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The Christian ethics of socio-economic development promoted by the Catholic Social Teaching

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Abstract: This paper highlights the relationship between economic science and Christian moral in order to analyze the idea of socio-economic development promoted by the Catholic Social Teaching (CST). In the first period leading up to the Second Vatican Council (1891-1962), from Pope Leo XIII to Pope John XXIII, the idea of development was connected both to technical and industrial progress, and to the universal values of justice, charity, and truth, which national communities were asked to follow. During the Conciliar period (1962-1979), the concept of development assumes a social and economic dimension, and so it becomes one of the main pillars of Catholic Social Teaching, which introduces the earliest definition of integral human development. Ultimately, in the post-Conciliar phase (1979-2009) including Benedict XVI's pontificate, the idea of integral human development reaches its maturity by incorporating the complexity of real-world economic interactions. Finally, this paper shows how the ethics bolstered by the Catholic Social Teaching is characterized by two distinct but complementary lines of thought: moral rules for both political action, and for socio-economic issues.

Keywords: integral human development, personalist economics, non-neutrality of economic theory

Introduction

This work is an investigation on the relationship between moral philosophy and economic science, and in particular it aims to analyze the relationship between

contemporary Catholic ethics and socio-economic development. The present study analyzes the concept of development both for the richness and ferment of the Catholic world's reflection on this issue, and for the opportunity to apply the results to a wide spectrum of socio-economic phenomena. However, the comparison with the religious ethics requires a preliminary discussion because of the reach of ethics as objective and normative. In fact, authors such as Sen, Etzioni, and Hirschman try to construct an "ethical" economic theory, which extends and reformulates the position of neoclassical economics. The reflection that the economy depends on morality brings us directly to the problem of non-neutrality, as was posed by Robbins (1932), by Myrdal (1958) and more recently by Mongin (2006). Concerning the subject of development, economic science has long made the leap from quantitative surveys to more complex analysis (see, among others, Bucciarelli and Giulioni 2011). This contemporary approach is certainly a fertile ground and offers a useful setting for comparison with the religious sphere.

The topic is mainly approached in the documents of Catholic Social Teaching (hereinafter we refer to it as CST) [1]. Pope Pius XI directly approaches the relationship between ethics and economics in these terms: "[...] Even though economics and moral science employ each its own principles in its own sphere, it is, nevertheless, an error to say that the economic and moral orders are so distinct from and alien to each other that the former depends in no way on the latter." (QA 42) So that, our analysis is guided by a double track reflection which arises from the same historical and philosophical path:

- 1) the current issues of development, and underdevelopment, mainly the issue of poverty and social justice;
- 2) the concept of development, and before that of progress, both in abstract terms - of not cyclical history - and in concrete terms related to economic and social life.

The study opens with an introduction to the context in which our analysis is conducted. Subsequently, attention is paid to the influence on the formation of the Christian concept of development by the Bible and philosophy. In particular three stages of philosophical elaboration can be identified. The first one is the so called Pre-Vatican II (1891-1962). At this stage, development is seen as reflected in the international dimension of the principles of justice, truth and love, to which national communities are subjected. The second is the Vatican period (1965-1978), during which development becomes the major theme, whose scale in

the society reaches its maximum extension from the individual to the world community through the definition of integral human development. Third is the Post-Vatican II phase (1978-2009), in which the concept of integral human development was expanded and placed in a global context.

More specifically, it is possible to detect two lines of thought: the first begins with the encyclical *Rerum novarum*, passing through the documents of Pius XI, Pius XII, and John XXIII, and then these concepts are found in John Paul II; the second begins with the constitution of *Gaudium et spes*, going through the *Populorum progressio*. This study thus proposes a definition of the Christian concept of development which consists of three elements: a matter of contingent character, a matter of personal concern, and a matter of relational potentials (rather than individual).

This study is positioned in a threefold framework: general, masterly and specific. The general framework consists of literature on the relationship between Catholicism and economic studies. In reviewing this literature, the issue of development remains a side question, as in the analysis carried out by Hobgood (1991), and the contribution of the Jesuit Calvez (1994). Nevertheless, there is no lack of critical positions on the social teaching, such as those of Roux (1967), Filoramo (2007) and Oslington (2008). The masterly framework consists of substantial literary commentary on the social teaching. The main reference of this study is the publications *a latere* of the encyclicals. The work of Biffi (1991) *Centesimus annus* falls, for example, within this field of research. The spread of this encyclical has awakened a number of new studies, among which there are Berthouzoz, Papini and Sugranyes de Franch (1994). Summaries and documentation of the social teaching may be included in this strand: the work of Chenu (1977), Langlois (1987), updated and reissued on the occasion of the *Caritas in veritate*, and Barucci and Magliulo (1996). The specific framework on the relationship between social teaching and development is less explored. These are contributions with a theological nature, as in the case of collection of Land (1971) or the work of Cosmai, Church and the Development of Peoples (1983). These texts provide many insights into the implicit premises in the social teaching, particularly on the Sacred Scripture and the Patristics.

