A Philosophical Look at Social Justice in Saint Augustine's *City of God*

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Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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This book first published 2022

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-7747-3
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-7747-3

To my Mother and her great legacy of faith
(in memoriam)

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PREFACE

As a result of the recent financial and health problems, there has been a renewed emphasis on the importance of "social justice." As a matter of fact, the demand for social justice is still alive and well in modern discussions over the future of Western civilization.

This book argues for a philosophical examination of social justice in the light of St. Augustine's City of God. According to Augustine, a philosopher-thinker, comprehending the complexity of human phenomena requires not only solely rational thinking, but also a thorough comprehension of human desires and life-style. This book also considers different perspectives from Machiavelli, Arendt, Polanyi, and Foucault, besides the Marxist and postmodern traditions, in order to highlight some interconnections and differences in an attempt to highlight the relevance of Augustine's ethics, taking into account the evolution of political thinking in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Despite the fact that Saint Augustine did not expressly develop a vision of "social justice", the purpose of this book is to investigate the philosophical underpinnings and meanings of this concept in contemporary political philosophy. With his writings, Augustine calls into question the nature of man as well as the ethical choices that allow social bonds to remain stable and cohesive. In the context of Augustine's philosophy, charity and justice are the motivating forces behind the ethos when the concept of "social justice" is discussed. It is also feasible to assert that "social justice" is the social dimension of justice, and that it is founded on a love of Truth and a sense of urgency in the face of suffering and injustice. Therefore, while living justly, from the standpoint of the durability and cohesion of social ties, the moral, ethical, and political implications of the Augustinian perspective are decisive since only through social justice can a sustainable social existence be configured.

Because of the necessity to call into question the ethical choices that allow social bonds to remain stable and cohesive in our times, the philosophy of Saint Augustine is still relevant today. It is anticipated that the issues chosen might result in substantial progress in both the revival of the tie between the ethics of general purposes and political life, as well as the development of a philosophy of social justice. As social and economic policy problems become more complex, it is urgent to revise our conceptual

outlooks in political philosophy in a non-trivial way. This is especially true in a context where the evolution of globalization has contributed to unprecedented social, political, and environmental challenges.

It takes a certain amount of courage and imagination to challenge our preconceived conceptions and conceptualizations of social problems and reinterpret them in new multidisciplinary settings while dealing with issues of social justice. By bringing together Augustine's philosophical foundation with the influential economic concepts of contemporary political philosophers, it is possible to engage in a debate that may lead to the development of new frameworks and solutions for a variety of problems. This book is appropriate for such a conclusion, as it prepares the reader for participation in current and relevant real-world debates on social justice.

INTRODUCTION

The study of human nature in society, his cognitive and emotional dimensions, his destiny and the circumstances for reaching happiness characterize the writings of St. Augustine, in which philosophy and theology are intertwined. Moreover, his contributions provoke further reflections on the philosophical foundations of "social justice", as well as its ethical and political implications. Considering this background, this book deals with the conceptualization of "social justice" in *The City of God*, by Saint Augustine, understood as the earthly and social dimensions of justice.

The Bishop of Hippo was a defender of justice, and a lover of peace, paying attention to the cries of the poor, and an opponent of iniquity and arbitrariness. As an example of the depth of the social and political criticism present in *The City of God*, Augustine highlighted the moral suffering of human beings in order to combat the abuse of power in earthly life as an illustration. This full dimension of his philosophy and conduct s expressed in the words of his biographer Posidius, who reveals Augustine's concern on the relief of the poor. The Saint was committed to transform men's life styles and actively participated in the religious, social and political controversies of his day. Indeed, he was committed to denouncing the roots of social and political ills. In this historical reality, human happiness was axial in philosophical debates.

The author of *The City of God* had the audacity to think about a "new man", against the prevailing style of life. According to him, all things in the universe exist because of God, through God and in God. His philosophy focuses on the relationship between God and man, considering that man's ultimate goal is Wisdom, that is to say, the understanding of God who is "all in all things". Thus, he presents a cosmological vision in which man's goal is the knowledge of the God-Truth that is also God-Love. God is the higher metaphysical idea in the boundaries of the cognisable. The philosopher states that faith and reason are compatible and develops a philosophy at the service of love. On behalf of this, the analysis of the multiple dimensions of the concept of justice characterizes the thought of Augustine. He establishes new philosophical foundations to think about justice, freedom and peace of pilgrims in the historical becoming.

In *The City of God*, the Saint develops reflections on the social bonds of the Christian people in an historical period in which two relevant issues can be identified: on the one hand, the Roman Empire was weakened by the Germanic invasions and domestic conflicts; on the other hand, the evolution of Christianity was gradually imposing itself as a new style of life. At the time of the Roman Empire, Augustine's thought reveals a turning point since it proposes a new philosophical foundation for the meaning of human history. His critique of the classical Greco-Roman tradition posits the need to ground human justice in a higher form of justice. Thus, in reflecting on the just society, the philosopher studies the relation between society and justice in a new approach. As a result, the Saint *christianises* the concept of "justice" and underlines that true justice is related to God ruling society. Based on the belief of providentialism, the philosopher presents an interpretation of the evils in social life such as selfishness, iniquity, injustice. In this line of thinking, the affirmation of an eschatological hope and the transcendent judgment after History underlie the redefinition of the terms of the debate about politics and the just society (Lima Vaz 2001, 170).

As Ramos (1984) points out, it is Augustine himself who states, in one of his earliest letters written to his friend Nebridius, that of every "existent" one must inquiry about its nature and value.[1] The solution to the question of what are the philosophical underpinnings of the conceptualization of "social justice" in *The City of God* unfolds in a series of questions throughout this book:

- What does "social justice" therefore mean?
- What is the nature and significance of it?
- How may "social justice" be conceptualized?
- Is "social justice" a necessary component of human action?
- How else would it be accomplished if not through justice?
- What are the obstacles to promoting a just society?
- In the light of this, how can justice itself be defined?
- What are the conceptual underpinnings of power?
- How can Christian people promote a truly social and just life?
- What are the social and political implications of the ethics of charity?

In order to answer these problems, this book is led by numerous principles, the most important of which are as follows:

[1] Ramos (1984, 36) refers to Augustine´s letter of the Epistolary (11, 4).

- "Social justice" refers to the earthly social dimension of justice that is founded on divine law;
- Establishing a philosophy of "social justice" requires an understanding of the link between immanence and transcendence in man, as *imago Dei*;
- The conversion of the will, according to ordered love, is necessary for the establishment of "social justice";
- Earthly "social justice", which might be established over time through human responsibility, is grounded on a love for the Truth and the urgency of charity;

Against this backdrop, the goal of this book is to give an insight into the understanding of Augustine's Christian philosophy's conceptualization of justice in the social order, particularly as it relates to the notion of justice in the social order. It is founded on the metaphysics of Truth and Good, which underlies not just anthropology and ethics but also politics. Ramos (1984, 74) describes morality as "a morality of happiness and responsibility, of love and freedom". We want to identify the connection that may be established between divine law, moral righteousness, conversion of will and charitable ethics in the process of building a just society, which is considered to be a society that is organized around the concept of fairness, as our ultimate aim. The real man, a being injured by sin and rescued by divine intervention, was constantly in the mind of the philosopher.

All attention will be given to *The City of God*, mainly Books II, IV, XII, XIV and XIX. [2] Although Augustine did not expressly define "social justice", it is reasonable to consider its meaning and roots via the lens of the author's social philosophy. This book contributes to the analysis of the dimensions of justice in St. Augustine's thought. In particular, it contributes to an explanation of the concept of "social justice" in *The City of God,* insofar as it refers to the social dimension of justice based on the ethics of charity. Augustine presents an integral vision of man and highlights the relevance of the comprehensive nature of the subjective and intersubjective dimensions of human life in the historical becoming. Indeed, Augustine´s contribution improves understanding of

[2] St. Augustine wrote *The City of God* between 413-414 and 426-427. The first three books begin in September of 413; books IV and V, in 415. In 417, Augustine wrote book XI. However it is only after writing the *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* and the *Locutiones* that he finishes and writes books XV and XVI, that is, around 420. In 425, he wrote book XVIII, and sometime in 427 he finished the other books. In this regard, see Aurell (2013).

the Christian underpinnings of social order, as well as of the ethical and political implications of justice. This task is challenging in the face of modern philosophical thinking and postmodern culture that take into account the influence of capital accumulation and consumerism on human life style. In this context, according to Kelsen (2012), the relativism of values introduces an element of ambiguity and uncertainty in relation to the meaning of human existence.

Indeed, Western civilization is currently undergoing a profound crisis as a result of the commodification of life, which reifies human connections. Significant ethical and political issues arise in defence of the global economic superpower's hegemony and the *ethos* of short-term profit maximisation, which not only configures social dynamics but also legitimizes the most diversified disparities. The global economic process is geared toward financial capital accumulation, which makes money an end in itself. Therefore, men become a mere instrument to achieve this end. Financial accumulation is axial to the reorganization of business and markets and, as a result, the meaning of human purpose is crossed by the "promise" of productivity gains in a scenario of disruptive innovations and technologies. Moreover, the so called economic rationality is transformed into unemployment, job insecurity, social exclusion and impoverishment. As a result, the cult of earthly goods, which has been elevated to the category of ends in earthly life, has had an impact on subjectivity and values. In other words, new ways of being in the world dictate the course of social life, and the "ethics of the present moment" dictate the norms of existence. In a historical context in which individualism prevails, social ties become weakened and fragmented.

Undoubtedly, Augustine's actuality refers to the contemporary debate on the need for universal principles for ethical choices that make possible the permanence and cohesion of social ties in the 21st century. The Saint introduces two central problems: the meaning of man's existence and the ethical orientation of his actions. In his philosophical interpretation, Augustine considers that Christian metaphysics is the foundation of ethics, morality and politics. In promoting a just society, he condemned the dissociation between ethics and politics, or even between morality and justice.

This book was initially influenced by the reflections of Robert Dodaro (2014, 17) concerning just society in Augustine's thought. In his comments, Dodaro highlights that the apprehension of the conception of a just society must keep in mind the use that the Bishop of Hippo makes of the term "*iustitia*". According to Dodaro, such a usage involves the combination of three meanings. The first meaning expresses the classical

sense of the Greek and Roman tradition and considers justice as a virtue through which each individual receives what is due to him. The second meaning reveals the influence of the New Testament and Latin Patristics. It equates justice, as a virtue, with love for God and our neighbours. Indeed, the true virtues, and justice in particular, are a form of love for God, who is the source of justice. Finally, the third meaning, translated as "righteousness", denotes the influence of the Pauline notion of "*dikaiosyne*" that refers to the condition of the soul in a "right" relation with God, the Creator. This, justice is conceived in conjunction with the concept of the "order of love" (*ordo amoris*), which conveys the hierarchy of goods established by God. These three interpretations open up perspectives for thinking about the dimensions of justice in *The City of God*.

Moreover, among other important references for the construction of our argument, the reading of Markus, Arendt, Curbelié, Ramos and Lima Vaz pointed to the need for an interdisciplinary vision that considers the relations between philosophy, history and anthropology in order to face the multiple insights that emerge from Augustine's writings. Aware of the difficulties of making a synthesis of the Augustinian philosophical contribution in *The City of God,* this book is organized in five chapters. The first one aims to elaborate an analysis about the relation between justice and divine law, considering Books II and IV. The goal is to highlight how the Saint moves away from the concept of "just" in Roman law and proposes a new foundation for the Christian conceptualization of justice. This chapter demonstrates how Augustine presents the founding principle of justice, which is divine law, and how truth, justice, happiness and faith are articulated in his thought. When all these ideas are considered, the role of divine law in a just society is further discussed.

The second chapter privileges the reading of Books XII and XIV to analyse the relation between justice and righteousness from the perspective of the author of *The City of God*. The Augustinian concept of justice understood as righteousness denotes the condition of the soul through which a man finds himself in a "correct" relationship with God, the Creator. The Bishop of Hippo unfolds his philosophical reflections on the split of the human will as an opposition and tension between the two cities: the City of God and the Earthly City. From the above, the goal is to elaborate a reflection about the righteousness of men in a just society.

The third chapter is focused on Book XIX in order to explore the relation that the Saint establishes between justice and the true virtues. According to the philosopher, man is a being of social nature who wants to be happy. This chapter is oriented to show how Augustine, while reflecting on the social order, redefines the relation between the Supreme Good and

the virtues so as to found the conceptualization of a just society in a new way. Indeed, the Augustinian analysis of the conversion of the human will and the highlight of social ethics is a central aspect of the author's thought in *The City of God*. The fourth chapter further analyses Book XIX of *The City of God* and clarifies St. Augustine's philosophical questions about the being and conduct of Christian people. It presents the Augustinian analysis of Christian people's conduct, namely, the influence of the love for Truth and the urgency of charity. Considering the pillars of the social philosophy of St. Augustine, the chapter shows the relevance of the ethics of charity and its relation with justice and politics in the formation of a just society. The fifth chapter is oriented to highlight a dialogue between Saint Augustine and relevant political thinkers, such as Hanna Arendt, Machiavelli, Foucault, Polanyi, and others from the Marxist and post-modern tradition, in order to grasp the unfolding ethical challenges from the point of view of modern and contemporary political philosophy.

Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the pillars of the Augustinian philosophy of "social justice" which considers Christian metaphysics as the underpinning of social ethics founded on charity. In this line of interpretation, the conceptualization of "social justice" refers to an earthly good in the hope of a happy life, which is an expression of *love for God* and of the urgency of charity.

In Augustinian philosophy, the promotion of "social justice" requires the conversion of man's will. Thus, the pilgrim Christian people, whose conduct is based on the love for Truth and on the duty of charity, live according to the order established by God and are aware of their responsibility in promoting a *truly* social justice. Such "social justice" should not be misunderstood either as philanthropy or as a spirituality which disregards social structures in historical life.

According to Augustinian thought in *The City of God*, true justice is the goal and also the intrinsic measure of all politics. By considering the complexity of the experience of human life in historical change, Augustine draws attention to the implications of ethical responsibility in the process of building "social justice".

CHAPTER 1

JUSTICE AND DIVINE LAW

In the context of the lower Roman Empire, Augustine's thought reveals a turning point and proposes a new foundation for the meaning of human history. According to Eslin (2008), Augustine was the first Roman philosopher to introduce a turning point into the history of Western philosophy. Thus, the understanding of St. Augustine's thought in *The City of God* cannot be dissociated from the evolution of Christian doctrine that progressively imposes itself as a new system of thought. [3]

Grounded in Christian faith, the Bishop presents a new interpretation of human history, which is based on the Metaphysics of Truth and Good. Such an interpretation underlies the redefinition of the terms of the discussion on justice and the question of a just society (Lima Vaz 2001). In the Augustinian perspective, the founding principle of justice is inseparable from Truth.

Truth, justice and happiness

It is opportune to remember that, in Book I, Augustine develops reflections on the attack on Rome by Alaric in 410 A.C., and on the role of Christians in this episode. He analyses the historical reality of the Roman crisis, which is characterized by corruption, social injustice, and the decadence of political institutions. In describing the style of life of the people of his time, the Saint points out that the greatest problem was moral evil or a "perverse heart" (City of God, Book I, 1). Reflecting on the evils

[3] According to Peter Brown (2006), in the fourth century, the Roman Empire faced political, economic, and social tensions. In addition to invasions by barbarian bands in the north, the Empire was challenged by the well-organised and militaristic kingdom of Persia in the east. Economically: taxes had doubled or even tripled; the poor were victimised by inflation while the rich accumulated property. Any offence against the emperor or his servants could bring about the destruction of an entire community of villagers by mutilation through torture or by reducing them to the status of beggars.

of social life, he draws attention to the consequences of human behaviour because of the "fetters of certain passions" that lead to wrong, illicit judgements, which encourage torture, violence, and iniquity (City of God, Book I, 9). In his view, man reveals an ambivalence which is translated into moral conflicts: man loves peace and desires power; man loves peace and practises iniquity because he turns away from the contemplation of Truth (City of God, Book I, 27).

Augustine presents, in Book II, the following question: are the pagan gods effective in ensuring the prosperity of the city? The philosopher develops his remarks on the role of the pagan gods in the prosperity of Rome and initially situates his answer on the plane of history (Guy 1961). In this sense, faced with this question, the Saint offers a negative answer to demonstrate that evils happened to the Romans when, before the spread of the Christian religion, they offered worship to pagan gods (City of God, Book I, 36). Thus, he demonstrates that the Romans were not preserved from misfortune by their gods. In his words:

> But of the evils of the soul, the evils of life, the evils of morals (so great that it is from them that the Republic will collapse, even if the cities remain standing, as their most learned men testify) the gods did nothing so that these evils would not strike their worshippers. Quite the contrary -they have sought by all means to increase them [...] (City of God, Book II, 16).

According to the excerpt of text quoted, the Romans were oppressed by the pagan gods with the only, or at least the greatest, of all calamities, the corruption of customs and the vices of the soul. In his argument, the author mentioned takes up the historical evolution of institutions and customs in the cultural tradition of the Roman Empire, with emphasis on the importance of law. In fact, Augustine's goal is to rescue this relevant aspect of social life among the Romans to support his criticism of the foundations of justice. Moreover, the Saint affirms: "I will be careful and, as a witness, I would rather present Salustius, who, when he spoke in praise of the Romans, said this with which we began this exposition: *Among them, the right, like the good, drew its value more from nature than from laws*" (City of God, Book II, 17).

In the understanding of Augustine, Salustius indicates the existence of a right that has its origin and foundation in human nature. According to this conception of natural law, the norms established by men for living in society can be judged on the basis of natural law, that is, the law that reflects right reason, immanent to nature, and which governs the rationally ordered universe. Thus, natural law takes as its reference the natural law that was inscribed within the human being. In this context, the

concept of justice is founded on the natural law inscribed in man's soul. Since he is a rational being, man has to know the natural law and apply it in his conduct. Moreover, from the moral point of view, the good (the just) is the result of the observance of natural law. Thus, the natural feeling of justice, a product of natural reason, conditions the moral behaviour of all men. In this sense, natural reason is the foundation of law, justice and morality. In the sphere of social life, the identification of the order of nature with the moral order creates bonds between men whose souls have a natural inclination to identify what is just, and always good (Barros 2007, 43-45).

Although Augustine was a Roman citizen, his conception of justice departs from that which affirms that the foundation of the right and the good (just) is in nature. In fact, he would not allow the categories of natural law to identify the foundation of justice or even the identity of the just man (Badiou 2009, 21). In order to develop this reflection, the Saint presents a second question that is decisive for the continuity of his analysis: What presides over the development of the city in the course of history? In other words, what presides over the temporal destiny of men?

To answer the above-mentioned question, the author leads his analysis to the terrain of morality to underline that moral evil must be considered the greatest and true evil. [4]In his argument, he not only refutes paganism, which seeks the High Good in temporal life, but also introduces the saving dimension of Christian doctrine (Guy 1961). Let us recall his words:

> Then, why do they impute the present evils to Christ, who with his saving doctrine forbids the worship of false and fallacious gods, detests and condemns with divine authority these noxious and scandalous passions of men, and little by little everywhere subtracts from this world, which staggers and falls into these evils, the family with which he will found an eternal city, the most glorious, not for the applause of vain superficialities, but for the authentic value of truth? (City of God, Book II, 18).

From this passage of text, it is clear that Augustine establishes a new foundation for justice. Christ is the authentic judge and, therefore, justice is founded in the divine law. Thus, the Saint underlines that God is just and the source of justice. Indeed, he emphasizes the transcendent judgment of human actions and affirms the eschatological hope in happy life, which is eternal. In particular, the Saint proposes to analyse the relation between

[4] Cf. *The City of God*, Book III, Augustine deals with the evils linked to the body and to external things that are subject to mutation.

divine justice and justice in human soul: human justice must be subordinated to divine justice. Therefore, the Bishop of Hippo establishes a relation between truth and justice. In this regard, the interpretation of Curbelié (2004, 94) emphasizes that this binomial will be decisively present in *The City of God*.

Following his argument, when reflecting on the extent of the impact of the pagan gods on the lives of men, a new question arises in Augustine's thought: what is the relation between justice and happiness? In this regard, let us recall his own words:

> And yet they continue not to impute to their gods that before the coming of Christ the State has become the worst and most depraved because of pomp, avarice, cruel and torpid customs. But of all that they are going through in these times because of their pride and their pleasure they accuse the Christian religion. If the kings of the earth and all the peoples, the rulers and all the judges of the earth, the young men and the maidens, the old with the young, all the adult age of both sexes, the tax collectors and the soldiers of whom Baptist John speaks, would hear and practise these precepts about the just and good customs -the republic would have adorned the lands already here with the happiness of the present life and would have risen to the summit of eternal life to achieve a reign of complete happiness! (City of God, Book II, 19).

This quotation indicates that the author of *The City of God* distinguishes between the happiness of the present life and complete happiness. Thus, the Saint mentions his concern with the theme of happiness, present also in Greco-Roman philosophy. However, he presents changes in the conception of a happy life. From the Augustinian philosophical perspective, happiness is only complete in eternal life.[5] To be truly happy, man cannot guide his life by the possession of earthly goods, which are changeable and which he can lose. According to Augustine, earthly goods cannot satisfy man's natural desire for happiness as men are happy only if they possess an immutable good, which is God. Augustine thus makes explicit a relation between truth and happiness, that is, happiness is found in the possession of Truth-God. Then, in Book II of *The City of God*, the Bishop of Hippo identifies the foundation of justice and underlines the relation between justice and the will of God. The Saint distinguishes his philosophical

[5] The theme of happiness is dealt with by Augustine in the dialogue *The Happy Life.* The philosopher makes an argumentative itinerary, together with his disciples, and asks: What is the good that the soul must possess to be happy? And what are the ways for the soul to obtain happiness?

thought on justice from the Greco-Roman tradition by presenting the God-Truth as the ultimate foundation of justice. In effect, the author affirms that the will of God is the eternal law. In his words:

> But because this hears, that despises, and the majority are more friendly to the blandishments of vice than to the useful harshness of virtue, the servants of Christ are commanded, whether they be kings or rulers, judges or soldiers, soldiers of the provinces, rich or poor, free or servants of both sexes, to tolerate the State, even if it be the worst and most depraved, and to acquire for themselves, at the price of such tolerance, a splendid abode in the most holy and august curia of the angels, in the heavenly republic where the will of God is law (City of God, Book II, 19).

In this statement, Augustine establishes a relation between divine justice and law within the framework of the order created by God. For the philosopher, God is the founding principle of the law that governs the order created by him.[6] In this regard, Chroust notes that divine law and the concept of order are inseparable in the Saint's thought. Order is a fundamental norm according to which all creation exists. Order also manifests the harmony of coexistence between the parts, each in its proper place according to the divine law which is the will of God (Chroust 2011, 60).

In the Augustinian perspective, eternal law is the supreme norm of justice, is of an immutable nature and implies the existence of a just, provident and omniscient, eternal, and perfect God. It is the eternal law that constitutes the universal source of justice and is identified with the will or wisdom of God, that is, with the plan according to which God orders and directs all created things towards his own end, which is the happy life of man. Moreover, the divine law is transcendent and has ontological precedent over human beings. Since the eternal law is the will of God, men must subordinate completely to it. Following the interpretation of Flórez Pérez (2005, 27), it can be said that, for Augustine, divine law does not coincide with natural law. However, the divine law corresponds to a natural law that is inscribed in the human soul. Thus, for the Saint, natural law is the expression of eternal law.

[6] The reflection on the divine law is developed by Augustine in Book I of *The Free Will.*

True justice and politics

After grounding his conception of justice in the God-Truth, Augustine's goal is to reflect on the foundations of politics in earthly life. Thus, in Book II of *The City of God,* the Saint presents a discussion of the relation between justice and politics in the context of Roman institutions.

It is worth remembering that the Roman *res publica* was a form of government linked to the period of the ancient Roman civilisation, between the 5th and middle 1st centuries BC. It began with the fall of the monarchy and its replacement by the Senate, magistrates and popular assemblies. The term "*res publica*" literally means "the public thing" and is the political expression of the people as a whole, and hence it is also called the people's enterprise. In effect, the private interests of each man must be subordinated to the superior interests of the whole, the *res publica*. Although the Roman Republic was never restored, the term "*res publica*" continued to be used to refer to the State. During the period of the Republic, the performance of Roman men in public life, as citizens, led to the establishment of civic values, which endured as an ideal of behaviour throughout Roman history. In this context, civic life refers to a set of rights and duties common to citizens based on a communion of interests. Moreover, the city (*Roman civitas*) encompasses the spaces common to its men: the forum, the courts, and also the temples, because religion is part of civic life (Corassim 2006).

In Book II, 21, the Saint considers Scipio's talk in Cicero's *Da Republica* on the topics concerning the organization of the State (*res publica*) and the relations of men in civil society (*civitas*). At the end of the second book of *The Republic*, Scipio is reported to have said: "What musicians call harmony in song, is called concord in the city, the surest and best vehicle for the security of the whole state. And it is this concord without justice that cannot be admitted" (City of God, Book II, 21). In his line of interpretation, Scipio defines "republic" as an "enterprise of its people", and "people" as the association based on the acceptance of law and the communion of interests. He concludes: "Without the strictest justice, a republic cannot be governed" (City of God, Book II, 21). Thus, in a tyrannical government, the republic would not only be corrupt, but also the republic would not exist, because it would not be identified to the "enterprise of its people" or "people" associated by consent on the mutual recognition of rights and communion of interests. As a result, in Scipio's view, there is no concord without justice; there is no *res publica* without justice. Underlying his argument is the conviction of a civil law founded in nature on which concord in social life is based (Barros 2007).

Nevertheless, the Bishop of Hippo radically criticizes the idea that a just man is the one who obeys the laws of the State. Indeed, in *The City of God*, Augustine leaves behind the reference of the "just" present in the classical "jus-naturalist" tradition, which considered natural reason as the foundation of justice, law and politics. Let us recall his words:

> I shall endeavour elsewhere to show that Rome was never a State (Republic) because true justice never existed there -according to Cicero's own definitions, according to which, briefly, and through the mouth of Scipio, it refers to what the State is and what the people are (I also rely on many other statements made by him and other partners). However, according to the most authoritative definitions, in a certain way there was a republic, and it was better governed by the ancient Romans than by the more recent ones. For true justice exists only in that republic whose founder and governor is Christ, if it is appropriate to call it a republic, because we cannot deny that it is "the enterprise of its people." But if this name, which in other places has been disseminated in another sense, has perhaps departed from the usage of our conversation -what is certain is that there is true justice in that city of which Holy Scripture says. *Glorious things have been said of thee, City of God* (City of God, Book II, 21).

One can see, in the passage of text quoted, that the author highlights the importance of justice in the sphere of politics and in the constitution of the structures of the state as an expression of the cultural tradition in the Roman world. However, Augustine highlighted that true justice only exists "in that Republic, whose founder and governor is Christ"; in other words, it exists in the City of God, which is an "enterprise of its people" because it expresses the communion of interests of men committed to the love for God.

Therefore, according to Augustine, the construction of the identity of the Christian man departs from the identity of the Roman man, founded on a feeling of continuity tied to the Roman *res publica,* even after its crisis and subsequent fall. In the Roman civic tradition, there was the feeling that the basic structure of social existence, the institutions, and the value system inherited from the past were, fundamentally, the only legitimate one for Roman men (Finley 1985, 36).

On behalf of this, the Saint's thinking on justice in *The City of God* reveals his rejection of the juridical conception and the conditions of Roman civic life that defined the just man. Although the notions of classical "jus naturalism" influenced his thinking, the Augustinian perspective redefines, in terms of the Christian faith, the foundation of justice. According to the author, the will of God is the law and the founding principle of justice, and politics, as the expression of the people's

enterprise, cannot be dissociated from true justice. In other words, politics cannot be dissociated from love for God and, as a result, the conceptualization of politics is linked to Truth. Therefore, the Bishop of Hippo redefines the terms of the identity of the Christian people in historical events.

Power, faith and justice

In order to reflect on the relation between power and justice in temporal life, Augustine continues to explore, in Book IV of *The City of God,* some ideas concerning the destiny of men. At the beginning of his argument, he presents the parable of the rich man and the poor man or the man of average condition:

> The rich man is tormented with fears, consumed with grief, greedy, never secure, always restless, breathless in perpetual conflicts of enmity, increasing his wealth without limit at the cost of these miseries, but adding to these also increases the most bitter cares. The average person, however, is satisfied with his small and tight family patrimony, is very dear to his own family, enjoys the sweetest peace with relatives, neighbours, and friends, is piously religious and endowed with great affability, has a healthy body, sparing in life, chaste in manners, serene in conscience. I do not know if anyone is so mad as to doubt which he should prefer (City of God, Book IV, 3).

