

Chapter 3

Luigi Sturzo's Socio-economic Development Theory and the Case of Italy: No Prophet in His Homeland



Flavio Felice and Luca Sandonà

Abstract Luigi Sturzo's (1871–1959) popularism is an economic and political theory that has many commonalities with the German social market economy. Because of his anti-statism, the fascist regime forced Sturzo to remain in exile for twenty-two years. In this period, Sturzo mainly lived in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America additionally absorbing Anglo-Saxon approaches to capitalism and authentically fusing these with a Catholic perspective. In his views on development, Sturzo pointed out that the free market must not only exist within the rules of free competition, but must also possess an ethical perspective based on the centrality of the human person. In the light of Sturzo's political thought, we can assert that political and social institutions should support the inclusion of all people, especially of the most poor and marginalized, according to the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. Consequently, Sturzo's 'constitutional economics' rejects welfarism, emphasizes the freedom and responsibility of civil society, while questioning potentially inflationary and deficit spending policies. Such conceptual framework based on the centrality of the intermediate bodies (family, associations, groups, enterprises, etc.) could today also be useful for the socio-economic development of the least developed countries given that Sturzo's approach balances the necessity for the competitiveness of a free market economy with the necessity from social justice drawn from Catholicism. However, from an historical point of view, although Christian Democrats had governed Italy uninterruptedly from 1946 to 1992, they had not develop Sturzo's approach to economic policy. Their economic planning had been in line with the Italian tradition of State capitalism, especially after the death of Alcide De Gasperi in 1954. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Christian Democrat economist Nino Andreatta rediscovered Sturzo's ideas.

Keywords Socio-economic development · Luigi Sturzo · Popularism · Constitutional economics · Christian democracy

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3.1 Introduction¹

In a recent pamphlet on the history of industrial policy in Italy, Franco Debenedetti,² a top manager and entrepreneur that serves as president of the pro-market Bruno Leoni think-tank of Turin, dedicated a chapter to Luigi Sturzo. This chapter is titled *Luigi Sturzo, una voce contro* (i.e., ‘a dissident/contrary voice’). The question thus is: against what? Debenedetti answered that Sturzo seemed to be the only social scientist that was contrary to state interventionism that defined the Italian model of economic development from the end of WWII to the end of the First Republic (viz., 1992). Other than Sturzo, Luigi Einaudi was also a promoter of a sort of humanist liberalism to encourage virtuous economic behaviours. Vilfredo Pareto and Maffeo Pantaleoni were neoclassical liberals. The subsequent generation of thinkers had included Francesco Forte, who supported socialist liberalism, Sergio Ricossa, who supported the Austrian school of economics kind of liberalism, and Alberto Quadrio Curzio, who argued for social liberalism.

Antonio Masala³ methodically reviewed the diverse range of European free market economic models, including classical liberalism, Ordoliberalism, neoliberalism, and so on. He pointed out that Alfred Sherman,⁴ one of the ghost-writers for Margaret Thatcher, had confessed that many of his ideas were drawn from Sturzo’s liberalism, which was the only example radically founded on Catholic ethics and natural law. For this reason, Dario Antiseri⁵ distinguished between Sturzo’s populism/liberal Catholicism that continued the tradition of Antonio Rosmini Serbati and Einaudi’s Catholic liberalism that, in turn, was founded on classical liberal economic principles and only adapted in reference to human and Catholic values.

The analysis of Sturzo’s populism seems particularly interesting in light of recent re-emergence of populism in politics and, according to some,⁶ even in the Catholic Church. Sturzo’s populism is based on the inclusive character of political, economic, and social institutions. Furthermore, it supports a balanced polyarchy of powers at the international, national, and local levels; interprets as complementary the concepts of government and governance; and contrasts any form of concentration of power in the hands of the few. What is more, populism emphasizes the charisma of the leader, challenges democratic institutions, and conceives the people’s will as being of divine nature.⁷ In this contribution, Sect. 2 introduces the thought of Luigi Sturzo, with special reference to his connections with the German social market economic tradition; Sect. 3 reviews Italy’s economic history underlying the lack of

¹This section was written by Luca Sandonà.

²Debenedetti [16].

³Masala [23].

⁴Sherman [31].

⁵Antiseri [7].

⁶Zanatta [39]. For a more detailed analysis of the phenomenon of populism, see L. Zanatta, *Il populismo*, Carocci Editore, Roma, 2018.

⁷Serio [30].

impact of Sturzo's teaching; and Sect. 4 analyses the revival of Sturzo's thought, as propounded by Nino Andreatta, a Catholic economics professor at the University of Bologna who has moved away from Keynesism and towards popularism/liberal Catholicism. Lastly, the conclusion (Sect. 5) attempts to address the reasons that Sturzo had failed to become a prophet in his homeland.

3.2 Luigi Sturzo's Socio-economic Development Theory⁸

It is thus true that the application of 'ordoliberal' theories has only recently reached Italy, and only indirectly.⁹ However, we cannot but acknowledge that the thought of authors such as Ludwig Erhard, Walter Eucken, and Wilhelm Röpke have profoundly influenced aspects of Italy's economic and political culture. With regard to popularism, we maintain that Fr. Luigi Sturzo—a priest, scientist, politician, and statesman—knew only too well how to express clearly the social philosophy of the authors mentioned earlier. A significant testimony reaches us from a letter sent by the West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to Giuseppe Palladino on 25 September 1959, a few days after the death of the Sicilian priest: 'I esteemed Fr. Sturzo as one of the great politicians who out of a profoundly felt sense of Christian responsibility, after the chaos of the last war, have worked in every sense to build a new Europe; I hope greatly that Fr. Sturzo's prayers may help me to cooperate, in turn, in the spirit that animated his intention, to resolve the problems that will present themselves for the Christian West'.¹⁰ Having returned to Italy in 1946, after a long and sorrowful exile since 1924, which had led him first to France, then to England, and, eventually, to the United States, Sturzo wrote prolifically as a freelance journalist for newspapers and academic journals in which he was vehemently critical of the mounting statist climate of that era. A climate that translated into government and parliamentary support for state intervention in the economy.

