughout the world. Thus, corporate management loosed itself from the constraint that the need for legitimacy had previously imposed, now that there was no determinate population of indispensable employees who were also its national legitimators. Correspondingly, economic power had less and less need to transform itself into authority. If the local workforce resisted, this was not met by durable concessions but by geographically re-locating operations.

In other words, corporate multinationals had freed themselves to pursue the *situational logic of competition* intrinsic to capitalism. However, simultaneously, such enterprises also had new requirements: for the speediest communication, for comparative cost/benefit data analysis on productivity, and for administrative logistics. The same requirements were redoubled in the burgeoning finance market, especially after the Bretton Woods restrictions on foreign exchange dealing were abandoned in the 1970s. Both developments paved the way for a new synergy between Structure and Culture.

The Intensification of Morphogenesis

Let me begin by posing a couple of questions that rarely get asked or answered in relation to two major episodes of socio-economic change. Why was the industrial revolution so slow (taking, let us say, 250 years from its first beginnings) and the technological revolution of the last 25 years so fast? Somehow, the question gets lost by calling them both 'revolutions', so I will re-pose it by removing these evocative terms. Why have historians maintained that the science upon which the industrial revolution was based was available one hundred years earlier but its application waited upon self-trained inventors with practical experience (such as Watt, Crompton and Arkwright) to translate it into the technology of the mill and factory?¹⁰

tingent complementarities'). Moreover, these 'generate parallel forms of situational logics'. *Realist Social Theory*, 1995, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 217-8.

¹⁰ J. Jewkes, D. Sawers and R. Stillerman, (1969) *The Sources of Invention*, New York, W.W. Norton. See also Charles Singer *et al.* (eds.), (1958) *A History of Technology*, vol. 4, *The Industrial Revolution, c. 1750 to c. 1850*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

(Eiffel and Brunel were the exceptions, both being civil engineers intrigued by technical challenges).

One crucially important reason for the slowness of industrialization was that the state (or public) educational systems to emerge in the developed world were, with the exception of Federal states such as Germany and the USA, remarkably inhospitable to vocal industrial demands for technical training. No strong practical, real or technical instruction developed because it was never a priority of the most powerful groups contesting educational control.¹¹ (To this day, most Europeans remained puzzled that ‘*Ingeniero*’ is a distinguished title in Latin America). Pure science attained a place in European universities towards the end of the nineteenth century, but applied science gained no foothold in higher education from which it could act as its practical translator, by demonstrating its manifest advantages through new industrial technology.

There were two equally important consequences of the slowness of industrialization for social solidarity. Firstly, despite the growth of urbanization, large tracts of the rural population could remain undisturbed and still bonded together by kinship, localism and reciprocal agricultural services. Secondly, the slow development of urban life, clustered around pits, mills and factories could enable the reestablishment of community in new settings.¹² After the initial ‘contextual discontinuity’¹³ for those involved, solidarity could develop anew and was prompted by the mutual services that working people supplied for one another in the absence of anything other than the most patchy charitable provisions.

This state of affairs had changed out of all recognition by the 1980s when the role of ‘interpreter’ was assumed by Information Technology (first in the USA) between the economy and university science. What is of overwhelming importance in the last twenty-five years is the fact that structure and culture have come into *synergy* with one another with far reaching morphogenetic consequences. It is ventured that cultural and structural morphogenesis are now becoming increasingly symbiotic *through* the per-

¹¹ Margaret S. Archer, 1979 [2013], *Social Origins of Educational Systems*, London, Sage [London, Routledge]. See also, Michael Sanderson, 1994, *The Missing Stratum: Technical School Education in England 1900 – 1990s*, Continuum.

¹² Michael Young and Peter Willmott, 1962, *Family and Kinship in East London*, Harmondsworth, Penguin. The book opens with a description of their surprise at finding a village [Bethnal Green] in the metropolis.

¹³ See Margaret S. Archer, 2007, *Making Our Way through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 48f.

ceived benefits of pursuing their positive feedbacks simultaneously and synthesising them.

Clearly, this can also be told as an historical narrative (and explained through an analytical history of emergence) rather than simply stated as a theoretical proposition. It would begin with non-overlapping groups of cultural and structural agents. We can caricature them as the scientists of Silicon Valley,¹⁴ initially unrelated to the endeavours of late twentieth century capitalism (at first being more closely connected to the military),¹⁵ and the structural protagonists of multi-national corporations pushing out globally for cheap labour, scarce natural resources, and expanded markets.¹⁶ If we want to put a significant earliest date to this synergy (a ‘tipping point’, designated *post hoc*, as they necessarily are), it would be that confluence in the 1980s epitomized by the structural burgeoning of multinational enterprises, the abandonment of the Bretton Woods agreement on foreign exchange dealings,¹⁷ and the cultural invention of the World Wide Web. Obviously, these had their precursors, calling for analytical histories of emergence at earlier institutional levels. Space precludes their examination here just as it prevents detailing the intricate synergistic intertwining that followed between globalized corporations, finance capitalism and informatics, but whose exemplifications are well known.

