

THE GOOD SOCIETY: LESSONS FOR INTEGRATED GOVERNANCE

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Abstract: *In this paper I argue that philosophies of the good society can inform theories of integrated governance in two significant ways. Firstly, they can provide a reasonable foundation for legitimating forms of authority to govern a society across the government, corporate and civil sector. Secondly, they promote value systems that can be constitutive of a normative theory of integrated governance. In developing this argument, I explore conceptions of the good society put forward by Marquis de Condorcet, Adam Smith and Karl Marx, and evaluate the modalities in which the social projects proposed by these authors involve issues of integrated governance. For this purpose, I examine the three theories in relation to three questions: (1) What goals (or objectives) should social action be directed to? (2) What should be the scope and limits of social responsibility lying behind the social authority of each sector (government, market or civil society)? (3) How is social authority to be exercised beyond legislation? What source(s) of legitimacy should one appeal to? Although Condorcet's idea of the natural social order, Smith's system of natural liberty and Marx's political economy of human value have all received their fair share of criticism from empirical theories of society, I suggest that these conceptions are still useful to us today as radical normative experiments. These experiments can have guiding value in formulating models of integrated governance. However, the fundamental differences displayed by these three conceptions reveal the importance of determining whether one can develop models of integrated governance that would accommodate plural, incompatible, or unknown conceptions of the good society.*

Key words: *Good Society, Integrated Governance, Social Theory, Social Progress, Human Fulfilment, Social Humanism.*

1. Introduction: the Good Society and Integrated Governance

The idea of 'the good society' has a long-standing philosophical tradition, almost paralleling the notion of 'the good life' but visibly exceeding the prominence of the latter in modern times. In planning and recommending social action for

progress towards desirable goals, working from an ideal of society has emerged as a methodological requirement for (almost) any normative social theory. Nowhere in the Western philosophical landscape is this trend more obvious than in the modernist paradigms represented by the French and Scottish Enlightenment of the late 18th

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Century and by Karl Marx's earlier works (such as *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*).

After two centuries of ideological triumph and experimental disillusionment, the foundations laid by these theories continue to inform post-modernist social and political philosophy [1].

In the broadest sense, the variety of contemporary discourses about the good society can be reduced to a single common feature: the methodology of evaluating social change by reference to an ideal state of affairs, where this ideal is an intelligible and detailed (often complete) picture of the desirable society. The resilience of this epistemologically overconfident methodology in a post-modernist climate is perplexing. However, it is not regrettable – especially if we are to consider its fertile influence on any discussion of the good governance of the whole society.

If we understand integrated governance to be the totality of forms of authority exercised within society as a complex organisation, both within its elements and the inter-relationships among those elements (Coghill, Tam, Ariff & Neesham, 2005, p. 13), then the central contribution of a normative theory of the good society to a theory of good governance becomes clear. After all, what is the use of a well-governed society if it is not, at the same time, a good society? What significance can we give the form if it is not supported by the substance?

I argue, however, that the impact of a conception of the good society on a conception of good governance can be formulated even more specifically. It refers to the ability of the former to make legitimate and answer (at least) three crucial questions about governance: (1) What goals (or objectives) should social action be directed to?

(2) What should be the scope and limits of social responsibility lying behind the social authority of each sector (government, market or civil society)?

(3) How is social authority to be exercised beyond legislation? What source(s) of legitimacy should one appeal to?

The first question is justified by the fact that substantive attributes of governance are, by their very nature, nothing else but attributes of actions (Coghill *et al*, 2005, p. 5). It would therefore be very difficult to understand how we would be able to evaluate governance meaningfully without establishing the content of the actions taken in order to exercise the authority referred to in the notion of governance.

With respect to the second question, it is assumed that governance (as an ethical concept) is characterised by the expectation that authority should be closely mirrored by responsibility. These two notions define and legitimate each other. For example, the source and justification of the state's authority in policing crime lies, broadly speaking, in its responsibility to contain crime and protect society from it.

The third question points to a key area that confers practical significance to the study of governance. It assumes that society can improve not only through codified rules of action and behaviour backed by enforcement but also through principles of constructive action which rely solely on moral judgements exercised by any social agent (in the absence of any statutory authority or obligation).

In this paper I examine the classical social projects proposed by Condorcet, Adam Smith and Karl Marx, and identify and evaluate the 'responses' offered by these theories to the three questions outlined above. I then conclude that these

conceptions are still useful to us today as radical normative experiments, and suggest that these experiments could have guiding value in formulating different models of integrated governance. Whether these different models could be unified in a universal formula remains an open question, which requires further investigation.

2. Condorcet and the Natural Social Order

In 1793-1794, Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794) wrote *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (referred to here as the *Sketch*). The essay, considered by the author himself to be just a plan or summary of a much more comprehensive project, was written in haste. The project it announced was never undertaken, as Condorcet died shortly after the essay was completed.

The *Sketch* explicitly examines the progress of human civilisation through ten stages, and then postulates what can be expected and should be endeavoured for the future of humanity. This Cartesian plan suggests that the role of a good society is to organise the expansion, accumulation and application of human knowledge to the satisfaction of human needs. In other words, the main direction of social progress is overwhelmingly dictated by the progress of the sciences and the 'arts' (which, in Condorcet's conception, included technology) [2]. I will not expand on this point here.