Methodological questions: relationship between economics, ethics and religion

The aim of this section is to outline in which relationship between ethics, religion and economics, our analysis takes place. The dialogue between religion and economics is greater the larger the space offered by economic theory to the role of ethics. The relationship between ethics and economics has been well detailed by Amartya Sen in his book *On Ethics and Economics* (1987). In particular, Sen highlights two sources of economic science, "moral" and "engineering", and shows how the second obscures the first. Moreover, the positive economy has come to escape a series of ethical problems that years later put findings about human behavior into a critical position. This first consideration concerns the influence of ethics on human behavior. The second consideration is related to the non-neutrality of economic theory itself. The economist Karl Gunnar Myrdal is the most critical toward the engineering approach of economic science: the moral evaluations cannot be left solely in the choice of purposes. The choice of the means employed to achieve them is itself an ethical choice (Myrdal 1969). It fails therefore the so-called *Hume's law* on value-freedom, according to which we cannot derive evaluative conclusions from factual premises (Barrotta 2003). Economists more sensitive to social problems consider value-free economics, which is independent from ethics, inadequate in the scientific understanding of economic analysis (Zamagni 1989).

What is the relationship between economics and religion? Most scholars working at the intersection of economics and theology take great pride in a rational affirmation of capitalism and thus glorify the path to progress and hold an unshakeable faith in the power of the market to solve problems. But this is usually coverage for a lack of consensus among economists, mainly in the last thirty years and recently also for a lack of a vision and proper economic thinking moving towards the idea of human development. Eschewing the binary logic that characterizes both conservative and liberal perspectives, we refer to a unique redeeming vision of the so called dismal science, investigating not only human development as a crucial quantitative topic, but also as a relational phenomena.

Luigi Einaudi proposed a simplification of the market through the image of the *village fair*: it could not exist if there were no vendors in addition to a number of institutions including "[...] the priest who recalls the duties of a good

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Christian, one must not forget these duties even at the fair" (Einaudi 1958). This quotation tracks well the marginal role often delegated to religion by economic theory: that of a technical instrument for social obligation and responsibility (Hirsch 1981). However, there are significant contributions which track in the Catholic religion the origin of many modern economic concepts, rejecting the idea that capitalism is of Protestant origin as argued by Max C. E. Weber (Stark 2005). In this regard, Paul Oslington (2008) states that: "[...] if we accept Robert Nelson and John Milbank's thesis, whole economy is ultimately a religion, then the religious contribution becomes dominant."

The idea of development in the Christian tradition

The link between the Christian vision of development and Holy Scriptures is one of the implicit premises of Christian arguments. Goods and human values are returned and proposed in the so-called "economy of salvation" (Falvo 2006).

The concept of development in the Old Testament

From a philosophical point of view, the idea of development, that is non-cyclical history, has been introduced by the monotheistic religions. Unlike the conception of the classical world, the *Weltanschauung* of Jew-Christians is confronted with unique events by their nature, laying the basis of a one-way path in history which also gives an idea of progress (Henrici 1972). Philosophy of history was inspired by the secularization of the Christian doctrine of salvation, in which the concept of progress plays a central role (Löwith 1965). Löwith's thesis is that the idea of progress is absent in the Greek-Roman world. Aristotle refers to the infinite accountability of time in Physics [2], but there is no other track in his philosophy. The term progress is also present in the Stoic vocabulary, but it refers to the individual and has no social or political connotations. Such a connotation is found in Lucretius, however, he considers the progress as random and, in the last line, unsuccessful: *ex nihilo nihil fit* [3] (Henrici 1972). This hermeneutic conception is fundamental in the Conciliar social teaching and it refers to the method of numinous exemplarism developed by the Patristic doctrine. Contrary to what happens in Lucretius, in the book of Genesis next to the eschatological component also appears that moral. To this must be added the possibility of a eschatological reading starting from the idea

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of renewal, linked to the Löwith thesis, by Isaiah: "I will create new heavens and a new earth and past things will not be remembered." [4]

Christian ethics traces the source of the moral and vocational nature of development in the book of Genesis: the development is the search for realization of human possibilities. Indeed the vision of development in the Old Testament is already characterized by the centrality of man, in fact it is reflected in Abraham's history. The promise made by God to the patriarch in order to give him numerous descendants (Gen. 22:17) reveals the role of man in the Jewish religion: there is no desirable prosperity without humanity. To this must be added many indications of a socio-economic nature contained in the Old Testament, particularly the reference to the demands of justice. Here the justice-poverty duo is introduced. Summarizing, the Old Testament concept of development can be described by a prophetic moral double-track:

- 1) The social needs and related requirements dictated by justice, which will be one of the first pillars formalized by contemporary social teaching;
- 2) The prophetic vision of growth and prosperity of the chosen people.

This double track is an important prerequisite for understanding the definition-identity of development by Paul VI, in which the contingent and the theological data are combined.

The idea of development in the New Testament

Hitherto the moral imperative of development does not have substantial differences with the concept common to modern philosophy and related to the Kantian imperative. Things change with Christianity. In fact, the Kantian perspective of the political transformation opposes "[...] to a static human depravity an equally static practical reason" (Henrici 1972), while Christianity does not relegate man to one of two positions, virtue or depravity. The Christian message indeed has a dynamic vision of the progress achieved by the introduction of the moral "conversion". Leonardo Becchetti (2009) has proposed an interesting comparison between the concepts of *sympathy* and *commitment* expressed by Sen (1987) and the concept of conversion found in St. Paul. The individual who observes the precepts without understanding them is like the individual who obeys to a *moral commitment*. The individual converted instead follows the "commandment of love" by acceding to it completely and therefore changes the

structure of preferences, as in the case of *sympathy* described by Sen. This can happen only through a recognition of his relational nature, that is considering the entire human family. The Gospel commandment "Love one another" [5] in this sense has two fundamental features:

- 1) The quality of Christian euergetism goes beyond the mere indication of "doing good" replacing it with the love of "brotherly love";
- 2) The universality of the Christian euergetism: it not only helps someone in need, the Roman *cives* or the Jewish compatriot, but every man (Grossi 1988).