However, more is involved here than a simple universal formula such as ‘scientific innovation requires capitalization and industry needs new marketable ideas’. Firstly, neither may be met (most of the inventions advancing the industrial revolution were bought cheap leaving their inventors to die poor) and secondly, neither may be true (in the 1960s and early 1970s industry was extending its multi-national markets, cutting its unit labour costs,

¹⁴ Everett M. Rogers and Judith K. Larsen (1984), *Silicon Valley Fever: Growth of High Technology Culture*, New York, Basic Books. See also, M.S. Malone (1985) *The Big Score: the Billion-dollar Story of Silicon Valley*, Garden City, NY, Doubleday.

¹⁵ In the beginning, industry was not a key player. The foundations of the ‘digital revolution’ – micro-electronics, computers and telecommunications – were first laid in the U.S. between the military and university science, with the Second World War as their midwife and the Cold War as nanny. The serious kick-start was the Russian launch of the Sputnik in 1957, prompting the US Defense Department’s ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency) to enter the communications field and the development of the first computer network (1969). See Janet Abbate (1999), *Inventing the Internet*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

¹⁶ Centre d’Etudes Prospectives et d’Informations Internationales, (1992) *L’Economie mondiale 1990-2000 : l’impératif de la croissance*, Paris, Economica.

¹⁷ Joseph Stiglitz (2005) *The Roaring Nineties*, New York, London, Norton.

gaining cheaper raw materials in a boom period, none of which depended upon new scientific ideas).

Moreover, these phenomena are not the tidal bore of ‘liquidity’. The synergy responsible for the global intensification of change continues to extend through the generative mechanism of ‘variety producing more variety’, which works by positive feedback. As novel items (ideas, techniques, products, skills) are added to the cultural and social systems, so too the range of potential compatibilities between them increases. Innovation and even invention become matters of creative combination and change amplifies in speed and scope. Although openings for-profit grow alongside, the competitive instrumental rationality of modernity ceases to be the sole motor and motive driving social morphogenesis. The situational logic of action shifts progressively away from zero-sum competition by valorising the production of novelty through making connections, without having to overcome the opposition of entrenched interests because these cannot yet have consolidated where new variety is concerned. The new *situational logic of Opportunity* is still trammelled by that of *Competition* (hence wars over patents and copyrights versus Openflows, General Licensing and the cyber-Commons) but it has – unlike every other situational logic – the potentiality of fostering ‘win-win’ scenarios.

It would become more justifiable to talk of social transformation if, although conceding the impossibility of empirically quantifying the amount or speed of change, some sociological precision could be given to those social forms, practices, concepts, activities and ways of life that would fall into desuetude were social morphogenesis to become increasingly unbound from morphostatic processes tending to restore the *status quo ante*. The following illustrative list is intended only to point to the profound qualitative changes already starting to be manifested: loss of inter-generational ‘contextual continuity’,¹⁸ of habitual and routine action,¹⁹ of vested (but not objective) interests, of traditional social classes, of cultural capital, of lasting norms, of a stable role array, of representative political parties, and of institutionalized forms of geographical belonging. Instead, the focus will be exclusively upon the consequences of increasing morphogenesis and its promotion of variety, novelty and change for social solidarity.

¹⁸ ‘Contextual continuity’ refers to inter-generational continuities in the social context (natal background) faced by parents and children. Margaret Archer, 2012, *The Reflexive Imperative in Late Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 17–23.

¹⁹ Margaret S Archer, 2010, ‘Routine, Reflexivity and Realism’, *Sociological Theory*, 28:3, pp. 272–303.

PART II: SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND GOVERNANCE

Political Parties: Politics without Conviction

In the history of representative democracies political parties were the main channel for the accumulation, aggregation and expression of popular aspirations and demands, responsible for transmitting these upwards to the central decision-making arena. Historically, *what* parties stood for and *whose* interests they represented – even in coalition – were relatively clear, although subject to gradual change. This has now largely vanished and one of the reasons is loss of solidarity within the electorate itself. In the ‘golden period’ after World War 2, enduring class differences were mirrored by ‘lib’ parties favouring neo-liberal policies, in the interests of the middle classes, and ‘lab’ parties sponsoring redistributive measures, of which welfare provisions were the most important, appealing to ordinary working people. The regular alternation of such parties in government (or the equivalent alternation of centre-right and centre-left coalitions) gave half a loaf of bread in turn to those they represented. Thus, Western democracies could fairly be characterized as ‘lib/lab’.²⁰ If governance is taken to mean how rules are established and implemented, then the oscillation between ‘lib/lab’ parties made it a matter of turn-taking, where not everything introduced by a predecessor was overturned by the successor when assuming office.