More interesting for our present discussion is Condorcet's idea of a natural social order, whereby the good society should be organised according to natural principles. What are these natural principles? Condorcet derives these from universal characteristics of human beings,

on the premise that the central aim of the good society is to facilitate human fulfilment.

In sum, Condorcet's argument runs somewhat like this. Human beings are naturally similar in certain respects which are observable: they have needs, aspire to fulfilment, require freedom to achieve it, and can exercise reason for this purpose. Within the *polis*, these universal natural features convert into rights. Because these natural features are universal, all humans are equal with respect to the associated rights. Accordingly, a natural social order is one that ensures universal equality of access to the realisation of one's needs. This principle justifies social action as follows: 'social art is the art of guaranteeing the preservation of these rights and their distribution in the most equal fashion over the largest area' (Condorcet, p. 128) [3].

Furthermore, among these rights is universal access to knowledge. Knowledge as both absolute possibility and universal right fuels Condorcet's optimism that social calculations can provide practical solutions for the satisfaction of all needs for all people. It is on this basis that he foresees, for example, the use of probability calculus to create, at the level of national governments, pension insurance systems for the continued support of elderly people, widows and orphans (Condorcet, p. 181).

While universal equality based on natural rights defines natural social order positively, natural inequalities should be treated as socially insignificant, and they certainly cannot lead to poverty, humiliation or dependence. It is under this premise that Condorcet can, for example, successfully combine secular democracy with religious tolerance (Condorcet, p.174).

A natural social order is also highly conducive to liberty, in that it allows individuals to seek their own fulfilment in an environment free from oppression. Thus, it is imperative that 'the actions of public institutions, or governments, or individuals' should not add 'new pains to those that are natural and inevitable' (Condorcet, p. 141).

In addition, a natural social order relies on principles of universal reason. The combination between the need for liberty and the need for reason leads Condorcet to ask rhetorically: 'Is there on the face of the earth a nation whose inhabitants have been debarred by nature itself from the enjoyment of freedom and the exercise of reason?' (Condorcet, p. 174). Hence, the ideal society of humankind is a global society which, according to principles of universal reason, guarantees the natural rights, including the liberty and equality, of all individuals and nations. All nations should therefore adopt constitutions based on these enlightened principles and enjoy sovereignty equally.

If 'the state's true power and wealth' should be related to 'the well-being of the individual and a respect for his rights' (Condorcet, p. 139), from this point onwards the instrumental role of society is regarded as facilitative rather than engineering. If individuals are allowed to use their abilities according to nature and to their true potential, then they can independently realise their own needs. Therefore, social systems should generally focus more on the guarantee of individual autonomy rather than on centralised distributive methods and solutions: 'men... should be able to use their faculties, dispose of their wealth and provide for their needs in complete freedom' (Condorcet, p. 131). Reason and

knowledge, to which all have access, will empower individuals for this purpose.

Importantly, throughout the *Sketch* Condorcet repeatedly displays the unshaken confidence that natural social order is accessible to all in virtue of individuals' ability to follow the precepts of nature through universal reason. In the absence of explicit laws, appeal to reason should reveal and recommend to individuals the best social conduct.

When Condorcet predicts that 'the time will come when the sun will shine only on free men who know no other master but their reason' (Condorcet, p. 179), he does not entertain the possibility that *their* reason could at any time come in contradiction with universal human reason. He does understand that the reasoning processes of individuals may be, in actual instances, imperfect and lead to imperfect results. However, he also believes that 'universal rules of reason and of Nature... are true for all languages and all peoples' (Condorcet, p. 166), and that through a process of cumulative enlightenment humankind can access these truths unequivocally.

This emphasis on the ultimate authority of the individual's exercise of reason (as well as the previously outlined emphasis on human well-being as ultimate justification of any social efforts), is not the result of an unreflective anthropocentrism. Condorcet's humanism is clearly naturalist, in that human well-being can only be achieved in accordance with nature (and not contrary to it). Thus, whatever is achieved for the *true* benefit of human beings must be for the benefit of nature (or at least not contrary to its benefit), as the *true* benefit of human beings cannot be defined or understood in any other way. He does not seem to envisage any possible tension, or conflict,

or contradiction between the two types of benefit. If, at times, he does perceive such tensions, he interprets them as an indication that the human mind has not become enlightened enough to understand the true benefits for humankind in accordance with the laws of nature. Such benefits for humankind may cover 'the true principles of the social order' (Condorcet, p. 111), the satisfaction of human needs and the attainment of individual happiness (Condorcet, p. 120), and the true rights of individuals (Condorcet, p. 182).

Let us now summarise how Condorcet's conception of the good society answers each of our three questions. Firstly, social action should be preoccupied with empowering individuals through knowledge and control, by achieving two crucial goals: (1) the universal development of science and technology; and (2) the universal political adoption of constitutions based on natural rights (such rights include equal access to knowledge and liberty for all - in this order).

