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## Catholic Social Thought on Citizenship: no Place for Exclusion

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of citizenship has many faces. It is about rights and obligations, about responsibility and solidarity, about the state and the person. Nonetheless, the concept lacks the ethical dimension necessary in today's world. "Citizenship" has a positive appeal and denotes identity, responsibility, and political as well as social participation. Because of the apparently exclusive relation between citizenship and the state (or another political entity), citizenship can easily be used to separate groups of people from each other according to their "citizenship". Enjoying their own recognition as "citizens", people may involuntarily or intentionally get into a situation where their neighbours suffer exclusion with the legalistic justification that the latter are no citizens of the same community or state.

The effects of globalisation in particular have made us aware that our traditional concepts of citizenship are barely adequate to cover the still growing gap between the included and the excluded, the rich and poor. Borderlines rapidly lose their effectiveness, but a really borderless world in which people were permitted to move freely from one community to the other, remains beyond imagination. Can solidarity be achieved in an interdependent but in many respects imbalanced world? In a world in which the individual increasingly wants to determine his own destiny, we are confronted with the fact of a growing interdependence. There is a conflict between the people and institutions that have the power to force us, punish us, and tax us, and the longing of man to be independent and untouchable. And while man longs for power and order to be protected, he turns away from it whenever there is a

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possibility.<sup>1</sup> These developments influence our concept of citizenship and the way we deal with exclusion.

The current notion of citizenship has been greatly influenced by the work of T.H. Marshall and his distinction between civil, political, and social citizenship. Other distinctions have also been developed, including the concepts of cultural citizenship and neo-republican citizenship.<sup>2</sup> Most of them define citizenship in relation to a nation state. The role of the centrally organised nation state seems to be becoming less important with the advent of globalisation and the rise of regionalism. The importance of the nation state is being affected by the shift of attention to two other levels: upwards to the international level and downwards to the regional level. New regional parliaments (Wales and Scotland) as well as new regional conflicts – in the former republic of Yugoslavia or in the Republic of Indonesia - are proof of that development. People who had been citizens of the United Kingdom for years claimed the right to special representation on the basis of their special (Scottish, Welsh) identity. People who had been living together relatively peacefully for years excluded each other from society on the basis of ethnic intolerance. Exclusion can be based on social, political, and economic arguments. And in the most extreme cases, the basis for exclusion will be found in racism, ethnic hatred, etc.

The concept of citizenship is not a static- but a rather dynamic concept. Marshall's definition is based on juridical, social-ethical, and political norms. A citizen is a person who is a socially and politically recognised bearer of rights. Citizenship is thus related to the idea of a constitutional state in two ways: a citizen is a person entitled to rights and a subject of social participation and of democratic decision-making. The fact that there exists such a thing as a universal right to a nationality<sup>3</sup> (and thus to citizenship) makes clear the generally shared feeling that social relations make man complete. The diminishing role of the state and the fact that we can no longer call for a common identity within countries because of regionalist (and other) tendencies makes us look for new theories. We face many questions like:

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<sup>1</sup> See G. MULGAN, *CONNEXITY. HOW TO LIVE IN A CONNECTED WORLD*, (Chatto & Windus 1997) p. 202-203.

<sup>2</sup> See B. STEENBERGEN, *THE CONDITION OF CITIZENSHIP* (London: SAGE publications 1994) chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> Article 15 of the *UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS*.

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How can we construct a common identity in a country where people not only belong to separate political communities but also belong in different ways – that is, some are incorporated as individuals and others through membership in a group?<sup>4</sup>

It is not the purpose of the present paper to present a new theory to deal with the question of pluralism and multiculturalism. Rather, we will look at the process of social in- and exclusion, because citizenship and exclusion are two sides of the same coin.<sup>5</sup> This is an important relation because most of the time citizenship is described as entailing rights and duties in a participatory national bond (with the nation state as the purest form), founded within a shared culture. But we are now faced by developments that make a reference to a participatory bond based on the nation state a less likely point to start the debate on citizenship and exclusion. In this paper, we want to look at the historical development of Catholic Social Thinking on citizenship and exclusion. Catholic Social Thought is based on the recognition of intermediate associations and therefore is not troubled by the notions of “the declining nation state” or “globalisation”. Thinking in terms of intermediate associations when dealing with citizenship and exclusion might prove a fruitful way forward in the discussion on citizenship and exclusion in this new century.

Catholic Social Thought (henceforth: CST) has developed in the interaction between the official teachings of the Catholic Church and academic thinkers since the 1890s. It has taken a long time for CST to accept the notion of citizenship in accordance with Marshallian criteria. But when it did accept Marshall’s definition, CST went beyond it and formulated ideals and moral dimensions of good citizenship. One of those ideals is the ideal of solidarity. After being abused by communist and fascist regimes it looked as if the concept would be dropped. Changing events in the church and the world gave it a new impulse and now the concept of solidarity has become one of the pillars of CST. We will give a historical overview of the development of CST thinking on good citizenship. We will then further explore the notion of solidarity and CST’s preferential option for the poor and what it can mean in today’s world to all people of good will.