In an article of 29 December 1957, entitled *Paura della libertà* ('Fear of Freedom'), Sturzo wrote: 'Unfortunately there exists among us, like it or not, a hybrid industrial business, [comprising] the staticised one and the private one; the former with monopolistic privileges, ample state guarantees, a facility of means, and no sense of risk; the latter with a longstanding tradition of state-given favours, facility of means and with a sense of risk; even industrial operators who seek particular favours lose sight of the value of economic freedom and the real interests of national productivity'.¹¹ These are not the words of an impenitent libertarian, an anarcho-capitalist who dreams of who-knows-what strategies to privatize lunar real estate. Quite the contrary. These are the words of the father of Italian and European politi-

⁸This section was written by Flavio Felice. An earlier version of this text was published in the international scholarly journal, *Global & Local Economic Review*.

⁹Forte and Felice [20], Forte et al. [19].

¹⁰Palladino [26].

¹¹Sturzo [35].

cal and economic Catholicism—one of the greatest interpreters of modern Christian social thought and one of the most authoritative social scientists of the 20th century.

That article is of considerable importance. It is interesting to note how Sturzo affirms that no form of ‘solidarity’ appears practicable where the coexistence of ‘statism’ and ‘market economy’ emerges, while a policy oriented towards solidarity would be possible only where the ‘free market’ is accompanied by a state policy of ‘cooperation’ and of ‘occasional’ and ‘agreed intervention’.¹² These would be the circumstances that would allow for a fair and healthy policy. Ultimately, Sturzo qualifies his political-economic position with the characteristics typical of a social market economy. Not by chance does he take the German and US economic-entrepreneurial reality as an example, nor is it by chance that Röpke cited Sturzo’s work as one of his inexhaustible sources of inspiration. The social market economy that Sturzo advocated takes three conceptual elements into consideration: First, that freedom is unique and individual: ‘one loses political and cultural freedom if one loses economic freedom, and vice versa’,¹³ in disagreement with the Crocian ‘political liberalism/economic liberalism’ distinction, and in agreement with the unitary perspective of Einaudi, Hayek, and Röpke himself. Second, that freedom is an expression of self-discipline as well as of legislative regulation: ‘for the coexistence and respect of reciprocal rights and duties’.¹⁴ And third, that the main functions of the State are to ‘guarantee and safeguard collective and private rights’,¹⁵ keep public order, assure national defence, and to maintain and safeguard the monetary and credit system. And, furthermore, to exercise vigilance and care for public finance, and to guarantee its proper administration. Only secondarily and ‘subordinately does the state intervene, in a supplementary manner, in those sectors of social and general interest where private initiative is deficient, until these are able to resume their role’.¹⁶ As becomes evident, Sturzo, just like the ordoliberals and the fathers of social market economics, does not deny that in cases of necessity the State should intervene, but he circumscribes such cases to situations of ‘emergency’, for a ‘temporary’ period and ‘in a secondary and alternative manner’.¹⁷

The economic freedom of which Sturzo speaks ‘is an economic freedom that conditions and facilitates the existence and development of the political and moral freedoms’.¹⁸ In this sense, for Sturzo, the collapse of all those ‘corporativistic illusions of the philo-fascist Catholics of yesterday’ would come as a result.¹⁹ Corporatism, for our author, did not and could not have any realization except in the sad Mussolinian

¹²*Id.*

¹³*Id.*

¹⁴*Id.*

¹⁵*Id.*

¹⁶*Id.*

¹⁷*Id.*

¹⁸*Id.*

¹⁹*Id.*

attempt to identify 'State-party-corporation', in the very realization of the fascist motto: 'all in the State, of the State, for the State, nothing outside the State'.²⁰

Similarly, the identification of economic freedom with the existence and development of political and moral freedoms—integral and indivisible freedom—arguably cause the collapse of the illusions in the 'socialist and classist State'.²¹ The experience of the Soviet Union and of its satellite countries, as well as the 'forgeries of Belgrade and Beijing' all demonstrate that, in the absence of economic freedom, 'free capitalism' is soon substituted by a 'State capitalism, a thousand times worse than the private one' and that the *dictatorship of the proletariat* would be nothing but 'the military dictatorship with the apparatus of profiteering functionalism'.²² It is on this level of reflection that Sturzo comes to affirm that 'Western countries, more or less individualistic and dynamic, with so many differences of climate, productivity, economic development, customs, needs, history, and culture, and whose political conditions are full of contrasts, will never undergo—except by force—the suppression of their fundamental liberties, of which the economy is the necessary condition'.²³ In this picture, although State intervention at the time was generally more extensive than in the past, its impact would be lesser, and the productive energies coming from the private sector would represent an antidote against State interference precisely in those countries where the political structure was more solid and the industry healthier. Sturzo did not see Italy as being amongst those countries, given that Italy was inconsistent and evidently immature on the political level, and possessed an economic-productive system that was extremely weak and constantly de-responsibilised by State interventionism that, assuring monopolistic privileges (state guarantees), had ended up miseducating economic operators to the 'risk that educates' in a Schumpeterian sense.

