

**AFTER THE MILITANT, THE VOLUNTEER BEYOND  
THE SECULARIZATION**

*European Identity, Welfare State, Religion(s)*

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## Introduction

In 1999, the European universities of Florence, Hannover and Salonica, together with the Israeli Beer Sheva, Ben Gurion University, and two non-profit cultural associations – the Salonica-based Planning and Research and the Florence-based ASFER (Associazione per lo studio del fenomeno religioso – Association for the Study of Religious Phenomena) began research on behalf of the European Commission on the theme “European Identity, Welfare State, Religion(s)”. The research lasted 28 months and was part of the TSER (Targeted Socio-Economic Research) programme dealing with social integration. The objective of this is to combat marginalization and new forms of exclusion, with the chief aim of identifying effective methods of constructing a sense of citizenship and a solid and solidary European identity.

It was important that the project came within the framework of the TSER because this research is on the borderline between economic and ethical rationality, between economic development and the development of civic society, both of which are fundamental features of the European tradition. The objective of economic convergence cannot ignore the need to construct the conditions for lasting stability, a stability that takes account of the cultural, social and political diversity of Europe. Europe is a continent with many national communities, each of which has their own physiognomy, culture and languages. It is a complementary mix of economic, political and social identity, and it is important that its vital, living connections should be advanced. One of these is undoubtedly the religious factor. The EISWR research therefore deals with the question of how the different Christian religious confessions (Catholicism, Protestantism, Anglicanism and Orthodox) and certain minority religions (Islam, Judaism) contribute to the debate about systems of social welfare in Europe. In this context, the research focuses in particular on the confessional and non-confessional (in so much as they are implicitly religious) humanitarian organizations that contribute to the transformation of social policies in Europe in view of a new European citizenship.

To what extent has the process of secularization, with the individualism of consumption and the marketplace, really led to an irreversible “desertification of souls”? We can see a process of secularization that does not lead to the “death of God”, even if there is a tendency towards a deconfessionalization of religious groups and a “fresh humanistic spell” of the “non-confessional” ones. What is at stake is the principle of subsidiarity, according to which it is possible to provide a more rapid and less costly response to problems at a local level. Solidarity is the ideal source that groups draw on and aim towards, even if it is still incomplete. Despite the returning tendency towards bureaucratization and institutionalization, it is promising that a large number of citizens dedicate their time and money to help the weak and marginalized. Finally, we have shown that religious values and norms, whether these are expressed by religious or non-religious groups, can play a significant role in the formation of a European identity based on the normative foundation of tolerance, solidarity and the acceptance of the “other” in strengthening solidarity and social cohesion in the present multicultural European Union.

After the militant, then, the volunteer appears to be an anticipatory figure of a new social phase beyond that of modernity and secularization.

# 1 Methodology of the research

## Introduction

It's not the first time (and it certainly won't be the last) that social researchers have to face burdensome methodological problems, essentially due to the almost absolute lack of basic information, data banks, reliable statistics concerning the phenomenology to be considered. If that would not already be sufficient to complicate the approach, we had to take into consideration the transnational character of the survey, and its extremely various and not easily comparable - even on the basis of wide and not really binding parameters - local articulations.

The same language, social-political, juridical and economic differences almost appeared to be routine matters compared to a sea of little and big problems concerning methodological comparison, due to the impossibility of adopting just an single, exact research procedure that might take into consideration the national particularisms and the distinctiveness of each context to be considered.

One of the first obstacles was represented by the extreme variety of numerical consistency of the reference universes, both those concerning the resident population in a specific country and those concerning volunteers associations. The relative span ranges from the over 80 millions Germans to the almost 60 millions French people and Italians, to the over 10 millions Greeks and, finally, to the over 8 millions Swedish people. Data on voluntary service within the sphere of welfare state in each country are scarce and sometimes conflicting, but, above all, hereof classifying criteria change and, in particular, it is not often clear the distinction between charity associations from a religious viewpoint and those with a lay origin.

### 1.1 The methodological approach of the research

Despite the awareness of the remarkable limits, structurally imposed by fortuitous circumstances, we nevertheless tried to find an operational solution, which could enable us to carry on the research in an appropriate and scientifically acceptable way.

First of all we estimated that it was not convenient to arrange a real questionnaire structured on the base of a quantity feature, taking into consideration the impossibility to define a representative sample of the reference universe. But, above all, we adopted a quality methodology in order to use at their best the information resources that might be available through a rather free and spontaneous interlocution with people interviewed. Nevertheless a draft scheme has been arranged (a sort of interview guideline, which rendered it, therefore, just a half-structured one) It should have had to enable us to collect, as much as possible, rather mutual comparable data, in sight of compared analysis of the results obtained. In particular we paid attention to the following aspects:

- Organisation aspect;
- Profile of the interviewed people;
- Organisational models;
- Decisions taking processes;
- Recruitment of members;
- Training of members;
- Perception of relationship between welfare state and religion;
- Perception of European identity.

For what the choice relating to the subjects to be interviewed is concerned, we decided to collect 100 interviews for each country, with 20 interviews in each of the 5 cities selected, for a total amount of 500 interviews, subdivided as follows:

- France 100
- Germany 100
- Greece 100

-Italy 100  
-Sweden 100.

These numerical goals don't have always been achieved for several reasons: refusal of people to be interviewed (especially in Greece, for what members of religious associations are concerned), specific conditions in single countries, in a particular city or within a particular association, lack of basic information to trace people with key-roles and members of organisations possessing the profile pointed out by the ideal sample. For these reasons we had to note a certain degree of variance from what expected at the beginning of the research and the real sample interviewed, without, anyway, affecting in a meaningful way the quality of results obtained.

In order to fully respect the international sampling model, we had sometimes to adopt some devices. For example in Strasbourg, following the impossibility to find enough people belonging to associations with Catholic origin to interview, we addressed two people of the same association: one having a managerial role and another one having a mere operative role as a simple supporter.

One of the criteria followed in order to select people for the interviews was the number of members of the association, in order to assess size categories (for example up to 20 supporters, between 21 and 50, from 51 onwards).

In order to establish meaningful groups to be used as part of the sample, also the experience acquired, in terms of years elapsed from the establishment of the organisation, has been weighted (e.g. from initial year to 1950, or till 1975, or till 1985, or even till 1995, or finally from 1996 onwards).

In each country we divided the sample formed by the 100 people interviewed into 2 different groups counting 50 members each: one constituted by interviewees that belonged to religious associations and the other by people belonging to associations with a more evident lay character. In the various countries, adjectivations differ greatly exactly on the definition of these categories: for example associations have been defined, from time to time, as spiritual or confessional or religious or even as humanitarian or secular. The basis for the discrimination lay/religious is, moreover, pretty conventional. It is not by chance that, even those who are clearly taking inspiration from religious principles strongly underline the lay, secular character of the association they belong to.

Moreover, we have to take into consideration the fact that in Greece, officially, the relationship between lay organisations (usually indicated as "humanitarians" and counting up to 370) and religious associations (which are just 78) is by large in favour of the first ones, that are much more numerous. At the same time, it must be taken into consideration the fact that there are many activities which are directly managed by Orthodox Church, at parishes or monasteries level, that others have born in a religious environment but had to assume a legal public structure and others, finally, that have a religious inspiration and that have a juridical acknowledgement but institutionally do not depend on Orthodox Church. In general, associations with a religious character do not seek for contacts with non-religious associations and, generally, do not maintain public relations (and this explains also the high level of refusals to the proposed interviews). Even within associations, which are defined as humanitarian, numerically much more present in Greece than the religious ones, we must distinguish between those exercising a more medical activity and those, which are more attentive to a social dimension, in a broad sense. The first ones take care of physical disabled (i.e. deprived or failing sighted or deprived of hearing), mentally ill people, elder people, orphans, maladjusted, Aids patients, cancer affected and also blood donors. The others include assistance to poor people, to unemployed, to mothers and families in difficulty, to drug-addicted, deviants, but include also environmental groups. The articulation of religious organisations is as much complex as it operates in six different areas: charity, medical assistance, family, old people, childhood and blood donation.

In Germany the division between the social and the educational sector has been completely cancelled, as education associations belong to a sole Federal Association of Independent Labour of Social Welfare.

On the contrary it has been rather respected - with the partial exception of France in particular - the distinction, in the percentage of 50% respectively, between the managerial and the operative level (the latter being more inclined to be reticent, for obvious reasons). The same thing can be said for gender distinction, respectively equal to 50% as well.

Obviously some changes had to be made for specific exigencies, even if, generally, the overall scheme was respected.

For example we wanted to distinguish within the associations between full time staff and other volunteers. Even in this case the division was equally assigned for the half to each group.

Other layers pertain to territorial and urban characteristics. We assumed that the phenomenon of charity associations takes especially root in towns and, proportionally to the number of their inhabitants. But the housing consistency criteria could not be the only one: We needed to add some aspects relating to social-economic and cultural representation.

For these reasons, in Germany, we took into consideration five "denominational" regions, equally present in the share of 20% each: Hanover and Lower Saxony which are by majority Protestants; Munich and Bavaria by majority Catholics; Cologne and North Rhineland-Westphalia by majority Catholics but with a significant Muslim presence; the multicultural Berlin and the surrounding territory; Leipzig and its rather secularised district.

In Italy, the criteria of big cities, connected to specific inter-regional social-economic characters, has prevailed. Therefore we decided to proceed with the survey in Rome, Turin, Palermo, Bologna and Florence, according to this order, having considered the number of inhabitants, which ranges from 2.645.000 in the capital to 919.000 in Turin, to 687.000 in Palermo, to 385.000 in Bologna and to 380.000 in Florence.

In Sweden, we chose Stockholm (674.000 inhabitants), as the capital and the main city of the same county, Göteborg (433.000 inhabitants), as an important port on Kattegat and the second Swedish city, Malmö (234.000 inhabitants), which is another merchant port and seat of intense passenger traffic, Umeå (91.000 inhabitants) which is the capital of the Västerbotten county and an important commercial centre, and Karlstadt (76.000 inhabitants), as the capital of Värmland county and a commercial port specialised in timber activity.

In Greece, cities involved were Athens, with over 3 millions inhabitants, Salonika with over 400.000 residents, Volos with almost 700.000 inhabitants and capital of *nomo of Magnesia*, and Kavala as a Macedonian centre with almost 60.000 inhabitants. Later we added the island of Crete, which is a region that counts over half a million of inhabitants.

In France the choice took also into consideration the geographical position and concerned Paris (with over 2 millions individuals only in the capital and almost 11 millions within the Ile-de-France), Strasbourg (eastward, with over 260.000 inhabitants, capital of Alsace and privileged by a local law inspired by German law dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century), Lyon (south-eastward, with almost 450.000 residents), Marseilles (southward, with roughly 800.000 individuals, largely composed by migrants from Maghreb and also from the so-called Black Africa) and Wrens (which counts around 200.000 people, south-westward and at the forefront in the field of social action in training and access to work through specific counters inside the city quarters). For a greater completeness we should have added another south-westward city, for example Toulouse (with almost 350.000 inhabitants) or Bordeaux (with almost 300.000 people living there), but the other cities sampled already represented a sufficient picture of the overall situation in France.

Sometimes we added specific questions considered being more attentive to national contexts.

But we have also to say that some questions appeared to be little understandable in some contexts, due to the fact that the basic structure of the interview was essentially prepared on the base of the Italian situation.

The very same modalities of the interviews (guided type) were generally direct, personal, that is to say face-to-face. In other cases they were supplied by telephone, particularly in Sweden where on a total amount of 74 interviews 41 were realised on the phone (in Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Umeå) while the other 33 were done in Karlstadt through direct contact with managers and supporters of the different groups sampled.

Sometimes contingent situations created some problems to the development of the research. And not always associations welcomed the survey activity of the researchers, due to lack of time or fearing possible exploitable misuse of information and data by external individuals.

Also the length of interviews indicates the disposability or resistance to the activity of our equipments on field. Generally, interviews lasted at least one hour, sometimes more than two hours.

The various transcriptions of the interviews were taken care of the same interviewers. Such a delicate task could not be entrusted to others.

For each interview collected almost 20 pages of transcription were needed. Therefore the material produced for each city has raised almost 400 pages, for each country almost 2000 pages, for the entire research little less than 10.000 pages, all duly analysed word by word.

Checks, where possible, were made on contents of interviews, especially relating to public and official communications concerning single organisations.

A single researcher normally took care of the interviews, but in the overall picture of the various countries concerned the trend adopted was to have one or two interviewers for each city or, at least, a responsible co-ordinator at national level and another one at city level.

Usually we provided to assign a group of five interviews for each city to each interviewer. In this way we had at least four interviewers for each city that collected a total of 20 interviews for each place.

The scientific personnel assigned to the survey possessed an average-high level academic training. All the interviewers had a university training in the fields of social sciences, almost ever at the highest academic level: research doctors, PhD holders, first researchers, university master students, scholars, university associate professors, professors.