Very broadly, the gradual increase in affluence (despite its uneven distribution) and the decline in union membership spelt the demise of Social Democratic Parties²¹ and the rush of traditional ‘labour’ parties to proclaim themselves as ‘new’ Labour or equivalent in the 1990ties. Earlier moves on the right, such as Margaret Thatcher’s sale of public housing stock to sitting tenants (as a *contre-partie* for legally restricting the Unions), had aimed to re-brand the right as representing the ‘solid’ middle class of home-owners with a stake in the country. Already, voter turn-out in general elections was plummeting throughout Europe as electorates recognised the diminishing

²⁰ Pierpaolo Donati, 2000, *La cittadinanza societaria*, Laterza, Roma-Bari. He also uses the term to refer more broadly to the *lib-lab* configuration of society, one that is a compromise between the liberal (lib) side of capitalist markets (free economy) and the socialist (lab) side of the welfare entitlements and equal opportunities guaranteed by the state (political system).

²¹ David J. Bailey (2009), *The Political Economy of European Social Democracy*, Abingdon, Routledge, p. 16 and H. Kitschelt (1994), *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

powers of national governments, given international finance capitalism, multi-national corporations and supra-national institutions such as the EU. A decade later, with the onset of the economic crisis, any residue of 'lib/lab' oscillation had disappeared to be replaced by a politics of 'centrism'. Very few²² still maintained that 'right' and 'left' retained any meaning – unless prefixed by the term 'ultra'.

This is when plummeting social solidarity registered its major effect. Who was the constituency of the (much re-named) centrist parties? All of these claimed to be representing 'the middle'. However, attempts, such as David Cameron's, to define this constituency by a bloated notion of the 'Big Society' were quickly dropped; no one recognised it or felt any belongingness towards it. What followed were a deteriorating set of tactics – sometimes entirely symbolic – aimed at dissociation from pariahs and re-association with potential supporters. One version was to distance parties from the super-rich; hence the rhetoric against 'bankers bonuses', which was also a trivial attempt to 'personalize' the causes of the financial crisis. Across the Channel, François Hollande's proposed 75% tax on super-rich incomes (over €1 million) was rejected by the Constitutional Court but was estimated to apply to all of 2,000 people. Back over la Manche, David Cameron tried to make a new distinction stick: between the 'strivers' (a competitive accolade for middle-Englanders) and the 'scroungers' (depicted as the third generation living on welfare benefits), which served the additional function of legitimating the dismantling of the welfare state.

The worst consequence of this frenzied quest for electoral support was that social solidarity was driven still lower by centrism. One social group, becoming larger and larger, but previously inviolate in Europe, now came under attack in the context of austerity measures – the retired. What was not untouchable was a category termed 'rich pensioners', assaults on whom were the flagship for undermining universal benefits in general. This is an explicit attempt to reduce inter-generational solidarity. Effectively, it tells young adults that the leaner occupational pensions they themselves will receive (if they will have one) and their struggles to get on the home-ownership ladder should be blamed on the parental generation, not their employers, much less on the politicians (even whilst the latter are squeezing their child benefits, especially for large families).

In place of solidary with groups such as the old and disabled, welfare policies based on universal entitlements (whose voluntary renunciation has

²² An exception was Noberto Bobbio, 1996, *Right and Left*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

never been tried to my knowledge),²³ came under attack. A new semantic category made a successful debut – the ‘vulnerable’. Its use (intransitive) parallels that of the ‘deserving poor’; it is unchallengeable, particularly by those branded as such. What it does is to ring-fence a much smaller group, to whom only the stoniest hearted could refuse public assistance, whilst freeing political hands for further welfare spending cuts. The ‘special needs’ (as designated) of this category also serve to leave them defenceless in the face of the rules set for (intrusive) bureaucratic regulation.

Politics without conviction means a drastic shrinkage (*crispation*) of normativity in political life. Political parties are preoccupied with tactics; with a St Simonian ‘administration of things’ – the day to day management of austerity and the reduction of public spending with minimum backlash – not the ‘government of people’ based on a normative conception of the good society. Tactical governance, with its ‘about turns’, absorption in today’s latest ‘scandal’, and the announcement of a ‘quick fix’, behaves like the fire service attending only to emergency calls. It ejects commitment from the political domain, whether in the form of expansive political philosophies or explicitly normative organizations with a broad conspectus on the good life. Hence, religion in general is banished from the public domain,²⁴ henceforth to be a depoliticized matter of private belief and practice. That is, unless it confines its normativity to the small scale defence a particular kind of school, an adoption agency, or a practice such as the wearing of turbans by motor-bikers, in which case it can be portrayed as just another vested interest group protecting its own creations or customs.²⁵ If functionalists had once held that values articulated every system of social action, they have become the antithesis of today’s political aversion towards normativity.

