

GLOBAL INJUSTICE: WHAT IS KNOWN, WHAT IS ASSUMED AND WHAT IS PROMISED?

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ABSTRACT. It is about a criticism of global justice theory, by raising the problem of time in front of facts of global injustice. These facts have agglomerated during the recent period, but are not at all new. To the old warnings born in the 19th century related to social injustice, some theories have responded with the epistemological detour concerning the quantitative and qualitative cognoscibility of social injustice and its aspects. The paper suggests some solutions to the epistemological problem of the possibility to treat global injustice in a non-emotional manner.

But in fact the counter-arguments of relativism are continuous, once they support the dominant policies. This theoretical legitimization of status quo is important: the concrete practice to minimize global injustice depends upon the permanent counteraction to relativist arguments that are certainly ideological. The theoretical debate concerning global injustice contains just these arguments and counteraction, global justice theory being a main participant in debates. But, even with its contrary position to that of relativist standpoints, the present global justice theory does not have enough explanatory power to win over its partners of dialogue¹. One cause of the wasted time in front of the dangerous facts of global injustice consists just in the inertia of the epistemological “doubts” concerning the phenomenon of social and global injustice. And an implicit form of this inertia manifests through the present global justice theory that is based on the principle of “donating to the poor”.

The paper focuses on some theoretical realizations. In this respect, to remember the redistribution of responsibilities at the level of corporations, the Human Development Index and the Human Development Reports, the concept of Gross National Happiness and the Conferences related to it, the concepts and measurements of values and human rights would not be superfluous. All these theories, concepts, efforts are considered as steps toward global justice. However, there are also more challenging standpoints regarding the problem.

Keywords: global justice theory, global injustice, time, present capitalism, ontology of human society.

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¹ It is contrary to them, but not contradictory.

Warning

There is certainly an objective background of social injustice worldwide: the historical level of technology that required until now a social division of the labor force (physical and subordinated workers and intellectual and dominant technical leaders). This low level of technology was intertwined with *rarity* as ontological constituent² of the human being, and they were the ultimate reason of the domination over the labor force. The present scientific and industrial revolution is overthrowing this ultimate reason, supporting *abundance* as ontic/ontological environment of man, but we all witness the coexistence of these two types of ontological conditions of the social organization (as well as of political, i.e. super-structural effort: to brake the rhythm of technical or objective transformations of the productive and work relations).

These objective fundamental features were transfigured under many ideological³ veils legitimizing them and becoming deeply internalized beliefs and thus criteria of social judgment and action. Theories, even like that of global justice, are, before being inquiries into the contradictory states of things and a basis for putting them under question, thus instruments of knowledge, such an ideological mediation between the ultimate objective reason of exploitation, domination and alienation and, on the other hand, people's beliefs and reasons of behavior.

But theories are constructed by intellectuals, by professional academics and so-called public intellectuals speaking *in the name* of truth and/or of the many, and they should be familiar with the facts and information related to these constructs. We cannot imagine an intellectual who *doesn't know*: we trust him just for what he knows. If so, a theory like that of global justice is the mirror of its creators.

In what follows, the present theory of global justice is confronted with facts of global injustice: a conclusion concerning the present intellectuals obviously results.

Global and social justice

First of all, the recent theory of global justice – that of Thomas Pogge, whose logo and ultimate solution, beyond all the critiques of world poverty, is *Giving What We Can*⁴ –, has in view the *world system* as it has developed and become visible

² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique. I. Questions de méthode*, Gallimard, Paris, 1960.

³ I take this notion not in the first Marxian meaning – as false consciousness – but in its consolidated sense (Marxian too), as representation of society from a concrete social position. The ideology of those in a dominant position tends to legitimize the relationships which generate and support this position.

⁴ This is the name of Pogge's society encouraging people in long-term donation to the most efficient charities regarding excessive poverty in developing countries.