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<sup>4</sup> N. Kymlicka, *Return of the citizen: A survey of recent work on citizenship theory*, in *THEORIZING CITIZENSHIP* (R. Beiner ed., Albany: State University of New York Press 1995) p. 309.

<sup>5</sup> K. Schuyt, *Aristocratisch Winkelen*, *DE VOLKSKRANT*, Dec. 22, 1999.

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### 2. THE TROUBLED RELATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE 1881- 1945

What are the origins of Catholic Social Thinking on matters of the state and the citizen? The original view on citizenship was quite conservative and anti-modern. In order to understand present day CST, it is necessary to look back to the historic Catholic view on the origins of civil power and what it meant for Catholics to be citizens until the major changes of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. In 1881, Pope Leo XIII published the encyclical *Diuturnum* on the origin of civil power. This was after the battle for Italian Unity and the Pope of Rome had lost considerable land (and influence) to the new Italian State. Catholicism was trying to come to grips with this new situation in which it was no longer affiliated to a worldly state but to a worldwide spiritual society. Pope Leo XIII started from the premises that nature wills that man should live in a civil society in which some should rule the multitude. However, the Pope did not endorse Rousseau's theory of the Social Contract. He criticised it fiercely:

...it is a great error not to see, what is manifest, that men, as they are not a nomad race, have been created, without their own free will, for a natural community of a life. It is plain, moreover, that the pact which they allege is openly a falsehood and a fiction, and that it has no authority to confer on political power such great force, dignity, and firmness as the safety of the State and the Common Good of the citizens require.<sup>6</sup>

The Pope stressed the importance of men not obeying anything that demanded of them action against natural or divine law. At the same time, justice should be of the highest importance to those who rule the state:

...those who rule States should understand that political power was not created for the advantage of any private individual; and that the administration of the State must be carried on the profit of those who have been committed to their care, not to the profit of those to whom it has been committed.<sup>7</sup>

This attitude was founded on the experiences of the Catholic Church in France where the doctrines of Rousseau and other writers had produced a fierce anti-clerical movement against the church and religion because of their affiliation to the *ancien régime* and the Papal State. Part of this

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<sup>6</sup> POPE LEO XIII, DIUTURNUM, ENCYCLICAL ON THE ORIGIN OF CIVIL POWER, (downloaded March 14, 2000) < [www.Vatican.va/holy\\_father/](http://www.Vatican.va/holy_father/)> (originally issued 1881) at 12 [hereinafter DIUTURNUM].

<sup>7</sup> DIUTURNUM, at 16.

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anti-Catholic movement had been the choice of allegiance that citizens had to make between church and state, sometimes paying with their life if they preferred the former. Linking citizenship together with extreme nationalism has, even until today, led to great disasters.

How were Christians to act within the state? This question was answered in the 1890 Encyclical *Sapientiae Christiana*. This encyclical starts with a statement about church and state:

...if we would judge aright, the supernatural love for the Church and the natural love of our own country proceed from the same eternal principle, since God Himself is their Author and originating Cause. Consequently, it follows that between the duties they respectively enjoin, neither can come into collision with the other.<sup>8</sup>

In this doctrine, the Church and the State both possess individual sovereignty. In the carrying out of public affairs, neither obeys the other. By stressing this point, the Pope was taking a stand against the nationalisation of religion, which meant that religion could only be tolerated when it was subservient to the interests of the state. This explains why there is “an option out” in this doctrine:

No one, can however, without risk to faith foster any doubt as to the Church alone having been invested with such power of governing souls as to exclude the civil authority. In truth, it was not to Caesar but to Peter that Jesus Christ entrusted the keys of the Kingdom of heaven.<sup>9</sup>

The governing powers of the State are wholly free to carry out the business of the State. But the Church stood (and stands) above all because religion was not to support any political movement and was to be accepted by all as holy and inviolate. This meant that Catholic citizens could be loyal to the state, but that they had a duty to oppose the State when it acted against natural or divine law:

No better citizen is there, whether in time of peace and war, than the Christian who is mindful of his duty; but such a one should be ready to suffer all things, even death itself, rather than abandon the cause of God or of the Church<sup>10</sup>

A very critical attitude towards the modern nation state can be found in both encyclicals. The experiences of the Church in France (or the unification of Italy for that matter) can explain this. It was in this

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<sup>8</sup> POPE LEO XIII (1890), *SAPIENTIAE CHRISTIANA*, *ENCYCLICAL ON CHRISTIANS AS CITIZENS*, (downloaded March 14, 2000) < [www.Vatican.va/holy\\_father/](http://www.Vatican.va/holy_father/) > (originally issued 1890) at 6 [hereinafter *SAPIENTIAE CHRISTIANE*].

<sup>9</sup> *SAPIENTIAE CHRISTIANE*, at 27.