The issue of poverty is a distinguishing feature. It should be observed that the Gospel does not condemn economic wealth as such, but because they expose human consciousness to the danger of selfishness [6]. For Christians, Jesus is not condemning the rich man in hell and consoling the poor, while leaving the latter in poverty (Giaquinta 1977). In conclusion, the social and prophetic double-track of the Jewish tradition is thus transformed:

1. In the prophetic component the aim becomes the coming kingdom of God on Earth and the fulfilment of divine will;
2. In the social component regulatory signs become instrumental to the attainment of bliss, as described in the famous "sermon on the mount" in the pages of the Gospels (Mt 5, 1-12 and Lc 6, 20-23).

Lastly, in the New Testament the theme of peace is enhanced by an eschatological connotation: it is the reunion of men with the love of the Father. The subsequent definition of Pope Paul VI, "development is the new name for peace" (PP 87), should be read in this context in order to fully understand its moral strength.

Patristics

Even in the Christian Fathers' thought, there exists a social dimension although it has not yet a public repercussion: "The early church [...] has no intention of changing in the sense of Christianity the sort of this world." (Campenhausen 1953) Instead, these considerations become prominent from the Fourth century onwards, when Christianity became the religion of the empire. The concept of development is elaborated through the method of the divine exemplarity. In Irenaeus of Lyons, the progressivity has thus a pedagogical reason: "[...] all that is created must have a beginning, a middle stage and maturity." [7]. In these

terms we find the development in the Greek Patristic sources, none other than "every creature has grown, it still develops and progresses continuously towards its best existence." [8] To transpose these statements into a program of progress we must admit that the expansion of the kingdom of God becomes, as mentioned previously, immanent in the history (Henrici 1972). Moreover, Henrici highlights the intergenerational character of the concept of progress.

In legal studies the principle *in dubio melior est condicio possidentis* is commonly accepted, which could be translated as a defending of the *status quo*. In this sense the position of the Christian Fathers is carrier of new prospects. As noted by Fuchs, this is the shift from a static to a dynamic perspective (1972). When the early Fathers of the Church speak about the obligation of charity they do it in terms of "duties of the rich" and "rights of the poor": God has given the goods to be distributed equally among individuals. So that the rich are obliged to voluntarily distribute through charity their surplus to the poor (St. Basil 1976). St. Gregory the Great (1965) in *Pastoral Rule* says: "Give the necessary to poor is a return of what is due and not a donation. [...] The reason is that the gift of God must be useful to the whole community." [9] Later, Paul VI will assume this topic with the words of St. Ambrose: "You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his [...]" (PP 23).

Thomistics

Among the contributions to Christian ethics one cannot ignore the influence of natural philosophy, which has the advantage of allowing the social teaching to overcome its confessional constraints. The first contribution of natural philosophy is certainly detectable in the use of the practical syllogism in moral analysis. This allows the formulation of an ethics of *first person*, unlike modern ethics from Hobbes onward, which adopts an external perspective to the problem (Abba 1989). The role of natural philosophy is, according to Thomas Aquinas, to lead man to his best achievement [10] because he is capable of "becoming all things" [11].

The Thomistic contribution is the basis of several principles that form the centrepiece for the construction of integral human development. In particular, integral human development owes the personalistic principle to Thomas Aquinas. For St. Thomas, as for Aristotle, man is a social animal par excellence. He is thus relational [12] and his actions are always related to the lives of other men,

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“in societate vivere” [13]. This is an essential characteristic for the neo-Thomist and personalistic imprint of Maritain integral humanism. In the Thomistic vision law is aimed at achieving the common good [14]. The latter can also be superimposed on the integral character of development, because of its nature, the individual is called to the realization of the indispensable values, and therefore is not expendable to the political community (Vanni Rovighi 1992). According to St. Thomas Aquinas the common good is not an end in itself, on the wake of Aristotelian thinking about wealth [15]. It is a good that is pursued in the name of development, and therefore intermediate in relation to the achievement of human perfection.

Even the principle of justice, which is discussed in Christian social thought, must be understood according to the idea of justice of natural philosophy [16]. This definition, combined with the Patristic theory of “restitution to the poor”, establishes the core of social pre-Conciliar justice. However, St. Thomas also represented a reference point even from that part of the liberal thought. The so-called economic personalism, points out Thomistic positions support both property and human freedom. Hayek (1967), in the wake of Lord Acton, did not hesitate to call St. Thomas Aquinas, the first *Whig* in history.

Until the Thirties, this overview can be summarized with Mulder's correlations of the social teaching, with the natural law and the Sacred Scriptures: “The Catholic Social Teaching was presented as based on the Gospel and reason. It seems to me that, as regards the content, it was based mainly on natural law, while recalling the Gospel as inspiration and motivation.” (Mulder 1975) Until the revolutions of the Eighteenth century, any social action outside of a society based on Christianity would be unthinkable for Christians (Ruggeri 2009). Scientific revolution created a deep rift between Christian morality and progress. This gap is also reflected on the fledgling economic science, guilty of making a real “ascent to heaven” (Duchini 1989).

The concept of development in the pre-Conciliar Catholic Social Teaching

From Leo XIII to Pius XII

Rerum novarum (1891) has represented a real novelty for the relevance of its content (Balducci 1977). For the purposes of our analysis, the encyclical, which

is considered the foundation of the Catholic Social Teaching, can be divided into two main areas:

1. a realistic area that is characterized by the analysis of the historical situation of the proletariat and the indication of concrete solutions;
2. a moral one that is characterized by the proposal of general principles for action. In the latter area, the transformation of Christianity in the society is defined as "a true human progress".