"Pogge's institutional approach is not nearly as demanding as one might initially think. It does not require us to disassociate from all institutions that harm others, nor does it even require us to fix the harmful institutions to which we contribute. More minimally, it requires only that so long as we contribute to the design or imposition of unjust institutions, we compensate for our fair share of the avoidable deprivations they produce and make reasonable efforts toward institutional reform", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Pogge (retrieved 28 June 2012).

under the overwhelming impact of the First World War, and more, of the Second World War. This world system challenged both the relativist moral arguments constituted from within the nation-states, and the abstract universalism nevertheless framed by these arguments.

But the main theories of international relations have continued to treat the world system from the point of view of separated and opposed interests of the nation-states, and do not supply many reasons to conceive of the present process of “mundialization of the world” as “creation of one great communal world in which the I and the other become a ‘we’”⁵. In its turn, from the theory of global justice arise cosmopolitan arguments (the best of this theory) which highlight the limits of a global order that does not transcend the social order inside a state, but does not yet address them in a radical manner. However, besides the reasoning supporting “humanitarian” interventions for the sake of some individual human rights related to the interests of Western states, and besides selective critiques of the infringement of human rights⁶, it has counter posed a passionate advocacy of the eradication of severe poverty⁷.

The difficulty of global justice comes from the lack, to a great extent, of *social* justice as such, thus within the borderlines of a state and not only on a world scale. Global justice theory – therefore treating justice in a non-emotional manner – insists on the duties toward the less fortunate if these duties realize “without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance”, and are understood as charity⁸ or rather to be charitable as a duty.

Consequently, there were also discussions concerning the metric used for the comparative advantage of individuals (“*the individual rates at which persons with diverse*

⁵ In Suk Cha, *The Mundialization of Home: Toward a Great Community*, http://www.zmk.uni-freiburg.de/Online_Texts/in_suk_cha.htm (accessed April 12, 2012).

⁶ China must not legalize “disappearances” and ‘two-track justice’. 07 March 2012, <http://www.justicefortheworld.org/> (accessed March 10, 2012).

⁷ See for example Steven A. Cook, “It’s Time to Think Seriously About Intervening in Syria”, *The Atlantic*, January 17, 2012, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/01/its-time-to-think-seriously-about-intervening-in-syria/251468/> (accessed March 10, 2012). But things are more complicated: see Michel Chossudovsky, “Syrie : La prochaine guerre « humanitaire » de l’OTAN? ”, 17 février 2012, <http://www.mondialisation.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=29351> (accessed March 10, 2012); Michel Chossudovsky and Finian Cunningham, “Syria: Clinton Admits US On Same Side As Al Qaeda To Destabilise Assad Government”, February 27, 2012, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=29524> (accessed March 10, 2012); Bahar Kimyongür, “Syrie : l’envers du mouvoir”, 29 février 2012, http://www.lesoir.be/debats/cartes_blanches/2012-02-29/syrie-l-envers-du-mouvoir-900056.php (accessed March 13, 2012); Jürgen Todenhöfer, (Interview by «Welt Online», Carolin Brühl), “Des forces étrangères soutiennent l’insurrection”, <http://www.horizons-et-debats.ch/index.php?id=3163> (accessed April 17, 2012); Nicolas Dot Pouillard, “Syria divides the Arab left”, 16 August 2012, <http://www.cetri.be/spip.php?article2718&lang=en> (accessed September 1, 2012).

⁸ Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1, no. 1 (Spring 1972): 229-243 [revised edition], <http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/1972.htm> (accessed February 24, 2012).

physical and mental constitutions can convert resources into valuable functionings"⁹), thus a metric for global justice. All these moral analyses are very important in order to legitimize it, but they take place within the system of reference outlined by the moral principle of "at least..."¹⁰ / "at least now..."¹¹ – au fond (thus letting alone the ethical foundation) suggesting to the wealthy-offs that if they/their states transfer 1 or 2% to the eradication of poverty, the purchasing power per capita of the 46% of world population, now exterior to the world market, will increase, and also the world demand – and by the stability presupposition of the "best of all possible worlds". As a consequence, they contribute to informing citizens of the developed world about hunger and grinding poverty, they could even be subversive by keeping attention on the obligation of intellectuals "to make clear to citizens how dramatically their own moral view differ from those officially set forth in their behalf"¹², but generally they weep over the lack of international obligations of the states and political actors¹³ and weep over the state of things.