<sup>10</sup> *SAPIENTIAE CHRISTIANE*, at 7.

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mindset that the first social encyclical was published in 1891: *Rerum Novarum* meaning *Of New Things*. It speaks about many (in Marshallian terms) aspects of civil and social citizenship. *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pope Pius XI (ghost-writer was Oswald Von Nell-Breuning) followed in 1931. However 19<sup>th</sup> century theories on political citizenship and democracy were not accepted until after the Second World War. In the next section we will look at the work of Jacques Maritain which paved the way for accepting the modern notions of citizenship and which still influences modern Catholic Social Thinking.

### 3. PAVING THE WAY

The work of Jacques Maritain greatly influenced the way in which academic Catholics think about citizenship today.<sup>11</sup> He was born in 1882 and died in 1973. In 1904 Maritain married to Raïsa Oumançoff, who was of Jewish-Russian origin. In 1906, despite hefty opposition from their relatives, they converted to Catholicism. Maritain searched for a place for the church in modern society, looking for ways to think about the primacy of the eternal without making any concession to the autonomy of temporal understanding that comes with the demands of the times we live in. When it appeared war was imminent, the couple fled to the United States. His book *Man and the State*<sup>12</sup> was published shortly after the Second World War and can be seen as a reaction to late 19<sup>th</sup> century CST, the misuse of corporatism by the Fascists and Nazis, and the bitter experiences of the Second World War. In his first chapter, Maritain establishes the relation between people and the state. The state, he argues, is that part of the body politic that is concerned with the maintenance of law, the promotion of the common welfare and public order, and the administration of public affairs.<sup>13</sup> He rejects Hegel's thesis that the state is the supreme incarnation of the Idea; the state is but an agency in the service of man.

Putting man at the service of that instrument is political perversion. The human person as an individual is for the body politic and the body politic is for the human person as a person. But man is by no means for the State. The state is for man<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Of course, other writers like H. Lubac, J. Murray, and R. Guardini have played a substantial part as well.

<sup>12</sup> J. MARITAIN, *MAN AND THE STATE* (The University of Chicago Press 1951 edition used: 1971) [hereinafter *MAN AND THE STATE*].

<sup>13</sup> *MAN AND THE STATE* at p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> *MAN AND THE STATE* at p. 13.

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The people are the multitude of human persons who, united under just laws, by mutual friendship, and for the common good of their human existence, constitute a body politic. A person is a whole. Thus, the multitude of human persons is a whole of wholes. Is it therefore a mere sum of individuals? Not according to Maritain, who used the writings of St. Thomas to explain the whole of wholes:

“Among created things [St. Thomas writes], ‘one is part of two, and two of three (as one man is part of two men, and two men of three). But it is not thus in God. For the Father is as much as the whole Trinity: quia tantus est Pater, quanta tota Trinitas.’”<sup>15</sup>

The whole of wholes has become known as the concept of person in community. This notion is the basis of CST’s recognition of the importance of intermediate associations.

The people are to be united under just laws. But experience has taught us that not all laws are just laws. It goes beyond the scope of this article to elaborate extensively on the origins of law here. CST is based on a natural law theory, which holds that the law of nature is written in the human soul; it is not something that comes from lawyers, kings, or priests, but it is complementary to human reason which can make us do good and abstain from evil. It is a “divine and natural” law.<sup>16</sup> Individuals unite through mutual friendship. Friendship is the leading force in providing justice. This is so because justice is not a fundamental source of law in itself. It is the application and interpretation of the law together with such principles as responsibility, liberty, and equality. Inherent in the quest for justice is the question of how can human charity be made the leading force to bring us justice?<sup>17</sup>

It follows that the common good of human existence is not merely the sum of individual wants and needs. It is likewise the whole of wholes and could be described as the whole of social conditions which make it possible for groups as well as individuals to reach their own fulfilment. It comprises respect for the person as such, the social well being and development of groups, and sustainable peace.<sup>18</sup> We saw that

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<sup>15</sup> Quoting St. Thomas’ *Sum. Theol.*, I, 30, 1, ad 4, in J. Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (1947), in *THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF JACQUES MARITAIN. SELECTED READINGS* (J.W. Evans, L.R. Ward eds., London: Geoffrey Bless 1956) at 105.

<sup>16</sup> CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH no. 1954-1955, edition used: KATECHISMUS VAN DE KATHOLIEKE KERK ( Baarn: Gooi & Sticht 1995) [hereinafter THE CATECHISM]

<sup>17</sup> For a more detailed explanation see F.A.M. ALTING VON GEUSAU, KEREN DE KANSEN? OP WEG NAAR EEN NIEUW MILLENIUM, (Tilburg: Tilburg University Press 1998) p. 154- 158.

<sup>18</sup> THE CATECHISM, no. 1906-1909.