Secondly, society is not expected to address human needs and fulfilment directly but to protect the power and liberty of individuals to realise these objectives locally, for themselves. This point requires further explanation: because society's protective and facilitative function is spelt out in terms of universal principles, it is to be carried out, in Condorcet's view, mainly by the national governments. He predicts that all these social efforts, made by national states through the application of universal principles of natural reason, will sooner or later converge into structured action by an international (global) government (Condorcet, p. 174). This will be achieved in the same spirit in which science and technology are to become global, as they become supported by a universal language

(Condorcet, pp. 197-198) [4]. Although the market and civil society are not completely excluded from the picture, Condorcet suggests that a unifying and co-ordinating role of this amplitude can only be successfully carried out by government.

Thirdly, for the proper conduct of both social and individual action, there is a more powerful and reliable instrument than legislation itself: it is what we should refer to as *appeal to reason*. This point also requires further analysis, which I shall briefly endeavour below.

Condorcet is aware that any legislation is bound to be imperfect, as it is incapable to foresee all possible circumstances; but, he says, the application of universal principles to local situations is a rational skill which individuals should be able to exercise autonomously: for reason to be exercised adequately by an individual, it must be independent of external authority, free to judge others and open to be judged by others (Condorcet, p. 17 and p. 42). That is why it is important for government to be secular and encourage independent thinking.

Furthermore, the authority of the law itself is to be upheld only insofar as it coincides with the authority of natural reason. This becomes apparent in Condorcet's refutation of the more traditional doctrine that the rationale of the *polis* is based on the principle of identity of interests. According to the latter, people come together to form a social order, first and foremost, for security purposes, usually expressed in means of protection against a common enemy; and, in more sophisticated cases, they are lucky enough to find additional common interests. Condorcet openly rejects this 'city as fortress' approach as inadequate for human beings as rational citizens. Universal reason should tell us plainly that natural

rights are more fundamental, less contingent and (therefore) more enduring than any identity of interests formed in times of hardship. If natural rights are denied, basic inequalities resulting from this denial will end up undermining, in the long term, the foundation of any identity of interests:

‘We shall demonstrate not only that this principle of the identity of interests, once made the basis for political rights, is a violation of the rights of those who are thereby

- debarred from the complete exercise of them, but also that this identity ceases to exist
 - once it gives rise to genuine inequality’.
- (Condorcet, p. 145)

Condorcet does not elaborate on this point but, based on the general features of his doctrine, as outlined above, I propose the following interpretation. Assuming that perfect identity of interests can be obtained in any community of individuals, beyond certain immediate security interests, comes in conflict with the reality that individuals are diverse and their interests may vary widely. No market exchanges could ever occur, for example, if identity of interests obtained in all areas of human activity. Thus, identity of interests politically superimposed on the natural inequality of individual interests is bound to create a ‘genuine inequality’ now reflected in social differences. Such social differences (of rank, status, privileges, etc.), unsupported by principles of natural equality, cannot possibly maintain, over a long period of time, an identity of social and political interests for all categories and groups of the respective community. Moreover, if one of the golden goals of humankind is, as Condorcet believes, universal and eternal peace, then this could

only be delivered by a general politics of natural rights, as previously described.

3. Adam Smith and the System of Natural Liberty

Let us now turn to the social project suggested by Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) [5] and *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) [6]. The explicit objective of the latter is to establish by what criteria a country may be regarded as rich or affluent (‘opulent’) and what sources or factors can contribute to the increase, stagnation or decrease of such affluence.

It appears that the mere choice of subject for such a thorough study as Smith undertakes over around 1,080 pages relies on the assumption that there must be something profoundly desirable about acquiring wealth or opulence. Indicative of a broader perspective on national material wealth is the fact that Smith often associates prosperity with civilisation, and poverty with barbarism (see, for example, Smith_b, p. 265).

Smith’s social and economic philosophy is extensively discussed in my thesis. For the purposes of this paper, I will limit my considerations to a brief analysis of his conception of an ideal economy as a system of natural liberty.

According to Smith, the most accurate measure of a nation’s economic health is the material state of those at the bottom of the social ladder, the disadvantaged (Smith_b, p. 88). Two ideas contribute to this conclusion – one normative and one empirical. Firstly, one must rely on the humanist premise that ‘no society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable’ (Smith_b, p. 88). Secondly, Smith also observes that the

only circumstances conducive to the prosperity of the economically disadvantaged are those in which the economy is in a 'progressive' state, 'advancing to further acquisition, rather than when it has acquired its full complement of riches' (Smith_b, pp. 90-91).

One insufficiently explored item in this argument put forward by Smith is his conception of the stationary state. Briefly stated, it refers to his belief that there are natural limits to the continuous advancement of any national economy, and that wealth acquisition will inevitably be followed by economic stagnation. This is evident in his outline of patterns and stages of development for labour wages (Smith_b, pp. 72-97) and stock profits (Smith_b, pp. 98-110). Having said this, however, it is not absolutely clear that Smith would have considered, like the French Physiocrats, that there are natural limits to economic growth which are given once and for all. Rather, it would be fairer to conclude that he leaves this issue open to the possibility that both natural and social conditions may have an impact on opening new horizons of economic development.