The selection of interviewers was carried on on the base of the good scientific results acknowledged by the national and local responsible, through previous co-operations in research activities or on the base of appropriate evaluation texts, taking into consideration curricula vitae presented by candidates and ensuing talks.

Particular attention has been given to the previous training of researchers, which participated in briefing meetings on methodology, contents, research techniques and specifically on European identity, welfare state and religions.

Here is the comprehensive scheme proposed to researchers for what options relating to individuals to interview and associations to include in the research area are concerned.

## 1.2 Comprehensive scheme of the structure for the survey sampling

Country	City	Gender		Association role		Association Type	
		Men <i>No.</i>	Women <i>No.</i>	Managers <i>No.</i>	Members <i>No.</i>	Religious <i>No.</i>	Secular <i>No.</i>
France	Paris	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Strasbourg	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Lyon	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Marseilles	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Wren	10	10	10	10	10	10
Germany	Hanover	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Munich	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Cologne	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Berlin	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Leipzig	10	10	10	10	10	10
Grecia	Athens	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Salonika	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Volos	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Kavala	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Crete (Island)	10	10	10	10	10	10
Italy	Rome	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Torino	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Palermo	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Bologna	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Florence	10	10	10	10	10	10
Sweden	Stockholm	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Karlstadt	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Göteborg	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Malmö	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Umeå	10	10	10	10	10	10
TOTAL	25	250	250	250	250	250	250
GENERAL TOTAL	25	500		500		500	

### Conclusion

In default of sufficiently defined profiles of the single situations to enquire, we tried to formulate the survey at our best, taking into consideration human and material resources available. Obviously a perfect respect of all the criteria could not be imaginable. Only someone who's not used to research on field can expect perfection, or that every stage of the research might be possibly implemented without doubts or difficulties.

Usually a well conducted research is that one that advices of all inconvenients and unforeseen events occurred, and, at the same time, that presents the solutions adopted to overcome obstacles and to bring back the peculiarities of single cases to the common model.

We couldn't expect that Sweden and Greece might answer mirror-like to the issues addressed by our survey. National cultures, prevailing religious modality, attitude and behavioural perspectives of the two people are too different. Nevertheless the result of the study we carried on highlighted peculiar convergences, contact points, intriguing affinities.

This also occurred concerning compared analysis paths relating to the other nations addressed by our empirical work.

In this context, it won't be sociologically correct to express a value judgement (and, moreover, what if that from our side) on the methodological progress of the survey. Certainly, it would be possible

to do it better. If that was not the case, this is due to contingent mishaps, to some organisation delay (especially financial-wise, at university level but also at Communitarian-European one), to some procedural hindrance. After all, we are still not very used to work as a team, especially with colleagues possessing different cultural, scientific and temperamental background. Let alone the constant represented by the language obstacle, notwithstanding the use of some free communication languages (English, French or Italian).

In conclusion ours has also been a research on how to research and, particularly on European research.

## 2 Voluntary Service Groups: reference models

### Introduction

Religions, welfare state, European identity: which is the relationship between these issues?

More precisely: in which way, according to which instruments and actions, great monotheistic religions, which formed the cultural background on which Europe historically was defined, take part, nowadays, in the building of an European identity, which might be able to ensure the respect for the *other* and the *dignity* of everyone. And again: till which stage does the secularisation process transform into a "desertification of souls", by which the European contemporary subject would result, once and for all, fixed in the individualistic game of consumption and market?

Finally: the crisis of "welfare state", that forced (and still forces), in a different proportion and in different times, EU member States to seriously debate the universalistic criteria that so far have legitimised their role of sole managers of "citizenship rights", caused extra-state solidarity networks to emerge.

In any case, both in the case of lay origin and in case of religious one of the aforementioned networks, it seems that the task of ensuring the satisfaction of fundamental needs of the person is assigned to them, in a complex path of re-definition of European welfare-state systems.

Then, up to which point the networks hereto do perceive their role as European actors?

EIWSR research represents, precisely, an attempt to give an answer to the above mentioned questions, through the activating of two research tracks: on one side, the social-historical re-construction of relationships between religions and societies in contemporary Europe; on the other side, an empirical research dedicated to the survey of non-profit organisations behaviours toward the topic of European identity.

Concerning the latter issue, 100 associations were sampled for each participating country: 50 lay ones and the other half religious ones.

Here we provide the final results of this research, concerning France, Greece, Sweden, Germany and Italy, but not before having exposed methodological criteria adopted for the sampling of organisations and the structuring of the questionnaire, as well as the hermeneutic scheme adopted for the interpretation of the results obtained.

First of all, it must be noted that the choice of a quality methodology - such is, as a matter of fact, the questionnaire structured as a "interview guideline" - was based on a specific theoretical-epistemological assumption by which whenever behaviours, judgements, perceptions surveying is concerned, merely statistical-quantity methods have now revealed to be seriously insufficient (if not completely useless).

Objectiveness of results obtained with the latter method, in fact, too often has shown to be based on unexpressed value judgements, which, therefore invalidate the relative reliability.

Taking into consideration the enquiry goal of the survey (that we have previously mentioned through the various question marks) and, above all, the extreme complexity and variety characterising the associations universe revealed by the different stories, variously interlaced in time, signing the path of European civilisation, we thought to be more scientifically appropriate, even if dangerous, to resort to an explicitly "subjective" determination of the methodological instrument.

Because of all that, the sampling derived from the following criteria:

- Year of establishment
- Area of intervention
- Number of members

For each one of them we maintained the criteria of representation and numerical balance within the relative selected areas of intervention:

- Social-medical services
- Psycho-pedagogical-educational services
- Personal care services

As a matter of fact, what concerned us mostly was not as much to measure the wealth of the association web in the countries selected for the survey, rather to understand a specific type of this kind of associations, and precisely that one whose area of interventions crosses directly welfare state institutions. Not by chance, therefore, the questionnaire was structured on the following thematic groups of issues:

- Organisation model
- Value system
- "Third sector"
- Welfare state
- European identity

Finally, in the selection of the cities to be proceeded with the sampling of associations, beside the criteria of numerical equality of these ones, we adopted the geographical representation standard, in order to test differences within the same areas ("lay", "religious").

Therefore, 20 associations were sampled (10 lay and 10 religious ones) in each city among the following:

Paris, Strasbourg, Lyon, Marseilles, Wren (France)  
Hanover, Munich, Cologne, Berlin, Leipzig (Germany)  
Athens, Thessalonika, Crete, Volos, Kavala (Greece)  
Turin, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Palermo (Italy)  
Karlstadt, Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Umeå (Sweden)

For what the map of the results obtained is concerned, the following pages will expose only those concerning the *organisation models* of the "third sector", showing the problems thereto due to the process of re-definition that, even if in different forms and with different results, involved (and still involves) all welfare systems.

Granted that we face all kinds of organisations connoting the third sector (from voluntary service associations to social co-operatives, passing through foundations and "confraternities"), first of all, we pointed out the great variety of welfare state systems within which associations concerned by the survey operates.

Welfare states of the countries where the research was carried on, even if produced by completely different histories, took shape, in fact, in as many specific relationship systems between associations (lay and religious one), state institutions and market economy.

Following an ideal path from north to south, we find, as a matter of fact, the Swedish model, which is certainly the best known (together with the English one) for at least two reasons: universalism of services and "probably the highest taxes in the world" - as the Swedish drafter writes.

The "insurances" system, inaugurated by Bismarck, points out a meaningful variety of the previous model: universalism, but only for some basic services, and above all, a mixture of public/private contributions.

The remaining three systems are more close to the Swedish one (France, Italy and Greece), but none of them is as much universalistic.

But what deserves mostly to be noted, relating to that, is the nature of the relationship existing, so far, between "third sector" and state welfare policies. Anticipating the conclusions, we can immediately say that, while in Sweden volunteers associations may be defined as an internal articulation of public welfare state, in Germany are hereto structural elements. In the rest of the countries concerned by the survey, on the contrary, associations belonging to the third sector (being both lay or religious, both in an associative and a co-operative form) are always pointed out as a complex of autonomous subjects, whose function can be defined as subsidiary to state policies.

Well, at present, the above-described differences seem to be further specified. Excluding, maybe, Germany, in all the other countries the so-called "crisis of third sector" started transformation processes of the social policies adopted so far, whose effects ended to involve the same third sector, re-defying its role and, in this way, debating also its same identity.

Even excluding *reaganomics* and *thatcherism*, as limit expressions of the trend started in the 80s concerning the research of alternative forms of welfare hitherto known, it is certain, in fact, that all

western countries assumed a different attitude towards market economy, accepting to articulate also social problems in terms of "consistency" with its logic. In other terms, the "fiscal crisis of the State" has become the horizon within which policies must be measured in order to face old and new social needs.

It's in this context - as data of the research show - that third sector, in the plurality of its expressions, emerge as the new subject in the debate on new forms of welfare to be adopted, starting a process whose results still appear largely unpredictable.

Actually, at this moment, the various associations composing the rich European web of non-profit environment seem to be, at the same time, market and charity subjects, with different effects on their original background, according to the country in which they operate and according to their history.

On the base, in fact, of the willingness to invest in the elaboration of new preservation strategies of their identity as "charity subjects", they could have a significant role in the building of a new social-economic structure based on common solidarity, or on the other hand, on the base of their attitude to fully transform into in social market subjects, they will have to articulate the "gift economy" in purely subjective terms, renouncing to discuss about the logic of consistency dictated by consumption system.

The loosening of the dilemma to which non-profit world seems to be bound (especially the Italian and French one) and, consequently, the building of new models of fruition of citizenship rights, depends on the translation into political terms of the centrality of the person, opposed by everyone (lay and religious people) to the anonymous re-distributive practices of actual welfare systems.

Moreover, as it results from the survey, facing the new and complex problems opened by the fall of "real Socialism" and by always increasing extra-community migration fluxes, neither the disenchantment of instrumental reason nor the self-referring closeness into its proper identity seem, in fact, to be the obvious effects of the secularisation process for third sector associations, on the contrary: even when organisations' action remains locally bound, it's not aimed to the defence of local identity or traditions, but to social integration of the *other*, considered as a *person*.

From this point of view, the sampling of answers given by associations of the countries concerned by the survey about the criteria of acceptance of new members is significant. Over 80% of those sampled declare explicitly not to consider faith or ideological beliefs as causes of exclusion. It's enough to "belong to mankind" to be accepted.

Even if, we immediately have to add, taking into consideration motivations behind individuals' commitment to voluntary activity, the distinction between members of religious organisations and lay ones appears to be clear: for the first ones faith is "the first engine".

But, according to our point of view, it would be a mistake to stop at this remark.

In reality, secularisation process did not mean (and it does not mean) "desertification of souls" but a request of humanising social relationships and the precise condemnation of all suffering caused by inequality conditions. For this reason, maybe, the vast majority of our interlocutors (90% in France) express really serious judgements on "Merchants' Europe".

But concerning the themes we just referred to, we'll come back, in a more extensive way, in the conclusive observations.

In this moment, and before exposing analytically single countries reality data, we believe to be appropriate a recall - even if very brief - to the theoretical contemporary debate on the nature and the role of non-profit in actual welfare systems, as, as it has been observed, the invention of the third sector (Ranci: 199, 153) is certainly the product of the crisis of the latter.

Is therefore to the crisis of welfare state that we have firstly to refer, recalling the main points on which it is articulated its debate.

Basically, the following objections have been addressed against welfare systems:

- a. too high costs for the quality of services supplied (considered having too low quality);
- b. constant deficit (coming from the almost non-existence of meaningful productivity increases of job utilised);
- c. organisation inefficiency (whose cause is identified in the almost monopolistic regime of public system);
- d. excessive tax burden (from which derives a deterrent effect for productive investments, which is causing in its turn the situations object of welfare policies);

e. incapability of public systems to adopt policies based on "individual incentives" (as, according to a largely shared opinion, a public insurance system against social risks originates from the failure of private insurance market. The insured subject can be brought to behave in such a way to increase the chances of meeting the risk from which it's intended to be protected. From this fact, beside an evident negative effect on total social expense, it derives a more relevant consequence: the induction to passivity and dependence from the system of the subject concerned.

From this fact, the debate on the universalistic character of welfare systems that constituted the ethical-political basis of the social state model adopted - even if with significant managerial variations - from continental European countries.

From the recent discussion concerning the classification, proposed ten years before, from Esping-Andersen (1990-2000)<sup>1</sup>, we note in reality that, according to the indicators used, it has become much more difficult to assign an universalistic character to welfare regimes in the countries sampled by the research<sup>2</sup>.

And nevertheless, when we consider social policies adopted in Sweden, Germany, France, Italy and Greece altogether, it doesn't seem unjustified to maintain for them the definition of universalistic welfare.

But also to this debate, essential for the formulation of the entire hypothesis on future policies of common welfare, we'll come back in the conclusions.