Tactical politics favours dealing with (and fostering the development of) increasingly specialized single-issue groups, promoting or defending ‘X’, who can be allowed voice if and when a scandal concerns the ‘X-zone’. Then, the media airing of their views stands for democratic consultation, but otherwise they are left in the wilderness of political lobbying. Tactical governance works through bureaucratic regulation whose highest aims are

²³ For example, I asked to return/not receive a ‘winter fuel allowance’ worth £200 in Britain for anyone eligible for the State pension and was told this ‘couldn’t be done – give it to a Charity if you don’t need it’.

²⁴ Roger Trigg, 2008, *Religion in Public Life: Must Faith be Privatized*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

²⁵ Those customs that are seen to represent contestatory symbolic markers are often treated roughly, as in the French dispute over women’s wearing of the *burkha*.

manifest (measurable) efficiency and effective control. Institutionally, the public domain is carved into decreasingly small pieces, each with its own Regulator, meaning that the problems occurring in any fragment can be addressed technocratically. In this way, the pieces can never be put back together and assessed for their coherence, let alone for their contribution or obstruction of any normative definition of the good society.

Ultimately, politics without conviction generates a huge shrinkage of normativity itself within public life. What matters is that epistemically we, the people, live together in overt ‘political correctness’, not that real ontological differences are acknowledged, addressed, assisted, or ameliorated, where possible and desirable. Normative shrinkage has as its consequence the narrowing bounds of socially unacceptable behaviour, where it is permissible (even ‘correct’) for the populace to express moral outrage; these now contain a single act – paedophilia. By implication, any form of society could claim to be ‘good’ provided it has somehow eliminated this phenomenon.

Social Institutions and Governance by Performance Indicators

From their emergence in Europe, the distinctive feature of the professions was the adherence of each to a specific and demanding code of ethics, departures from which were usually disciplined by a governing body of peers (generally the case for doctors, lawyers, academics etc.). This ethical regulation, symbolized by the Hippocratic Oath, approximated to a secular vow of service. It both bonded members of a profession together and provided assurance to those they served that the skills in question were being used in their interests and thus that their relationship differed from a market transaction – for example, the stock characters of the family doctor and lawyer. Undoubtedly, personal status accrued but it was counter-balanced by obligations (such as doctors turning out in the middle of the night). It was this version of institutionalized professionalism to which those Etzioni termed the ‘semi-professionals’ had aspired (teachers, nurses, social workers etc.),²⁶ as they sought certificated and later graduate status.

Over the last quarter of a century, all of the above groups have become subject to governance by performance indicators. Schools, hospitals, universities and so forth became managed by ‘objective’ performance indicators with results published in League Tables, which undermined the solidarity amongst ‘free professionals’ and the relationality between them and those

²⁶ Amitai Etzioni, 1969, *The Semi-Professionals and their Organization: Teachers, Nurses and Social Workers*, New York and London, The Free Press.

they served. The use of performance indicators represents an extension of the *logic of competition* from the business world to one previously held to consist importantly in the quality of human relations. The indicators deployed could capture measurable quantitative differences in crude empiricist terms (hospital through-put, waiting times for operations and so forth) but were incapable of assessing the quality of care, of teaching or of research.

Both internally within each organization and externally between the potential public of users, the *logic of competition* constituted an assault upon solidarity. A new conflict of interests had been introduced between professionals and the growing ranks of administrators; one damaging to the professional ethic and, in turn, to those who were being served. In extreme cases, such as the Report just issued on the Mid-Staffordshire Health Trust in G.B.,²⁷ meeting performance targets had taken precedence over patient care. Robert Francis QC, leading the investigation, commented in his report that patients were ‘left “unwashed, unfed and without water” while staff treated them and their relatives with “callous indifference”’. “There was a lack of care, compassion, humanity and leadership”, he said. “The most basic standards of care were not observed and fundamental rights to dignity were not respected”. It seems that a measurably excessive death-rate was required before the relational evils developing between staff and patients were addressed.

Externally, the effects of governance by performance indicators may not be fatal but are damaging for the social solidarity among users. In seeking school placement for their children in establishments highly ranked on the League Tables for their measurable results, English experience shows parents moving house in order to be eligible for entry and cases of legal prosecution for some who lied about their addresses so as to place themselves in the desired catchment area. Parent is thus placed in competition with parent and their children under an obligation of gratitude for these manoeuvres, ones that have probably deprived many of their friendship groups. It is unnecessary to mention the transformation of our students into ‘consumers’, reluctant to undertake any module or to do more than minimal reading unless this ‘counts’ towards their results. Lecturers now hesitate about awarding low marks, and thus graduate expectations become inflated and a new competition is unleashed amongst the student body about construction of a CV that will prove attractive on the employment

²⁷ The headline of *The Independent* (09.02.2013) read ‘NHS’s darkest day: Five more hospitals under investigation for neglect as report blames “failings at every level” for 1,200 deaths at Stafford hospital’.

market. Corporate employers raise the non-academic stakes by the expansion of seductive internships, the appointment of ‘student Ambassadors’ and other forms of colonizing the campuses.