In underlining the fact that, ultimately, State interventionism does not lead to policies of solidarity and respect for personal freedoms, but rather to the authoritarian subversion of a free society, Sturzo presents a pragmatic and impactful view. It is worth noting that Sturzo's idea of economic and political development is consistent with the notion of 'integral human development'; a quintessential notion within the tradition of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Sturzo's 'personalism' argues that only the individual acts and the social aggregates are the multiple, simultaneous, cumulative, and continuative projection of human action. On this anthropocentric basis, Sturzo's popularism advocates democratic participation to political activity, openness to inclusive institutions working in a spirit of polyarchy, and opposition to any form of concentration that favours the rent over the competition. On the other hand, Sturzo's 'solidarity' pertains to the moral character of civil and political action,

²⁰On the contrary, it is precisely by recovering the experience matured by and in 19th-century social Catholicism that Sturzo develops a sensitivity towards the underlying human factors of the production process, proposing representation for work, understood in its most varied forms, within the administrative organisation of the Italian state. See Secco Suardo [29].

²¹Sturzo [33, p. 158].

²²*Id.*

²³*Id.*

rejecting State interventionism conceived as a form of assistentialism. In this view, humankind is seen as free and responsible, ignorant and fallible, yet always perfectible. However, if it is inspired by ‘superior ideals’, it can concur to the reflection of the divine on the civil institution in order to build a type of development not only in quantitative terms (growth) but also qualitative. This perspective, which connects *personalism* and *solidarity* in Sturzo’s popularism, is centered on the belief that the *common good* is not determined by the State as well as that the State is not endowed with the right of achieving the common good in the name of social pluralism. On the contrary, Sturzo thinks that the common good is inspired by the principle of subsidiarity, as it derives from the spontaneous order resulting from the active role of each individual and intermediate body (such as the family and cultural/social/associative groups) without any pretence of imposing something on other people. In this context, Sturzo introduces the transcendent call of each human person to create institutions directly answering to God’s invitation (to Man) to be co-creator. Put differently, Sturzo’s proposal could be a sort of *people’s capitalism*²⁴ or even, according to Guy Sorman’s definition, of *barefoot capitalism*.

His harsh critique of this reality was aimed at a part of the Catholic political and intellectual milieu accustomed to referring to concepts such as *personalism* and *solidarism* as possible picklocks that could have unhinged—by overcoming—the typical institutions of the market economy, to give life to some form of an economy ‘of Italy’s own’. This was an illusory alternative to the market economy that threatened political and cultural liberties; illusory, inasmuch as—according to Sturzo—freedom is ‘individual’ and consequently ‘whole and indivisible’.²⁵

State intervention, which Sturzo considered necessary for civil living (living in *conformity*, according to the terminology of the fathers of social market economics) may precariously slip into statist interventionism: *not in conformity*, ‘a destroyer of every institutional order and every administrative order’,²⁶ when it appears as the ‘systematic degeneration of state intervention, in fields not its own or by provisions harmful to the rights of citizens’.²⁷ Intervention is ‘illegitimate’ or ‘harmful to the rights of citizens’²⁸—Röpke and the interpreters of the Freiburg School would claim ‘not in conformity with the market economy’—when the State does not limit itself to attempting to neutralise hostile factors in the joint activity between entrepreneurs and workers. The degeneration of statism would result in the monopolization of national capital, consequently contracting productivity, devaluing currency, generalising functionalism, and effecting a totalitarian drift.²⁹ As may be witnessed, for Sturzo the State was in its very essence the political form of civil society; what the *Res publica*

²⁴In relation to this perspective, it would be interesting to compare Sturzo’s economic and political theory of development with Michael Novak’s original view on democratic capitalism. See De Girolamo [13, 14], Felice [17].

²⁵Sturzo [33, p. 159].

²⁶Sturzo [36].

²⁷*Id.*

²⁸*Id.*

²⁹Sturzo [32].

was for the ancient Romans and the *Administration* in the Anglo-saxon tradition. Ultimately, and to put it in Sturzo's words, it was 'power and the administration of the common good'.³⁰

The reasons for the anti-statism in a certain tradition of Catholic social thought (that current heir to Sturzo's thought), are expressed by the priest of Caltagirone himself when he affirms that statism unhinges the intermediated articulation of society; ultimately, by centralising power in the hands of State entities and bureaucratising civil society, it contravenes one of the cardinal points of the modern Social Doctrine of the Church, namely, the principle of subsidiarity, both in its horizontal and vertical dimensions.³¹ It weakens a certain capacity for individual resistance in the face of the threat of invasion by bureaucratic bodies in the spontaneous life of social organisations. It transforms parties and unions into bureaucratic bodies of the State—where the State is strong—and of the anti-state, where the State is weak. Sturzo's fear is that 'one day today's power-centralizing state will collapse even with its half-chained freedom, and there the anti-state, itself a power-centralizing entity, will rise to power with the cadaver of political freedom at its feet'.³² According to Sturzo, by subverting the rights inherent in the human person, statism also ends up subverting the powers and functions of the administration, producing an economic imbalance in, both, the production and distribution of goods and services, due to its irrational initiatives, elevated costs, and management deficit.