A fugitive stop on the philosophical significance of the present global justice theory

Although it states that there is a global inequality arising from the structure of international relations favorable to the rich states and strongly supported by them, the global justice theory promoted by Thomas Pogge has a subterranean presumption: that of the impossibility and ineffectiveness of the transformation of the basic social order in every country and globally. Au fond, this social order is the expression of social reasonableness – reflecting different and opposed abilities and merits that would arrange people in their different social positions (the structural power relations not being but the result of these different given capacities), thus changing this order would lead to the anarchical counter-productive stopping of the human civilization –: only some excessive or visibly uncomfortable injustices have to be attenuated. The presumption is thus ridiculously contradictory: the world is as it should be, ordered according to the "logos", and within this just world there are revolting injustices.

⁹ Thomas Pogge, *Can the Capability Approach Be Justified?*, http://www.etikk.no/globaljustice/papers/GJ2003_Thomas_Pogge_Can_the_Capability_Approach_Be_Justified.doc (accessed February 3, 2012).

¹⁰ Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002.

¹¹ Thomas Pogge, "Introduction" In *Global Justice*. edited by Thomas W. Pogge, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford (2001), 2004, p. 4: "why are these governments doing so very little toward the eradication of severe poverty abroad even while they are prepared to spend billions on other humanitarian initiatives, such as the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia?"

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

But are these injustices scandalous? Obviously, everybody is nowadays informed about what happens in the world, but the conscience of the flagrant is somehow foreign to the mainstream or dominant pattern of the Western *ideology*¹⁴: this pattern is constructed by/on the above-mentioned presumption, and thus the idea to annul injustice (and not only to correct it) is exterior to the ideal world or theories based on this pattern. In other words, this idea follows from this pattern, but does not change it.

Philosophy has developed – with its grand themes and ability of reasoning in the European world – as a Western creation. But the West was not only the ground of philosophy, but also of the dominant ideological pattern according to which social injustice would be only a secondary feature, a phenomenal appearance of a world essentially rational.

This is the reason of the main focus of the theory of global justice on the problem of philanthropy or charity, on arguments and controversies related to the assistance of the poor. But philanthropy is just a feeling exterior to the idea of identity and *independent integrity* of the subject: it certainly comes from the abundant social experience of man, but for the mainstream Western philosophy the subject was always explained as *individual* conscience and body, society being an exterior environment to the integrity of the subject and formed by individual + individual + individual. The explaining structure of man in the Western philosophy is not the individual *within* society, but the individual (and his conscience) *and* society. In global justice theory also, the standpoint is that of the individual (or of an individual state) who donates to a “different world” from that of his own independent integrity. Even in the capability approach, capabilities belong to the individual as if they were natural and fatal characteristics of a given person and not the results of social relations. (This is the reason of the challenge of the discourse of capabilities with the one of the rights¹⁵).

¹⁴ But the problem of time is very important here. See Thomas Pogge, *Historical Wrongs: The Two Other Domains*, http://www.etikk.no/globaljustice/papers/GJ2003_Thomas_Pogge_Historical_Wrongs_The_Two_Other_Domains.doc (accessed February 3, 2012), where he demonstrates that “historical wrongs do not affect our *ultimate* moral reasons; they only affect what our ultimate moral reasons are reasons to do concretely” and that “Past wrongs do not *strengthen* the moral reasons to refrain from and to prevent like conduct now and in the future, but they may *weaken* such moral reasons”; as well as that “the manner in which present social rules have once been instituted can affect present moral reasons for action in regard to these rules”.

See the same topic and the rejection of the theory of poverty as a non-imputable situation generated by past behavior in Ser-Min Shei, *On Morality-Based Reasons for Eradicating World Poverty*, 2003, http://www.etikk.no/globaljustice/papers/GJ2003_Shei_Morality_Based_reasons_for_eradicating_poverty.rtf (accessed January 23, 2012).

¹⁵ Hartley Dean, *Critiquing capabilities: The distractions of a beguiling concept*. 2009, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24376/1/Critiquing_capabilities_%28LSERO_version%29.pdf (accessed February 14, 2012).

