

Preamble

The theme of social justice as such does not seem to belong to the usual vocabulary of sociologists. The entry can be found almost only in the most established and up-to-date dictionaries of sociology (Ritzer 2007: 4432-4436, 2016) or in some manuals by authors particularly sensitive to the problems of inequalities (Smelser 1994: 157-158).

Nevertheless, in the Nineties of the last century there were two surveys, in 1991 and 1996, called the International Social Justice Project, which saw the collaboration of 13 States to study, in a comparative perspective, the perception of social and economic justice in more or less advanced industrial societies (<http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR06705.v2>).

The availability of economic resources and their distribution give rise to a whole series of dynamics which affect the whole of society and in particular the individuals who are part of it and who draw on these resources in a rather differentiated way. With the advent of globalization, then, the problem of social justice becomes increasingly acute and difficult to solve. In a highly competitive and highly stratified market, in terms of quantity and quality, social justice depends on the context of reference and in particular on the values that apply in it. The validity of the Marxian (but also sociological) concept of social class has not diminished and, on the contrary, it is proposed and strengthened as the main junction of every analysis applied to the social structures, to the groups to which it belongs, to the exercised professions and to the wealth possessed. Smelser (1994: 157-158) quite rightly distinguishes between three types of social justice: as "equality of opportunity, which does not entail an equality of the final distribution, but implies a reduction to a minimum of the barriers of access to positions, resources and rewards"; as "returns proportional to investments, which even if they must not result at the level of absolute equality must, however, contain a principle of equality"; as "equality of results, which, in the final analysis, completely obliterates the differential distribution of resources and rewards". This would be true both in the social field in general and in the strictly economic field.

Chances of life

The so-called life chances are given, as opportunities, above all by civil rights and opportunities for well-being. According to Ralf Dahrendorf (1994), the chances of life are divided into three categories related respectively to their formation, their development and their diffusion (but according to a trend that is evolutionary, procedural, without significant interruptions or substantial innovative changes). New chances of life can manifest themselves at first in restricted environments, reserved for the few, but their diffusion for the benefit of all is something historically relevant and occurs when more chances of life are created for an ever increasing number of individuals, ultimately the greatest chances of life of the greatest number of individuals (Dahrendorf 1994: 165).

As demands grow, so does the human capacity to satisfy them in new and unexpected forms (Dahrendorf 1994: 115). In fact "the chances of life are possibilities of individual growth, of capacity building, desires, hopes, and these possibilities are made available by social conditions" (Dahrendorf 1981: 40-41).

After all, "the chances of life are the imprints of human existence in society: they define to what extent individuals can develop". Moreover, "the particular combination of options and bonds, of choice and of bonds that make up the chances of life is what allows us to evaluate the meaning of history". Finally "the

consequence, at least, is that a sense of history is made possible. It would consist precisely in creating more chances of life for more men" (Dahrendorf 1981: 16-17).

Forms of social justice

Sociological analysis shows that there are substantial differences between different social individuals. Institutions and administrations are called upon to regulate such differentiations in order to avoid creating the conditions for permanent social conflicts. For this reason, rules are established, sanctions defined and preventive and control activities prepared in civil society, in commerce and in international relations. All this is organized on the basis of guiding principles, of basic values, which can go back in time to the Aristotelian formulations on politics (Aristotle 2002), to the Enlightenment in whose perspective "not utopia but a society of liberals and equals would have been the answer" (Venturi 1970, 2001: 126) and to the Rousseauvian social contract (Rousseau 2014), based on general law and will. But this approach obviously suffers from a Eurocentric perspective, which is not applicable elsewhere.

In any case, it is the visions, the perspective images of a just society, made up of equals, with shared resources, that prevail in any context in which an operative and widespread social justice is thought of.