Internal and external effects coalesce. The use of Journal ‘impact factors’ by Heads of Department to control where colleagues publish, the appearance of Google ‘hit’ rates in academic references, the expectation that research grant holders must demonstrate its effects before the research is even completed, embroil all in the *situational logic of competition*. Collegiality gives way to mutual suspicion, collaboration to strategic considerations, and peer review segues into a procedure for enforcing academic correctitude. *Qui bono* from this competitive turn? The answer is hardly anyone, except those – usually not the most creative – who have re-invented themselves as academic administrators, but not the state of research and not academia as a solidary body.

Governance by Bureaucratic Regulation

Whether we are talking about Local Authorities, National Government or the E.U. most people would agree that bureaucratic regulation has increased during their lifetimes, despite the nineteenth century fulminations of Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens and later Ford Maddox Ford against ‘red tape’. It is also worth noting that Canada, the U.S. and the E.U. have commissions or committees whose aim is to reduce it. In other words, bureaucratic regulation is a strange animal in the sense that some of the agencies most responsible for its proliferation, such as the E.U., at least wish to be seen to be unenthusiastic about it. What accounts for this paradox?

Certainly, bureaucratic regulation is about control and no democratic institution wants to be seen as a ‘controller’. Yet, there has to be more to it because so many organizations that increasingly operate through this form of regulation make no claims about their governance being democratic: public utilities, banks, supermarkets, manufacturers, public transport, leisure facilities and hotels amongst dozens of others. I want to maintain that one reason for this profusion and proliferation lies in low social solidarity amongst the relevant populations (of users, consumers etc.) and one consequence of its growth is to drive solidarity even lower. No claim is being made that this is the only cause or sole consequence of these regulatory measures.

Regulations, like rules, are imperative and also more frequently legally binding but, unlike rules, they do not rely upon normative consent from those to whom they apply or upon whom they impinge. There are other differences. Regulations tend to be more particularistic as to space, time, object and activity (“This is a non-smoking building/flight/shopping mall”).

They can be novel and without precedent, unlike most conventions,²⁸ although they may be just as arbitrary ('Food and drink may be consumed on the second floor of the library') and changed at any time. They can be non-declarative but unavoidable (try to buy a crooked carrot in any E.U. supermarket). They are non-negotiable ('Our system doesn't allow that') whereas special pleading or circumstances can sometimes get rules to be bent. There is nothing tacit about a regulation and less room for interpretative manoeuvres.

However, the most important difference of all is that a bureaucratic regulation must be respected but does not require respect from those who abide by it. Regulations are instruments of control, ones that are constraining and can be enabling, but they do not rely upon commanding normative consent, endorsement or approval from those to whom they apply. If that is the case, then it might seem that the prevailing level of social solidarity amongst any group who will be affected by a new regulation is irrelevant, because everybody will be bound by it.

That conclusion appears premature because it is when normative consensus is lowest in a target population that bureaucratic regulation can be applied most easily. Were there higher solidarity, entailing shared concerns amongst group members, the basis exists for potential (organized) opposition to bureaucratic fiat. Although solidarity does not necessarily imply a state of affairs even approaching normative consensus, the holding of shared concerns cannot be devoid of normativity. Some of the same things matter to those with concerns held in common and one of them is that these *ought* to be fostered rather than damaged. Conversely, low solidarity signals heterogeneous concerns meaning that regulation will have a mixed reception, but one too fragmented for resistance. In that case, control is simply control.

Although it does not seem definitional to me that *social* regulations have to be internally linked to social relations (unlike the persuasive case Al-Amoudi has made for social rules)²⁹ they do influence them, which is not inherently part of their objective. *A bureaucratic regulation is usually satisfied if each and every member of the target population behaves as specified* (e.g. not parking except in designated bays). The exceptions are where it is collective behaviour that is prescribed ('Queue behind this line') or proscribed ('This

²⁸ Ismael Al-Amoudi and John Latsis, 2013 (forthcoming), 'The Arbitrariness and Normativity of Social Conventions', *British Journal of Sociology*.

²⁹ Ismael Al-Amoudi, 2010, 'Immanent non-algorithmic rules: an ontological study of social rules'. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 40:3, 289–313.

taxi is licensed to carry four people'). What makes a regulation social is simply when a social outcome is its objective, such as avoiding a definition of overcrowding ('No more than 8 standing passengers permitted'). Nevertheless, regulations influence real social relations – specifically social solidarity – in excess of the behavioural conformity sought.

Let us quickly glance at an improbable instance, that of the (still current) E.U. regulation governing the sale of carrots. Commission Regulation (EC) No 730/1999 of 7 April 1999 states they must be “not forked, free from secondary roots”. One consequence has been that horticulturalists have to dump or find some industrial outlet for their offending carrots, only being paid by supermarkets for perfectly straight specimens. Another is that the price of the latter rises. Farmers are disgruntled and so are customers. Yet, considering the price, customers may conclude that farmers growing carrots are doing very well. Meanwhile, the grower, returning home with a half a truck load of rejected forked carrots that have now lost freshness and value, curses customer perfectionism. Relations of solidarity deteriorate. Ironically, neither party may be fully aware of EC Regulation No 730/1999 and both, if consulted, would be normatively opposed to it in all likelihood. The attitudes they do share are discounted bureaucratically and the practices imposed by regulation serve to diminish solidarity between them.