Sturzo's message on economics can be summed up in the maxim, typically used in the Ordoliberal context: 'the state, a referee and not a player in the free economic game'. Giuseppe Palladino, the Italian economist who executed the 'will' of the founder of the Italian Popular Party³³ and was one of the men closest to Sturzo in his final years, is credited with highlighting the great lesson in economics we received from Sturzo. Palladino writes in a volume dedicated to the US recessions from 1927 to 1957: 'In rethinking the past and recent economic and financial experience, we shall make reference above all to the critical position assumed by father Luigi Sturzo in the face of more relevant government and parliamentary directions on the

³⁰*Id.*

³¹'A State-controlled organization on subsidiarity puts up for discussion not only the repartition of competence and power between the various institutional levels, from local to European levels, but also puts up for discussion the repartition of competences in the horizontal sense, between operators having diverse characteristics—public, private and State-private—having in common the capability to carry out activities of general interest. This problem has already been addressed in different and in convergent ways applying a variety of theories, with the most important identifiable as federalism, the theory of subsidiarity and the model of Social Market Economy. These different approaches allow one to understand the various elements of the historical process. Their capacity to develop a cross-fertilization process can be attributed to the very nature of the ongoing processes involving the change referred to by all the three mentioned' Velo [38, p. 15].

³²Sturzo [34].

³³The Italian Popular Party was founded by Luigi Sturzo on 18 January 1919, and, in the opinion of the Italian historian Federico Chabod, it was '[t]he most notable event in the history of the Italian twentieth century'. It contributed to the end of the so-called 'Roman question', exacerbated by the capture of Rome by the Italian army on 20 September 1870 [11, p. 43].

topic of the state intervention in the economy'.³⁴ We particularly owe to Palladino the reception of Sturzo's thought in a manner strongly committed to understanding the national and international economic processes, and again owe to Palladino the understanding of Sturzo as one committed to giving answers coherent with his sociological presuppositions, and oriented towards the current of research we have defined as Ordoliberalism. Sturzo was conscious that *stability*, understood as full commitment, and *development*, in the absence of inflation, represent two demands of modern democracies, since such democracies are more sensible to the needs of the market. Their greater market sensibility results from their diminished derivation from those nets of social protection typical of archaic societies; consequently, the women and men of the post-war period were much freer, but at the same time much more exposed to risks deriving from possible economic crises and catastrophes.

In conformity with the ordoliberal lesson, Palladino, assuming Sturzo's principle of 'the sociology of the concrete' regarding the evils of statism, writes that 'since the series of economic and social relationships in a free society is always posed as a question of fair and proper competition, it is well to observe that the following principle of free competition was suffocated yesterday (in the past) by the illusion of being able to consider the market the playing field and referee of the economic game, and is more seriously threatened today by the error of deeming the state a party and referee of the game itself. And thus, the game remains a confused one, and its stability enters into conflict with the ulterior development of the economy'.³⁵ Ultimately, the lesson of Sturzo, mediated by Palladino's contribution, regarding the Italian reception of the ordoliberal lesson, takes into account the awareness that in a game or match, the best results are obtained when the following three conditions exist: the presence of good players ('conscious and updated economic workers'), clear and certain rules ('principles with which to regulate the hierarchy of interests and ends, starting from those individuals and of groups, of the categories and—in the universal sphere—of the individual nations') and an impartial referee.

The first error was allegedly committed in considering the market the playing field, in which senseless automatons with homogeneous—and thus indifferent—expectations exercised themselves in the public manifestation of the principle of free and perfect competition. This dual function was motivated by the conviction that it was sufficient for the State to serve as the guarantor of economic freedom, and, consequently, to have the function of impeding anyone from disrupting competition—which on its own could not have been other than perfect—out of respect for an interpretation of the concept of Adam Smith's 'invisible hand', according to which the instances of individual selfishness would be directed towards the 'greatest common good'. This mistake, according to Palladino, generated the misleading idea that universal and free competition would regulate the natural and spontaneous circulation of work, capital, and goods, resolving in this way the problem of the allocation of scarce resources on a global scale. So that, Palladino points out, 'healthy force of the economy's sure development'—which has from time immemorial been called

³⁴Palladino [25, p. 171].

³⁵*Id.*, p. 178.

selfishness—when not moderated by reason, can serve as neither brake nor limit. In this way, selfishness, exploiting the increased revenues of the larger companies, has obtained the upper hand over the weakest: ‘And as companies have grown *in proportion* they have also become less numerous in the main sectors of the economy: the iron and steel industry, metallurgy, sources of energy, mechanics, credit, etc. In this way *individual selfishness* has often become *group selfishness* (monopolies, trusts, cartels), *class selfishness* (trade union monopolies) and *national selfishness* (economic imperialism and isolationism)’.³⁶

By the end of the 1950s it was evident that the great economic and social question, conscious as it was of the market's incapacity to regulate itself and of the inestimable harm the state would do if positioned simultaneously as referee and as player, was being directed towards the search for a referee able to guide the economic sphere. People began to understand how anti-monopoly and anti-trust laws would not suffice, since in those sectors that had been left in the hands of a few companies, no law would ever keep a certain number of directors from meeting and making decisions that would influence the global market for a single good. Here Palladino sees three possible remedies. Having set fairness and stability as objectives of the economic game led by free men, he deemed that these objectives could be pursued as long as society addressed the quality of the economic players, took on the full consciousness of its individual and collective goals and, lastly, became definitively aware that only the principle of free competition ‘is compatible with the economic game of a free society founded on the incentive of private property and on men's free individual choices, on the democratic method as workers, consumers and savers’.³⁷ Instead, where economic power is confused with political power in the international field, through control by nations, or worse, through a mixed economic system in the domestic realm, it is highly unlikely that results would be any more comforting than those of an economy left to itself, since the asphyxiating control of the entrepreneurial State would lead to increasing confusion of the political system with the economic system.