In other words, while Augustine challenges the very basis of justice and happiness, he also suggests that God has a plan for mankind, the meaning of which humanity must endeavour to discover. According to him, there is a relationship between justice and happiness. He goes on to say that piety and justice, two of God's greatest gifts, are sufficient for true happiness: "that of living rightly in this life and subsequently attaining eternal life" (City of God, Book IV, 3). He points out that earthly life does not contain the fundamental founding principle of happiness and justice, as stated by the philosopher. All mortal men are subjected to trials, tribulations, and misery. The pains of virtuous persons should not be interpreted, however, as "punishment for a sin, but rather as the trial of virtue" in this worldly life (City of God, Book IV, 3). Indeed, the mixture of blessings and curses that God bestows on man during his earthly existence teaches him what kinds of blessings he should seek. To put it another way, in order to appreciate the proper relationship between temporal commodities and man, he must first comprehend the significance of earthly life in the context of eternal life. Regarding man's transitory existence, Augustine writes: "Therefore, the good, even if reduced to slavery, remain free;

whereas the wicked, even as king of a nation, remain a slave, not of a man, but, what is more serious, of as many masters as there are vices, which is the most serious of all" (City of God, Book IV, 3). Using the contrast between slavery and freedom, the Saint suggests a new way of looking at the human predicament, as well as a call to challenge appearances as the basis for men's judgments in the world of the temporal.

In Book IV of *The City of God*, the Bishop of Hippo seeks to unmask what lies beneath the appearances of the conduct of men and of noble Roman ancestors in order to question the vision that the Romans themselves had of their past glory and power (Brown 2006). Regarding appearances in the conduct of men, kings, or pirates, the Saint asks: "Apart from justice, what are kingdoms really, if not great bands of thieves?" (City of God, Book IV, 4). Remembering the encounter between Alexander the Great and a pirate who had been imprisoned, Augustine compares and contrasts the kingdom of the former with the gang of thieves led by the latter. The Christian philosopher judges the pirate's answer to Alexander to be "true":

> [...] when the king asked the man what it seemed to him of infesting the seas, he answered with frank audacity; "The same as it seems to you of infesting the world; but to me, because I do it with a small ship, they call me a thief; and to you, because you do it with a great armada, they call you an emperor (City of God, Book IV, 4).

In this portion of his text, Augustine introduces the metaphor of successful banditry as the fundamental paradigm of any earthly empire that is to come into being (Brown 2006). As a result, he opposes the notion of justice that is related to ambition, fame, and power, all of which are prevalent in earthly governments. For the most part, as Ramos (1984) explains, the Saint rejects the notion of justice when it is applied to the realm of relations between governing authorities and the people they govern. In order to better understand the relationship between power and justice, Augustine points out that pagans have made allegations against Christians, accusing them of allowing traditional civic virtues to become loose in their conduct. The divine purpose that he believes marks the ineluctable trajectory of historical evolution is highlighted in his reinterpretation of global history and emphasis on it. The philosopher demonstrates that the pagan gods cannot be held responsible for the lengthy continuance of the Roman Empire since their religious cult is useless in producing the true virtues. After thinking about the inconsistencies inherent in pagans' notion of god, the Bishop of Hippo

expresses the following idea:

> Even if they understood that in truth Virtue must be distributed by four species - prudence, justice, strength, temperance. And since each of these has its own species, Faith is linked to Justice and holds the first place among us who know what it means for *the just to live by faith*. (City of God, Book IV, 20).

In other words, Augustine establishes an inseparable relationship between faith and justice and characterizes the just man as one who lives by faith. He redefines the concept of the just man by attributing to the relation between justice and divine law the key to understanding the identity and meaning of the life of the Christian man. In effect, his remarks aim to point out the differences between the identity of the Roman man and the identity of the Christian man. Regarding the characteristics of the identity of the Romans and their worship of pagan gods, in Book IV of *The City of God,* the author asks: "How is it possible that one has not understood that Virtue and Happiness are gifts from God and not goddesses?" (City of God, Book IV, 21). As a matter of fact, the philosopher puts into question power, and glory as false auspices of the gods venerated by the Romans, such as Jupiter, Mars, and Happiness, Faith, Virtue, and adds:

> Consequently, they could by no means have an empire if they had the true God against them. But, on the other hand, if they had ignored and despised this multitude of false gods, and had known and worshipped with sincere faith and pure customs the one God, they would have had here, whatever their greatness, a better empire; they would then have received a sempiternal one (City of God, Book IV, 28).

In this excerpt of the text from Book IV, Augustine criticizes the false conceptions of divinity of pagan polytheism and concludes that the success of Rome is due to the one true God, by whose power and judgment earthly kingdoms are founded and maintained (Fortin 2004). Thus, contrary to the pagan foundations of glory and power in earthly life, the Saint criticizes the fact that pagan gods are worshipped for the temporal advantage of glory and power that men can obtain. In short, the author expresses the view that the power of the pagan gods did nothing to prevent the evils of mankind (Guy 1961). On the contrary, these gods have harmed men with their deceptions and lies (City of God, Book IV, 36). Furthermore, in his confrontation with paganism, the Bishop of Hippo refers to those philosophers who clearly distinguish the difference between the creator and creatures can arrive at Truth, which is the foundation of true justice, glory and power. It is worth remembering that in other books of the First

Part of *The City of God*, the author chooses two extreme types of paganism to develop his critique of false divinities: Varro and the Neoplatonists.

As a witness against himself in Book VII, Augustine employs Varro's philosophy to demonstrate the weakness of civil theology by presenting the thought of the pagan philosopher Varro as a witness against Augustine.[7] According to the Saint, Varro did not take his gods seriously because the care of human things came first before the treatment of celestial matters.[8] In this way, this pagan philosopher was interested in how men exhibit their religiosity through a variety of attitudes and cults, as opposed to how women do so (Guy 1961, 50). While Varro did not explicitly state it, he inferred that gods of the cities did not exist independently of man, but rather that gods were a result of human spirit.[9] According to Augustine, the fault of the pagan philosopher is found in the fact that he does not accept divine nature as superior to human nature, but rather inverts the natural order. The human soul, or at least its reasoning half, takes on a divine character, transforming man into a god rather than merely a servant of the Almighty. So the Saint believes that this kind of civil theology mixes man with God and is therefore disputed from a reasonable perspective, because man's inability to be perfect can't be reconciled with the perfection of the Supreme Being, as the Saint believes. Augustine's major thesis in Book VII of *The City of God* is that paganism fails completely when it comes to the understanding of divinity: the gods of Varro, for example, cannot be regarded as gods since they are not deities. The theologian Augustine comes to the conclusion that such gods are nothing more than "divinized" mankind (Guy 1961, 56). Also in Book

[7] In this regard, Markus (1970) affirms that "Augustinian politics" is a critique of Roman civil theology.

[8] Augustine, quoting Cicero, constantly refers to Varro as a "very acute and educated" man (City of God, Book XIX, 2).

[9] Taking into account the reflection of Varro, an exponent of Roman civil theology, St. Augustine divides pagan theology into three basic forms: mythical; natural or philosophical; and civic or political. Mythical theology is the theology of the poets: it appeals directly to the multitude, and its many gods are revered by men for temporal goods or material advantages in this life. On the other hand, natural or philosophical theology is monotheistic and is based on the authentic notion of God, and, therefore, it is superior to mythical and civil theology. However, it is accessible only to the learned and is therefore incapable of exerting a beneficial influence on society as a whole. Finally, civil theology, also associated with the worship of various gods, is the official theology of the city, which all citizens must know in order to know which gods are to be worshipped and which rites and sacrifices are to be celebrated. Such theology seeks to improve men through the development of political virtues. See *The City of God*, Book VI.

VIII, the author continues on his critique of pagan philosophy and explores the roots of divinity in Neoplatonism, both of which are discussed in detail in Book VII. Augustine was critical of pagan Neoplatonists in the battle between intellectual schools, despite the fact that his discovery of Neoplatonism was important in getting access to the notion of logos.[10] In late antiquity, Plotinus argued that in order to achieve happiness, the soul, which is spiritual in nature, must turn towards the intelligible world and thus ascend to God. In this philosophical interpretation, the ethical problem lies in the soul's distance from the One, insofar as the soul, because of pride, attaches itself to material and transitory goods and forgets its origin. Yet, as Plotinus explains, despite the estrangement, a part of the soul, reason, perseveres in the *nous* and the soul returns to the intelligible world. The intellectual ascension of the soul is predicated on a purification process in which the virtues assist it in becoming aware of its essence and origin and thus detaching itself from transitory goods. When the soul, as *nous*, contemplates, beyond itself, the One, it attains the possession of the Highest Good.[11] In Plotinus' philosophy, the conceptualization of happy life has a metaphysical basis and the virtuous life is the path that man should follow to attain the Highest Good.[12]

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[10] In *Confessions* (Book VII, 9.13), Augustine recalls the importance of the influence of the followers of Plato´s books. The Saint states that in these books he read, "[...] not exactly in these words, but with many and varied reasons, that on the whole this was argued*: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word: 'this was in the beginning with God; all things were made by him, and without him was nothing made; that which was made was life in him, and the life was the light of men; and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it;* and that the human soul, though it bears witness to the light, yet itself is not the light, but the Word, God, is *the true light, which enlightens every man that comes into this world; and that he was in this world, and the world was made by him, and the world did not acknowledge him*". Augustine adds that he did not read in these books: "But that he *came for what was of his own, and his people did not receive him, and that as many as received him he gave them power to become the sons of God, to them that believe inn his name,* this I have not read there."

[11] In Books VIII to X of *The City of God,* Augustine develops an argument against Porphyry (a Neoplatonist) about the principles and metaphysis of the soul.

[12] Cf. Brachtendorf (2012, 32-33). In Plotinus' conception, the soul of the human being, which is part of the world soul and belongs to the sphere of the intelligible, emanates, as the third hypostasis, from the *nous,* which, in turn, emanates from the One, the ineffable, foundation and source of being. The world soul looking to the *nous* apprehends the world of Ideas and transmits them to material beings as their forms (*logoi*).

Augustine's debate with the Neoplatonists proposes new terms in which the relationship between man and God should be thought of, given the mistaken response offered by the pagan philosophers.[13] The Saint understood that this philosophical school could not reach the Truth, which requires not only the reading of the Sacred Scriptures, but mainly divine help so that man may take the steps towards the Truth, towards the Highest Good and, therefore, so that he may fulfil the divine law.

Divine law in a just society

Throughout Books II and IV, the Bishop of Hippo underlines man's dependence on the one true God, who helps him in history. In his words:

> It is God, therefore, who is the author and dispenser of happiness, because he is the one true God, who grants the kingdoms of the earth to the good and to the bad alike. And He does not do this by chance, as if by chance (for He is the true God and not fortune), but according to the order of things and of time, which is hidden from us but perfectly known to Him. He neither serves nor is subject to this order of time. On the contrary, it is He who, as Lord, governs it and, as moderator, orders it. But as for happiness, that He gives to the good. Those who serve may have it or not; those who reign may have it or not. However, it will only be full in that life where no one will have to serve. This is why He gives the kingdoms of the earth to the wicked as well as to the good: He does not want His worshippers, still children in moral life, to desire this gift from Him as something great (City of God, Book IV, 29).

Augustine considered the "order of things and time" is organized and governed around the principle of justice, whose foundation is the eternal law. The notion of order emerges as a disposition of things created in temporal life according to the divine will or eternal law. Moreover, the eternal law is understood as the foundation of happiness, which is the fundamental problem facing humanity in history. When confronted with the reality of man's eventual demise, the Bishop of Hippo reinterprets the "order of things and of time" in order to give it a new meaning. As a result, he offers a new interpretation of history based on a new concept of telos, that is, the meaning of human life in the context of the evolution of

[13] As for Neoplatonism, Augustine acknowledges in *Confessions* (Book VII) the central role that the "Platonic books translated from Greek into Latin" played in his philosophical and religious development, including in his final conversion to Christianity in the year 387.

historical events (Lima Vaz 2001). On the basis of this background, the philosopher argues that Christians have a new identity when it comes to the meaning of life and when it comes to their belief in the doctrine of redemption. For this reason, he suggests a new conceptual underpinning for the concept of justice. Augustine, in his discussion of Divine Providence, emphasizes that the affirmation of an eschatological hope, as well as Christ's transcending judgment, are essential to the redefining of the terms of the argument on justice and the creation of a just society. According to the Saint, the concept of justice, which has its base in divine law, can be used to organize a just society in its entirety around this concept. The everlasting law lays out what righteous men who live by faith must do in order to be happy, and it is written in the Bible. To put it another way, from the Augustinian perspective, the normative aspect of the divine law is made clear as the standard of the pilgrim's moral conduct. Understanding the right will of the just man necessitates taking a step further and taking into account not just man's place in God's established order, but also the human nature that has been wounded by sin as well.

CHAPTER 2

JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

From an ontological standpoint, the moral purity of a person's existence is inextricably bound up with the order established by the Creator. According to Augustine, men's good relationship with God is translated into subordination to the will of God by their obedience to the law of God. While in his worldly life, the pilgrim man, on the other hand, is undecided as to whether he should go to Jerusalem or Babylon. In truth, the division of the will that exists inside each individual man serves as the foundation for the conflict between the two cities, the City of God and the Earthly City. The author begins an investigation of the beginnings of the two cities, the heavenly and the earthly, their evolution, and their final fates once the first part of *The City of God* (Books I to X) is completed. This is something to keep in mind while you read the book. On the second page of Book XI, 2, the Saint gives a synthesis that might be read as a transition between the first and second sections of his analysis:

> It is great, but very rare that one might elevate, by an effort of the mind, above all corporeal and incorporeal creatures, after having observed and recognized mutability, to reach the immutable substance of God and learn from Him that every creature distinct from Him has He alone as its author. In fact, God does not speak to man through a corporeal creature -as the ears of the body are wounded by making the air vibrate between the one who speaks and the one who hears; nor does He make use of those spiritual images which take the form and likeness of bodies, as is produced in dreams and all that resembles them [...]; but He speaks through the truth itself if one is able to hear through the spirit and not through the body. It speaks in this manner to the most excellent part of man, superior to all the elements that constitute the home and to which God alone is superior. [...] But since the mental part itself, the natural seat of reason and intelligence, is greatly weakened by the inveterate vices which obscure it, it needs first of all to be purified by faith in order to adhere to the immutable light and enjoy it, or even to withstand its splendour, until renewed and healed day by day, it becomes capable of such great happiness. And to walk more confidently in this faith towards the truth, the truth itself, God the Son of

> God, taking on man without annulling God, founded and established this same faith so that man might have a path to God through man-God. He is truly the mediator between God and men -the man Jesus Christ: he is Mediator because he is man, and as such he is the way. [...] There is therefore only one path which excludes all error: which is that God himself and man are the same -God whither one goes, man whither one goes (City of God, Book XI, 2).

When it comes to paganism, the Bishop of Hippo presents, albeit in a different phrasing, the arguments he made against it in this important portion of text. It is his belief that there are contrasts between God's divine nature and God's human nature. Observant of the Christian religion, the philosopher believes that there is only one God, who created man and is the source of his meaning in life, and that the mediation of Christ is the sole way leading to eternal life (City of God, Book VIII, 32). Several concerns are raised by Augustine's observations on justice and moral righteousness in man, which are founded on an understanding of human nature that raises a number of them. Within the pages of Books XII and XIV, the philosopher poses the following questions to the reader:

- What is man's place in creation?
- What is the relation between man and truth?
- How can human reason know Truth?
- How can man know what is ontologically superior to him, that is to say, what surpasses him in perfection?
- What is the origin of Evil?
- What kind of relation prevails between men because of sin and the split of will?
- How can human beings live in conformity with God in temporal life?

Man in Creation

The thought of the Bishop of Hippo about the Christian vision of man rises, not without conflict, within the static frameworks of the ancient cosmology (Lima Vaz, 2001). The Saint goes beyond the "natural man" of the ancient cosmos and his thought lays the foundations of a new conception of man, happiness and freedom. He also presents a new conception of time. [14] It is worth remembering that, in the intellectual and

[14] The meaning of freedom and happy life, considering the ontological relation between God and man, is contemplated by Augustine in *The free will* (Book XV,

spiritual trajectory of Augustine, the sermons of Ambrose and the reading of Plotinus and his disciple Porphyry, begun in Milan, raised doubts and questions about divine and human nature.[15] At that point in his life, he asked himself: "Who made me? Was it not my God, who is not only good, but good itself?" (Confessions, Book VII, 3 and 5). With these words, Augustine underlines that the Good is God himself, who not only created man but also gave meaning to man's life.

Within the pages of Book XII of *The City of God*, the philosopher explores the five features of the religious history of humanity: the creation of the world, the original sin, the promise of the Messiah, the birth of Jesus Christ and the eternal beatitude.[16] In Book XII, 1, Augustine reflects on the origins of the world and its creation. The Saint highlights the idea that the one true and unchanging good that makes man truly happy is God: "We say that there is only one unchanging good, God, one, true and happy" (City of God, Book XII, 1). In the process of creation *ex nihilo*, things are called into existence by God. Based on the biblical reference, the Saint understands that man, endowed with a body and a soul, is not from eternity, but was created by God, in his image and likeness. In the order created by God, the Bishop of Hippo underlines that there is an ontological hierarchy between higher and lower goods. However, because of sin, man inclines his will towards apparent goods and is subject to error in his judgments. In this sense, the Saint clarifies:

> Thus: avarice is not the vice of gold, but of the man who perversely loves gold, putting aside justice which ought to be set far above gold; nor is lust a vice of beautiful and graceful bodies, but of a soul who perversely loves bodily voluptuousness, neglecting the temperance which disposes us to the more beautiful realities of the spirit and to greater incorruptible graces; not boasting is a vice of human praise, but that of the soul which perversely loves to be praised by men with contempt of the testimony of conscience;

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32). The Saint proposes a concept of freedom that refers to men's relationship with God: "Without doubt, true freedom does not exist except among happy persons, who follow the eternal law".

[15] For more details, see Matthews (2007). In Augustine's trajectory, it was the theologian Ambrose who guided him to break with the philosophical materialism defended by Manichaeism. When he was 29 years old, the famous Manichaean bishop, Faustus, arrived in Carthage. The Saint was disappointed by this visit, as he recalls in the *Confessions.* In this regard, Augustine says that he found "[...] in the first place, that the individual had not mastered the liberal arts, except grammar, and in a vulgar form" (V, 6, 11).

[16] According to Guy (1961), Books XI to XIV of *The City of God* constitute a commentary on the book of Genesis.

> nor is pride a vice of the one who bestows power or of power itself, but that of the soul which perversely loves its own authority and despises the just authority of one more powerful. This is why whoever perversely loves a good, of whatever nature, even if he obtains it, becomes evil in that good and miserable in the deprivation of a better good (City of God, Book XII, 8).

So, Augustine examines the relationship between humans and worldly goods and warns that things in the order established by God are not inherently sinful. According to this interpretation, the question of man's relationship with worldly commodities pertains to the significance of his life in the divine scheme of things. According to the Saint, the splendour of God is the culmination of creation and the ultimate meaning of man's existence. Man's happiness can only be attributed to God alone. As a result, the Bishop of Hippo emphasizes the metaphysical distinction between the Being who is the foundation and the Being who is the founded. God is endowed with the attributes of a Supreme Being, including boundless power, omniscience, and immutability. The Supreme Being is one who loves, who is righteous, who is merciful, and who is the most merciful (Brachtendorf 2012). The existence of God serves as the foundation of man's existence; as a result, there is an ontological transcendence in man's existence. God, in his perfection, does not require the assistance of man.[17]

Because of this, Augustine gives a theory of an ontological hierarchy of beings in the order created by God, which can be summarized as follows: The vision of the universe is that of a hierarchy of natural beings who express a higher order, the will of God, to which they are all subject. God is both the beginning and the end of all things, according to the Bible. He to whom all things are directed and to whom all things will return, he is both the creator and the efficient cause of the universe, from which all proceeds and the final cause towards which everything tends and will return. Man, according to Augustinian thinking, can only be comprehended in relation to the Absolute, and this is unassailably true. As a result, according to Arendt's perspective, the only one who can provide a response to the question "Who am I?" is God, who created man. [18]

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[17] Cf. Brachtendorf (2012, 47-48). In this respect, Oliveira e Silva (2012) emphasizes that, in the Augustinian vision of God in relation to the world, God becomes visible not only through creatures but also through Christ, the theophanies, and the manifestations of the New Testament after the resurrection of Christ.

[18] See in particular *The City of God,* Book X. According to Arendt (2013), the question of the nature of God and the nature of man are theological questions and, therefore, both must only be resolved within a divinely revealed answer. In this

The author of *The City of God* highlights an Absolute Being who is alpha and omega. This is the root of the possibility of man's fully becoming in the world.[19] On the nature of the human soul created in the image of God, the author states:

> God, therefore, made man in His own image. He created in him a soul fit by reason and intelligence to rise above all the animals of the earth, the waters and the air, who are without such a spirit. Having therefore formed man of the dust of the ground, he breathed into him that soul of which I have just spoken, whether he had already made it by his own breath, or whether he wished the breath which he thus produced (indeed, to breathe what is there but to produce a breath?) to be the very soul of man (City of God, Book XII, 24).

From these words, it can be said that the Saint considers that man's soul, of a spiritual nature, was created by a most perfect superior being. In the Augustinian perspective, man was created as the image of God. However, among men, the first death constitutes a punishment because of Adam´s sin. Adam was the first man who transgressed the divine law. [20]

The two forms of love and the two cities

When discussing the nature and role of concupiscence in Book XIV of The City of God, Augustine calls for a consideration of the original sin as well as the habits that fuel human vices in order to discuss the punishment resulting from disobedience of divine law (Curbelié 2004, 121). His responses to inquiries about man's way of existence in both the City of God and the Earthly City are included in his comments (Brown 2006). In this regard, he inquires, "What is the difference between living in conformity with man and living in conformity with God?" (The City of God, Book XIV, Chapter 4) The author of the book The City of God describes the two cities in detail in the Preface to the book. The Heavenly City, which is a pilgrimage site for the impious, exists in the course of time via faith and awaits the arrival of the Eternal City. Because of its

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sense, the forms of human cognition, applicable to things, are of no value when we ask ourselves "Who are we?"

[19] It is worth reading *The City of God*, Book XI, 32. Regarding man in creation, Arendt (2013) explains that Augustine calls the beginning of the world *principium*, and the beginning of human action *initium*. In the philosopher's view, the use of different Latin words is crucial to differentiate the two beginnings.

[20] On Adam and the divine law, see *The City of God,* Book XII, 24. The first death is the theme of Book XIII.

holiness, it will be in an unbroken state of peace. While the Earthly City is a slave to its own ambitions of dominance throughout history, the Celestial City is a slave to its own ambitions of dominance throughout history (City of God, Book XIV, 4).

Unlike the Earthly City, according to Augustine, the City of God is not guided by love for oneself and does not live according to the "flesh," as does the Earthly City (City of God, Book XIV, 2 and 3). When used in this philosophical context, the term "body" should not be taken literally, as if it simply referred to the physical body and bodily pleasures. Natural man is represented by the Greek word for flesh, which includes not only the vices of the body but also the vices of the spirit, insofar as man does not live his life with God as the High Good, the ultimate goal in mind. In the case of those who live according to the flesh, the will tends towards the concupiscent desire that seeks pleasure as the ultimate goal. The outcome is the development of vice-producing habits that are motivated by man's love for himself rather than his love for Truth. In this context, the corruption of the body is understood by Augustine as a punishment for man, as he states: "it was the sinful soul that made the body corruptible" (City of God, Book XIV, 3). This has resulted in the Earthly City being characterized by the life style of men whose love for themselves is revealed to be the antithesis of the virtuous life; that is, it is revealed to be the antithesis of a life lived in obedience and surrender to God's purpose. The sin of disobedience committed by Adam is individually renewed in the lives of the people of the Earthly city in their uniqueness. In the light of this backdrop, the Saint summarizes the function of sin in men's ways of life when he says:

> This is why we said that there are two different and contrary cities - because some live in conformity with the flesh and others in conformity with the spirit; or still in the same manner we can say that some live in conformity with man and others in conformity with God (City of God, Book XIV, 4).

In the part of text that has been given, the Saint makes a clear distinction between two ways of living that are rooted by two types of love: love for oneself and love for God. When a person's way of life is centred on selfish love, on love for oneself, his disordered wants stand in direct opposition to the legitimate desire for happiness and to the moral righteousness of his or her will. Man's passions demonstrate that they are diametrically opposed to the laws of divine justice when he sins. The Saint also claims that the manner of life of men in the Earthly City is a "lie" when he conducts a comparative investigation of men's ways of living. To put it another way,

he says:

> When man lives in conformity with himself, that is, with man and not with God, he certainly lives in conformity with a lie. Not because he himself is a lie, for he has God as his author and creator, and God does not make lies. But man was created to live in conformity with God, that is, to do God´s will rather than his own. Not to live the style of life for which you were made - that is a lie. To want to be happy even when one does not live in such a manner to be able to be happy -what is more untrue than this will? Hence it can be said, not without reason, that every sin is a lie (City of God, Book XIV, 4).

It is evident from this remark that the philosopher is emphasizing the ontological dimension that is at the heart of the conflict between the two cities in question. The way of existence in which man's will is supreme does not lead the creature to Truth and, as a result, to happiness, but rather to suffering. This is not the way of life of the Christian man, who was formed to love Truth rather than to do what he wants at any given time in his life. As a result, man was created to live in accordance with divine law, which is to say, in accordance with God's will. From this standpoint, Augustine characterizes the love of Truth, as well as the living of one's life in accordance with divine law, as an ontological requirement. To put it another way, according to his way of thinking, the significance of creation is revealed through the "right" relationship that exists between man and God.

Will, moral righteousness and justice

Augustine´s analysis unfolds through the analysis of the causes of human vices. The vices or perturbations or diseases of the soul, as Cicero called them, or even the passions, according to the translation of the Greek words -desire, fear, pleasure and pain, "comprise all the evil propensities of human habits" (City of God, Book XIV, 5). It is not only under the influence of flesh that the soul experiences the passions, as the Manichaeans supposed, but the Bishop clarifies that "the agitation of these impulses can come from within itself as well" (City of God, Book XIV, 5).

By saying that "man is not evil by nature, but by vice" (City of God, Book XIV, 5) the Saint mentions the influence of the will on choices. Such influence depends on the relation between the human will and goods, as Augustine indicates when he states: "Man's will is attracted or repelled according to the diversity of objects which it seeks or avoids, and is thus changed or transformed into these different affections" (City of God, Book

XIV, 6). In other words, the perturbations of the soul affect the judgments concerning the will that is present in the different affections of man in relation to the diversity of objects that he seeks or avoids. In this regard, the Saint asks: "Indeed, what is desire or joy if not the will that consents to what we want? What is fear or sadness if not the will that leads us away from what we refuse?" (City of God, Book XIV, 6).

In the Augustinian perspective, the will of man affects judgments and, therefore, choices. In grounding the analysis of the vices and errors of human judgments on the split of the will, Augustine introduces significant modifications in the diagnosis and explanation of the pains of the soul in relation to ancient philosophy (Matthews 2007). The author of *The City of God* identifies the relation between good love and the right will when he says:

> [...] the right will is a good love and the perverse will is an evil love. The love that aspires to possess what it loves - is desire; when it possesses it and enjoys it -it is joy; when it flees from what repulses it - it is fear; if its grief experiences it- it is sadness. These feelings are, therefore, bad, when love is bad; good, when love is good (City of God, Book XIV, 7)

From the passage of text quoted, it can be affirmed that the Saint argues that when the inclination of the will contradicts the divine order and prefers inferior goods, man distances himself from the Supreme Being (City of God, Book XIV, 8). He underlines that the right will is a good love and that evil is deprivation of the good. The right will desires what must be desired according to the divine will and presupposes a "reconnection" or return of man to God. Thus, the right will not only nurtures the virtue of justice but is inseparable from good love (City of God, Book XIV, 9). Augustine unfolds his argument about human behaviour in a reflection on man's social nature, in which he focuses on man's relationship with his neighbour. In the Bishop of Hippo´s view, when man's will follow the will of God, this man loves in an orderly manner and follows the commandments of love that Christ summarized, according to the Gospels, in the essence of the commandments in Matthews, 22: "Love God above all things and your neighbour as yourself". In this regard, the philosopher states:

> Of him who purports to love God and also to love his neighbour as himself, not in conformity with man but in conformity with God, because of this love he is rightly said to be of good will. This, in the Holy Scriptures, is generally called charity (*caritas*). But in the same Holy Scriptures, it is also called love (*amor*) (City of God, Book XIV, 7).

According to this passage taken from the text, the philosopher links the man of good will with the person who does what is right in the eyes of God (verse 1). According to this understanding, the virtue of justice is connected with the virtue of good love, and the virtue of good love directs the manner of human life in accordance with divine rule. As a result, it is an absolutely fundamental aspect of Augustinian morality, in which the will and justice are articulated in order to investigate the foundations of righteousness and hence, ultimately, happiness. As a result, man's appropriate relationship with the Creator directs his way of life in accordance with divine justice, and this has profound implications for man's relationship with his neighbour as well as with himself. The love of neighbours, charity, is thus the fruit of ordered love, because good love expresses the will to do what is good. Love for neighbours arises as the central intersubjective question from an Augustinian perspective, because a man of good will must love his neighbour in accordance with God, according to this perspective.

