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Journeying from Economic Violence toward Justice

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Cover Page Footnote

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Journeying from Economic Violence toward Justice

Introduction

While the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si'* has spawned a considerable literature, several of the arguments outlined in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium (EG)*, remain highly relevant for broad consideration, and also may shed light on several aspects of *Laudato Si'*. In that document, Pope Francis warned that “until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence.”¹ Pope Francis’ statements connecting economic systems to injustice and violence drew much press and controversy, even among Catholics.² Pope Francis’ incisive critiques cut deeper than those of previous Popes’ writings, especially when contrasted with the writings of Benedict XVI. Francis’ development of structural sin depends on St. John Paul II’s work on “structures of sin”, whereas Benedict’s work focuses more on the individual’s responsibility in the face of structures.³ Even so, Francis follows Benedict XVI’s “anthropological turn”⁴ in CST to argue for an individual responsibility

¹ Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), para. 59.

While this paragraph examines the literal connection between economic injustice and physical violence, it also begins to open up the possibility of viewing violence more abstractly. “If every action has its consequences, an evil embedded in the structures of a society has a constant potential for disintegration and death. It is evil crystallized in unjust social structures.”

See also para. 218 on the broader notion of peace that incorporates human dignity and the common good.

² This controversy was well treated in a special issue, David Cloutier (Editor), “Pope Francis and American Economics.” Theological Roundtable with Charles Clark, Mary Hischfield, and Matthew Shadle. *Horizons: The Journal of the College Theology Society* 42 no. 1 (2015): 122-155.

³ Francis’ development of structural sin depends on St. John Paul II’s work, whereas Benedict’s work focuses more on the individual’s responsibility in the face of structures. The latter point is developed in: Daniel Daly, “Structures of Virtue and Vice,” *New Blackfriars: The Dominican Council*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2010.

Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), para. 36, 42, and 68.

⁴ For a thorough consideration of Benedict XVI’s contributions on this front, see:

Dennis McCann, “The Principle of Gratuitousness: Opportunities and Challenges for Business in ‘Caritas in Veritate’.” *Journal of Business Ethics* 100 (2011): 55-66.

Stefano Zamagni, “Dilemma di prigionero.” In Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni (Eds.), *Dizionario di Economia Civile*, Roma: Citta Nuova Editrice (2009): 271-278.

to supplement a transformation of unjust structures.⁵ In this sense, he combines the approaches of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. *Laudato Si'* (LS) further builds on these critiques of the global economy as they relate to broad ecological issues.⁶ “Finally, the common good calls for social peace, the stability and security provided by a certain order which cannot be achieved without particular concern for distributive justice; whenever this is violated, violence always ensues.”⁷ He calls for an ecological conversion so as to transform the hearts, minds, and habits of persons as well as the structures they construct and inhabit. This paper takes the two fundamental issues identified by Francis in EG and developed in LS, “the inclusion of the poor in society, and ...peace and social dialogue”⁸, as the central issues to be addressed, with EG and LS serving to structure our inquiry, themes, and analysis.

Pope Francis’ writings invite inquiry into the nature and potentials of states and markets, structural dimensions of justice, global systems and economic violence. An important question that can be raised concerns the meaning of economic violence, remaining mindful of possible dangers for justice of extending or broadening the scope of what counts as violence. Violence in society exists at multiple levels, from individual acts of physical violence to coordinated levels

It should also be noted, that John Paul II places considerable emphasis on anthropology. Fr. Zieba has argued that “John Paul clearly establishes anthropology as the framework of the Church’s social doctrine.”

Maciej Zieba, *Papal Economics: The Catholic Church on Democratic Capitalism, from Rerum Novarum to Caritas in Veritate*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books (2013), pp. 152-166.

⁵ Oskari Juurikkala has sought to argue that Francis’ conception of “poverty as a Christian virtue” represents a moral message that doesn’t target free markets as such. In this way, Juurikkala emphasizes the individual responsibility message in Francis while disregarding the sharper critiques the latter levies at unjust structures:

Oskari Juurikkala, “Virtuous Poverty, Christian Liberty: A Free-Market Appreciation of Pope Francis.” *The Acton Institute*, Calihan Lecture, Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (2014).

⁶ Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'* (2015), para. 2, 46, 82, 142, 149, 157, 197, 200, 204, 229, and 230.

⁷ *Laudato Si'*, 157.

⁸ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 185.

of violence at the levels of groups such as gangs or terrorist organizations or even at the state level as manifested in wars. Violence may also be understood literally as physical violence, or metaphorically as an intentional and malevolent wound to the human person, whose nature can be harmed at the level of our souls. In all cases, violence tends to rebound on the perpetrators as well as the victims in some way. As Francis loosely uses the term violence, he seems to impute all these levels, even as he connects violence to the economy. Recently, in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Francis gives an even subtler meaning to the term violence. In this document, even verbal harm to another or the diminishing of their person by looking down upon them is labeled violence by Francis. Here, he seems really concerned by what we have called harm to the soul.⁹ We here explore the nature of economic violence and how economic systems might be organized to promote or reduce violence.

Interrogating Francis' conception of economic violence will depend in part on Francis' view of the global economic order as "an economy of exclusion".¹⁰ As Catholic economist, Charles Clark has argued, "Francis' main contribution to the public discourse on poverty has been his linking of poverty to inequality, and his framing of both poverty and inequality in terms of exclusion".¹¹ Clark asserts that this view of "poverty as exclusion captures both individual agency and social structures" in a way that continues to place the "vision of a just economy" offered by CST beyond the left-right political divide. For Clark, the key to the Catholic view of the economy is its Christian anthropology that regards the human being as a person rather than rational *homo-oeconomicus* assumed by the reigning neo-classical school of economics or the

⁹ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, (2018), para. 115-117.

¹⁰ Charles Clark, "Economy of Exclusion: Global Perspectives on Pope Francis on Capitalism." *Journal of Vincentian Social Action* 2 no. 2. Article 4. (2017): 4-11.

¹¹ Charles M.A. Clark, "Pope Francis and American Economics," *Horizons* 42, no. 1 (2015): 128-140, p. 132.

Marxist account of humans as “the totality of social relations”.¹² According to Clark, this anthropology leads CST to view society as a “process” formed by “the interaction between individuals with free will and social institutions” as opposed to a mechanism guided by market forces or an organic whole processing towards a certain social *telos*. Quoting Gandhi, Clark points out that “Poverty is the worst form of violence”.¹³ While Clark tends to interpret the meaning of violence at the physical level, he emphasizes how poverty as exclusion generates the conditions for various forms of physical violence, and notes that “Poverty can be social, political, cultural, and spiritual, as well as economic, and often these forms of poverty are interconnected...All forms of poverty—that is, all exclusions—can be individual or structural, and most often are both, since these reinforce each other, and it is difficult to separate individual and collective causes and effects neatly.”¹⁴ We would add that violence can appear in all these forms and levels, which are interdependent, and exist at individual and structural levels.

Following Clark’s account of Francis’ characterization of poverty and economy in terms of exclusion and their linkage to violence, we seek here to explore the deeper meaning of economic violence and how inclusion, peace, and dialogue may address these evils. In so doing, we ground Francis’ view of the economy in the Catholic anthropology that undergirds it. We will find that an analysis of liberation theology will serve to illuminate some of Francis’ approaches to economic violence. We will highlight some of the insights from the economics discipline that develops possible responses to problems of global injustice and economic violence. These insights invite questions about the relevance of CST to real world problems pertaining to economy, violence and justice. Yet, when economic paradigms of justice are viewed carefully

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 138.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 139.

through the lens of CST, certain tensions continue to loom large, particularly regarding assumptions of freedom and anthropology. These tensions are particularly salient in the Latin American context from which Francis hails, especially when liberation theology is brought to bear on the analysis.¹⁵ At the same time, we will suggest that the methodologies of liberation theology may serve to enrich CST in a direction that serves to make these tensions more productive.