Social justice as distributive justice

A first area of application for the recognition of positive or negative value by an individual concerns differences in income, gender, skin colour, nationality, religion and other characteristics usually stratified in common perception. The concrete consequences create discomfort and intolerances, for the unfounded considerations of superiority/inferiority of a characteristic element with respect to another: for example, rich vs. poor, man vs. woman, white vs. black, American vs. Libyan, Catholic vs. Muslim and more. According to such a logic, the differences of treatment existing at an intersubjective level appear in evidence, both in reference to the belonging of a group or social category as a whole and in reference to the position of the individual within his belonging. In short, inequalities concern groups within the community/society/state and individuals within the group in which they are found. Friction points concern goods and resources in relation to health, housing, leisure, education, profession, environment, communication, but also social burdens in terms of contributions, taxes, expenses, waste. Here the social movements catch and cheer up, even revolutionary protests against injustice (Doran 2014), often sustained by religious radicalism and by both religious and political leadership (Foran 2014: 8), as in the case of Ernesto Cardenal (1982, 1995), the theologian protagonist of the Nicaraguan revolution of 1978, already suspended a *divinis* by John Paul II but then rehabilitated by Pope Francis himself in 2014.

Another area concerns the intersection between individual conditions, the content of perceived reality and the social action of individuals and groups in order to understand what is right and to counteract the abuses and injustices that they believe to suffer.

According to Guillermina Jasso (2001) distributive justice is based both on the point of view of those who judge as observers (but can also be a beneficiary themselves) and on that of those who receive a distributive benefit. It is therefore considered what the observer considers right and how this is reflected in the beneficiaries.

Social justice in the documents of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council

The theme of justice (and social justice in particular) was well present in the discussions that characterized the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the assembly that brought together in Rome for some years (from 1962 to 1965) thousands of Catholic bishops from all over the world. The fruit of those discussions is contained in 4 Constitutions, 9 Decrees and 3 Declarations. At the time Jorge Mario Bergoglio had not yet been ordained priest, but it is likely that he was particularly influenced by those texts, in that some important choices in the course of his pontificate as Pope Francis (Tornielli, Galeazzi 2015) seem to be directly inspired by specific indications contained in the Council documents, which in some cases seem to have been taken literally and implemented through concrete acts.

It is particularly in the Constitution widely known as *Gaudium et Spes* that one finds numerous prodromes of the thought and action of Pope Francis (Christian 2015). There are sixteen passages that refer to the concept of social justice, gathering "the bitter claims of many who, becoming clearly aware, consider themselves to have been deprived of those goods for injustice or for an unfair distribution" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the contemporary world *Gaudium et Spes*, "Introductory Exposition: The Condition of Man in the Contemporary World", n. 9: "The most widespread aspirations of humanity").

On 17 August 2016 Pope Francis established the "Department for the Service of Integral Human Development", competent "in matters concerning migration, the needy, the sick and the excluded, the marginalized and victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters, prisoners, the unemployed and victims of all forms of slavery and torture". Article IV of the Statute of the said Department states: 'A Section of the Department shall deal specifically with refugees and migrants'. That Chamber shall be presided over by the Pope himself. Since January 1, 2017, the new Dicastery has brought together the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum", the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care for Migrants and Itinerant People and the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care for Health Care Workers.

The Prefect of the Dicastery is Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, Ghanaian, former President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

The task of this Dicastery seems almost prefigured by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council: "Therefore, by faithfully adhering to the Gospel and benefiting from its strength, united with all those who love and practice justice, they have taken on an immense task to fulfill on this earth: of it they will be accountable to the one who will judge everyone on the last day" ("Conclusion", n. 93: "A world to be built and to be led to its end").

The theology of the people

The words and actions of Pope Francis in the field of social justice have been widely echoed throughout the world. On September 30, 2015, the New York University organized a debate on the same topic in its Buenos Aires headquarters, a choice certainly not by chance, from an inter-religious perspective (Artusa, Carrara, Gehring, Inam, Kiechel, Yattah 2015).

His remarks often make news, also because they often have the character of improvisation, even if they are the result of a thought made mature by numerous experiences on the ground, especially in his pastoral

activity in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. Now that his action almost always takes on an emblematic and journalistically significant character it is evident that Bergoglio, aware of the echo that his saying arouses, takes full advantage of the opportunities that are offered, especially at the public level and therefore does what he must do, as he likes to repeat, regardless of the criticism that comes from the old establishment of the Catholic Church, not accustomed to a non reticent pontiff and often a decision maker.

Its antagonistic reference objective is capitalism, which does not care about the waste it produces and which it abandons along its way. And on the other hand, he takes it with the "globalization of indifference" and with the "pathology of power", characteristics that are not absent even in Roman curial circles.