The split of will and ways of life

Throughout Book XIV of *The City of God*, the Bishop of Hippo's remarks about sin and evil aim to deepen not only his analysis of the relation between God's will and man's will, but also of man's freedom. Therefore, the philosopher studies the question of the good from both an ontological and a moral point of view. From the ontological perspective, slavery, the fruit of original sin, also finds its place in the order created.[21] The Saint says: "But God foresaw and could not ignore that man would sin" (City of God, Book XIV, 11). Indeed, this affirmation highlights the role of divine omnipotence with regard to man's designs:

> God in his foreknowledge foresaw one thing and another, that is, how evil the man he created would become and the good he would derive from that evil. It is true that God is said to change his plans (in metaphorical language Scripture even says that God repented). But this is said in relation to what man expects or in relation to what the order of natural things entails, and not in relation to what the Almighty foresaw he would do (City of God, Book XIV, 11).

In the highlighted passage of text, Augustine mentions the relation between divine knowledge and man's freedom. From the ontological point

[21] On original sin and the order created by God, see also *City of God,* Book XII, 24.

of view, God created man and endowed him with free will. Thus, by his nature, man is not a slave to sin.[22] As Guy (1961, 46) clarifies, there is a hierarchy of efficient causes that allow us to understand how human freedom is not suppressed by divine foreknowledge, but, on the contrary, God founds man's freedom.

It is worth remembering that in the spiritual and intellectual journey of the Bishop of Hippo, one of the crucial questions undoubtedly is: "What is the origin of evil?[23] According to the Saint, the cause of sin lies in the disturbances of the soul. Pride is the origin of all sin because the human soul is pleased with itself. Therefore, it distances itself from the immutable Good.[24] By false grandeur, man´s will turns away from the superior and immutable Good. Such an act, contrary to human nature, revealed the split of the will. From the Augustinian perspective, the concept of will reveals an inner faculty of the soul. On behalf of the split of the will, there is an internal division of man and a moral ambivalence (Ramos, 1984). Indeed, because of the original sin, man presents an inner conflict that reveals a split of the will. Adam fell because he acted according to his will and did not submit his actions to the will of God. In this regard, Augustine says:

> What was recommended in the precept was obedience, a virtue which is as it were the mother and guardian of all the virtues in the rational creature. The rational creature was created in such manner that it is useful for him to be subject to obedience, and it is harmful for him to do his own will and not the will of Him by whom he was created (City of God, Book XIV, 12).

According to the text quoted, the author clearly states that original sin was the fruit of the disobedience of man, a rational creature, who did not follow the will of God. In Adam's behaviour, the will did not submit to the love ordained. On the contrary, by eating the forbidden food, Adam's will led him to transgression. The first sin is a sin of disobedience: such a sin reveals that the creature acted according to his own will and not the

[22] It can be said, on the basis of Augustine's thought, that the distinction between the conceptualizations of human nature and human condition are anchored by the split of will as result of Adam's disobedience. See, City of God, Book XIV, 11.

[23] This question is also developed by Augustine in *The True Religion,* Book II, 11, 21 and 22.

[24] In this regard, it is worth recalling Augustine's forceful statement in *Confessions,* Book II, 2, 2, which highlights the relation between pride and man's submission to the mortal order. The Bishop of Hippo says: "I am deafened by the noise of the chain of my mortality, in punishment of the pride of my soul".

Creator's will because of pride. Moreover, Augustine of Hippo asks: "But what is pride but the desire for a false grandeur?" (City of God, Book XIV, 13). He reaffirms that evil corresponds to an ontological distancing of man from God.[25] After original sin, moral remoteness ultimately brings us back to the problem of ontological remoteness. Let us recall the Saint's words:

> Man did not fall to the point of becoming nothing but, by turning in on himself, he became less than he was when he was united to what fully is. To abandon God in order to remain in oneself, that is to say, to take pleasure in oneself, is not yet nothingness but is already approaching nothingness (City of God, Book XIV, 13).

In this selected passage of text, Augustine draws attention to the ontological significance of original sin. Original sin means loss of being, loss of harmony in relation to order. Once called into existence, human life cannot return to nothingness: what exists, even if corrupted, is a good and is related to the Creator. From the ontological point of view, sin distances man from God. However, to free himself from sin and restore the fullness of being, Augustine underlines, in Book XIV of *The City of God,* the importance of grace: "Of free will he died in his spirit, against his will he died in his body. He deserted eternal life and was condemned to eternal death, unless freed by grace" (City of God, Book XIV, 13). Indeed, the Bishop indicates that man, of natural dimension, needs grace, a supernatural gift, in order to enjoy the true and perfect freedom. According to the Christian philosopher, the conflicts and internal clashes experienced by men are expressed by personal sins that result from the split of the will and, therefore, they are based on an inclination of the will to evil. The desire generally called *libido,* which is a manifestation of concupiscence*,* refers to the search for pleasures preceded by an appetite felt in the flesh. As to the naming of such desires (*libidines*), the author of *The City of God* states:

[25] Augustine rejects the conception of evil as a substance. In Augustine's intellectual trajectory, the move away from Manichaeism is consolidated by his contact with Neoplatonism. According to Manichaeism, a Christian sect, there is a cosmic principle of darkness as well as a principle of light. Thus, the problem of evil was a consequence of the war between the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness. According to this doctrine, the cosmic force of evil is equal in power to the cosmic force of good. See Matthews (2007).

> There is a desire for revenge which is called anger, a desire to have money, which is called avarice, a desire to win by any means, which is called obstinacy, a desire for glory, which is called boastfulness. There are many desires (*libidines*), some of them have a proper name, others do not (City of God, Book XIV, 15).

Considering the passage of text quoted, the Saint affirms that desires, such as the desire for revenge, for money and for glory, create habits which, in turn, if they are not fought, end up generating vices. In other words, habits, insofar as they are repeated, generate vices that take roots inside men, disturbing their souls, and subordinating their will and conduct to sin (Gracioso 2010). From an Augustinian perspective, the distinction between free will, the ability to choose, and freedom, the ability to choose well, is important.[26] The Saint warns that man must not subject his free will to an inclination of the will that could suppress his freedom (City of God, Book V, 10).

Furthermore, at the end of Book XIV, Augustine synthesizes a central concern: beyond the opposition between vice and virtue, human history reveals an opposition between forms of love that express themselves in opposite ways of living (Guy 1961, 88). The Bishop of Hippo states:

> Two loves have made the two cities: the love for oneself to the point of contempt for God - the earthly city; the love for God to the point of contempt for self -the heavenly city. The one glorifies itself in itself - the other in the Lord; the other asks for glory from men- the greater glory of the latter consists in having God as the witness of its conscience; the one in its glory lifts up its head - the other says to its God: *You are my glory, you lift up my head*; the one in its princes or nations which it subdues, and dominated by the passion to dominate -in the latter they serve one another in charity: the chiefs directing, the subjects obeying; the one loves its own strength in its potentates- the one says to its God*, I will love thee, O Lord, my fortress*; wherefore in that the wise live as it pleases man in seeking the goods of the body, or of the soul, or of both: and they that could know God did not *glorify him as God, nor render him thanks, but were lost in their vain thoughts, and darkened their foolish hearts. They boasted that they were wise* (that is, exalting *themselves* in their wisdom under the empire of pride) *they became fools* (City of God, Book XIV, 28).

[26] Arendt (1996) points out that Augustine radically changed the terms of the problem about freedom insofar as he made freedom (free will) the essence of the will.

In this excerpt from *The City of God*, Augustine highlights the nature of love as axial in the demarcation of the opposing paths that lead to the two cities. From the Augustinian perspective, love is understood as the intimate engine of the human will.[27] Thus, the opposition between the two cities leads to a reflection on the conflicts that manifest themselves within every human being: on one hand, man is called by God to live according to divine law and true justice; on the other hand, the human will is dominated by love for oneself. A further benefit of understanding the nature of love is that it reveals the type of common sentiment that connects the men of a given culture. Indeed, social existence is predicated on the presence of an emotion that draws men together in pursuit of a common goal. Augustine believes that love is the emotion that allows him to complete this duty. So the members of both cities are distinguished by the type of love that leads their actions: love in the Earthly City is defined as love that seeks material goods; love in the Celestial City is defined as virtuous love, which is defined as love for what is right. It is as a result that men's lives reach true happiness in the Celestial City, which can only be attained via God, because true life "is happy when it is eternal" (City of God, Book XIV, 25).

Righteousness of life in a just society

In the philosopher's perspective, there is an order in the universe and it is this divine order that gives meaning to human history.[28] In other words, the meaning of order is related to God, insofar as the fullness of being and human happiness should be referred to Supreme Good. According to Curbelié (2004, 149), it is divine justice that gives man the fullness of being and true life. From the ontological point of view, man needs to reach the principle of Truth: this is an ontological matter of necessity because the human soul is naturally united to the divine reasons.[29] Thus, following original sin, the right reason (*vera ratio*) must be reconnected to eternal reasons in order to transform its "look" toward the neighbour and earthly goods in accordance with divine justice, which dictates how everything should be.

There is an ontological order that is the cornerstone of Augustine's philosophical reasoning, and this order serves as the foundation of the moral order. While the ontological order applies to all species, the moral order is

[27] Cf. Zanoni Ramos (1998, 8).
[28] On movement and time in *The City of God*, see Book XII, 21, and Book XI, 6.
[29] On this topic, see Augustine´s *Free Wil,* Book III.

unique to men since they are the only ones who have the ability to respect or violate the everlasting law. According to the philosopher, men experience a loss of existence as a result of their sin. Indeed, ignorance of the soul is associated with moral perversion, implying that there is a close relationship between knowledge and morality on the part of the individual. The philosopher, according to Oliveira e Silva (2012), provides a judicative model of reason, in which cognitive actions always entail value judgments, and in which cognitive actions always involve value judgments.

As Lima Vaz (2001) points out, men do not stop being actors in history when they reach a certain age. It is possible to find folks of righteous will among those who have a perverse will during their earthly and temporal existences. Despite the fact that these two kinds of persons are of different races and languages, the Bishop of Hippo distinguishes between them. On the basis of John Locke's philosophical presuppositions, it can be stated that a just society is one in which persons of faith, assisted by grace, have a "proper" connection with their Creator. Consequently, as Curbelié (2004, 122) points out, a comprehensive understanding of divine justice needs a holistic conception of man as a substantial combination of body and soul. The eternal law, the fundamental principle of justice, is the foundation of human moral righteousness, which is firmly placed in history. Taking into consideration the foregoing, we disagree with the consequences of Guy's view of the two cities in the "spiritual" sense and as two *a priori* categories, as stated in Guy (1961, 81). As a result, Augustine's analysis, according to Guy, does not refer to concrete human reality, whether it is individual or social. [30]

However, our reading is close to the classic interpretation of R. Markus. Therefore, beyond the opposition, it is in the secular space of coexistence between the Earthly City and the Heavenly City that the real human existence happens in history.[31] In other words, the bifurcation stressed by Augustine does not exclude the coexistence of the two cities (Zanoni Ramos 1998). In this regard, let us recall the words of the philosopher:

> Indeed, one part of the earthly city has become the image of the heavenly city, without being the sign of itself but of the other - and that is why it is

[30] Cf. Guy (1961, 91). On the basis of this conception, Guy refutes the idea that *The City of God* is a treatise on Christian politics.

[31] Cf. Markus (1970). The author aims to study those aspects of Augustine's thought that contribute to thinking about the meaning of human society, and particularly his reflections on history, society and the Church. In his analysis, Markus presents Augustine as a thinker who rejected the "sacralisation" of the social order of his time.

> enslaved [...] We find, therefore, two parts in the earthly city, one part shows us its service as a slave to signify with its presence the heavenly city (City of God, Book XV, 2).

In other words, the Bishop of Hippo clarifies that the heavenly city makes use of earthly goods. Its members, as pilgrims, live righteously and are aware of the ephemeral and changeable character of these goods. Moreover, they know how to differentiate the ontological order of beings.

Thus, it is in temporal life that the two cities, the heavenly and the earthly, are inextricably intermingled, like the wheat and the darnel in the biblical parable, which may grow together and must await the time of harvest to be separated. Indeed, the dividing line between the two cities is invisible in temporal life (Chauqui 2005). In this regard, it is relevant to recall the words of Augustine when he states, "Indeed, these two cities are mutually intertwined and merged into one another in this century, they will not be separated until the last judgment" (City of God, Book 1, 35). Indeed, only at the last judgment will God separate the righteous from the unrighteous. As a result, all human societies contain both cities, and the Heavenly City, while on pilgrimage in temporal life, makes use of the goods of the Earthly City.

Human reality, wounded by sin, shows that man, on behalf of love for oneself, moves away from God and forgets God's presence in him. From the Augustinian perspective, this estrangement has deep implications for the conditions of sociability. To deepen the analysis about human life style in a just society, it is necessary to examine the place of the true virtue of justice in man's pilgrimage.

CHAPTER 3

JUSTICE AND VIRTUE

Within the pages of Book XIX of *The City of God*, Saint Augustine affirms that man is a being of social nature and men, by acting, show what they are and reveal their singular identities.[32] Therefore, social relations assume prominence in his philosophical interpretation that places morality in social perspective, and analyses the ethical implications of individual responsibility in a just social order. According to Augustine, every man belongs to Adam, that is, to the human race by generation, but not by imitation (City of God, Book XV, 1). The imitation of Christ involves a choice: the path of the restoration of being. Men in history who imitate Christ, the just men who live by faith, have hope for eternal life, which is the true happy life.[33] As a result, according to the philosopher, the wise man is the one whose understanding of virtue leads him to practice the true virtues, i.e., he is the just man. And so the wise man is not the one who acquires information, but rather the one who knows how to love in a manner that is orderly and how to behave in the interests of justice. According to the Bishop of Hippo, the right social order can only be found in the City of God, also known as the Heavenly City. It is important to recall that the author of *The City of God* elaborates a perspective on the evolution of the Heavenly City, from its origins to the incarnation of Christ, in Books XV to VIII of the work. More significantly even, in Book XV, Chapter 22, the philosopher asserts that the order of love is the true virtue in the City of God:

> For the very love that makes us love well what ought to be loved, must also be loved in order that the virtue may be in us by which to live well. That is why it is true virtue: *ordo amoris* –"the order of love". That is why the Spouse of Christ, the City of God, sings in the holy Canticle of Canticles

[32] According to Finley (1985), Aristotle had already posed the question of the social nature of the human being.

[33] In *The City of God,* Book XXI, Augustine deals with the second death, eternal punishment, and in Book XXII he deals with eternal happiness in the Heavenly City.

Order charity in me (City of God, Book XV, 22).

By looking at this excerpt of text, it is evident that Augustine makes a connection between pure virtue or the order of love and the truth of God. When mankind lives according to the will of the creator, they treat inferior commodities with justice, "giving to each one what belongs to them," as the Bible says. To put it another way, the Bishop of Hippo asserts that there is no happiness for man apart from his virtue in the order of love, which must rule not only over the use of earthly commodities, but also over the interrelations between individuals. Furthermore, he asserts that, in earthly life, the practice of charity is the defining characteristic of the sons of God.

To put it another way, men love in an orderly manner only when they respect all beings with justice, or even if they subjugate all goods to their souls in order to live according to the order of love, as defined by the Augustinian tradition. Man must subordinate his senses to reason, which must be enlightened by faith, and, with the assistance of grace, he must submit his soul to God in his own soul. According to this understanding, a just man who spends his life in faith submits himself to the will of the divine creator. So the interior order that arises from the will conversion is a prerequisite for the social order founded on happiness, justice, and peace to be realized in the world.

It is worth noting that, in Book XIX of *The City of God,* Augustine deepens the analysis of the relation between the City of God and the Earthly City in history.[34] The author proposes an approach to men in social life which expresses the originality of the Christian historical awareness in the face of the ancient world (Lima Vaz 2001). In this philosophical approach the conceptualization of justice, as the true virtue, is the cornerstone of the City of God because its founder is Christ. The philosopher underlines that those men who subordinate themselves to the will of God and practise the true virtue are members of the Heavenly City.

On the basis of Augustine's assertion that the fundamental problem of man is to find happiness, his ethical philosophical theory can be considered part of the ancient philosophical tradition due to its emphasis on contentment (*eudaimonia*). Augustine, on the other hand, broke away from this tradition by rethinking the relationship between the High Good and virtues, and by treating the process of "reconnection" with

[34] Arendt (1996) draws attention to the importance of Augustine's view of the human condition and, in her interpretation, highlights that he is the first philosopher to consider man as the starting point of a reflection on the world.

the High Good as a whole. Men are equipped with free will, and the reconnection exposes a process of restoration of their being that is manifested via actions that reveal the knowledge of virtue to be discovered. As a result, the true virtue is significant in that it prepares mankind for their encounter with God. Men, on the other hand, require heavenly guidance in order to be moral.

The High Good and the true virtue of Justice

Augustine's contribution is in continuity with ancient ethics and Hellenistic philosophy. In effect, the Saint belongs to the framework of the so-called ancient "ethics of happiness". From this perspective, the main question about the Supreme Good is, in the last analysis, a question about men's desire for happiness (Brachtendorf 2012). Despite the philosophical traditions from which he inherited those influences, the Augustinian thought searches for a change, which is based on the sharp criticism of the philosophers who believed that happy life is possible in earthly life.

In Book XIX, 1, of *The City of God,* the author elaborates a revision of the views of philosophers who had hitherto vainly sought to find happiness in earthly life. His aim is to find out what true happiness is and what kind of happiness can be expected in this earthly life. At the beginning of Book XIX, the Saint warns that his philosophical method is based on faith and reason. In fact, for the Bishop of Hippo, all true philosophy is built on faith, which precedes reason.[35] He understood that faith, aided by reason, incites philosophical speculation in order to attain knowledge of the object of faith. Therefore, philosophy is completed with the study of Revelation to attain knowledge of the Truth. According to him, philosophy and theology, although distinct in their methods, complement each other and are two guides that lead to God (Boehner and Gilson 1982; Gilson 2007).

While conducting his investigation into paganism, Augustine examined the writings of the philosopher Varro, who claimed that 288 pagan groups could be distinguished (City of God, Book XIX, 1). Such sects were united by the belief that mankind can attain the Supreme Good and remain in possession of it throughout their worldly lives. Among the criteria that Varro used to classify and combine the 288 theoretically viable philosophical sects, it is possible to point out the following:

[35] The reflection on the relation between faith and reason is developed by Augustine in the dialogue *Soliloquies*, Book I.

- The principles that men naturally seek;
- The relation between virtues and these principles;
- Men's attitudes in social life;
- The nature of opinions;
- Habits and customs;
- Genres of life.

The Saint came to the conclusion that, according to the pagans, the Supreme or High Good is a matter of relative importance. According to the Epicureans, for example, the existence of an objective standard of certainty to guide men's activities based on sensory awareness was stressed in their philosophical theory. As a result, from the Epicurean point of view, it is understood that nature teaches that pleasure is the highest good and that pain is the highest evil. Because absence of pain is the highest form of pleasure, the Epicureans accepted their fate with calmness in order to attain the joy of stillness and, as a result, to achieve happiness in the end. According to this philosophical framework, virtues are means of attaining the pleasure of stillness, which is to say, the highest good (Brachtendorf 2012). As a matter of fact, the Epicureans believe that there is a natural law-based morality that establishes the relationship between what is good for all and what is good for the individual.

Furthermore, the Stoics asserted that virtue is the highest good. In their cosmological perspective, moral virtue is a contributing factor to happiness and *logos* (reason) is the teleological principle that drives the human being to realize his or her own nature. Consequently, the virtuous life is considered a life according to the *logos,* and in order to achieve the proper ordering of the soul, it is necessary to adopt an interior attitude of conversion. In the opinion of Stoic thinkers, human happiness can only be achieved in a condition of soul perfection, which is to say, in a well-ordered mind in which reason has won the battle against passions. While Plato and Aristotle acknowledged that man is fundamentally a social being, the Stoics proposed the concept of the wise man, who lives outside of the world in accordance with the law of universal nature or reason, as an ideal of virtuous living in contrast to this. Continuing the discussion of the happy life and the High Good, the Saint also criticized the New Academy's scepticism for denying the existence of a criterion of truth (Marrou 1955). According to sceptics, the sage practices *epoché,* which means that he abstains from affirmative apodictic judgments, which are demonstrative judgments that do not admit contestation, to avoid errors. Thus, the wise man makes no claim to knowledge, but rather bases his pursuit of happiness on mere opinions about temporal life. In this sense,

the Saint's critique of the sceptics reaffirms a central theme of *The City of God*: there is only one Truth, which is the one God who governs the world. Therefore, the Bishop discards earthly goods and the goods of nature as the foundation of happiness.[36]

According to the Saint, earthly goods, which are changeable, ephemeral and corruptible, cannot be considered the foundation of a happy life. In this regard, he also brought into question the goods of nature, such as the senses, given that a sense perception can lose quality and reason can become numb. Indeed, he criticises those who claim to find in earthly life the High Good and reach happiness on their own. In his words:[37]

> [...]. as we are saved by hope, so also by hope are we blessed; and like blessedness, so also salvation we do not possess as present, but we await it as future, and this thanks to patience; for we are in the midst of evils which we must endure with patience until we attain those goods where everything is to be enjoyed in an ineffable manner and where there is nothing left that we are obliged to endure. Such a salvation, which will exist in the century to come, is what the final beatitude will be. These philosophers do not want to believe in this beatitude because they do not see it (City of God, Book XIX, 4).

The author highlights his fundamental intention, which is to elaborate the conceptualization of happy life in a new perspective: happy life is eternal life. Thus, the Saint not only brought into question the fullness of happiness in earthly life, but also the power of man to cure by himself the diseases of the soul. Therefore, a critique of ancient philosophical ethics as the "art of living" emerges in the Saint´s writings. According to Brachtendorf (2012), ancient ethics develops primarily a technique of the good life, an *ars vivendi*, which leads man to apprehend the supreme good and to direct his life by it towards the attainment of happiness.[38] The diagnosis underlying

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[36] Summing up Varro's reflection on the philosophical scope of the 288 sects mentioned, in Book XIX, 3, of *The City of God,* Augustine highlights three relations that can be established, according to the pagan philosophical approach to happiness, between virtues and primary goods of nature, namely: the primary goods of nature are sought in view of virtue; virtue is sought in view of the primary goods of nature; and virtue and the primary goods of nature are sought for themselves in earthly life. Of these relations, Augustine reminds us that Varro chose the third, which is identified with the moral school of the Ancient Academy, whose author is Antiochus.

[37] The relation between earthly goods, the goods of nature and happiness is extensively developed by *The City of God*, Books I to IV and Book V, 10.

[38] In the Hellenistic tradition philosophy was divided into ethics, theory of

the proposal of ancient philosophy as a moral therapy is that there are in the human being diseases of the soul that prevent a happy life.

Although Augustine is also concerned with the diseases of the soul, he criticizes all those philosophers, including Cicero, who believed that man has the power to heal his soul. In fact, the Saint introduces a new relation between High Good and virtues. Moreover, he brings into question the conceptualization of philosophy as a moral therapy to reach the High Good in earthly life. Despite the influence of the ethical ideal of happy life, the Saint's thought differs from the inherited philosophical traditions because, from his perspective of happy life, the cure of the soul's illnesses belongs to the field of religion and Christ is the only mediator in the search for happiness, which is eternal life. As a result, the foundation of the Augustinian ethics is the desire for happy life, which is nothing but eternal life (Ramos 1984).

In contrast to pagan philosophers who believe that earthly life possesses the supreme good, the Saint claims that Christians believe that God is the supreme good. In terms of the structure of Book XIX of *The City of God,* chapter 4 represents a shift in his reasoning. Indeed, the philosopher affirms a conception of man as a substantial union of body and soul, which has a significant impact on the Christian conception of the Supreme Good. In opposition to the diversity of pagan theology, Augustine presents the unity of Christian scripture, according to Guy (1961, 129). For the Bishop of Hippo, man possesses a natural desire for happiness that can only be reached in God himself, in the Supreme Good that is the Absolute. In his words: "The happy life consists in rejoicing in you, of you and for you".[39] Thus, this desire for happiness leads man to return to God (Ramos 1984).

Augustine's approach to happiness emphasizes justice as a virtue in the ethical sense. The philosopher considers that virtues are "man's most precious and useful treasure" and, in his view, virtues are not part of the principles of nature. Regarding the conceptualization of virtues, the Saint asks:

> Virtue itself, which is not among the primary goods of nature, because it is added to them later through education, although it claims for itself the highest place among human goods, what does it do here if not a perpetual war against vices, not exterior but interior, not alien but very much our own and personal - especially that virtue which is called in Greek *sophrosyne,* and in Latin *temperantia* (temperance), by which the carnal passions are restrained so that they do not lead the spirit to consent to some

knowledge (logic) and natural philosophy. On this point, see Brachtendorf (2012).

[39] Augustine, *Confessions*. Book X, 22.

turpitude? (City of God, Book XIX, 4).

From the perspective of Christian faith, the practice of virtues is axial in the fight against vices. Regarding temperance, the Saint affirms the moral struggle of man in earthly life to obtain inner order. In addition, he clarifies that prudence consists "[...] in discerning good from evil [...]. Indeed, it teaches us itself that the evil lies in consenting and the good in not consenting to the desire to sin". As for the virtue of fortitude, the philosopher instructs us, "[...] it is she that bears the most obvious witness to the human evils she is obliged to endure with patience." Finally, the role of the virtue of justice is "to give to each one what is due to them" (City of God, Book XIX, 4).

To emphasize the impact of Christian faith on the concept of virtue, the Saint distinguishes between the Romans' civil-life conception of "virtue" and his own conception of true virtues. He clarifies that those virtues qualified as true are practised out of love for the Highest Good, not out of desire for human glory. As Gilson (2006, 258) points out, attaining virtue is critical because "virtue is to will what we ought to will, that is, to love what we ought to love." The true virtues, according to the Augustinian view, express the perfecting of the powers of the soul through divine aid. Thus, true virtues are not a human achievement obtained, for example, through education. True virtues are the result of God's intervention in the pilgrim man. In this regard, we can affirm that, according to the Augustinian perspective, virtuous knowledge, the fruit of grace's infusion, assists man in his historical becoming to adapt his way of life to God's will.

After deepening his reflections on virtues and happy life, Augustine shows that the true virtue of justice — "that gives to each one what is due to him" —allows for the establishment of a certain order in man, in which he submits mind and flesh to God. True justice, according to the Christian philosopher, is founded on the transcendent authority of divine law, that is to say, on the Absolute. On the other hand, from an Augustinian approach, justice as authentic virtue is inserted into the intimate fight of the human being against his own passions, and into the context of man's "proper" connection with God. Within this philosophical setting, a conception of justice as a virtue emerges, referring to the subjection of human behaviour to genuine justice, which is the bedrock of ordered love. According to Dodaro's perspective, Augustine describes the true virtue of justice in *The City of God* as a properly organized condition of the soul that discovers the

just measure of things in the order of God's created beings.[40] Augustine's worldview defines perfect justice as Truth, that is to say, true justice is God's dominion in earthly life. Moreover, true justice mandates the proper ordering of all things. In this perspective, the practice of earthly justice becomes a moral commitment. The true virtue of justice is regarded as the *bonum* of earthly existence, which must be followed as a model of conduct indispensable for a happy life within the bounds of human ability (Terceiro-Muios 2004). Human justice, on the other hand, will always be imperfect in earthly life, as Costa (2012) underlined.

Man's moral ambivalence and human judgements

Considering the interrelations between men in social life, the Bishop of Hippo considers the defects or deviations in human behaviour from ordered love based on God observed in his surroundings. The Saint expresses himself as follows:

> [...] Are not human situations everywhere full of these deviations? Are they not found, most of the time, even in the most honest friendships? Are they not everywhere full of human situations where we feel insults, jealousies, enmities, and war as certain evils and peace as an uncertain good because we do not know the hearts of those with whom we want to keep it, and if today we can know them, we do not know what they will be tomorrow? (City of God, Book XIX, 5).

From this passage, it can be said that Augustine indicates human situations that exemplify "deviations" from the order created and governed by God. On the level of history, man is not secure even in his own home or city; while political institutions do not guarantee such security either. Thus, the philosopher warns that man is not free from the threats of self-imposed calamities and sufferings. Although social life is highly desirable, it is often disturbed by numerous difficulties, such as insults, jealousies, enmities, and war. According to the author, the errors of human judgments that result in deviations or evils, the "darkness of social life", express ignorance of Truth. Nevertheless, according to the Saint, man does not live only in ignorance of the Supreme Good or in deliberate indolence to reorient his will and change his style life. In truth, behind the errors of human judgments, there is an ontology that refers to the split of the will and to "human weakness" (City of God, Book XIX, 6).

[40] According to Dodaro (2014, 17), the relevance of the ordered relation of the soul denotes the influence of the Pauline notion of *dikaiosyne*.

Regarding the dominant features of social life, Augustine uses the metaphor of the "diversity of languages":

> In fact, if two men, neither of whom knows the other's language, walk towards the other but, for whatever reason, instead of crossing paths, they have to stay in the same place, it is easier for two mute animals, even of a different species, to live together in society, than those two, even though they are both men. Indeed, when they cannot communicate to each other what they feel only because of the diversity of language, the great similarity of nature is of no use to bring men into social intercourse and so much this is true that man takes more pleasure in being with his dog than with a stranger (City of God, Book XIX, 7).