The presence of the combination of progress and humanity is important for two reasons. First, it is a primary pacific approximation to progress, of which the ideological distance is known. Second, it represents an association that crosses the whole Catholic Social Teaching. In *Rerum novarum* the progress of nations is defined as "the search for better living conditions and the common good". From this definition two dimensions of the Christian concept of progress emerge (RN 27): 1. Every individual contributes directly or indirectly (participative progress). 2. Every individual receives his or her own benefits (improving progress). As suggested by Langlois, the moral conditions of progress can be derived by way of contrast from the critics of the existing disorders at that time (1987). The Pope considers poverty as a state issue and not as an inevitable condition. The argument of the encyclical (RN 7) is similar to that of Locke: "[...] everybody has a property in his person; but no one has the right at all, only at his [...] because of his work a man appropriates something on which other men have no right of common property." [17] As St. Thomas Aquinas [18] says, the right to private property is an extension of the rights which find their origin in the individual and they should be protected by authorities (Sirico 2001). The principles of fairness and justice, at the base of relations between capitalists and workers, are also suitable to be used by analogy in international relations between rich countries and developing countries. Free trade can be called just only when it conforms to the demands of social justice. Using the analogy again, the words of Leo XIII on the re-composition of conflicts can be read with reference to the international situation.

Pope Pius XI compares himself with an economic science by the discussion on the separation between economic activity and moral purpose (Robbins 1932). This distinction reopens the comparison of ideas between economic science and religious ethics. In fact, the pontificate of Pius XI arises in what Duchini (1989) rightly described as the "crossroads" of the exceeding of the market and the search for a new guiding principle for economy. With Pius XI the idea of

progress becomes a fully-fledged economic theme of the social teaching. Hence, it is possible to apply the concept of progress to that criterion of non-neutrality already used for economic studies (see, among others, Robbins 1932, Myrdal 1958, Mongin and Hausman 1998). The Pope read with deep concern the dominance of financial strength in global economic choices and in a society marked by the Great Depression of 1929: "It is obvious that not only wealth is concentrated in our times but an immense power and despotic economic dictatorship is consolidated in the hands of a few [...]." (QA 105-106). So that, the concept of progress remains rooted in reality. It does not characterize an abstraction, but a circumscribed process triggered by industrialization (Langlois 1987). Under Pius XI the Church overcomes the years of mistrust with the concept of progress due to the clash with French liberalism. Waterman (1986) questions if the social history of Christian thought would be different if the Church had met, on the contrary, English liberalism. Pius XI put in direct relation the distributive principle and the progress of society, facing in this way an issue of economic theory: the choice between the different distributions of goods. With regard to the institutional level, the encyclical introduces the principle of subsidiarity: "[...] the natural object of any action by the society is to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them" into the social teaching (QA 79).

John XXIII

John XXIII places the transformation of the social issue in international perspective: no longer rich and poor classes, but rather developed and underdeveloped countries. Thus, the doctrine faces socio-economic development questions (PT 59). In the encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, the Pope introduces the idea of integral human development, understood as a cultural and moral process of the individual. Here, integral human development is an independent concept of history and anticipates, but limited to the personal dimension, the future and extended definition of the integral development. The transposition of the doctrinal debate on the international stage has the effect of applying the principles of equality and solidarity to political communities. The Pope notes the profound interconnection of humanity as a place of recomposition of conflicts (MM 157). However, the redistribution of wealth is not sufficient to judge positively an economic system if it simultaneously undermines human dignity and the free exercise of initiative and responsibility (MM 83). Therefore,

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John XXIII also introduces the theme of ecology in the social teaching recognizing a relationship between population growth and the use of natural resources at the service of man (MM 183).

The second social encyclical of John XXIII is *Pacem in Terris*. The Pope places at the foundations of relations between States four general principles, which help shape a true "right to development". This is the first systematic organization of the Catholic Social Teaching on the subject (PT 52-56): the principles of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. However, these principles remain cryptic if not set into the dynamics of development, as the encyclical well shows. Regulating international relations according to the truth means first to renounce all forms of racism. On an international level, the principle of justice has as a result the right of communities to the specificity of their own development (PT 49). In particular, there emerges the concept of development as a gradual process (PT 7). The relation led by truth and justice must be vivified by solidarity. Faced with the international affair, the common good is also extended and redefined as the universal common good. The Pope stressed that the human family has a common origin and a common destiny. The latter is well understandable if one thinks of the Cold War period.

The concept of development in the Conciliar Catholic Social Teaching

Here below the evolution of the social teaching during the period of the Council is analyzed. During this period the concept of *integral human development* is settled, we chose to include in the period of the Council, which begins with the Second Vatican Council in 1962, and also the pontificate of Paul VI, which ends in 1978. This is followed by John Paul II (SRS 6).