Before passing to the exposition of data collected we urge to note that the progressive complexity and social variety seem to have resulted in a structuring of western contemporary societies according to which state capacity of social regulation is reducing - in the area concerning our research - to the role of "reducer of complexity" (Luhmann). As Ranci writes, public welfare policy "seems to have lost its traditional synthesis function and its role in composing individual interests", so that non-profit organisations role give an answer not just to the aim of "completing public policies, but to reduce the complexity of problems finding actors who are external to the public system and delegating them the responsibility of their solution (...) its efficacy consists in the capability to avoid duplications and losses, but surely not in that one of overcoming the particularism and fragmentation" (Ranci: 1999, pp.221-222).

From this point of view, therefore, we could say that we are now facing a "Leviathan" that being unable to define what can be said "common interest", exercises his power just as a "reducer of complexity", continuing in this way to produce (and reproduce) continuously marginalization and social exclusion phenomena that it should solve. And this is exactly what the more clearly attentive European non-profit environment is attributing to actual welfare systems.

But let's see the results emerged from the researches in the countries concerned by the survey and precisely in France, in Italy, in Germany, in Greece and in Sweden. In this first part we try to reconstruct groups models, than we will expose how they face European identity and finally we will enquire about the relationship between groups and welfare state and the role of religions and values in order to face new questions against poverty, states of those in needs etc.

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<sup>1</sup> In his book *The three worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, Esping-Andersen proposed three welfare models: 1) liberal, 2) Social Democratic and 3) conservative, whose distinctive aspects were found referring to the role assigned to State, family and market, and according to which in group 1) social unity of solidarity is constituted by the individual, in group 2) from the universe of individuals, and finally in group 3) from kinship/corporations/State. The typology has been newly discussed in the recent book *I fondamenti sociali delle economie post-industriali*, Italian translation, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2000, ed. or. Oxford Press, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> As Esping-Andersen writes (2000:p.150), "The first formulation of the typology of the three worlds was almost exclusively based on the analysis of the income support programmes, but they capture just an aspect of welfare state". The "real essence of Social Democratic welfare states (or of those conservative), according to him, "is not just in the more or less demerchandising guarantees of income, but in the approach to social services and to women employment" (pp.150-151).

## 2.1 France

Let's try to explain the situation of groups in France. The 88% of social solidarity association sampled are included in the typology defined by "1901 Association Law"<sup>3</sup>. The remaining 12% are constituted by: a Limited trade Responsibility society, a foundation and an association without legal acknowledgement, beside 8 associations ruled by "1908 Law"<sup>4</sup>. Considering that also the latter associations are "non-profit", the sample results as formed by the 96% of non-profit associations.

From a juridical point of view they are "private subjects", nevertheless they financially depend upon Public Institutions for at least 60%, whose half part comes from the State and the other half from Local Entities (Departments, Municipalities etc.). What appears to be more interesting is that the 69% of the association sampled entirely depend upon public funding that, in turn, constitutes the 75% of the entire volume of funds utilised. Only 31% of them trusts in donations, last wills and private contributions, due to an expressed refusal towards public funding or conventions.

The latter category includes big Catholic organisations (from *Secours Catholique* to *Emmaus* community, from *Action Catholique Ouvrière* to *Petits Frères des Pauvres*, to the *Société Saint Vincent de Paul*). Even smaller Catholic associations don't benefit from public funds, both for their refusal (as one of the interviewees in Lyon said: "the authority has never to take care of things that do not concern it"), and for self-sufficiency.

Among the lay environment, the self-funding occurs according to two different ways, relating to the type of association: 1) through sales of their products and/or services (even if some of them also benefit from grants for their functioning) in case of organisations directly involved in economic activities; 2) through revenues coming from media events (e.g. Telethon for *Médecins sans Frontières*) or from the organisation of concerts (as *Abribus*).

It is exactly among this second type of associations that we note, on the contrary, the more radical refusal for relationships with Public Institutions. As the representative of *Médecins sans Frontières* says: "Working with the State would hamper our capacity to vindicate".

In general, we can say that in France non-profit associations do not perceive "financial ties" with public powers really quietly. Behind this distrust, surely, there is the involvement implied by those ties in terms of control on results, and else. It's at the same time a symptom and an effect of the crisis of welfare systems that, for its relevance and its various meanings, will have to be carefully considered in the conclusions.

Let's see now, on the contrary, the interviews, but not before having quoted data relating to associations' areas of intervention: 30% poverty at large, 16% social integration through economic initiatives, 9% health, 8% childhood/adolescence, 8% homeless, 7% help to homeless, 5% women, 4% prostitution, 4% refugees/gypsies, 3% elder people, 3% prisons, 2% listening, 1% unemployed.

Even if, from the statistical point of view, the number of people interviewed (100) do not allow any ideal-typical generalisation, some common characteristics can be highlighted among them, to give meaningful indications on the social composition of French non-profit.

So, if the majority of men interviewed compared to women (59 vs. 41) cannot be used for the representation of the universe of people involved in social aid activities, it can nevertheless be used as a signal for the sampling of a more meaningful unbalance.

Taking into consideration, in fact, the over-representation of responsible people as compared to mere supporters, we note that among the former ones just the 25% is composed by women, and the 75% by men. It is confirmed, in this way, what we still notice in general enquiries concerning women condition in work environment. A more interesting observation allows distinguishing between paid staff and volunteers.

When we recall that, at national level, the more active age class in voluntary field is that one ranging from 35 and 59 (51% according to two surveys in 1991 and 1994)<sup>5</sup>, we note, first of all, that in

our sample The same age range represents the 68% of volunteers. From the results of the aforementioned surveys it was not possible to compare their social-professional status.

For what the specific part of paid staff of our sample is concerned, what seems to be more obvious is that the difference from the volunteers do not consists in the fact of being paid, but in the professional training of the former.

In other terms, when considering specific motivations, we could not note meaningful differences: even for those receiving a salary, it seems fundamental the willingness to commit against any form of poverty and social suffering.

What distinguishes the latter from volunteers is their status as social workers equipped with specific professional degrees (from social assistant to medical-psychological help, etc.).

In this part of the sample, in fact, we find that about 30% of them have a pedagogical training, 30% a psychological one, 15% as an entertainment organiser, 15% as trainer and the remaining 10% is equally divided between medical professional training, educational and social one.

Now, using professionalism as an indicator, we can assess interesting inter-connections between the distinction employed/volunteers and that one between responsible/supporter.

Among the responsible people of the two groups (Catholics and lay ones) we find 37 employees and 22 volunteers, while among the "supporters" just 10 employees and 31 volunteers.

It's true, in any case, that the 76% of supporters is formed by volunteers, but when we take into consideration the fact that in ten years time (between 1985 and 1995) the use of paid staff in third sector associations is more than doubled, we can reasonably argue that the result of the survey (47 paid staff, 53 volunteers) do not correspond to actual reality, that is to say that the highest number of those employed in voluntary service might be represented by paid staff.

Concerning the latter issue, the difference between Catholic associations and lay ones is interesting: while within the former 72% appears to be formed by volunteers (34 vs. 13), in the latter, on the contrary, the 64% is represented by paid staff (34 vs. 13).

It's an almost perfectly contrary relation, whose explanation is to be found in the different conception of social action on which the two groups of associations are based.

Even if, as we'll see further on, Catholic solidarity action is passing through a transformation stage, it still remains based on moral duty for charity, as shown, nevertheless, by the fact that 16 on 27 Catholic managers are volunteers, while only 6 on 26 are those among the lay ones. This might be related to the different age ranges noted among the members of the two different groups, in particular the fact that just the 6% of Catholics is less than 30 years old, opposite to the 22% of the lay ones.

Within Catholic association therefore the relevance of people aged over 30 years is bigger, and this is reflected also in the different number of professional workers: 60% of members of lay associations vs. 36% within the Catholics. It's another confirm of the persistence of charity imperative against the professionalism of aid activity in favour of our fellows, even if, as we anticipated, it's going through a transformation.

When we proceed to the analysis of organisation models, what we note, as a first instance, is their uniformity: general assembly, steering committee, president, treasurer and secretary, besides those features considered as necessary for the management of the association. So, for what decisional processes are concerned, almost everyone seems to adopt the same hierarchically arranged model, from high levels to the ground, even if - according to interviewees - this doesn't occur in an authoritative way.

As the representative of *Association Française de lutte contre les myopathies* says concerning bigger associations: "It's full of big chiefs and each one of them has a little chief executing their orders".

Even if numerically irrelevant - just the 6% - in any case it seems worthy of attention the group of associations, which are, in any case, very different one from the other, that adopted alternative decisional models to the prevailing hierarchical-functional one; and even in a more relevant way than

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<sup>3</sup> See

<sup>4</sup> It's a specific law for the Departments of High and Low Rhine and Moslem, very similar to the 1901 Law, but presenting significant changes relating to the number of founders (7 instead of 2, set forth by the national law) and to the possibility of purchasing real properties (only those strictly necessary to the fulfilment of their activities).

<sup>5</sup> See Halba, *Le Net*, 1997, p.57-58

what noted among some big Catholic associations like *Action Catholique Ouvrière* and *Secours Catholique*.

If, concerning the former, we face associations (both lay and Catholics) that testimony the survival of freedom and anti-bureaucratic practices, with the latter we face the opposite case: even if autonomous from a management point of view, in fact, they don't decide intervention programmes as the Dioceses office does it.

This is a situation shared also by organisations in other countries concerned by the survey, and that represents a further element of reflection on the common European citizenship building processes.

For what the recruitment and training of members of organisations are concerned, it's to be noted that, firstly, there are no relevant differences between the two types of associations sampled. Both in Catholics and in lay ones, what is required, beside a general "capacity to listen to, and a spiritual openness" and the practice of "tolerance", is *sharing goals* and *values* of the association. Only 10% of those belonging to the confessional area consider faith as an essential condition to commit to charity activities, while in all the others they refer to *Human Rights*.

What appears to be more interesting is *considering faith a personal issue* and, above all, as something not discriminative for the acceptance of new members: "we don't ask the Baptise certificate". Even if, we have immediately to add, that they demand the respect of own faith: "A non-Christian person can commit but he/she will have to respect Christian commitment".

In the end, what emerges, concerning the recruitment, is the obvious worry of *not to confessionalise* Catholic associations.

When the recruitment of paid staff is concerned, on the contrary, the criterion adopted by all associations (lay and religious ones) is represented by professional skills, that is to say that they behave like enterprises, sometimes - as the case of Red Cross - becoming the same structures of specialised training. All of them (97%) in any case - even with different forms and width - take upon themselves the responsibility of supplying to their members, and particularly to paid staff, ongoing cycles of training (motivational, cognitive, technical-scientific).

Now, if what we already observed, is revealing the transformations of third sector we referred to at the beginning, this confirms definitively its new problems as supplied by the nature of relationship with the actual welfare system. The 82% of associations sampled, without distinction between lay and Catholic ones, severally criticises the modalities by which it realises its function.

On the contrary, what is really refused is the reduction of "social state" action to a mere supply of "material aids" to disadvantaged people, as in doing so - according to the representatives of French organisations - you contribute to the *de-responsibleness of individuals, with dependence and initiative capacity hampering side effects for the same individual*.

The majority of French representatives of "private social aid" seem to express in this way what Rosanvallon (1995:p.9) defined as the "third stage" of the crisis of welfare systems, that is to say the incapacity to think at new forms of poverty and exclusion among the traditional frame of citizenship rights.

Exactly on the latter point critics of French non-profit representatives concentrate, debating their welfare system on the radical transformation of the "indemnity machine", perceived as irreparably obsolete compared to the new context of mass unemployment and its relative exclusion processes.

What to do then? But, above all, which role do they think to play among the "world of outcasts"? And concerning this aspect we find the first real news compared to traditional methods of self-organisation in the society: none of them claims the right to represent or, alternatively, to interpret the interest of those "left as change" due to the imperatives of economic growth.

They consider themselves as *privileged witnesses, intermediaries* between the excluded and public institutions, *detectors* of the "new social issue".

Relating to the political European tradition it's a completely new way to give visibility to social subjects compared to the past (and still present) expression through parties and trade unions.

Even not refusing, in fact, to play a political role, at the same time they seem to refuse to transform into political subjects, introducing, in this way, on the social-political scene a thoroughly new problem that, in a first instance, we could define as pertaining to "welfare-network".

Public institutions and social private field, each maintaining its own identity, design a system of relationships whose everyone roles and functions are continuously re-defined within a network logic finalised to social integration for all.

This is what it seems to be deduced from the fact that associations sampled do not seem to consider the collective dimension of "disadvantaged people": it's not the group of excluded, but everyone of them that must be helped. From here it comes, in fact, the more severe critic toward the actual welfare system and at the same time, the assessment of their difference and the invitation to a radical change of perspective.

The fact is that, for associations, social policies reducing to financial re-distribution might be a way to obtain social peace, *but not a way to affirm the dignity of the individual and to assure social integration.*

Now, for almost the totality of solidarity associations (included the Catholic ones), that must be exactly the goal of social policies: starting from the excluded person to walk back the same path with him/her for his/her re-integration in the society.

What they ask to the State, therefore, is to transform into an "*active* social State", inserting among *citizenship rights*, the *right to social integration* where job represents the fundamental condition.