The historical ground of this conception is clear, but its function has ultimately been to support the structural power relations in such a manner so as not to change them. This is the reason of continuity and, more, of increase of the distance between the mass culture and education (education of the many)¹⁶ and, on the other hand, the high level of science, technology and human creativity: the marketization of education is only a (final?) form integrated within the market society full of advertising, of spectacle¹⁷ and simulacra¹⁸, somehow treating the ordinary people as the slaves cared for by a benevolent master, but whose happiness depend “upon the complete perfection of their moral and mental degradation”¹⁹. By stimulating false needs²⁰, the reasonable characteristic of society seems to be at least disputable²¹, and even though the level of civilization increases so that it could support post-materialistic values²², in fact, globally there is a huge split between social strata and places where the material values of survival exceed those of self-expression, and the advantaged layers worldwide. There is not only a cultural gap between them, as sociology describes it, but rather one of existential status, to which global justice theory does not contribute much to minimize.

A theory is only a theory, but the principle of global justice, as it is promoted by even its liberal (in the American sense of the word) supporters, is limited and somehow caricaturized: it would consist mainly in donations of the wealthy toward the poor²³.

¹⁶ Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt, *The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America (A Chronological Paper Trail)* (1999), Revised and Abridged Edition, Conscience Press, 2nd edition, 2011.

¹⁷ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 1967, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/debord/society.htm> and *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, 1988, <http://www.notbored.org/commentaires.html>.

¹⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres set simulation*, Editions Galilée, Paris, 1981.

¹⁹ Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation, 1838-1839*, 1863, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12422/12422-h/12422-h.htm> (accessed February 15, 2012).

²⁰ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955), Beacon Press, Boston, 1974, pp. 74-105.

²¹ André Gorz, *L'idéologie sociale de la bagnole*, 1973, <http://carfree.free.fr/index.php/2008/02/02/lideologie-sociale-de-la-bagnole-1973/> (accessed March 21, 2010).

²² Ronald Inglehart, and Wayne Baker, “Modernization, Cultural Change and the Persistence of Traditional Values”, *American Sociological Review* 65, 2000, pp. 19–51, <http://my.fit.edu/~gabrenya/cultural/readings/Inglehart-Baker-2000.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2012).

²³ I do not speak here about *people* from the affluent societies and who do not apply in practice the moral (universalist) principles they seem to adhere to (see this problem presented by Pogge in his *World Poverty...* and analyzed by Thomas Mertens, *Kant, Rawls and Pogge on Global Justice*, http://www.etikk.no/globaljustice/papers/GJ2003_Mertens_Kant_Rawls_Pogge_GJ.doc0 (accessed March 9, 2012), but about *theories*.

But indeed, there is no fundamental difference between this theory and the old point of view of Saturnalia (obviously leaving aside the duration of the transfer of gifts to slaves, a week, 17-25 December, in Roman ancient times, while at present it ought to be practically permanent, according to global justice theory) see Lucian of Samosata, *Saturnalian Letters*, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/luc/wl4/wl426.htm> (“31 (accessed March 21, 2012): “I must compel you to bestow on them

The theory – which pertains to *analytical philosophy* discussing the *moral arguments* of the supporters and opponents of global justice – *does not challenge the structural causes* of the *state of urgency* that requires these donations and, by aiming to convince both the possible donors and the conscience of self-esteem of its promoters, gives rise to the utopian belief that through a (world) politics of donation the entire society would change, would transform. It is a form of “liberal imagination”²⁴, which could include even advice to corporations to share the responsibility of this politics, considering these corporations as new, non-state actors capable to participate in the formal system of global governance, sometimes more justly than the states²⁵. In fact, neither the corporations nor the NGOs and the humanitarian private nets could substitute state and global solidarity, i.e. official developments of the equal human rights worldwide.

What is known but is separated from the problem of global justice

Many aspects of the present world are discussed within the present social sciences and global justice theory benefits from them. But it sets aside some of them and thus it does not unit them into a comprehensive theory of global justice.