This interpretation would be consistent with the central importance Smith gives to both division of labour (as the driving force of the economy) and the natural liberty of the economic agents (as the opportunity for the latter to change the nature and processes of their labour as guided by the pursuit of their own economic advantage). Because division of labour can be changed creatively over time, and because people's creativity is stimulated by self-interest, periods of post-affluent economic stagnation can, again, lead to periods of progressive wealth acquisition. In other words, inspired by Smith's famous demonstration of the benefits of division of labour as apparent

in the production of a pin (Smith_b, p. 449), one can say that a good society is not so much a hard working society but a smart working society.

The key to increasing national wealth (understood not so much in terms of the gold possessed but in relation to the quantity and quality of the labour applied) is, therefore, an economy characterised by the natural liberty of all its agents. It is only through this sort of system that a society can make best use of the creative abilities possessed, at the level of individual economic agents, to produce new opportunities for economic advancement. In this context, the central role of any good society is to facilitate and protect a system of natural liberty in which all economic agents are allowed to act in accordance with their own interests.

For example, individuals should be allowed to change their trade or profession according to their skills and profit-making abilities (Smith_b, p. 63), no restrictions should be imposed on anyone wishing to enter a market or industry, corporation privileges and monopolies should be eliminated (Smith_b, p. 69), the prices of any commodities (including land and necessities) should not be regulated (Smith_b, p. 70), and wage fixing should be abolished (Smith_b, p. 77). Smith illustrates in detail the pernicious effects of regulation in these areas (Smith_b, p. 265 and p. 269).

Through the removal of state intervention in economic activities, the perfect system of natural liberty delivers invaluable benefits, such as fair distribution of wealth, equality and justice. Smith provides elaborate explanations of how this would happen (Smith_b, p. 111 and p. 136). He is confident that this system is more likely to produce what people need, because a transparency is established

between the free expression of needs and interests by each individual and the opportunities available for society to respond to these needs and interests.

The more revolutionary side of Smith's conception, however, lies in asserting that a system of natural liberty is most successful not only in assisting individuals in realising their own needs but also in producing public goods. Let us consider for a moment Smith's view of the manner in which each individual's pursuit of self-interest, compounded, will result in public benefit, according to his well-known principle of the 'invisible hand'. According to this principle, in (and only in) conditions of natural liberty, a natural law somehow obscured from human understanding ensures that private vices, such as greed and selfishness, are transformed to produce public goods, that is goods benefiting the whole community, beyond what was originally intended (Smith_b, pp. 477-478). It is in these terms that Smith discusses private prodigality and frugality, and their differently 'moralised' impact on a nation's economy (Smith_b, p. 360). Interestingly, a more evocative explanation of the importance of the invisible hand for the distribution of goods within a community, according to the later labelled 'trickle-down effect', is to be found not in *The Wealth of Nations* but in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

Described in these terms, Smith's system of natural liberty appears convincing – but there is a catch. Such liberty, as facilitated by the well-established institutions of society, is to occur if and only if certain qualities displayed by these institutions articulate harmoniously with certain qualities to be exercised by individuals as economic agents. Accordingly, if society should not interfere with the individuals' opportunities to express, pursue and obtain

the objects of their interest, the individuals themselves are expected to be able to convert their self-love into proper care for the furthering of their own condition. This proper care is somehow measured objectively, outside individual preferences. It refers not only to the basic skills involved in looking after oneself but also to being courageous (Smith_c, p. 296), well-informed (Smith_c, p. 282), well-educated (Smith_c, p. 305), and enterprising (Smith_b, p. 301).

For example, when demonstrating that free competition establishes the prices of necessities more accurately than any regulation (Smith_b, p. 159), Smith regards this accuracy as fair opportunity for any economic agent to command and obtain goods valued according to their genuine importance for the agent's needs, without the interference of any distorting factors. But for the natural system of liberty to work, the agents themselves have to be able to convert such fair opportunity into those improvements of their own condition recommended by the proper pursuit of their interests.

In sum, for any individual and/or community to reap the benefits of natural liberty, two conditions must be obtained simultaneously: (1) the social system must properly channel any private excesses of passion towards the public benefit; while (2) individuals must properly exercise their self-love. Both conditions require further explanation.

Regarding the social responsibilities of individuals, it is important to note that Smith does not found his ideal of society on the assumption and/or requirement that individuals should be fully developed morally, or capable of exercising all the complexities of justice and benevolence in an enlightened manner. On the contrary, he suggests that the safest social arrangement

would be one which assumes that self-love should be sufficient. (Moreover, acting beyond self-love and, at the same time, at the expense of it creates problems for the social interpretation of what individual needs are to be satisfied.)

This leads us to observing the crucial responsibility placed by Smith on social systems to make best public use of this self-love. For example, when criticising the callousness and rapacity displayed by those private companies administering the affairs of the colonies (America and the East Indies) in his time, Smith emphasises his concern not so much with the selfishness of the individuals involved (for, acting selfishly, they must have behaved in accordance with their natural inclinations) as with the incapacity of the social system (led by an ineffective state) to convert these private vices into benefits for either the colonies themselves or the mother country (Smith_b, p. 158).