3.3 The Divide Between Sturzo's Thought and Italian Economic Development Model³⁸

The Ordoliberal topic of a competitive economy as a *public good*, above all, after Wilhelm Röpke's contribution to developing the theory of the social market economy, has undergone a fair diffusion in Italy thanks to its positive evaluation by Luigi Einaudi, Luigi Sturzo, Benedetto Croce, and Guglielmo Ferrero in the period immediately following the First World War, to then, lamentably, be set aside by the second

³⁶*Id.*, p. 179.

³⁷*Id.*, p. 181.

³⁸This section was written by Flavio Felice. An earlier version of this text was published in the international scholarly journal *Global & Local Economic Review*.

half of the 1960s. Even less fortunate had been the reception of Ordoliberal thought at the time of the drafting of the Italian Constitution.³⁹ With particular reference to this second context, Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa wrote: ‘The norms on the economic relations contained in Part I of the 1948 Constitution appear to be largely inspired by the idea that public institutions should have an active role in the economy. It is an idea that joined the two dominant political forces of the time, the Marxist and the Catholic, in a vision that was strongly critical of “capitalism”. Government intervention in the market, limits on ownership rights, the orienting of economic activity to social ends are thus grafted strongly onto the fabric of liberal origin’.⁴⁰ The author of that passage perceives how strongly the thesis is affirmed that to pursue a *social* value, it would be necessary to reduce the *market space* to make room for *government intervention*. In such a thesis, Padoa-Schioppa comments, we glimpse a negative judgement of the market—considered intrinsically *antisocial*—and a positive one regarding public intervention, judged *intrinsically beneficial*. Padoa-Schioppa comments: ‘for some time there has been a consensus in economic theory in deeming the market’s “failures” an exception rather than the rule; that, just as we were saying, “except for exceptions”, the market system has in itself the capacity to achieve the ends of “safety, freedom, human dignity, salaries proportional to the quality and quantity of the work done” that the Constitution enunciates’.⁴¹

This same position has been expounded by Alberto Quadrio Curzio, according to whom, ‘[i]t would instead be better to say that, a middle way (though some would see it as a compromise) has prevailed between the liberal configuration favorable to the market regulated by the Western democracies, and the Communist-socialist configuration, favorable to Eastern planning. This middle way was advocated for principally by Catholics, but others’ intentions could have distorted it, had political events permitted, in the extreme case, towards the collectivist planning solution’; and, again, that ‘[a]lready in Art. 1 of the Constitution, which affirms that “Italy is a Democratic Republic, founded on work”, the possibility was left open to extend this concept even towards conceptions of the supremacy of the “working class”. In fact, it does prove difficult to understand why “work” should come before the “human person” (spoken of in later articles) that expresses values that are far superior and of greater breadth that include, among other things, also that of work [...] There occurs [in the Constitution] instead, often, the reference to the intervention in production and state and public ownership as an expression of that “third way” which in our country has generated a growing and grave distortion with a protectionist bureaucratic attitude and state-run entrepreneurship activities for which only recently attempts at a remedy have been made’.⁴²

An equally radical judgement on the insensibility to the market of a significant part of the fathers of the republican constitution was expressed by Giuliano Amato. In an essay on the market in the Italian Constitution he writes: ‘[i]t is a classic mixed-

³⁹Rotondi [28].

⁴⁰Padoa-Schioppa [24].

⁴¹*Id.*, p. 454.

⁴²Quadrio Curzio [27].

feeling that which the Constituting Assembly, in its great majority, feels and asserts in regard to the market. It mistrusts the market at the same time that it defends it; and it defends it [...] while being in the main insensible to a large part of the reasons for which it is right and fitting to do so'.⁴³ The result is an economic Constitution that oscillates between a kind of neo-corporatism and veiled government control, where the role of the little autonomous producer predominates, who, rather than seeking out and demanding respect for the laws of the market, regulates himself within his own community (*corporation*) of associate producers. All this in a general climate where efficiency and social justice are considered antinomies, and where political rhetoric finds it more convenient to emphasise the latter rather than the former. No one, in the context of drafting the Constitution would discuss anti-trust laws, the rules of the market, the limits that the market itself—and not the State—imposes on individuals; no one discusses conflicts and interests that legitimately and inevitably dwell there, and that determine the choices of consumers and workers.⁴⁴

Those were years when no one questioned the model of State Participation. And in such years of boundless optimism due to the hope people were placing in growth after WWII, the *Ordoliberal* prudence and fears of bureaucratisation, in these years of the monopolisation of social services and of anti-statist recipes, favouring the principle of free competition, appeared as a dead weight that would have inevitably slowed the positive economic cycle triggered by reconstruction. These were the years when Italy was experimenting with the great deflation willed by then President of Banca d'Italia and future President of the Republic, Luigi Einaudi, and was entering the exciting and mythologised phase of reconstruction, through the policy of assistance and subsidies directed towards companies. The Italian industrial fabric that was reborn after WWII was the child of an industrial policy centred not on the market with its rules, but on state aid, with the distorting burden of both its bureaucratic technical apparatus and its expectations to enact its political programming.

