

THE ETHICAL VALUES OF THE ECONOMIC SYSTEMS OF EAST AND WEST AND THE ALTERNATIVE OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND OF CIVIL ECONOMICS

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Abstract:

The Western and Eastern economic systems are represented by two countries: Italy for the Western economic systems and China for the Eastern ones. The economies are seen as representative models of the entire process of globalisation. The study analyses the underlying ethical values of the economies of the two countries and connects its results to the major social problems affecting the world in the present. It is implied that in the twenty-first century the social problems of man are the direct causes of the ethical and moral principles being embedded in the current economic systems, as the economies are supposed to satisfy the basic needs. Another principle that is implied in the study is that human nature asks for the union with God and his values: God being our creator rules the individual and social order of man by means of laws of human nature represented by values that are instilled in man, when the values are violated there are consequences for the individual and entire society; the antropological and sociological point of view of the study is the one of the Catholic Church. The values that are embedded in both Eastern and Western economies result in separation of Man from God and isolation and loneliness of man in the contemporary society: this is the major cause of the corruption of the society and the rise of many different types of crises.

The study proposes a perspective for the solution of the problems suggesting an implementation of the values of the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) or Social Doctrine of Catholic Church (SDCC) in the economies and their application by means of Civil Economics.

Civil Economics is the first attempt to encode formal studies of economics in the modern era; due to the earlier works of Antonio Genovesi the discipline organizes topics and values according to the principles of civic virtues, public faith and economic progress.

Keywords: civil economics, social doctrine of catholic church, ethics, economic systems, eastern economies, western economies

1. WHERE WE ARE?

The presence of ethics into the economy is a story as old as the world, and for this reason thinkers have repeatedly insisted on it over the centuries;

Basically we can say this: there are countries where 40 or 50 percent of the population is unemployed, with the dramatic peak of Zimbabwe reaching 95 percent in 2009 (CIA - The World Factbook); 10 percent of the population owns 85 percent of the world's wealth and 80 percent is reserved for just 1 percent; 26 people possess the wealth of 3.5 billion people (Oxfam Report 2019)¹. Furthermore, there are financial securities in the world that are worth more than global GDP. (see Figure 1)

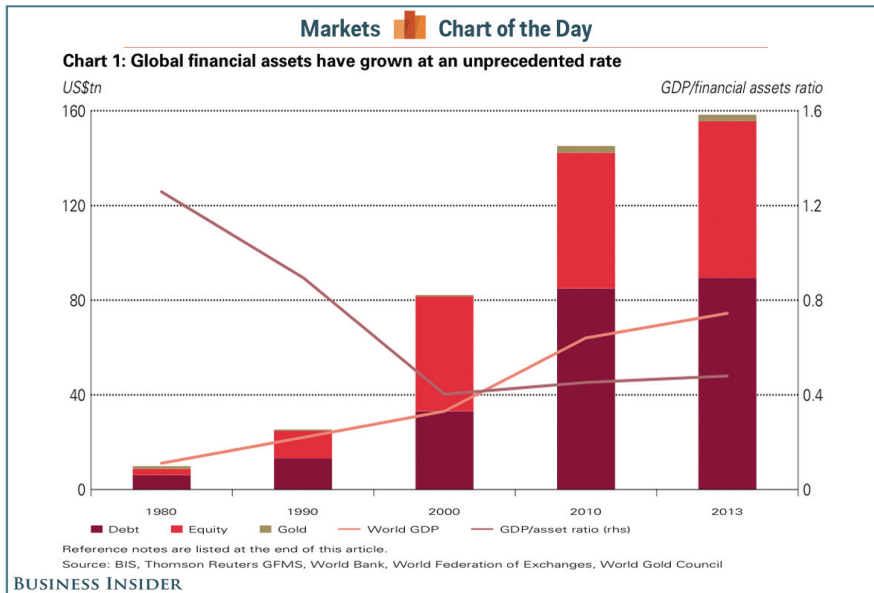


Figure 1

The climate, due to pollution, is changing and forecasts for the future and the health of our planet evidence many risks. (see Figure 2)

How the level of global warming affects impacts and/or risks associated with the Reasons for Concern (RFCs) and selected natural, managed and human systems

Five Reasons for Concern (RFCs) illustrate the impacts and risks of different levels of global warming for people, economies and ecosystems across sectors and regions.