Can one generalize from this ludicrous issue? Probably, to a certain extent, because when social solidarity is low the weaker are the networks along which information flows and the less the bonds that mitigate or offset a person or group behaving in a way that is the product of regulatory control. For example, if a taxi driver lives in a neighbourly area and declines to take five people home from a party, meaning they need to find and pay for two cabs, the response might be the irritated but nonetheless understanding comment: 'Well, it could have cost him his license'. However, surveys show that in Europe, we don't even know the names of our neighbours any longer.

Social Life that Escapes Governance

Many novel social practices, promoted technologically, are distinctively morphogenic; they catch on fast through positive feedback and do not become readily stabilized through negative feedback. In other words, they escape *both* bureaucratic and normative regulation alike. Should these be regarded as 'new personal freedoms' or as 'new forms of social anarchy', thriving in the absence of social solidarity? Certainly, it takes time for norms to crystalize in relation to new inventions and the social practices stemming from their adoption and use (remember the man with a red flag walking in front of the first cars). In that case, it could be argued that prudential rather

than normative concerns prompted road widening and the convention of driving on the right or left, but such conventions developed everywhere.

Yet, some current practices appear resistant to governance and such norms as eventually develop are not necessarily *universal*. Take the introduction of television in the 1950s. At first, the TV remained on when visitors came *because* friends and family had been invited to experience the new domestic wonder. In the next half century, as ‘everyone’ acquired one, it stayed on regardless of the difficulties of competing with it conversationally. Eventually, a strange convention developed, particularly though far from exclusively among the poorer, namely that if asked to switch it off, say by a visiting social worker, the sound would be muted but the picture remained flickering. (Sometimes when interviewing people in their homes during the last five years I have had to use the pretext that the TV would interfere with my recording equipment in order to gain their full attention). What form did bureaucratic regulation take given the arrival of the people’s new ‘best friend’? In Britain it persecuted the 3% of us who registered that we did not have one, threatening home inspection and legal prosecution for not having bought a TV license.³⁰ In GB, an average of 28 hours a week are spent viewing,³¹ which is typical for Europe, whilst in the US the mean is higher at 34 hours plus.³² These statistics begin to equal those of the national minimum working week, meaning these informal practices must be reducing time for social relationships outside the house.

Some relatively novel practices challenge social solidarity directly and are hostile to regulation. Mobile phone users do not adapt existing conventions (such as moving out of others’ way to re-tie a shoelace) but body-block, interrupt conversations to take calls, leave the dinner table, or broadcast to the entire restaurant. At concerts, in lectures or in church regulatory reminders have to be issued; the creation of a single Quiet Coach on trains is not respected but often contested by the same passengers who act in conformity with the adjacent ‘no-smoking’ sign. Should these be regarded as new norms and new forms of social relations?

³⁰ Now, matters are worse for the minority. We are forced to buy a license if our computers are capable of receiving TV.

³¹ According to Ofcom, the independent Regulator for the UK communications industries: ‘the average number of hours of television watched by individuals in the UK has risen over the past eight years, from 3.7 hours a day in 2004 to 4.0 hours a day in 2011’.

³² ‘The average American over the age of 2 spends more than 34 hours a week watching live television, says a new Nielsen report – plus another three to six hours watching taped programs’. <http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/tv-movies/americans-spend-34-hours-week-watching-tv-nielsen-numbers-article-1.1162285#ixzz2KgAqQlQM>

Claims to normativity and solidarity seem thin. On the contrary, telephone hacking is not just a ‘new crime’ amongst journalists because every professional criminal knows to buy a disposable device. As for relationality, one attraction (tied into the mobile through the smart phone), according to Pew Internet Project is the interface with social interactive sites.³³ And on Facebook we find not only the debasement of the term ‘friends’, the inducement to engage in deceptive and sexual modes of self-presentation, but also new unregulated opportunities for cyber-bullying, relational deception, blackmailing and data-mining. Such practices defy regulation and public governance to the detriment of social solidarity, partly because all postings remain the intellectual property of the site’s founder.

Conclusion: The results of low social solidarity

The present socio-economic context could not be further from one based upon solidarity (*fraternité*) or less propitious to it. Thus, the injunction in *Caritas in Veritate* §36 that the ‘logic of the gift’ must find its place ‘within normal economic activity’ is intended to revitalise social solidarity. Any ‘logic’ of action (minimally) involves three elements: firstly, people who are deemed capable of acting in the way specified; secondly, social structures that foster this kind of action; and, thirdly, results for the social order congruent with these types of action. Yet, how can social solidarity be re-created in the context of late modernity’s enduring ‘logic of competition’ and persistent reiteration that ‘There is no alternative’? If it cannot, does the new ‘situational logic of opportunity’ promote an alternative normativity, conducive to solidarity and capable of confronting a macro-institutional context that is hostile to it?

