

*Discussion of Prof. J.J. Llach's paper*

VYMETALIK

The chief question is whether the problem of unemployment can be solved at all. I am convinced that a solution must exist. Had the people all over the world lived in abundance and had they no longer any need for goods and services, further supply of jobs might be a problem. We all know that such is not the case; the situation is rather the opposite. The solution might be difficult within individual countries or states. As Father Schasching stressed in a lecture in Vienna, action on the world scale will also be necessary. Then we ought to investigate how the subsidiarity principle should apply in order to prevent the danger of new totalitarian tendencies. This would probably require an association of constructive democratic forces, men with high level of responsibility, expertise and experience. The responsibility of Christians should not be kept off this problem.

MALINVAUD

A comment and a question. When looking at your results, I am impressed by the fact that the differences you find are not more systematically ordered. I interpret this fact as arising from the great variability of features concerning work and employment. I was aware of this variability for the Western European countries, which I best know. I see that it is more generally valid. Explaining components of this variability remains a challenge to social sciences.

Is not the list of characteristics you are considering somewhat too restricted? I know that my question is a bit unfair, because it is unfair to request more from someone who has produced a geographically extensive work, with all its difficulties. However, just to stimulate the production of still richer results, I am taking the liberty to suggest that it would be nice to have more in two respects. First, I should like to have, for each of the characteristics you consider, a measure of variability within each of the 16 groups of countries. Second, I would appreciate knowing more about each group than just its population and the average GNP per capita, but also the average values of several other indicators of human development, such as those which were presented by Professor Sabourin at the First Plenary Session.

LLACH

I do agree that much work needs to be added to this, in order to show the variability between countries that belong to the same type and also to include other variables which could be educational variables, so as to have a more complete picture.

I will try, if I have enough time, to incorporate at least some of your suggestions in the final version of the paper. I consider the typology in itself as something for which future work of this Academy could be helpful. Extra indicators and measures of variability could then be helpful.

ZUBRZYCKI

I was puzzled by one finding in Table V, which shows the distribution of the work force into agriculture, industry and services. The services sector interests me in particular, because this is the one which apparently presents the greatest promise for absorbing some unemployment worldwide. Within that sector we have a useful distinction made between wage and non-wage. Now, within the non-wage sector, or a part of the services sector, variability is quite pronounced. For example, looking at the middle-income former socialist countries, I find that only 2.8% of those who are non-wage work in services. Surely, this is the area where the promise is greatest, and, judging from the experience of developing countries, there is some scope for improvement in the unemployment situation. Would you like to comment on that?

LLACH

Well, in general, working in services is seen as something negative in a way, or at least not as positive as working in manufacturing. But, the process of economic development basically means the continuous increase in productivity, and the increase in productivity is much faster in manufacturing than in services. So, naturally, societies in the future, as this table shows, will be more and more service intensive. In my opinion, there is no alternative to such a change in the structure of the distribution of the work force.

ZUBRZYCKI

I may have not made myself clear. My concern was with the non-wage sector, that is to say with "family-centred" business or type of employment. This, I think, is an interesting phenomenon. In services such businesses provide scope for employment of family members and thus for absorbing to a degree the pool of unemployed.

LLACH

I would be tempted to say yes. But I don't have precise arguments to say so. I consider it as an interesting working hypothesis. However, remember that, even in the service industries, a gradual process of modernization occurs. So, growth of salaried work will be more important than that of independent work, even in the services sector.

ZACHER

Professor Llach, allow me to make two remarks. The first one concerns the background of your statistics. There are background differences. For instance, what does the term "work" mean? It is not so clear. Even in the formal wage-sector and in developed countries, "work" first of all implies a formal position. Such a position entitles you to money. "Work" plays a possible part in materializing that formal position. What that precisely means depends on organizational efficiency, the value system, labour law, etc. In some societies, anyone who has access to a formal position called "work", even if it is a very low position, first of all feels entitled to money, perhaps also to prestige, perhaps to fringe benefits or facilities like an office, a telephone and so forth. And what he or she actually contributes to society is, to say the least, secondary. But these are only a few examples which show that extremely different values and cultural contexts underline the term "work".