In this selected extract, the author expresses the idea that man cannot communicate with his fellows. This fosters the fragmentation of society and iniquity.[41] The Bishop of Hippo understands that man is a social animal and the only one endowed with speech, through which he can communicate and relate to other men. In the context of his anthropological approach, speech and action reveal the distinction of man as a rational creature with a body and a soul. Moreover, in his analysis of social life, the Saint introduces the conceptualization of peace as an uncertain good. Let us recall the Saint´s words:

> But this iniquity, because it is of men, must be painful to man, even if from it no need for war arises. Therefore, these evils, so horrendous, so cruel, anyone who reflects on them with pain must confess that they are a disgrace; but anyone who thinks he can bear them, or think about them without pain in his soul, and continues to think himself happy, has fallen into a much deeper disgrace, because he has lost his own human feeling (City of God, Book XIX, 7).

Despite the evils of human life, many men think that there is happiness in earthly life and have therefore lost "human feeling itself" (City of God, Book XIX, 7). As a result, man ends up becoming a stranger to other men. As human peace is founded on the mutability of earthly life, it will always be an uncertain good. In the author's analysis, true peace is the expression of the manifestation of God's will among men.

The philosopher highlights man's moral ambivalence, which manifests itself in a tension between individuality and sociability (Markus 1970). The Bishop of Hippo reaffirms the nature of the human being as

[41] In *The City of God,* Book XIX, 7, Augustine develops the idea of "just war".

eminently social and, therefore, human action involves interpersonal relations.[42] Though, in social life, Augustine considers the conflicts of the human condition that are overwhelmed by the original sin: "Everyone claims to live in peace with his own, as long as everyone wants to live according to his will" (City of God, Book XIX, 12). Nevertheless, the Saint states that man, despite his moral ambivalence, desires peace: "The good of peace is so great that, even in earthly and perishable affairs, nothing can be heard more gladly, nothing can be sought more eagerly, finally, nothing better can be found" (City of God, Book XIX, 11). And he adds, "Whoever takes a little notice of human affairs and our common nature will recognize with me that just as there is no one who does not seek joy, so there is no one who does not wish to possess peace" (City of God, Book XIX, 12). In the excerpts of text quoted, Augustine states that peace, like joy, is the ultimate aspiration of all men, whose nature impels them to social life. Even the cruelty of men in times of war and all human disturbances and concerns are aimed at achieving peace, since there is no being that does not desire peace. Additionally, Augustine says, in Book XIX, 12:

> Man is, as it were, impelled by the laws of his nature to enter into a society with men". In the Augustinian perspective, the genesis of the city is strictly related to a historical evolutionary criterion driven by social dynamics, whose foundation is human nature and its need to live in society. However, when men subvert the "order of love" and want to build peace out of selfishness, submitting other men to their own interests (pride) and to their own will, this peace of the wicked cannot even be called peace, "in comparison with the peace of the just (City of God, Book XIX, 12).

in other words, man's moral ambiguity can be seen in his conflicting desires, which exhibit themselves in his desire for happiness while also desiring power; he loves peace while also committing acts of iniquity, as demonstrated by the clash between individuality and sociability. At the end of the day, such moral ambivalence reflects a split in the will, or even the insufficiency of man's will in comparison to God's will. In this philosophical context, true serenity in earthly existence, even in the face of difficulty, is not possible because of the laws of the universe that govern it. Peace, according to the Saint, is predicated on the order of love:

> The peace of the body is the ordered composition of its parts; the peace of the irrational soul is the ordered tranquillity of its appetites; the peace of the rational soul is the ordered concord of cognition and action; the peace

[42] According to Arendt (1996), human beings appear to each other, certainly not as physical objects, but as *qua* men.

> of body and soul is the ordered life and health of the animate being; the peace of mortal man with God is the ordered obedience in faith under the eternal law; the peace of men is the ordered concord; the peace of the house is the ordered concord of the citizens in command and obedience; the peace of the heavenly City is the absolutely ordered and absolutely harmonious community in the enjoyment of God, in the mutual enjoyment of God; the peace of all things is the tranquillity of order. Order is the disposition of equal and unequal beings which distribute to each one its places (City of God, Book XIX, 13).

In the light of the part of text that has been quoted, the Bishop of Hippo offers additional definitions of the term "peace." He begins with a definition of the peace of the body, then moves on to the peace of the illogical and rational souls, the peace of the body and souls together, and, lastly, the peace of man with himself and with the universe. The tranquillity of the individual man, who maintains a sense of order inside himself as well as in his relationship with God, is emphasized by the Saint. Under divine law, each man achieves, with the assistance of grace and in accordance with the order of love, what he deserves as a result of his desire to do so. Whether in the house (family) or in the city, the peace of men together is,then regarded as important by Augustine. It is important to note that the philosopher's explanation does not proceed in a haphazard manner. He considers the preservation of peace within a single individual to be a necessary precondition for the promotion of peace in interpersonal relationships in general. Throughout the course of the book, the progressive concept of peace is expanded to include the spectrum of social relationships inside the family, within the city, and throughout the world. There is also the notion that God, the creator of the global order, has bestowed certain temporal blessings on mankind, which go beyond these criteria. In eternal life, however, only those mortal men who make proper use of such commodities and who live according to the Christian faith can expect to receive even greater quantities of even better goods: the gift of peace itself. For lack of a better expression, the philosopher presents the concept of moral duty in man's earthly voyage for the sake of world peace. When the soul submits its will to God's will, he believes that the soul informs and animates the true qualities in earthly life, which is a good thing. Consequently, the will of man brings about ordered concord, which is the harmonious cohabitation of men in social life. [43]

[43] It is worth remembering that in the *Commentary on the Psalms*, 85, Augustine also emphasizes the relation between justice and peace in the promotion of social order.

Conversion of will, justice and peace: from inner order to social order

After emphasizing the need of individual responsibility in maintaining societal peace, Saint Augustine states, in Book XIX, 14, of *The City of God*, the boundaries of reason and senses in adapting man's will to God's will or the Supreme Good. Regarding the morality of man, the author states:

> But he has need of the divine teaching which he obeys to stand in certainty, and of the divine aid to submit to it as a free man, lest by his own desire to know he should incur the plague of some error due to the weakness of the human race. But because he walks on a pilgrimage away from the Lord as long as he remains in this mortal body, it is faith and not sight that guides him and therefore he refers all peace of body, or of soul, or at the same time of body and soul, to that peace which unites mortal man with immortal God, in order to have well-ordered obedience in faith under the eternal law (City of God, Book XIX, 14).

This selected passage emphasizes the distinction between the "eyes" of faith and the "eyes" of the body. In the Augustinian perspective, the relevance of "divine teaching and help" is related to the boundaries and scope of human knowledge.[44] In effect, the philosopher emphasizes the limitations of natural reason's capacity to know Truth, and he views wisdom as a product of faith and reason. Additionally, the soul participates in the knowledge of the immutable perfection of Truth, through divine Illumination which is superior to man because God created and sustains him. According to the philosopher, man comprehends the Truth revealed by Illumination through a spiritual movement. The soul can only know and assess itself if it is illuminated by the genuine Light and guided toward judgmental and evaluative transformation. Distancing itself from transient and sensitive objects, the soul can contemplate the unity of its nature, and the Christ-illuminated intellect can distinguish the hierarchy, the order of beings. As a result, man bows to the Supreme Good's will in order to reach complete happiness.

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[44] The doctrine of illumination is worked out by Augustine in *De Magistro*. According to the philosopher, human reason is illuminated by the Light which comes from the Interior Master, Christ, who will guide it to know the Truth. In *De Magistro*, XI, the Bishop of Hippo says: "In all the things that we understand, we do not consult the voice of one who speaks, which sounds from without, but the truth that presides within us".

According to the Saint, man verifies the Truth, which is the absolute and transcendent divine being that resides within him, in his innermost being. The experience of self-knowledge happens during the *interiorization* process that entails a spiritual ascension in the face of materiality, changeability, and imperfection, as well as the pursuit of spiritual perfection. The soul's self-knowledge results in moral judgments that are truly free in accordance with divine law, which is the foundation of justice. God endows man with free will, and it is He who, through grace, assists man in converting his will.[45]After the original sin, the human creature lacks the ability to restore his being in such a way that his will conforms to divine law. In this view, man's rational will is insufficient to convert the will in a proper way. Augustine's theory is founded on the

[45] Augustine works on the movement of the soul in *On the Potentiality of the Soul.* The Saint reveals the seven degrees of the soul's greatness, which are exhibited in the soul's power over the body, in its own being, and before God, among other manifestations. First, the soul is referred to as a principle of life. Second, it is referred to as a principle of sensibility. Third, it is referred to as a principle of reason. In other words, the first degree refers to the concept of conservation of the body; the second degree refers to the soul as a force that moves the body physically and has an effect on the senses, as described by the Saint in the second degree. The third degree entails the development of creative faculties that allow man to create an ethos. When working with higher degrees, the Saint emphasizes the soul's capacity for self-knowledge as well as its capacity for moral judgment. As a result, the journey to the fourth degree of grandeur of the soul entails the development of self-awareness, which is essential for the comprehension of the true virtues. Self-consciousness allows for the perception of a hierarchy, of a moral order, through which it can make judgments based on the criteria of organized love, and so allows for the creation of a moral order. During this process, the soul becomes aware of the truth of a transcendence that regulates all creation and preserves its own unique state of existence. As soon as the soul recognizes that it has a spiritual component, it begins to yearn for cleansing, which entails growth in virtue and piety, in justice and humility, among other things. In the fifth degree, the soul strives to maintain the purity that it has gained through virtue and piety in order to progress along the road of contemplation of the God-Truth. When in the sixth degree, the soul is striving for its own purification, choosing to know and desire that which is higher in value than itself. The sixth and seventh degrees are concerned with the introduction to the contemplative life and the contemplation of the God-Truth who is God-Love, respectively. The sixth degree is concerned with the contemplation of the God-Truth who is God-Love. The soul therefore attempts to abstain from the longing for sensible things and turns away from the propensity towards material things when it is in search of Truth. On this route, the soul of the virtuous man as imago Dei recognizes itself as being akin to the perfect model, which is a spiritual realization.

contrast between human *will* and human *power,* which is critical for comprehending the heavenly support during man's worldly life. Indeed, inner order is not the sole product of reason.

It is important to note that the Bishop of Hippo emphasizes that man's social life is not less important than his "inner world". Indeed, they are interconnected, but the inner order is a precondition of social order. On behalf of this, the Saint´s examination of social life is based on a transformative relation. Thus, the intersubjective component of social life and the ethics of love become major concerns in the Saint's thought (City of God, Book XIX, 13). In his analysis of social life, Augustine emphasizes the need of living socially with love, as Matthew, 22, states: "Love God above all things and your neighbour as yourself". The philosopher states this axial idea as follows:

> God, our teacher, taught us two main commandments: love for God and love for the neighbour. In them, man found three objects to love - God, himself and his neighbour. He who loves God is not mistaken in loving himself. Therefore, he must help his neighbour to love God, this neighbour whom, according to the commandment, he must love as himself (his wife, his children, his relatives, all the men he can). And he must also want his neighbour to help him if he is in need. Thus, as far as it is in his hand, he will be as every man in peace, which is the well-ordered concord of men. And the order in this peace consists: first, of harming no one, and then of making oneself useful to whom one can (City of God, Book XIX, 14).

This is the part in the reasoning where the author brings up the importance of love for Truth in one's interactions with one's neighbour. Man's passion for the Truth assists him in exercising his freedom and committing himself to the love of his neighbour as well as the development of harmony in social affairs. Furthermore, according to St. Augustine:

> In its pilgrimage, therefore, the Celestial City also makes use of earthly peace, protects and desires the composition of human wills in all that concerns the mortal nature of men, as far as piety and religion permit, it refers this earthly peace to celestial peace, which is the true peace which, at least for the rational being, must be recognized and called by the name of peace, that is to say: the community in perfect order and harmony enjoys God and the mutual company of God. When he arrives there, his life will no longer be mortal, but fully and certainly vital; nor will his body be any longer an animal body, but a spiritual body, without any necessity and all subject to the truth (City of God, Book XIX, 17).

From the extract above, it is relevant to note that the philosopher underlines the reasons for defending peace in earthly life as a good that must be promoted in the perspective of eternal life. Thus, the philosopher highlights the importance of human conscience in relation to one's own salvation. However, the Saint warns that the "peace of Babylon" is fragile, it is not permanent. Furthermore, it is a paradise in the context of terrestrial existence. To put it another way, he recognizes the malleable nature of human judgments and actions and, as a result, challenges the belief in the stability of the dynamics of social life throughout history. He does this because conflicts and tensions are inherent to the human condition, which has been wounded by sin. As far as we know, there is no earthly remedy that can completely eradicate such realities from the human race, such as barbarism, brutality and injustice, to name a few examples. The reasons for promoting peace, according to the author of *The City of God*, must be viewed through the lens of eternal life in order to be fully appreciated. Thus, the just man helps to build society in which "so long as he goes on his pilgrimage in faith, he already has this peace, and it is thanks to this faith that he lives in justice, allocating all of his good deeds to God and his neighbour to the acquisition of this peace, for the life of a city is truly social" (City of God, Book XIX, 17). These words emphasize that, in earthly life, a truly social society is one that is founded on the principles of equity and fairness. When seen from this perspective, justice and peace will be all the more true insofar as they participate in the order of love, despite the fact that they will be limited in earthly existence. So the Augustinian vision of concord in social life, or peace among men, can only be understood in conjunction with wilful self-awareness, true justice, and a hopeful outlook on life. As the philosopher points out, internal order is a necessary condition for social order to exist.

Relationships between inner order and social order, or even between the virtue of justice and happiness, must be viewed in the context of the divine providential arrangement that has given creation a meaningful order (Brachtendorf 2012). To be sure, the Saint states in Book XIX, Chapter 18, that "nothing can evade or escape from the regulations of the Supreme Creator and Lawgiver." Based on his commitment to Christian religion, the philosopher asserts what he believes to be the meaning of human life; in other words, that human beings must direct their will in line with God's will. The social order is thus contingent on the preceding interior order of pilgrim men, which Augustine hopes will result in the attainment of everlasting peace.

The virtuous life in the just society

Humanity's ontological reliance on God, according to the author of The City of God, remains throughout his becoming and defines the purpose of man's trip through history until the end of time. To put it another way, the Saint, as noted by Oliveira e Silva (2012), opens the door to a new perspective of time and space, one that recognizes the dynamic character of man's relationship with God. The future, in this philosophical context, is a source of hope for the just man, according to the philosopher. Man may be able to determine (through reason) which style of virtuous living leads to a happy existence, but this does not necessarily imply that he can achieve it with a simple act of will. Because of this, virtuous living is not solely the result of human effort, but also incorporates divine assistance. For example, Augustine's philosophy differs significantly from that of the Hellenistic and Late Antique schools when it comes to the healing of the vices of the soul since it emphasizes the limitations of man's autonomy when it comes to the complete repair of his existence. According to the Augustinian perspective, such restoration entails not only love for God, but also love for one's neighbour in God, in conformity with the ethical principles of charitable giving and receiving. Because of the ontological tie that exists between the Creator and human beings, the soul is capable of comprehending the ramifications of this relationship. Any deviation of man's will from the highest good ultimately results in man's own freedom being restricted. Only He who created man's free will has the ability to restore it, or, to put it another way, only divine grace has the ability to restore the freedom of human will. In order to carry out God's purpose, divine grace cures the will of concupiscence and brings the human will back together in order to do so. As a result, man's behaviour can be brought into conformity with the order set by God (Gracioso 2010).

Indeed, the soul should be in an intimate relationship with God. Though, in order to participate in the divine glory and be capable of acting according to the parameters of ordered love, that is, in line with the true virtues that pertain to the ontological hierarchy in the cosmos, the soul must be regenerated and purified in the presence of the divine splendour. In this movement of the soul, divine assistance informs and revitalizes the authentic virtue of justice, for God supports the fullness of human beings for those who submit their will to divine rule and so sustain the fullness of human people. The Saint underlines that in the dynamic of the relationship between God and man, the divine order establishes an order of love: love is the essence of God and the foundation of man's vital relationship with God, according to the Saint.

Yet, what does love mean? Love is the giving of being and this giving makes the other (man) be. Therefore, God helps man to *be* with the fullest properties that his being can have (Oliveira e Silva 2012). Nevertheless, man must live in conformity with the will of God. Therefore, from the Augustinian perspective, man's style of life has relevant moral and ethical implications. In fact, among the key aspects of Augustine's understanding of social life, he believes that human community is crossed by moral challenges that threaten the cohesion of social bonds in the course of history. Considering these backgrounds, the human promotion of a just society has the inner order of men as a crucial precondition. According to the Augustinian line of thought, knowledge, as a virtue of the pilgrim man on the route to happiness and a pillar of the will's conversion to achieve internal order, leads to love in an organized fashion within God's hierarchy. With supernatural assistance, man can modify his choices and way of life, so affecting the social order on behalf of God's plan, the cornerstone of justice. Thus, a Christian *ethos* in the promotion of a just society emerges from the reading of *The City of God.* From the point of view of social order, justice and peace prevail when men share the Christian faith and follow the divine law, which is the foundation of moral righteousness and justice.

In other words, as M. T. Clark (2015) points out in his understanding of Augustine's conception of justice, the interior order is a requirement for the existence of justice in the social order. According to the Saint, the objectivity of God's revealed rule, the subjectivity of man, and the interpersonal relationships are articulated in the course of historical development. In order to comprehend the full fulfilment of human being, the philosopher develops an unbreakable relationship between the true being and the true virtues of the human being. Towards this end, he draws attention to an apparent contradiction: pride (vice) debases man, while humility (virtue) elevates him. Indeed, humility is the virtue that causes man to submit to the Creator, and the true virtues rekindle the conversion of the will according to the order of love in order to promote justice and peace in the world today.

So in *The City of God*, the genuine virtue of justice emerges as the cornerstone virtue of the ideal social order, supplanting the false virtue of mercy as the cornerstone virtue of the ideal social order. The virtues of justice and charity are intimately connected from an Augustinian viewpoint, despite the fact that they are integrally linked from that perspective. According to this perspective, generosity animates the virtue of justice. It is therefore inadequate to understand Augustine's in-depth analysis by just analysing justice as a foundational pillar of the Heavenly

City. We must go farther in order to fully understand the Augustinian idea of "social justice," and we must do so in order to fully understand his thought on the link between Truth and Charity, before we can define it.

CHAPTER 4

A PHILOSOPHY OF "SOCIAL JUSTICE" BASED ON CHARITY

It is in the very internal development of *The City of God* that Saint Augustine attributes to the term "*iustitia"* some meanings, as Robert Dodaro states (2014). Among these meanings, some of them can be highlighted:

- Justice is the divine law, and the foundation of justice is God.
- Justice is the right relationship between man and God.
- Justice is the habit of the soul by means of which "each individual is given what is due to him".
- True justice is the virtue of the order of love.
- Justice is the path to peace.
- Justice is the founding virtue of every political-cultural process of the Christian people.

Moreover, in Book XIX of *The City of God*, Augustine's reflections on justice unfold in the relevance of love for the other. In the analysis of social life in the course of history, Augustine underlines the importance of configuring social relations according to the principles of divine justice. In the words of the Saint, if man does not possess inner order, then "there will be no justice in the assembly [...] there will be a lack of recognition of rights [...] to think of a community" (City of God, Book XIX, 21)

Within this philosophical context, there is a clear distinction between the scope of the State and the scope of religion with regard to their role in the promotion of social justice. For the Saint, the State must resist the ever-latent temptation to be the promoter and provider of "happy life".[46] The Bishop of Hippo says that the primary function of the State is both to ensure domestic peace within its territory and to combat external

[46] Regarding the contemporary world, Eric Voegelin (1982) calls attention to the earthly utopias that are based on the *immanentization of the eschaton*.

enemies so that men, in temporal life, can organize their material without domestic conflicts. [47] The Augustinian philosophy of "social justice" is based on a metaphysical approach to ethics, which is underpinned by love for Truth and the urgency of charity. Thus, the relation between man's transcendence and immanence is a constitutive feature of the Augustinian social philosophy that seeks to answer the following questions:

- In the face of men's ultimate end, how should Christian people behave?
- What are the metaphysical foundations of Christian people's conduct?
- What is the role of charity?
- What are the social and political dimensions of charity?
- What is meant by "social justice" when considered Christian social philosophy?
- What kind of "social justice" can be achieved in earthly life?

The ethics of Christian people

In accordance with Book XIX, 19, of *The City of God,* Augustine is concerned about the real and existential problems of men that are pilgrims in temporal life. Thus, in this book, there is a confrontation between time and eternity, or even, there is an appeal to the ordering of temporal goods in the face of eternal life. Therefore, the interpretation of ways of being and acting of Christian people in history emphasizes that habits and customs cannot be contrary to divine precepts. Yet, the Saint is not worried about singular habits or customs, which Varro attributes to the Cynics, and Augustine affirms:

> Of the three types of life, contemplative, active and mixed, each one can choose any one of them for his life, provided that faith is safeguarded, so as to attain eternal rewards; but it is important not to lose sight of what the love for truth obliges us to maintain and what the urgency of charity obliges us to sacrifice. But no one should be so idle that he does not think in his unconcerned state of being useful to his neighbour, nor so busy that he does not seek the contemplation of God. In the contemplative life, it is

[47] Augustine's sharp distinction between ecclesiastical and civil authority suggests the possibility of conflict between them and raises the question of the relation between Church and State. In this regard, in Book V, 24, of *The City of God,* Augustine presents the portrait of Christian princes who, by restoring the unity of the city, could promote the spiritual and temporal well-being of Christian men.

> not empty inactivity that is to be loved, but the search for or discovery of truth, so that each one may progress in it and not refuse to share with others what he has found. But in action, it is not the honours of this life nor power that should be loved, for *all is vanity under the sun,* but work itself, done in the exercise of these honours and power, if it is done correctly and usefully, that is, capable of contributing, according to God's plans, to the salvation of those who are subject to us (City of God, Book XIX, 19).

According to the passage above, the philosopher expresses a definite position on the topic of the genres of life that have been passed down from the Greco-Roman philosophical heritage. With regard to the social dimension of human life, Augustine demonstrates how the Greek philosophical tradition has had an impact on his thinking. However, the Bishop of Hippo suggests a new frame of reference for considering the actions of men and the interconnected nature of social ties throughout historical progression. For the purposes of this discussion, we can agree with Lima Vaz (2001) when he points out that the importance of historical existence lends to the Christian view of man, according to Augustine's perspective, its uniqueness in regard to the ancient world. Towards the end of the fifth century, the Saint gave a new philosophical viewpoint on the relationship between contemplation and action, in which he presented a holistic conception of man as a solid union of body and spirit. It is necessary for a contemplative person to love the search for truth in order to perfect his or her spiritual powers and to share the revelation of Truth with others while living a contemplative life. In his active life, the Saint teaches that man should not seek earthly glory and power, but should instead strive to be able to contribute to the salvation of all people in accordance with God's purposes. So the author of T*he City of God*, in Book XIX, explicitly states that man is a social person who bears responsibility to himself and to his neighbour during his voyage in the hope of eternal life, and that he must bear this responsibility to himself and his neighbour. Consequently, Augustine qualifies the phrase "active life," which, while appearing to preserve the original ancient connotation linked with a life devoted to public-political matters, is defined in a new way by redefining what it means to be a political activist in modern times (City of God, Book XIX, 2). According to the Saint, the Christian life is comprised of two parts: contemplation and action, both of which are subordinated to divine justice. As a result, understanding the interrelationship between active and contemplative modes of living is critical to redefining social justice within the dynamics of political events today.

Augustine identifies the underpinnings of human action.[48] Men demonstrate who they are and disclose their distinct identities in the world through their speech and behaviour that come to the fore in intersubjective connections. Furthermore, men's behaviour in society is connected to a dynamic ontological idea of what it means to be alive and well. When man is on his earthly voyage, he, as the image of God, must reconnect with the Supreme Good in order to live in freedom and the fullness of his human potentiality. Augustine emphasizes that "doing discloses being" as an essential tendency to reveal the agent in conjunction with its actions as a central theme of his writings. A complex series of relationships between the ontological, anthropological, and historical components of Augustinian philosophical thought may be identified as a result of this research. Also worth mentioning is that the Saint makes a close connection between the acts of Christian people, ethical principles and political principles in his writings. A combination of faith and reason, according to the philosopher, is possible only through love. In effect, the Christian idea of love, as developed by Augustine under the influence of Paul, introduces the innovation of the revelation of the one via the other. It is man's conduct in the world, as well as the historical event of social existence, that manifests the philosophical dilemma of the other person. Consequently, the Bishop of Hippo emphasizes the need for social ties established on love in order to live justly, in accordance with the divine rule, in order to live in fairness. As a result, he understands both the transcendent and immanent dimensions of human existence. As a matter of fact, St. Augustine gives a conceptualization of man that is both universal and unique, marked by a singular subjectivity at the same time. As a result, each man is distinguished by his individuality. Considering that singularity is unquestionably an important component of human plurality in the social fabric, each individual has the ability to consciously articulate this differentiation (Arendt, 2013).[49]

The philosophical problem of the other is manifested in man's conduct in social life. In other words, it is man's conduct in the world, as well as the historical event of social existence, that manifests the philosophical dilemma of the other person. Consequently, the Bishop of

[48] In this regard, Arendt (2013) clarifies for us that "To act, in its most general sense, means to take initiative, to initiate (as indicated by the Greek word *archein,* "to begin", "to lead" and, finally, "to govern"), to give movement to something (which is the original meaning of the Latin term *agere*)".

[49] Arendt (1996) calls attention to the importance of Augustine's view of the human condition and highlights that he is the first philosopher to consider man as the starting point of a reflection on the world.

Hippo emphasizes the need of social ties established on love in order to live justly, in accordance with the divine rule, in order to live in fairness. As a result, he understands both the transcendent and immanent dimensions of human existence. As a matter of fact, St. Augustine gives a conceptualization of man that is both universal and unique, marked by a singular subjectivity at the same time.

The behaviour of Christian people, according to Augustine, reflects their place in the course of historical evolution. As a result, from an ethical standpoint, the fullness of being refers to an inner summons to "exteriority" (social activity), which is associated with a spiritual drive towards one's neighbour that is guided by charity. Thus, the Bishop of Hippo highlights the importance of social ties founded on love in order to live in justice, according to the divine law. Therefore, he grasps the transcendent and immanent dimension of human life. Indeed, St. Augustine presents a conceptualization of man in his universality and, at the same time, in his particularity characterized by a singular subjectivity. Thus, each man is characterised by uniqueness. Each man is capable of consciously express this singularity as an important aspect of human social reality (Arendt 2013).

According to Augustine, the actions of Christian people reveal their being in historical evolution. Thus, from the ethical point of view, the fullness of being refers to an inner call to "exteriority" (social life), which is related to a spiritual movement towards the neighbour that is led by charity. Regarding charity and the conduct of Christian people, the Saint raises relevant questions:

- What is charity?
- What is the relation that can be identified between love for Truth and the urgency of Charity?
- What are the outcomes of the love for Truth?
- How should Christian people conduct themselves in their actions?
- What does the urgency of charity compel Christian people to do?

Let us now elaborate a reflection on these questions.

Truth and Charity

Recalling the selected passage of text from Book XIX, 19, let us dwell on some words, in particular these: "but you must not lose sight of what the love for truth obliges us to maintain and what the urgency of charity obliges us to sacrifice". Our reflection will unfold as we consider

three questions raised by Augustine's interpretation of Truth and Charity.

1. What is the relation that can be identified between the love for Truth and the urgency of Charity?

Augustine highlights that, in addition to the love for Truth, based on the Christian faith, people also need to base their actions on charity. Therefore, he highlights not only the subjectivity of men, but also the intersubjective dimension of their actions. Besides faith and reason, a third term emerges, which is love. Indeed, love is indispensable for arriving at the Truth. As Silva Rosa (2007) observes, love is undeniably powerful to bring to light what is unknown.[50] In *The City of God*, Book XIX, the Saint emphasizes that faith can be reconciled with reason and develops a social philosophy based on the metaphysics of love (Jaspers 1995, 162).

Moreover, the Saint establishes an association between Truth and ethics and, thus, the love for Truth has moral implications. Critical of the dominant trait of selfishness in human condition, Augustine affirms that the antidote to this selfish and self-centred orientation of human lives is divine grace. Grace produces, as its main effect, the reorientation of human conduct from *love for oneself* to *love for God* (Doorley 2015, 13). From an axiological point of view, there is no autonomy of ethical values in dealing with the problem of the other, since the rules of ordered love should govern the life of men in a just society according to the divine will. Under the Augustinian perspective, charity in God emerges as a rule of social life based on the love for Truth. He emphasizes that love for one's neighbour reveals the love for God which, as an expression of freedom and of the "right" will, is exteriorly revealed in man's relationship with his neighbour. For the Christian man, the loving relation with his neighbour requires the conversion of human will and the submission of choices to the divine will (Arendt 1996).

Faced with the ultimate end of man, the Saint studies the conceptualization of love for the other (neighbour) under the perspective of the eternal happy life. Thus, the Augustinian ethics is associated to the Absolute and, consequently, the love for God, who created the human beings and transcends them. God is, in other words, "interior to man" and "superior to man". According to the biblical reference, love is the essence of God since God is love (John 3:16). Indeed, Augustine's social Christian

[50] See the Introduction to *Trinity of Trinitate* written by Silva Rosa (2007, XV). Silva Rosa points out that in *Against the Manichaeans* (XXXII, 18), Augustine says: "One does not arrive at truth except through charity".

approach presents the philosophical question about God from a new angle by highlighting man's relation of love with his neighbour.[51] Therefore, the crucial questions are:

> How does Augustine study the problem of the other?
> How to characterize the human encounter with the other?