This epistemological lack follows from the ideological framework within which the theory of global justice occurs: the keystone of this frame is the standpoint of private property *fragmenting* the view of society and social relations²⁶. The separated integrity of the subject has developed within Western philosophy in the framework created by the private property. And nowadays, from more than 30 years ago, when the strong foundation of the post-war human rights²⁷ – transposed into the politics of welfare state – was jolted by the neo-conservative politics (called neo-liberal in Europe) of transnational capitalism, global justice theory cannot but enter the game of questioning the rights (an always necessary endeavor, obviously) and at the same time urge towards a global politics in order to alleviate severe poverty.

any clothes that you do not require, or find too heavy for your own use, and also to vouchsafe them just a slight sprinkling of gold. If you do this, they engage not to dispute your right to your property any further in the court of Zeus. Otherwise, they will demand redistribution the next time he takes his seat”; “33. ...a liberality that costs you nothing appreciable will impress itself permanently by its timeliness on the memory of recipients”).

²⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief*, Routledge, New York, 2001.

²⁵ Andrew Kuper, *Redistributing Responsibilities. The UN Global Compact with Corporations*, http://www.etikk.no/globaljustice/papers/GJ2003_Kuper_Redistributing_Responsibilities.doc (accessed March 19, 2012).

²⁶ The standpoint of private property is related to the philosophical standpoint of the individual, and of states representing this viewpoint.

²⁷ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 1948, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

As a result, the problem of famine and hunger²⁸ is the main existential argument of the theory of global justice, but the individual standpoint directs argumentation toward the reduction of the distance between the deprived and the wealthy: both the negative and positive duties of the latter appear as necessary to cover this conspicuous distance.

However, there are not only starving to death, but also malnourished people and obesity of the poor²⁹. There are people consuming healthy bio-food, and there are people eating unhealthy and damaging food. And there is also the *precariat* (*précariat*), a new infra-wage condition of the majority of wage-earners³⁰, and not included within global justice theory. All of these have social roots and causes: the *fragmented* and *privately antagonistic* manner to treat society as a system and to treat the Other.

Global justice theory does not focus on these causes³¹, does not include alternative scientific solutions within its body (as those from Jean Ziegler's work; or

²⁸ Whose consequences were known more than 100 years ago (see Charles Gide, *Principes d'économie politique* (1883), Reprint, L. Lerose et Forcel, Paris, 1884, 415: in the same natural area, people from the poor strata live less than the rich, and the proportion and gravity of diseases are higher in the poor strata than in the rich ones).

And they are nowadays emphasized by scientific researches, Moshe Szyf, "The early life environment and the epigenome", *Biochim. Biophys. Acta*, 1790, 2009, pp. 878–885 and M. Szyf, "Early life, the epigenome and human health", *Acta Paediatrica*, 98, 7, 2009, pp. 1082–1084: insufficient food supply (especially during pregnancy and early childhood) generates later epigenetic aberrations and affects empathy and systemic happiness, both in individuals and societies as a whole.

²⁹ Obesity is not necessarily related to the waste of food, rather to the *malnourished* situation of the poor (working poor) and of impoverished middle classes (as well as to the unhealthy way of living, as sedentary or excessive regime of work, or as sedentary regime of entertainment of the unemployed).

³⁰ Robert Castel, *Les Métamorphoses de la question sociale*, Gallimard, col. Folio, Paris, 1999 ; Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2011.

³¹ Let us refer only to the increase of arms spending (while the global justice theory discusses only the reduction of aid of developed countries to the underdeveloped ones).

19 March 2012: *Rise in international arms transfers is driven by Asian demand*, says SIPRI (Stockholm, 19 March 2012) The volume of worldwide arms transfers in 2007–2011 was 24 per cent higher than in 2002–2006 and the five largest arms importers in 2007–2011 were all Asian states, according to new data on international arms transfers published today by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). <http://www.sipri.org/media/pressreleases/rise-in-international-arms-transfers-is-driven-by-asian-demand-says-sipri>.

But 27 Feb 2012: *Business as usual for top arms producers despite slowdown in arms sales*, says SIPRI (Stockholm, 27 February 2012): Sales of arms and military services by the largest arms-producing companies—the SIPRI Top 100—continued to increase in 2010 to reach \$411.1 billion, <http://www.sipri.org/media/pressreleases/27-feb-2012-Business-as-usual-for-top-arms-producers>.