The problem is that the conjunction between the logics of *competition* and of *opportunity* tend to be counter-productive towards solidarity since they pull the social order in two different directions – both of them morphogenic – but meaning that the changes introduced between them are in normative and institutional conflict. On the one hand, those attempting to develop common goods that encourage new forms of social integration (peer-to-peer production, shared intellectual property, and openflows) are dependent upon free-giving³⁴ and constantly threatened with ‘colonization’

³³ http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_Teens_Smart-phones_and_Texting.pdf

³⁴ On 21.11.2012 Jimmy Wales was trying to raise €10 per capita user per year, sufficient to maintain Wikipedia. That represents €540 million of overheads for that year on the figures given.

by market and state. Thirty years ago, Jürgen Habermas³⁵ identified these invasions of the ‘lifeworld’ by the two Leviathans of late modernity – market and state – and they have constantly updated their colonial adventuring since then. On the other hand, the response to it is the intensification of ‘counter-institutionalization’ by organized agencies for charitable activities and by not-for-profit innovations.

‘Colonization’ by market and state is indisputable. The market turns the activities that have been successfully pioneered by voluntary initiative into business ventures (as in chains of Care Homes), floated on the stock market, making them party to the ‘logic of competition’, just as ‘green’ and ‘organic’ have been profitably assimilated into marketing strategies. Attempts to create a ‘cyber commons’ through Peer2Peer exchanges were promptly taken over by *Wikinomics*³⁶ as a method of harvesting technical solutions *for free* – euphemistically known as ‘dispersed production’. The trick consists in appropriating voluntary innovations (micro-credit, for example) and simply turning them into for-profit. In direct parallel, the state absorbs voluntary initiatives (in schooling, health, mental care), not only passing on some of the bill to them, at least for start-up costs, but also throttling voluntary sources of solidarity with bureaucratic regulation.³⁷

‘Counter-institutionalization’ is understandable. It consists in performing the trick the other way round. Charities become charitable *enterprises*, losing their solidary character in the process. This was vividly illustrated several decades ago by the commercialized ‘plate dinner’, where the self-promotional photo-call displaced free-giving as a motive. More recently, employing commercial fund-raisers.com has become standard (competitive) practice as has media promotion, employment of lobbyists and ‘celebrity’ representation. This is a consistent threat to the undercapitalized cyber-Commons, where remaining prominent usually involves institutionalized collaboration with the for-profit sector. (For example, whilst Wikipedia has successfully resisted advertising in order to retain its impartiality, the ‘Wikidata Project’ is partly funded by Google. Similarly, on the peer-2-peer foundation site, most videos and audios have to be accessed through Google and its YouTube subsidiary).

³⁵ J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 1989 [1981], Polity Press, Cambridge.

³⁶ Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams, *Wikinomics: how mass collaboration changes everything*, Atlantic Books, 2008.

³⁷ Trivial but telling, my younger son and his wife had to undergo a ‘home inspection’ before being allowed to rescue a mature cat with three legs.

This fundamental antinomy cannot be eliminated by attempts to blur the different contexts in which they thrive. It cannot be done by putting ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ inside the for-profit enterprise, ‘Business Ethics’ inside Management Schools and introducing them on the MBA. The point is that multi-nationals remain competitive and Business Schools reflect competition between universities, which are increasingly financialized enterprises whose ‘best seller’ is the MBA (have a look at the annual fees). The point never was – and Marx was the first to say so – that capitalism was produced and maintained by ‘greedy people’, but it is intrinsically competitive. Finance capitalism, most marked in countries with shrinking to invisible ‘real economies’, no longer benefits (in the West) by exploiting wage-labour but preys, instead, on the housing market and pension funds and it detaches credit from credit-worthiness. It cannot be transformed by assuming a ‘caring face’, but that does not mean that those who try to make it authentic or even those who don’t are ‘bad guys’. What it means is that the individual is the wrong level at which to address the issue. The same is true for the state. ‘Care in the Community’, ‘Community policing’ or ‘Community Service’ cannot legislate solidarity into being, especially when the term ‘community’ decreasingly has a meaningful referent.

Caritas in Veritate reaches the same conclusion that ‘top down solutions’ alone, ones that aim to civilize and humanize the two Leviathans, are inadequate because both market and state continue to corrode social solidarity:

‘The exclusively binary model of market-plus-state is corrosive of society, while economic forms based on solidarity, which find their natural home in civil society without being restricted to it, build up society. The market of gratuitousness does not exist, and attitudes of gratuitousness cannot be established by law’. §39

The first thing that this very decided, radical (and not much quoted) statement does is to encourage us not to equate ‘normal economic activity’ with current economic activities. Secondly, it invites us to concentrate upon the growing deficit in *social integration*,³⁸ and on building up a civil society resilient to the ‘corrosive’ influences of market and state. Thirdly, this means working from the ‘bottom up’, rather than seeking reform from the ‘top down’.