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individuals constitute a body politic. The body politic is political society as a whole. The state is the topmost part of this whole. However, Maritain does not imply that the people united in the body politic have sovereignty. Sovereignty relates to a power separate from and above the whole ruled by the sovereign. The state therefore cannot be sovereign, nor can the people be sovereign, God alone is sovereign.<sup>19</sup> This view is contrary to the notion that the civil and the sacred have their own sphere. Maritain's work can best be understood from the historical context in which it was written. Not all Catholic thinkers shared his view. The work of Oswald von Nell-Breuning of the 1960s is not focussing on this absolute interpretation of divine sovereignty. Because of this, some premises on the origin of absolute sovereignty are no longer part of CST. They were (and are) in contradiction with the teachings of the Gospel itself. When asked whether He was the king of the Jews, Jesus answered Pontius Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. Despite this, Maritain paved the way for modern CST and is still seen as one of the major contributors to the development of the notion of person within community.

### 4. GOOD CITIZENS IN THE MODERN WORLD

In 1986, the American bishops issued a letter to American Catholics entitled *Economic Justice for All*. They had to address questions other than those Maritain had to thirty years earlier. During the meeting of the Second Vatican Council in the early sixties, church leaders tried to come to grips with the modern world. In many ways they shifted from century-old conceptions and doctrines in favour of a more realistic approach. So, at the time the bishops prepared their letter, the church had embraced the concept of democracy and classic (Marshallian) ideas on citizenship. The church accepted that respect for human dignity was a democratic idea as well. It also accepted the idea of freedom of religion since it no longer meant to be free from religion (as was the experience of the church in revolutionary France), but the freedom for people to unite and express their religion. In 1986, the bishops wrote

The virtues of good citizenship require a lively sense of participation in the commonwealth and of having obligations as well as rights within it. The nation's economic health depends on strengthening these virtues among all its

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<sup>19</sup> MAN AND THE STATE p. 24.

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people, and on the development of institutional arrangements supportive of these virtues<sup>20</sup>

The American bishops stressed that *good* citizens participate in the commonwealth and have rights and obligations within it. The notion *good* citizenship brings us to another dimension of citizenship: active citizenship. T.H. Marshall's 1949 definition got a very passive interpretation at first, when everyone focussed on rights. The active dimension of citizenship came into focus in the sixties and seventies of the last century when it was translated as a question of political participation.<sup>21</sup> The bishops' letter points to (moral) obligations. An appeal for active citizenship will only be successful if persons feel part of a community. A living community is a product of reason and moral strength.<sup>22</sup> It implies a focus, an aim; in CST: the common good.

Maritain's vision echoes in the 1963 encyclical of Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*. In this encyclical, the Pope stated that the common good concerns all people, that all members must share in it, and that attention should be given to the poor and marginalised members of society. The state should assume a role in promoting the material as well as the spiritual welfare of its citizens. Liberals need not be worried by the role of the state in promoting spiritual welfare because it does not imply that the state should promote a single belief as the only way to reach spiritual welfare. The Declaration on the Liberty of Religion, *Dignitatis Humanae*, which was adopted in 1965, states clearly that freedom of religion is based on the dignity of the person. No one should be forced to act against his or her conscience. Freedom of religion is a civil right.<sup>23</sup> The view of the church on the role of the state can be characterised by the ideas of human dignity, solidarity, and subsidiarity. It is striking to see how various writers in the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands all use the same words, but have very different interpretations. Also remarkable is the absence of the concept of subsidiarity in the American debate. In order to understand CST's recognition of the importance of intermediate associations, we have to explore the meaning of human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.

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<sup>20</sup> ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR ALL : CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND THE U.S. ECONOMY, (Washington: NC News Service 1986).

<sup>21</sup> A. ETZIONI, THE ACTIVE SOCIETY, A THEORY OF SOCIETAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES (London/New York 1968/1971).

<sup>22</sup> MAN AND THE STATE at p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Dignitatis Humanae in* CONSTITUTIES EN DECRETEN VAN HET 2E VATICANAANS CONCILIE (Baarn: Stichting Ark 1965, edition used 1995) at 2.

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Respect for human dignity is the basis of current CST. The rights of a person are intrinsic; they do not stem from some social compact and thus cannot be alienated or abrogated.<sup>24</sup> Human dignity is about creativity, equality, and liberty. It encourages man to make use of his talents. It also includes responsibility, for oneself and for others, because the liberty to use his talents and to claim human dignity implicitly makes individuals responsible for the liberty and creativity of their fellow man.<sup>25</sup> The concept of the common good provides a balance between the rights of the individual and the greater good of society. But it is a very difficult concept. What is the whole of social conditions needed? Can we define what the common good in a given circumstance is? The perfect fulfilment of the common good is not something man will reach on earth. We can try to grasp it, but man is by nature imperfect. Not even a society of saints would do because even saints are not perfect. The impossibility of giving a definition of the common good prevents abuse of the concept. As no one can define it, it cannot be enforced on societies, something dictatorial and totalitarian systems did (and do) all the time. In those systems, the government, the state, believes it knows what is best for the people, and so all people are –theoretically- being treated equally. This idea of the “makeability of society” (the idea that government policies are the best way to bring about social change) is absent in CST. But even when societies are not able to define what the common good is, the duty of man to contribute to the common good. The common good is not only a duty of the state because of the concept of subsidiarity. And all participants on various levels can have different views on what the common good should be in a certain situation (Maritain).