Maritain and the personalism

Maritain's thought on "maturity" that goes from the Thirties to the Fifties, in particular on *Integral Humanism*, which derives from the homonymous opera of 1936, will form the basis of the concept of integral human development. The Council attests the interdependence between men's improvement and development of society that had been implicit in the teachings of John XXIII (GS 25). The Christian proposal is presented as an overcoming of liberal individualism and of

nationalist and collectivist socialism (Viotto 2009). The proposal by Maritain is primarily a "humanism of the Incarnation" (Maritain 1930), as opposed to totalitarian humanism. Integral humanism is the exploitation of man in terms of *anthropological and of axiological integration*, which is able to integrate the different concepts of man (Fornero and Tassinari 2002). At the core of the program of humanism is the passage from the individual to the person, understood as "a universe of a spiritual nature endowed with freedom of choice. Neither the nature nor the State can affect this universe without permission [...]" (Maritain 1937). Thomism, evident in this definition, has influenced the construction of the concept of *personality*: "[the human person] according to his imperfect condition participates in that transcendental perfection which is personality [...]" (Maritain 1947). Similarly the concept of development is linked to its supernatural character: "the man reaches his perfection supernaturally [...]" and "[The integral humanism] tends to reach the unity of man and to prepare him for the peace that passes all feelings" (Maritain 1930). In the Thomistic wake we can read the vision of the temporal common good, that is, with an intermediate and distinct value from the ultimate goal of the person (Maritain 1937).

The vatican has attacked the *Humanisme integral* [19]. Paul VI does not comply with the accusations and refers to them during the works Council (Bressan 2009). Today, misunderstandings of the Catholic world seem more a reservation about Maritain's dialoguing positions than on his philosophy. He is the man of dialogue par excellence: between theology and contemporaneity. Maritain is constantly referring to Thomas and is the best mediator between Catholic philosophy and contemporary secular philosophy (Abbagnano 1993). The dialogue is a form of respect for the dignity of those who do not accept the Christian truth (Maritain 1976). This means to allow the dialogue between the matter of contingent character with that transcendent one, without reducing spirituality in immanence. The influence of the Maritian themes is reinforced in the Council even through the proposal of the cardinal Wojtyla, future John Paul II, based on the "presence" of the Church in the world (Turbanti 2000).

Second Vatican Council

Integral human development is interpreted by the Conciliar Fathers in an active manner and therefore not exclusively historical. The importance of humankind

is put in direct relation to the economy, "[...] for man is the source, the centre, and the purpose of all economic and social life." (GS 63) The social teaching has always given an open interpretation of the common good, and the Council preserves this setting. This is included in the duality of the person and society. The common good is, "[...] the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment." (GS 26)

Gaudium et spes offers a series of profiles on the worldwide condition among which social inequalities between nations stands out. The consideration of the consequences of this condition is hugely modern: "[...] While a few enjoy very great power of choice, the majority are deprived of almost all possibility of acting on their own initiative and responsibility." (GS 63) The possibility of acting will certainly remind economists of the work of Amartya Sen, and his definition of capabilities in the theory of human development (Sen 1987). In deeply analyzing the concept of freedom contained in the Conciliar document "Only in freedom can man direct himself toward goodness [...]" (GS 17), but this does not mean that all means to achieve it are justified. *Gaudium et spes* does not renounce the idea of defining freedom based on life conditions. The principle of freedom is guaranteed by the principle of fairness that requires an equal distribution of wealth. Development must both serve humanity and be subject to its control. This leads to a number of implications to preserve the personalistic principle (Grillo 2010): the involvement of every person in the management of economic activities, the complaint of the obstacles impeding a fair distribution of goods, and, finally, the use of all the wealth for obtaining the common good. The first principle shows a clear democratic criterion for the conduct of economic life to be applied both at the European and international level (GS 65). The second involves all men in complaint as already performed by the Church, including even the social teaching. The third sets out clearly the principle of the universal destination of goods (GS 87).

Gaudium et spes addresses the problem of generational continuity, which today might be called a criterion of intergenerational sustainability preceding the best-known definition contained in the Brundtland Report by about twenty years [20] (GS 70).

Paul VI

Populorum progressio is entirely dedicated to the issue of development, and contains a number of innovations in its interpretation. On the analytical level, Paul VI identifies both the social and economic components of the phenomenon, (PP 6) fully recognizing the concept of socio-economic development: "[...] When we speak of development, we should mean social progress as well as economic growth." (PP 34) On the doctrinal level, the Pope outlines the basic concept of "integral human development": development is authentic only if it is addressed "[...] to promote the good of every person and of the whole man." (PP 13) The Pope mentions the Maritian's concept of integrity. In this way, the encyclical frees the concept of development from any reference to a particular historical period, rereading it under a moral profile. Paul VI says that "[...] every man is born to seek self-fulfillment, for every human life is called to some task by God." (PP 15) Thus, the foundations of the first definition-identity contained in *Populorum progressio* are settled. The three different meanings of development we encountered in the Catholic Social Teaching thus far are:

1. Individual: referred to the single individual as the achievement of his multiple dimensions (social, cultural, and spiritual);
2. General: referred to humankind called to be realized through the integral human development;
3. Historical: referred to contemporary society and its socio-economic imbalances.

If the identity of the first two terms is implicit in the concept of human development (GS 25), the equality of the last two is proposed in this way: "When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, [...] we are also furthering man's spiritual and moral development." (PP 76)

The Pope is aware that underdevelopment comes from many factors, first of all the differences in initial endowments of tangible and intangible resources; this was indeed the lesson of Lebret. Therefore, the encyclical gives a negative opinion on the international liberalism guilty of creating a competitive market, which rather than heal disparities between the countries accentuates them (Barucci and Magliulo, 1996). It is the fundamental principle of liberalism as a rule of trade that is blamed and indicted here, dealing with ethical business practices (Napoleoni, 1990). Such an opinion prevents naive optimism, but also pessimistic or nihilistic positions on technological and economic development

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(Bieler, 1970). Cardinal Poupard, direct witness of writing, recalls: "[...] To those who believe with that the Pope had entered among the critics of economic freedom, Paul VI said that it was necessary to pay attention to his words, because he criticized the profit defined as the key driver, the competition adopted as supreme law, and private property without limits or obligations." (Cubeddu 2002)