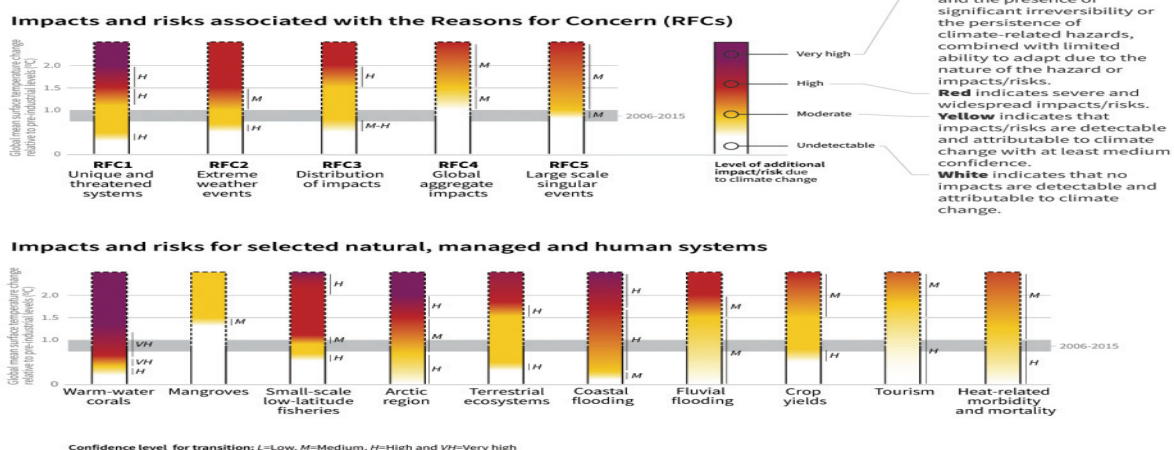


Figure 2²

What can be said about all this? There are various aspects of complexity that are difficult to analyze and

1 M. Lawson et al., (2019), *Public good or private wealth?*, Oxfam Briefing Paper – January 2019, Oxford UK

2 Allen M. et al., (2019), *IPCC Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5° C. Summary for Policymakers*, IPCC Switzerland

critical issues that require immediate resolution, but on the other hand we are witnessing changes that predict that life, in a few years, will be destined to change for the better, thanks to the technologies that are being developed and that, slowly, gain the first place on the scene of the innovations enabling a better life from a material point of view and for those who will have access to them.

The most urgent problem is the growth of inequalities in the world³, especially those affecting the middle classes which constituted a large part of the generations of the second half of the XX Century in the Western world. From the data highlighted, it can be noted that this phenomenon is, unfortunately, growing at least since the late 1980s, but in the last 20 years it has taken on an ever greater importance, creating explicit and latent tensions in the various countries of the world.

What are these events? We could say that they are all those that emerge from the 17 objectives of sustainable development commonly called Agenda 2030: this agenda of interventions started on the initiative of the United Nations in 2015, involved 193 countries of the world; it envisages a goal aimed at reducing inequalities. We should try to implement the actions planned globally.

But on the international geopolitical-economic front, we are witnessing an ever-increasing effort of hegemony over the world by great superpowers such as: the USA, China and Russia, which, using their strategic alliances, strive for gaining access to resources (for the West that is lacking them), to markets (for China), and having important influences on all the countries of their respective constellations of power, in order to increase their world hegemony;

The presage of such events was already clear to the USA at the end of the last century, in 1997, when the Newcons had created the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), an organization for educational purposes that conveyed the ideas of the new American Right, which has released several reports on how American foreign and defense policy should have behaved in the new millennium, and which called for a renewed US leadership role in leading the world through its democratic and market values⁴.

It is clear that access to resources and markets is being the major scope played on the international scenario, and could seriously jeopardize international security, unless awareness of the fact that what happens at one point on our planet, affects the whole planet.

2. NEW VALUES

Culture is an immaterial aggregate, and at the same time, the universal category of language and thought, which makes possible to maintain cohesion between social groups; it includes among other categories: arts, values, forms of thought, religion. Because of this its permeability to all sectors of life, its transversality and its autonomy that live in social groups, it becomes a very powerful tool for aggregating people; culture cementizes relationships and makes them cohesive.

Because of its immense aggregative power it can lead to clashes of civilizations, like the ones that are actually happening before our eyes, as the academic and political scientist Samuel Phillips Huntington has for some aspects prophesied in his book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order"⁵ which sees a post-cold war scenario in which civilizations and not nations will be fighting each other.