It's not by chance, in fact, that another news among the main ones emerged within French associations having social aims is represented by the always increasing number of organisations which are directly involved in economic activities, even if in a specific way, as to define themselves as - as one of their representatives says - "an intermediate sector between private enterprises and the State".

The founding principle of these associations, representing the 16% of our sample, is the following: offering an intermediate job station between unemployment and work contract, in order to bring the person to a real job, considered as the decisive condition for the social re-integration of excluded.

Now, it's interesting to note that the development of this type of associations has caused a new feature of "volunteer" to emerge, being closer to a manager than to a "fellow of good will", whose main consequence was the increase of employed in the associations.

The growth of employment in the third sector between 1981 and 1991 raised, in fact, to 39,6% (from 3,3% to 4,5% of total employment) when it did not reach even the 2,2% for the entire active population (Archambault 1996: p.110). But, above all, that growth was focused on the social side of third sector, with an increase, in the same period, of 123% of its effective employees (more than 200.000, that is to say more than 8,4% of the annual average).

A real explosion that, anyway, could take place only because of the support of the State that, through the *Local Economic Plan of Integration* (PLIE) allowed the financial support of associations.

This fact, if from one side transformed in the just mentioned performances, on the other side caused associations to face the attitude to adopt toward the State, which appears to be able to be defined through a double negation: neither refusal, nor total acceptance. From here the request for forms of cooperation of the specified type.

What, in other terms, is requested from private actors of solidarity is the *acknowledgement* and the *support* to their actions, inside a law framework defining clearly their role in a renovated welfare.

If from one side, in fact, associations seem to possess a clear awareness of the impossibility to avoid the *professionalisation process* of their work, started from the always more pervasive practice of delegation inaugurated by the State in the social field ("public powers are increasingly willing to dismiss solidarity activity and to assign them to associations"), from the other side they refuse the competitive logic of market, for a fresh perspective of public/private "integrated social policy" in the fight against exclusion.

Certainly, the success of these positions, contributed to the secularisation process that involved the same Catholic associations, even if, when we take into consideration motivations and values implied by their action, the positions concerning the relevance of the religious dimension appear to be more articulated.

We can, in fact, distinguish three positions:

The first one - supported by the 35% of them - according to which Christian identity is recognised and claimed; the second -supported by the 45% of them - according to which this identity is seen with a sense of proportion; the third, finally, supported by the 30% of them, according to which religious belonging is to be hidden, if not refused.

Wishing to dispose this position on a scale, we would have, therefore, at one extreme those we could define "*professants*" and at the other extreme the "*laysants*" and in between the "*relativisers*".

If we consider the percentage entity, the latter group is surely acting as the indicator of the trend of French Catholic associations, whose main aspects seem to be the following: de-confessionalisation of the action and autonomy from ecclesiastical hierarchy.

What appears to be even more interesting is that what we have just noted among Catholic groups joins a general trend involving also lay groups.

In both cases, in fact, we face a radical re-definition of values environment of French third sector toward the affirmation of a *humanistic* "ecumenism" centred on the *person*.

Even if it might seem contradictory, in particular for what Catholic groups are concerned, in reality it's exactly this process of "*committed* secularisation" that is re-defining a *common ethos* that we'll see it- interests the entire European associations environment.

To conclude, anyway, with French case, we note that on this identical "ethical seed", the 70% of Catholic associations and the 90% of the lay ones agree.

As the representative of a lay association declares concerning the aim of action on behalf of the excluded: "We want to help them to build themselves personally, as the individual and the citizen possess a wholeness".

Making it possible that everyone might be able to build his/her own identity as a citizen and as an individual, personally and fully respecting his/her own human singularity: this is the new and different aim of social solidarity association, through which they establish the end of all ideological divisions between lay people and Catholics<sup>6</sup> and the step from a "distributive" conception of solidarity to a *common* "participative" concept of it.

The best witnesses - concerning the latter issue - is maybe that one expressed by the representative of *Secours Catholique* that, relating to the 50th anniversary of its establishment, declares that in that occasion "we passed from a pedagogy of assistantship to a pedagogy of doing together".

Therefore against blind material help and anonymous distribution, actors of French social solidarity, both lay and Catholics, define the horizon within which inserting new welfare state programmes.

## 2.2 Italy

For what Italy is concerned, it's interesting to note firstly, that almost all the religious organisations sampled assumed (or are going to assume) one of the juridical features ruled and recognised by recent national laws (and then regional): ONLUS, ONG, Volunteers Associations, Social Co-operative<sup>7</sup>.

Motivations pleaded, even if not always explicitly declared, appears to be even more interesting, that is to say the possibility to use public funds, both under the form of grants, and (in the highest number of cases) as conventions for the management of specific areas.

On the basis of that, maybe, it becomes more understandable the trend - from explicitly religious organisations like Caritas - to equip themselves with further ones, even when they already represent an operational structure.

It's not by chance, in fact, that a relevant part of the budget is formed by agreements relationships established with Local Entities and other public institutions<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>92% of lay associations express full acceptance judgements relating to Catholic associations.

<sup>7</sup>It concerns exactly: Voluntary Service associations - 21%

ONLUS - 40%

ONG - 10%

Social Co-operatives - 19%

Mere associations - 10% (it's to be noted that the establishment and the legal acknowledgement in one of the previous before during 90s).

<sup>8</sup> Just the 25% of the associations sampled depend entirely upon agreements relationships with public institutions: for the remaining 75% funding source is mixed. But when we count that at least 50% of the latter is formed by grants and projects agreements, we can rightly say that at least 58% of funding have public origin.

Concerning this aspect, it seems paradigmatically, for many aspects, the position expressed by the President of *Consorzio Zenit* in Florence.

While he judges welfare policies of public institutions as the actions of "Court's almoners" which are supplying with "funds and aids with no distinction", instead of creating "real chances" for individuals, at the same time urges for a simplification of contract work procedures, in order to allow "us, as entrepreneurs of the third sector (...) to better manage our activities": "every three years, when our agreements expire, 1/3 of my educators fall in crisis as they might lose their job from one moment to the other if they do not renew the agreement for the specific service".

In reality, among sampled organisations, only *Consorzio Zenit* can present a business volume ranging up to 20 milliards ("and as much for the associated co-operatives"), and among the interviewees, only its President expressed in a really clear way the nature of "social enterprise" of what, for others, still remains "a gift of themselves", "faith testimony", "charity".

It's, on the contrary, an evident sign of the transformation process investing also religious associations within the general re-assessment of Italian welfare state.

As the same *Caritas* in Bologna shows, in any case, even if in a different feature from the just mentioned form of enterprise, to have equipped itself in 1996 with *Mosaico di Solidarietà*, "an operative instrument" - as defined by a member of the Steering Committee interviewed - that is to say an "association born with legal criteria pertaining to voluntary service" and that therefore as such "can relate to institutions" for "agreements, project presentations etc."

But even being present and relevant, the just described trend doesn't seem prevailing, or rather the attitude toward what today is considered by everyone actual association trend (the transformation into welfare state organisations) is characterised by a deep ambivalence: from one side they consider almost obvious the result, from the other side they refuse (or radically contest) the effects.

In other terms what seems to emerge from Catholic associations is not as much their refusal of welfare policies but rather the denounce of the implied risk of loss of identity.

Concerning this, the position expressed by a worker of *Volontariato Centro Storico* of Bologna and of the responsible for training and external relations of *Gruppi di Volontariato Vincenziano* in Palermo can be considered exemplary.

According to the former, in fact, agreements with Local Entity are "not signed as a principle. As being a pure voluntary service and wishing pure freedom of action", those ones "would limit our management autonomy of the service" through control procedures.

For the latter, on the contrary, it's not the control which is debated but the enterprise logic that also "social enterprises" are adopting.

The "utopia" would, on the contrary, be that "from voluntary service association might arise a co-operative (:::) with a different mentality and a logic from that one of an enterprise".

That this might be an utopia or a project pursued with awareness, the fact is that the constant motive of Catholic associations seems to articulate on three movements:

1. acceptance of the pure logic of "social market";
2. refusal of all reductions to "work" for what help relations are concerned;
3. integration into welfare logic maintaining its own "difference".

Concerning this aspect it's probably not by chance that the previous position expresses three Italian macro-regions, according to which 1. is prevailing in the Centre; 2. is prevailing in the North; 3. is prevailing in the South.

What appears to be even more meaningful - confirming an ongoing "alternative" attitude to market and consumption - it's maybe the judgements on social state.

Even those, in fact, recognising, as the representative of *Volontariato del Centro Storico* in Bologna, that "sometimes" it's possible "to answer to citizen needs", she does it "in a very limited manner, according to available budget".

The fact is that - as everyone underlines and expressly says the representative of *Aczas* in Turin - "social state" to them might seem "more as form of assistantship than a form of attention to people".

In the most dramatic form the same position is expressed from the young Franciscan which is the president of *Inventare insieme* association in Palermo:

"They talk a lot about Social State, Welfare State...I believe that in this territory it's not existing...(where) they levels of drop outs still remain very high" and many families "do not possess any guarantees for their future".

Indiscriminate assistantship, without the guarantee of continuity and, above all, possessing limited effects when not counter-productive, social state, even in its last version of mix welfare, doesn't seem to Catholics interviewed an instrument to promote the rights of the person.

On the contrary the same multiplication of social co-operatives for the supplying of social-assistance services, as the representative of *Gruppi di Volontariato Vincenziano* says, only shows that "municipality it's not up to it":

"The great boom of social enterprise what is due at? (...) (to the fact that) we realise that social area relating to people needs is an immense one, where (...) Municipality do not arrive to be sufficient! Together with the great need of work, that is why this reality of social economy emerges, that one of social enterprise".

But here, she adds, it starts also the chance for missing of voluntary service associations. Social enterprises, in other terms - according to them - are due to subvert voluntary service, for at least two reasons: always less young people are willing to "offer their time to others" and secondly, because of the always more pressing and pervasive "request for work".

So the breakdown circuit provoked by the meeting of welfare crisis and request for work ends up in seriously debating the value of free unselfishness.

The problem in reality is exactly this one (as we noted many times): it's possible to maintain own's identity, based on ethical-religious motivations translating into an "imitatio Christi" and, at the same time, acting as actors of the social market? or, as we'll see analysing the varieties concerning decision processes, recruitment modalities and judgement on lay associations, the original values background, translating solidarity to the other and free gift into jobs, is going to become a private option of the association member?

Relating to the latter aspect we repeat the same distinction between South, Centre and North. Among the conditions to be accepted as members of the organisation, the prevailing percentage of those situated in the Centre-north part of Italy (Bologna and Turin) that by majority (65%) point out beside the common "acceptance of aims and methods of the organisation" also the belonging to Catholic Church, while for the others (Florence, Rome and Palermo) the fundamental consideration of altruistic motivation and professional training are prevailing (70%).

As we'll see, exactly the always more decisive relevance of professional skills, represents one of the points shared with lay associations and, at the same time, one of the signs of the overall transformation of third sector.

In any case for what Catholic associations are concerned, notwithstanding the above cited differences, even for those who are more committed to maintain their confessional identity, the process of "professionalisation of charity" seems to be unavoidable.

It's sufficient to consider, concerning this aspect modalities, and above all, contents of training internally activated : it concerns *motivation and technical-professional issues*.

It happens not differently for what methodologies used for the selection and access to work are concerned.

Finally organisation models, concerning whom the more relevant aspects seem to be:

1. the nature of service or "sector" of 25% of the organisations sampled. That is to say autonomous in the management of the services offered, but possessing a juridical acknowledgement, being structured as "activities" of the parish or of another association, so for example in the case of Caritas we face a particular policellular model by which the same declared autonomy we believe to be interpreted as "Management autonomy" and not as a decisional one;

2. decisional processes, even if defined at the 80% as democratic-participative, in reality appear to be centralised to a limited pool of people, when not to a charismatic leader, and excluding co-operatives, due to the clear distinction between members of the organisation and paid staff/volunteers.

3. organisation mission, even if appearing extremely differentiated (from lonely elderly people care to homeless welcome, from physical and mental handicap to the social centre for the cloth collecting for Third World etc.), in reality when we exclude only missionary associations (as *Mani Tese* in Turin, the *Gruppo Volontariato Civile* in Bologna, *VIDES* in Turin ), they are characterise for the ongoing increase of services, as much as none of them maintained the original mission;

4. all of them, even with different degrees of complexity are articulated on the base of internal structures based on the functional division of work, for whom technical-professional skill is becoming increasingly more relevant as opposed to the simple willingness "to help my fellow".

5. finally, directly relating to the judgement on welfare state, all the organisations sampled by the survey believe that "unfortunately" their role is going to be increasingly relevant in the European social context, as, differently from lay associations, with whom in any case they maintain very rich relations, they are the sole associations to advance the *needs of the person to those of the organisation*.

It's a very relevant judgement, as independently from its descriptive value, it points out - as we'll see better in the conclusions - one (if not the main) problematic "knots" of the crisis of traditional welfare models and values system on the base of which new social policies seem to have to be measured.

But let's see first lay associations and than religious ones.