The proposal addressed to developed countries is not economic but ethical. The Pope points out three principles-duties as guide for development: "[...] 1. mutual solidarity, the aid that the richer nations must give to developing nations; 2. social justice, the rectification of trade relations between strong and weak nations; 3. universal charity, the effort to build a more humane world community where all can give and receive, and where the progress of some is not bought at the expense of others." (PP 44) Paul VI proposes a policy intervention, as recommended by post-Keynesian economic theory, to reduce imbalances between the resources employed adopting external intervention in market dynamics (Barucci and Magliulo 1996). Paul VI concludes that the path of development leads to peace (PP 77) and the path of peace passes through development (PP 83). This is the fulcrum of the second definition-identity of the encyclical, the one between peace and development with which the document concludes: "[...] Knowing, as we all do, that development means peace these days, what man would not want to work for it with every ounce of his strength?" (PP 87) After *Populorum progressio* Paul VI wrote two more openly social letters. In the first, the Pope refers indirectly to the Neo-Malthusian school of thought, mentioning the famous *Report on Limits to growth* [21] (HV 2). The second, *Octagesima adveniens*, recalls and deepens the critique of consumer society typical of hedonistic capitalism (Filoramo 2007). The Pope emphasized the need to replace the measures of efficiency and market with new ones that consider human relations (OA 41). Indeed, according to Paul VI the politics are "[...] a demanding manner - but not the only one - of living the Christian commitment to the service of others." (OA 46) *Octagesima adveniens* marks the abandonment of an economic-ethical approach in favour of an ethical and political one, which John Paul II will consider later. At the same time, economic theory is confronted with the unfulfilled promises of a speedy resolution of the North-South gap. The same Albert Hirschman (1983), one of the pioneers of development economics, wrote, "[...] the quiet confidence that our sub-discipline had performed in its early stages was in crisis [...]" The new Pope will be

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responsible for finding the broken promises about the solution of the global North-South division.

The concept of development in the post-Conciliar Catholic Social Teaching

In this section we will see how the concept of integral human development, introduced by Paul VI, has addressed the historical verification in the two decades following the *Populorum progressio*. Finally the analysis is concluded with the Magisterium of Benedict XVI which retraces and revises the Pauline encyclical introducing new elements.

John Paul II

In this phase, the development theme is at the heart of the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*. The tone is very different compared to that of *Populorum progressio* centered on a wish development, which had generated a climate of "advent".

However there is the observation that development still appears far away (SRS 4), and many of the hopes of Paul VI are disappointed. Pope Paul VI already in *Octagesima adveniens* shifted the attention to the role of politics. John Paul II turned his moral analysis on the politics of the past two decades: the causes of the lack of development are not only economic factors, but especially political ones underlying the so-called "political blocs". Consequently, the political matter is traced back to the real issue of moral order: the selfishness of individuals and nations and a chain of individual mistakes or structures of sin (SRS 10).

Political causes lie behind what the Pope calls the moral causes of underdevelopment, leading to the reversal of the scale of values in the relationship between ethics and economics, namely the affirmation of materialism in Christian humanism (Musu 1991). The violation of basic human rights always starts from a breach of the principle of human freedom in its different forms. As one looks at this passage, freedom becomes a measure of development and a principle in full agreement with Sen's theory of *development as freedom*, which states that "development requires removal of major sources of unfreedom." (Sen 1999)

The protection of the right to free enterprise versus the collectivist economic system raises the first point of criticism. A multifaceted criticism is also

extended to the capitalist system because the socialist conflict between citizens and the public apparatus is not different from that between workers and capitalists in the West. The Pope warns against the resurgence of a certain capitalist neo-liberalism, which subordinates the human person to blind market forces and conditions the development of peoples on those forces [22]. When nations and organizations are part of the free choice of procreation, demographic issues are revisited in terms of the violation of individual freedom, and thus constitute a new form of oppression (SRS 25).

The document focuses on the political analysis of underdevelopment. Without denying the complexity of the subject, the Pope sees a factor “not negligible” in the formation of two blocs, Soviet and Atlantic (SRS 20). Hence, the least developed countries have entered the “logic of blocs” and the “proxy war” (SRS 20). The latter final effect becomes the reason of condemnation for both economic systems. John Paul II moves from the recognition that development does not follow a linear criterion, as if it were the result of a mathematical function, to reject all purely mechanical and economic approaches. It is possible to outline a dual relationship between development and morals: development must not only be moral, in that it is guided by morality, but also a moral imperative (SRS 32). Now the stage is complete in order to introduce the theological and moral readings of the obstacles to development: “[...] Sin and structures of sin are categories which are seldom applied to the situation of the contemporary world, even if sin and structures of sin are unusual categories.” (SRS 36) There are essentially two structures of sin considered by John Paul II: the craving for profit and the hunger for power, both aimed to impose one's own will on others, and understood as absolute targets to be pursued “at any price” (SRS 37). The Pope identifies two key principles of authentic development: freedom and solidarity (SRS 33). The reflection on solidarity is a starting point to extend the principle of the universal destination of goods, not only to natural resources, but also to artificial goods (SRS 39). This principle constitutes a sort of “social mortgage” on all forms of private property. The final perspective is the creation of a new community that overcomes the biggest challenge to combine freedom and social justice, freedom and solidarity. [23]