This study adopts a set of assumptions as its point of departure. We follow the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in elaborating the common good in terms of a set of principles, especially the universal destination of goods.¹⁶ We also follow The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, which, in a document entitled *Vocation of the Business Leader*, emphasizes the positive potential of business to be an agent for justice and the greater good.¹⁷ In orienting our inquiry around EG and LS we focus on structural forms of injustice globally that call for systemic solutions and corporate discernment enacted through the free and responsible actions of individuals. While we shall mention the positive contributions business can make, our paper tempers such optimism with careful analysis of the ways the economic system in which

¹⁵ Throughout this article, the term liberation theology is used to refer particularly to Latin American liberation theology. While acknowledging the various forms of liberation theologies that have emerged in the past half century, Latin American liberation theology has been systematically focused particularly on economic and political concerns.

¹⁶ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Washington DC: USCCB (2004).

¹⁷ Naughton, Michael, et. al. *The Vocation of the Business Leader*. (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2013).

Of particular value is the articulation of the corporation as a community of persons. See also: Lyman Johnson, Michael Naughton, and William Bojan, "Rethinking How Business Purpose is Taught in Catholic Business Education," *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* 32, no.1 (2013): 59-81. Michael Naughton, "The Corporation as a Community of Work: Understanding the Firm within the Catholic Social Tradition." *Ave Maria Law Review* 4, no. 3 (2006). Robert Kennedy, "Corporations, Common Goods and Human Persons." *Ave Maria Law Review* 4, no. 1. (2006): 1-31.

business operates may promote the prosperity of powerful parties at the expense of the poverty of the most vulnerable. Ultimately, we agree with the view of the purpose of business advanced in *The Vocation of the Business Leader*, but consider how macro global structures must be developed in ways that foster rather than hinder such a lofty business purpose.

In what follows we first lay out the conceptual problematic of our paper, articulated as a dynamic between principles and their application. We then make the case for a CST that is better informed by the methodologies of liberation theology. In doing so, we begin first with an overview of Catholic anthropology and how economic violence might be viewed from that perspective. We then explain the fundamentals of liberation theology and suggest how it might better inform CST, drawing on Pope Francis as an intriguing exemplar of this proposed new methodology for CST. We then examine several economic models from the perspective of a CST informed by liberation theology. We first explore the dynamic of principles and application by considering its operation between two of the more extreme branches of Catholic theology and economics, that of liberation theology and libertarianism. Next, we turn to a more moderate version of this paradigm clash as exemplified by a treatment of Catholic teaching in tension with economic theories about violence, notably those of Douglass North. Finally we consider the role and value of markets and business in light of CST with an eye towards a more hopeful integration of Catholic thought and economics regarding the dynamics of principles and application.

The Dynamic of Principles and Application

This inquiry revolves around the practical necessity of creating systems and structures that foster the fullness of a genuinely human person in a way that brings about inclusion, peace,

and dialogue for which Pope Francis calls. We uncover the ways CST's vision of the human person influences and shapes our evaluation of various models of social arrangement. In-depth analysis of various disciplines finds CST-related principles to be operative in these fields. Yet, these principles, like freedom or welfare, often carry different connotations due to their being undergirded by a view of human nature divergent from Catholicism. Moreover, while particular models may appear more congenial to our commitment to justice, when used to construct systems or structures they may prove ineffective or not necessarily lead to ends of justice consistent with CST. At the same time, we recognize the limitations inherent in the application of principles to real world problems, in that the world often fails to conform to the principles and we must do our best to bring about justice given the pervasiveness of sin. In short, the challenge of bridging principles and applications appears to be reciprocal.

We examine challenges from both CST and economics along this vein. Both CST and economic theories contain a set of principles that they seek to have applied. However, CST is stronger on the side of principles and leaves application to prudential judgment, which claims when even made by a pope, do not bind the faithful.¹⁸ Moreover, many would argue, following St. John Paul II, that CST does not offer a "third way" to capitalism and communism¹⁹, but rather offers a principles-based evaluation of a variety of economic systems ultimately guided by the uniquely Catholic anthropology and the core values of truth, freedom and justice, guided by

¹⁸ Some economists would like to place Francis' critiques of carbon credits in *Laudato Si'* in this category.

¹⁹ St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 41.

Fr. Zieba has also emphasized that St. John Paul II clearly rejects ideology, as well, differentiating it clearly from Christian faith from which the Church's social doctrine stems.

Maciej Zieba, *Papal Economics*, 64-5.

St. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 46.

love.²⁰ Application of these principles and values may appear in a myriad ways and in a plurality of economic arrangements, but application is yet called for, otherwise the principles would be empty, like Kant's concepts.²¹ Economics, on the other hand, tends to focus more on the concrete programs that advance the principles, say of freedom or overall welfare, that it presupposes, using complex mathematical modeling for micro or macroeconomic analyses. The disciplines tends to operate less reflectively regarding principles, and hence its applications run the risk of being guided blindly, however complex the mathematical models. In the cases of both CST and economics, the application of principles may lead to outcomes contrary to the principles, or the realities encountered may make the principles seem empty, as application of principles may founder on the quagmires of sin and the mysteries of grace.

Regarding CST, there appears to be a gap between principles and realities due to the reality of sin that mandates the need for principles in the first place. It is even arguable that realities of sin lead to worldviews guided by different principles than CST, or a different ordering of principles. Take, for example, the principle of the universal destination of goods, which limits the relative right of private property²². This principle encounters difficulty in application given the sin and the concrete reality of access to the goods of the earth. Greed leads many to accumulate and hoard far more than necessary for the security of reasonable goods to which we are entitled by Natural Law. Moreover, conflict emerges in the context of both real and apparent scarcity. These conditions breed myriad forms of violence. It is likewise the case for the principle of participation, as authentic, equitable, and full participation of all members of society

²⁰ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Washington DC: USCCB (2004).

²¹ Immanuel Kant, "Concepts without percepts are empty, percepts without concepts are blind".

²² Robert Spitzer, SJ. "Catholic Social Teaching and Pope Francis on Free Markets and Sustainability," Address to the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools World Forum, July 2018.

would mitigate against the sorts of sin that lead some to regard private property as supreme. Populists can manipulate participation nationally in a way that serves the property rights of some and mediates against the universal destination of goods. In order to maintain a system that allows private property to reign as the ultimate principle, such advocates would need to dispense with many of the principles of CST. While the principles function as an invitation to address injustice, there may be a possible gap between the application of ideal principles and work for social justice.

In this paper, we explore the intersection of economics with CST, while focusing on the Chicago School and the New Institutional Economics.²³ We examine some economic principles/theories like Friedrich von Hayek's vision of liberty in a great society²⁴ or Douglass North's vision of open-access systems²⁵ and highlight gaps between these theories and the real world. Often these theories only make sense in an idealized world absent of the messy history of exploitation and oppression, and the general realities of sin that pervade human existence. For example, Hayek tends to disregard or underemphasize the significance of certain forms of historical injustice in establishing his libertarian vision.²⁶ The popular libertarian idea of a statute

²³ It is important to recognize that much work has already been and has yet to be done on reconciling the academic discipline as a whole with CST, particularly as taught to students. See: Douglas Meador, "Teaching the Principles of Economics: Reconciling the Canon of the American Economics Association to Catholic Social Thought", *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* 32, no.1 (2013): 41-58.