But, at the same time, we can observe, thanks also to globalization, that cultures also tend to meet because within them there is an instance of human and social growth that ask for unity; in other words, a strange attractor makes them naturally to interact in order to change and become something else: this collective identity of which all men are bearers, is still unfinished and always tries to perfect itself, wants to share and to create, also wants to receive new ideas and new hopes; we could call this identity in the making as "*human and cultural universal*": it could be a strategic lever for constructive change in today's world and the engine for the activation of a more equitable and sustainable development for the whole world.

Then we want to have the courage and the confidence to change and not accept passively and uncritically situations that appear to us as monolithic and indestructible laws. It is necessary to put man at the center, a new Humanism is needed. Love, manifested in the person of Christ, true God and true man, is the engine of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church. There is an urgent need to return to Christian values which are the founding ones of Europe and they are also present in many Constitutions of European countries, in particular the Italian one.

The concept of *benevolent justice* is necessary, that is, a justice that while practicing what is right and gives everyone his own, at the same time, is willing to donate something to make up for the shortcomings of those who do not have. The logic of the gift is the answer and is necessary to introduce it in the values underlying the economic behaviour and not consider utilitarianism as an end in itself. Moreover, it is necessary to have a

3 Christoph Lakner, Branko Milanovic, *Global Income Distribution: From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the Great Recession*, The World Bank Economic Review, Volume 30, Issue 2, 2016, Pages 203–232, <https://doi.org/10.1093/wber/lhv039>

4 Donnelly T, (2000), *Rebuilding America's Defenses Strategy, Forces And Resources For A New Century, Project For The New American Century*, Washington USA

5 Huntington, Samuel P. (1997). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York :Touchstone

holistic and non-individualistic approach in the research methodology of economic sciences, also introducing the human phenomena that were not considered in the individual disciplines (religious behavior, education, values, family, dignity of human life, etc.);

3. THE ECONOMIC PARADIGM

It is important to consider the economy as the basis upon social values depend; in fact, just as historical materialism has allowed the interpretation of facts according to Marxism, so today it is to be considered that a fundamental aspect (among others) of the values that interpret reality and the ways in which these values crystallize in the society is constituted by the type of axiology inserted in the functioning of the economic system: a pertinent explanation of this phenomenon can be provided by Maslow's pyramid.

Basically the moral structure of society depends less on religious, cultural, ethical superstructures unless the point where there is a socially widespread minimum level of well-being is reached: that acts as a trigger of a chain reaction to solicit a collective ethical thought; the role of the values implemented in economic systems is one of the basic elements for modifying and governing the social ethics of a nation, a civilization, of cultural, religious and social institutions.

4. TWO SYSTEMS

We will try to identify at least theoretically the value-based assets of today's economy by comparing two great civilizations - the West and the East -, which are a fairly intuitive exemplification of the at least ten civilizations that exist in the world as Huntington declared.

The socio-economic structure of the West is given by:

- democratic regimes; the long philosophical tradition inherited from Greece has forged various modes of government in the various eras; democracy is a superstructure of the free market.
- competition: competition is seen as one of the regulating factors for the market; it is also important to consider an aspect that can distort freedom, which is given by oligopolizing or sometimes monopolizing factors in those sectors with rigid demand that are strategic (utilities, telecommunications, banking and financial services, etc.)
- liberalism born in opposition to totalitarian states and absolutism for the emancipation of the individual; there are at least three interpretative roots of it: the first one, the English one, based on the empirical conception, which denied to the reason the absolute right to dictate the organizational principles, as the reason could be misleading; the second, the French one, born on the basis of the conquests of the French Revolution, had a rationalistic, materialistic matrix that gave an essential design function to reason; the third one, coming from a group of Catholic philosophers and theologians of the University of Salamanca towards the end of the 1500s, centered on the idea of personal freedom (the concept of person and no longer of individual) that have anticipated the elaborations of 18th century liberalism. Hayek's thinking makes us understand how the link with the religious factor is fundamental for liberalism, he says: "I am convinced that if the rift between true liberalism and religious convictions will not be healed, there will be no hope for the rebirth of liberal forces"⁶
- Consumerism: a social economic phenomenon that consists in inducing the masses, through advertising, but also with other and more refined species of communication (lifestyles, status symbols, new forms of indoctrination), to the continuous purchase of goods that must be quickly consumed and replaced. This brought forward the culture of waste and conditioned generations to believe in an ephemeral happiness based on consumption and possession of goods. The homologating contribution of the phenomenon is remarkable.
- law and rights: law as instrumental to the axiological aspects of reality, so as to regulate it according to the prevailing ethics and morality; rights have a function to allow people to be able to perform their duties.
- financialization of the economy: detachment between the financial activity inherent to payment instruments and the real economy. This leads to reflect on the sustainability of growth and its limits: the paradox is given by the financial system built upon money and financial instruments with potentially unlimited growth and the physical reality of the resources that are finished: explanatory motto is: "In a finite system of resources, infinite growth is impossible".
- Christian religion and secularization: there are strong instances in the West that are in opposition, leading to outcomes that are classified with the terms of modernism and postmodernism in philosophical debates; we see a great reversal of values within western society: while until the Middle Ages Christian values informed all aspects of society and were shared by the totality of the population, we now observe an anthropology that ignores any truth and affirms a generalized ethical