The philosophical relevance of otherness (neighbourhood) is introduced by Augustine as part of his understanding of Christian faith and ethics of charity.[52] From the point of view of social ethics, the Saint elucidates the problem of the other, of his existence and his recognition. In a radical approach, he emphasizes that love is the pillar of a just society. Within his analysis of social relations, charity is the expression of a transforming relation in which love for the neighbour is based on the love for God (City of God, Book XIX, 19). The neighbour is the one that a man encounters in a specific situation and needs his help and mercy. Indeed, Augustine effectively connects charity and service. Moreover, man must rely on his neighbour. For man, the neighbour becomes the criterion for interpreting God's actual will. Let´s recall how the Bishop of Hippo describes who his neighbour is, in the *Commentary on the Psalms*, 25:

> Let none of you think, brethren, that you must speak the truth to Christians, and the lie to heathens. It is to your neighbour that you speak. Your neighbour is he who, like you, was born of Adam and Eve. We are all near one to another by the condition of our earthly birth; but we are brothers differing in hope of the heavenly inheritance. Consider every man as your neighbour, even before he is a Christian. You do not know what he is before God; you do not know how God, in his foreknowledge, saw that he would be (Commentary on the Psalms, 25, II, 1-3).

According to the passage of text quoted, St. Augustine expresses that the Absolute is phenomenologically revealed in the "other" (neighbour). In effect, in the neighbour, transcendence is revealed. In this philosophical context, the concept of charity manifests the internalisation of the idea of the Absolute, which is explored by Augustine on both the moral and social ethical levels. As Holte (1962) makes clear, in the structure of *caritas*

[51] According to the *Letter to Corinthians* (1:13), the Apostle Paul affirms a new concept of love, *amor caritas*. This Christian concept of love is characterised as a gift, since God loves humanity to the point of sacrifice.
[52] See Lima Vaz (2001) on a historical overview of the philosophical problem of the "other".

there are two forces: one divine and the other human. Thus, in the historical development of man's concrete life, charity is an expression of love based on the Triad formed by God, man, and his neighbour. From the Augustinian perspective, the imperative of the virtue of charity prevails, and there is no place for concupiscence or selfishness. In accordance with this philosophical approach, love is a radical intersubjective philosophical question, since, because of charity, man does not seek his interests. The experience of charity leads to a de-centring of man in relation to himself. Yet, the one who is self-centred inevitably seeks his own interests. The virtue of charity is, on the one hand, a moral virtue and, on the other, the founding principle of intersubjective relations, according to ordered love or true justice.

The virtue of charity, according to Augustine's philosophy in *The City of God*, is defined as the opposite of concupiscent desire. The virtue of charity, which is a gift, is love placed at the service of one's neighbour, and it is self-giving in its essence. God himself exemplifies the virtue of charity, loving our neighbour in and through ourselves and through all of creation. As a result, charity is a goal in and of itself. It walks out to greet the neighbour with no expectation of receiving anything in exchange. Because of God's love-gift revealed through revelation, Arendt (1996) argues that the imperative of charity is the existential imperative of love for humankind, as shown by the Augustinian perspective on charity.

2. What does love for the Truth oblige us to maintain as the conduct of Christian people? [53]

Augustine affirms that the Highest Good is happy life, which is eternal life. Faithful to the Christian faith, the Saint affirms that all things in the universe exist from God, through God and in God. From an ontological point of view, man's ultimate end is Wisdom or the knowledge of the God who is "all in all things". In this context, man's goal is the knowledge of God-Truth, who is also God-Love. This is the highest metaphysical concept, that is to say, this concept lies in the boundaries of the knowable. Taking this into account, it is appropriate to recall that, with regard to the love of God, Augustine asks in *Confessions*:

> What do I love, when I love Thee? I do not love bodily beauty, nor temporal glory, nor the brightness of light, so friendly to these eyes of mine, nor the sweet melodies of songs of all kinds, nor the sweet smell of

[53] This question has arisen in T*he City of God,* Book XIX, 19.

> flowers, perfumes or aromas, nor manna or honey, nor limbs so flexible to the arms of flesh. None of these do I love, when I love my God. And yet, I love a light, a voice, a perfume, a food and an embrace, when I love my God, light, voice, perfume and embrace of the inner man, where a light shines for mine that no space contains, where a voice resounds that time does not snatch away, where a perfume is exhaled that the wind does not scatter, where a food is savoured that longing does not diminish, where a contact is felt that satiety does not undo. This is what I love, when I love my God (Confessions, Book X, 6, 8).

Considering this excerpt of text from *Confessions*, it is worth noting that Augustine expresses the view that man can only love the Truth if he undergoes a radical process of interior transformation, so as to incline his will to the Highest Good. As a result, Augustine places love for God in a perspective that emphasizes interiority. According to the Saint, reason recognises its own limitation and love for Truth moves the soul to desire the fullness of its nature, both ontologically and morally. While the human soul is naturally united to divine reasons, *vera ratio* must be reconnected to eternal reasons through the path of interiority in order to know the essence of Being and the foundation of Truth. In this process, there is no merit for man. The merciful God, Christ, by means of Revelation, presents himself to man. In other words: God comes to meet man (City of God, Book XV, 1). According to the philosopher, man's reconciliation with the Creator is based on true life, true being, which is a truly virtuous life. Thus, love for Truth is manifested in knowledge in virtue. In the divine providential order, God's mercy provides man with the goods and evils he needs for the full realization of his being (City of God, Book XIX, 25 and 15). In other words, man, being endowed with free will and with the help of grace, can conform to the order of love established by God. Such adherence is voluntary in nature and represents a submission of the soul to the Supreme Good.

Man desires happy life in the process of his "reconnection" with God. In other words, man desires God. For such a reconnection to occur, the soul must travel a spiritual path. In other words, to be a virtuous or even just person, man who lives by faith must submit the rational soul to the Divine law. However, in order for this to occur, the divine assistance of grace is required in mortal man's pilgrimage to eternity. Nevertheless, why is love for God the foundation of Christian people's actions? Going back to the selected passage of text from Book XIX, Augustine's perspective shows that, without the love for Truth, man cannot attain the interior order which is the condition for social order. By orienting the soul toward the love for Truth, man departs from the demands of selfish love,

as illustrated in the love for earthly goods, glory, power, and pleasures that motivate his actions. Orienting the soul according to ordained love, the demands of such earthly goods will find their rightful place in the life of Christian people (Doorley 2015). Based on the biblical framework, the Augustinian perspective reminds us that Christian people cannot obey two masters, as Matthew, 6, says.

St. Augustine states that the authenticity of love for God is revealed not only in the conversion of the will, but also in the actions that reveal the being of Christian people in history. Therefore, it is necessary that man's actions towards his neighbour reveal *love for God through charity*. Love for Truth implies living in conformity with the divine law and recognising the order and measure of all things, this is the path to freedom and justice. Loving in conformity with God refers to divine love as the foundation of human love. Thus, Augustine establishes a close link between love for Truth and the restoration of being. The illumination of the intellect and the conversion of the will are involved in the submission of the soul to ordered love.[54] Even with every effort to order his will, man, by his own strength, will not succeed; he will need divine help to love in an ordered way.

3. What does the urgency of charity require us to sacrifice in the actions of the Christian people? [55]

Augustine emphasizes the urgency of charity. In effect, the Christian philosopher reaffirms that charity is a moral imperative because Christ *compels* man *to* charity. In this regard, it is opportune to recall that the Saint stated, in Book XV, 22, of *The City of God*, "[...] that the spouse of Christ, the City of God, sings in the holy Canticle of Canticles: *Order charity in me*". Therefore, in accordance with biblical references, love is the most profound, universal and meaningful human experience. In charity, there is a celebration of divine and human love, since the human creature is the image and likeness of the Creator. Moreover, God is love and human love is a manifestation of God himself, who makes himself present in the person of human beings who love one another according to his will. In other words, the perfection of the divine law is summed up in charity.

Augustine establishes a close link between charity, justice, and the restoration of being in Christ. His analysis of the virtue of charity

[54] References to ordered love and the relation between the virtues and the order of love are found in *The City of God*, Book XV, 22.
[55] This question is arisen in *The City of God*, Book XIX, 19.

draws attention to the image of the neighbour, who is another Christ in earthly life (Dodaro 2014). Thus, in the manifestation of God's love, men must not forget that Christ gave himself to death and resurrection for the salvation of mankind. In emphasizing the urgency of charity, the Saint places Christ as the one true reference point in man's life. In fact, the Christian philosopher warns us not to forget the role of the God-Man in mediating the virtue of justice for the soul. Following the interpretation of Dodaro (2014), it can be said that the Bishop of Hippo considers that living justly in society means loving oneself and one's neighbour in the manner prescribed by divine law and by the example of Christ.[56] By situating true justice and charity within the horizons of social life, as Clark points out, there is no confusion between the virtues (Clark 2015, 8). If justice is "give to each what is his", the "his" should be interpreted on the basis of the demands of the order of love, that is, on the basis of the full realization of Christian charity. Thus, the experience of charity in God subordinates all the other virtues.[57]

If the construction of a just social order involves submission to God's law, "Christians who are just" are authentic signs of charity in Christ who ordains charity in the City of God. [58] Indeed, justice as a virtue will be truer and better the more it is grounded in charity, God's gift. From this perspective, the conversion of the will is an ontological and moral construction in which the inner man makes room for awareness of the self and of the world and conformity to ordered love and can act, grounded in justice and charity, towards the promotion of the social order (Costa 2012).

In his reflections about the duty of charity, Saint Augustine indicates a tension between cupidity and charity, or even a tension between *frui* and *uti,* which manifests the split in man's will. In effect, the criterion for ordered love established by Augustine, distinguishes between *uti* and *frui,* a distinction that is fundamental in Augustinian ethics (Ramos 1984). Finite goods are to be used as a means and not be transformed into objects of fruition and delight, as if they were ends. God is the highest good. Such a

[56] Dodaro (2014) grounded his observation on Romans 13:8: "You owe no one anything but mutual love".

[57] According to Clark, the thought of Saint Augustine extends and develops the thought of Paul, who, in the Letter to the Romans (13:8-10), affirms that charity is the perfection of justice.

[58] In his pastoral life, by calling attention to the needy who are another Christ on earth, Augustine urged to "look" at the Christ in the neighbour. On the pastoral life of the Bishop of Hippo and the expectations of justice of his time, see the analysis of Uhalde (2007).

distinction is crucial to understanding the love for Truth. Fruition (*frui*) is related to the love of something that is loved for its own sake, which is not a means to an end. On the other hand, use (*uti*) means loving something as a means, as a relative good, to achieve an end. Therefore, this distinction between *uti* and *frui* becomes relevant when Augustine deepens his studies on men in social life. Since man is a pilgrim in search of the happy life, his actions should help him to achieve this end. The richness of the philosopher's reflection puts into perspective man's moral struggle to attain the High Good, that is to say, the conflicts between cupidity and charity. In other words, the split of will drives man towards two loves: cupidity and charity. In turn, these loves condition interpersonal relations in social life: the two loves condition opposite ways of life in the two cities.

Considering the Augustinian philosophical approach, cupidity leads one to seek happiness in bodily sensations and, therefore, shapes intersubjective relations in accordance with love for oneself or egoism. Charity, founded on love for God and on the love in God for one's neighbour, leads man to seek happiness according to the will of the creator. While cupidity is at the origin of original sin, the return to God will be a movement of charity (Gracioso 2010). Virtuous knowledge leads man to direct his existence according to the order of love, that is, to justice. Thus, one cannot understand Augustinian ethics outside the perspective of love. Men´s desires towards their objects of love reveal their being through what kind of goods they love (City of God, Book XIX, 25 and 28). There are beings that are the object of *frui* (fruition, enjoyment) and there are beings that are the object of *uti* (object of use). As Gracioso (2010) points out, the understanding of this difference is crucial to placing oneself in the *ordained dilectio* (order of love) so as to realize that *caritas* (*charity*) is the axial principle of social life.

From the point of view of the Augustinian ethics, charity is the concept that articulates, in man, transcendence and the awareness of himself and of other human beings. Therefore, immanence and transcendence are inseparable concepts that should be articulated in the understanding of social life. The contingent and the immutable should be interwoven in the apprehension of the meaning of life and of man's ways of living. Therefore, the Saint presents a totalizing conception of man, a substantial union of body and soul, which unfolds in his reflection on transcendence and alterity. As a pilgrim, man's "reconnection" with God is an experience founded on love for God, justice and charity.

Charity and politics in a just society: power and service

Taking into account the decisive role of justice in the existence of the Roman republic to its ultimate consequences, Augustine, in Book XIX, 21 of *The City of God,* asks whether there ever was a Roman republic, since it was never identified with the "company of the people" and there was no law based on just rules. The philosopher unmasks what was hidden beneath the appearances of the conduct of the noble Roman ancestors and transforms the vision that the Romans themselves had of their past (Brown 2006). If justice is the virtue that gives to each one what belongs to him, Augustine asks:

> What then is the justice of man who takes man himself from the true God and subjects him to unclean demons? Is this to give to each what belongs to him? Is he unjust who takes property from the one who bought it and gives it to the one who has no right to it; and is he just who subtracts himself from the authority of God, by whom he was created, and submits himself to evil spirits? (City of God, Book XIX, 21)

The Saint starts with the definition of "justice" that is identified with the norms that govern civil life, with the law or the *jus*. In this sense, the Augustinian conception of "justice" involves an ethical questioning that is prior to any juridical order. In fact, Augustinian ethics is a questioner of social ordinances. While changing the terms of the discussion about justice, he also modifies the definition of "people". Contrary to the position defended by Scipio in Cicero's The *Republic,*[59]Augustine argues that the existence of a system of rules or laws is not sufficient to speak of a people or a republic. In the words of the Saint: "A people is the union of a multitude of rational beings associated by the agreed participation in the good things they love" (City of God, Book XIX, 24). Thus, Augustine relates each people to the object of his love and gives the definition of people a moral connotation. Furthermore, this change in the definition of "people" is relevant for understanding why the Bishop of Hippo presents a philosophical political approach, that is, a reflection on the foundations of the social coexistence among men, in which love for God becomes the principle that underlies interpersonal relations in society. Thus, in the

[59] According to Barros (2007, 46), in *The Republic*, Cicero states his jus naturalist conviction in civil law and criticizes the conventionalist thesis according to which there is no law founded on natural law and men just by nature. According to the conventionalists, law and justice are based on changing opinions that vary throughout history.

attempt to achieve justice in history, Augustine considers that the power of God´s law, which governs the creation and sustains man's pilgrimage, is the founding principle of justice in temporal life (Curbelié 2004).

Taking into consideration the opposition between the two cities in history, let us now reflect further on the meaning that the relation between the Augustinian conception of justice and social ethics in *The City of God* acquires. Let us recall Augustine's words:

> [...] just as the just man alone lives by faith, so a whole community and a people of the just live by the faith which is practised out of love - by a love by which man loves God as he ought to be loved and his neighbour as himself,
> - When this justice is lacking, there is certainly no community of men united by the adoption by common consent of a law and of a communion of interests,
> - When this is missing, if this definition of people is true, what is certain is that there are no people, and therefore no State (res *publica*), because there is no enterprise of the people (*res populi*) where there are not even people (City of God, Book XIX, 23).

In his reasoning, the philosopher presents some relevant ideas which are interwoven with a succession of implications. In the first place, a people is "the union of a multitude of rational beings associated for the sake of sharing in the goods they love" (City of God, Book XIX, 24). By emphasizing the relevance of public space, the Saint states that the people:

> Whatever it is that it loves, if it is a union of a multitude, not of animals but of rational creatures, by their agreed participation in the goods they love, it is not unreasonable that it should be called a people - a people so much the better the more it agrees in the better things, and so much the worse the more its agreement is in the worse things. According to this definition, which is ours, the *Roman people* are people and their enterprise is undoubtedly a public enterprise, a *republic* (*res publica*). But what, in the early times or in those that followed, did this people love, and because of what customs did they arrive at the most cruel sedition and thence at civil and social wars, and thus break and corrupt that concord which, in a way, is the health of a people - and history tells us. We have already quoted many events from it in the preceding books. Therefore I will not say either that this is not a *people, or* that its enterprise is not a people, or that its enterprise is not public, a *republic* (*state*) so long as the union of a multitude of rational beings associated by the concordant participation of the goods they love endures (City of God, Book XIX, 24).

In accordance with the quotation above, the author defines people as a multitude of rational beings united by the same object of love. Additionally, he affirms that the existence of people is a precondition for political life existence. In effect, Augustine had rejected Cicero's thesis that Roman political institutions were based on laws created by men. In this context, the Christian people are those who are united by the communion of faith and the object of love. In other words, love for God is the main reference for Christian people. On the other hand, from the Augustinian perspective, the just order of society becomes the central duty of politics. It is possible to affirm that the concept of "justice" is, on the one hand, a moral virtue. Thus, justice is the principle that governs the interiority of man in the search for perfection according to the law of God the Creator. On the other hand, justice is the principle that defines the rules of conduct of human beings "who live by the faith which is practised out of love" in social relations. Therefore, Augustine not only establishes a connection between the virtue of justice and the happy life, but also defends a conception of justice as a true virtue that expresses the love "by which man loves God as he ought to be loved and his neighbour as himself". By defining true justice as the empire of God's will over men's choices and, concurrently, as the empire of the soul over each man's body, the foundation for a just social order is laid on interiority, on man's conversion process, which involves the pursuit of a just measure of things in earthly life. When justice is considered in conjunction with the concept of the "order of love," the hierarchy of God-created goods as objects of love and desire becomes clear. Thus, the volitional aspect of love is reconciled with the created order of nature. The free gift of grace assists in the conversion of the will and the restoration of the soul which recognizes its sinful condition and inferiority before the Supreme Good.[60] In the relationship with one's neighbour, the virtue of charity is inseparable from the true virtue of justice. Here it is clear that Augustine considers the e relevance of *amor caritas* in promoting a just society,

The philosopher concludes that there are politics only where there is true justice. By emphasizing true justice as the foundation of the people and of all political institutions, morality emerges as a constitutive principle of political life in Augustine's thought. Following the classical interpretation of Fortin (2004), it can be noted that the central axis of the Saint's political doctrine is his teaching with respect to virtue. As a result, the Bishop of Hippo's reflections on justice establish a clear distinction between morality

[60] For a reflection on the relation between grace and humility in Augustine, see Arendt (1996).

and law, and he emphasizes the difficulty for men, in earthly life, of being just and building political institutions founded on justice, which is divine law. The Saint states:

> [...] generally the city of the wicked lacks true justice, because it does not obey God who commands it to offer sacrifices only to Him. Consequently, in it the soul rightly and faithfully imposes itself on the body, and reason rightly and faithfully imposes itself on vices (City of God, Book XIX, 24).

While stressing the dynamic character of the ontological relation between God and man in history, Augustine says that man must face moral challenges to live in conformity with divine justice.[61] In other words, the central idea the philosopher poses is: the Christian man must submit reason and the strength of the appetites of the soul to the order of love, so as to desire earthly goods properly and be able to live in temporal peace with piety and charity, as is highlighted in *The City of God,* Book XIX, 26. Moreover, the Saint states that in temporal life, as long as vices dominate, there is no complete peace:

> [...] for the vices that resist must be fought in dangerous combats, and those that are conquered, from them one does not triumph in a secure tranquillity, but must keep them under vigilant control. In the midst of all these temptations, of which the Divine Word speaks concisely: *Is not human life on earth a temptation?* Who will presume to live without having the need to say to God: *Forgive us our debts,* but the infatuated man? Truly he is not great, but he is puffed up, the intumescent, who in his righteousness resists He who dispenses his grace to the humble. Therefore, it is written: *God resists the proud, but to the humble he bestows his grace*. Here on earth, then, justice for each one is the rule of God over the man who obeys, of the soul over the body, of reason over vice, even if it rebels, either by subjecting it or resisting it; it is also asking God for the grace of merit, the forgiveness of sins, and giving thanks for the benefits received (City of God, Book XIX, 27).

Considering the passage of text above, it can be concluded that Augustine identifies that a moral conflict arises at each step taken by a Christian man in Earthly life. Indeed, there is a human hesitation at the crossroads of earthly life.[62] From the ontological perspective, man´s answer to God's

[61] In this regard, Arendt (1996) clarifies that man is born first for the world. Yet, man must subsequently be born for God in order to attain the full realization of his being.

[62] Lima Vaz (2001) analysed the relation between Christianity and historical consciousness.

call demands an awareness of himself, his neighbour and the use of temporal goods. With the help of grace he is lead to the conversion of will and the configuration of his style of life according to true justice. Thus, the moral responsibility of the Christian man is founded on man's "right" relationship with God: the just man subordinates his will to the will of God. By the infusion of grace throughout his temporal life, the man of humble heart, who prays and "whose faith is put into practice by love", promotes a just social order (City of God, Book XIX, 27).

Following Piret (1991, 317), we can ask: what relation does the Bishop of Hippo establish between politics and the heavenly city? Beyond understanding man's conflicts and the moral difficulties in promoting temporal peace, the opposition and tensions in the coexistence between the two cities require an eschatological reading: the Heavenly City directs itself towards the good and will achieve eternal salvation; the Earthly City subordinates happy life to earthly goods, and is condemned to hell.[63] Yet, man can only be cured of these vices if, helped by grace, he acts in conformity with God's will. As pilgrims, Christian men must prepare themselves in earthly life for the final judgment.[64] In hope, as St. Paul points out, men are "blessed" in this earthly life where there is as yet neither peace nor complete happiness (City of God, Book XIX, 27).

Finally, it can be stated that justice, morality, ethics, and politics are inseparable in Augustine's thought. The Bishop of Hippo rejects the dissociation between morality and politics in temporal life because such a separation renders ineffective human actions, which seek to promote justice. All these ideas considered, it is worth remembering that Pope Benedict XVI (2005) affirms that politics is more than a simple technique for defining public order, since its origin and objective are precisely justice and this has an ethical nature.

Truth, "social justice" and happiness

Considering this background, the analysis of the foundations of the Augustinian conception of "social justice" sought to highlight the relevance of the ontological, anthropological, ethical, and moral foundations in the context of Christian philosophy. Once the frontiers of Christian philosophy have been delineated, in which the metaphysical problems par

[63] In *The City of God*, Book XIX, 28, Augustine emphasizes that for wicked people, the second death will be reserved.

[64] Brown (2006, 400) says that the Christian people are pilgrims or foreign residents.

excellence are God and the soul, Augustine adopts as his point of departure man inserted into social and political life. The philosopher does not understand social life as mere immanence and suggests a concept of "social justice" that is rooted in the Absolute. In the perspective of the happy life, "social justice" is a relative good, in the hope of a happy life.

In effect, the Saint establishes a new relation between society and justice, as well as the identity of the Christian people, who must adhere to the eternal law as the moral and universal rule to which the will of man should be converted. The philosophical problem posed by this author is the relation between the contingent and the transcendent, between man and God (Guy 1961, 65). On the one hand, true justice is transcendent, immutable. On the other hand, true justice is pilgrim and inhabits the soul of a man who seeks and loves Truth. Therefore, in historical evolution, the apprehension of true justice is inserted into the tensions between immanence and transcendence.

When speaking of justice as a virtue that inhabits the soul of a man, which, when practised, constitutes a good that produces joy and peace, or concord in society, it is possible to affirm that true justice is transcendent and immutable. Nevertheless, true justice is also a pilgrim virtue, which inhabits the soul of a man who seeks, for love of God, higher levels of perfection. For Augustine, in fact, a just man loves God and follows God´s will. However, in earthly life, even if man lives according to the order of love and experiences joy and peace, he is still not fully happy. In his words

> [...] he who possesses this life in such a manner to refer its use to Him whom he loves with a greater love and for whom he hopes with a firmer hope, it is not without reason that he can already call himself happy, more by that hope than by this reality. For this reality without that hope is a false beatitude and a great misery: it does not offer true happiness to the soul, because true wisdom is not that which is in the goods here, which the soul chooses with prudence, achieves with fortitude, uses with temperance and distributes with justice, and does not direct its intention towards the supreme good in which God will be everything to everyone in a certain eternity and in perfect peace (City of God, Book XIX, 20).

From the Augustinian perspective, it can be concluded that happiness in earthly life is based on hope. In his view, hope vivifies the true virtues. Thus, the true virtues - prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance - are inseparable from hope. Thus, true fortitude is the virtue which endures all things easily for love for God; true justice is the virtue which subordinates man's will to God; true temperance is the virtue by which man hopes with tranquillity for love for God; true prudence is the virtue of discernment in conformity with ordered love.

As a result of ordered love, the social order, founded on charity, prevails. By emphasizing the urgency of charity, Augustine underlines the primacy of the ethics of love. In other words, the soul informs and vivifies the *caritas* that generates justice and peace, the peaceful coexistence among men and social harmony. The relationship with one's neighbour can be understood as a path to the relation with God who is the foundation of justice (Arendt 1996). Love for God is affirmed in the relation between men and their neighbours, in which freedom is manifested as the expression of the right will. Therefore, the Saint highlights the individual responsibility in building a just society. Thus, he privileges a humanism in which human choices oriented towards building a just society express the order of love. Therefore, the concept of a just society can be interpreted in the scope of human coexistence, in the sense of privileging the foundations of Christian people's actions: love for the Truth and the urgency of charity.

The Bishop of Hippo establishes an intimate connection between the integral concept of the human person and the concept of "social justice". The philosopher poses two central problems, that of the meaning of man's existence and that of the ethical orientation of actions, and recognizes the complexity of the experience of social life in history. Augustine affirms the social nature of man in the course of history, and deeply studied the moral conflicts and the mutability of the institutions that characterise the human condition. Insofar as it reflects on the moral problem in intersubjective relations, it considers Christian metaphysics as the foundation of social ethics. In fact, Augustinian metaphysics has ethical and political implications. Love for Truth generates a conception of "social justice" that privileges, in the understanding of the human person, a universal singularity against established abstractions, juridical or economic. In this sense, Augustine's actuality refers back to the debate on the need for universal principles for ethical choices that make possible the permanence and cohesion of social bonds.

The Saint does not believe that the social order is an exclusively human conquest. Such an Augustinian conception is inseparable from the mystery of the God-Man, from the mediation and grace of Christ, who teaches us to follow our nature as *imago Dei*. His philosophical interpretation has a teleological and eschatological character that affirms a new foundation of power and justice in social life.

As noted before, the philosopher emphasizes that man does not arrive at the order of love through reason alone. In fact, reason alone is insufficient to attain the Highest Good, that is to say, happy life. Yet, Truth is accessible to all and not reserved only for the wise, according to

Guy (1961, 47).

Within this philosophical context, charity is the virtue that dwells in man's soul, and when it is practised, it emerges as a Christian ethical and political principle by guiding men in social life in accordance with ordered love, that is, the true virtue of justice (Arendt 1996). In the Augustinian perspective, the process of conversion of the Christian man is a condition for "social justice". Love for the neighbour and true justice cannot be separated because love for the neighbour implies the recognition of the dignity of man as *imago Dei*. Indeed, within the dynamic of social relations, the true virtue of justice is founded on the reciprocal recognition of the dignity of the human person. In other words, from an Augustinian perspective, the concept of "social justice" is critical of any approach to solve social challenges, because such an approach should be compatible with the Christian style of life.

Thus, the Augustinian conception of "social justice" points to a specific relationship between man and power and his neighbour in the hope of a happy life. From the reading of *The City of God* emerges a vision of society as a living organism, as a fabric of inter-subjective relations in historical evolution. Sharply critical of moral evil, the fruit of the divided will, Saint Augustine draws attention to the importance of recognising otherness and of living the charity that goes out to one's neighbour. Thus, in the life of the Christian people, love for Truth is articulated with the experience of love as a transforming relation in the attempt to promote "social justice".

CHAPTER 5

AUGUSTINE'S ETHICS IN DIALOGUE WITH POLITICAL THINKERS

To develop a fruitful dialogue between Augustine and other political philosophers it is important to highlight the axial role of the relation between ethics of general ends and politics. Within the Christian tradition, Augustine presents in Book II of *The City of God*, an analysis about the relation between justice and politics. The Bishop of Hippo radically criticises the idea that a just man is the one who obeys the laws of the state. Indeed, in *The City of God*, Augustine rejects the reference to the "just" present in classical "jus naturalist" tradition, which considered natural reason as the cornerstone of justice, law and politics. He underlines that true justice only exists "in that Republic, whose founder and governor is Christ". In other words, true justice exists in the City of God, which is an "enterprise of the people" since it expresses the communion of interests of men based on love for God (City of God, Book II, 21).

From a moral perspective, St. Augustine highlights the importance of man's individual responsibility in promoting justice and peace in social life. The Bishop of Hippo emphasizes that man's actual, real, historical life is not an escape into the "inner world". In his approach to social life, the Saint demonstrates the importance of living socially in the light of the one and only commandment: "Love God above all things and your neighbour as yourself". Love for God (Truth) helps man to exercise freedom and to commit himself to love his neighbour in order to promote concord and peace in social life.