How does Smith's conception of the good society answer our three questions? To start with, a good society is one that values smart working (by developing new ways of using division of labour efficiently and creatively) and that facilitates an economic system of natural liberty, in which all economic agents can pursue their interests without external constraints.

In answer to our second question, it is strongly advocated that social action by government should be reduced, at least as far as economic regulation is concerned, and all crucial economic issues should rely on the self-regulating potential of the market. This argument is run on the background of a deep-seated mistrust Smith has in the power of government to compensate for shortcomings in human behaviour:

'What institution of government could tend so much to promote the happiness of

mankind as the general prevalence of wisdom and virtue? All government is but an imperfect remedy for the deficiency of these. Whatever beauty, therefore, can belong to civil government upon account of its utility, must in a far superior degree belong to these. On the contrary, what civil policy can be so ruinous and destructive as the vices of men? The fatal effects of bad government arise from nothing, but that it does not sufficiently guard against the mischiefs which human wickedness gives occasion to' (Smith_a, p. 187).

This may appear to come in contradiction with Smith's analysis of the ineffectiveness shown by the British society of his time in converting the greed of private interests in the colonies into public good. It is not contradictory, however, if we understand the responsibility for this conversion to belong to the market, and not to the government. Because government relies on deliberate and planned social action, its 'intentions', no matter how 'enlightened', are subject to moral failure from the part of the individuals relied upon to exercise that authority. Fortunately, the market does not work in the same way; as, in principle, no 'intention' has more authority than others, the 'intentions' of the players flow into a spontaneous, uncontrolled process in which only outcomes of use to others (no matter how morally questionable their source) are allowed to materialise.

It is not difficult to remark that Smith's idea of a market governed by natural liberty makes sense only under the assumption that there are no significant power differentials among the economic players. This is understandable in the context of Smith's struggle with the government's regulatory power; it does not address, however, the possibility of accumulated economic power emerging

from non-regulated market processes. In this respect, Smith's view is rather static and focused on economic agents as rather small scale (or human scale). Within his perspective of natural liberty, most economic agents would be enterprising artisans promoting on the market their own personal skills. Accordingly, government itself should also be small scale (human scale) government:

'The great object of [state] reformation... is to remove... obstructions; to reduce the authority of the nobility; to take away the privileges of cities and provinces, and to render both the greatest individuals and the greatest orders of the state... as the weakest and most insignificant.' (Smith_a, p. 234).

This conclusion must be explained in Smith's historical context. In the conditions of social and political privilege generated and maintained by political measures through state institutions, it makes sense for Smith to look at the market as a liberating alternative, capable of producing socially fairer arrangements.

However, having removed from the responsibility of the state (of 'men of system') the direct pursuit of any economic objectives, Smith invests the government with a comprehensive educational role. He is the first to admit, for example, that division of labour can have negative effects on human development (Smith_c, pp. 302-305). These effects should be reduced or eliminated through the government's effort to allow the labouring poor time and opportunities for education.

The educational role of government is extended even further. For the success of Smith's economic doctrine it is essential that the great majority of citizens practise a particular set of virtues, such as prudence (Smith_b, pp. 360-362), practical intelligence and zest for knowledge, at

least in matters directly concerning them (Smith_c, p. 282). It is only provided that these conditions are met, that it becomes preferable for the state to leave the task of furthering the interests of citizens in the hands of the citizens themselves. If cowardice, ignorance and stupidity become entrenched in the great majority of the population, it is the responsibility of government to take educational measures to combat these vices of individuals as some of the most dangerous social evils (Smith_c, pp. 308-309).

Accordingly, Chapter I of Book V of *The Wealth of Nations*, entitled 'Of the Expenses of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', contains in excess of 220 pages of instructions on government intervention to educate for the purposes of national defence (Smith_c, pp. 212-231), administration of justice (Smith_c, pp. 231-244), or simply the education of people of all ages for the purposes of good citizenship (Smith_c, pp. 282-340). Throughout this material, Smith presents very detailed recommendations as to when and how the government should intervene to regulate. For example, he deems the support of the state to be absolutely necessary in financing public education institutions to attract good teachers, to enable poor but gifted students to attend, and to encourage high-quality general education for men and women of all ages. However, he also points out that students should be free to choose the apprenticeships, subjects and teachers they want (Smith_c, pp. 285-286). Similarly, he proposes that, while the education of young people of rank and fortune can be safely left to the devices of their own family, the government should insist on the compulsory basic education of children of the labouring poor and the regulation of trade standards for anyone wanting to

practise a trade (Smith_c, pp. 305-306). This basic education involves reading, writing and arithmetic, as areas of knowledge indispensable to individuals for the satisfaction of their own needs, but does not necessarily involve the teaching of religion or the liberal arts, as these should remain areas of personal preference (Smith_c, pp. 309-312).

