

This paper is the result of my participation in the event The Economy of Francesco in November 2020 as member of Women for Economy village.

A Change of Horizon: the Care Paradigm

Sara Echeverri Rodríguez*

My analysis is focused on chapters two and three of the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), “A stranger on the road” and “Envisaging and engineering an open world,” where Pope Francis sheds light over the “dark clouds” and the problems of society. These problems have become clearer because the COVID-19 pandemic revealed structural inequalities and the 10% vs. 90% gap between the richest and the poorest of the world. This light is possible through a different perspective, a change of horizon that is going to answer questions such as: is it possible to change the growth economic model for one that privileges integral human development? What if human dignity is seen as a priority with respect to benefits and revenue? What if instead of work for market freedom, we work for person’s freedom? What if policy makers use new measures for well-being and quality of life, measures that really reflect most people’s situations rather than the status of the well-to-do?

The aim of this paper is to show an alternative to the technocratic paradigm related with the neo-liberal economic system; this alternative is the paradigm of care related with fraternity, equality, social friendship, justice and the common good. Further, I will show how women are part of this transformation of our polyhedral reality; the polyhedron expresses how unity is created while preserving the identities and cultures of everyone. First, I present the current economic system (the technocratic paradigm) in a brief history from its beginning and its principles formulated by Adam Smith. Then, based on Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si*, I describe the issues of this paradigm. Later, I focus on the care paradigm, explain its principles and characteristics, and how women (Nussbaum, Duflo, Ostrom) contribute to rethinking economics, starting from the common good, human development, and quality education.

The Technocratic Paradigm

In our time, the economic system is based on the technocratic paradigm that promotes market freedom, infinite economic growth with poverty, inequality, and a lack of integral human development. An

explanation for excluding the human person could be the tendency to confuse human goods with merchandise. The first has an intangible value—such as a joke or a conversation with a friend. The other has an exchange value (a price)—such as a cellphone or a coffee. Due to the logic of capitalism, everything is commercialized, not only objects, but also food, organs and DNA.

How did this happen? How did we become a market society? Varoufakis (2017) states that before the Industrial Revolution there were societies with markets, where people exchanged food and animals for other goods. However, market societies were born when the three factors of production, land, labor, and capital, were turned into commodities: when they started to have exchange values, buying and selling became of the basis of the economy.

Therefore, the economic system places people’s individual interest at the center instead of the social well-being of others. This is one of the principles and conditions for economic progress considered by Adam Smith¹

Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. Nobody but a beggar chose to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens. (1977, 16)

Thus, the pursuit of self-interest is a way of boosting the market, because everyone is trying to maximize something; consumers maximize their individual satisfaction, the companies maximize their profits.

Unfortunately, the consequence of the invisible hand conception, according to which if everyone cares for their self-interest the market will self-regulate, is neg-

ative, because we have become indifferent to the pain and suffering of those around us; all becomes relative to the market dynamics. Human beings are valued based exclusively on the efficiency, effectiveness and usefulness of this approach and hence our identity is reduced to being consumers, ruthless exploiters that only care for their own immediate needs. This will only change when human dignity starts to be part of the equation, when *being* is prioritized over *being useful*.

There are two current situations which reflect and illustrate the lack of authentic social and moral progress.

- The pandemic has exposed and deepened global inequality. According to the World Bank in its report “Reversals of Fortune,” (2020) people who are already poor and vulnerable are bearing the burden of the crisis. These people include those with lower levels of education, insecure employment and lower-skilled occupations. Women are part of this group too; they suffered greater exposure to covid-19 because of their work and responsibilities in many households. The increase in domestic and sexual violence against women is also disproportionate.

At the same time, the fortune of billionaires rose 27% during the global lockdown. In turn, statistics show that in 2020 almost 100 million people were pushed into extreme poverty. The lack of a common horizon is real; more wealth does not mean more education, human responsibility, values or consciousness. Pope Francis points out to how finance overwhelms the real economy, where every advance in technology is accepted as long as it is profitable, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings (*Laudato si*, 109).

- Technological disruption accompanied by the revolutions in biotech and infotech—which will enable us to manufacture and manipulate life—constitute a problem for human labor and dignity. In the face of artificial intelligence, people could become increasingly irrelevant if algorithms become better and more efficient. Harari (2018)

suggests that “for every dollar and every minute we invest in improving artificial intelligence, it would be wise to invest a dollar and a minute in advancing human consciousness” (p. 93). Pope Francis (2015) agrees with this when he highlights that immense technological development has not been accompanied by development in human responsibility, values and conscience. Unfortunately, at present we are not doing much to research and develop human consciousness and integral development.

However, the goal is going out of ourselves to recognize other creatures for their true worth, building relationships outside the market logic where gratuity is what comes first, listening to the voice of others, and especially women, when they are excluded, mistreated and ignored, and calling each other brothers and sisters.