Dean Peterson and David Carrithers, "Integrating a Social Justice Perspective in Economics Education: Creating a Distinctly Catholic Education *Catholic Education /A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*. (2011). David F. Carrithers and Dean Peterson, "Conflicting Views of Markets and Economic Justice: Implications for Student Learning", *Journal of Business Ethics* 69, no. 4 (2006).

²⁴ Friedrich von Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty. Vol. 2 The Mirage of Social Justice*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

²⁵ Douglass North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

²⁶ See especially, Friedrich von. Hayek, *The Mirage of Social Justice*, 70-74; 84-85; 142-143.

of limitation on historical acts of injustice like colonialism or slavery in order to allow for the idea of some just/fair starting point²⁷ is problematic given the real world consequences of these historical institutions. However, North's theories represent a counterpoint to Hayek's.²⁸

North et al. suggest that an impersonal open-access society can better address social justice than a personalistic natural state. They argue that an impersonal system facilitates greater access for the common person to political and economic benefits than a personal one, which relies on connections between individuals with economic and political power in the community or society. Such ideas open up new avenues for CST, but also remain problematic in light of certain aspects of CST.

So, we move from principles to practical applications and the challenges of: a) maintaining awareness of the nature of principles, which are operative not only in CST or philosophy but the various theoretical frameworks of other disciplines like economics and law²⁹;

Hayek tends to be more concerned with the history of Nazism and totalitarianism as they may influence collectivist doctrines like socialism. Socialism, in his view, necessitates totalitarian regimes. See especially,

Friedrich von. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1944, 183-198.

Friedrich von. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1960, 85-102.

²⁷ For an extensive critique of the "statute of limitations" idea, see:

Karl Widerquist, "A Dilemma for Libertarians," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 8, no. 1 (2009), 43-72.

²⁸ North received a Nobel prize for his theories of historical institutions that examined among other matters, slavery. Racism and sexism must be countered by strong norms that uphold the equality of all citizens. However, his treatment of religion is mainly critical, particularly when considering the medieval Church:

Douglass North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders: A conceptual framework for interpreting recorded human history*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 60-69. See also:

Douglass North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005, 42-45, 156, 167.

²⁹ Mark. A. Chinen, "Crumbs from the Table: the Syrophenician Woman and International Law". *Journal of Law and Religion* 27, no. 1 (2011): 1-56.

b) so as to be aware of the necessary limitations that arise from the construction of systems that apply these theories or principles. We then ask how these limitations can be overcome by better connecting principles with practical applications in the service of a just society characterized by inclusion, peace, and dialogue. We propose that dialogue between seemingly diverging disciplines such as theology and economics as well as within those disciplines can serve to bridge the gap here identified. Dialogue, which stems from the CST principle of participation and encounters the messy realities of application may provide a key avenue to the realization of justice. It is worth noting that Dialogue served as the penultimate chapter of the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, which Pope Francis proposed as an essential avenue for change.

Although some trends within humanities disciplines tend to disparage the fields of business and economics, and portray them as antithetical to CST, a deeper look at these latter disciplines reveals potential compatibility with the values undergirding CST. Economists exhibit ways that markets can foster a world consistent with the aspirations of the social encyclicals, particularly one in which persons and communities can have greater agency and opportunities for participation in society. Yet, there certainly are branches of economics and CST that conflict. We will depict those ideological battles in stark relief before considering more compatible economic and theological ideologies, examining subtle synergies and points of departure.

Prior to engaging the dialogue between CST and economics, we will first engage in a dialogue more internal to Catholicism, that between CST and liberation theology so as to find means by which to inform the principles-based approach of CST from the applied methodologies of liberation theology. In mapping potentials for individuals to exercise their vocations in

Iris Chiu, "Enhancing Responsibility in Financial Regulation – Critically Examining the Future of Public-Private Governance: part 1." *Law and Financial Markets Review* (Mar. 2010): 170-188.

creative response to God's command to live in loving relationships, rightly ordered at all levels, we begin with an overview of Catholic anthropology, emphasizing the Catholic account of freedom and responsibility. Freedom is necessary for responsibility to enact justice and promote peace; love cannot occur absent free will. Consequently, we shall explore Catholic ideas about freedom in relation to other notions of freedom that inform liberation theology, political liberalism, neoclassical economics, and other theories. We will argue that liberation theology will help to inform CST in ways that enable it to bridge the dynamic of principles and application in ways that will bring the Catholic tradition into more fruitful dialogue with other secular theories and programs.

Toward a CST Animated by Liberation Theology

Francis' writings pertaining to economics have spawned an expansive literature, with many economists from the global North hastening to discredit Francis on a number of accounts, not least being his origin in Argentina, a country having suffered from a century of economic decline and a probable exemplar of crony capitalism. Mainstream no less than conservative economists have decried Francis' attitude towards markets, pointing out many of his supposedly flawed arguments that issue from the troubled economic context of the Global South.³⁰ Some of these economists have published their critiques in the popular press, drawing critical responses from liberal Christian theologians who come to Francis' defense. Nordhaus' piece on "The Pope and the Market"³¹ serves as an intriguing example of this sort of failed dialogue, in which experts

³⁰ Consider the following special issue, Robert M. Whaples, "The Economics of Pope Francis: An Introduction." *The Independent Review* 21 no. 3 (2017):325-345.

³¹ William D. Nordhaus, "The Pope and the Market", *The New York Review of Books, Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home, an encyclical letter by Pope Francis*, October 8 (2015).
"The Pope and the Market: An Exchange", *The New York Review of Books*, November 19 (2015).

in the disciplines of economics and theology talk past one another without either seeming to understand the deeper points being made by their interlocutors. It is this sort of fraught dialogue that intrigues us and which we hope improve in this paper.

The background of liberation theology that informs South American Catholicism, even venturing into the CELAM documents, haunts Francis, although he has not declared himself to be in favor of liberation theology, which would be a controversial move for a pope.³² Some would even suggest that it would be dangerous for Francis' work to call him an advocate of liberation theology, as many right wing commentators have accused him of being, along with being a "Marxist", "socialist", or "communist" on account of his sharp critiques of the dominating global economic order. We will set aside these more extreme critiques, and we will eschew a renewal of liberation theology in its Marxist guise. Rather, the relevance of liberation theology, which we see to be operative in Francis, arises more from its methodology than any ideological associations. In fact, the ideological associations may undermine the praxis of liberation theology, which begins from the lived reality rather than from the realm of pure ideas.

As such, Francis' lived reality in Argentina is indeed highly relevant to an evaluation of his statements about the economy, however, not for the reasons mainstream economists and conservatives insist. The notion that markets would be improved without the crony corruption that pervades the developing world, or what North will call "closed access systems", certainly merits consideration, and yet such a view should not be deployed to dismiss the suffering that pervades those contexts or the views that emerges from the lived experience. It is arguably a form of neo-colonialism for economists in the Global North to declare that people in the South

³² For a brief overview of the relevance of liberation theology to Pope Francis, see: Harvey Cox, "Pope Francis: Liberation Theology's Second Act?" *The Nation* January 6/13 (2014): 23-25.

are not experts about their experiences, or that they are mistaken about the realities they face. As Clark has pointed out,

“the United States and Europe have always been the teachers and Latin America the student in the science of getting rich at the expense of the poor...Current Latin American economic institutions evolved primarily from this extreme exploitation and still reflect these built-in injustices....the perspective of the oppressed is at least as valid as the ‘official perspective’ of the oppressors. Moreover, for followers of Jesus, the viewpoint of the oppressed is the privileged perspective.”³³

It is this standpoint, of beginning with the concrete experience of oppression in Argentina that arguably informs Pope Francis’ thinking about economics, an approach that owes a debt of gratitude to liberation theology.