6 Hayek von, F.A., 1998, *Studi di filosofia, economia e politica*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, Italia

relativism.

- Immigration: it is a characteristic of the West to be at the center of mass migration. The reasons are both economic and protection of human rights that are not guaranteed in many areas of the world

These aspects bring with them values and beliefs that are the basis of Western civilization.

F. Grillo and R. Y. Nanetti⁷ point out for the West two important paradoxes that also are its limits: the "Paradox of technology" and the "Paradox of democracy"; these two paradoxes can represent the state of things in our day. The first paradox states that although there has been a great technological innovation in the West, it has failed to socialize its benefits for all citizens despite the potential. The second paradox on which the first also stands, starts from the crisis of legitimacy and efficacy of liberal democracies after the collapse of the 1989 Berlin Wall and the victory of the market economy over the communism and the planned economy; Grillo and Nanetti contrast two models of economies, one representing the West and the other the East; the economies considered are Italy and China.

Italy is one of the liberal democracies that emerged after the Second World War and was one of the founding states of the ECSC, Euratom and EEC, the three communities that generated the European Union, supporter of rights, of the free market and the rule of law; Italy is seen by the authors as the quintessence of the economic decline of the entire West.

China, on the other hand, is considered one of the few planned economies still existing in the world that has experienced extraordinary growth in the last few decades; it does not have a universal democratic system for the election of its government forces, but has been able to distribute wealth to its population by observing an increase in per capita income of over a hundred times compared to the sixties of the last century; moreover, the Chinese citizen has increased his life expectancy, net of illnesses, so as to overtake that of the US citizen⁸.

There are many factors that explain this prodigious rise: the level of the population that approaches over 1 billion and 300 million people; the powerful technological comeback; the social cohesion of the Chinese people due to its glorious past history and also to the less glorious recent history, combined with a desire for redemption for the return of Greater China; the shared values of an authoritative culture with over five thousand years of history; awareness of cultural roots and national pride of the population; every year China produces more than 1 million engineers; the efforts aimed at a rapid geopolitical and geo-economic stance; a few years ago, China brought the Yuan into the IMF's basket of currencies; for almost a year it has begun to list oil futures independently; moreover, it has opened its own international financial rating agency, Dagong (the translated term means: "Great deal"); the great impact on international trade due to particularly favorable bilateral treaties within the WTO; the global strategy of economic and commercial leadership called the "Belt and Road Initiative" (The new Silk Road); massive investments throughout the West and in Africa.

It is also necessary to point out that China is not in itself a model for the rest of the world, especially for the West, since it presents various critical points like civil and social rights and, sometimes, there is no respect for reciprocity in some types of foreign relations; we cite:

- the program of social control of citizens, for which, at the time of birth, each citizen is given a score and penalties for worsening this (for example, inability to access certain jobs, inability to leave Chinese territory and more);
- foreign direct investments in China, although they are very attractive to companies, since the Chinese market is immense, on the other hand entail significant sacrifices such as, for example, the fact that the Chinese government is required to make members of the foreign multinational , Chinese entrepreneurs or companies (Sino-foreign Joint Venture Law), with implicit transfer of know-how and technology of the companies themselves.

the consequent looser protection of intellectual property is a considerable difference compared to European standards.

The increase in China's negotiating capacity in the WTO (World trade organization), combined with the vast majority of bilateral trade agreements compared to the multilateral ones, make it clear that there are different conditions for the different partner countries.

China, with its Belt and Road Initiative, has established a type of foreign trade and cooperation policy that aims to penetrate economically, and therefore, with increased contractual capacity, by means of massive strategic infrastructure investments (thanks to the powerful financial resources accumulated) in various parts of the world, obtaining in exchange pieces of their governance.

5. THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Considering the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church (SDCC) as a repository of affirmations relating to the social questions that the ecclesiastical magisterium has elaborated since the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of

⁷ Grillo F. e Nanetti R.Y., (2018), *Democracy and Growth in the Twenty-first Century- The Diverging Cases of China and Italy*, Palgrave McMillan

⁸ (<https://nova.ilsole24ore.com/infodata/la-cina-supera-gli-stati-uniti-anche-nelle-aspettativa-di-vita-in-salute/>).

Pope Leo XIII, and giving it the function of structuring the founding values of society, we need to understand if its values and suggestion can help us to configure a new type of interventions for the economies of the world. What are the terms that are explanatory of Christian sociological ethics that can be assumed in economics? The moment we retrace them we can understand how the Magisterium of the Church and its intervention in civil society throughout Europe has been and continues to be a foundation for European civilization and also for Western thought in general. Let's see some terms of SDCC: subsidiarity; the first form of the principle of subsidiarity was anticipated in the encyclical "Rerum Novarum" in paragraphs 36 and following of Pope Leo XIII in 1891 and is then elaborated in the encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno" by Pope Pius XI in 1931; solidarity: it is an essential concept of Christianity and the SDCC; we can see it applied to the economy in the 1991 encyclical "Centesimus Annus" by Pope John Paul II, precisely in the Centenary of the "Rerum Novarum"; gift and benevolent justice; represent the foundations of the civil economy which will be discussed below; nevertheless the gift was manifested even in other cultures in ways that have varied according to the times. It is a fundamental aspect of the economic paradigm that is intended to be proposed, because can be one of the keys to solving the problems afflicting the world; the Church has repeatedly pronounced itself in favor of the gift in the economy and in relations: we recall the heartfelt appeals for the cancellation of debts of Third World countries. The gift is opposed to the exclusive exchange; indeed we need an inclusive and non-exclusive economy because it is true that we must give everyone their own based on social justice, but we must not forget that justice alone is not enough because we run the risk of turning into justicialism, and then the economy of the gift counterbalance the excesses of inequalities. So the gift is added and does not replace justice. For the economist: instead of looking for the excellent Paretian (iustitia), he should be looking for Pareto improvements;⁹ property right, an important aspect of the encyclical "Rerum Novarum" of Leo XIII. Property is described in it as fundamental for human freedom and for the social function it can perform, it is also be incorporated in Article 42 of the Italian Constitution, indirectly recalled by Article 17 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (CDFUE), and by art. 345 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), as well as from various judgments of the Court of Strasbourg; work and salary dignity; they are the basis of human dignity and also an essential part of substantial human freedom; are expressed and illustrated in the encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno" by Pope Pius XI. It would be desirable to move from a wage type participation to an association for socialisation of profits, in which all workers were co-owners of companies; dignity of all as human persons; in particular the poor and the excluded as sanctioned by the "Rerum Novarum" of Leo XIII; peace, social justice and human rights; these concepts being founders of the same magisterium of the Catholic Church, appear transversally in all social encyclicals; society and its structures (culture, economy, law, arts, science, etc.); to the widest extent we can consider the encyclical of Pope John Paul II "Veritatis splendor" to be illuminating; one could obtain a definition of "beauty" so desired by numerous philosophers; beauty, indeed, as the splendor of truth; His appeal to the evangelization of culture as part of the New Evangelization is famous in order to announce the Gospel to contemporary man; development; in 1987 Pope John Paul II with the encyclical "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis" in paragraphs 28 and 29 states that development is to be understood not as continuous and mechanistic economic growth, so that one becomes happy by increasing the possession of goods or by replacing them continuously, but rather through a vision of man as a whole considering also its inner parameter, that is its spirituality, even including other aspects like environment, peace, quality of social and cultural life and well-being; all this was anticipated by the Club of Rome with the volume on the limits of development, even though it had a clear function of preventing economic and other crises¹⁰; environment; "Laudato si' " the encyclical of Pope Francis leads us to reflect on various aspects concerning ecology and the environment; Pope Francis lead us to the awareness that creation has been made for man and since man is also nature, so he is part of it and for this reason he cannot disregard its care and must be held responsible for his custody for future generations.