Thus, the connection between inner order and social order must be apprehended within the divine providential arrangement which has conferred on creation an order endowed with meaning (Madi 2015). In the Augustinian perspective, the knowledge in virtue of the pilgrim man, in his path to happy life, leads to love in an ordered manner within the hierarchy created by God. With divine help, man can transform his choices and his style of life, and, thus, produce transformations in the social order. Therefore, the relevance of the Christian *ethos* in the promotion of a just

society arises from the reading of *The City of God.* In Book XIX, 19, the Saint establishes an intimate association between the actions of Christian people, ethics and politics. His interpretation notes the importance of social bonds founded on love in order to live in a just society, according to divine law. From the ethical point of view, the fullness of being of man, whose nature is fallen, refers to a call to "exteriority", that reveals itself in a relationship with the neighbour based on charity.

Critical of the dominant trait of selfishness in the human condition, Augustine points out that the antidote to this selfish orientation is the reorientation of *love for oneself* to *love for God.* In his argument, St. Augustine indicates a tension between selfish desires and charity. The passions, for example, lead one to seek happiness in bodily sensations and thus shape intersubjective relations in accordance with selfishness. Charity, however, leads man to direct his existence in earthly life according to the order of love, that is, to justice (City of God, Book XIX, 25 and 28). Augustine associates the order of love with ethics, and, thus, love for God has moral implications. From the axiological point of view, there is no autonomy of ethical values in intersubjective relations. Indeed, the philosopher identifies the rules of ordered love as the rules that should govern men's lives in a just society, that is, in which men submit their will to the divine will.

From the Augustinian perspective, where the imperative of the virtue of charity prevails, there is no place for concupiscence or selfishness. If the construction of a just social order involves submission to God's law, "Christians who are just" are authentic signs of charity in Christ. Indeed, justice as a moral virtue will be truer and better the more it is rooted in charity, God's gift. From this perspective, the conversion of the will is an ontological and moral construction in which the inner man makes room for awareness of himself and of the world and conformity to ordered love. Therefore, man can act virtuously towards the promotion of social order when grounded in the virtues of justice and charity.

The analysis of the underpinnings of politics induces Augustine to rethink the definition of "people". Contrary to the position defended by Scipio in Cicero's *The Republic*, the Saint argues that it is not enough to think of the existence of a system of rules or laws to speak of a people or a republic. In his words: "A people is the union of a multitude of rational beings associated for the purpose of sharing in the goods they love" (City of God, Book XIX, 24). Indeed, Augustine gives to the definition of people a moral connotation and affirms that the existence of people is the precondition for the existence of politics. Moreover, Christian people are united by the communion of faith and their object of love. In other words,

love for God is their reference. By emphasizing true justice as the cornerstone of all political institutions, Christian morality is defined as the cornerstone of true political life. Thus, the Saint condemns the dissociation between morality and politics in temporal life. Indeed, Augustine raises awareness of the extent and limitations of governments. From his point of view, the main function of governments is to protect society against external enemies and thus to enable men to organize their conditions of material existence with peace. However, governments must resist the temptation both to promote and to provide a "happy life" in the "earthly city".

After Augustine´s life, the debate about the relation between ethics and politics in modern philosophical thought has been the source of a variety of interpretations, as we will briefly present in the following sections.

Politics, Ethics and Morality by Machiavelli

The debate about the relation between ethics and politics in Machiavelli's thought is fundamentally based on questions concerning the moral implications of Machiavellian naturalism and realism in the treatment of politics. According to the analysis of Bignotto (1992), this debate has basically two strands. In a first strand, interpreters claim that Machiavelli inaugurated the absolute independence of politics in relation to ethics. For example, Croce (1952, 159) affirms that the Florentine promotes the autonomy of politics insofar as political action is not subordinated to universal moral precepts defined *a priori*, such as the Christian moral virtues. Croce understands that the autonomy of politics can transform it into a utilitarian instrument without commitments to ethical values. In a second strand, the interpreters strive to show that Machiavelli, by describing the functioning of the reality of politics, proclaims new values for the ethical-political universe. In this sense, the interpretations of Berlin (2002) and Bignotto (1992) reject the separation between ethics and politics in Machiavelli. For Berlin, the Florentine presents a differentiation between two distinct groups of values, one Christian and the other pagan, which refer to two opposing moralities. Moreover, it is worth remembering that, for Bignotto, Machiavelli opposes two ways of conceiving ethics: a Christian one, founded on charity and conscience, and an ancient one, founded on respect for the public good and laws. According to this interpreter, in Machiavelli's view, ethics and politics are inseparable faces of the same reality. In his perspective, Machiavelli's critique is not directed at the prudent man of Aristotle, as

the measure of ethical-political behaviour, but at the Christian man, who practices moral virtues.

As the interpretation of Goyard-Fabre (2002, 16) clarifies, the redefinition of the terms of the relation between ethics and politics in Machiavelli develops in an historical framework characterised by the securalisation of society, that is to say, by the shift of a society from religious values and institutions toward non-religious values and secular institutions. From a naturalistic and realist view of politics, the Florentine is critical of the tradition of Christian metaphysical and theological thought. He rejects the philosophy of "jus naturalism", the divine nature of power, and every transcendental foundation of the organisation of political life (Strauss 2014, 216).

Therefore, the aim of this section is to elaborate a reflection on ethics and politics in Machiavelli. Regarding the religious phenomenon and its consequences on political practice, Machiavelli´s *Discourses* reveal the tension between public good and particular interests as a key question to understand ethics and politics in his thought.[65] Taking into account the *Discourses*, the "religious phenomenon" and its political consequences are studied by Machiavelli.[66] In Book I, 11, the Florentine analyses aspects of the religion of the Romans that can be considered as obstacles to the constitution of a virtuous republic. He recalls, for example, that in the period of Numa Pompilius, successor of Romulus, many citizens esteemed the power of God more than the laws of men. At this respect, Machiavelli says that religion "served to command the armies and to infuse the plebs with spirit, to keep men good and make kings ashamed".[67] Regarding this example, the Florentine notes that religion was used as a justification to create new ordinances since Numa Pompilius "suspected that his authority was not enough" (Discourses, I, 11). In this case, the moral precepts of the religion of the Roman people, by highlighting Numa's goodness and prudence, induced people to follow all his deliberations.

According to Machiavelli, the use of religion for political purposes can incite abuses of power. In Book I, 13, of the *Discourses*, the Italian thinker takes examples reported by Titus Livius to shed light on his analysis of the consequences of the religious behaviour of people for political life. He recalls situations in Roman history in which the faith in gods was used for political purposes: (i) when the election of tribunes had

[65] For a biography, see Prezzolini (1965).

[66] The expression religious phenomenon is taken from the analysis of Landi (2017), chapters XV and XVI.

[67] Cf. Maquiavel, *Discourses on the first decade of Tito Lívio.* Book, I, 11, p. 50. The next references to this work will be indicated as *Discourses*.

been restricted to the class of nobles by claiming the intention to placate the action of the gods, the frightened plebs elected the nobles as tribunes; (ii) at the time of the military siege established by the Romans on Veii, a location near to Rome, the soldiers endured fatigue and hardship in the name of Apollo and other prophecies of the gods (Discourses, I, 13).

Machiavelli rejected the idea of a political system based on religious traditions. Moreover, he condemned the use of faith and fear as instruments to obtain particular political advantages. In political life, he also condemned the human negligence in law-making.

According to Landi (2017), Machiavelli identifies in the Christian religious phenomenon aspects concerning collective imagination and political subordination. In the light of this, it is important to recall the political consequences of the Christian education according to Machiavelli. In Book II, 2, of the *Discourses*, Machiavelli analyses the consequences of the "diversity that there is between our education and the ancient one, founded on the diversity that there is between our religion and the ancient one". He points out that the Christian´s style of life constitutes an obstacle to guiding men to freedom. While Christian ethics, as demonstrated by St. Augustine, states that Christian men must prepare themselves in earthly life as pilgrims for the final judgment, the Italian thinker states:

> For our religion, by showing us the truth and the true way, leads us to esteem worldly honours less, which is why the Gentiles, who esteemed them highly and saw in them the highest good, were fierce in their actions. Our religion has glorified men more humble and contemplative than active men. Moreover, it sees humility as the highest good, in abjection and contempt for human things; while for the other religion the good is in greatness of mind, in bodily strength, and in all other things capable of making men strong (Discourses, II, 2).

In this excerpt from the *Discourses*, Machiavelli states a confrontation between the ancient and the modern world in order to identify the relations between ways of life, politics and freedom. From his perspective, the transformation of the style of life after the spread of the Christian religion stemmed from the moral value system associated with education.

Critical of the consequences of Christian morality for political life, the thinker understands that the existence of strong men is not the result of the Christian practice of humility to bear offences and to avoid revenge in worldly life. In his analysis, the Christian man's hope for the Highest Good and Paradise favours the abuse of power in politics. Moreover, he states that Christian ethics is incapable of founding a free society because the love (and fear) for God makes the Christian man

fragile in the face of the ambition that characterises the immutable human nature. In other words, the Christian religion contributes to the fragility of political bonds (Landi 2017, 274). As Landi explains, such fragility is linked to an individual and collective imagination that influences one's style of life, behaviour, and political relations.[68] Considering this background, it can be said that Machiavelli was undoubtedly a strong critic of Christianity. The Florentine rejects the foundations of the Christian ethics, that is to say, he rejects the idea that the "inner order" of men is a condition for the "social order". Otherwise, he defended good laws and manners as the basis of a secular institutional order. Thus, a radical difference between his thought and Christian social philosophy ideas can be identified.

Furthermore, Machiavelli believes that political life is not tied to the 'inner order' of men but to a set of 'ordinances'.[69] Machiavelli affirms that in the absence of the fear of God, it becomes necessary to base political institutions on good laws and manners (Discourses, I, 18). In his view, it is not enough for a prince to be prudent while he lives to ensure the maintenance of political order. Otherwise, the maintenance of political order depends a set of institutions created by the legislator. In his words:

> The salvation of a republic or a kingdom, therefore, does not lie in having a prince who governs prudently while he lives, but in having one who orders everything in such a manner that, dead as he is, everything remains (Discourses, I, 11).

As a matter of fact, Machiavelli's thought reinforces the importance of the concept of "ordination" in the political sense which indicates a set of institutions created by the legislator. In this respect, Landi (2017) points out that his realism leads to the identification of the mechanisms of power and its practices as the axis of an institutional conception of politics. In regard to the role of institutions in politics, Machiavelli shows, in the *Discourses*, I, 58, that the defence of the common good and of freedom at the expense of personal glory is a goal to be imitated.

For the Italian thinker, the ambition of men, always present in them, is a passion linked to avarice and greed that drive their actions. Although ambition is a human passion, the Florentine often associates it with the actions of the "Great Ones".[70] Moreover, Machiavelli's considerations about the "humour" of people and the "Great Ones" are relevant to deepen

[68] Ibidem, p. 275.
[69] Cf. Glossary, *Discourses.*
[70] Cf. Glossary, *Discourses*, p. 457.

his argument on freedom (Discourses, I, 2-6). Regarding social life in the city-state, the notion of "humour" becomes a category of analysis to apprehend the long-running conflicts within the political body between particular and general interests (Landi 2017, 280-83). Indeed, Machiavelli understood that these conflicts should be institutionalised so that men's political actions could avoid the prevalence of particular interests.

In accordance with Machiavelli, a free life establishes a "habit" in people who, over time, fight with greater persistence to maintain such freedom, both in domestic and foreign dimensions. Such freedom has a utility, which is "that each one may enjoy freely and without fear of the things he has" (Discourses, I, 16). To the Florentine, the defence of freedom in political life requires good ordinances, good laws and good customs: "Because, just as good customs need laws to be maintained, so laws, to be observed, need good customs" (Discourses, I, 18). If good "habits" favour the republican *ethos*, the Italian thinker notes that when habits lose their ability to mirror the spirit of laws, corruption threatens the freedom in political life. In the face of a corrupt political body, Machiavelli warns that laws are incapable of inhibiting extraordinary methods, such as violence and arms (Discourses, I, 18).

In short, Machiavelli was sceptical about the possibility of the recovery of a society that has become totally corrupted. As for the possible consequences of this scenario, Machiavelli states that in a corrupt city it is very difficult to "maintain a free state, or, if it does not exist, to create one" (Discourses, I, 18). In those cases in which the tension between public good and private interests is heightened, the spread of corruption establishes the boundaries of the political realm.

In rejecting the moral values of the Christian man, Machiavelli suggests the foundations of a new political philosophy in which the "ought to be" is replaced by the "effective truth of things" (Goyard-Fabre 2002, 61), Machiavelli warns that governments can use, if necessary, extraordinary methods. As a matter of fact, he emphasises that men act by necessity or by choice according to the occasion. Yet, he does not advocate the use of violence in a blind way. At the same time, the Italian thinker was a defender of the public good. From his perspective, only the triumph of the public good over particular interests can avoid the rupture of ethical behaviour in political life, both in the present and in the future.

Considering the internal dialectics of Machiavellian thought, Valverde (2012) formulates the following question:

> *Here is the question*: how can we overcome the supposed smallness and presumed evil of human nature, captive to minor desires and appetites, in

> the face of the greatness of effective and lasting political action aimed at the public good? (Valverde 2012, 59)

Machiavelli introduced a political morality in humanist rhetoric, with emphasis on the appeal to freedom and the condemnation of tyranny (Landi 2017, 292). According to the Florentine, it is up to men to build a political organisation aimed at the public good and freedom in the 'Earthly City'. Unlike St. Augustine, Machiavelli does not condemn the dissociation between morality and politics in temporal life. Objecting to the teachings of the Christian tradition, the Florentine affirms the supremacy of purely political virtues (Strauss 2014). Beyond political conflicts, the *virtue* of rulers can be understood as the ability to read the signs of the times and catch the occasion - the complex set of circumstances for a possible action in an imperfect and uncertain reality (Valverde 2012, 59).

Ethics and collective human existence by Hanna Arendt

Machiavelli´s rejection of metaphysical and theological idealism opens up the discussion around the secular and historical roots of power relations. From the 17th century onwards, Arendt highlights the main theoretical basis of political society and rationality in politics in Western political philosophy which has been built on three pillars:

- A political society is the only reasonable remedy for the insecurity, fear, and threat of violence that individuals expect in its absence.
- Once established, a political society must expect to face competition and maybe violence from other societies, forces, and even domestic groups, and must therefore have the resources to deal with this insecure and permanent situation.
- In order to deal adequately with competition, violence and other political necessities, political societies must cultivate the unity of its members.

Additionally, modern conceptions of individual safety and political society's overall security include considerations such as justice and material well-being, as well as the establishment of institutions that promote ideas of liberty and equality. As in the democratic tradition, these considerations, as well as the limits and accountability of the state's power, are consistent with modern conceptions of individual safety and political society's overall security. Political society is constructed on the

priority of individual and societal security, according to the contributions of Hegel and Mill, as well as those of Rousseau and Kant, after it has been formed. Even today, the importance placed on justice is related to the security of citizens and the preservation of their own existence. Arendt's views on ancient and modern political philosophy have been extremely influential in reconsidering the linkages between truth and human life in a political society, especially when taken into account in this philosophical context. In the eyes of both ancient political philosophy and contemporary thought, the very sort of human existence that political life provided was one in which truth did not play a prominent part. Actually, fear and intimidation have been the major vehicles for the spread of falsehoods and violence in governing rules in the name of the political community's supposed security for quite some time now.

Taking into account the contributions of Aristotle, Arendt highlights the importance of the intermediate basis of collective human existence. Aristotle distinguished three modes of life (*bioi*) that men could freely choose: the life of enjoyment of the pleasures of the body; the life dedicated to the affairs of the *polis* and the life of the philosopher, dedicated to research and contemplation.[71] In the Greek context, with the emergence of the city-state and the public domain that had destroyed the units organised on the basis of kinship, men as *bios politikos,* whose constitution was marked by action (*praxis*) and discourse (*lexis*), spend their lives in the political sphere. In the experience of the *polis*, the emphasis shifted from action to discourse. To be political, to live in a *polis*, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion. In this historical setting, the private and public spheres of life remained separate.[72] While life in the home catered to the needs and wants of its members, who were basically concerned with defending their own lives and survival, life in the *polis* as a political domain was the sphere of freedom (Arendt 2013). There was an abyss between the protected life of the home and the ruthless exposure in the *polis*, a space in which the virtue

[71] Arendt (2013) states that, in medieval philosophy, the term *vida activa* lost its specific political meaning, and it came to denote all kinds of active engagement in the world. The term active *life* is, in medieval philosophy, the usual translation of Aristotle's *bios politikos.*

[72] In the Aristotelian philosophy, a qualitative distinction is established between public space and private space, including the family in the latter. In the Roman context, Finley identifies the importance of the figure of the father of the family as a social-political archetype, together with the institutional character which this notion will assume as a legacy from Augustine to the West. On the importance of patriarchy, see Finley (1985).

of courage was considered as one of the elementary political attitudes, according to Macintyre (2012). Therefore, in the *polis* there was a *telos* that transcended life: the pursuit of the good life, as Aristotle called the citizen's life that was not limited to the biological processes of life. In the ancient world, excellence (*arete*), as the Greeks called it, or *virtus*, in the words of the Romans, was always reserved for the public domain. In the interpretation of Arendt (2013), such excellence, by definition, required the formalisation of the public constituted by the individual's peers and not by the familiar presence of his equals or inferiors. While Plato and Aristotle affirmed that man is essentially a social being, their Hellenistic followers postulated the figure of the sage detached from social life as a higher ideal. In other words, the sage lives outside the world in conformity with the law of universal nature or reason. Thus, Hellenistic philosophers turned out to present a dichotomy between wisdom and world, or even between contemplative and active lives. However, in accordance with Augustine, Truth is related to the metaphysical form of being, God, and it is crucial to the understanding of charity and social justice in earthly life. As a result, there is no dissociation between contemplative and active lives.

With regard to the relation between charity and social life, we can recall the words of Arendt, who draws attention to the articulation between ethics and politics underlying the Augustinian conception of *caritas*:

> Finding a bond between people strong enough to replace the world was the main political task of the first Christian philosophy; and it was Augustine who proposed to build on charity not only Christian brotherhood but all human relationships (Arendt 2013, 44-45).

In other words, the meaning of the duty of charity is related to the necessity of developing a sense of social belonging, a sense of Christian community based on harmony or temporal peace, and the duty of charity is linked to the development of a sense of social belonging. The obligation of charity is essential for the maintenance of the community and the strengthening of social ties. Charity is defined as the perfection of (organized) love that makes it possible for mankind to live together in the tranquillity of the righteous, according to the public domain. While keeping Saint Augustine in mind, it is important to note that Hannah Arendt's assaults on modern politics, which are founded on falsehoods and special interests, continue to have relevance in today's world (Arendt 1971; Mehta 2012). The conditions of legibility of philosophical writing that dates back to the fifth century, according to Arendt, revealed that Augustine reflected on the great question of human existence and provided

powerful insights into how to think about the new in politics in the centuries following his death. According to Arendt's 1985 article "Truth and Politics," her observations on the boundary between private, social, and political worlds are in favour of the separation. Hannah Arendt (1971, 197) stated in her examination of the Pentagon Papers that "truthfulness has never been included among political virtues, and falsehoods have always been seen as legitimate instruments in political dealings" in respect to the practices of contemporary politics. In a nutshell, Arendt establishes a connection between power and justice in social dynamics and develops a strong condemnation of deception and violence.

Regarding the challenges of contemporary politics, Arendt´s contribution unfolds the Augustinian reflections on ethical choices that make possible the permanence and cohesion of human bonds in a context of "social justice".

Ethics, truth and care of the self by Foucault

In the entry "Foucault" in the "Dictionnaire des Philosophes", the philosopher himself, under the pseudonym Maurice Florence, states that his work can be considered a critical history of thought, that is to say, an analysis of the conditions by which certain relations of the subject with the object are established or modified as constitutive relations of possible knowledge.[73] Therefore, the critical history of thought may be considered a history of discourses capable of being said to be true or false. In the light of this, this section presents some remarks on the relation between ethics, subject and truth in Foucault. For the purpose of developing the proposal, the methodology of Foucault's general project is considered, as well as its evolution and changes in "The Hermeneutics of the Subject," a course taught by Foucault at the Collège de France in 1982 (Gros, 2003). Within his general project, certain choices involve some rules of method:

- A systematic scepticism towards all anthropological universals, that is, towards propositions of universal validity regarding human nature or categories that can be applied to the subject require to be experienced and analysed;

[73] The entry "Foucault" written by Michel Foucault presents a retrospective of his work written at the time of the first version - which would still be further worked on - of the "History of Sexuality". It was first published in Huisman (1984, 942-944).

- An inversion of the philosophical procedure that goes back to the constitutive subject, from which it is required to account for every object of knowledge in general;
- A reference to specific practices, conceived and known as modes of acting and thinking, promoting an approach that enables intelligibility for the correlated constitution of subject and object.

It is important, at this point, to establish a counterpoint between the implications of the Cartesian method and the method followed by Foucault for the intelligibility of the relations between subject and truth. Descartes founded modern philosophy based on a metaphysics in which the *cogito* is its first principle. In the "Discourse on Method", the status of the human being refers to a dualistic conception of substances (soul and body) whose union refers to a distinct and irreducible category of its own.[74] The whole Cartesian philosophical system is built on the *cogito*, the thinking being, subject of reason and conscious of himself (Buzon and Kambouchner 2010, 78). The awareness of oneself as a thinking being is the first fundamental certainty that had been achieved through the application of the rules of the Cartesian method. In the second part of the "Discourse on Method", Descartes presents four precepts (evidence, analysis, synthesis, and enumeration) that must be followed to attain true knowledge. The Cartesian method, which starts from methodical doubt, initially isolates the first principles, the first clear and distinct notions. The emphasis on the hierarchical ordering of thoughts reinforces the relevance of the geometric method of reasoning. The philosopher is inspired by the geometrical method, which incorporates the notion of order and presupposes clear and distinct principles that are not demonstrable. Once the simple elements of a problem are known, all the consequences that derive from those absolutely certain first principles can be deduced.

According to Descartes, reason, while a cognitive faculty of the human being, is the basis of the possibility of knowledge of the truth. In Part IV of the "Discourse on Method", Descartes uses the sceptical resource of doubt, hyperbolizes it and arrives at *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) - indubitable principle, clear and distinct. Such a first principle meets the criteria by which one recognizes a truth: clarity and distinction. Moreover, such a metaphysical principle will allow him to discover new truths and to advance in the construction of true knowledge.

[74] Being of an immaterial nature, one should not imagine the soul as actually extended through the body, according to Buzon and Kambouchner (2010, 78).

The certainty of "I think, therefore I am" marks the identity of the rational subject.

The Foucauldian philosophical project explicitly criticises the subject of knowledge capable of truth. For Foucault, Descartes' philosophy refers to an *a priori* being, thinking being, subject of reason and capable of truth, given that this absolute subject, without ruptures, without contradictions, does not correspond to the existence of man in the world. According to Foucault, the subject is not invariable, universal or homogeneous. It is an open, contradictory, unfinished being, which is constituted in the becoming of historical time. Recalling Foucault (1966, 524), man in the world "cannot be given in the immediate and sovereign transparency of a *cogito*".

From the rules of the Foucauldian method, explained by Foucault in the mentioned entry, there emerges a subject and an object constituted in certain simultaneous conditions. There is no subject-object dualism characteristic of Cartesian philosophy, but subject and object are continually modified and, therefore, change themselves, in the field of experience. Through the analysis of the practices, ways of acting and thinking, Foucault highlights the different ways of objectification of the subject and the importance of power relations. The Foucauldian conception empties the rational autonomy of the *cogito*.[75] In an archaeological analysis, Foucault points to the relations between the subject, truth and power in the context of social relations, of historically constructed practices and institutions. The relevant questions posed by the philosopher are: how does the subject become the object of knowledge? What is implied in the historical analysis of the *care of the self*?

Let´s develop these questions.

1. How does the subject become the object of knowledge?

According to Muchail (2004), it is noted that in the entry "Foucault", the author, when talking about his discursive production, emphasizes that it is conducted by the theme of the subject's constitution. Within his general project, which has always remained the same, Foucault initially tried to conduct such a theme in two ways.

[75] The history of discourses, as a philosophical question, corresponds to the archaeology of knowledge. Foucault did not propose such archaeology when the subject itself is placed as the object of a possible knowledge. See entry "Foucault", p. 229.

At first, in "Words and Things", Foucault (1966) is concerned with the emergence and consequences of the question of the subject as an object of knowledge of the human sciences. In this book, Foucault exposes the refusal to accept the being of man in Cartesian philosophy: the being whose nature is to think, endowed with the autonomy of reason. According to the philosopher, in the 18th century, the philosophical problem centred on man's being, that is, on his nature, on his essence, shifted to the emergence of knowledge about man which reflected on his identity. In order to develop a reflection on man's identity in the most diverse domains of knowledge and culture, Foucault reject the rational conceptualizations of Cartesian philosophy. Indeed, He refuses to deal with the essence of being and develops a philosophical approach to social relations in history.

In the classical period of modernity, approximately in the 17th and 18th centuries, Foucault highlights a first revolution for the constitution of the sciences of man. In this Cartesian context, a representation emerges between the word and the thing as the mental image we have of reality. In Foucault's understanding, Descartes´ proposal of knowledge is oriented to "develop on the unified and unifying background of a *mathesis*" (Foucault 1966, 341). Such philosophical thinking points to a universal foundation of a unified body of knowledge. As a result, there is a distancing between word and thing, given that the being of man in Cartesian philosophy is the fruit of a discourse elaborated in the domain of representation. It is an *a priori* being of history.

Secondly, in the books "History of Madness", "The Birth of the Clinic" and "Discipline and Punish", Foucault analyses the constitution of the subject considering the conditions under which the subject may appear on the other side of a normative partition. By incorporating the distinct relations of social nature between domains of knowledge and types of normativity, the philosopher draws attention to subjectivity as a historical-discursive construction. In "Discipline and Punish", he finds that man "is trapped within a power that disperses him, drives him away from his own origin" (Foucault 1999, 232). Foucault argues that the subject is constituted in experience and as a result of practices of domination. He claims that we are not "naturally" subjects, but are constituted as such. Indeed, the relation between subjectivity and truth, as the central axis of his philosophical analysis, is correlated to the analysis of power relations in modern societies.

Consistent with his methodological option in the analysis of games of truth, the philosophical reflection on the relations between subject, truth and power questions not only the origin of power, but also the procedures and techniques used in different institutional contexts.

Thus, Foucault highlights the coercions exercised in the organisation of disciplinary spaces and the impacts of power on forms of subjectivation. Power, in his perspective, is understood as a mechanism of normalisation put into action by the set of social institutions. In modern Western societies, surveillance becomes an essential component of the power disseminated in multiple institutional forms which is affirmed through disciplinary devices. Such devices are inscribed in the body and soul of men producing different modes of subjectivation. After these two initial moments, Foucault distinguishes a third in which he studies the constitution of the subject as an object for himself. In this sense, he understands that the "History of Sexuality" is a possible example of the history of subjectivity.

Regarding the general Foucauldian project, Muchail (2004, 129-30) explains that the philosopher does not investigate any possible knowledge, but those in which the subject itself is placed as the object of knowledge. Thus, the analyses of the conditions of possibility for the construction of knowledge, at a given time and in a given society, basically refer to two interdependent processes: the subjectivation of the subject (a subject can be legitimised as an object of knowledge) and the objectivation of the object (something can be qualified as an object for possible knowledge).

2. What is implied in the historical analysis of care of the self?

The analysis elaborated by F. Gros (2003) is concerned with a retrospective reading of the Foucauldian path in his approach to the relation between subjectivity and truth in the course given at the Collège de France in 1982, "The Hermeneutics of the Subject". Gros (2003) highlights that a significant change in Foucault´s philosophical thought can be observed in this course. If, in the 1970s, the question of sexuality was addressed by Foucault within his theoretical horizon of reflections on power and normalization, in the 1980s the problem of sexuality interests the philosopher as linked to the ethical question. According to Gros (2003, 153), the 1982 course given by Foucault immediately presents itself as a historical analysis of the *care of the self*, that is to say, the *care of the self* appears as an object of historical analysis. He notes that, from the philosophical notions of subjectivity and truth, the following questions arise:

- What is implied in the historical analysis of *care of the self*?

- Why does Foucault take the historical analysis of *care of the self,* as the central problem for understanding the connection between subjectivity and truth?

Gros (2003) identifies that the central problem of Foucault´s course is how the relation between subjectivity and truth is woven historically, and formulates *binomials* to analyse such a relation in Ancient and Modern Philosophy. Gros develops his reflections on the relation between subject and truth when this relation is considered as a relation of theoretical knowledge and a spiritual transformation. First, he presents what he considers an opposition between the *subject of truth* and *the truly subject*. The subject *of the truth* is the subject determined by Modern Philosophy, a subject that Descartes defines as an *a priori* subject, capable of the truth within the framework of the investigation and determination of the forms and limits of the subject's capacity for knowledge. The subject, by its nature, is the *subject of truth* and the discovery of truth is what confirms its nature and makes it a thinking being itself. On the other hand, the *truly subject* is the subject that Foucault attempts to reconcile or reconstruct from Greek and Hellenistic philosophy. In the class of January 6, 1982, Foucault's aim is to understand what changes, what shifts, what is transformed between the Greek "take care of yourself" and the modern "know yourself." Therefore, it is identified as an opposition between the Socratic definition of philosophy as *love of truth* and the Cartesian determination of philosophy as *knowledge of truth*. While in Modern Philosophy the subject by itself is capable of the truth, in Ancient Philosophy the subject is only able to have access to the truth by the transformation of his being. Regarding Modern Philosophy´s expression "*the subject of truth*", knowledge holds the two terms (subject, truth) in a neutral exteriority. Otherwise, within the Ancient Philosophy´s expression "*the truly subject*", love transforms the two terms of the relation (subject, truth).