Whereas CST tends to operate from the realm of principles, teaching from the Church and speaking universally to the globe, liberation theology remains deeply contextual, starting from the particularities of lived experience and drawing lessons from there. While CST starts with anthropology and derives principles to be applied, the methodology of liberation theology is to begin with experiences. We suggest that a potential dynamic might be emerging with Francis wherein he moves between these two methodologies. CST could benefit from liberation theology as such a methodology will begin to allow the Church to come to terms with its complicity in colonialism, in its Euro-centeredness. For, the principles that purport to be universal may ultimately be Euro-originated historically and hence more local than universal, and generalizing more particularities than intended. Pope Francis’ writings that draw extensively from bishops’ statements from across the globe begins to incorporate an approach to CST grounded with integrity at the local level, while simultaneously seeking to maintain continuity with the

³³ Charles M.A. Clark, “Pope Francis and American Economics”, pp. 128-9.

principled based approach of the Church. Let us now explore how this approach plays out in Pope Francis' treatment of economic violence.

Catholic Anthropology and Economic Violence

A working definition of economic violence would minimally incorporate the notion that the economic system contributes to illness and death, as when Francis points to examples of exclusion and inequality as “an economy (that) kills”.³⁴ Francis emphasizes how consumerism contributes to dehumanization, as when “Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded”.³⁵ The “idolatry of money” leads to viewing persons in terms of their buying power, thus truncating their very humanity.³⁶ Such a reduction does violence to the human person. *Laudato Si'* further emphasizes how these structures of sin reverberate through multiple ecologies, including that of the natural environment. “The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.”³⁷ Let us now consider the genesis of these ideas about economic violence in the body of CST, in the writings especially of John Paul II, but also of Benedict XVI.

The fundamental Christian understanding of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God speaks to the dignity of the individual and our social nature. This anthropology is grounded in the understanding of God as Trinity, as divine communion, an idea captured by the term *perichoresis*, meaning “the idea that the three divine persons mutually inhere in one another, draw life from one another, “are” what they are by relation to one

³⁴ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, para. 53.

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium*, para. 55.

³⁷ *Laudato Si'*, para. 2.

another.”³⁸ The dignity of the human person rests also in part on the doctrines of redemption and sanctification. The transcendent God has entered into profound relationship with human beings and all creation in the incarnation and has promised the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

A Christian vision of human freedom moves from a person with a capacity for choice and for self-actualization as one who becomes most fully free by living into her capacity for self-transcendence, that is the capacity to move beyond simply the self towards others, towards community and the ultimate Other. The individual moves towards her fullest self as she moves towards a self in community. The most authentic self-actualization happens when one’s capacity for love is exercised in the creation of community where others are able to become their most authentic selves, living into their giftedness, which includes a capacity for self-gift.³⁹

The theological category of sin begins to shed light onto the un-freedom that exists in the hearts of persons and manifests in the manner of relationships that human beings create among themselves and in the social organizations they construct. The universal reality of sin must be taken into account in understanding the Christian vision of the human person. The reality of alienation from self and others pervades the human condition. The Church has come to recognize that sin can infuse systems, that it can be structural as well as individual.⁴⁰ Intentional, volitional acts become obstacles to human beings living into their fullest selves. Such actions can lead to the creation of systems and structures that inhibit human flourishing or facilitate dehumanization. John Paul II’s emphasis on structures of sin clearly influences Francis.

³⁸ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity & Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 270-271.

³⁹ John Sachs, *A Christian Vision of Humanity* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991) 27-34.

⁴⁰ St. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Reconcilatio et Paenitentia* (1984), para. 16.
St. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1988), para. 36-37, and 39.
St. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Centessimus Annus* (1991), para. 38.

Regarding the sin of violence, writings prior to EG tend to focus on physical violence between persons or at the levels of war. Even so, *Gaudium et Spes* began to articulate the concept of violence in more general terms, “The social doctrine also entails a duty to denounce, when sin is present: the sin of injustice and violence that in different ways moves through society and is embodied in it”.⁴¹ St. John Paul II goes on to specify a metaphoric conception of violence to the human person, when he argues that the meaning of inalienable rights is that to deny them is to do violence to the human person, violating our natures.⁴² Child labor, which he compares to slavery, is given as a particular example of rights violations and hence violence.⁴³ Benedict XVI mentions violence three times in *Caritas in Veritate*, in progressively more metaphoric ways. He first uses it in connection to physical violence as an obstacle to development⁴⁴, then in relation to arguments for birth control in the face of population growth⁴⁵, and finally, declares more abstractly: “Reducing nature merely to a collection of contingent data ends up doing violence to the environment and even encouraging activity that fails to respect human nature itself”⁴⁶. It is important to note that Benedict’s treatment of environmental justice is deeply linked to his account of human ecology in which this latter general discussion appears.

CST offers principles for social justice, but economics can offer *techne* and *praxis*. The science of economics provides us with a set of sophisticated tools for putting principles into practice, enabling us to realize justice in the world more effectively. CST could help steer

⁴¹ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Washington DC: USCCB (2004), para 81. *Gaudium et Spes*, 25.

⁴² St. John Paul II, Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, 3.

⁴³ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Washington DC: USCCB (2004), para. 296.

⁴⁴ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 29.

⁴⁵ *Ibid* 44

⁴⁶ *Ibid* 48

economic choices and help economists avoid becoming blinded by the sophistication of their tools without regard to ultimate purpose, legitimate ethical constraints, or unintended implications for justice. Another benefit of CST is to offer cautionary caveats about the reality of sin. We see this particularly with St. John Paul II and his writings on culture, which Fr. Zieba, a proponent of the view that St. John Paul II's represent the heart of CST today, regards as closer to American neo-conservatives and economic liberals than many realize, in its emphasis on a moral theology and virtue in the face of consumerism⁴⁷. And yet, as we have seen, the debates regarding the "third way" of CST invite us to be wary of particular recommendations. While Fr. Zieba has argued that St. John Paul II scrupulously avoids any "third way" direction, unlike several of his predecessors, notably Paul VI, and successors, Benedict XVI, and probably Francis, Zieba tends to regard the popes who were more favorable to capitalism and critical of socialism to be free of the "third way" danger, whereas he suggests that those who follow Paul VI's seeming embracement of leftist thinking do veer into such undesirable territory⁴⁸. Zieba's assessment of Benedict XVI's writings remain rather uncharitable to the latter, and doesn't seem to be aware of the complex influence on the document of prominent thinkers like Zamagni whose resurrection of Civil Economy and profound focus on gift and gratuitousness give CV some of its distinctive character and significance.

In evaluating economic systems from the perspective of CST, it is necessary to interrogate their structural nature to uncover hidden mechanisms for inculcating, reinforcing, or propagating sin. A system designed to support prosperity and eliminate poverty could inadvertently yield violence, as we will see with the liberation theology critique of neoliberalism.

⁴⁷ Maciej Zieba, *Papal Economics*, 135, 155.

⁴⁸ *Ibid* 58-9, 168, 173.

Moreover, we must discern the underlying values and assumptions, especially regarding the human person who is the foundation and ultimate purpose of any system. Although the outer appearance of certain ideologies (here we restrict our examination to economic ideologies) may utilize lingo and concepts that have also reappeared in CST, as well as advance goals seemingly also endorsed by the Church, deeper inquiry may reveal fundamental disagreements that make such ideologies hard to reconcile with CST.