Also relating to lay organisation<sup>9</sup> we face a very different sample: concerning their size, activity field and mission.

And if that, from one side might transform operation their comparison into a meaningless operation, from the other side, on the contrary, it allows to manifest their structural homogeneity.

Both in case of an organisation like *Arci*, having national character, being articulated on autonomous activity areas, with thousands of associates and the the case of co-operative *IANUA* in Florence (3 members and 15 volunteers taking care of street work), organisation models adopted and problems hereto do not seem very different, on the contrary.

In both cases it deals with finding human and financial resources to achieve the mission of respective organisations; for both activities carried on and methodologies are effect and cause, at the same time, of the internal communication style; for both, finally there's the problem we already noted relating to religious organisations: maintaining original identity and obtain results.

The latter being a particularly relevant problem for lay non-profit organisations, especially for voluntary service associations and social co-operatives. Due to the fact that any reference to values systems based on religious faith, which might in some way legitimise the anti-utilitarian image is, by definition, absent, which are the characters differing them from those utilitarianly oriented?

Becoming formally acknowledged actors of public welfare system do not imply the adoption of enterprise strategies (marketing, image promotion, "quality texts", target selection, training of an effective and skilful management etc.) for their placing on market?

That is to say, do they risk to start from organisation and its needs instead of starting from maladjustment and social suffering?

The question that we saw among religious associations, is newly proposed with no less urgency and seriousness among the lay ones.

In the meantime, funding sources: 90% public funds, through conventions on projects and competitions for the services supplied; the remaining 10% by self-funding.

Relating to the latter aspect it must be noted that just in two cases among our sample we can correctly define "self-funded activity": in the case of *Fondazione Agnelli* and *ASPHI* in Bologna (formed by societies studying and promoting insert of handicapped people in data processing field). the remaining cases, in some form benefit of public funds. But for what concerns us, it's more interesting to observe the dynamics opened within social co-operatives, whose more lucid expression is represented by the vice-president of social co-operative "Nuova Sanità".

Three are the points to underline:

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<sup>9</sup> Services activated by EE.LL.	2%
ONLUS	27%
Non-profit entity	1%
Social Co-operatives	25%
Cultural associations	12%
Voluntary Service association	30%

1. the transformation of the role of social co-operative: from an organisation oriented toward self-funding, and for this aspect available to accept "everything and even more" from institutions to actor in the determination of welfare policies;

2. the adoption of service quality evaluation procedures;

3. training of a skilful management different from political role of co-operative bodies.

It clearly represents a precise indication of the assumption of society models, for whom the "co-operative value" is defined in terms today required to their members by enterprises in order to be successful on the market: "belonging", "faithfulness", "identification".

Not by chance they insist on "participation to the life of the co-operative" as one of them risks to fail not just because of a bad management but surely also because of a bad social base".

It's a path - what we just described - that seems to join all social co-operatives, but differently from the religious ones, with a further difficulties for the latter concerning exactly the "surplus" that the vice-president would inspire to members.

From one side in fact the mutual aid value of original co-operatives is denied by their transformation into "services agencies", more attentive to professional skills than to ideological-motivational ones, from the other side they would like it to be the base for action.

Not differently it happens, even if in a less evident way, in voluntary service associations and ONLUS where training - not by chance conceived as an ongoing process, life long learning model - is addressed especially to the acquisition of knowledge and professional skills for an always increasing "customer satisfaction".

In reality, and this is shown by the clearly positive judgement expressed by all lay organisations toward welfare state, as the potential adoption of participative-horizontal decision models, the problem is that in both cases of organisations analysed they do not consist in the persistency in the change but in the nature itself of the overall change - and they do not seem to arrive to the same effects.

The organisation structure and the always increasing specialisation and professionalism, in other terms do not seem to imply, at least in our case, a meaningful reduction of members' participation.

Maybe, as we already saw for what French case was concerned, we need to think at third sector as to a group of subjects transforming through adapting strategies, very similar to those belonging to enterprises system and that, as the latter, are formed by the environment.

The remaining of a never digested anti-statism of Italian Catholicism, that we noted, must be, maybe, related to the different contexts in which it expresses and not considered as the confirm of what it risks to be a mere historical-sociological stereotype.

In the same way, the request for certain and facilitating rules, together with a more meaningful political role, expressed by lay associations, not necessarily must be translated into a question of new assistantship to "social market". Maybe, if it's connected to the "perverse effects" of traditional welfare models, it can, on the contrary, indicate a possible new definition of social state, based on a plurality of subjects whose ruled competition might start a virtuous circle of citizenship.

It will depend upon policy makers to realise third sector as composed, but still homogenous for what basic values are concerned, in a shape, as a Sicilian parish expressed himself, of a "Multinational enterprise of charity" serving its citizen-person.

## 2.3 Germany

German case is very different, as its third sector possesses characteristics with almost nothing in common with those presented by the aforementioned cases in France and in Italy. In fact, both in cases of lay organisations and religious ones, we face entities that, as mentioned in the introduction, represent as much structural elements of German welfare system. They are not concerned by a problematic approach to their identity or their role, and, even less by welfare state (judged in a positive way from all the representatives interviewed), but eventually, by the research of new modalities to increase the financial assets required for their activity.

From Red Cross to Caritas, from Diakonisches Werk der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland e. V. to Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband e. V. to Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland, all German associations sampled are structured as organisations for whom "the unprofitable rest would become unbearable".

Besides, and not by chance, for all social welfare associations, "Sozialstaat" generally is a great achievement nobody wants to abolish. On the contrary, the "sozialstaat" should be made as fit as possible in order to easily overcome moment of crisis.

All persons involved agreed on the point relating to the necessity of analysing the reasons for critical situations and to start reforms.

While from one part is argued that:

- The expenditures should not be cut by decreasing financial resources, while it should be safeguarded that a sufficient income might be obtained. Therefore, new sources of income have to be tapped, away from contributions relating to wages and taking into account contributions from profits, productivity growth, speculative deals etc.

- one of the advantages of the German system has been a sort of mixed financing, which allows to take profits from successful services and to put them into loss-making projects. Such an economisation only makes it possible for private providers to take the pick of the bunch (Rosinenpicken), but the minority tries to find new ways to safeguard the Sozialstaat by new aims, definitions and concepts, concerning financial issues too.

In the same way they all assessed the co-operation between their organisation and the state as a good one, characterised by mutual recognition and principal willingness to work together and not against one another. This is something valued, at all levels and branches, namely within federation, federal states, further administrative districts and local authorities, from legislative branch as well, and from governmental and administrative ones. Even if the co-operation is not always free from conflicts, due to the normal difference concerning meanings and opinions, it was generally described as successful. A larger regional representativeness of one or another organisation is not the result of an ideological struggle between a special government and the respective organisation, but it's the result of preference of people. People's choices and preferences are recognised by every state authority and based on legal fundaments.

With a view to the Europeanisation of the welfare state, the majority demands just framework legislation (Rahmengesetzgebung) at European level, to secure a common basic provision of benefits. Singularities should be further regulated by member states.

In reality, with German case we face a mixed welfare articulated at grass-root level on the territory, in which voluntary service is assuming the shape of "added value" of a framework of organisations that numerically for what employed and activities, efficiency and proficiency are concerned, is exactly the imprint of enterprise system.

Two examples, one among religious organisations and the other among lay ones, could be sufficient to give an idea of what we just mentioned:

### 1. Caritas

It is articulated in 27 diocesan associations, divided in 607 community associations and it can count on 650.000 members. Central direction is divided in 10 sections, 28 offices and is equipped with 350 employees. The activities, which encompass the entire universe of social-

sanitary area (from nursery school to hospitals, from centres for migrants to assistance to lonely women) are developed in 24.841 institutions and it employs 1.214.485 persons.

## 2. Arbeitwohlfahrt

It is organised territorially in 29 land, 457 districts and 3905 community associations. It counts 620.000 members, 100.000 of whom are volunteers and 105.000 are employed.

It is, in any case, interesting to note that even in Germany, concerning acceptance criteria for new members, the denominational condition within the statutes to be Catholic or Protestant, is decreasing in favour of being of Christian faith or member of a Christian community.

So, not differently from what we have already observed in France and in Italy, the process of secularisation has produced a ground of common values on the basis of which also religion and religious communities have further more relevance as "suppliers of moral and social basic values".

## 2.4 Greece

What strikes about Greek non-profit environment, before the complex and, for some aspects dramatic relationship between Orthodox Church and state institutions, is the almost biunique reciprocity between social changes and the development of humanitarian organisations, especially lay ones.

Independently from their legal feature<sup>10</sup>, in fact, when considering the historical period of their establishment we can note that, after the gap lasted from 1950 till 1970, when many self-help organisations for disabled people started to become active from the commitment of parents of children having specific needs who were trying to find appropriate ways to provide care and education to them, which can be explained with the social-charitable disastrous situation at the time of colonels' dictatorship, it is between 80s and 90s that we see a substantial increase of non-profit, by the arising of new social problems.

Fifteen among the sampled association, as a matter of fact, were born in the 80s addressing social problems at large and 19 of them in the 90s, when awareness relating to different needs and multifaceted social problems raised, as issues which hadn't been tackled so far (drugs, immigrants, minorities, AIDS patients).

For what religious organisations are concerned, on the contrary, trend is rather uniform.

The highest number of lay ones having just paid staff represents a further difference between the two types of organisations: 11 lay associations vs. 4 religious ones.

While, for what area of intervention is concerned, the ratio is reversed in favour of religious entities. Lay associations can be divided into three groups<sup>11</sup>, while the religious ones are more hard to be classified, given that many of them do not have a single area of intervention (as usually it is for humanitarian organisations), being interested in offering in a philanthropic way. Thus, they provide assistance to several different groups at the same time.

What is necessary to be highlighted, concerning the latter associations, is the high number of them that associate the activity of helping to work of catechising of people<sup>12</sup>

Even for what receivers of the action of humanitarian organisations is concerned, a further distinction characterises the two typologies sample: while over 50% of the lay ones provide services to private clients and also co-operate with public sector, the situation is different for religious organisations: 23 out of 25 provide services to private individuals only.

Not differently from what funding sources is concerned: over the 50% of lay associations receive mixed funds (private and public, in same cases the 50% of the budget is constituted by EU contributions), while just the 1,5% of the religious ones receive funds from public institutions.

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<sup>10</sup> As in other countries, here as well, the main associative forms of non-profit, excluding co-operatives, are present.

<sup>11</sup> The main intervention areas of humanitarian organisations are: people with disabilities or chronic diseases, general social and political issues and environmental issues.

<sup>12</sup> As much as 14 of them, equal to the 30% of them.

The aspect on which the two groups of associations differ radically is represented by the criteria of acceptance of their members. Even within similar organisation models, in fact, profession of faith (both Orthodox, numerically more present in the sample, and Catholic or Evangelical) is discriminant for the acceptance in religious associations.

Differently from what we have observed in the other countries concerned by the survey, Greece seems to be less involved in the secularisation process that western world is sharing, reposing a division between lay and religious world that somewhere else seem to pertain to the memory of nations.

From this aspect, the contradictory relationship between Greek non-profit and religious institutions arises, and in a correlative manner also that one between the latter and state institutions.

From one side, due to the pervading and effective nature of their activity, lay organisations cannot avoid maintaining relations with religious institutions, from the other side they cannot avoid to note their serious problems.

Besides, only an association that belongs to religious area declares to act autonomously from the Church. In the same way, the behaviour of religious organisations articulates their relationship with the various sectors of the state: more or less fortuitous forms of co-operation, and only relating to specific problems, showing, even if in an indirect way, their instrumentality.

The fact is that Greek Orthodox Church seems to be closed in a self-referential attitude, causing it the refusal to discuss - as a lay association proposed - a minimum platform on religious tolerance in Greece.

It is because of that, maybe, that an organisation working on human rights in general has stated that it has hostile relations with Greek Church, as one of the fundamental principle it upholds is separation between Church and State. Which is obviously, what dominant Greek Church opposes.

So, by taking a closer look at the answers of the organisations of the sample, both the humanitarian and the religious ones, certain points emerge, offering some sort of interpretation of their attitudes, their behaviours and their practices.

The humanitarian or religious origin of each organisation determines to a great extent its field of action and, by extension, its contribution and the services provided by it.

The different ideological base appears to be a factor that shapes the internal structure of organisations, affects the intensity of their communication with public institutions and determines the way in which they perceive both their own role in the community and the role of the welfare state.

When speaking of the organisations' internal structure, we mean issues related to member recruitment, the main features of members, member training, administration, etc. The common points between humanitarian and religious organisations, as well as their differences will be presented below.

There is a fundamental difference in the provision of welfare and care services by humanitarian and religious organisations, even when they target the same population groups, mostly in terms of the objectives pursued.

Although all organisations cover "human" needs in general, the actions they implement end up serving different purposes.

Most humanitarian organisations provide services with a view to mobilising their clients rather than seeing them as passive receivers.