In accordance with Foucault, there is a "price" to pay to be a truly subject. Indeed, access to truth should be accompanied by a certain transformation of the subject himself. To grasp the key issue that underlies the binomials identified above, it is relevant to look again at the distinction between philosophy and spirituality established by the philosopher in the class of January 6, 1982. In this lecture, Foucault states that philosophy is a form of thought, and he goes on to define spirituality:

> [...] asks itself what enables the subject to have access to truth, a form of thought that attempts to determine the conditions and limits of the subject's access to truth. [76]

> [...] the set of searches, practices and experiences such as purifications, askesis, renunciations, conversions of gaze, modifications of existence, etc., which constitute, not for the knowledge of the subject, but for the subject, for the very being of the subject, the price to be paid to gain access to the truth. [77]

Spirituality concerns the transformations that the subject must undergo in order to have this access to truth. According to the philosopher, spirituality as it appears, at least in the West, presents three characteristics:

- spirituality postulates that the truth is never given to the subject in its own right;
- spirituality as the access to the truth involves a movement of *eros* (love), a movement of ascent that pulls the subject out of his current condition and through which the truth comes to the subject and enlightens him, and it also involves a work of progressive transformation of oneself towards oneself, which is that of asceticism (*askesis*);
- spirituality postulates that the access to the truth produces effects "of return" on the subject that complete the very being of the subject and transfigure him.[78]

Moreover, Gros (2003, 154) elaborated the comparison between the *subject before experience* and the *subject of experience*. The *subject before experience* in Modern Philosophy is the *subject of the truth* - a transcendental or universal *a priori* subject. In this case, the conditions of possibility of experience are connected to the rational knowledge of the *a priori* subject. The *cogito*, in Cartesian philosophy, refers to a subjectivity understood as consciousness of oneself. Therefore, all conscious experience consists of thought (Williams, 1978, 86). By the act of thinking, the being apprehends its existence, given that, in order to exist, the thought does not need material substance. In other words, being, as *res cogitans* (thinking thing), does not need some material substance. This proves that the existence of

[76] According to Lecture of 6 January 1982, first hour, of Foucault´s course *Hermeneutics of the Subject,* given at the Collège de France (1981-1982).
[77] Ibidem, Lecture of 6 January 1982, first hour.
[78] Ibidem, Lecture of 6 January 1982, first hour.

thought is independent of the body; therefore, soul and body are distinct substances. Let us remember that, in the "Discourse of Method", Descartes says: "I understood by this that it was a substance whose essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, in order to be, does not need any place, nor depends on any material thing".

According to Gros (2003, 154), the *subject of experience* in Ancient Philosophy is the *truly subject*. In this case, the experience is understood as a place of exchange and transformation, reciprocal, of the truth and the subject. From these observations, it can be said that an experience is an historical form of subjectivation, concrete, historical and culturally situated. It is in the light of this frame that Gros identifies two forms of subjectivation, that is to say, two possible forms of the relation between truth and subjectivity: *knowledge of the self* and *care of the self*. While the *knowledge of the self* refers to a subjectivation that involves the subject's knowledge of itself and obedience to the law,[79] Gros points out that the *care of the self* involves an ethical subjectivation that refers to a practical engagement between truth and subjectivity.

It is worth remembering that, in the class of 24 February 1982 of *The Hermeneutics of the Subject,* Foucault states that such practical involvement does not disqualify the knowledge of the world (*mathesis*). Beyond knowledge, the *askesis* refers to an operative practice implied in the conversion to the self; it involves a practical angle of the exercise on the self so that, in the face of the unexpected events of life, of misfortunes and illnesses, or in the shadow of imminent death, the subject is provided with true discourses by making this truth apprehended and, progressively appropriated. In this lecture, the philosopher states that *askesis* designates an exercise of the subject over the self that aims at a transformation, without the renunciation of the self that characterises Christian asceticism. *Askesis* refers to a set of techniques that aims to link the truth to the subject. In other words, *askesis* is the practice and exercise of truth. By making truth-telling a mode of being:

> *Askesis* is what allows the saying-truth - saying-truth addressed to the subject, saying-truth that the subject also addresses to itself - to constitute itself as the subject's way of being. [80]

According to Foucault, the *care of the self* involves an occupation of the self which, as a style of life, requires a conversion to the self throughout life. Such a process, which involves a multiplicity of social relations, is

[79] Ibidem. Lecture of February 24, 1982, second hour.
[80] Ibidem, Lecture of February 24, 1982, second hour.

characterised by its critical function in order to eliminate bad habits and false opinions received, but it also has a fighting function by giving the individual the weapons and the courage to fight throughout his or her life. Thus, the *care of the self* is an attitude towards a truly life which has a curative and therapeutic impact on subjectivity.

Foucault also believes that the philosophical tradition of the Greek and Hellenistic period, Plato, Stoics, Cynics, Epicureans, maintained *knowledge* and *spirituality* as inseparable dimensions. In the nineteenth century, as he states, the act of knowledge still remained linked to the demands of spirituality in Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, in Husserl's "*Krisis*," and in Heidegger.[81]

Despite the differences with Saint Augustine, it is relevant to highlight that Michel Foucault calls for a reflection *on spirituality and knowledge* in modern society. Therefore, his contribution to the critical history of thought stimulates a deeper understanding on modes of existence and ethical demands for human transformation. The 1982 course, given at the Collège de France, represents a significant change in the approach to the relation between subjectivity and truth in Foucauldian thought. Such a change puts into question the modes of subjectivation associated to the *knowledge of the self.* As a result, the rescue of the Ancient concern on *care of the self* implies the rescue of the inseparability between spirituality and knowledge. In effect, *care of the self* as a philosophical precept has relevant ethical implications in the modes of subjectivation by articulating true *ethos* and *logoi.* Therefore, *care of the self* implies that the relations between subjectivity and truth are not exempt from ethical requirements.

Ethics and social embeddedness by Karl Polanyi

The systemic and institutional analysis proposed by Karl Polanyi is a decisive reference to apprehend the current cultural and social challenges to (re)embedding the economy in society. This historical setting shaped ethical and economic patterns that do not favour social justice. Considering the relevance of Polanyi's work to apprehend today's challenging social and political issues, our aim is to provide a more deep and nuanced understanding of his thought on social justice. Polanyi's interpretation of modern economic and social history clarifies how his understanding of the relation between ethics and economics touches on social justice. The outcomes of the market economy can be understood in the light of

[81] Ibidem. Lecture of January 6, 1982, second hour.

Polanyi's concern about how the economy relates to social organization and culture, as well as the effects of social and political institutions on human livelihood. Polanyi's critique of the liberal myth and of the disruptive forces of the market economy inspires one to examine the quality of one's living conditions. As he writes in *The Great Transformation:*

> A market economy is an economic system controlled, regulated, and directed by markets alone; order in the production and distribution of goods is entrusted to this self-regulating mechanism. An economy of this kind derives from the expectation that human beings behave in such a manner as to achieve maximum money gains…. Self-regulation implies that all production is for sale on the market and that all incomes derive from such sales. Accordingly, there are markets for all elements of industry, not only for goods (always including services) but also for labor, land and money, their prices being called respectively commodity prices, wages, rent, and interest (Polanyi 1944, 68-69).

The self-regulated market demands the institutional separation of society into an economic and political sphere, that is to say, in the market society the social relations are embedded in the economy rather than the economy embedded in social relations. The proper self-regulation of the market requires that "nothing must be allowed to inhibit the formation of markets, nor must incomes be permitted to be formed otherwise than through sales" (Polanyi 1944, 69). Thus, as the commodity fiction is the vital organizing process in a historical context where the process of exchange in the market economy is the goal of society, labour, land and money turn out to be commodities produced for sale. As a result, the commodification of money enlarges the subordination of social conditions to the market economy and the social relations become an "*accessory of the economic system*" (Polanyi 1944, 75).

Nevertheless, Polanyi highlights that the historical evolution of capitalism has always been followed by the sprouting of safeguards to protect society against the interference of market practices. The deep economic and social changes observed in the nineteenth century were the result of a double movement: the extension of the market was accompanied by a counter-movement to protect society, by a set of measures and policies aimed to restrict the effects of the institutions of the market economy relative to labour, land, and money (Polanyi 1944, 76). As a matter of fact, the deliberate intervention both to "institutionalize" the market economy and to protect society from its harmful effects reveals:

> […] the action of two organizing principles in society, each of them sets special institutional aims, having the support of definite social forces and

> using its own distinctive methods. The one was the principle of economic liberalism, aiming at the establishment of a self-regulating market [...]; the other was the principle of social protection aiming at the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization…" (Polanyi 1944,132).

According to Polanyi, the commodity fiction implies that the market economy demands the institutional separation of society into an economic and political sphere. Labour, land and money are elements of industry, but cannot be produced themselves for sale, thus cannot be seen as commodities. Labour is another name for a human activity which is part of life itself; land is another name for nature; money is just purchasing power. As the commodity fiction proves to be the vital organizing process, within the self-regulated markets, the market society and the social relations are embedded in the economy rather than the economy embedded in social relations. Some of the socially deleterious consequences are clearly presented in *The Great Transformation*:

> Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighbourhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed. Finally, the market administration of purchasing power would periodically liquidate business enterprise, for shortages and surfeits of money would prove as disastrous to business as floods and droughts in primitive society" (Polanyi 1944, 76).

In other words, in the nineteenth century, the liberal agenda was an important expression of economic and cultural changes because it made it possible to enlarge the subordination of sociability conditions to the market economy and the social relations increasingly become an accessory of the economic system. As labour, land and money turned out to fictitious commodities bought and sold in the market, Polanyi says: "human society had become an accessory of the economic system" (Polanyi 1944, 75).

With the advance of industrialization, the liberal economic theory spread the statement that the search of individual enrichment is the "natural" characteristic of men. For Polanyi, the social and economic dynamics are not the result of a "natural order". Indeed, he looked for evidence in history and anthropology to show that the priority of the economic sphere as well as the expansion and dominance of the "economic motive" in the markets, are essentially modern phenomena. The spread of individual behaviour founded in the economic motive and the disorganization of traditional forms of reciprocity and redistribution threatens the interrelations developed inside the families and neighbourhoods that aimed to "safeguard both production and family sustenance" (Polanyi 1944, 48). In truth, the new pattern of behaviour provokes disruption of traditional

livelihoods and intensifies the subordination of the whole society to the commodity fiction.

From the study of early societies, Polanyi highlights the social nature of men as an outstanding feature in societies of all times and places (Polanyi 1977). Besides, he underlines as an outstanding discovery that the universal motivation of human beings is to protect and enhance social standing. Thus, Polanyi underlines the need to reflect on the relations between material goods and the behaviour of human beings towards the aim to achieve social standing within different societies. All societies studied by him, other than market societies, protect themselves by promoting values, such as generosity, that foster social standing. In this respect, Polanyi's historical analysis of economic change emphasizes the relevance of ethical principles that supports a conception of human being that is social and whose fundamental motivation is to protect and enhance social standing.

Taking into account current ethical challenges within financialisation, we can say that the systemic and institutional analysis proposed by Polanyi (1944) in *The Great Transformation* calls for a reflection on economic, social and cultural contemporary challenges as a result of neoliberal policies and the outcomes of recent pandemics. The understanding of the role of the values that shape human behaviour is absolutely relevant to apprehend the current ethical challenges in the market society.

In fact, the material and non-material elements of a society should be considered in any attempt to apprehend the challenges to overcome the process of social injustice. Currently, the linkages between finance and culture enclose not only financial strategies, but also values that are the basis of the expectations of individuals in society. Thus, it is worth remembering that Polanyi considers that institutions embodied human meaning and purposes (Polanyi 1944). That is why, in the introductory note to *Trade and Market,* Polanyi calls for a re-examination of the notion of economy since many people are used to thinking that the only possible organization of men's livelihoods is the market economy. In his own words:

> What is to be done, though, when it appears that some economies have operated on altogether different principles, showing a widespread use of money, and far-flung trading activities, yet no evidence of markets or gain made on buying or selling? It is then that we must re-examine our notions of the economy (Polanyi et al. 1957, xvii).

Polanyi proposes a new theoretical construction in order to explain the place and role of human beings in the social and economic system. And he

argues that man values material goods only in so far as they serve the end to promote social standing. In fact, the social question becomes an anthropological question. Reinforcing the role of history and of anthropology to build a new notion of the economy, Polanyi notes:

> But a purposeful use of the past may help us to meet our present over concern with economic matters and to achieve a level of human integration, that comprises the economy, without being absorbed into it" (Polanyi et al. 1957, xviii).

In other words, while taking into account different ways of organizing men's livelihoods, Polanyi provides a guide to examine the non-market economies and claims that empirical observations reveal economic life in archaic and primitive economies to be entirely different from that assumed by formal economic analysis (Polanyi et al. 1975, 243-44).

In this respect, it is necessary to distinguish between the formal and substantive meanings of the term 'economic', as Polanyi also underlines in *'The Economy as Instituted Process'*. Reflecting on the epistemological issues that arise in economics as scientific knowledge, he argues that economics, as it was scientifically developed at his time, depends on formal principles. As a result, a set of assumptions, that becomes premises, were used as the basis for a sequence of logical deductions. Nevertheless, in Polanyi's view, the method of economic anthropology, as it depended upon principles of economic behaviour that were induced from empirical observation, could be known as substantive. From the empirical evidence of economic life in ancient times and primitive economies, Polanyi explains the concepts of reciprocity and redistribution. The reciprocity principle implies that in some societies there is an unspoken agreement and on behalf of it people produce goods and services for which they could do best and share them with those people that live around who also behave alike. All of them contribute according to their abilities to the common welfare, and all share according to their needs. Their motivation to produce and share is not the economic motive, but the fear of loss of social prestige. In this setting, money also operated within the context of reciprocity. The redistribution principle is found in those societies where a chief or leader, after a harvest or a hunting expedition, redistributes the storage to members of his group. The distribution of communal wealth reinforces the social structure where the allocation of the storage indicates status and importance.

Although Polanyi recognized that markets existed in ancient times and in primitive economies, within a context of reciprocity. In other words, ancient and primitive economies had market places but were not

market economies. Daily markets were merely convenient localized exchange places operating within the broad system of reciprocity and those market places for long distance trade, such as ports, such as the *ports of trade* were specifically isolated by the authorities from the prevailing reciprocity area and served to separate it from external influences. In other words, local craft and provision markets were not linked to long distance markets. These markets sell only items which could not be provided within the local system of reciprocity (Polanyi et al. 1957).

In the 19th century, however, a monetary based market economy sprang suddenly into existence and it pushed aside the old systems based on reciprocity and redistribution. This market economy is an economic system controlled by prices that determine what, how and how much is produced and how it is distributed. Money, as purchasing power, enables its possessors to acquire goods and services which are priced in money terms (Polanyi et al. 1957). As Polanyi explains, in the market economy there are not social considerations in the decisions about production and distribution. *The Great Transformation* presents an interesting example of this feature of the market economy. Before developing a critique of the explanation of the role of poverty in the economic system, Polanyi synthetized the main (and false) theories aimed to explain "*Where do the poor come from?".* About these false theories on the increase in pauperism in England in early nineteenth century, Polanyi says:

> On one point there appears to have been general agreement, namely, on the great variety of causes that accounted for the fact of the increase. Amongst them were scarcity of grain; too high agricultural wages, causing high food prices; too low agricultural wages; too high urban wages; irregularity of urban employment; disappearance of the yeomanry; ineptitude of the urban worker for rural occupations; reluctance of the farmers to pay higher wages; the landlords' fear that rents would have to be reduced if higher wages were paid; failure of the workhouse to compete with machinery; want of domestic economy; incommodious habitations; bigoted diets; drug habits (Polanyi 1944, 94-95).

And he continues arguing that:

> Some writers blamed a new type of large sheep; others, horses which should be replaced by oxen; still others urged the keeping of fewer dogs. Some writers believed that the poor should eat less, or no, bread, while others thought that even feeding on the "best bread should not be charged against them". Tea impaired the health of many poor, it was thought, while "home-brewed beer" would restore it; those who felt most strongly on this

> score insisted that tea was no better than the cheapest dram (Polanyi 1944, 94-95).

From these passages of text, it can be said that Polanyi's analysis explains that the deleterious social effects created by the Speenhamland Laws led to the emergence of the labour market and the birth of the market economy in the nineteenth century civilization (Polanyi 1944, 87). After land and money had already emerged as commodities, the commodification of labour, that is to say the commodification of human lives, turned out to result from social conflicts and land appropriations via enclosures. In this historical setting, as Polanyi shows, the Speenhamland Laws created an obstacle to the formation of the labour market.

The Great Transformation underlines the process of social change created by trade and industrialization which led to the emergence of poverty on a large scale. Polanyi describes the desolation, dehumanization and degradation of human lives as necessary steps for the emergence of a labour market. In his own words:

> Before the process had advanced very far, the labouring people had been crowded together in new places of desolation, the so-called industrial towns of England; the country folk had been dehumanized into slum dwellers; the family was on the road to perdition; and large parts of the country were rapidly disappearing under the slag and scrap heaps vomited forth from the "satanic mills." Writers of all views and parties, conservatives and liberals, capitalists and socialists invariably referred to social conditions under the Industrial Revolution as a veritable abyss of human degradation (Polanyi 1944, 41).

It is clear that Polanyi's concern about the conditions of mankind in the context of industrialization relies on a critique of those economists and public men that, in the nineteenth century, believe that poverty was necessary to the functioning of society. For example, as Polanyi recalls that Townsend, Malthus, Ricardo, Bentham and Burke considered that the Poor Laws would interfere with the production process (Polanyi, 1944, 132). Reflecting on Ricardo's view, Polanyi condemned not only the workers´ hunger to increase production but also the outcomes of the abolishing of any kind of government policy oriented to poor people. In fact, Polanyi notes that the "iron" laws governing a competitive society are not human laws. In his own words:

> The true significance of the tormenting problem of poverty now stood revealed: economic society was subjected to laws which were not human laws (Polanyi 1944, 131).

Beyond economic laws, Polanyi highlights the presence of the ideology that supported the spread of economic liberalism:

> Economic liberalism was the organizing principle of a society engaged in creating a market system. Born as a mere penchant for nonbureaucratic methods, it evolved into a veritable faith in man's secular salvation through a self-regulating market. Such fanaticism was the result of the sudden aggravation of the task it found itself committed to: the magnitude of the sufferings that were to be inflicted on innocent persons as well as the vast scope of the interlocking changes involved in the establishment of the new order. The liberal creed assumed its evangelical fervor only in response to the needs of a fully deployed market economy" (Polanyi 1944, 141).

Indeed, the economic changes that resulted from the Industrial Revolution cannot be comprehended if ignoring the political, social and ethical issues underlined by Polanyi. Considering the insights of her father, Polanyi-Levitt's (2013) critique of contemporary economics is also related to the objection to the methodological individualism of the neoclassical approach. Indeed, in her view, the representation of the so called rational economic man does not show understanding of the multiple set of issues related to human nature and human needs. She emphasizes the importance of history and of a multidisciplinary approach to social and economic change since economic development is overwhelmed by the role of culture, by creativity and diversity.

As a matter of fact, the fundamental problem in economics, for Karl Polanyi is the attendance of human needs.[82] Thus, the Polanyian notion of economy certainly offers us a new approach to "human beings" and the "economy" around us. This notion of economy is supported by ethical principles that touch on social justice. Polanyi´s ideal of social justice can be summarized in the following words: "*The economy has to serve society, not the other way around*". In his view, human beings act to

[82] On a different perspective, Hayek proposes that the main fundamental problem of economics is that of coordinating the plans of many independent individuals. The main advantage of a competitive market order, in Hayek's view, is that rational agents respond to price signals, which convey the relevant information available in the markets, for the purpose of economic calculus. In his view, competition, through the price market system, leads to such coordination. Individuals, acting in their own self-interest, respond to price signals. Prices, in turn, reflect the information available in society. Prices, as signs, may allow for the transmission of previously unknown information for the purposes of economic calculus. Now, prices, impersonal signs that provide for an extensive social division of labour, are expressed in terms of money. See Hayek (1937).

promote social standing that turns out to be the universal aim that supports social justice. However, the current "market economy" has turned human society into a "market society". The self-regulation of the market creates the conditions that make the market the only organizing power in the economic sphere, that is to say, the central mechanism for the production and distribution of goods.

Indeed, the current market economy dramatically impacts upon the social spheres since the spread of market-based values turns to "*disjoint man's relationships and threaten his natural habitat with annihilation*" (Polanyi 1944, 44). Moreover, remembering Polanyi's words,

> […] the control of the economic system by the market is of overwhelming consequence to the whole organization of society: it means no less than the running of society as an adjunct to the market. Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system […] society must be shaped in such a manner as to allow that system to function according to its own laws. This is the meaning of the familiar assertion that a market economy can function only in a market society (Polanyi 1944, 60).

From this excerpt of her work, it can be noted that Karl Polanyi emphasizes the role of politics to express economic interests but also social aims. In short, human actions need to encourage the social embeddedness of the economy. As a result, the importance of "economic forms based on reciprocity and redistribution" could indicate how both markets and politics need individuals who are open to values that foster social standing. Basically, what is needed is an effective shift in mentality that can lead to the adoption of new life-styles as a mechanism of "self-protection" in an otherwise market dominated society. The decisive issue, therefore, is the overall moral tenor of society. In this context, Polanyi's work is inspiring because it dwells on two criteria that govern moral action: social justice and the common good. All individuals are called to rethinking values, also by the institutional path which affects the life of the *polis*, that is, of social coexistence and excellence.[83] So, Karl Polanyi invites us to think about power and justice today since he reflects on the meaning of human life in history and points out to the existence of values arising from social life.

According to Karl Polanyi, a society is a living organism in which *ethos* is the result of a complex combination of customs, norms, attitudes,

[83] In this respect, my interpretation has been deeply influenced by the reading of Arendt (2013).

aspirations that shape institutions. As a result, his conception of social justice underlines that the economy needs to be supported by ethical values in order to function correctly in order to protect society. It is not just any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centered. This centrality of the human being at the heart of the ethical values must be the guiding principle of social justice.

Polanyi's understanding of modern capitalism really favours a concept of social justice that is overwhelmed by the principles of reciprocity and solidarity and the value of generosity.[84] Steps to social change should involve the creation of institutions necessary to translate the shift in mentality into effective actions since he points out to the individual responsibility in the construction of social justice. His conceptualization of social justice becomes a key-concept in social philosophy since it emphasizes the social nature of men and warns not only about the morality of human actions but also about the mutability of human institutions. Social justice can be understood in the political dimension of human coexistence where human actions can promote the excellence of human life by preserving social standing and human dignity. These thoughts underline a humanism in which the human-centered ethics of social justice expressed the universality of human dignity. In this sense, Polanyi's concept of social justice highlights two central issues: the meaning of human existence and the ethical orientation of human actions. In short, Polanyi's understanding of modern capitalism really favours a conceptualization of social justice that is overwhelmed by the principles of reciprocity and solidarity.

Ethical struggles, theory and *praxis* by Western Marxism

The themes, problems and thinkers selected in *Considerations on Western Marxism* and *The Crisis of the Crisis of Marxism,* written by Perry Anderson, bring together a plurality of information and analysis on the evolution of European Marxist thought from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1980s. For Perry Anderson, the common thread is the search for the characterisation of the challenges with which critical theory is confronted in the twentieth century.

Anderson offers a broad perspective on the history of European Marxist thought in the period between 1924 and 1968. Regarding 'The Classical Tradition', Anderson presents the contributions of the founders

[84] At this point, my interpretation has been deeply influenced by Augustine's *caritas*. See Arendt (1996).

of classical Marxism, Marx and Engels, and its main exponents, Kautsky, Plekhanov, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Bukharin. These exponents of classical Marxism were actively involved in political practices and, for this reason, their writings privileged questions of economic analysis, strategy and political tactics for their direct relevance to *praxis*. However, new political conditions led to the advent of Western Marxism in the face of the collapse of the world revolution inspired by October 1917. As opposed to classical Marxism, many formal changes were proposed from the mid-1920s onwards by Lukács, Korsch, Benjamin, Horkheimer, Della Volpe, Marcuse, Lefebvre, Adorno, Sartre, Goldmann, Althusser, Colletti, among others.

As to the evolution of Western Marxism, Anderson (1976, 58) the British historian states that "from 1924 to 1968, Marxism did not "stop", as Sartre would have it, but advanced by endless diversions away from any revolutionary political practice." In the English historian's view, Marxist theory after the end of the Second World War migrated almost entirely to the universities, where it remained exiled from political struggles. Indeed, for Anderson, the dissociation between theory and political practice reflects the migration of Western Marxists to universities and research institutes, such as the Frankfurt School, but it also reflects the chosen themes. The themes of Western Marxism have moved away from those themes central to the classical tradition of historical materialism, that is, the study of the economic laws of motion of capitalism as a mode of production, the analysis of the political mechanisms of the bourgeois state and the strategies of class struggle. In particular, Anderson points out that the use of a hermetic language can be apprehended as a sign of the dissociation between Marxist theory and popular practices. In this context, Gramsci is recurrently singled out as an exception for not dissociating theory from *praxis*.

The absence of articulation between theory and *praxis* cannot be understood, Anderson argues, except against the background of Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, the Europe of Stalin and Hitler. Moreover, the conflicting relations between some of the Western Marxists and the directives of the communist parties of France and Italy should be considered. The trajectories of Lukács, Althusser, Sartre, Della Volpe and Adorno, among others, pointed to different experiences in their relation to political practice. Although Lukács, Althusser and Della Volpe remained members of their respective parties, these thinkers developed a discourse distant from official dogmas. Sartre, however, maintained a position outside parties and sought to theorize their practices; and Adorno refrained from establishing any direct connection with party politics.

Considering this background, the thematic displacement of Western Marxism in relation to the classical tradition stemmed from "*a profound change in the centre of gravity of European Marxism, which shifts towards philosophy'*" (Anderson 1976, 67). On behalf of this trend, the thinkers of Western Marxism reversed the trajectory of Marx's own intellectual development, which moved progressively from philosophy to politics and then to Economics. Yet, in the context of Western Marxism, there was a displacement from Economics and Politics to Philosophy.

Anderson (1976) also points out that the innovations in Western Marxism do not only reveal a dissociation between theory and *praxis,* but also the results refer to a progressive disappearance of the confidence and optimism that characterized the contributions of the founders of historical materialism. As for the themes, the British historian distinguishes between two axes characteristic of the works of Marxism of this period: a horizontal axis characterized by articulations of Marx's work with philosophers prior to himself, in addition to a vertical axis, where the articulation was established between Marx's thought and the contributions of non-Marxist thinkers.

As for the vertical axis, Anderson considers that Sartre, Adorno, Althusser, Marcuse, Della Volpe, Lukács, Bloch and Colletti produced important syntheses aimed at epistemological problems. Each resorted, for their specific purposes, to the philosophical legacies of Hegel, Spinoza, Kant, Kierkegaard, Schelling, Rousseau, Schiller, Pascal and Montesquieu, among other philosophers prior to Marx himself. However, such a strategy was not consensual. Althusser and Colletti stated, for example, the need to extirpate from Marxism its Hegelian interpretations.

In terms of the horizontal axis, Western Marxist thinkers and schools developed contacts with a variety of contemporary non-Marxist thinkers, including Freud, Weber, Heidegger, Croce, and Hjelmslev. As a result, Anderson notes that Lukács drew on Weber's concepts and themes, Gramsci's from Croce, Sartre's from Heidegger, and DellaVolpe's from Hjelmslev. With regard to the horizontal axis, thinkers and schools within Western Marxism developed contacts. Anderson attributes the innovations to the pioneering of studies of cultural processes, or superstructure, in which art, aesthetics, and ideology were given prominence. Thus, relations with bourgeois culture, which were alien to the tradition of classical Marxism, manifested themselves in Marcuse's view of unidimensionality, Althusser's approach to ideological illusion in modern societies, Benjamin's cultural works, and Sartre's contribution to group dynamics.

Perry Anderson demonstrates his disenchantment with the contributions of Western Marxism to the advancement of Marxist theory

in the twentieth century by examining the world economic and social scenario of the 1970s. According to him, a Marxist theory cannot be divorced from a history theory. However, twentieth-century Marxism neglected the study of institutions. As a result, he proposes to resurrect, on the basis of a rereading of Marx, the study of the capitalist state and related topics of nationalism, in addition to the value theory of prices, productive and unproductive labour, and the rate of profit. It is critical in this endeavour to concentrate on issues concerning proletarian and bourgeois democracy (in the West and East) in order to develop a theory of political structures. Additionally, praxis cannot be overlooked.