Liberation Theology's View of Economic Violence

The great insight of liberation theology is to note the presence of economic, political and social structures that stand in the way of human beings living into their giftedness and into being gifts for others. Obstacles to liberation are not only exterior to the human being but also interior. Liberation theology has also drawn attention to sin as acts of commission and omission, including a willful blindness to the reality of inhumanity in constructed social relationships that press their devastating weight on the weakest in society. Such institutionalization and willful blindness does violence to the human person, whether victim or perpetrator, and to the *imago Dei*. Ultimately, liberation theology serves as a reminder to look to the concrete situations of peoples that call for redress.

While liberation theology shares the fundamental Christian anthropology of CST, its theological method distinguishes it from a classical approach to theology. Liberation theology takes as its starting point the experience of the marginalized poor instead of theological principles. It is from a lived faith that questions are formed and from which theological responses, in light of the Word of God, are constructed. Rather than philosophy as its primary analytical lens, liberation theology turns to the social sciences, including economics and political

theory for analytical tools to understand and address realities of poverty and social exclusion. Without conflating the kingdom of God with the political goals of these theologies, they draw an explicit connection between political action and the redemptive work of Christ. More succinctly, Clodovis Boff tells us that “whereas the social teachings of the church offers the grand orientation for Christians’ social action, liberation theology, seeks, on the one hand, to *integrate* these orientations into its synthesis, and on the other, to *explicate*, them in creative fashion from the concrete context of the Third World.”⁴⁹

The birth of Latin American liberation theology came in part as a rejection of the development model of economics that was perceived as neo-colonial imposition of the development strategies of the developed North without due consideration for the concrete circumstances of the communities that these strategies were intended to benefit. Instead, these development strategies were viewed as advancing the interests of the developed North and the economic elites of the developing South, perpetuating the underlying problem of dependency.⁵⁰ In addition, materialistic values seemed to take precedence over human dignity, integral human development, and peoples’ sovereignty. IMF loans and the subsequent structural adjustment programs imposed upon loan default served as poignant examples. Numerous instances occurred in which multinational corporations exploited the conditions created by the free market agenda of Bretton Woods institutions⁵¹ and the Washington Consensus⁵². Such exploitation was

⁴⁹ Clodovis Boff, “Methodology of Liberation Theology,” in *Systematic Theology*, 18.

⁵⁰ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 16-17.

⁵¹ These include the International Monetary Fund, IBRD, which was to become The World Bank. What was to become the World Trade Organization, then called the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, was also negotiated around the same time.

⁵² For definition and disambiguation, see:

“Washington Consensus”, *Global Trade Negotiations Homepage*, Center for International Development at Harvard University, 2003. <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidtrade/issues/washington.html>

occasionally met with successful rebellion from populations in the South; the case of water privatization and Bechtel in Bolivia furnishes us with a prime example⁵³. Economic development may have yielded prosperity for the powerful at the expense of the poverty of vulnerable and marginalized populations. The neo-liberal economic development model permits the purpose of business to remain profit-maximization under the guise of an Adam Smith style aggregate welfare justification for such selfish motives. The reality in Latin America seemed to disprove these theoretical presuppositions about the relationship between profit and social prosperity. It was recognized by various liberation movements that economic development did not bring about the liberation of the poor nor allows them to become genuine agents of their future. And it was such agency, the capacity for self-determination not only of individuals but also of communities that was at stake.⁵⁴ The dominant strategy of constructing solutions in economic and political power centers for problems at the periphery gets inverted by liberation theology, which begins with the concrete context of the reality of base ecclesial communities and their struggles.

Latin American liberation theology has as its interlocutors the “non-persons,” those who are systemically excluded from economic and political power both on the macro-level and on those levels that most affect them. More than the challenge of non-belief that occupied Western theological thought at the time of the birth of this theology, it was the challenge of the existence of the “non-persons” that made belief in the God of Jesus Christ, the God of love and

It should be noted that identifying the Washington Consensus as a key source of exploitation is due to the fact that it was primarily elites in developing economies connected with the U.S. who benefitted from U.S. driven development schemes.

⁵³ For a summary of this case, see:

William Finnegan, “Leasing the Rain: The world is running out of fresh water, and the fight to control it has begun,” *The New Yorker*, April 8, 2002. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/04/08/leasing-the-rain>

Juan Forero, “Bolivia Regrets IMF Experiment,” *The New York Times*, December 14, 2005.

http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/14/business/worldbusiness/14iht-water.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

⁵⁴ Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free: Confrontations* (Maryknoll, Orbis, 1990), 129-132.

compassion difficult.⁵⁵ These movements found a more natural proclivity for identification with the crucified, rather than the resurrected, Christ. Those regarded as “non-persons” by the dominant paradigm became identified as the crucified people.⁵⁶

This theology would influence the theology of the Latin American bishops, particularly in their second and third gatherings in Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979) where “institutionalized violence” and “structural sin” became part of the language of the Church.⁵⁷ Captured within these concepts is the idea that the consequences of personal acts of self-interest and greed become embedded in systems and structures that supersede the intent of any individual and lead to the dehumanization of multitudes. Thus the idea of liberation from sin, a concept understood in terms of personal volitional acts, became explicitly linked with the work of liberation from economic and political systems oppressive to the masses of poor and marginalized. It is important to note the utopian political ideal is the horizon towards which the work of liberation moves, aware of the reality of sin and not to be confused with the kingdom of God, understood ultimately as gift.⁵⁸

Certain liberation theorists insisted that part of our work is to “get the people off the cross.” Ignacio Ellacuría, SJ, as well as Archbishop Oscar Romero, both martyred for their work with the poor, used the language of a “crucified people” to talk about the systematic oppression

⁵⁵ Robert McAfee Brown, *Theology in a New Key: Responding to Liberation Themes* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 62-64.

⁵⁶ Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological View* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 254-271.

⁵⁷ See for example, Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM II), “The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council” (August 16-September 6, 1968) in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, 110 and Third General Conference of the Latin American Bishops, “Evangelization in Latin America’s Present and Future” (Puebla de los Angeles, Mexico, January 27-February 13, 1979) in *Liberation Theology*, 234-235.

⁵⁸ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 135-140.

of people who are poor in El Salvador and other parts of Latin America.⁵⁹ Jon Sobrino, SJ, unpacks this image in a number of his works.⁶⁰ The image is intended to powerfully communicate the horrors inflicted on the poor and excluded and to connect them to Jesus and his fate. At the same time, it serves as a reminder that they are placed on the cross by unjust acts that beg for transformation. The crucified people suffer from unjust social, political, and economic orders rife with structural sin. Their crucifixion, like that of Jesus, serves as a sign of the reality of sin in the world. What should never be lost is that this theology is firmly rooted in the lived faith experiences of the Latin American poor wrestling to make sense of the good news proclaimed by Jesus Christ and its concrete demands in the midst of their dehumanizing social situation.

A key element in the birth of liberation theology was the recognition of the importance of the social sciences in providing analytical tools for understanding and ultimately addressing the reality of systems and structures that lead to the exclusion of peoples from the economic and political spheres. Pope Francis' strong critique of prevailing free-market economics is informed by his experience of and solidarity with those who have been systematically excluded from participation in the economic and political realms. He provides a realist caution against the individualism, materialism and blatant disregard for humanity that prevails in much of contemporary culture and vehemently critiques unquestioning "trust in the unseen forces and the

⁵⁹ Ignacio Ellarcuria, "The Crucified People," in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, ed., Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellarcuria (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 257-278.