On the other hand, religious organisations, with a few exceptions, operate within the context of traditional charity, which is more suited to the tradition of the Orthodox Church. This difference can be illustrated by the following examples: in the former case, projects providing vocational training and establishing productive workshops for the disabled, training of refugees and immigrants, participation in environmental protection projects, etc.; in the latter case, benefits and allowances to the poor, messes, etc. This conceptual difference and the pursuit of efficiency have resulted in many humanitarian organisations' acquiring specific organisational features and fulfilling certain basic conditions through their practice. The organisational features and the conditions that have de facto become a sort of "regulatory" framework for the efficient operation of these organisations are the following:

- a) A specific legal form.
- b) Adequately qualified scientific staff; this explains why many of them have salaried staff.
- c) Ongoing and regular training of members on concrete subjects, in order to facilitate adaptation to new scientific facts, development of new activities, etc.
- d) A good administrative structure usually complemented by thematic or experts groups, in addition to the Board of Directors and the general assembly, and characterised by a clearer division of tasks.
- e) Fostering lasting communication and co-operation with other agencies, both at the national and the international level, within a specific framework. Partnerships tend to aim at the implementation of specific projects and at the relevant financing. The development of such activities also requires technocratic management. This is demonstrated by the profiles of the interviewees (studies, professional status). Such a structure does not rule out the possibility of certain organisations putting all kinds of pressure on public institutions in view of improving the services provided by the state.

The above clearly demonstrate that the quality and the efficiency of the services provided require concerted action and constant information, which gradually give rise to partnerships through networks of organisations.

It also becomes clear that humanitarian organisations, differentiating themselves on the basis of the values of peace and solidarity, actually become carriers of change both at the ideological and at the practical level. The interviews demonstrate that the level of co-operation between humanitarian and religious organisations is very low. This can be explained either by the fact that their respective interventions focus on diverging levels or by the fact that religious organisations work in a closed framework, they refrain from publicising their work or they do not seek some form of communication.

Compared to the above, the profile of religious organisations differs greatly. The aforementioned features can not be found in the vast majority of religious organisations. In very few cases do they provide services requiring specialised knowledge. In the few exceptions, services are provided in a modernised framework, by specific standards, given that this is the only way they can ensure public funding. As already stated in point 2.1, many welfare activities are carried out in the context of church structures and lack independent legal form. Moreover, given that no specialised knowledge is required for the services delivered, there are often no training activities for the organisations' members. On the other hand, the very nature of the work of religious organisations does not motivate them to develop partnerships with public institutions in order to achieve concrete aims (e.g. implement specific projects), consequently they have no public funding. Moreover, the absence of regular co-operation between organisations having an independent legal status and the official Church of Greece is not a rare case, in spite of the existence of a common communication framework. With regard to the religious organisations' opinion on humanitarian ones, some stated that the core issue is the efficiency of the services provided rather than the ideological grounds, while others were quite sceptical about humanitarian organisations, judging their voluntary contribution as imperfect because it lacks religious connotations. A contradiction emerges from these views, since on the one hand for religious organisations publicising their work is not desirable for various reasons, and on the other hand they believe that NGOs ought to ask for the help of the church, due to its long experience in the field of charity. Humanitarian organisations avoided making judgements on the work and the role of religious organisations.

The answers given to the questions on conditions for membership and the basic features of members lead to the conclusion that for religious organisations the religious and national beliefs of active and prospective members are important, as opposed to humanitarian organisations, where religion is not a factor determining their respective choices.

With regard to the welfare state, the definitions of it given by the organisations and their views about the future scope of solidarity organisations and non-profit organisations, demonstrate the role they play in modern civil society. It appears that the dominant view in all organisations about the provision of care services to citizens is state-centred. They believe that this field is the exclusive responsibility of the state. At the same time, they criticise the Greek State for major

shortcomings in terms of infrastructure and organisation. Humanitarian organisations see themselves as covering some of these gaps in public welfare and substituting the work of the state in certain cases. They believe that their alternative nature enables them to highlight emerging needs, which the state ignores. They also believe that they are able to suggest new forms of interventions, adjusted to the ever-increasing social demands. Of course, it is clear in some cases that they are unable to have an overall view of the problems in social care, since the organisations' views tend to be restricted to their own field of activity. With regard to the overall public-private relations, they are in favour of partnerships where the state would play the role of the co-ordinator of private non-profit initiatives. This framework could give an answer to the problem of NGO financing. On the other hand, NGOs are sceptical about close co-operation with public institutions, because of the risk of excessive intervention in their work. On this point organisations seem to lack information and be unable to follow developments. Most of them seem to ignore both the pieces of legislation presented in point 1, laying down for the first time in Greece the legal framework for partnerships between NGOs and the state, and the general theoretical debate on the third sector and civil society. Religious organisations, although in the definitions given on the welfare state their opinions seem to coincide in part with those of humanitarian organisations, rather look at the whole issue of welfare from the perspective of the recognition of the role of the charity work of the church in the past and are mainly concerned about its future position in the community. With regard to questions related to public-private relations, the role of NGOs and the conceptual shift from traditional charity to volunteerism, most of the organisations of the sample appear not to have reflected on them and be having difficulties in keeping pace with developments.

On the questions on European identity, the views of humanitarian and religious organisations have some points in common, but there is a great distance in relation to their respective role in the European context. Views converge to a certain extent on the values of the European identity, given that all humanitarian organisations and some of the religious ones state that the European identity should be based on the values of human freedom, mutual respect, equality and acceptance. Moreover, 1/3 of the humanitarian organisations considers European culture to be a prominent value of the European identity. The role of religion and Christian principles, as basic values of the European identity, are considered to be decisive factors in European identity-building by some religious organisations. On the other hand, very few humanitarian organisations refer to religion (hardly 1/6), and even those who do are relatively reserved.

Similarly, the vast majority of humanitarian organisations and part of religious ones perceive the European identity more as a cultural entity. A smaller group of organisations focuses more on its political aspects. According to the majority view, the European identity is seen as a synthesis of the common cultural backgrounds of the Europeans, in coexistence with the cultural specificities of each people. On the other hand, some of the proponents of this view criticise the extent to which the cultural specificities of all partners have been respected and accepted until now, because they believe that tremendous political emphasis has been given on the economic convergence of EU Member States at the expense of national cultures. This criticism, however, is not as ethnocentric as the opinion voiced by certain religious organisations, which consider each people's specific tradition to be a *sine qua non* for survival in current multicultural European reality.

It would be worth mentioning that 1/3 of religious organisations avoided answering the questions on the values of the European identity and its definition. This attitude and the fact that most religious organisations of the sample have no contacts with European partners bring us to certain comments. Religious organisations have not looked at European matters. The successful European partnerships developed by some religious organisations are not widely known. This demonstrates that most religious organisations still stick to the work they have been carrying out so far, and they refrain from enriching it with experience from co-operation with international organisations. Moreover, the answers received point to the conclusion that partnerships at the European level, if any, are used as a means for a peculiar mission in favour of promoting Orthodoxy in the EU context. At this point, let us repeat that twenty-five (25) religious

organisations that we contacted refused to answer the questionnaires and said that they were not interested in studies of this kind.

On the other hand, humanitarian organisations (4/5 of the organisations of the sample have international partnerships), through their European role, seek to defend human rights and jointly plan policies and actions to respond to social problems.

In assessing the overall results of the study, we are drawn to the conclusion that third sector organisations in Greece have been growing at a very fast pace, especially after the 1980's. Their action in Greece provides complementary assistance in social care fields that the welfare state is unable to fully cover. The effort to improve the services provided is a decisive factor for the organisations' transition from spontaneous voluntary contribution to a more regular and more professional service provision, achieved through a series of structural changes, such as the efforts to improve their organisation and management, to recruit professionals and specialists, to train their members and to develop partnerships with public agencies, which often provide a solution to the financial problems all organisations are faced with. All the above is pursued without affecting their non-profit character. On the other hand, such actions give rise to tensions and discussions on the future independent existence of NGOs, due to the dependence produced by close co-operation with public bodies.

In the study it has become clear that the humanitarian or religious grounds on which organisations operate is a decisive factor determining their scope and the way they implement their activities. It appears that religion is a parameter that does not play a key role in the activities of humanitarian organisations, nor does it affect their views. All organisations acting on humanitarian grounds, regardless of the field they are active in, aim at defending human rights. This leads them to recognise the needs of individuals or groups that are at a disadvantage for various reasons (social, economic, health) and to provide services to them. At the same time, they see the European Union as a framework in which they can develop partnerships with other organisations. They have the opportunity to draw on the positive aspects of know-how and experience gained through international co-operation, in order to improve their services and participate in developing a common policy to address social problems. On the other hand, few religious organisations have taken action in the above context. Most of them perceive social work as a form of traditional diaconal service. At the same time, in many cases this is combined with missionary work. Moreover, religious organisations tend not to be interested in integrating their work in a broader framework of systematic social care, because they associate it with Christian philanthropy and personal offer. Of course, in recent years the action of some organisations has demonstrated that they have moved away from this pattern and opted for co-operation in a broader framework, which fosters the provision of quality services meeting high standards.

Another significant difference is the fact that the proportion of humanitarian organisations that refused to be interviewed was 4%, whereas this proportion for religious organisations comes up to 50%.

Finally, the vast majority of humanitarian organisations and part of religious ones perceive the European identity more as a cultural entity, whereas a smaller group of organisations focuses more on its political aspects. According to the majority view, the European identity is seen as a synthesis of the common cultural backgrounds of the Europeans, in coexistence with the cultural specificities of each people.

Views converge to a certain extent on the values of the European identity, given that all humanitarian organisations and some of the religious ones state that the European identity should be based on the values of human freedom, mutual respect, equality and acceptance. The role of religion and Christian principles, as basic values of the European identity, are considered to be decisive factors in European identity-building by some religious organisations. On the other hand, very few humanitarian organisations refer to religion, and even those who do are relatively reserved.

## **2.5 Sweden**

### **Profile of organisation**

Participating organisations have different legal features with the following distribution: 67% non-profit associations; 14% religious communities, 19% foundations. The field of intervention is mainly local: 56% (25% national, 19% international). The typology of purchaser is mostly a mix between public and private funding (71%). We note that in the religious group mixed funding were quite evident (87%), while in the humanitarian group there were more public funding (48%). Organisations, if considered as a group, get much funding from local municipality.

The various organisations are working in different directions aiming to serve people with different social problems (homeless people, women and lonely mother, unemployed people, immigrants, ethnic group and refugees, lonely people, handicapped people, etc.)

The religious group is composed by organisations belonging to different confessions: 50% of them are linked to the Swedish state church (Lutheran) and the rest are more within the domain of free religious communities (churches like Salvation Army).

### **Profile of respondents**

The respondents were differently aged, ranging from 25 to 70 years and they had different occupational and academic background; some of them were in the sector from 20 years (as the most), others from just a year. Several respondents had experience of other kinds of voluntary or third sector organisations.

The reason for being socially engaged was, in most cases, the willingness to express solidarity. For those working in religious based organisations the aim of helping was also intertwined with religious values.

### **Organisational pattern and decision process**

Voluntary organisations were organised in a quite similar way: we didn't find any specific difference between religious and humanitarian organisations. The advisory board and the executive manager represent the vital instances, but quite an amount of strategic thinking is founded on lower hierarchical levels as well. Bigger organisations presented staff functions across different units. In all essentials the organisations participating in this study worked quite independently from higher organisational levels. These flat non-hierarchical organisations experienced a higher degree of professional attitude in recent years.

When we looked at the decision processes we could not report any specific differences between the two. Decisions are taken in a decentralised way, with democratic and horizontal communication.

In this kind of organisations the act of legitimising works as a base for commitment and it's crucial. But we do not find conference kind of people in these organisations. As more we find distinguished professional roles and increased professionalism, the effectiveness raised. Because of unclear objectives in these kinds of organisations we note some lack of effectiveness in the decision process. Despite the need for legitimising work within the organisations there is room for more effectiveness.

### **Recruitment and training**

In this section we address forms and places of recruiting, prevailing features and skills of the subjects concerned. Finally we look at the amount and direction of training, courses and other supportive organisational activities.

The main recruiting form is represented by the introduction of potential individuals to the organisation and the research of recommendations, or by the introduction by the same subject

applying for participating in the work. Mostly there is no formal application procedure or selection made for this. To a certain extent, recruiting is made among previous addicts (drug or alcohol) or former clients.

Features and skills of co-workers have secondary importance (sex or age). Religious belonging and ideological placing have secondary order too: the most important matter is that they share the aims of the organisation and accept the programme and its methodology.

In a secular society it is an advantage to refer to strong human values, and not to religious ones. Of course, in the religious group, it is appreciated whether the volunteer has religious faith, even if this was not something they insisted on.

For what courses and education are concerned we found that most organisations do support their employees with courses, mostly internal, arranged by the organisations themselves.

But we found some interesting facts about the role of the dependants/clients: we noted an increasing awareness about the clients' active role in the social work. With this approach clients become part of social networks and are implicitly helping themselves. This support creates trust, loyalty, self-esteem drive for change. The outcome of the process is the solution to social problems, less negativism and drives for further changes.