The origins of subsidiarity can be traced back to the encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*. Written in 1931 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, it introduced subsidiarity and solidarity into CST. Subsidiarity can mean a passing of powers downwards, but it can also mean a passing of powers upwards if that would better serve the common good. The state should not take upon itself what individuals can do better; but subsidiarity also requires that the state should not shrink from doing what it can do better. It became a very important doctrine in Europe and can even be found in the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (although re-interpreted in a

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<sup>24</sup> P. Valley, *Towards a new politics: Catholic Social Teaching in a pluralist society*, in: THE NEW POLITICS. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, (P. Valley ed. London: SCM Press.1999) p. 160.

<sup>25</sup> A.van Luyn, *Recht doen om gerechtigheid*, in: ONTMOETINGEN VAN GELOOF EN WERELD. PERSPECTIEVEN OP KATHOLIEKE LEVENSBESCHOUWING ( I.N. Bulhof, W.F.C.M Derkse, P.A. van Gennip, S.J.M. Waanders eds., Best: Damon 1999) p. 177.

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restrictive sense). Linked with subsidiarity is solidarity. The concept of solidarity is a very noble one, but has also been greatly abused by corporatism, and ultimately, Fascism. And even today it can give rise to great misunderstandings. For instance, the American professor Christopher Wolfe recently described solidarity as:

...the priority of the common good above all parties, ideologies, or partial interests in society.<sup>26</sup>

This interpretation is not adequate. Solidarity is not about the priority of the common good, but about relations between people. Only in relation with other people can man become fully human. For this reason, citizenship should never be applied as an instrument to exclude other people or peoples from their fundamental rights. Solidarity means the willingness to see the other as another “self”. Any injustice committed against another must be regarded as no less serious than an injustice against oneself.<sup>27</sup> Solidarity starts among the oppressed and excluded groups because of individual respect for each other in spite of the current – discriminatory - interpretation of a common good by a majority. CST holds that the common good should be interpreted from the perspective of those who are left out. The preferential option for the poor and excluded, which was developed in the discussion with Liberation Theology, is mandatory when working towards the common good.

In this section, we have looked at the current CST view on citizenship and the role of the state. We paid attention to the notion of active citizenship and the virtues the American bishops promoted in their 1986 letter. Finally, we looked at the four guiding principles in current CST. Respect for human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity, are the main principles that define the role of the state. In the next section, we will focus on the principle of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor.

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<sup>26</sup> C. Wolfe, *Subsidiarity: The “other” ground of limited government Catholicism*, in: LIBERALISM, AND COMMUNITARIANISM. THE CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL TRADITION AND THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY ( K. Grasso, G.V. Bradley, R.P. Hunt eds., Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield publishers, Inc. 1995) p. 81 and further.

<sup>27</sup> CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES, THE COMMON GOOD AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH’S SOCIAL TEACHING (Manchester: Gabriel Communications Ltd. 1996) at 14.

## 5. CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT AND THE RECIPROCAL DIMENSION OF SOLIDARITY

The origins of “solidarity” can be found in the legal world. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, the phrase *in solidum* pointed at “the whole, all those involved”. The term *in solidum* was first used outside the legal world in 19<sup>th</sup> century socialist writing.<sup>28</sup> The writings of Hermann Pesch laid out the groundwork for the doctrine of *solidarism*. It was put forward as an alternative to socialism, since it advocated ‘solidarity’ between persons, regardless of the fact that some may be owners of capital and others disposed workers. Soon after that, it was to be found in the first encyclical of the Catholic Church on what has become known as the social question. The 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* was a cry of protest against the social injustice which labourers were experiencing. They were being exploited economically and had no way to fully participate in political life in order to bring about changes. Pope Leo XIII tried to bridge the gap between the rich and governing minority and the underclass majority by expressing his concern about this gap. Bridging the gap was a top-down process because workers were only allowed to use legal means (set out by the ruling upper class) to claim their rights. Overthrowing oppressive rulers (revolution) was not part of the Thomistic thinking in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And this was in contrast with the writings of St. Thomas himself on tyrant murder and the obligations of a righteous ruler. But in 1891, the victims of oppression and injustice were asked to put up with their suffering in the hope of renewal in the next life.<sup>29</sup>

For the next seventy years, this attitude remained in CST. A moral appeal was made to the ruling class, and the poor had to wait. The church stressed the importance of private ownership but did not answer the question how the poor should obtain this. This all changed with the installation of Pope John XXIII to the throne of St. Peter. He seems to have realised that the church’s emphasis on the right of private property was being abused to obstruct social change. The Church’s historical suspicion of the state, and even worse, state intervention, was also a major obstacle.<sup>30</sup> Seeing that the entrenched rights of the wealthy and powerful were the main obstacles to the exercise of the rights of others – especially the poor – the Pope made a radical choice. From then on the

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<sup>28</sup> L. Oeing-Hanhoff, *Freiheit und Solidarität*, in: PERSONALE FREIHEIT UND PLURALISTISCHE GESELLSCHAFT (G. Pöltner ed., Wien: Herder 1981) p. 9. [hereinafter: FREIHEIT UND SOLIDARITÄT]

<sup>29</sup> D. DORR, *OPTION FOR THE POOR. A HUNDRED YEARS OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING* (New York: Orbis Books 1992) p. 59 [hereinafter: *OPTION FOR THE POOR*].