The Care Paradigm

In *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), Pope Francis invites us to become a neighbor, like the Good Samaritan who stopped when he saw an abandoned man on the side of the road, because we all share responsibility to help the wounded, and care for the needs of every man and women as we pursue the common good.

There is an alternative, a change on the horizon that is possible with *the care paradigm*, which is a new economic model, showing the fruit of a community based on fraternity and equality. First, we must imitate the qualities and the attitude of the Good Samaritan, in particular his willingness of helping other people because “life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity” (FT, 87).

Pope Francis calls for a fraternity that leads us to transcend our own limitations, borders and barriers; a fraternity that creates community between neighbors not just business partnership or associates in a company; a fraternity in which we acknowledge the worth and dignity of every human being; a fraternity that becomes part of the new economic model integrating human development.

It is therefore necessary to have a better kind of politics and better leaders, ones who truly serve the common good. Charity is the central virtue in the care paradigm, the compass that guides us to the promotion of integral human devel-

opment through service and little habits of solidarity (Petrini 2020). Also, Pope Francis suggests *political charity* as a way forward, not only as an expression among our close kin but also in macroeconomic relationships, in social, economic and political circles.

This can become concrete and real when it is accompanied by bold actions like welcoming differences, making small gestures of mutual care in the civic sphere, promoting education among the poor, while also building bridges and creating jobs; everyone can practice charity to ennoble his or her political, social activity. Besides, Pope Francis states “good politics combines love with hope and with confidence in the reserves of goodness present in human hearts. Indeed, authentic political life, built upon respect for law and frank dialogue between individuals, is constantly renewed whenever there is a realization that every woman and man and every new generation, brings the promise of new relational, intellectual, cultural and spiritual energies” (FT, 196)

The care paradigm and political charity are a special invitation for women, because with our sensibility and intuition we make room for others, listen, and have dialogues attentive to different points of view, changing the way we view things. The presence of women in social life can help to show the contradictions present in the economic system and contribute to the processes of humanization in an alternative civilization.

Women have lived according to models of care that privilege communion through a recognition of others, so it is common to find women in positions—in companies, foundations, government institutions, schools, households—in which they fight to preserve human dignity, to defend family, those who are more vulnerable and human rights, to benefit the underprivileged, to protect the seed of social friendship and universal fraternity.

Indeed, the contribution of women such as Elinor Ostrom and Esther Duflo—the only two women who have won the Nobel Prize in economics—invites us to look for other ways to understand economics and progress, according to the value of each creature and the necessity of honest dialogue. Their views are also related in an unexplicit form with the Social Doctrine of the Church (2005) because they underline the relevance of **truth** in social relationships and **freedom** as the highest sign of human dignity.

(Freedom) an expression of the singu-

larity of each human person, is respected when every member of society is permitted to fulfil his personal vocation; to seek the truth and profess his religious, cultural and political ideas; to express his opinions; to choose his state of life and, as far as possible, his line of work; to pursue initiatives of an economic, social or political nature. This must take places within a strong juridical framework, within the limits imposed by the common good and public order, and, in every case, in a manner characterized by responsibility (200).

Justice comprehends an idea of social justice that encompasses social, political and economic aspects for identifying the dimensions of problems and their solutions. Women such as Ostrom (2009) promote governance from the commons, i.e., exploring mechanisms for tackling common problems that faced communities across the world, avoiding both statist and market-oriented approaches. This attitude helps form collaborative solutions, and a core goal in public policy should be to facilitate the development of institutions that bring out the best in humans. In a post COVID-19 future this will become necessary for achieving the common interest.

Furthermore, Duflo (2019) works with an experimental approach that studies the causes of global poverty and how best to combat it by means of four interventions: the increase in educational attainment through incentives for families, health interventions (field experiments in Kenya), the improvement of school quality, and nutrition. Her focus is on concrete solutions because both the pandemic and the crisis of 2008 had demonstrated, as Pope Francis writes, that not everything can be solved by market freedom; the fundamental task in international economics is integral development and striving for an equitable distribution of resources.

Overall, women can help to create a *polyhedral reality* in which everyone has a place and build it alongside men, committed to equality, freedom and fraternity. Women with the *feminine genius*, as John Paul II called their mission, are committed to work for a change in the world: proclaiming and denouncing the dark clouds but shedding light as guardians of the four social values: truth, freedom, justice and love. This lead society and the Church into paths of hope. Would you join us?