Or <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/trends>: "World military expenditure is estimated to have been \$1630 billion in 2010—a real-terms increase of 1.3 per cent over 2008 and of 50 per cent since 2001. This corresponded to 2.6 per cent of world gross domestic product (GDP) and \$236 for each person in the world". (All accessed March 18, 2012).

see³²), and appropriates the presumption that there are ontological benefits brought about by late capitalism, specifically in its liberal-democratic form. In this respect, it is similar to global ethic "movement" (declarations, institutions and courses, journals, foundations) that seems to represent the hidden essence of the powerful who, au fond, would be permeable to the well-intentioned urges and thus at least convincing the individual and providing him with a code of moral values. In fact, it is not about new theoretical and ideological discoveries but about a new hypocrisy of intellectuals and political leaders who do not dare to question or to change the logic of capitalist system³³. For this reason, they only declare moral commitments and legitimize them, although these commitments are beautiful when they involve resistance to the violation of rights to life, liberty or security³⁴.

As a consequence, global justice theory has not a strong, or authentic, philosophical characteristic, since philosophy is "a laboratory, where is always brought to the proof, at abstract level, the fundamental problem of ideological hegemony, therefore the constitution of the dominant ideology"³⁵. Or, maybe on the contrary, if being this laboratory, philosophy imposes the line of dominant thinking of worldview, global justice theory suggests to the present state of Western thinking the boundaries within which it would be profitable to move.

Theories which support global injustice

Global justice theory is so criticized here for it has in subtext a wishful thinking that could lend expectations to naïve researchers who approach Western ideology. It could be seen as the best of this ideology.

But there are other, applied theories related to the problem of global justice that doubt the reason of social and global justice, thus criticizing global justice theory and, at the same time, emphasizing its limits.

³² Nick Beams, "Free market" program boosts world poverty, 8 June 1999, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/jun1999/imf-j08.shtml> (accessed March 30, 2012); Chris Williams, "Population, hunger, and environmental degradation. Are there too many people?", *ISR* 68, November–December 2009, <http://www.isreview.org/issues/68/feat-overpopulation.shtml> (accessed October 15, 2011); Barry Mason, *International food crisis due to agribusinesses and speculation*, 10 June 2011, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2011/jun2011/food-j10.shtml> (accessed February 14, 2012).

³³ *Toward a Global Ethic*, 1993, http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/_includes/FCKcontent/File/TowardsAGlobalEthic.pdf (accessed February 11, 2012); *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* (Proposed by the InterAction Council), 1997, http://www.global-ethic-now.de/gen-eng/0c_weltethos-und-politik/0c-pdf/decl_human_respons.pdf (accessed February 11, 2012).

³⁴ David Swanson, *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*, March 12, 2012, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=29700> (accessed March 21, 2012).

³⁵ Louis Althusser, «La transformation de la philosophie» 1976. In Louis Althusser, *Sur la Philosophie*. Gallimard, Paris, 1994, p. 169.

Generally, they are neo-conservative (or neo-liberal, in European meaning) theories, supporting the thesis of general improvement of civilization and standard of life as a result of free market, this one being not so free but dominated by the big world corporations. But this aspect, as well as the constitutive corruption, the competition to the death and the irrational destruction of nature and the cruel waste of creativity, all of these are not considered by these theories or they are seen as not so important just following the neo-conservative policies.

An example is the neo-liberal approach to poverty, visible also in the theoretical support of national and international policies. Another one is the elitist, cynical leadership and political regime, indifferent at present even to keeping up appearances, supported in the beginning by various theories, from Robert Dahl's *Polyarchy* to Rawls' *Law of Peoples*, and nowadays by different kinds of conservatism, including the compassionate conservatism and libertarian political philosophy. The result³⁶ is what Habermas criticizes as "post-democracy", from a utopian constitutionalist view that idealizes the period prior to the trans-nationalization of capitalism and considers a global community feasible and necessary to reconcile democracy with capitalism³⁷.