In relation to our third question, does Smith suggest any principle of social authority beyond the rule of law? He certainly does, especially considering the largely non-interventionist role he confers to government (with the notable exceptions outlined above). In his view, *appeal to self-interest* is by far the most effective means to elicit from individuals socially desirable behaviours. Although Smith's more than subjective interpretation of self-interest does rely on a more general idea of reason, it is not universalist in the sense of Condorcet's conception of natural reason. Hence, self-interest, properly understood and exercised, is both a driving and regulating force in a good society, and its double function is of central importance to the maintenance and progressive development of this society.

4. Marx and the Production of Human Value

A third influential perspective on the good society is that of Karl Marx, as highlighted in his earlier works: *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844), *The German Ideology* (1846), *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) and *Grundrisse* (1858) [7].

Marx provides one of the most radical and specific philosophies of the good society developed so far. His normative theory goes to the heart of social structures: the good society is not only free from exploitation and alienation (regarded

as the greatest obstacles to human fulfilment), it also relies on a mode of production which renders these undesirable phenomena impossible.

When discussing ideas of the good society, Marx's earlier works are more appealing, because it is there that he elaborates on more subtle aspects of exploitation as self-exploitation, and alienation as self-alienation. These more subtle aspects are increasingly interesting for us today, in the aftermath of a promise of leisure time promoted and left unrealised by post-industrialist affluence (Hamilton, 2003; Hamilton & Denniss, 2005).

It is in the *Manuscripts* that Marx launches the radical idea that the labouring individual concurs to the exploitation and alienation practised by the capitalist system when emphasising *having* over *doing* in their own life.

Based on this idea, the history of human civilisation can be written somewhat like this. Irrespective of the type of society they are in, human beings must produce, in order to create their physical means of subsistence (Marx_b, p. 31). In this context, society is the indispensable medium in which individuals organise, primarily, their material life (Marx_a, p. 298). This organisation relies on certain categories of human *being* which, although profoundly different from one type of society to another, are nevertheless constant: labour (as productive activity), and property. In other words, human *being* (as a process or activity, as a verb in the gerund) is expressed socially as *doing* and *having* (Marx_a, pp. 275-279).

Marx's later developed theory of dialectical and historical materialism can help us now elaborate on the 'seed' he planted in the earlier works and did not return to develop. I hereby propose the

following interpretation. The constants of human being as doing and having have evolved, socially, through various modes of production in human history (from ancient to modern structures) towards an increasingly polarised and universalised separation between *those who do* (the property-less/property-free workers) and *those who have* (the work-less/work-free owners) (Marx_a, p. 271). When treated as the central value of the social order, property imposes its rules on labour in a way that results in exploitation as appropriation by one class (the exploiter) of the values created by the other (the exploited). The synthesis that humankind is waiting for is a social order in which this phenomenon ceases to occur. This requires social relations to develop in conditions of production that necessarily cannot give rise to the sort of appropriation described above. In the earlier Marx we find the suggestion that the solution may lie in conceiving human being as a harmonious, inter-supportive articulation between doing and having as inseparable aspects of humanness (Marx_a, pp. 283-284; Marx_c, pp. 103-105). Accordingly, a good society should promote *human value* (as opposed to *economic value*) based on a conception of the human being as both a 'doer' and a 'haver'.

This balance between the two aspects of human being is gradually lost in Marx's later works, as *Capital* inaugurates the trend of emphasising doing over having. The mature Marx appears to develop a conception of human nature in which not only property but the act of *having* itself is demoted as external to human fulfilment (Marx_e, p. 170). It is on the grounds of this later conception that Marx postulates the abolition of all private property and all the political measures recommended by this goal. One cannot help observing, however,

that this constitutes a significant departure from young Marx's idea of rich experiencing described as *appropriation of the world through the senses*, an act of inseparable creation (production) and ownership (Marx_a, pp 301-302).

Having said this, Marx's critique of the existing laws and institutions as unduly emphasising human beings as property owners rather than producers is constant throughout his work, and remains valid. Marx is right to observe that a good society should recognise human beings as socially relevant through the labour they produce rather than through the property they own. But, I would argue, the contrast should be made between, on the one hand, labour and property (forms of ownership) as human values and, on the other hand, commodified labour and private property (or capital) as externalised ('de-humanised') values.

Here I would like to point out a less explored aspect of Marx's earlier work. As a human being, Marx suggests, the owner of capital is also enslaved to the reductionist imperatives of private property, although not to the same extent as the worker. While the capitalist may enjoy the time and opportunity to separate his (or her) life as human beings from their role in the economic system, the worker cannot do that because his (or her) time is consumed by his (or her) productive role. But in both cases, the unifying assumption is that the capitalist economic system fails to treat members of both classes as complex human beings. In front of capitalist or bourgeois law, the capitalist is not socially valued in relation to personal qualities of skills but strictly as property owner (Marx_a, p. 247).