<sup>30</sup> The attitude that can be found in the second section of this paper.

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church would be a supporter of the welfare state and social teaching would express solidarity with the poor, even giving them preferential treatment. This resulted in a very radical statement in the constitution on the church in the world: *Gaudum et Spes*, which was adopted during the second Vatican Council. This stated that people are obliged to come to the relief of the poor and not so merely out of their superfluous goods. This was a very radical approach indeed. But it still was a top-down approach, appealing to the *haves* to show mercy towards the *have nots*.

The 1968 conference in Medellín, Colombia, of the Latin American bishops changed it all. In line with world-wide changing attitudes and the spirit of the sixties they formulated the opinion that the preferential option for the poor means “*conscientisation*” of the poor. In other words, the church should educate the poor to be aware of the basic causes of their marginalisation, and the church should help the poor to organise themselves to overcome this injustice and achieve liberation.<sup>31</sup> In principle, this is a very noble concept. However, the violence with which this liberation from the dictatorial governments of South America took place, made the Church think again. The Pope could not support a theology which encouraged people to liberate themselves by violence. Jesus did not preach the Gospel with an automatic rifle.

In 1978, Pope John Paul II was elected to succeed Pope John Paul I. After visiting Brazil in 1980, he declared solidarity with the poor, but this solidarity was not to be exclusive. He saw how western concepts of development and liberation where destroying local cultures, and in practice, led to more injustice, alienation, and poverty. At the same time the poor were declared to be the main agents. The poor should struggle together to improve their conditions.<sup>32</sup> The struggle for justice is not a class war in the Marxist sense. In a battle of “us against them” there can be no solidarity within a society as a whole.<sup>33</sup> Having lived with the “benefits” of Marxism and its views on liberty for most of his life has made the current Pope very critical of any reference to class struggles. Nonetheless, the rich should be aware that they are (in) directly responsible for the conditions of the poor. In *Laborem Exercens*, the Pope introduced the “indirect employer” metaphor: although we may not be direct employers who pay unjust wages, we still have a responsibility for the poverty and poor conditions many people are forced to live in.

We already paid attention to the fact that solidarity is about people, and that it implies the willingness to see the other as another

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<sup>31</sup> The bishops were heavily criticised by the affluent of the societies. They no longer provided tuition for them and started schools in the poor areas. *See: OPTION FOR THE POOR*, p. 226.

<sup>32</sup> *OPTION FOR THE POOR*, p. 281.

<sup>33</sup> *FREIHEIT UND SOLIDARITÄT*, p.11.

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“self”. Pope John Paul II seems to have realised that the Church’s attitude towards the poor was very paternalistic. He introduced a new concept of solidarity in which the excluded should be co-operating in order to fight injustice. Solidarity implies an element of opposition, but opposition only in service of the common good. This also means there should be room for dialogue. As the common good is no longer the sole responsibility of the state and as it can vary within intermediate associations (because of the principle of subsidiarity), dialogue is needed with proponents of other conceptions of the common good and between in- and excluded. At the same time, the responsibility for society continues to pay attention to the excluded. Donal Dorr summarised the present concept of solidarity and the option for the poor as follows:

It [the church] must be effective in solidarity with those who are powerless and voiceless and must seek to empower them and give them back their voice. Catholic social thinking recognises that the poor and powerless are God’s favourites...They can no longer be seen as just the ones who are to be helped by others. They are called by God to be key agents, under God, in bringing justice and liberation in the world<sup>34</sup>.

In this section we looked into the origins of the concept of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor. We saw that the church moved from a very paternalistic concept towards a more balanced one. Solidarity seems to have two dimensions, a horizontal one and a semi-vertical one. Horizontal because it is necessary for the excluded to unite in order to obtain justice: the notion of person in society. And a vertical dimension, calling upon all those people (and thus also those who execute power) who are (in)directly responsible for the exclusion, to their responsibility towards the poor and excluded. This reciprocal concept of solidarity - horizontally as well as vertically- can be understood, as Dutch Catholic thinkers in 1962 already acknowledged, from the semantic development of *in solidum*. In order to undertake a common task, we stand side-by-side. Our attention is directed towards undertaking the task. In this, solidarity differs from love. In love we stand face-to-face. Solidarity points towards the situation in which an individual is facing a challenge, which he cannot overcome on his own, he then may expect help from others. And when we see that a person is facing such a challenge, we are obliged to help to the best of our abilities. The first formula is about the helplessness of the person, it is an I-orientation: “I need you, so it is my right...”. The second formula is focussed on the duty to help. It is a you-orientation: “You need me, so it is my duty”. Together they form the

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<sup>34</sup> OPTION FOR THE POOR, p. 378.