This statist culture, with its diffidence towards the market and ignorance of the opportunity that the mechanism of free competition offered, was shaken by the process of European unification. The 1957 Treaty of Rome bore a series of directions, prohibitions, and limits in opposite direction to those taken by the Italian Constituent Fathers.⁴⁵ It took the direction of the market, and of the principle of competition, as the hermeneutical key of economic policy; not merely an applicative instrument of some occasional policy. In the direction of public intervention not aimed at interfering with the market, but at dictating rules to safeguard and promote competition, seen no longer as an alternative to social justice but its ally, and the sole authentic promoter of economic efficiency.

The opinion is widespread among economic jurists that the *ordoliberal* conception will influence significantly the underlying philosophies of the constitutive Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (i.e., 1957 Treaty of Rome). Maria De Benedetto writes: '[a]ccording to such a doctrine [ordoliberalism] the State,

⁴³Amato [1].

⁴⁴*Id.*, p. 13.

⁴⁵Felice and Sandonà [18].

“strong but neutral”, is called to carry out the functions of rebalancing and institutionally guaranteeing the mechanisms of the market: “the new neutrality imposes a public administration of the economy”⁴⁶. There, thus, enters into Italy, by way of Europe, the market culture,⁴⁷ the principle of competition, the consciousness that the market process represents not so much a possible non-value to be contained, as a value to be grown and nurtured to maturity.⁴⁸ Reference should be made in particular to articles 85, 86, and 90 of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, nowadays articles 101, 102 and 106 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2007), in the part pertaining to the ‘Common norms regarding competition, taxation and drawing the respective legislative bodies closer’. Contained in these articles is an affirmation of the principle of competition as the hermeneutic principle expressing the economic character—the *ordoliberals* would say the *Economic Constitution*—of the geopolitical area we call Europe. Agreements between businesses and associations are prohibited, as are all those practices that prejudice the market and restrict or distort free competition, enunciating, moreover, the irreducible irreconcilability between the presence of any companies that abuse their dominant position and the principle of competition.

3.4 Nino Andreatta’s Revival of Luigi Sturzo’s Thought⁴⁹

In the immediate post-war period, Italy experienced market-oriented policy-making quite close to Sturzo’s ideas.⁵⁰ In fact, Einaudi led the economic policy of De Gasperi’s centrist government, which was mainly characterised by the introduction of agricultural reform that divided the large estates of the wealthy landowners in favour to the small private farmers. In the name of the principle of subsidiarity, De Gasperi also favoured small- and medium-sized firms as exemplifying popular entrepreneurship, which he praised. He maintained a serious fiscal policy in an attempt to achieve balanced budgets, and his approach to monetary policy was characterised by an aversion to inflation. In 1954, however, De Gasperi died and Amintore Fanfani, the leader of the Christian Democracy’s left-wing, became the secretary of the party.⁵¹ Fanfani was a professor of Economic History at the Catholic University of Milan; a scholar of international stature specialising in the relationship between Catholic ethics and cap-

⁴⁶De Benedetto [12].

⁴⁷Velo [38].

⁴⁸‘The reforms of Ludwig Erhard oriented towards the free market in West Germany near the end of the 1940 s offered an alternative model of development, and the consequent economic growth represented a strong impulse to the vast European liberalization’ [37, p. 163].

⁴⁹This section was written by Luca Sandonà.

⁵⁰Bini [10].

⁵¹Bini [9].

italism.⁵² He was a strong supporter of State interventionism as a means of achieving social justice. Consequently, Sturzo's economic and political ideas were definitively abandoned by Catholic policymakers, who went on to uninterruptedly govern Italy from 1955 to 1992.

The economic philosophy behind the second and third generation of Christian Democrats was rooted in the Camaldoli Code. As Antonio Magliulo⁵³ has pointed out, Fanfani and Dossetti also inspired the Italian Constitution according to a social conception of economic rights. In this debate on the fundamentals of Italian law, Einaudi, a member of the Constitutional assembly, was defeated because he 'thought that the state may actually encourage the formation of cartels and monopolies with measures such as duties, patents and meddling in investment, which reduces competition amongst rival firms. He proposed an amendment stating that the government must not favor the formation of cartels and monopolies and, if anything, it must submit them to public control. The amendment was rejected, because most voters considered that the formation of cartels and monopolies should have been regulated on the basis of a difference between "positive" and "negative" agreements among firms, without preventing the government from playing an active role in the economy'.⁵⁴

We could thus affirm that the left-wing of the Christian Democrats elaborated a sort of Catholic Keynesianism. This approach was initially elaborated by the academic review *Cronache sociali*, that was published from 1947 to 1951. This journal was founded by Giuseppe Dossetti and other professors of the Catholic University of Milan, and had the aim of propagating an economic culture implicitly oriented by Catholic values and based on the centrality of the State. In particular, Giorgio La Pira, a professor of Roman law that will later become mayor of Florence, argued that only the State could address the expectations of the poor people because it was only public intervention that could build an inclusive economy. This perspective of government-oriented economy, in 1963, reflects the transition from a centrist to a centre-left government coalition. While the Second Vatican Council was under way, several members of the Italian Socialist Party were included in a government that was presided over by the Christian democrat Aldo Moro. At the end of the 1960s the centre-left government coalition intensified its economic planning. In the 1970s, the centre-left government introduced social welfare measures, approving a series of long-term economically unsustainable reforms that were based on the principle of their being accessible and free to all, such as the review of pension entitlements, healthcare, and education. In these years, the Italian economics academic community was dominated by Marxists, Sraffians, and Post-Keynesians.⁵⁵ The more conservative Italian scholars, included the left-wing Christian democrat economists Nino Andreatta and Romano Prodi, defined themselves, at most, as Keynesians. On the

⁵²At the 1956 Democratic convention, John F. Kennedy, the future President of the United States, cited Fanfani's work as one of the principal causes of his entry in politics.