My second point takes us back to what our colleague, Professor Schasching, said. He told us — and I was very happy about that remark — that the Catholic social doctrine started for the relatively homogeneous Catholic Europe of the late 19th century. Now it has spread all over the world and we see how great the differences are. The methodics and the content of the doctrine must change if it no longer applies to a limited, homogeneous region, but aims to take account of all the different circumstances prevailing throughout the world. But statistics are only one of the challenges that face this doctrine. The many different social and political systems, and the many different cultural and economic conditions do not only pose a great variety of challenges to a social doctrine, but also underscore the necessity of finding adequate, open and complex answers. So I would like to ask Professor Schasching whether he would agree that it is a great task, for our Academy in particular, to find the right approach; stating too forcefully a believed truth would be dangerous when it could not apply to all circumstances.

LLACH

About the first part of your comments, I share with you the concern for the limitations of the statistics I presented, but perhaps not to the same degree. These statistics come from international sources. The expression non-wage means paid work, but executed by self-employed workers on their own account and a small proportion of family workers, the ones that Professor Zubrzycki mentioned. Basically, these statistics are comparable. In the low-income countries, we see a high proportion of non-wage workers; to have a wage there is like a luxury. Limitations of the statistics are perhaps more intense in other aspects, but they are not serious in this non-wage and wage classification.

ZACHER

May I say one word? My problem is not between wage and non-wage work, but within these categories: within! There lie the great, not easily perceived, cultural differences.

SCHASCHING

I would like to summarize what I have said already. There is a certain development in the Catholic social teaching on work. *Rerum novarum* as well as *Quadragesimo anno* have been written under the proposition of a Christian renewal in personal and public life. With *Pacem in terris* the Catholic social teaching addressed all men of good will. This means that the Church stood as one of the moral forces contributing to what Pope John Paul II called "the culture of work". This means at the same time the willingness to collaborate with other religious and social forces, not imposing upon them her own principles and orientations, but offering the Catholic social teaching for a dialogue.

MINNERATH

Je voulais signaler dans la discussion les conclusions des recherches d'un économiste français bien connu qui s'appelle Alain Cotta. Dans un livre récent (*La troisième révolution française*, J.C. Latrès, Paris 1995), il explique que les développements devant lesquels nous nous trouvons, notamment en matière de travail disponible, sont liés aux grands courants de changement culturel, comme l'accès de la femme au travail, dans le Nord de la planète. Il semble dire que la transformation du rôle social de la femme depuis deux cents ans, mais surtout depuis ces quarante dernières années, est le facteur principal des grands bouleversements sociologiques et économiques que nous connaissons. Ce changement serait indirectement à l'origine de la

désintégration de la famille, de la chute de la démographie, de la création de 10 à 15% d'exclus dans nos sociétés et du grand volant du chômage structurel que nous connaissons. Sans évidemment mettre en question tout ce qui se rattache à la libération de la condition féminine, ces remarques nous invitent à ne pas réduire notre approche aux facteurs purement économiques. Les leviers des grands changements sont culturels.

ARCHER

I appreciate this may seem a small, semantic point, but I think it's nevertheless important. Much of the burden of Father Schasching's paper this morning, was talking about the availability of work as necessary for the fulfilment of every human being. This I accept entirely, and it is probably just your formulation that I am questioning. You talk about the entry of women into the labour market as a cultural phenomenon. This fascinates me, and it distresses me, because I don't think anybody would talk about the entry of men into the labour market as a cultural phenomenon. Of course, in both cases, there are cultural factors, education, expectations, local mores. They influence both genders. But, I think there is a very dangerous path to be followed if we see the employment of women as both being quintessential to the fulfilment of half the human beings constituting the human race and regarded instead as culturally variable. But I do appreciate this is probably just a semantic method of formulating the question, and of course there are cultural features involved in it, I wouldn't deny that for a minute.

LLACH

Excuse me. May I add some comments to the comment of Professor Archer? What I said in the paper is that if we look at the statistics of the male participation in the labour force, we can see that countries with some cultural traits in common show a different pattern of female labour participation. That is why I consider, without any additional meaning, that it has a cultural explanation.

ARCHER

If I can just answer, because I was not making an adversarial point, I agree completely that there are cultural facts involved. I simply think it is very important not to slide or glide from saying, "yes, there are cultural factors involved", proposition A, into proposition B, "the employment of women is a purely cultural phenomenon or question". But I don't think you would contest that for a minute.