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reciprocal concept: the “we”-formula. Together the (world) community faces questions which no man is able to solve on his own. Therefore it is our duty *in solidum* to face these questions.<sup>35</sup> Both the person and the community have responsibilities towards each other. Pope John Paul II formulated it like this in 1987:

The exercise of solidarity within each society is valid when its members recognise one another as persons. Those who are more influential, because they have a greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess. Those who are weaker, for their part, in the same spirit of solidarity, should not adopt a purely passive attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all. The intermediate groups, in their turn, should not selfishly insist on their particular interests, but respect the interests of others.<sup>36</sup>

In- and exclusion are part and parcel of the concept of citizenship. We have seen that CST understands citizenship in terms of a person's relation with a community. The role of the state in defining citizenship seems less important. Important human rights can be claimed on the basis the fact of *being* a person rather than of being a state national. This makes it possible for citizens to defend themselves against an unjust state. The development is in line with the developments within Europe. The declaration on European Human Rights and the complementary status of European citizenship together with national citizenship point in the same direction in answering the question of how to protect citizens against injustice.<sup>37</sup>

In a more recent work,<sup>38</sup> Donal Dorr has tried to broaden the CST scope of exclusion to the “untouchables of society”, those excluded on the basis of ethnic hatred, terrorism, ageism etc. CST points towards ways of giving these people a voice. One of the main points of criticism of communitarianism focuses on this very point. To many observers, communitarian thinking is offering only an exit, but not a voice to

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<sup>35</sup> WELVAART, WELZIJN & GELUK. EEN KATHOLIEK UITZICHT OP DE NEDERLANDSE SAMENLEVING (J.A. Ponsioen ed., Hilverum: Uitgeverij Paul Brand B.V. 1962) p. 112.

<sup>36</sup> POPE JOHN-PAUL II, ENCYCLICAL SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS (Oegstgeest: Stichting R.K. Voorlichting 1987 -dutch edition) at 39.

<sup>37</sup> The protection against an unjust state might be the reason of Pope Leo XIII's rejection of unilateral citizenship. However historical circumstances and the church's interests seem to have played a more dominant role.

<sup>38</sup> D. Dorr, *Can anything good come from Nazareth? Option for the poor revisited* in: WHOSE ETHICS? WHICH PRIORITIES? CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT IN TRANSITION, A SEMINAR IN CAMBRIDGE (Cambridge: Von Hügelinstitute 1999).



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minorities. In this respect, we can learn from CST that giving minorities and the excluded a voice, is part of the concept of citizenship. But there's more. Traditionally, the concept of community of CST has been a very specific one, based on the family, the village, the state and the world. Without losing this core, we should realise that there are more communities today that face the same questions of in- and exclusion. Therefore we feel that CST should, for instance, also look at (new) groups like women, the elderly, the handicapped, as well as ethnic or Internet (!) communities. This extension would fit perfectly in the notion of intermediate associations and it can offer a welcome perspective within the debate on citizenship in this new century.

### 6. THE RECIPROcity OF SOLIDARITY AND THE EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF ENTITLEMENTS

The Dutch professor Kees Schuyt recently described four forces that determine the process of in- and exclusion.<sup>39</sup> We will describe those forces briefly here. The first force is the economic value that the excluded represent for society. The height of the value will determine how quick inclusion by society will take place. The second force is the moral approval or disapproval of society towards the excluded persons. The third force is the social cohesion within a group in order to defend the rights of that minority. More highly organised groups will be taken more seriously. The final force is the legal position the excluded have. Schuyt sees a hierarchy; on top are the economically valuable, morally admired, and highly organised people with strong legal positions. At the bottom are those who are economically non-valuable, morally suspect, unorganised, and barely legally protected.

According to Schuyt there are five strategies for approaching the excluded groups and people:<sup>40</sup>

- 1) giving money
- 2) giving entitlements (rights)
- 3) giving political power
- 4) giving professional help, or better access to professional help
- 5) giving means to help themselves or to better their own situation

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<sup>39</sup> K. Schuyt, *Aristocratisch Winkelen*, DE VOLKSKRANT, Dec. 22, 1999.