There are innumerable indicators of plummeting of *social integration* in the developed world, which the competitive logic of multinational and finance capitalism globally augments: the breakdown of the family; of the neighbour-

³⁸ Margaret S. Archer, ‘Social Integration, System Integration and Global Governance’, in I. Rossi, (ed), *Frontiers of Globalization Research*, Springer, New York, 2007.

hood community; turf warfare between gangs; the majority of households constituted by those living alone (Britain) or financially constrained to co-habit (Eastern and Southern Europe); huge reductions in inter-generational solidarity; rising proportions of those who have never worked, and the recent flotation of *Facebook* – the resort of the friendless. Moreover, the combination of *low social integration* and *low system integration* is always explosive. Economic crisis in the absence of social solidarity intensifies the fall-out.

Thus, in attaching importance to the building up of civil society, is *Caritas in Veritate* being unrealistically utopian? Historically, it seems important to recall how crucial ‘bottom up’ social movements were in promoting human dignity and its institutional recognition: enfranchisement, working conditions, education, health and welfare. The baton was then passed to civil rights, feminist and anti-racist movements. These are effective, we all owe them a great deal, but as attempts to reform market and state (or both) they did not primarily address the problems arising from the deficit in social solidarity. Is the building up of civil society through solidary organizations, as expressions of subsidiarity, more promising?

Certainly, subsidiary ventures are active in the economy. As a means of production, cooperative enterprises, micro-credit and the cyber-commons enhance sharing and generate relational goods. In terms of consumption, the success of Charity shops and of Free-cycle, in particular, show how goods can circulate – and usefully so – on the basis of gratuity. More ambitiously, new agencies in numerous countries such as Brazil are attempting to create financial markets for social enterprise as initiatives in horizontal subsidiarity. Such alternative investment markets envisage a stock exchange for non-profit social enterprises and community interest companies using shares and debt bonds as their financial instruments. In principle, these are not competing as high yield investments; on the contrary they are an opportunity for gratuitousness where the shareholder, unlike the regular contributor to a Charity, retains a say, a vote and an involvement.³⁹

All of the above initiatives promote ‘use value’ over ‘exchange value’, but more significant for social solidarity are those that combat financialization by

³⁹ However, in practice, these are not even the aims of the proposed British Social Stock Exchange, which seeks to sign up for-profit enterprises and overtly has an eye to the pension funds as investors. See the website of the proposed ‘Social Stock Exchange’, UK, which defines it as for-profit and indicates ‘colonization’ from time of conception: ‘The Big Society Investment Fund was set up by the Big Lottery Fund under the Dormant Accounts Act to make early investments prior to the establishment of Big Society Capital (previously known as the Big Society Bank)’.

re-valoring alternative currencies, particularly skills and time. These contribute to social integration because of their necessary localism. Time Banks and Food Banks can be sufficiently successful to become regionally or nationally organized, but practices have largely to be localized and thus help to build up social bonds. Valuing and harnessing the skills and resources possessed by most people also serves to mitigate new or looming forms of social divisiveness: between those in-work and out of work and between the active and the retired population. This is not nostalgia for the 'lost community'. In fact, it is promoted by globalization. Schemes pioneered in one country are rapidly adopted in others (the first European Food Bank was Italian, but similar initiatives are spreading throughout Europe and Latin America).

Caritas in Veritate is a salutary but not a pessimistic document. It encourages us in 'weaving networks of charity' §5 and the caring relations created and expressed by groups of unpaid voluntary workers reinvigorate social solidarity. Weaving is slow work and the better the rug, the longer it takes. In the immediate future it appears that we will have to live with gradualism and encourage it. Terms and practices such as 'corporate social responsibility' and 'social enterprise' have been placed on the agenda and corporate enterprises know that they will be held to account. The third, voluntary or social-private sector is growing and diversifying and if it is subject to colonization and regulation, it can exert some influence from within and respond with further new initiatives from without.⁴⁰ Perhaps we should look at it as the research and development agency for a future civil society and civil economy. This may be slow and sub-optimal, but it probably represents the one new form of future change whose governance is not fundamentally undermined by the deficit in social solidarity. Gradualism is never triumphalistic but it seems the only realistic way of slowly re-building social integration.

⁴⁰ This 'gradualism' is endorsed by the founder of p2p, Michel Bauwens when advocating the use of existing 'infrastructures for personal and social autonomy': 'The creation of this infrastructure was a combination of efforts of civil society forces, governments and public funding, and private R&D and commercial deployments. It's an imperfect world full of governmental control, corporate platforms, but also many capabilities for p2p interaction that did not exist before ... They have become civilisational achievements that are just as necessary for p2p-commoners [as for] the powers that be'. http://p2pfoundation.net/What_Digital_Commoners_Need_To_Do