In perspective these people clearly get more social competence and potential for an increased level of integration in the society. This approach or social strategy was more evident in new "innovative" organisations.

Finally some notes on economic contribution to the organisational administration:

donations (mainly public) 41%, conventions 14%, sales of goods and services 12%, one's fund 12%. Besides this options several respondents listed membership fees, collections and individual gifts as important contributions (21%).

### **Conclusive observations**

The picture pointed out by the national reports, as it was easy to foresee, presents very different welfare systems. Non-profit organisations seem -and partly are- in as much so different for origins, nature and features to suggest the conclusion of a simple confirm of their difference, postponing the hereof explanation to the history of the "short century" (Hobswan). In reality, and the reports just analysed are the most recent demonstration of it, European welfare systems, even if in their confirmed differences, seem to be longing in the same re-definition process from at least 20 years.

When we look at organisation models of associations, it seems impossible to avoid the impression of assisting to a progressive omologation thereto, according to two different tracks, apparently contradictory but in reality perfectly coherent with the nature of the welfare systems crisis.

From one side they present themselves as alternatives to government institutions (and in particular this is the position of 82% of French associations), from the other side as subsidiaries of the same ones.

In reality the picture is extremely differentiated, at least at a first sight, and for many aspects not comparable.

It seems difficult, in fact, to compare an Orthodox Greek association constituted within a monastery with DCV (German Caritas) which is managing 24.841 institutions on behalf of 1.214.485 persons, or rather the Students International Centre "Giorgio La Pira" in Florence with its organisation structures given by the Dioceses (students residence, library, mediateque, 5 employees, 10 volunteers, street work with outcast people in the city) and the reality of Swedish local and municipal associations with *Medécins sans Frontières*.

But notwithstanding their extreme difference, they are all united by, at least, the following aspects:

- organisation structure based on participation of supporters even if, in the majority of cases, formalised in administrative and decisional bodies
- constant increase of selection procedures for new supporters based on, beside motivation, professional skills

- increasing growth of investments in training and quality assessment
- budget formed essentially by public funds (in France 69%, Italy 90%, Sweden and Germany from 50 to 70%, Greece from 50 to 60%, inferior percentages tested in religious organisations)

This obviously implies what we already observed concerning the transformation process of third sector into a subject of the new welfare, relating to which it is convenient to expose now the relative positions expressed toward "social state" and their same identity.

When we exclude -as already known- critics on costs within a strong affirmation of social security systems, expressed in particular in Germany and Sweden, judgements sampled within organisations of other countries appear to be interesting, in particular in Italy and in France (Greece, surely because of its recent history, expresses at a vast majority through the classical definition).

So, the associations of both the latter countries, even if underlying different things and with different percentages, express a severe critic to actual social policies, and what interests mostly is the content of judgement itself. They do not contest, in fact, equality or help policies but the specific modalities of help.

In other terms, the assistential form of realised welfare is charged as, paradoxically, instead of producing autonomy and active reintroduction in the society, it causes the legitimating of the state of passive exclusion in which French "*sans logi*" or teenagers of Zen neighbourhood in Palermo are forced, or reduced.

It's interesting also their identification (even if in a minority way, which is in any case very significant of a new capacity to observe actual "systems of needs" and to define their role) with revealers of social maladjustment and, at the same time, as intermediaries between society and state bodies.

We believe that this is not different from all the other European associations realities sampled, as to induce the reflection that, despite all differences which condition the relative realisation, a sole path is emerging relating to the reform of national welfare into a mix welfare feature.

What is the perception of European identity?

### 3 Facing the European Identity

In the first section we will present the results collected from individual case studies and attempt to compare the answers which were given between Religious and Humanitarian Organisations, at least for those countries in which we found some difference, and these are Greece and Italy. For the rest, France, Germany and Sweden, we did not find a significant degree of difference between the answers collected from Religious and Humanitarian Organisations, a fact which is explained by the different socio-historical evolution of the social formations of these different countries. In the second part, we will try and bring together the results from all our case studies and to compare and contrast the similarities and differences at a European level so to speak. This will enable us to make some more general comments on the issue of European identity and the way this is perceived at the moment from religious and humanitarian organisations.

#### 3.1 Greece

As far as the answers collected from humanitarian organisations in Greece, we can see that a percentage of 60% think that European identity should be based, or should express, the values of social solidarity, tolerance, equality and freedom for any person. 26% supported the argument that a European identity should be founded upon, and to express, the values which characterise European civilisation. Another 4% said that the dominant economic values which function in a negative way, should be undermined so as to give place for more humanitarian and sensitive values, while a percentage of 2% have said that religion should be the basis of European identity. Finally, a total of 8% did not give any answer.

As far as the religious organisations is concerned, only a percentage of 52% replied to our questionnaire, from which a total of 16% did not answer the questions regarding the issue of European identity, with the rest 48% being hesitant to provide us with any information whatsoever. Thus, we can see that 16% think that the basic values of European identity should be tolerance, mutual respect and social solidarity. At the same time, they stated that a sense of European identity should be based on common cultural characteristics of the countries of the European Union, without however neglecting the cultural particularities of its different peoples. 16% expressed the view that religion, and particularly Christianity, should be the foundation of European identity. Finally, 2% of the religious organisations who were found to agree with the above statement, said that it is necessary to have a dialogue between the different Christian traditions, but said that the Orthodox Church has not yet shown any signs or expressed its desire for initiating such a dialogue inside Greece.

Posing the question of the role of religion, or the role of the religious factor in influencing the construction of European identity, we can see that in total, 26% saw such a role in religion. Having said that, it is important to point out that given the small number of replies collected from members of religious organisations, the actual figure is much less, since only 7 humanitarian organisation's members said that religion has, or should have, a stronger role to play in forming a sense of European identity. Thus, only 1% thinks that religion should be a basis of a European identity but inside a framework of religious tolerance, while a 2% spoke for a rather general role without explaining further what this means. Furthermore, it can be assumed that 6% of our sample implicitly spoke of religion in the context of the specific cultural characteristics of each of the European peoples. Another 6% pointed out the need for religious tolerance, considering religion a private matter, but accepted its unifying role without however explaining the way this unifying role can be brought about. Additionally, 10% supported the argument that only Christianity can have a role in the construction of European identity, but it has to be said that 1% said that the Orthodox Church should communicate with the other Christian traditions inside Greece.

The rest 74% was distributed as follows: 37% has either refused to answer any questions or to give an interview, or did not give any answer to this particular question. The same percentage did not see any role for religion, or ignored the religious factor. One particular element which can be derived from the answers collected, and more specifically, from those who saw a certain role for religion, is that they fail to distinguish between 'religious tolerance' on the one hand, and 'religious freedom' on the

other. It seems like a percentage of 8% understands religious tolerance through the concept of religious freedom.

### **3.2 France**

As far as the issue of Europe is concerned, the results from the French enquiry has revealed a strong majority towards scepticism: 85% of the members of the lay solidarity organizations and 95% of the Catholic ones have shown a behaviour of reserve, if not of rejection, towards Europe. The notion of European Identity itself has been received with great perplexity and some of the respondents have even refused to express themselves upon a notion they declared incomprehensible.

Two main trends explain this scepticism. The first is stressing the importance of the 'local level' when social action is at stake. The 'localists' are in favour of small-scale interventions in the frame of small size organisations, which aim at being very close to those who need social support. On the other side, we find the advocates of a 'global apprehension' of the social problem in the name of the universality of the principles. The 'globalists' consider the human dimension as a transnational one and militate in favour of the constitution of huge federations of social organisations, which could lobby upon the national and European institutions. Each of these positions regards 25% of the respondents, the 50% left being sceptical without any clear statements about an alternative to Europe.

We have nevertheless observed a real claim for a 'social Europe' based on a strong critique: 90% of the respondents are denouncing the exclusive economical orientation of the European Union. This critique goes hand in hand with another one which focuses on the archaic complexity and the technocratic nature of the European decision making process which is incapable of simply understanding the needs of the people. Here is the reason why European Citizenship is viewed as unreal and still to be made: for the French social organisations, the human dimension must be taken into account if the European Union wishes to become a reality, supported by its populations. The respondents have asked for a reorientation of the European policies towards humanitarian values: the respect of the Human Rights and the Social ones has been quoted as the central goal of the European institutions.

### **3.3 Italy**

From the results collected in Italy, we can see that as it regards humanitarian organisations, 10% think that the basic value of European identity is solidarity, while the largest percentage, 40% think that democracy is the defining value. A percentage of 20% think that the most important value is respect for human rights.

As it regards the definition of European identity, 50% think that a sense of a common European identity is derived from a recognition of shared cultural values, while 20% think that it is a political plan for the construction of the European Union. The same percentage, around 20%, support the idea that European identity reflects a denial of different cultural characteristics in view of achieving economic unity, while 10% think that it is project useful to the domination of the richest countries. Of the humanitarian organisations approached in Italy, 60% have already established contacts with other European partners, while the rest have not.

As far as their aims at the European level, 60% said that their aim is social integration, 20% that it is to defend human rights and to affirm universal tolerance.

Of all the religious organisations in Italy, 30% think that solidarity should be the defining value of European identity, while 20% think that religion is, or should be, the defining value. A large percentage of 40% think that respect for human rights should be the main value. As it regards the definition of European identity, almost equal percentages have defined it as 'an ideological invention', a 'recognition of shared cultural values', and as 'the denial of different cultural traditions' which scored a bit higher at 40%.

Furthermore, only 40% of the organisations have established relations with other European partners.

As far as the organisation's aims at the European level, 40% said that their aim is to defend human rights, and another 40% that their aim is social integration. A smaller percentage of 20% said that their aim is to affirm universal tolerance.

In a more general sense, what our results show for the case of Italy, is that a majority of members of both humanitarian and religious organisations believe that Europe is an instrument which can promote economic development and they hope that Europe will become a 'link' for different cultures, in order to ensure, first of all, human rights for all people.

As far as the role of religion for the definition of a European identity is concerned, they believe that all religions can give their equal contribution, but some have expressed their reservations on Islam, which is considered a cause of conflicts. Another important finding, has been that a large part of both religious and humanitarian organisations, have expressed their suspicion towards the dangers of loosing local or national identities so as to create a common European economic space.

### **3.4 Germany**

From the results which were collected from Germany, we can observe that the concept of "European identity" is not clearly defined and it does not seem to have any great importance for the day-to-day activities of the people. However, people were interested in the subject since more than any other case study, respondents from Germany think that European identity is a political project in order to construct the European Union, in other words, think that Europe is above all a geographical and a political-juridical issue whose realisation is open in the future.

Furthermore, almost all of the interviewed persons think that European identity is a sort of combination between generally accepted values, a modern democratic and pluralistic society, ideas covering philosophy, Greek classical antiquity, religions, civil revolution and civil rights movements. What stands out in the case of Germany, is the fact that we have found very small percentage of people holding negative views on Europe, since very few people have expressed opinions like; 'European identity is an ideological invention', or that it signifies the 'denial of cultural particularities'. Having said that, it must also be stated that there are people who express their concern and argue that Europe should not drop achievements realised and recognised in Germany to a lower level, thus again, pointing the finger to the persistence and importance of the 'national' level.

*As with the other northern-European countries of our sample, we can also see that there are not significant differences between the answers given by humanitarian and religious organisations, which moreover, have scored high marks when it comes to the issue of having established links with other European partners, mainly with the aim to ensure the protection of human rights, without this meaning however, that there is no capacity for further improvement in this respect.*

### **3.5 Sweden**

The answers which were collected from both religious and humanitarian organisations are equally distributed among the alternatives 'freedom', 'solidarity' and 'equality' as the fundamental values of European identity with a smaller percentage arguing that democracy is the fundamental value.

The majority of those who answered the questionnaire support the idea that European identity is a political plan aiming towards the construction of the European Union. It is important to be noted also that 20% of our respondents think that European identity is an ideological invention which is functional to the domination of the richest member states thus revealing a rather strong scepticism towards a specific form of European integration which adopts economic indicators as the main driving force.

Furthermore, we can also see in the case of Sweden, the pattern which is present also in the rest of the northern European countries of our sample, by which we did not find many differences between Religious and Humanitarian organisations. Again, this may signify what we have argued throughout our research, that the decline of the importance of the established Churches, has not been accompanied by a decline or even disappearance of moral or ethical values. It is much more appropriate to think of this process as a process of 'diffusion' or of a 're-location' of these values which are today expressed by other organisations and/or associations.

## 4 Facing the “crisis” of the Welfare State

The Welfare State is the result of a long struggle against the liberal state, against the *gendarme* state and against the nation state, according to which dying for one’s country was the ideal destiny. *Pulchrum est pro patria mori*. It is the result of a joint and complementary struggle on the part of two adversaries, socialists and Christians. There was great rivalry between the two, but both found a common adversary in liberal capitalist society. In the Anglo-Saxon countries, besides socialism and Christianity there was also labourism and solidarity. The Welfare State was the outcome of a shared struggle, and it is important not to forget the various stages and phases of the process, also within the various churches themselves. At the constitutive assembly of the Ecumenical Council of Churches (Amsterdam, 22 August 1948), Karl Barth complained about the existence of an ecclesiastical deficit of understanding and reflection about major economic issues. “This is hardly surprising”, he commented, “given that all problems concerning property, capital, interest and money in general are not dealt with or commented on in the preparatory documents, as if all this was a taboo and as if the dilemma ‘God or Mammon?’ were not posed in the New Testament”.