⁶⁰ Jon Sobrino, "The Human Being and the Christian 'Taking the Crucified People Down from the Cross,'" in *Love that Produces Hope: The Thought of Ignacio Ellarcuria* (Collegeville: Michael Glazer Books, 2006), 1-67. See also: Jon Sobrino, *Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994. See also:

Gerald Beyer, "Freedom as a Challenge to an Ethic of Solidarity in a Neoliberal Capitalist World: Lessons from Post-1989 Poland", *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 133-167, 2009 3.

invisible hand of the market.” Coupled with his critique and invitation to place our attention on those who are excluded and the impact of the economy on the poorest among us is the acknowledgement that “growth in justice requires more than economic growth, while presupposing such growth.”⁶¹

The influence of liberation theology on Pope Francis is most evident in his theological method. He is often described as being pastoral, which can be understood as attuned to the situation on the ground. The starting point of human experience is evident in his official writings like *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si'*, which help establish the sense of urgency often read in his documents.⁶² Analytical tools provided by the sciences inform his analysis of the reality under consideration.⁶³ Such analysis is brought to bear on the process of discerning the response that is consistent with the Gospel and the tradition of Catholic social thought in light of the concrete circumstances in which these actions are to be taken. More than theories from liberation theology, it is the method of liberation theology that is most evident even in Francis' official writings. It is movement from concrete situations that are analyzed using scientific tools and examined through the lens of faith that call for concrete action. This is liberation theology's method and Francis' method.

⁶¹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, para. 204.

⁶² Note for example his critique of trickle-down economics in *Evangelii Gaudium* where he notes that this idea “has never been confirmed by the facts.” *Ibid.*, para. 54. After locating the document within the long history of Catholic social thought on ecology, Francis begins *Laudato Si'* by looking at “what is happening to our common home,” (para. 17) describing the concrete degradation that is taking place with a view to “to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.” para. 19.

⁶³ “John Paul II said that the Church values their [social science] research, which helps her “to derive concrete indications helpful for her magisterial mission”. *Ibid.*, para 40, citing Motu Proprio *Socialium Scientiarum* (1 January 1994): AAS 86 (1994), 209.

Evaluation of Economic Systems in Light of a CST Animated by Liberation Theology

From this proposed vantage point of a CST animated by liberation theology, as represented by the new direction led by Francis, we now turn to an evaluation of economic theories. We begin with a classic clash of paradigms as represented by libertarianism as viewed from the standpoint of liberation theology. We then turn to the seemingly more modest New Institutional Economics, as viewed from a Catholic vantage point that considers liberation theology methodologies. Finally, we provide an overview of some new directions in economics more congenial to the approach to CST led by Francis and consider some directions for future research.

A Clash of Paradigms: Liberation Theology vs. Libertarianism

At a 2014 conference at Catholic University, entitled, *Erroneous Autonomy: The Catholic Case Against Libertarianism*, the scholars made a decision not to dialogue with libertarians because the libertarian position was defined as inherently contrary to CST.⁶⁴ Before we address those tensions, we will elucidate the distinctions between libertarianism and liberation theology, as these offer two of the most diverging theories of justice. When CST is viewed under the framework of liberation theology, libertarian economic theories seem particularly hostile to Catholic visions of justice. We will later note how a continuum exists between these extremes and the more moderate divergences that exist between CST and the economics discipline. So, we extend the findings of this conference to consider some of the

⁶⁴ Joshua McElwee, “Cardinal Staunchly Defends Pope’s Critiques of Capitalism”, *National Catholic Reporter*, June 3, 2014.

incompatibilities between CST and economics, in addition to those between CST and libertarianism.

Both liberation theology and libertarianism center on the value of freedom. However, they differ in their views on the meaning of freedom and sources of un-freedom. The more communal emphasis of liberation theology stands in contrast to the individualism of libertarianism. For liberation theology, freedom is not only from oppressive economic and political systems but, ultimately, *from sin for self-actualization*. Such freedom has value ultimately not only in order to ensure individual agency but to allow for the full flourishing of each person in community.⁶⁵ This theological movement seeks the liberation of people from oppressive systems that have set up a kingdom contrary to the reign of God. Contrarily, libertarianism, arising from the liberal political tradition in Europe, remains neutral on questions of the good, leaving each individual free to pursue his own conception of the good life.⁶⁶ For libertarianism, freedom is a matter of pursuit of individual desires based on individual values. Individual freedom ought be only circumscribed minimally by avoidance of fraud, coercion, murder, physical harm, and violation of contract or property. Property rights and liberty remain closely entwined for libertarians, and liberty may even be viewed as a form of self-ownership.⁶⁷ Libertarian freedom regards other people and primarily the state as threats to individual liberty.

⁶⁵ The seminal work of Gustavo Gutiérrez, considered the father of liberation theology, is a useful guide here. *A Theology of Liberation*, 15th Anniversary Ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), 22-24.

⁶⁶ We see this view in appear in liberal theories generally, not just those of libertarians. The idea is particularly important in the work of Rawls, who himself was a great critic of libertarianism and *laissez-faire* economics:

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice, Revised Edition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, 393.

⁶⁷ Jonathan Wolff, *Robert Nozick: Property, Justice, and the Minimal State*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991, 7-8.

Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009, 58-74.

In advancing a minimal state, libertarians seek to preserve the rights of the individual from majoritarian tyranny.

Note that the clash of paradigms is most extreme when liberation theology is juxtaposed with libertarianism. Neither paradigm is mainstream within CST or economics. In fact, while the current pope is more sympathetic to liberation theology⁶⁸, his predecessor, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued two documents cautioning against this theology.⁶⁹ However, we will see that some of differences between these two paradigms parallel tensions between CST and other economic theories.

Libertarians and advocates of what has come to be called neo-liberalism interpret the events in Latin America and the global South that gave birth to liberation theology through entirely different theoretical lenses. Neo-liberalism marries libertarian political ideology with neo-classical economics as developed in the Chicago school of economics. Some historically

⁶⁸ Recall that, while not a liberation theologian, Pope Francis was formed out of the Latin American context, which is heavily influenced by liberation theology, particularly the CELAM meetings in Medellín, Columbia (1968) and Puebla Mexico (1979) meetings. He presided over the CELAM V, which met in Apariceda, Brazil in 2007. Gustavo Gutierrez's visit to the Vatican in the first year of Pope Francis' pontificate was seen as a reversal of attitudes in the Vatican towards this theology. See for example: Joshua J. McElwee. "Pope meets with liberation theology pioneer," *National Catholic Reporter*, 23 September 2013. <http://ncronline.org/news/theology/pope-meets-liberation-theology-pioneer> [accessed 11 May 2015]; David Gibson, "Liberation Theology Founder Basks in a Pope Francis Inspired Rehabilitation," *America*, 8 May 2015. <http://americamagazine.org/content/all-things/liberation-theology-founder-gustavo-gutierrez-basks-pope-francis-inspired> [accessed 11 May 2015].