At the same time Pope Francis aims at establishing a wide-ranging dialogue, open to other religious (and non religious) perspectives. For this reason, he leaves the Rome office and goes to East and West to resume and reawaken a speech begun by others but interrupted for contingent reasons, accidents along the way, misunderstandings. It also risks misunderstanding (the world of communication is fraught with traps and manipulations) in order to achieve its priority objectives. In fact, it is capable, almost at the same time, of remaining silent but also of raising its voice loudly against the damage that is done in the field of social justice. And he thinks of a "globalization of solidarity and fraternity", starting from the Church herself "poor and for the poor".

According to Raniero La Valle (2016) the intention of the Argentine pontiff is to re-establish an order of justice that is based on the "Truth" or rather on the poor Jesus and the poor. In this sense the God of mercy is proposed again by Pope Francis as a preeminent ethical figure, on the basis of a continuity with the spirit of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council in one way (as has already been widely seen) and with the proposal of the theology of the liberation of the Peruvian Gustavo Gutierrez (1992) but revisited in an Argentinean key in the guise of "theology of the people" (Apples 2014).

According to Francisco Mele, a scholar with solid psycho-analytical foundations, a good connoisseur of Pope Francis and his successor in the teaching of psychology (in the Jesuit College of Salvador in Buenos Aires), "Bergoglio is a priest linked to pastoral practice rather than a theoretician of the science of God, but he has solid theological foundations" (Apple 2014: 145). The theology of the people is watered down from different sources, including liberation theology itself and beyond: Gustavo Gutiérrez and Camillo Torres, Paulo Freire and Frei Betto, Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boffo, Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, Ernesto Cardenal and José Comblin, Emmanuel Lévinas and Paul Ricoeur, Maurice Blondel and Michel de Certeau (a Jesuit). These figures are certainly quite different from each other but the content of their intervention-appeal is to a large extent taken up by the theology of the people, which can be presented as follows: "In Argentina, liberation theology has had less following than in other Latin American countries, especially because of the almost imperceptible presence of Indians and Afro-Americans. Here, however, a similar version is spread: the theology of the people, also defined as cultural theology. The people here are understood as nation-population, not as class-population (a concept dear to liberation theology). This people is composed of the middle class, mostly of European origin, and the smallest indigenous component - Indios, Mischlinge - of the population" (Apple 2014: 147).

The theology of the people began with the document of San Miguel in Argentina in 1969 and, among others, by the Jesuit Juan Carlos Scannone (a pupil of the Canadian Bernard Lonergan), considered one of Bergoglio's inspirers and a supporter of an "anadialectic" aimed at overcoming the contrasts. In this sense, it is not Marxism that provides the keys to interpretation but a historical-cultural method that is sufficiently linked to the social sciences. And the wisdom of the people is intrinsic in their own religiosity, inclined to a community perspective and solidarity, already supported by the Bishop of Recife Dom Hélder Camara.

NETWORKED COGNITIVE REFERENCE SYSTEM

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

THEOLOGY OF THE PEOPLE

FRENCH INTELLECTUALS

OTHER LATIN AMERICAN INFLUENCES

LEGENDS:

LEGENDS:

SCHEME-PANEL OF INFLUENCES

ON FRANCISCAN POPE

Mele (2014: 148) appropriately reiterates that "the theology of the people, unlike that of liberation, does not seek confrontation with those who govern". On this point, however, it must be pointed out that a strong dose of executionism is also present in the ideological approach of Peron's Peronism by Juan Domingo Perón, who had a great influence on Argentine politics, especially at the beginning of the second half of the last century. Peronist executionism also leverages the social teachings of the Catholic Church and advocates the defence of the poorest, but in fact Bergoglio has opposed both the peronism of the past and that of the present. And it was he himself who presided over the preparation of the 2007 document of Aparecida (Brazil), which, revisiting liberation theology, re-proposes it as theology of the people, considering the latter as the fulcrum of the pastoral attention of the Catholic Church.