The third social encyclical of John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, contains many suggestions on development. The common good that in the Leonine thesis was considered as a duty of the State, here becomes a right of the worker and of the person (Biffi 1991). The pope outlines the principle of freedom. Full freedom

and human development are an essential combination; in fact human development needs authentically free political orders. The encyclical adduces novelties also in the principle of the universal destination of goods, officially formalizing its extension to knowledge, technique, and learning (CA 32). Capitalism comes out of the cold war as a successful economic system, but the Pope remains on guard against new dangers, threats and the risks inherent in "free" market dynamics (CA 34). In that regard, the Pope proposes and compares two definitions of capitalism, one positive and one negative. Thus, the symmetry of judgments between socialism and capitalism, of which there is a good version, is loosened, and for the first time a Pontiff enhances the moral function of the firm, of the market, and of "capitalism rightly understood" (Felice 2009). As a consequence, the Pope does not hesitate to express a real *non licet* about foreign debt: it is not right for the Church to demand or expect payment when the effect would be the imposition of political choices leading to hunger and despair for entire populations (CA 35). The latter type of market, ethically unacceptable, can only have disastrous consequences, at least in the long term. It eradicates fundamental and common ethical and cultural values, and it risks creating "an anthropological void".

Benedict XVI

Pope Benedict XVI's *Caritas in veritate* allows the theologian Pope to recap and unite the Christological foundation of integral human development, covering the entire Church's social teaching (Grillo 2010). In John Paul II's arguments a sense of a verification of the past prevails, yet for Benedict XVI the present time is the point for "new future possible development" (CV 21). It is not surprisingly that Benedict XVI defines *Populorum progressio* as the "*Rerum novarum*" of the modern times (CV 8). The principle of "charity in truth" is indicated as the main driving force behind real development. In addition to the *dià-logos*, the Pope associates charity with the *chàris* [24] (grace). This allows gratuitousness and the logic of giving to enter into the moral line of the encyclical.

The common good comes down from loving each other: to love someone is to desire his own good. Nevertheless, as described by Jacques Maritain, the common good is the good of "all of us" which is the whole of humanity (CV 7). Pope Benedict XVI updates the principle of freedom by placing it in relation to responsibility. The main innovation of the period of Paul VI is represented by the explosion of globalization (CV 33). Faced with legal national orders

characterized by limited sovereignty, economic and financial actors that overcome national boundaries emerge. The development process partly coincides with the government of globalization, which requires the adoption of the principle of subsidiarity (CV 57) and solidarity simultaneously. The exclusion of the first leads to a dependency culture, the exclusion of the second to social particularism (CV 58). Benedict XVI, by updating, defines development as polycentric, consisting of actors and manifold causes. The pope makes a new reading of the Catholic Social Teaching reformulating it based on the principle of "charity in truth". The market economy cannot rest solely in the commutative justice, the exchange one, but also needs social justice and redistributive justice (CV 35). In fact, any human costs become economic costs and vice versa (CV 32): one cannot abandon economic activity and commercial logic, but it has to be driven by the logic of the common good. It is required of the market to create positions for firms, which pursue institutional purposes of mutualistic and social character different than those of the private and public sector: this is the first reference within social teaching to the cooperative enterprise. Such a "hybridization" of business conducts will cause a real civilization of the economy (CV 38). Gratuity is a basic concept for firms' activities and therefore for the whole economy. The gift is in fact an "exit from roles" that allows the economy to meet people and not functions (Becchetti 2010). Becchetti always stressed the importance of this to explain the empirical results found by Akerlof *et al.* (1988) on the fertility of the gift and achieved by Andreoni (1990) on the *warm glow*, that is the need for fraternity. Finally, Pope Benedict XVI indicates the bioethics as the crucial field of conflict between absolutization of technique and moral. The Pope did not hesitate to say that the contemporary social issue has become a radically anthropological question. Christian ethics can improve economics on the issue of its anthropological fundament, *i.e.* the idea of man (Zamagni 2007).

Concluding remarks

At the end of this study it is possible to trace the evolution of the concept of development within the Catholic Social Teaching, the guidelines within the moral theology, and the influences from the Patristic, Thomistic and the personalistic philosophy, as well as the relationship between CST and economic theory. Christian religion, and in particular Catholicism, reserves the task to explain how development occurs to economic theory. The pursuit of economic

objectives should be protected by a strict social morality, which today the system erodes rather than supports (Manzoni 2001). The Church's interest in development arises from human and ethical dimensions, which each development brings with itself. Moving from industrialization, the encyclical presents the first paradigm of interpretation: the search for better living conditions and the common good. Pius XII speaks for the first time in a radio message relating to economic development. Whereas John XXIII, by considering increasingly interdisciplinary areas, amplifies the considerations of his predecessors, dealing with the issue of socio-economic development. The Catholic concept of development begins to reach its independence ending with the formulation of integral human development by the Second Vatican Council. In this period there is a shift from the active paradigm of the *Gaudium et spes* to the proactive of the *Populorum progressio*. Such a Christian model is consolidated by the Magisterium of John Paul II to which falls the distressing historical verification of Paul VI's expectations. The concept finds a new perspective in the theological and pastoral works by Benedict XVI.