6. CIVIL ECONOMICS

The problem of linking morals, ethics with the economy has always been present in history. Incidentally, the difference between morals and ethics is generally stated, where the first is the theoretical part of the principles that guide human behavior and the relationships that exist between men, the second is its practical and applicative aspect; the SDCC Compendium in paragraph 331 states: *"The relation between morality and economics is necessary, indeed intrinsic: economic activity and moral behaviour are intimately joined one to the other. The necessary distinction between morality and the economy does not entail the separation of these two spheres but, on the contrary, an important reciprocity"*¹¹. Historically we can see that there is a principle of Greek philosophy that concerns the foundations of social action: Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics*

9 Zamagni S., *Diseguaglianze e giustizia benevolente*, 2012 n.3, AICCON Ricerca, Bologna

10 Donella H. Meadows [and others]. (1972). *The Limits to growth; a report for the Club of Rome's project on the predicament of mankind*. New York :Universe Books

11 PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, (2005), *Compendium Of The Social Doctrine Of The Church*, paragraph 331, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City

holds that ethics and politics - which is the public space where human action is manifested - are interconnected. Later with the coming on of economic science, the hierarchy of the three traditional magisteria that inform economic activity is structured as follows: ethics, that is the realm of values; politics, that is, the realm of ends; the economy, that is the realm of means.

In 1829, there was a new interpretation of them: Richard Whately, economist, logician, theologian, professor of the University of Oxford and Anglican archbishop, introduced the principle known as NOMa, that is, Not Overlapping Magisteria¹², with the intention of affirming that if the economy had wanted to be a science, it would have had to emancipate itself from ethics and politics, so that there could no longer be the traditional hierarchy of magisterias (ethics, politics and economy), but this hierarchy had to be undermined and reorganized into watertight compartments; nowadays we have arrived at a reversal of the pyramid, at the top of which there is now the economy that dictates the laws to politics and creates a new ethics (a new religion), in which the economy itself predominates according to the logic of profit. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the present day all economists (at least the whole Mainstream, with the exclusion of a few) have adapted to this principle which is summarized in the saying "The business of business is business" which Milton Friedman has made his own through a quote he says: "There is only one responsibility for business: to use its resources to engage in activities to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game"¹³.

This situation is the fundamental cause of inequalities and social injustice present in society. The fact of having built an exclusive system generates fear of not succeeding in having access to resources and being expelled from society; this produces devastating effects on man, because he deludes himself to create a just and holy society without God and without the sanctity of man, but only by introducing parameters of rationality and technoscience, running the risk of producing perverse effects on himself and on today's and future society.

An answer to these problems could be given by the Civil Economics based on the values of Christian social doctrine; an evolution of the same Civil economics as imagined by Antonio Genovesi who held the first chair of Economics in the world at the University of Naples in 1754 where he will give his Civil Economics Lessons.

Why Civil Economics? From an etymological point of view we understand how civil derives from the Latin *civis* "citizen" and *civitas* "city" which seems very similar to the "political" attribute of the political economy that derives from the Greek *politikos* "citizen" and *polis* "city", typical of the Anglo-Saxon world; what is the difference then? The Greek *polis* was not inclusive, in fact it was divided into social classes (slaves, metics, birth citizens who were the only ones called to take part in the political life of the city¹⁴); instead, the Roman *civitas* was inclusive for foreigners: an example for all is that of St. Paul who was forced to invoke his Roman citizenship when he was about to be scourged in prison following a scuffle hatched by some of his opponents (Acts of the Apostles Chapter 22 verses 22 to 29).

According to Genovesi, as well as to Smith (who held the chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow), the same market was civil, as it had an emancipatory and freedom function as well as a regulator, because it connected people. In fact, the Neapolitan economist combined three fundamental elements for the wealth of a state: civic virtues or morality, that is mutual respect between people and respect for the common good¹⁵, substantially this constituted a good relationship between associates, man being unhappy without; public faith, that is trust as the basis for the negotiation activity, derived from the fact that everyone works for the common good, trust derives from the effective practice of civic virtues (this is a valid concept also for other economic paradigms, and in particular for liberalism, since without trust there cannot be the contract that is the basis of exchanges in the market; in liberalism, trust is placed in the individual as contracting party and not in the common good deriving from good relationships); economic progress; it is the logical consequence of economic actions inspired by these principles.

The unifying element for Genovesi was the interest that drives man to action; however the interest was for the Aristotelian *eudaimonia*, that is the happiness consequent to a good life that sprang from the practice of civic virtues; in fact, for Genovesi it was the public faith that created social relations, which resulted in the economic ones of the market (to paraphrase it could be said that the absence of corruption and the respect of civic and civil rules in a society is a source of economic development) ; for Smith it was worth the opposite assumption, he affirmed that it was the market that fostered social relations that were marked by individual utilitarianism.