References

- Pontificium Consilium de Iustitia et Pace / Pontifical Council for Justice & Peace (2005), *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 5, USCCB Publishing.
- Francis (2015), Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*, Vatican Press.
- Francis (2020), Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, Vatican Press.
- Harari, Y.N. (2018), *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, Random House.
- John Paul II (1995), *Letter to Women*, Vatican Press.
- Ostrom, E. (2009), *Beyond Markets and states: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems*, 8 December, in *Nobel Prize*, www.nobelprize.org/uploads/2018/06/ostrom_lecture.pdf
- Petrini, R. (2020), *Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a path towards Integral Human Development*, «Oikonomia» 19/3 (2020), www.oikonomia.it/index.php/it/2020/ottobre-2020/118-2020/ottobre-2020/1128-catholic-social-teaching-cst-and-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-a-path-towards-integral-human-development
- Smith, A. (1977), *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*, University of Chicago Press, UK edition.
- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (2019), *Understanding development and poverty alleviation*, Stockholm, 14 October 2019, in *Nobel Prize*, www.nobelprize.org/uploads/2019/10/advanced-economicsciencesprize2019.pdf
- Varoufakis, Y. (2017), *Talking to my daughter about the economy: A brief history of capitalism*, Random House.
- Neate, R. (2020), *Covid-19 crisis boosts the fortunes of worlds billionaires*, «The Guardian», 7 October 2020, www.theguardian.com/business/2020/oct/07/covid-19-crisis-boosts-the-fortunes-of-worlds-billionaires

NOTES

* Economist (Macroeconomics, Quantitative Analysis and Social Projects Evaluation).

1. A Scottish political economist and philosopher, towering figure in the history of economic thought because he is considered the father of modern economy. His most influential book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776).



The Economy of Francesco is “an event that will help bring us together and allow us to meet one another and eventually enter into a ‘covenant’ to change today’s economy and to give a soul to the economy of tomorrow.” These are the words of the Holy Father that appear in his official letter of 1 May 2019 for the *The Economy of Francesco* event. It is no accident that in the Italian version of his letter, the Pope uses the term ‘patto’, which comes from the Latin word *pactum*, “derived from *pacisci*, which means ‘negotiate,’ with the same root of *pax-pacis*”, i.e., peace (OED 2020). A “pactum,” in its essence, is only possible by “approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and finding common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word ‘dialogue’. If we want to encounter and help one another, we have to dialogue” (Franciscus 2020a, 198). A dialogue of inclusion is needed—to use the words of the Pope, a dialogue “in which not only believers but all men and women of good will, regardless of differences in creed and nationality, can participate, inspired by the ideal of fraternity” (Franciscus 2019a, 9).

Many who study dialogue find resonance with the Pope’s words:

Difference is enriching (Benjamin – Sullivan 1996).

Dialogue continues to be a key factor in promoting spaces of mutual engagement in a simplistic and polarized era (Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2018). Dialogue is essential because words are not innocent

(Anderson 1996); they are important (Garrison 2013).

Sharing is essential to dialogue: Sharing the fact of having lived with the fact of having to live, as a meeting of distances, passing the torch of the future: combining the wisdom of those who have already lived their whole life with the enthusiasm of those who still have to build that life and, indeed, live it (Franciscus 2018). Because *share* is not just a button (Ljungberg *et al.* 2017), and it is not neutral (Hemsley *et al.* 2018).

Difference, dialogue, and sharing: This is what *The Economy of Francesco* meant and means for us (Federici 2020).

Dialogue and sharing among the like-minded but also among those with opposing views are what guided us on our path and what unite us in our *Women for Economy* proposal. *Women for Economy* has been an incubator for persons of the most diverse origins and traditions who met and discussed in order to find a difficult, though stimulating, project to realize together, for the role of women in the future. All this, between ideality and reality, between possibility and probability, between the theoretically optimal and, therefore, impossible, and the compromise which is not perfect but achievable, and in any case positive.

Women and men, fathers and mothers,

(WO)MEN: Dialoguing and Sharing

Luca Federici

communities and individuals, law and ethics, institutions and society, public and private, small and large, leaders and collaborators, believers and non-believers, young people and the elderly: all should be invited to the dialogue. Through the dissemination and sharing of information, experiences, joy, failures, successes and pain; through horizontal communication among peers (Costanza-Chock 2006); vertical top-down communication (Bartels *et al.* 2010) and ascending bottom-up communication (Wroblewski 2013).

These apparent polar opposites, intrinsic “oxymorons,” can actually flourish together. However, for this to occur one must change perspectives. Not only must I, the actor, be willing to change my point of view, but also the other, my interlocutor, must change his or her view of me and have the patience, kindness and intelligence to allow me to understand him or her. How? In my experience, it happened through the power of example and the sharing of experiences afforded by the *Women for Economy* initiative and our group work, which lasted for seven months. We worked together, though physically distant from one another because of COVID-19 (The group members never actually met physically, only online.)

As a young male rooted in Western