This study found inside the Magisterium two lines of thought, which can be defined as Leonine and Pauline. The Leonine line begins with Leo XIII, through the documents of Pius XI, Pius XII and John XXIII, finding itself in John Paul II. It has a social and political character, focusing on moral and historical analysis. The encyclical *Pacem in terris* is the contact point between the two *directices* [25]. The second line was opened with the Council document *Gaudium et spes*, which will have at core Paul VI's *Populorum progressio* defined as "the *Rerum novarum* of the contemporary age" [26], and comes to the *Caritas in veritate* by Benedict XVI. Pauline vein is characterized by economic and social issues, with a greater capacity for abstraction and conceptual definition: it is in this wake that the concept of integral human development is formed and matured. In response to the fundamentalism of ideologies, the Church associated the feature of humanity to integrality. The development must be integral towards the individual and involve the whole humanity of people. The Integrality appeals also to economic science: an integral epistemology is needed, in the words of Jacques Maritain, capable of dealing with both the empirical knowledge and modern thought, both the ancient wisdom and classical thought (Fornero and Tassinari 2002). Only in this way can economic theory answer the question of *meaning* that increasingly intercepts taking care of the deepest needs of man.

When the economy is confronted with the “people”, it approaches, even without knowing it, the social teaching. Kennet J. Arrow says that some goods and services are withdrawn from the logic of the market - for example the decision of a judge - and affirms the existence of a non-universality of private property is essential to the market system (Arrow 1972). At a first glance, we cannot relate this to the universality expected from Catholicism to the destination of the goods, but we can see how the American economist introduces a hierarchy in which something is subtracted from economic power. Arrow's reasoning “by subtraction” coincides with that of Thomas Aquinas on subsidiarity. What is “subtracted” and thus not available are the moral rules and freedom. Therefore, it is not surprising that an economist such as Amartya Sen is the father of a theory of human development based on the concepts of capabilities and freedoms. In addition, it is no coincidence that the personalistic philosophers, addressing the matter of the creation of categories, talk about conditioning factors and attitudes of the person [27]. However, after a hundred years of social teaching there have been charges of trespass or incompetence. The main reason lies in the comparison between theology and matters of contingent concern, and in the case of development it is quite a complex matter. Hence to avoid the charge of dilettantism, the theologian must use information from various disciplines, including economics, knowing that it is not up to him to judge the validity (Alszeghy and Flick 1972).

Recently, Thomas E. Woods Jr. (2005) has raised several criticisms of Papal teachings. These criticisms answer the belief that a negative statement is applied continuously, while a positive one should not be observed continuously and in a binding way [28]. However, the intent of Woods is to credit the ideology of the free market economy, fostered by the Austrian school, within the social teaching. Further investigations should focus on the fact that there are two economic schools, one “distributive” and one “liberal”, which contend the “provision” of economic theories “to” the social doctrine. The first is found more in the “Pauline line”, the other in the “Leonine one”. In conclusion, if the success of an economic system has been decided by history, the fate of different economic schools of thought remains uncertain. Today, religious and economic thought can overcome mutual criticism. More simply, while economist and theologian are different jobs, that does not mean it is impossible to work together for development. And the first step is dialogue, since “[...] deeds without knowledge are blind, and knowledge without love is sterile.” (CV 30)

Endnotes

[1] In the following, words and expressions as religion, or theology, are related to the Catholic Church and Catholic Social Teaching unless otherwise indicated. This is not to deny the precious contribution of other religions, but simply to avoid constant repetitions in the text.

[2] Cf. Phys. IV, 10, 217b e IV, 14, 223a.

[3] Lucrezio, 'De rerum natura', III, 945.

[4] Is 65,17.

[5] Gv 15,12.

[6] See 1 Tim 6,17-19.

[7] Adv. Haer, IV 11,2; PG VII, 1002, A.

[8] Stromata VI, 17; PG IX, 348, C.

[9] St. Gregory the Great, 'Pastoral rule', III, 21.

[10] St. Thomas Aquinas I-II, q. 90, a.1.

[11] *Quaestiones disputate de veritate*, 1,1.

[12] *De Regimine Principum*, I,I, c.1; cf. Aristotele, *Politica* 1.I.

[13] St. Th. Aquinas I-I, q.188.

[14] St. Th. Aquinas I-II, q.90, a.4.

[15] *Ethica Nicomachea*, I,5.

[16] *Digesto* 1.1.10.1

[17] Locke, John, 'Two treatises of Government', op. cit. in Robert Sirico (2001), 'Il personalismo economico e la società libera', in Flavio Felice (ed), Soveria Mannelli, Italy: Rubbettino.

[18] St. Thomas Aquinas II-II, q. 66, a.2.

[19] *The Catholic Civilization* (e.g. August 25, 1956).

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[20] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, United Nations, 1987, also called Our Common Future: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

[21] Meadows, Donella H., Dennis L. Meadows, Jørgen Randers and William W. Behrens III (1972), *The Limits to Growth*, New York, US: Universe Books.

[22] Homily to Havana, Cuba, 25.1.1998.

[23] Homily in Havana, Cuba, 25.1.1998.

[24] In Latin, the word *gratis* means cost free.

[25] It is emblematic the tone of the criticism that the more conservative circles moved at this encyclical, such as the subsequent detractors of *Populorum progressio*.

[26] The expression is related to Benedict XVI (CV 8) and expresses the "cardinal" recognition in relation to the Pauline document.

[27] See, among others, Mounier E. (1991), 'Traité du caractère', in *Oeuvres*, Paris, France: Seuil; Ricoeur P. (1983), 'Meurt le personnalisme, revient la personne', *Esprit*, N. 1, in Danese A. (ed) (1991), *Persona e sviluppo*, Roma, Italy: Dehoniane.

[28] *Praecepta negativa valent semper et pro semper, praecepta affirmativa valent semper sed non pro semper.* (Fuchs 1972)

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- CV, Benedict XVI (2009), Lett. Enc. 'Caritas in veritate', Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana
- DRM, Pius XII, Speeches and Radio Messages
- GS, Conc. Vat. II, (1965), Cost. Past. 'Gaudium et spes', Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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