<sup>40</sup> K. Schuyt, *The sharing of Risks and the Risks of sharing: Solidarity and Social Justice in the Welfare State*, in: ETHICAL THEORY AND MORAL PRACTICE. AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM (1998), vol. 1, no. 3, p. 307. [hereinafter: THE SHARING OF RISKS]

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Most governments will invest in policies two to four. Governments will seldom give the money and walk away. The fifth option, enabling, is seldom used. The focus on giving entitlements and professional help is determining the poverty debate, and, in fact, any debate on exclusion. Schuyt argues that simply giving rights and money without reciprocal obligations has proved to be unsuccessful. In this critique, he is not alone. Schuyt opts for an interesting re-allocation of responsibilities of the welfare state. First, the state has a responsibility for production. Secondly, the state should hold individuals accountable for their actions. The third responsibility is to allocate commodities that are scarce. And, finally, the state should encourage solidarity with persons who have landed in desperate circumstances through no fault of their own.<sup>41</sup> But Schuyt is opting for a mere vertical concept of solidarity. This is again a top-down appeal. The state giving; the poor accepting. From CST we can learn that action can only be successful if the excluded are also called, to get organised to counter injustice and exclusion.<sup>42</sup> The reciprocal concept of solidarity calls for action on both sides. We must not assume that we know how to battle the forces of exclusion. We are not even able to set the agenda. We sometimes even have to keep in check our own desire to help:

The people who have been marginalised should be empowered to speak and act on their own behalf, so as to overcome their sense of helplessness. This means that those who have opted to be in solidarity with them often have to 'hold back'. And when they do intervene it should be to encourage or facilitate the disadvantaged people themselves in articulating their own experience and in planning realistic action.<sup>43</sup>

Solidarity within the concept of citizenship is a kind of emancipation. Helping people to become citizens who can hold their head up high and participate fully and with dignity in the life of their society.<sup>44</sup> They can hold their head up high, not because of rights and money, but because they have got there, with coaching, on their own. It starts at the level of the excluded, but it is an appeal to society as a whole. Solidarity is therefore not only about ensuring that nobody falls below a decent level

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<sup>41</sup>THE SHARING OF RISKS, p. 309-310.

<sup>42</sup> An attitude that can be explained by the experiences of missionary workers in the 1960's and which nowadays has become common good for all involved in working in the developing countries.

<sup>43</sup> D. Dorr, *Can anything good come from Nazareth? Option for the poor revisited* in: WHOSE ETHICS? WHICH PRIORITIES ? CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT IN TRANSITION, A SEMINAR IN CAMBRIDGE (Cambridge: Von Hügelinstitute 1999) p.4.

<sup>44</sup> *Compare: J. WALDRON, LIBERAL RIGHTS, COLLECTED PAPERS 1981 – 1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993).

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of subsistence, it is also about giving people means to help themselves and to better their own situation. Seen in this way, the CST concept of solidarity is a dynamic balancing force in the process of inclusion and exclusion.

Giving people the means to help themselves presupposes the presence of rights. As we have seen, CST acknowledges basic rights as attributed to persons because of their human dignity. Rights are important because it is of no use to help people when they run the risk of losing everything again. Rights provide a framework on which the person can build his or her self-respect. This insight has been developed further in CST by emphasising the right to work and property rights. Although hardly disputed in Western society, these two rights are very important points of debate in non-western societies.<sup>45</sup>

### 7. CONCLUSION

We started this paper with an outline of citizenship and exclusion in an interdependent and globalising world. Catholic Social Thought is based on the recognition of intermediate associations and therefore is not troubled by the notions of “the declining nation state” or “globalisation”. We started with a retrospective on the Catholic attitude towards citizenship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The gradual acceptance of modern citizenship meant for CST that attention shifted towards interpretation of *good* citizenship.

One of the main issues in the CST concept of good citizenship is solidarity. We found that solidarity has two dimensions. One dimension is the horizontal level between those who are excluded. A vertical responsibility consists of the haves (the rich, the indirect employers) with the poor, the excluded. CST has developed a concept of solidarity that goes beyond the traditional boundaries of respect for the individual and the obligations of society. The work of Donal Dorr made us aware that CST should broaden its definition of the poor to all those excluded from society, those who tend to fall beyond the reach of the intermediate associations.

Critics may argue that the CST interpretation of human values may not be as fully transcultural as assumed. The appeal for solidarity seems to work only in a society with harmony and consensus, a situation rarely encountered in real life. They may have a point there.

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<sup>45</sup> See: POPE JOHN PAUL II, ENCYCLICAL CENTIMUS ANNO (1991), *also* OPTION FOR THE POOR p. 341-342.

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Reciprocal solidarity offers a counter balance to the process of exclusion and makes clear why a simple distribution of entitlements is not enough: because it does not encourage the excluded to overcome their helplessness. CST holds that solidarity should be achieved through a boundary-crossing citizenship in intermediate associations, by participation in common initiatives and finally not only by reading the Word but by living it as well. Citizenship gives an opportunity and at the same time a moral obligation to look beyond the borderlines that have been drawn for political and legal reasons. With a legitimate focal point within the own nation or community, citizenship will not exempt someone from a more fundamental and ultimately prevailing responsibility as “world citizen”. A non-excluding understanding of citizenship allows citizens to participate in different societal forms of co-operation, but also requires them to take action across the borders between states and associations.

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