⁶⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instructions on Certain Aspects of Liberation Theology" (1984) and "Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation" (1986). Leading liberation theologians like Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff were both subject to investigation and critique by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. See "Ten Observations on the Theology of Gustavo Gutierrez" (March 1983) and "Notification Sent to Fr. Leonardo Boff regarding Errors in His Book, *Church: Charism and Power*" (March 11, 1985) in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995). While the documents from the Doctrine of the Congregation of the Faith were seen as having in mind theologians like Gutierrez and Boff in their critiques, defenders of these theologians argue that these documents misunderstand the works of these theologians. See for example Raymond Bautista Aguas, "Relating Faith and Political Action: Utopia in the Theology of Gustavo Gutierrez," Ph.D. diss. University of Notre Dame, 2007. CurateND. <https://curate.nd.edu/show/9306sx63f99>.

important figures in this tradition are Robert Nozick, Milton Friedman, and Friedrich von Hayek.⁷⁰

Robert Nozick's entitlement theory opposes redistribution of resources, holding that a given distribution of resources is just as long as it came about through just means.⁷¹ Just means preclude violations of commonly held moral duties such as duties not to steal, kill, enslave, lie, defraud, cheat, or overtly coerce. Nozick's view would permit even extremely inegalitarian distributions of resources in society to be just.⁷² Formal political and economic liberties, especially property rights, remain the building blocks of Nozick's libertarian entitlement theory of justice. On this view, inequality is just so long as the relevant liberties are upheld by the system of political economy. While a post-colonial theorist might counter Nozick's claims that his theory insists on historically just antecedents by pointing out the background of genocide, slavery, and conquest that undergird the current distribution of resources, Nozick does not thoroughly address such critiques, but rather poses a series of questions, such as wondering how far back we must trace the history behind current entitlement holdings.⁷³ The global free market agenda advanced by The Washington Consensus and IMF structural adjustment programs would in Nozick's eyes serve a more just political economic order at the global level.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Another article that deals with these figures is:

Mary Hirschfeld, "What are Economic Goods For? A Prolegomenon to the Question of Economic Justice", *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, Vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 305-327, 2014.

⁷¹ Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. Basic Books, 1974.

⁷² For a discussion of the implications of this view for economics education, see:

David F. Carrithers and Dean Peterson, "Conflicting Views of Markets and Economic Justice: Implications for Student Learning", *Journal of Business Ethics* 69, no. 4 (2006), 380.

⁷³ Nozick, 152. To Nozick's credit, he later acknowledges the possibility that his principle of rectification of injustice in holdings could require a more than minimal state for short period of time if the nature of the injustices have been so grave as to warrant it. See p. 231.

⁷⁴ See also:

Mary Hirschfeld, "What are Economic Goods For? A Prolegomenon to the Question of Economic Justice", *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, Vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 305-327, 2014.

Milton Friedman popularized ideas that can mainly be traced to his mentor Friedrich von Hayek. Hayek's *The Mirage of Social Justice* provides a sustained critique of the goals of social justice.⁷⁵ While he acknowledges the value of the intended ends, his arguments seek to demonstrate that the means to those ends necessarily violate liberty rights.⁷⁶ Moreover, he argues that the consequences of morally driven economic schemes that aim at greater equality eventually usher in totalitarian regimes.⁷⁷ Hayek's writings, and Friedman's following Hayek's⁷⁸, tend to conflate social justice with socialism or communism, the latter forms of political economy being construed as inherently requiring totalitarian structures for implementation.⁷⁹ As with Nozick, the state is assumed to be a coercive institution that fundamentally threatens the rights and freedoms of the individual. Libertarian theories draw their strength from their aims at protecting individuals from arbitrary and coercive powers. They tend to pit individualism against collectivism wherein collective bodies are regarded as inherently antithetical to the good of unique persons.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ For another treatment of Friedman and Hayek, see:

Robert F. Pecorella, "Property Rights, the Common Good and the State:

The Catholic View of Market Economies", *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 235-284, 2008.

Kishor Thanawala, "Globalization and Economic Justice: A Social Economist's Perspective", *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, vol. 2, no.

1, pp. 53-84, 2005.

⁷⁶ See also, Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 37-48.

⁷⁷ "It is indeed the concept of 'social justice' which has been the Trojan Horse through which totalitarianism has entered."

Hayek, *The Mirage of Social Justice*, 136.

⁷⁸ Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits," *The New York Times Magazine*, 1970.

⁷⁹ See also the discussion of this view in:

Dean Peterson and David Carrithers, "Integrating a Social Justice Perspective in Economics Education: Creating a Distinctly Catholic Education, *Catholic Education /A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*. (2011), 421.

⁸⁰ This theme arguably dominates much of Hayek's reasoning, particularly in *The Road to Serfdom*.

Not only does libertarianism conflict with liberation theology, but it sits in very uneasy tension with CST, particularly in assumptions about the nature of humanity, and what it means to flourish. CST acknowledges the dangers of both extremes of individualism and collectivism. It carves out a vision of justice based on an anthropology wherein the social nature of the human person presumes that an individual cannot fully cultivate and express his/her God given gifts outside of a corporate relationship to larger social bodies. But, societies may not degrade or devalue individual persons, each of whom deserve human dignity, as beings made in the image of God. There is a deeply sacred dimension to each person that cannot be discarded, overridden, ignored, neglected, or deprived for the sake of collective purposes.

A Catholic Evaluation of North's Economic Solution to Violence

Insofar as the sacred dimension of the human person is violated by economic systems and structures, notions of violence come into play. In this section we explore the meaning of economic violence as viewed from CST and the anthropology that underpins it. From this theological lens, we evaluate the theory of open-access systems elaborated by North⁸¹ considering his view of the human person. Where appropriate, we also apply insights from the previous section on liberation theology and libertarianism. We will see that a parallel contrast plays out between that of liberation theology vs. libertarianism and that of CST and more mainstream economics.

An example can be found in the work of Douglass North, who explores how economic systems form to address physical violence in society, progressively evolving towards the point that the economic system almost eliminates physical violence at the individual/group levels

⁸¹ In what follows, North et. al. will simply be referred to as North.

while concentrating it in the hands of the state. Douglass North's theory of open-access systems may appear compatible with CST in its focus on rights, fairness, and inclusion, however these systems entail a consolidation in control over violence that enhances global power imbalances. The open-access systems preferred by North resolve problems of violence in society through the monopolization of violence by the state, where the state supposedly makes use of violence only to uphold principles of justice and then administers violence in an abstract, impersonal, and hence "fair" way. However the need to monopolize such violence does concentrate violence over time so that the state retains considerable power over the individual, a point most feared by libertarians. In addition, principles of justice are not in fact applied fairly, as money, power, and privilege systematically advantage some at the expense of others. The military and prison industrial complexes in the U.S. signal serious failures of justice in one of the most powerful countries in the world. Hence, the economic system favored by North generates a new form of violence, of a different kind than that critiqued by liberation theology, and may constitute a type of economic violence. Moreover, North's vision of the state does not appear quite compatible with CST's view on the state's role to protect the most vulnerable through a balance of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity.⁸²

North argues that political and economic structures evolve as ways to resolve problems of violence in society. His theory advances the view that market based systems, insofar as they are open-access, advance the common good better than historically antecedent forms of political economy in which access to economic and political processes remained limited to those in power. Open-access systems are characterized by a de-personalization of participants, which he interprets as permitting the concepts of citizenship and rights. Human beings become abstract

⁸² U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 351.

participants in larger processes; consequently dependency on elite status, personal networks, and nepotism as guarantees of opportunity and advantage declines. Equal opportunity and fairness follow, although actual equality of economic outcome and political power does not. North's theory might suggest that markets would serve as vehicles for realizing social justice.

According to North's historical analysis, the movement from more personalist systems to open-access systems is not something that can be intended, but rather has been the consequence of elites inadvertently creating more open-access systems in their attempts to consolidate their power. If that is the case, then grassroots movements that attempt to improve the economic conditions of the economically marginalized may need to create strategies that not only benefit the poor but that have economic benefit to the already affluent in order to garner their support for the success of these efforts with the long term goal of increasing economic power among the economically poor to a level that will bring about sufficient political power to galvanize change.