In fact, though social phenomena – as relative poverty or natural resources crisis – are relative, one can integrate them within a coherent and unitary theory which does not avoid unitary, therefore structural measures for social and global justice³⁸.

But there are epistemological shortcomings of the above-mentioned theories – including, to a significant extent, global justice theory –: the fragmented manner to consider the facts; the neglecting of some, i.e. the causes which are not at all introduced into analysis; and the relativist presumption according to which, because it's difficult to measure and compare different and absolutely opposed situations³⁹, on the one hand, the role of common denominator to which they are reduced is taken over by universalist wishes and, on the other hand, they are analyzed in an isolated manner.

³⁶ Paul Craig Roberts, *Western Democracy: A Farce And A Sham*, November 03, 2011, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=27447> (accessed November 23, 2011).

³⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The Last European. A Philosopher's Mission to Save the EU*. interview by Georg Diez, 11/25/2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,799237,00.html> (accessed January 15, 2012): "Otherwise, as he puts it, we run the risk of a kind of permanent state of emergency".

³⁸ Takis Fotopoulos, "Disaster theories and the crisis: the peak oil case", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy* 7, No. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn), 2011, http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol7/vol7_no2_3_takis_disaster_theories_peak_oil_crisis.html (accessed February 15, 2012).

³⁹ That of the condition of those of the leading strata and that of the ruled; and that of different levels of poverty: this is why they insist on the eradication of severe poverty.

Challenging global justice theory

Let us imagine a different philosophical presumption: not that of the isolated integral individual seeing the others as being outside his own human system – the only one that counts in this type of supposition –, but that of the main significance of the Other for the understanding and realization of my own humanness⁴⁰.

This presumption is not altogether strange to the European philosophy. Instead, it lies in a “subterranean current”⁴¹ that never really missed from within its body, and consists in the worth of the *exteriority of the oppressed*: as providing the actual “presence” of a perspective for me, perspective which, however, “is impossible for the system of domination without the help of the Other”⁴².

This different outlook of the Other – not as language, not as style of thinking, not as continuity of subjectivity, not as the “they”, but as concrete suffering because of the condition of the “wretched of the earth” (Franz Fanon) – represents a “fissure” of the exteriority, it surpasses the lens of proximity by changing it with the social condition of being dominated, and requires the liberation from the “oppression and exclusion from the ‘benefits’ of the totality”⁴³. This *philosophy of liberation* deals with “the ‘we’ (a ‘Thou’ which is exterior to the dominating ‘us’) of the ‘people’, as a social block of the oppressed”⁴⁴ and as the subject of liberation which can no more expect social justice from those who consider that the social division, exploitation and domination would be natural⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ See John Stuart Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Volume VIII, A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation (Books IV-VI and Appendices), ed. J.M. Robson, Introduction by R.F. McRae, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1974, Book VI, Chapter XII http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=247&layout=html#chapter_40043 (accessed February 2008): “in the comparatively humble sense, of pleasure and freedom from pain, and in the higher meaning, of rendering life, not what it now is almost universally, puerile and insignificant – but such as human beings with highly developed faculties can care to have”.

⁴¹ The expression belongs to Louis Althusser, « Le courant souterrain du matérialisme de la rencontre. » (1982), In *Écrits philosophiques et politiques*, Tome I, Textes réunis et présentés par François Matheron, pp. 553-591, Paris, Stock / Imec, 1994. (The term “materialism” is used by Althusser to signify that Necessity and Reason (as human representations or natural laws) are not accomplished facts, but processes/movements having at their beginning a non-world, that of an unreal something whose names – we understand only through names or concepts –, thus reality, are certified only within/through accidental movements, see p. 556).

⁴² Enrique Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor and the Philosophy of Liberation*. Humanity Books, 1996, p. 7, <http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/dussel/apelin/cap1.pdf>.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁴⁵ As Rawls thinks, *A Theory of Justice*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972, p. 102.

Starting from the questioning of the condition of the poor, the paradigm of this philosophy is that of the *life of the human community*, and “liberation here means not only to subvert the practical-social relation (communicative action, political institution, ethical injustice), but also to locate oneself in a different manner in the productive relation of work itself (subsequent and necessary technological revolution)”⁴⁶.