Therefore, for Smith the main purpose of economic action is the satisfaction of personal interest, while for

12 See the article by the economist Stefano Zamagni which appeared in *Avvenire* where he comments on a new document entitled 'Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones' of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and of the Dicastery for the Integral Human Development Service and illustrates the scientific and historical developments of the NOMa principle <https://www.avvenire.it/opinioni/pagine/verso-una-nuova-finanza-il-cammino-ora-segnato> (in Italian)

13 Friedman M. (1970). The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits. *The New York Times Magazine*, pp.173-178

14 Sabine G.(1937) , *A history of political theory*, pp. 3-4, Henry Holt and Company, New York

15 AA.VV Dizionario di economia civile, voce Genovesi Antonio, Città Nuova, Roma (in Italian)

Genovesi is the happiness that comes from correct and respectful interpersonal relationships. In essence, according to him there is a need for the community.

Let us analyze what were the fruits of the Western economic system based on a liberalistic economy, even if, at times, with social corrections, and in particular, coming to our days in which an even more in-depth liberalism denoted by the prefix *neo-*.

The fundamental aspect is the problem of access to markets that becomes prohibitive for those who have no income; in turn, income can be produced through the remuneration of factors of production; for the vast majority of individuals it is work; for access to work, it is necessary to compete both in terms of knowledge, of salary and of negotiating capacity. The terminology for competition was coined ad hoc: free competition, merit, rewarding, performance, evaluation; the motto of this competitive condition could be "*Homo homini lupus*" by Thomas Hobbes.

Capitalism has provided the structuring basis for this condition; from the socio-economic point of view, by distinguishing between those who own the capital and the means of production and those who can only sell their work; this great division has structured the society of the last two centuries, creating a mode of survival of the same capitalism that is based on the category of commodity: something that is suitable to be exchanged; the category of goods, in the last two centuries, has increasingly expanded both due to the entry of new goods (produced thanks to the advancement of technology), but mainly thanks to the commodification of things that were previously considered as non-exchangeable. It has reached the point of considering legitimate to exchange even what was explicitly forbidden before; even what was hardly emancipated from the status of a commodity (for example, work without protection).

Consumerism has helped to create a false sense of freedom and independence, so over time the idea of doing everything without the help of others has grown, developing individualistic attitudes that have tarnished communities and the sense of belonging to the the same society and the institutions; moreover, made people believe that the choices regarding consumption could be taken even in the absence of value judgments since the market replaced men to decide the lawfulness of exchanges and the objects of exchange; thus the market has become a religious substitute and has become an institution that creates forms of guided choices, removing market participants from the hindrance of attributing a value and moral indicator to the exchange actions that take place in it.

Psychologically this has led to a form of mass alienation whereby the associates no longer ask themselves whether it is right or wrong to participate in exchanges, with consequent delegation to impersonal subjects or objects; unfortunately, the abdication of contemporary man from critical thinking, reinforced by a misunderstood perception of freedom, has led to a pathogenic society. Individualism, fueled by personal passions and desires, and by a market that creates artificial needs for consumers, has made contemporary man more and more isolated, so that social contacts become more and more exchange and communication without relationship, and the culture of waste and throw-away becomes a fundamental part of contemporary thought, with all the stubborn consequences.

Man is a social being because he cannot do without others; he is dependent on others at various times in his life; he needs a family, an education, an organization of social and community life; the community is superordinate to the individual as the family precedes the children;

Capitalism, on the other hand, needs people who are disconnected, isolated, and therefore undermines community relationships and needs to tear them apart and possibly dismember them. From the destruction of the community comes the individual, alone and fearful, to whom nothing remains but to compete; Hence the *homo oeconomicus* which is the foundation and the hope of today's neoliberal economic system.

We observe that capitalism has operated: destroying emotional and community relationships (the family in the first place); undermining the formation of men with autonomy of thought (educational systems with increasingly growing critical thinking problems); destroying professional stability; weakening the national state to overturn the pyramid of ethics, politics, economy (deregulation, privatization); making democracy less authoritative ("Markets will teach how to vote").

Basically, with capitalism we find ourselves facing an anthropology that is aimed at maintaining the established order that favors the dehumanization distancing man from God; also communism, in parallel, promoted an anthropology of its own that aimed to destroy every human connection with religion.

We can say that in communism we saw an atheistic doctrinal and institutional humanism, while in capitalism we can speak of atheistic values and behavioral humanism, both with the common aim of distancing man from God, promoting dysfunctional modes in human behavior and creating a rift with the profound nature of man which is a divine nature.