⁵³Magliulo [21].

⁵⁴Magliulo [22].

⁵⁵Bini [8].

other hand, the right-wing Christian democrat politicians, such as Giulio Andreotti, did not refer to alternative economic theories of policymaking. They paradoxically praised state-owned enterprises given that they could directly recruit people. In this way, politicians could directly satisfy the electorate's demand for jobs, which would thus reciprocate the favour at elections.

However, Christian democracy was culturally led by the left wing, particularly in respect of economic policy. In fact, the left wing of the Christian democrats collaborated with some economic think-tanks, and included several economists as their parliamentary deputies, whereas the right-wing of the Christian democrats had only sporadic external contact with individual economists. However, the revival of Sturzo's thought was paradoxically promoted by Nino Andreatta, an economic advisor to Aldo Moro from 1963 to 1978. In 1976, Andreatta became a member of Parliament and founded with other colleagues the think-tank *Agenzia di Ricerche e Legislazione* (Research and Legislation Agency). Initially, Andreatta had been a strong supporter of economic planning. In the 1980s, the international political and cultural climate influenced Andreatta towards a market-oriented direction. Ronald Reagan's deregulation and supply-side economics, Margaret Thatcher's privatisation policies, the pro-market character of the Single European Act that intensified the process of European integration, and the prominence of the Chicago School of Economics in the academic literature were all factors that contributed to Andreatta's 'conversion',⁵⁶ as he himself put it. In particular, the figure of Michael Novak, a distinguished scholar of the American Enterprise Institute, was influential on Andreatta. Novak developed an original take on democratic capitalism that also sought to demonstrate the compatibility between Catholic ethics and a free-market economy. At the 'Money and Christian Conscience' conference, held on 10 and 11 April 1987 in Bologna, Andreatta quoted Novak's volume *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, whose translation was in press by the publishing house Studium. Andreatta emphasised Novak's values of competition, professionalism, success, and human liberty. Andreatta cited long passages from Novak's arguments, including that 'the incarnation doctrine teach us to reduce our noble expectations and love the world as it is, elaborating a political economy capable of supporting the best parts of it'⁵⁷; '[t]here are abuses of the competitive spirit, obviously, but competing—*cum petere*, searching together—although one against the other, is not a vice. But it is somehow the style of every virtue, it is an indispensable fact of human and spiritual growth of a free person'⁵⁸; and that 'money has a neutral value. It can be administrated in a wise way or in a foolish one'.⁵⁹ In other words, in the light of Novak's vision, Andreatta criticized the mainstream approach to economics based on abstract and formalized models.

Furthermore, Andreatta seriously worked for some time on the foundation of a new Italian Popular Party, which ideologically referred to the original Italian Popular

⁵⁶ Andreatta [6].

⁵⁷ Andreatta [5].

⁵⁸ *Id.*, p. 317.

⁵⁹ *Id.*

Party founded by Sturzo in 1919. This project would be realised in 1993, after the demise of the First Republic deriving from problems of corruption and malfeasance among the political milieu. Anticipating the evolution of the Italian political history, Andreatta thought that 'it occurred to come back to non-denominationalism (*aconfessionalità* in Italian) of Sturzo's party ... in order to understand our time'.⁶⁰ In this regard, Andreatta rejected the idea of a 'chimeric third-way', but proposed to 'acknowledge the difficulties of the perfection of the market economy' and consequently the necessity of creating a system of rules (liberalism of rules) to constrain 'economic, political, and financial criminality'.⁶¹ Therefore, Andreatta stated, 'the market is not the only mechanism and, nevertheless, it is the best possible. The market can be obviously corrected. The political community has to guarantee the rules of the game [...] and these rules have to be internalized in the professional activities of the economic agents'.⁶² He also offered examples of when the rules fail to work: 'In Argentina, a Catholic country, there is the idea that the political power can change the rules of the market [...] the diverse social groups tried to modifying the working and the rationality of the system. The consequence has been that Argentina, which was the 7th country in the world in 1930, is now the 45th [N.B., at the level of economic development]. Argentina has grown less than 1% from 1930 to today; at that time, it exported a quantity of goods equal to that of Canada and Australia, now it exports a quantity of goods equal to 10% of that of Canada and Australia'.⁶³

Therefore, evidently, Andreatta emphasised Sturzo's anti-statism, anti-perfectism, anti-protectionism, and the morality-based view of the economy. In addition, Andreatta valorised Sturzo's methodological personalism, which emphasises freedom and responsibility of every person in her/his actions. In this sense, Andreatta affirmed that 'Sturzo's intellectual experience is lack of historical archaeology; I refer to the corporative view that often influences social Catholic tradition with the risk of a utopianism unconnected with reality'.⁶⁴ In fact, Andreatta underlined Sturzo's 'deep interpretation of history',⁶⁵ his aversion to 'the abstract modelling',⁶⁶ and his affirmation in 'strong and intuitive terms of the relevance and meaning of economic laws'.⁶⁷ According to Andreatta, the Christian Democracy's 'diffidence'⁶⁸ toward Sturzo lies in the fact that the economic culture of the 1930s of Chamberlain, Robinson, Berlain, and Minz was introduced in Italy through the Catholic University of

⁶⁰ Andreatta [2].

⁶¹ N. Andreatta, *I cattolici e l'economia*, in conference proceeding, 'La politica economica degli anni ottanta: riaggiustamenti o progetto ideale', Centro culturale San Carlo, Milano, republished in *La Rivista dell'Arel*, nos. 3/2015, 1/2016, p. 302.