This view seems to be something more than the contemporary theory of recognition, going farther than Hegel: the aim to ensure personal dignity as inherent to the human person is promoted by this theory not by reflecting on the elimination of inequalities, but on preventing disrespect⁴⁷. However, the fight for recognition is not so much a struggle for recognition of “cultural identity”, but for rights and legal guarantees to all citizens⁴⁸. But would this be enough only at the level of a certain country with its citizens?

Certainly not: the present world involves “transcultural elements” which inherently create the experiential structures of the new life-world (Cha). In a certain country, “equality is, finally, the real essential of democracy” (and “Neither the current brands of neo-liberalism which emphasize individuality and competitiveness at the expense of the welfare state, nor any of the various strands of communitarianism which are being bandied about as being a 'third way' to achieve democracy, but which in fact promote a sense of community which excludes those who do not share the same communal traditions, are adequate to move developing countries to the place they need to be if they are to be solid players in a global community”⁴⁹). And if we want to develop this essential of democracy, we have to consider human rights in a global citizenship⁵⁰.

There are political transpositions of some researches related in a way or another to a more traditional or a non-conformist representation of global justice. Let us remember that, despite all their problems, the Human Development Index, as well as the Gross National Happiness concept, contribute to pressing towards global justice.

All of these may be understood from the standpoint of a profound philosophical term which continues and makes concrete the presumption of an indestructible

⁴⁶ Dussel, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Axel Honneth (Interview with Axel Honneth), Spring (April-June), 2010, <http://www.barcelonametropolis.cat/en/page.asp?id=22&ui=366> (accessed January 19, 2011), p. 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp.8, 9.

⁵⁰ Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri. *Empire* (2000), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., London, England Tenth printing 2001, pp. 361-403.

relationship between me and the Other: *time*⁵¹. Indeed, justice means that I manage my lifetime, I expand it in the same duration through my rich manifestations of creativity, communication and feelings. But if my richness depends on the rich manifestations of the Other, the ultimate criterion of justice is the time of the Other given through actions and relations leading to the freedom of his creativity. Justice, even more if it is global, doesn't mean providing some aid to the disadvantaged of destiny and postponing some sufferings, but assuring the possibility of all to manage their *kairos*⁵². And to support this background of justice is more valuable than ever before. Consequently, to remain at the level of charities just in order to alleviate the too excessive and cruel face of the capitalist social order – and implicitly dreaming to the good old days of the post-war welfare state capitalism – means to enter in the logic of a servile ideology, thus to avoid philosophy and its tormenting questions.

⁵¹ A strong tradition of the European philosophy, the individualist paradigm, consists in conceiving of man as struggling with only the finiteness of life of the speaker/narrator and as taking this finiteness only at the level of consume (of time): anxiety in front of the insufficient events man passes through and in front of acts man develops transforms into anxiety toward time. In its turn, this image arises from the also traditional conception which separates the relationship between man and time from the one between man and space. Clearer, through this separation philosophy can arrive rather to an abstract view about man: that of a philosophy horoscope, where every human being would have the same feeling concerning his/her insufficient time to live, irrespective of the spatial content of life/ the content of life "given" by the (social) space he/she lives in. As a result, the problem of increasing the time to live appears in individualism as only individual management of the individual time, namely as effort to experience more acts, but upon the basis of a fundamental sad conscience: that of the irremediable shortness of life.

Obviously, a dogmatic collectivist philosophy, that of the non-importance of the individual life in front of the infinite life of the species, is at the same time neglecting the above-mentioned problem and the ontological connection between the human time and space; and it issues from the same historical stage based on rarity and domination – subordination in order to manage one's own time on the expense of the others and, perhaps paradoxically, it ignores the time-space relationship related to the human life.

⁵² Ana Bazac, « Le temps d'agir. » In *L'Action – penser la vie, agir la pensée*, Actes du XXIII^e congrès international de l'ASPLF, Venise 17 août-21 août 2010, Vrin, Paris, 2012, pp. 307-310.