Perhaps the most eloquent description of the dehumanising effects of historical social orders upon all their classes,

including the ruling class, is provided by Marx in *The German Ideology*:

‘...Society has hitherto always developed within the framework of a contradiction – in antiquity the contradiction between free men and slaves, in the Middle Ages that between nobility and serfs, in modern times that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This explains, on the one hand, the abnormal, “inhuman” way in which the oppressed class satisfies its needs, and, on the other hand, the narrow limits within which intercourse and with it the whole ruling class, develops. Hence this restricted character of development consists not only in the exclusion of one class from development, but also in the narrow-mindedness of the excluding class, and the “inhuman” is to be found also within the ruling class.’ (Marx_b, p. 432)

In this context, how can economic and social progress be aligned with human progress? Or, in other words, how can the good society (regarded as a facilitator of human fulfilment) occur? As it stands, the actual goal of capitalist political economy is to increase the sum total of annual savings. This goal, Marx shows, is not necessarily related to human fulfilment; if anything, it tends to go against it (Marx_a, p. 284). Hence, the aim of production (as material wealth increase) should be, instead, to maintain as many workers as possible and to create for them, through increasingly available leisure time, as many opportunities as possible for ‘self-creation’ (Marx_c, pp. 65-69).

Consequently, in answer to our first question, Marx’s earlier conception of the good society suggests that social action should primarily be directed towards the development of a mode of production which is non-exploitative and non-alienating. This is to be done through a

balanced perspective on doing and having as inseparable aspects of human being. These aspects should be promoted as socially relevant through an economy of *human value* whose chief goal is to create leisure time rather than capital.

With respect to our second question, Marx has a substantially different answer from Condorcet and Smith. The revolution of the working class and its initial claim of state power is a politically determined transitional step necessary to create the economic prerequisites for the association of free producers in the socialist stage (the ‘self-government of producers’, as stated in Marx_f, p. 58). This stage will then form the economic and political basis for the abolition of private property as class property (Marx_f, p. 61), the complete subordination of the state to civil society and, eventually, the disappearance of the state (Marx_c, p. 55).

In other words, government is only needed in the revolutionary and socialist stages. Based on a centrally planned economy, mature communism will have the resources to do away with both government and the market, and enjoy the triumph of civil society.

Within the prospect of a society without government, our third question becomes extremely important. As no social order is possible without some form of authority, how would the laws of Marx’s advanced communist society be upheld in the absence of the state, and (beyond these laws) what principles of social action should operate with legitimate authority? There is, I believe, insufficient material in Marx to answer the first part of this question; but there are some interesting elements that could answer the second part.

I have summarised these elements under the heading of *appeal to collective*

consciousness. Accordingly, Marx suggests, the good society should not be divided into classes and experience class conflict. In *The Poverty of Philosophy* of 1847 (pp. 173-174), he provides a detailed explanation of how the revolution of the working class will abolish all classes and all political power in society, thus dissolving its own power and identity as a class. The significance of this phenomenon is explained in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

‘In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all’ (Marx_c, p. 63).

Collective consciousness is a necessary characteristic of the ‘new individual’. If a non-exploitative and non-alienating mode of production, facilitating human fulfilment, should be promoted, then some of the key principles of bourgeois society should be re-defined. Hence, he or she should understand that relating to land as a human being, as well as equality in human development, is achieved through collective property and not private property (Marx_a, p. 268). He or she should also understand that the convergence between labour and free activity is better achieved through general (rather than local) utility, that is, through production ‘for the sake of universal man’ or ‘for the sake of the community’ (Marx_d, p. 146). All these conceptual changes require all individuals in the new society to develop an advanced collective consciousness. Only on the basis of the proper development of collective consciousness in individuals can the new society do away with the state. It is only because individuals require time to develop this collective consciousness adequately that the state cannot be abolished at the time of

the revolution of the working class but some transitional stages (such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, and socialism) are required.

In other words, collective consciousness requires that all individuals become social individuals, in that they internalise a common, rather specific, set of principles and values, which will form the basis of all relationships in the new society (now a homogeneous civil society). Any forms of authority emerging from this social structure would have to be dealt with by reference to these principles.

5. Three Good Societies: Three Different Lessons for Integrated Governance

Let us now summarise how the three conceptions of the good society presented above answer our three questions relevant to integrated governance. In Condorcet’s natural social order, the central locum of social authority is the government, while social authority beyond legislation is performed by appeal to reason. In Smith’s system of natural liberty, the driver of social authority is the market (with some important qualifiers from government), while social authority beyond legislation is performed by appeal to self-interest. Finally, in Marx’s advanced communist order, whatever remains of social authority is exercised solely at the level of civil society, through appeal to collective consciousness.

How can each set of answers affect a conception of integrated governance? The hypothetical formula proposed in Coghill *et al* (2005) appears to deal successfully with any variance in prominence among the three sectors. Let us consider this formula:

$$\text{‘IGI} = \text{GSG}^a + \text{MSG}^b + \text{CSG}^c + \text{IRG}^d,$$

where

IGI = integrated governance index

GSG = government sector governance indicator

MSG = market sector governance indicator

CSG = civil society sector governance indicator

IRG = inter-relationships governance indicator

and a, b, c, d are variable weightings that should be given to each governance indicator, to reflect the impact of socio-economic and political factors on the relative importance of governance in each indicated area' (Coghill *et al*, 2005). Assuming the above, any variance in social authority and responsibility of each sector across the three social orders considered can be represented as a variance in the values of a, b and c . With the proviso that not much seems to be left of the meaning of IRG in Marx's model, it can also be said that variance in the relevance of this indicator can be represented as a variance of d .