In short, it is as if, in symbolic and in fact substantial form, two parallel lines were grafted onto the biogram of Bergoglio-Francesco, consisting of the cultural heritage of the Second Vatican Council (which ended in 1964) and the contribution of liberation theology (born in 1968 in Medellín, Colombia), taken up and developed by the theology of the people, which in reality is also opposed to the theology of prosperity, of Pentecostal and charismatic matrix. Graphically, one could synthesize the whole with a load-bearing line, represented by the vertical line of Francis' efferent letter, and two parallel lines, almost two arms one above the other, which join perpendicularly (and parallel to each other) with the vertical axis, also constituting two extensions that seem to express, visibly manifest the content (or rather the thought) of the support pivot-segment:

Beyond the artifice constituted and offered by the graphic sign that corresponds to the initial capital letter of the name Francis, which therefore directly recalls that of the Argentine pope, who became with this appellation the 268th successor of Peter on the pontifical throne, what counts is rather the union between the biographical experiences of Jorge Mario Bergoglio, as a believer and as a minister of Christian worship (first a Jesuit priest and then a bishop and cardinal), and the theological and pastoral events linked to the rooting of the Council message first and then peculiarly Latin American after, with the conflicting dynamics of both theology of liberation and the theology of the people.

Many times, almost without interruption, Pope Bergoglio speaks of the culture of waste or discards to stigmatize a concept that aims to privilege only those who are already economically, professionally and culturally favored. On the contrary, it prefers a culture of inclusion and welcome. And the recipients are women, minorities, the exploited, those who are also denied basic rights (AA. VV. 2014, AA. VV. 2016).

Conclusion

Social justice is the mainstay of the pontifical programme of Pope Francis, so much so that it is almost impossible to ignore it, so much so that it is linked to his words and his action. However, some criticism of his work during the military dictatorship in Argentina persisted (from 24 March 1976 until 10 December 1983, when democratic elections were called). In particular, it is argued that Jorge Mario Bergoglio did not help two of his Jesuit confreres, pursued by the regime in power in his country. Despite denials and testimonies in his favor, even authoritative, there is no lack of reservations (and accusations) about Bergoglio's behavior (Verbitsky 2003, 2005, 2006). The matter is still open, pending further developments, documents and evidence aimed at acquitting or recriminating the grievances.

As for social justice in a Berglian key, it is useful here to briefly reconstruct the channels of thought through which it has developed, taking shape and strength over the years at the turn of three centuries.

Indeed, the social doctrine of the Catholic Church has had interesting chapters of history as well as sometimes controversial events, starting from the impact recorded by *Rerum Novarum* (Leonine), often cited (more or less improperly) as the origin of Catholic social thought (Curran 2002), at a time when workers' rights were still unknown because they had not been granted leave from work for health reasons, they had no possibility of obtaining a pension, they did not take paid leave, free medical care was still to come (O'Brien, Shannon 1995).

In the United States it was founded by the cited John Ryan, criticized however by Beckley (1992), a Social Action Department, later become National Catholic War Conference and then National Catholic Welfare Conference. Therefore, the need for an operative intervention in the society was passed on, as well as aid on the occasion of war events and, finally, direct concern for the welfare state. The basic program was aimed at helping the poor, safeguarding the person, and equal dignity and value for every human subject. At the level of rights, there was a beginning to recognise the universal ownership of natural goods, and thus the possibility for everyone to have access to common goods. At the same time, individual rights had a value in themselves and took precedence over rights of a Community nature. To put it another way, attention to the individual became a priority over attention to society as a whole.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a pragmatic reference to natural law, but now it is no longer so often invoked. Precisely on the basis of natural law, it was not yet possible to fully legitimise equality at all levels. In short, we did not go beyond the rights that are essential for survival. Therefore, market interests, increased production and profits and efficiency at the highest possible level continued to prevail.

But today Pope Francis intervenes to judge as a "very serious sin" the closure of a company and the dismissal of workers for pure calculations of convenience and for a more profitable reinvestment of the accumulated resources: "Whoever, for economic manoeuvres, to make negotiations that are not entirely clear, closes factories, closes work businesses and takes work away from men, makes a very serious sin". (hearing on March 15, 2017 in St. Peter's Square).

Previously, however, it had been assumed that economic inequalities were necessary and that something would then be delivered to those with fewer own resources. With the conciliar document called *Gaudium et Spes*, however, something has changed, with the support of the relational character of the person, with the fostering of the sense of community and with the conjugation of the community dimension together with that more properly ecclesial, in order to finally reach the solidarity connotation of the community. This, however, is still prevented by an increasingly dichotomous society, between those who have a great deal and those who have very little, the result of a distributive justice that does not solve the problem of

disparities, does not fill the gap of community and societal inadequacies. The ultimate precipitate of all this is precisely an ever-increasing division between wage levels and hence living conditions and lifestyles.