The economic advantage and consequent political advantage afforded to both the elite and the economically disempowered would be uneven because the impact of the increased economic advantage would lead to uneven political advantage. For example, an economically elite person may earn \$2M from a venture that only increases the buying power of a community by a few hundred dollars/mo/family. A presupposition is that the impact of \$2M for the elite may be minimal in terms of the additional political or economic influence it garners her, while the additional \$300 for the economically disadvantaged can mean access to education for their children that would allow them a perceived significant increase in political power. The increase in political advantage is marginal, just as an increase from further wealth is marginal, as wealth increases. While such a theory would allow the poor to benefit increasingly both economically and politically over time, a critic of North might argue that such increases in both spheres remain

insufficient to the project of realizing justice in society. Although North does not seem to offer an opinion from a distributive paradigm, advocates of such a paradigm could point out that the differences in political benefits constitute reasons to redistribute economic gains. Consolidation of economic and political power in the hands of the wealthy threatens others when great inequalities remain, even if the poor's plight is improving as a result of elite ventures.⁸³

While North's logic may be consistent with CST from the standpoint of enhancing both political and economic rights for all, it may remain blind to factors that truly promote the common good. The Catholic view of the common good arises from an anthropology in which human beings are considered as fundamentally relational beings.⁸⁴ Made in the image of a Trinitarian God, created originally as man and woman, and ultimately born into and raised in families, human beings have an identity that is at once uniquely individual and relationally collective. Equality, solidarity, and fraternity help to bind the human being in society. Marriage, the family, and the trinity serve as models for understanding the common good of the human community. Economic models that de-personalize humans in ways that encourage people to view themselves as isolated individuals competitively seeking their own self-interest undermine and degrade the humanity of the individual and the fabric that binds humans into a flourishing community. In addition, consequences of policies should be considered alongside the nature of the processes that engender them.

Toward a Renewed Role for and Value of Markets and Business

⁸³ North himself acknowledges that open-access systems sometimes fail (as would be the case given the above eventuality), as do all economic systems from time to time. However, he believes that open-access systems fail far less frequently than closed-access systems.

⁸⁴ This insight could also be used to deepen North's theories and expand them to allow for greater complexities. Such an approach would seek synergies rather than tensions between North and CST.

It is important to note the diversity of subfields within economics, and hence the challenges of making generalizations about the discipline of economics as a whole. Although we have mainly focused on the work of Douglass North as representative of a particular strand of economics, we here note how considerations of ethics and justice have played a more prominent role in the discipline and the degree to which contemporary economists can incorporate such considerations. We point to places where the discipline of economics and CST can mutually inform one another. This will not be an exhaustive account, but hopes to contribute modestly to the ballooning literature on this topic.⁸⁵

Although the 20th century has seen a progressive mathematization of the discipline of economics, along with a tendency to circumscribe the scope of moral concern by staying neutral about questions of the value of ends sought⁸⁶, the discipline had previously engaged in more robust dialogue with moral sciences, particularly utilitarianism.⁸⁷ Yet, as Tony Judt notes, the 20th century discourse on economics has also remained dominated by a left-right political debate. He attributes the present-day aversion to social democracy in the U.S. to “economism”, which he asserts emerged out of this debate, where the views of Hayek came to prevail.⁸⁸ Libertarian economics makes an attempt to restrict the scope of moral concern within economics as well as to broaden the power and application of the economic spheres in society.

⁸⁵ See a parallel discussion in:

Dean Peterson and David Carrithers, “Integrating a Social Justice Perspective in Economics Education: Creating a Distinctly Catholic Education, *Catholic Education /A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*. (2011), 420-421.

⁸⁶ Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature & Significance of Economic Science* (Auburn, AL: Mises Institute, 2007, 1932), p. 23.

⁸⁷ William Stanley Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy* 1871, I.29 – I.35.

It is important to note that the Church has remained critical of utilitarianism.

⁸⁸ Tony Judt, “What is Living and What is Dead in Social Democracy?” *The New York Review of Books*, December 17, 2009.

Yet, it is possible to renew our understanding of the nature and value of markets. The Catholic social tradition has acknowledged the importance of the wealth-generating function of business so long as it engenders prosperity and reduces poverty through the production of goods and services that legitimately contribute to human flourishing. Considerations of just distribution and sustainable wealth production, as emphasized in VBL's practical principles for business, serve as important additional constraints on the pursuit of wealth. Business purpose must be viewed in light of the role business plays in well-functioning markets, and the true nature and value of markets for the common good.

New works in economics also highlight further benefits to markets that could be considered more thoroughly by CST. For example, John Kay argues that economists have tended to focus overly much on the value of the price mechanism for efficient resource allocation.⁸⁹ He argues that markets may also be characterized by two additional elements: as “processes of discovery” and as “mechanism(s) for the diffusion of political and economic power.” The latter characteristic is reminiscent of North's conception of open-access systems. Kay emphasizes that markets be evaluated separately from what is good for individual businesses; what is good for businesses may involve accumulations of economic and political power that degrades the market as a whole. If markets are allowed to evolve as an “adaptive biological system” they can serve to break up concentrations of economic and political power. From a pro-government perspective the question would then concern how laws and regulations may best support markets in this adaptive function. From the perspective of CST, the role of government still remains an issue,

⁸⁹ John Kay, “The Rationale of the Market Economy: A European Perspective.” *Capitalism and Society* 4, no. 3, 2009. pp 1-10.

but even more so the importance of the values and principles that drive human agents, as they co-create with God, in the sphere of the marketplace.

A future direction of this course of research would be to explore the theorizations of Civil Economy, resurrected by Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni from the Italian Enlightenment⁹⁰. The latter had been intimately involved in the writing of *Caritas in Veritate*, emphasizing the logic of gift and the spirit of gratuitousness. The idea of civil economy represents not an ideology of political economy but an emerging set of practices in the market place based out of a robust civil society in which the spirit of reciprocity and gratuitousness prevails. It is based on a Latin Catholic positive anthropology of the human being as fundamentally social and relational and hence inclined towards pro-social behavior, contrary to the more Calvinist suppositions that undergirded the Scottish Enlightenment as manifested in the works of Adam Smith and its subsequent evolution in the neo-classical economics that prevails today. Future studies should examine how Bruni and Zamagni's theories of civil economy might be brought to bear on the direction to CST led by Pope Francis.

Concluding Thoughts

Pope Francis' challenge demands not just the knowledge and applications of principles of CST but of politics manifested in "sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots—and not just the appearances—of evils in our world,"⁹¹ and economics, of "the art of

⁹⁰ Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni, *Civil Economy: Another Idea of the Market*. Newcastle: Agenda (2016).

Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni (Editors), *Handbook on the Economics of Reciprocity and Social Enterprise*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar (2013).

⁹¹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, para. 205. See also, *Laudato Si'*, Chapter Five.

achieving a fitting management of our common home, which is the world as a whole.”⁹² We have suggested that the liberation theology context from which Francis comes has served to enrich CST by bringing a deeper contextual awareness to an evaluation of economic systems and the forms of violence associated with them. Such grounding in the lived experience of various contexts brings the principles of CST to life in a new way and furthers the potential for dialogue across and within disciplines. This sort of methodology can balance out the principles-driven approach of CST so as to better avoid some of the pitfalls in application to the real world.

We have emphasized the works of a Friedrich von Hayek and Douglass North to illustrate the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue as these represent perspectives that challenge elements of both liberation theology and CST. Dialogue is critical as it allows for the possibility of learning from others. Indeed, *Laudato Si'* argues that dialogue across institutions, sectors, and disciplines will be crucial for bringing peace and justice to our common home. Such dialogue will help us navigate the dynamics of principles and application in mutually informing ways. Dialogue will be necessary for the inclusion of multiple voices, and especially those of the most vulnerable and marginalized, and will also further the goals of peace. Ultimately, such a process may allow us to journey from economic violence toward justice in pursuit of the common good.

⁹² *Evangelii Gaudium*, para. 206. The term “common home” came to structure the concept of ecology laid out in *Laudato Si'* as exemplified by its use in the subtitle of the encyclical.