Special attention should be paid, however, to the modalities in which differences in the underlying principles of the good society can lead to differences in defining substantive criteria for governance (such as transparency, accountability, responsiveness and fairness). On the issue of fairness alone, for example, there is a vast literature displaying profoundly different understandings of what constitutes (or should count as) fairness, as well as of the mere relevance of fairness for the governance of society, from social naturalism to market liberalism to post-Marxism to neo-contractualism. While it would be impossible to take the matter any further in this paper, I suggest that more research should be done in this direction.

If the general formula cannot account for substantive differences in meaning (of the type indicated above), it is doubtful that it

could be used to measure governance across social structures where such differences occur. This conclusion raises the question of whether fundamental differences in conceptions of the good society (such as those pertaining to social structure) point to a problem of incommensurability of governance performance across different social structures, or whether a universal operational model could indeed be obtained.

6. Conclusion

Why should we reflect on these models? In a very clear sense, they deal with *ideal* societies, they are out of this world. Furthermore, each of these three conceptions represents a paradigm of social progress which has become dominant in modern times, generated a social project that has been tried in practice and that has, largely, failed. It can be said that some have failed 'more than' others – but, considering the serious practical problems faced by each of these models, they can all be reasonably labelled as failures.

The reason these conceptions are still interesting to us today is a combination of two factors. Firstly, *these* three normative experiments stand out to be selected for our discussion because they have been dominant in the last three centuries. Humanity has spent the most time trying to put *these* projects into practice more than any others. Consequently, both support and criticisms of these projects are abundant, and offer us rich material for use in reflecting on the interactions between models and practice.

Secondly, they are radical normative experiments (some more radical than others). When evaluating good governance, we are essentially making the

same kind of intellectual move: we compare what occurs in social practice with some idea *we* entertain about what is desirable. What *is* is assessed by reference to what *should be*. Whenever we ask ourselves about what *should be*, we step out of this world. But radical normative experiments are more fertile than others also because they push our normative creativity to the limits. There are many reasons that can be attached to the failure of these three projects (for example, the unfounded reliance on ideas such as absolute universal knowledge, the perfectly competitive market, the perfect social individual). However, what is important for the development of a model of integrated governance is the realisation that such a model is bound to be very sensitive to variations in the conceptions of the good society informing it – at least with respect to the three questions that have been discussed in this paper (namely, the goals of social action, the distribution of social authority and responsibility among the three sectors of society, and principles of authority beyond legislation). Radical normative experiments can indicate to us the range or extent to which models of integrated governance can vary with conceptions of the good society.

In modelling integrated governance, we are in a difficult situation. Can one form a conception of good integrated governance without adopting a conception of the good society? On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that conceptions of the good society can vary greatly and significantly in any jurisdiction. How can we then safely assume that we would be able to create a unified normative conception of integrated governance representative for that jurisdiction? In this context, I believe that the most serious challenge governance researchers are facing today is to determine

whether one can develop models of integrated governance that would satisfy plural, even incompatible, conceptions of the good society – or, even further, conceptions of the good society that are unknown or not yet formed. Only after answering ‘yes’ to this question can we then ask ourselves what these models would look like, and what conditions they would require to become operational.

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2. In Condorcet's view, at the forefront of any progress of human civilisation are the sciences – that is, all the disciplines and activities set up for the pursuit of truth. On the other hand, people do not just contemplate the universe but have needs inherent in their nature. It is in response to these needs (under the imperative of utility) that humans have developed the arts – the 'mechanical arts' (Condorcet, *Sketch*, p. 59) as the archetype of today's notion of technology, as well as the fine arts (Condorcet, *Sketch*, p. 53). The role of mediator between truth and utility is performed by philosophy, which is thus set apart from both the sciences and the arts. It results from here that, in order to achieve appropriateness in anything of utility to human beings, one has to first establish the truth of nature, and then derive from it (through philosophical reflection) its utility and relevance for human beings. Thus, utility is nothing but truth applied, or further specified, in contexts of human benefit.

Notes

1. Some of the most recent writings on the subject include: John J. Ranieri, *Eric Voegelin and the Good Society*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995; Karol E. Soltan and Stephen L. Elkin (eds), *The Constitution of Good Societies*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996; John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Good Society: the Humane Agenda*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1996; Julia Parker, *Citizenship, Work, and Welfare: Searching for the Good Society*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998; Joseph S. Berliner, *The Economics of the Good*

3. All page numbers refer to the 1955 edition listed in the **References**.
4. Condorcet's view of a universal language, though, refers to a perfectly transparent and precise symbolic language as developed, for example, in mathematics or the natural sciences (and not to a particular natural language).
5. All page numbers refer to the 1976 edition listed in the **References**.
6. All page numbers refer to the 1976 edition listed in the **References** (volumes I and II).
7. All page numbers refer to the editions listed in the **References**.