When the economic system excludes and does not include, it generates social aberrations; The central aspect to keep in mind is that the economy - thanks to its essential function of procuring the means for life - incorporates all the values and needs of man, just as Maslow's pyramid makes us observe: in other words, in order to satisfy the needs of a higher order, it is necessary to satisfy those of a lower order: but when the market fails, and fails precisely in primary needs (such as food, security, housing, income, etc.), it generates different negative reactions in the individual, but in the sphere of the quality of life. It would seem to have to say that today more than ever we must evangelize the economy, bringing those seeds of justice, of solidarity, of gift, of joy that if sown they can soon become shining trees where the birds of the sky find shelter.

8. CONCLUSION

Both systems taken as a reference point unfortunately have in common the fact of not guaranteeing social justice both in freedom and economic terms, as there are large pockets of deprivation in the West and in the East and human rights are often threatened by regimes borderline with totalitarianism. Another notable factor is that once again the triad of "ethics, politics, economics" comes into play and it is clearly seen that in both systems the ethical aspect influences their outcomes.

Can we consider this situation of social injustice as illustrative of the ways in which the world works from an economic point of view? Probably yes. What are the "natural" ethical conditions and for which neither governments nor peoples imagine alternative situations? The answer could be given by the fact that since ancient times in common experience and even in modern history in economics - starting from the physiocrats and mercantilism - the feeling of dominance and competition have been shown in relevant episodes of economic and non-economic history. All this cannot be ignored. It is also true that we have reached a point where the sustainability of economic and human systems is strongly questioned with great risks both for human life and for the health of the planet on which we live. Signs of unsustainability are visible: it would seem there are crises on a global scale that converge towards a specific time of outbreak: demographic crises¹⁶, economic and resource crises (Club di Rome), climatic one¹⁷, but above all the ethical and moral ones.

What to do to activate sustainable development on a global level, which is fair for the populations and cultures?

We can say that globalization must not become a new form of colonialism, but should respect men and the different cultures of the world.

From the economic point of view, all the men of the earth should be guaranteed access to the market; this would certainly be very desirable also for companies; all this raises another issue: it is necessary to ensure education and vocational training for everyone, so as to give them access to the world of work which, in turn, would provide the income to participate in the markets.

From the civil economics perspective, the work ethic's should be anchored to the idea of person, and the latter to that of society, so that the contribution of man to the common good through his work (which must not be alienating or destructive), would correspond to his free initiative of doing good to others, a high vocation inscribed in his conscience. The inclusiveness of the economy passes through the consideration of the relational aspects present in the human person; unfortunately these aspects have never been considered by the Mainstream economics, for which only the individual and rationality has been enough: in fact, this is *Homo oeconomicus*.

By inserting relationality, the common good, the gift and fraternity in the economic paradigm, we could rekindle an engine of true development that respects man and nature: the theoretical means, the possible paradigms of the circular economy, sustainability enablers and technology to implement them are within our reach when not already a reality: we need the political transition to achieve them, but we ought to remember that our values, our culture and our education must be meaningful and compatible with the paradigm of civil economy, which represents a concrete possibility to reverse the direction that all humanity is following.

It is important to reconsider the role of private companies, since they are not to be considered as structures that take advantage of the resources (human, natural, financial) of the nations by plundering them, nor should they be seen as means to make easy profits, but they must be appreciated for what indeed they can be, that is, catalysts and collectors of social and economic development. Here too a cultural and ethical capital is needed to be created and disseminated and an effective fight against corruption is essential.

It is a new anthropology, a new humanism, a cultural and ethical palingenesis that is necessary at a planetary level to be able to respond to challenges with efficacy and sustainability, or even with resilience - for those who think that sustainability it is not an option anymore, like Dennis Meadow-; man the center and end of the economic and social system.

On the macroeconomic side, this means that rules are needed to be shared and accepted as much as possible among all market participants: we must move from a pure market economy to a civil market economy where even those who do not have the immediate possibility of access to them, are not excluded from the economic logic that is to guarantee the means for the satisfaction of needs, especially those of the weakest people who live the dimensions of sickness, suffering, disability, unemployment, poverty and, above all today, inequality.

Another task have the intermediate bodies and the third sector. Intermediate bodies can be defined as institutions that become exponential bodies of specific categories of people who find themselves united by the same problems to be solved and the Third sector can be seen as the means by which these problems with the help of the State and the free market, can be solved. We would implement what Hegel said: "The State as a community of communities". In particular, organizations could be imagined departing from a wage-type participation, and passing to an associative type of participation where co-ownership shares on the

16 <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>

17 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/11/1026691>

activities carried out and on the generated resources.