⁶² Andreatta [3].

⁶³ *Id.*, p. 314.

⁶⁴ N. Andreatta, *Potere pubblico e mercato: la natura economica dei partiti di ispirazione cristiana*, conference of Luigi Sturzo, parties of Christian inspiration, and European democracy, Bologna, 8–11 March 1989. A version of this intervention was published in De Rosa [15].

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ *Id.*, p. 325.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ *Id.*, p. 328.

Milan. This point of rupture was due to the idea of having ‘much more degrees of freedom than those of the wise and old ideas of Sturzo, who was endowed with an historical sense of the economic laws’.⁶⁹ On the other hand, in Andreatta’s view, Sturzo rightly opposed the dialogue between socialism and Catholicism because he believed that it would have created an ‘economic bureaucratism’.⁷⁰ Thus, he was opposed to the establishment of ENI, i.e., the state-owned electricity production enterprise. In Andreatta’s view, Sturzo was not only a courageous ‘master’ capable of contrasting mainstream ideas; he was also an exponent of a new era of populist policy-making, and his ideas often served as points of reference for others. In fact, ‘the operation of distinguishing Sturzo’s ideas on state and politics from those on economy, accepting the former and rejecting the latter, [...] it was not a negligible failing on the part of the second generation of Christian Democrats, which ended the experience *à la De Gasperi* in 1954’.⁷¹ It is not common to hear such reflective self-critical words.

3.5 Conclusion⁷²

Sturzo originally proposed a people-centred market economy where competition was conceived as a part of, and conducive to, the *common good*. He thus opposed discretionary political interventionism that could potentially disrupt inclusive democracy. For this reason, in line with German social market economic theory, Sturzo spent his entire intellectual life theorising on the importance of social institutions as a bulwark against such arbitrariness driven by contingent political interests capable of perverting political institutions, and precipitating the advent of a totalitarian State.

Just as the market has proved incapable of simultaneously functioning as, both, playing field and referee upholding the rules of the economic game, so should the State not be both referee and player. The State cannot but carry out the role of referee. The political system should have distinguished itself from the economic, both, in the national and international contexts. Hence the need to distinguish the State as referee, the market as the playing field, and the operators as the players. With each actor faithfully playing its part, one may more readily deduce the possible antidotes to the risk of grotesque private economic concentrations degenerating into a system of public collectivism. The first remedy, identified by Palladino, is of an internal nature, and concerns the uncontrolled form of self-financing and the separation between the managing and ownership of shares of large corporations. The second is an external remedy and regards the State’s commitment to optimally expanding market processes in order to impede a few sellers and buyers from dominating the market. Palladino wrote: ‘[w]ith the first corrective, capitalism must become popular and the democratic

⁶⁹*Id.*

⁷⁰*Id.*, p. 329.

⁷¹*Id.*, p. 331.

⁷²This section was written by Flavio Felice and Luca Sandonà respectively to their contributions.

method be adopted by large companies. With the second, the solution to the economic problem must assume a worldwide dimension'.⁷³

Sturzo's views were rejected by Catholic policymakers that governed Italy during the First Republic. Their economic culture was based on the centrality of State interventionism. The Italian Constitution and the Camaldoli Code substituted the social for the individualist view of economic rights. As Andreatta pointed out, the history of Italian economic policy for that period was thus in line with the 'social-democratic tradition'.⁷⁴ This seems quite odd and paradoxical taking into account that the principal government party, the Christian Democracy, was among the co-founders of the European People's Party in 1976.

Conversely, Sturzo's thought was rediscovered and valorised by Nino Andreatta, a development economist that converted from Catholic Keynesism to popularism/liberal Catholicism. Andreatta praised Sturzo's popularism because he understood that it was capable of elaborating a free-market economic view within a juridical framework, and based on the centrality of the individual. Such an inclusive economy balances the principle of competition with that of social justice, as well as the principle of subsidiarity with that of solidarity. Sturzo's *constitutional economics* emphasise meritocracy and efficiency. At the same time, it also includes the marginalised and the less talented because it provides subsidies and aid in order to stimulate and realise their abilities. In fact, Sturzo's view of development focus on civil society's primacy over the economy's function. The intermediate bodies are capable of satisfying the needs of the people with pragmatism, concreteness, and the involvement of all participants. In the liberal Catholic view, welfarism and deficit spending policies were thus radically rejected as the State ought only play a minimal role in the economic system.

It is in our view that Sturzo's approach to development could be useful even for the least developed countries as it is neither founded on the external support of other national and international/supranational organisations—which ordinarily imposes conditionality, such as structural reforms, for financial aid—nor on the role of a presumed enlightened elite that governs the State. Whilst, Italy's history, culture, and experience following World War II undoubtedly differs greatly from that of most of the world's most impoverished and underdeveloped nations, there are, however, lessons that may apply to these nations, particularly those with a Catholic heritage. Sturzo's development theory is based on a bottom-up approach centred on the irreducible and inalienable dignity of each individual and of the people. For instance, many of the problems associated with international aid-based policies are associated with elitist assumptions as to the value of Statist solutions, and with indifference towards the value of bottom-up policymaking. Whilst, Sturzo may have been, to paraphrase Scripture, a prophet not espoused in his land and in his time, the wisdom of his insights, however, has much to impart to those seeking sound development policies for impoverished nations nowadays.

⁷³Palladino [25, p. 182].

⁷⁴Andreatta [4].

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