Anderson (1983) attributes the deaths of Western Marxist exponents such as Della Volpe, Adorno, Goldmann, Lukács, Horkheimer, Bloch, Marcuse, and Sartre to the mid-1970s demise of Western Marxism. In terms of critical theory, it is impossible to examine recent developments in Marxism without considering economic, social, and political transformations. These changes, most notably the first large-scale synchronised recession since the post-war period following 1974, the outcomes of the Chinese Revolution, the challenges posed by social democracy and Eurocommunism, and the emergence of neoliberal tendencies, all had an effect on Marxism's fate in the 1970s and 1980s. It's also worth noting that the 1968 movement marked a watershed moment in advanced capitalism's history. Additionally, social movements independent of bureaucratized parties provided new opportunities for rethinking the relation between theory and *praxis*: in 1969, strikes by Italian workers sparked the country's largest strike wave; in 1972, English workers paralyzed the national economy; and in 1973, Japanese workers mobilized in defence of their class interests against capital. In effect, the early 1970s saw the emergence of the crisis of the post-war economic model, which was led by North America.

After the 1980s, while considering the intellectual landscape of Western post-Marxism, Anderson highlights the importance of a "new appetite for the concrete" (Anderson 1983, 25). This concern is expressed, for example, in the following examples:

- Ernest Mandel's study of the laws of motion of the capitalist mode of production in his book *Late Capitalism;*
- the research on the transformation of the labour process in the 20th century in Harry Braverman´s *Labour and Monopoly Capital*;
- the analyses of the capitalist crisis and the changes in the mode of production explored in Michel Aglietta´s *Theory of Capitalist Regulation;*

- the study of the nature and dynamics of Eastern European countries by Bahro, Nuti and Brus;
- The conceptual and methodological renewal on Marxism by Michio Morishima, Ian Steedman, John Roemer, Marco Lippi and Uhich Krause.

In political studies, Nicos Poulantzas investigated the parliamentary, fascist and military types of capitalist state structures, and more empirically grounded research is associated to Ralph Miliband and Claus Offe. In Marxist historical, cultural and sociological studies, the works of Eugene Genovese, Eric Foner, David Montgomery, Robert Brenner, David Abraham present relevant contributions, besides Immanuel Wallerstein, Raymond Williams, Christopher Lasch and Frederic Jameson. Anderson asserts that there are continuities between Western Marxism and the new developments, even if they are not direct. For instance, the Althusserian approach probably endured via Poulantzas, Therborn and Aglietta, the legacy of the Frankfurt School can be seen in the work of Braverman and Offe, and the Lukassian perspective likely persisted in the work of Jameson.

Looking at this scenario, Anderson´s predictions in *Considerations on Western Marxism* are interesting to remember He would have rightly warned, "the geographical pattern of Marxist theory has been profoundly changed in the past decade. Nowadays, the *dominant* centres seem to be in the English speaking world rather than in German or Latin Europe, as it was the case in the interwar and post-war periods" (Anderson, 1976, 284). Such geographical changes, however, failed to overcome the poverty of strategy, that is, theory and praxis remained dissociated. Indeed, this fact is inextricably linked to "the crisis of certain Marxism, geographically confined to Latin Europe, basically France, Italy and Spain" (Anderson 1976, 33). The crisis of Latin European Marxism, both in theory and praxis, might be associated with:

- An anti-communist "fever", with a renunciation of Marxism. For instance, while Coletti declared himself in favour of liberalism, Sartre supported radical neo-anarchism. Moreover, some intellectuals such as Philippe Sollers and Julia Kristeva shifted their support from China's social order to the revaluation of mysticism and support for the North American social order.
- A dilution of Marxism, with growing scepticism about politics. For instance, Poulantzas asserted a crisis of confidence in politics, while Michel Foucault proclaimed the end of politics. In addition,

other Marxists came to defend the ideas of Nietzche or Milton Friedman.

This crisis can be observed in the studies on structure and the subject in history. In particular, when the 'internal history' of French Marxism is considered, it has been conquered by structuralism and the philosophy of language developed by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. This new trend is very different from the period before the Second World War, when the tension between subject and structure was a crucial philosophical problem, with phenomenological and existentialist contributions by Kojève, Husserl and Heidegger. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the contributions undertaken by Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Simone de Beauvoir manifested the continuing effort to rethink such relations.

After the Second World War, the relation between subject and structure also dominated the French intellectual left. For Saussure, language was understood as a system of rules (*langue*) that took priority over the speech (*parole*) of individual subjects. Consequently, Saussure's linguistics was concerned with the timeless relations that constitute language, rather than prioritising changes in language across time. By adopting this linguistic approach as a point of departure, Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology began to identify the simple, universal structures underlying kinship systems. In this context, Althusser endorsed the importance of Lévi-Strauss' contributions to think about the effects of ideological structures on subjects.

From the mid-1970s onward, French structuralism was revitalized, with a stress on subjectivity as its central theme. The unconscious, according to this new scenario, is structured as a language, and hence psychoanalysis can be stated as linguistics, according to Jacques Lacan. Other examples are Foucault's hermeneutics, which concerns the truth of the subject, and Derrida's philosophical deconstructions, which both show the trend towards the radicalization of the process of subjectivation in post-structuralist theories. To comprehend the results of Marxism, critical theory, and structuralism, it is necessary to understand this political thinking movement. Even though structuralism investigated "one of the most essential and fundamental problems of historical materialism as an explanation for the development of human civilisation," according to Anderson (1984, 39), its contributions are characterized by an "exorbitance of language." As a result, truth in everyday life and politics has been weakened as a result of this. Latin European Marxism has destroyed any chance of differentiating between the true and the false, a premise of any rational knowing where evidence plays a meaningful role,

by eliminating the capability of discriminating between the genuine and the false. The idealist philosophical ideas that structuralism and post-structuralism promote are at the expense of realism approaches to economic, social, and political events because they make language the paradigm of social activity.

Indeed, the importance of language in communication, as well as its relationship to actual facts, is at the heart of contemporary political philosophy. To paraphrase Anderson, Habermas' philosophical contribution stresses social interaction as an equally irreducible feature of symbolically mediated human activity in which the dialectic of moral existence has its own autonomy, as opposed to other dimensions of human practice. From Marx's readings, the German philosopher produced an entirely new conceptual shift that prioritized evolutionary communication, language, and learning processes in cultural systems and normative structures over other aspects of human existence. His "universal pragmatics" posits that communicative ethics is backed by reasonable standards of behaviour. The ethics of consensus achieved through communicative action (language) brings back into focus crucial problems about history and the pursuit of the truth. Despite the unavoidable contrasts between Habermas' contribution and classical Marxism, Habermas' contribution helps to restore the relevance of politics in the Marxist tradition's theory.

Ethics and individual choices by post-modern thinkers

Men are now merely instruments in the pursuit of capital accumulation, which is a product of globalized capital's emphasis on capital accumulation as an objective in and of itself. To put it another way, the commodification of human relations manifests itself in the form of unemployment, job insecurity, social marginalization, and economic destitution. The depletion of resources and the risks to the environment are also indicators of the negative characteristics of the current forms of economic power in existence. Recent social and economic trends, in fact, have shown significant tensions between the visions of long-term economic growth and the demands of society for decent labour and wealth redistribution. Indeed, present economic modernization has exacerbated social inequality in the context of a financial-led growth regime that places a premium on the importance of free markets as the primary source of growth. Because of the financialisation of wealth, today's global business has been completely overrun. In addition to financial and "rationalization" strategies, social disputes and tensions have been exacerbated since labour relations must be adapted to capital mobility and short-term returns in

order to remain competitive. The rise of global finance has contributed to the redefinition of labour relations since investors and management have subordinated the dynamics of the business to a financial model that favours downsizing and cost reduction at the price of job creation and preservation. Because labour expenditure is typically regarded as big expense items, firms, particularly public companies, must rigorously control and document such costs in order to avoid the risk of non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations. As a result of continuous restructuring to generate cash outflow, redefinition of tasks, increased outsourcing and casualization to cut costs, sell-offs and closures irrespective of productivity and profitability, deteriorating working conditions, increased control over employees, and diminished employment security are all possible outcomes (IUF 2007).

Private strategies that seek to increase production while simultaneously reducing costs have driven the evolution of flexible worker relations. Reduced industrial employment and relocation of productive units were among the consequences of global investment flows being redefined in a way that supported new value chains and management practices that prioritize short-term profits. Specifically, Weil (2014) points out that today's employer-employee relations are focused on generating value to investors rather than on creating value for employees. As his groundbreaking analysis shows, the result has been an ever-widening income inequality.

In this setting, how is it possible to spread social justice as an imperative to achieve social cohesion in political life?

In reality, the rearrangement of markets under the supremacy of financial power has been followed by a political redefinition based on a reductionist vision of the human personae. André Orléan (1998, 1999), a French economist who has written about the commodification of human relations, has stated that the role of debits and credits is particularly important in shaping livelihoods in the context of commodification of human relations. Even if he is nothing more than Pannurgo's sheep, the financier appears to us as a prophet who foretells what is to come in this framework of social relationships. In this setting, finance exerts itself on the rearrangement of business and markets, and as a result, the "promise" of productivity improvements crosses the line between human purpose and economic purpose. According to Passet (2002, 120), the nature of this process is criticized as follows: "The search for productivity, which is a positive phenomenon, becomes negative productivism from the moment the phenomenon, having ceased to serve human ends, has become closed in on itself and has become its own end." In this scenario, the cult of

earthly things, which has been elevated to the category of ends, has resulted in the depletion of the mobilizing values of social justice, which has had significant ramifications for social dynamics as a result. The human costs of the new forms of organization in commercial and scientific life are a manifestation of these ramifications. To put it another way, the commercialization of man has extended to the monetization of the life sciences as well. When the commodification of life reaches its logical conclusion, man is reduced to the status of "material" for man. For example, Passet (2002, 128) warns that "it is the entire conception of the human person that is put into question" in this context.

Because of major political and economic revolutions, the basic essence of the link between men has changed, particularly in the setting of latent fragmentation of the realms of scientific knowledge, which has occurred in recent decades. In this sense, the crisis of metaphysics, or even the incapacity to communicate a truth, might serve as evidence of the deep crisis that the current world is experiencing. The crisis of modern reason as a whole will manifest itself as a crisis of metaphysical philosophy in post-modernity, as a result of which the whole of modern reason will collapse.

In this regard, Lyotard (1989) is an obligatory name whenever the subject of postmodernity is discussed. As Lyotard (1989, 12) points out, the nature of knowledge has been reformulated as a result of the major historical and cultural transformations that have occurred since the end of the twentieth century, which have resulted in the current state of Western culture in advanced post-industrial societies. The French philosopher draws attention to the dilemma in metaphysical philosophy by asserting that postmodern knowledge displays scepticism toward metanarratives. Consider the fact that postmodern criticism has brought to the fore relevant discussions about some assumptions of the Enlightenment tradition, according to which scientific reason guides human action without the need for reference to a transcendent that confers intelligibility and normativity on human existence and actions. This is an important point to remember. Thus, according to this tradition, the human being himself makes the claim that he or she can rationally justify his or her own thoughts and actions.

However, there is no longer any assurance regarding the fundamentals of truth and human values in today's world. In postmodern culture, science is presented as being in conflict with metanarratives, and modern discourse is no longer considered to be a satisfactory discourse in this setting. It is this shift in knowledge's status, to which Lyotard alludes, that leads to a new way of applying knowledge in postmodern societies,

which in turn fosters its commodification; in other words, knowledge is and will continue to be generated for the purpose of selling it. The consequences of this activity have the potential to shape new systems of power in postmodern Western civilization, particularly in the area of information management. As Lyotard points out, today's knowledge is nothing more than a potent tool for national-state control, and he is right. Thus, the philosopher establishes an irreconcilable relationship between knowledge and power in postmodern culture, in which knowledge turns out to take on a purely practical component. It is only the denotative discourse that has validity in scientific discourse, i.e. knowledge that can be validated and recognized by the authorities (the other scientists). As a result of this technique, scientific knowledge has become divorced from the realities of the world and societal demands.

According to Lima Vaz (2002, 16), as a result of the crisis of knowledge, there is an "immanentization of the terms of the relation with transcendence," which arises as a result of the crisis of knowledge. Because of this, myths have taken the role of metaphysics as a means of guiding human activity. Such myths, such as the one about the laws of the free market, illuminate the relationship between fragmentation of information and fragmentation of social life. According to this scenario, truth and relativism are being weakened, and new processes of subjectivation are emerging, as well as new ways of being and being in the world. The challenge of relativism develops as a result of postmodernity, which affirms the relativity of human knowledge and the inability to know the Absolute and Truth as a result of dependent and/or subjective circumstances. From the perspective of anthropology, our knowledge of time, life, and the future evolves across time. Subjectivity begins to govern the trajectory of one's life, and the "ethics of the moment" defines the social standards that must be observed in order to survive. As a result, according to Bauman (2003), relationships become "liquid." Human life is characterized by choices overpowered by appetites and volitions as a result of current societal practices, which encourage hedonism and immediacy. Furthermore, the importance of immediate gratification culminates in the extinction of paradise. The absence of utopias is decried when hope has come to an end, as Marcuse has pointed out (1969). Lipovetsky (2000) warned that the post-moralist society is not built on utopias but on human self-realization based on utilitarianism, as opposed to utopias. The consumerist well-being sought by the post-modern way of life is expressed in the aesthetics of enjoyment, which is the logic of mass consumption articulated in the aesthetics of enjoyment. This confluence of circumstances encourages a new articulation between ethics and aesthetics, which in turn

encourages a narcissistic culture characterized by the cult of the body and the valorisation of physical beauty. As a result of this environment, which is characterized by individualism, there is a weakening and fracturing of social bonds.

In this scenario, the promotion of social justice has progressed in tandem with a trend to gradually and increasingly replace the discourse on essential values with the discourse on fundamental rights, which has been occurring since the 1960s. According to Speamann (2004), fundamental human rights are not contingent on members of society agreeing on a similar set of values, but rather on their compliance with the law. Because of this, there is a latent threat to the dignity of the human being in the world. Particularly dangerous is the arbitrary power of governments, which manifests itself as the expression of those who, believing that they have discovered the truth, mould the lives of men according to their own preferences.

In the light of this context, it is unavoidable that the argument concerning the ethics of "social justice," which rejects particular objectives, deception, and violence in order to construct a true human sustainable existence in society, is taking place today.

EPILOGUE

ADDRESSING POLITICAL CHALLENGES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Augustine's theory establishes the conceptual grounds for the pilgrim man's considerations of justice, freedom, and peace, as they are inserted into the historical growth of thought. His philosophical reflections on the order of things in the universe and the history of mankind are derived from his encounter with Christ. His Christian philosophy contains an ethical dimension that informs both men's religious beliefs and their behaviour in this world, according to the author. For the most part, Augustine's philosophical interpretation takes its cue from the man who is embedded in social and political life. In the light of this context, the subject of this book was Saint Augustine's *The City of God* and his idea of "social justice," which was viewed as the earthly dimension of justice at the time of writing. Dedicated to the Christian faith, Augustine reframes the debate over the foundations of justice and the fair society in order to make it more inclusive. In accordance with our perspective, we demonstrated how, in the author's opinion, "social justice" is the worldly component of justice that is based on divine law. Throughout history, the pillars of social justice have revealed a cosmic vision of an order ruled by divine law. This eternal law outlines what just people who live by faith must do in order to be happy, and it may be found in the Bible.

At the heart of the book is Augustine's understanding of man's place in creation, which overshadows the meaning of human life and the moral ambivalence of man, which is portrayed in the tensions between the "two cities." During our examination of the relationship between justice and righteousness, we place a strong emphasis on the importance of a holistic conception of man for the interpretation of the concept of "social justice." In reality, the relationship between the immanence and transcendence existent in man is critical for the establishment of a philosophy of "social justice" from an Augustinian perspective on the subject. The Bishop of Hippo organizes the concerns of being, knowing in virtue, and loving in an orderly manner by emphasizing a meditation on

man, his material dimension, his ontological dependence, his senses and appetites, his challenges, his pursuit for Truth, and his finite temporality -. A man's awareness of his true nature, according to the Saint, can only be gained through his ontological relationship with God. The soul's understanding of itself as the imago Dei permits the Divine to be contemplated in it through the lens of the soul. The soul may identify and understand its ephemerality and limitations as a result of the intellect illuminated by the Light of God in its heart. Because God is infinite and man's intellect is finite, man cannot know God alone via the longing of his soul and the effort of his natural reason. Man must seek God through all of his senses. The soul, fixated on transient, changing, and external things, succumbs to the temptation of earthly commodities and loses sight of the fact that it is the image of God. As we have seen, Augustine believes that divine assistance plays a crucial part in the quest for knowledge of Truth and, as a result, in the repair of the human soul. Consequently, the Saint does not consider social existence to be merely immanent, and he advocates a conception of "social justice" that is anchored in the Absolute rather than mere immanence. According to his understanding, there is a close connection between the conceptualization of the human being and the conceptualization of "social justice" when seen in the context of a non-reductionist anthropological approach to the study of the human condition.

The full understanding of the relation between justice and true virtues should highlight the cosmological order as a condition for achieving social order. In Augustine's *City of God,* the conversion of the will is a condition for the construction of a just society where "social justice" reigns. In this context, justice is the humanising virtue of every political-cultural process. The path to justice is based on a process of conversion which involves the search for a just measure of things. As a result, "social justice", founded on charity, can prevail among men. Moreover, the Bishop of Hippo combines the relevance of *being*, *knowing* and *loving*. In his philosophical thinking, man's being is based on the ontological bond with God. Through the infusion of grace, the human soul, as *imago Dei*, can contemplate the Truth in it. As a result, the pilgrim man does not lean on ephemeral and changeable earthly goods but realizes that the human soul is *imago Dei*. Indeed, the Augustinian interiority is translated into a constant reflective practice of self-knowledge, illuminated by Christ, in order to orient human existence towards a virtuous life according to the ordered love. Furthermore, the ethics of charity is considered the foundation of Christian people's actions. The relationship between the Absolute and the other is axial in the Augustinian conception of "social justice". The conceptualization of "social justice" in Augustine's

City of God refers to the ethical responsibility of men in historical becoming and is founded on the love for Truth and the urgency of charity. In the context of the Saint's social doctrine, charity and justice are two founding expressions of the Christian *ethos* when the perspective of promoting justice and peace is emphasized.

For the most part, Saint Augustine, a Christian adherent, redefines the boundaries of the debate on the foundations of justice and the question of what constitutes a just society in the fifth century. In this chapter, he discusses man's place in creation, the meaning of human life, and man's moral ambivalence, which is embodied in the antagonism between the "two cities." Saint Augustine's view of "social justice" might be considered as the contingent component of social life, where he emphasized the relevance of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. As far as Augustine's theory is concerned, charity and justice are two factors that influence the ethos in situations where "social justice" might be addressed. Aside from that, based on the interpretation of *The City of God's* Books II through to IV as well as Books XII to XIV and XIX, it is possible to think about "social justice" in the context of both the contingent and transcendent components of human life. The concept of "social justice" isn't specifically defined in Augustine's writings, but it's conceivable to interpret it as the earthly dimension of justice that displays the inner connections that exist between love, Truth, and the necessity of charity. According to the Bishop of Hippo, true justice is a transcendent and unchanging virtue, and this can be said with certainty. True justice, on the other hand, can be found in the pilgrim man who strives for higher levels of spiritual purity. The intellectual underpinnings of the Augustinian idea of "social justice" draw attention to the understanding of the subjective and intersubjective components of human experience throughout history, particularly in the Middle Ages. According to Christian doctrine, a just earthly human life encourages the design of social connections in accordance with the principles of divine justice. Although the philosopher is critical of the moral evil that exists in the human condition as a result of the selfishness that characterizes social life, he also points out that the divine help is an antidote to this selfish and self-centred orientation, which produces effects in the sense of a reorientation away from love for oneself and toward love for God. He cautions that worldly goods are not the bearers of meaning, but that they do so when men "look" at them and thereby gain their actual significance as a result. However, when men turn away from the Truth, they continue to live in ignorance and fail to recognize the ontological aspects of their existence.

According to the Saint, if men love in an orderly manner, societal justice will be achieved. Consequently, there will be greater promotion and acknowledgment of rights, although the very existence of social life will not be jeopardized. For the sake of simplicity, "social justice" is placed second to the love of God. As a result, it is impossible to conceive "social justice" without considering the criterion of Truth, which is to say, without considering transcendence. What is it about God's love that leads to "social justice"? Human beings cannot achieve the inner order that is essential for "social justice" unless they have a deep love for the Truth. With their hearts turned towards Truth, mankind is able to turn away from the demands of selfish love, which is defined by desires for earthly possessions, glory, power and pleasure. Because of the inclination of the soul in the direction of organized love, the desires of such material commodities will find their proper place in the lives of mankind. The Augustinian concept of "social justice," which is based on biblical allusions, reminds us that Christians cannot serve two masters at the same time. In a nutshell, Augustine enlightens us on the significance of forming a social tie founded on the ethics of charity for the advancement of the Christian faith. This is how ordered love transforms injustice into justice, according to this viewpoint. As a result, justice in the social order is predicated on the existence of an inner order that serves as the foundation of morality, ethics, and politics. The moral, ethical, and political consequences of the Augustinian perspective are critical from the standpoint of the stability and cohesion of these social relationships, for only through "social justice" is it able to construct a truly social life. Augustinian social philosophy considers the philosophical question of our neighbour in the context of intersubjective connections and loving ethics, which are both foundations of the Augustinian social philosophy.

In this line of philosophical interpretation, the relevance of "social justice" in St. Augustine's *City of God* requires an integral vision of the human being and the rescue of the contingent and transcendent dimensions of human life. Justice as true virtue is the cornerstone of social cohesion since human judgements and choices, founded on Truth and charity, promote a just society. Therefore, there is an intimate connection between the concept of a just society and the concept of the human existence in an anthropological perspective that conceives of the human being as a whole, body and soul, created as the image and likeness of God and who possesses a meaningful existence. Thus there is a cosmological and ontological presupposition about the place of man in creation and in history: only what transcends can give meaning to man's life. Augustine realizes the complexity of human life experience in history, and claims to

ethical responsibility in the promotion of earthly justice. Nevertheless, in his perspective, the provision of our neighbour´s material needs is not a sufficient condition for achieving "social justice." since it is not possible to think of ethics without the metaphysics of the Absolute. As a result of the *order of grace*, Christian people will be *truly* involved in promoting the common good to achieve "social justice." Considering their style of life, a just society is built under the responsibility of all men, who direct their lives according to the ethics of charity. As a matter of fact, Augustine proposes an ethic with metaphysical foundations that support a philosophy of social justice. From the reading of *The City of God* emerges a call to deal with the conceptualization of "social justice" against established abstractions, juridical or economic, and, at the same time, against all particular claims.

The relationship between Augustinian ethics and political philosophers such as Machiavelli, Arendt, Foucault, Polanyi and others who expand the Marxist tradition and postmodern thinking is presented in Chapter 5, which is devoted to modern and contemporary politics. This endeavour demonstrates that, in order to comprehend the obstacles of spreading social justice, it is necessary to recognize the intricate interconnections between power, knowledge, and truth that exist in contemporary society. Against the historical backdrop of the Renaissance, Machiavelli promulgated a morality based on new ideals in the ethical-political cosmos, which was distinct from the morality of the Church. As a result of present globalization and the predominance of economic power, crucial ethical and political concerns have arisen, as underlined by critical theory and post-modern thinking. In political life, the ethos of short-term profits and efficiency reduces social interactions and legitimizes the most diversified disparities, all as a result of the widespread dissemination of lies. Benedict XVI emphasized that the dissolving consequences on society occur when "social activity is placed at the mercy of private interests and the logic of power," as was the case in the case of the death penalty. As Arendt pointed out, social justice is not solely about "rights," as is commonly assumed in contemporary political thought. If Augustine and Hannah Arendt were to work together to promote "social justice," they would undoubtedly critically examine the values that underpin modern legal order, which requires that the rights of citizens, or of a group of citizens, do not depend on the sharing of a common basis of values, but rather on obedience to the laws of the state. To the extent that they agreed with Augustine's views of ethics and politics, Arendt and Foucault both criticised the separation of ethics and politics on the grounds that it renders ineffectual efforts intended to promote a just society. Indeed, this division

serves to accentuate lying in politics. The radical perspective taken by those philosophers condemns the road of deception and fraud, which corrupts social life and encourages injustice to take place.

Recalling Polanyi, the commodification of life not only denies the divine nature of man but turns out to objectify social relations. In our times, the aim of the market economy, the economic motive, is not compatible with the goals of peace and freedom. According to Polanyi, if people want peace and freedom in their future, those people "must become chosen aims of the societies towards which we are moving" (Polanyi 1944: 263). Considering this background, the actions of human beings towards social standing, peace and freedom highlight the relevance of aims that foster social justice. In truth, the aim of social justice needs to promote a human-based and community-oriented cultural and economic process that is open to values that protect society.

The current driven-forces of institutional change and money commodification have exacerbated social and cultural fragmentation in the context of living circumstances and livelihood. A consideration of ethical concerns that overshadow contemporary expressions of life commodification is necessitated in this scenario by the need for social justice. In this scenario, As a result, the present institutional framework, which was established under the aegis of the neoliberal agenda, has proven ineffective in protecting society. Finance has grown more detached from production and social claims, according to Polanyi-Levitt (2013), particularly in the Anglo-American type of capitalism. Throughout the twentieth century, the growth of the global capitalism system has progressively revealed the conflicts that exist between the expansion of the market economy and the negative impacts that it has on society. Furthermore, as Kari Polanyi Levitt notes, many Western nations have witnessed a decline in the contribution of manufacturing to gross domestic product, while an increase in the contribution of financial and business services has been noted. During this period of financialisation, capital accumulation has been geared on maximizing short-term profits in order to benefit shareholder interests. Furthermore, transnational companies have expanded their monopolistic influence over global marketplaces in recent years. As a result, millions of farmers, for example, have been displaced off their land, and millions of employees have been displaced from well-paid employment.

Recent worldwide developments have demonstrated that the existing capitalist institutional structure is an embodiment of the "economic drive" as a manifestation of cultural practices. One way to understand the impact of a major financial company on the expansion of market exchange relations is to examine them in the context of unfettered markets, where

one of the most important driving forces behind global dynamics is the development of the "culture of money." In this scenario, the political dominance of high finance comes to create new elites, institutions, and cultural practices that are dissolving social bonds, as individual claims endanger the maintenance of common interests in the face of political domination of high finance.

Economic dynamics in the global economy, which encourage efficiency and productivity, have tended to amplify reductionism in the concept of the human being, which is also evident in liberal thinking's definition of the individual. In this historical setting, the promise of increased productivity crosses the line between the meaning of human being and the meaning of human existence. It is the drive for productivity that, rather than serving the human goal, closes in on itself and becomes its own conclusion. As a result, such a logic of production and efficiency results in unemployment, precarious job, social marginalization, and destitution, among other consequences. Furthermore, resource depletion and dangers to the environment demonstrate the negative features of current forms of economic dominance that must be addressed. Indeed, the reconsideration of the philosophical ties between the economy and the dignity of human beings is a remarkable achievement. According to Polanyi-Levitt (2013), rethinking human wants and the true value of commodities and services in present societies where financial power relations determine the growth of livelihoods is urgently required.

In the light of this context, an Augustinian conception of social justice should place a strong emphasis on intellectual underpinnings, in which anthropology, politics, economics, and ethics are connected with one another. Its relevance refers to the current debate about the need for universal principles in order to rethink ethical choices that could make it possible for social ties to remain stable and cohesive. It is relevant to the current debate about the need for universal principles in order to rethink ethical choices that could make it possible for social ties to remain stable and cohesive. The writings of Augustine serve as a source of inspiration for contemplating the ethical concerns that have been imposed in the context of globalization on behalf of the predominance of economic (financial) power in the world. However, in practice, the *ethos* of efficiency and productivity has changed social relationships and legitimized socioeconomic inequalities. The notion that the worth of a human being is determined by criteria prescribed by the principles of efficiency and production means a rejection of not just a holistic picture of man, but also the notion that human beings are important to the economic process. Ultimately, those ideas emphasize the importance of social transformation

in our lives. The notion of social justice relates to the moral and ethical concerns for one's own self and one's fellow man that have existed throughout history.

After all is said and done, Augustine's *City of God* unquestionably calls for a re-examination of social justice and offers insights into the deep crisis of ethics that has gripped Western culture in recent decades. Power and inequality are intertwined, and each one is intricately related to the challenges of living in a just society, as Augustine demonstrates. Insofar as social justice practice comprises the social re-embedding of the economy, the common good can be developed by people who are concerned with the protection of society as their goal. This is inextricably linked to leading an ethical lifestyle. Without a rejection of utilitarian ideals, social life will continue to be at the whim of private interests and the logic of economic power, with potentially catastrophic consequences for society as a whole. According to Augustinian philosophy, ethical and just living in contemporary capitalism can be seen as a social perspective that rejects the current utilitarian view of individual and social life that is favoured by the expansion of market society and promotes the commodification of human life.

If economic and social improvements are to be really human, they must take into account values that help people advance in their social status. To put it another way, this endeavour must create room for principles that encourage comprehensive human development as well as genuine social justice on a global scale. Or, in short, economic and social transformations must be aimed toward the common good, for which the entire society, as a political community, is responsible.

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