### Religion(s), Welfare State

To speak of the Welfare State in the European Community means to use a common language while having different concepts and understandings in mind in doing so. With reference to authors like Esping-Andersen and Leibfried, the German report on *Poverty and Inequality in Germany* of 2000 makes a distinction between four different models of Welfare State which can, according to the authors, be found in present-day Europe<sup>13</sup>:

The enumeration shows that the typology is not exclusive so that one and the same country can only be mentioned once. In the cases of the Netherlands and Italy, there is double mentioning so that these typologies are more tendency descriptions than precise characterizations as such. Moreover, the classifications contradict the idea of any link between Welfare State models and religion(s) if, in the first model, the mainly Anglican or Protestant United Kingdom is in the same group as Catholic Ireland or in the third case laicist France, Catholic Italy and Catholic and Protestant Germany form one model group. Needless to add that the typology is not limited to Europe alone if in the first model non European countries like Australia, New Zealand and USA are mentioned in one line together with European countries.

These different models suggest different ways to protect people against market forces and income cuts: rather weak in the first case, through a lot of private insurance measures; strong in the second, through state guarantees of a very high level; middle in the third case, through state insurances on a compulsory basis; and weak, through not yet fully established social insurances and therefore the need of support from family members instead of state institutions or insurances.

In front of such a typology, the question arises whether any role can be attributed to religion(s) as concerns the concept of social policy as such. The answer to this requires a close look at the different mainstreams of religion(s) in Europe. To do that in form of a country by country study would go far beyond the possibilities of this investigation. Therefore need was to limit it to the concepts of social policies as put forward by the main Christian denominations: Catholicism, Protestantism, Anglicanism, The Greek Orthodox Church, and by Judaism while Catholicism and Jewry are studied in two different country contexts here in order to distinguish what is general teaching from its specific country related forms of application. The study of the religion(s), consequently, follows the way of “ideal-types” in the Weberian sense thus describing, with reference to official declarations and documents, concrete cases from which one can proceed to general observations regarding the relationship between Welfare State and Religion(s) in Europe.

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Walter Hanesch, Peter Krause, Gerhard Bäcker: *Armut und Ungleichheit in Deutschland*. Der neue Armutsbericht der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, des DGB und des Paritätischen Wohlfahrtsverbandes, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 2000 p. 458

## Catholicism

A peculiarity of Catholicism is its strict hierarchical organization that enables the church to have the same teachings at all levels in all the countries so that papal directives are handed down to the national forms of Catholicism and within these to local bishops, priests and lay people. That is not only true for dogmatic positions, it also applies to teachings in social and moral questions as laid down for the first time with regard to the social question in a papal letter (encyclical) of 1891 (*Rerum novarum*), and then repeated with adaptations to more recent phenomena in 1941 (*Quadragesimo Anno*), 1961 (*Mater et Magistra*) and 1991 (*Centesimus Annus*). Consequently, it seems that it would suffice to study these papal statements in order to know what Catholics think and how they shall behave in the social field. Yet, studying Catholicism in Italy and Germany from a socio-historical perspective shows that things are not as simple as that. There are indeed significant differences in the forms of requirements and adaptations with regard to the common teaching that is imperative to both countries. Differences, however, do exist and lie in different expectations from the state and the role of the church in it.

### Italy<sup>14</sup>

To retrace history in an interpretative way means for the debates and policies in Post World War II Italy that three important steps should be noted with regard to the role of Catholics in politics:

- the years immediately after the war (1945-49), when Catholics took part in writing the constitutional charter and made fundamental choices in the policy of reconstruction,
- the years of increase and the so called economic miracle (1952-64), when Catholics struggled for a policy of an economic programme that would reduce geographic and social imbalances,
- and finally the seventies, when the new institutions of welfare state were introduced to Italy.

As concerns the first step, the constitution of 1947, which was strongly influenced by Catholic thinkers and politicians, draws the lines of a model of social state. It recognizes and protects, in addition to traditional civil and political rights, social rights and those of the intermediate communities too and provides the appropriate legislative instruments to reach these aims. In the first four articles of the constitution the set of objectives is clearly defined. Italy is "a Democratic Republic, based on labour" and not on wealth, education or privileges (art. 1). It recognizes and guarantees inviolable human rights, "for individuals and social formations wherever personality is involved" (art. 2). It recognizes the rights of the person and of the intermediate communities on the levels between individuals and the state (i.e. families, unions, associations etc.), legitimatizing their social functions according to a principle which later on will be known as subsidiarity. It committed itself to remove material obstacles that hinder the full development of the person (art. 3), in particular: the Republic "recognizes to all citizens the right of labour and promotes the conditions to realize this right." (art. 4) The traditional great fear of state intervention from either a left-wing (communist) government or from a right-wing (fascist) government which both, according to many Catholic writers, had in common that they wished to take the whole social responsibility over to the state, thus not leaving any room for church activities in the field of charities and social support, was overcome by these objectives of the constitution. The aims represented by the safeguard of the person's (civil, political, and social) and of the communities' rights (anticipation of the principle of subsidiarity) together with the instruments given by the state, qualify the economic system, as outlined in the constitution, as a model of "social market economy". Unified in the principles, the Catholics were, however, divided in their concrete options for economic policy. Some (Vito, Vanoni, Saraceno) struggled for a policy of coherent planning with neoclassic theory guidelines

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<sup>14</sup> The following section on "Catholicism in Italy" (1945-1989) is based on investigations carried out by Pietro de Marco and his collaborators as part of the TSER project of the European Community on "European Identity, Welfare State and Religions" and draws heavily on their own formulations.

(monetary stability and investments not superior to available savings). Others (La Pira) were in favour of a more courageous policy making use of the more recent discoveries of the theory of Keynes. At the end maybe De Gasperi was the only one to win in taking a mediation and compromise position in searching to use parts of prosperity, produced by the market, to reduce unemployment and social inequalities.

The second step had as objective to reduce the geographical and social imbalances. It was established during the years 1952-1964 and showed different proposals. Most of them, however, could not be realized though important social weeks were held and many promising plans were discussed. It were the years of the Italian "economic miracle". The Catholics affirmed their confidence in the social state but insisted on subsidiarity as a leading principle. "As to reach the proper aim for care and assistance it is necessary that, in addition to public social services for the whole community and if real need is, there are initiatives of individuals, families, intermediate bodies, those of the territorial communities, enterprises, the trade unions directed to improve, through free acts of provision, minimum protection guaranteed to all. In this respect it is the duty of public authorities to stimulate and co-ordinate those initiatives and to integrate them eventually according to the principle of subsidiarity. In this context assistance and welfare maintain a function of stimulation to personal overcoming of particular situations of needs."<sup>15</sup>

The third step is marked by the construction of the Welfare State and the end of Catholic hegemony (1968-78). The social state is built also in Italy. The double health care reform of 1968 and 1978 introduces a universal and democratic (i.e., with management committees appointed by the local governments) system. A social pension is introduced for those citizens who are without a subsistence income, as the transition to a system based on previous income levels rather than contributions. Wages and pensions are indexed and a subsistence wage is granted to unemployed workers. Public expenditure increases and Italy chooses to finance the construction of the social state through debts and promotes it through political bargaining among the government, the employers' association (Confindustria) and the trade unions. The end of Catholic hegemony that goes along with this development has as consequence the loss of influence and the absence of remedy proposals when the Welfare State came in a crisis in the eighties because of steady debts increases and always higher demands to finance the system. The term "crisis", in this context, refers to the inability to satisfy all the needs covered by the promises of the Welfare State, it does not imply any questioning of the Welfare system as such, or to put it into simple words "crisis " here means lack of money to put into practice what has been promised in theory. Consequently, the Church offers its help by providing services as voluntary action in the "third sector". In this line there can be found a higher concentration of staff in the sectors for old people, handicapped, minors and youths at risk. Other sectors are working with foreigners and homeless, convicts and ex-convicts, families at risk as well as with drug addicts, alcohol addicts, Aids patients etc. The more the crisis of the Welfare State is noticeable as a consequence of lack of money the larger grows the "third sector" in which the Church with its help organizations takes a leading role. Its motivation is charity and is, therefore, addressed to every human being, fellow citizens as well as foreigners. The concept of charity in this respect is much larger and embracing more addressees than the idea of solidarity would in this context.

The Catholics in Italy, as it has been shown, always insisted on having enough room for charity activities and were therefore afraid of too much state regulations. Their fears led to maintaining a proper domain for Church activities which was originally expressed in the claim for not taking the whole social responsibility over to the state. This idea found a new expression in the eighties when along with the crisis of the Welfare State in Italy the social activities of the Church took a different shape as being part of the "third sector" together with other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).

In spite of similarities between Italy and Germany after World War II, differences must also be noted.

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<sup>15</sup> Il cammino delle settimane sociali, collective work by different authors, Rome: Dehoniane 1989 p. 295

## Germany<sup>16</sup>

German Catholicism was, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, marked by the experience of exclusion of Catholics from politics in the so called "Kirchenkampf"-period under Bismarck and the willingness of Catholics to full participation in state activities after the end of the "Kulturkampf". Consequently, fears of too much state intervention like in Italy had never inspired German Catholics in their social policies. On the contrary, the social reforms of Bismarck were fully supported by the Catholics and inspired them to develop the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity put forward by the leading German social Jesuit thinkers Gundlach and von Nell-Breuning. These principles were finally approved by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno". Post-war Germany, too, was shaped by social thinking in this perspective and it largely supported church owned social institutions as their subsidiarity contribution to society. In particular, just after World War II, the churches - both Protestant and Catholic - were the only still functioning institutions of a national level that were able to recreate the communication network needed to rebuild society and give shape to the newly built state of the Federal Republic of Germany with its capital in Bonn, in the middle of a predominantly Catholic area of Germany. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, a Catholic from Cologne, and Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, were representative figures of the new Republic of Germany, strongly opposed to the socialist counterpart of the German Democratic Republic of East Berlin.

The West German social orientation followed the line of German Catholic interpretations of the social question. This was a matter of fact for the first two decades of the German Federal Republic. It was due to both, a lack of social policy in politics after the Nazi regime and to the fact that the Protestant churches had, in the first decades after World War II, not yet a coherent social doctrine that was able to compete with Catholicism in this field. Though the Christian Democratic Party (CDU), which was the main ruling party for nearly the first 20 years, was conceived as an ecumenical party, composed of Catholics and Protestants in theory and in practice, Catholic social thinking had an enormous influence on the formulation of policy principles in the field of social aid. It led to what is still the typical situation of Germany, namely a close cooperation between church related charity organizations, both Catholic such as Caritas and Protestant such as the Diakonisches Werk, and non-religious organizations such as the Arbeiterwohlfahrt and state related institutions such as the Sozialamt and the Versorgungsamt. Until today, these organizations are concerned with helping people. There is no competition between them. To a large extent, they all share the same ideals and commitments and have no significant ideological differences among themselves. This may partly be due to a generalized common concern for the weak and the poor, with a good deal of Christian, non-denominational thought in it, it may also be due to Catholic experts such as von Nell-Breuning who was often consulted by Trade Unionists and members of the Socialist Party of Germany (SPD) so that his views gave shape to their thinking as well. It is thus not surprising but highly significant that through this historical formation process there is a large part of common Christian heritage in the social commitment of all political parties in Germany (at least up to 1989) as well as in all other groups of society - with sometimes the exception of the employers. More secularization and multi-culturalism, typical of the period after 1989, may in the long run jeopardize this common ground, for the time being, however, it doesn't look like this because most of the claims formulated in society are in total agreement with the Christian concern for the poor and the marginalized as expressed in Matthew 25, 34ff where the only criterion for the last judgment is whether or not they have helped the poor and the needy. The commitment to help - be it religious or secular - is therefore strongly supporting the idea of a welfare state and is critical of all claims of market strategies that produce marginalization and poverty. The common Christian ground is well identified with these claims because Protestants, too, have more and more followed the line of Catholic general social principles and added some more specific claims of their own which then were also taken up by Catholics so that the denominational differences have no great importance for social policy as a whole, notwithstanding some particular issues of the discussion such as the services provided for pregnant women who reflect upon abortion.

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<sup>16</sup> The following sections on "Catholicism and Protestantism in Germany" (1945-1989) are based on investigations carried out by Torsten Oliver Deecke as part of the TSER project of the European Community on "European Identity, Welfare State and Religions" and draw heavily on his own formulations.

The main difference between Italy and Germany regarding Catholic social politics is that in Italy the Roman Catholic Church was afraid of handing over the whole social responsibility to the state and struggled for domains of its own, in the beginnings of post World War II Italy just to guarantee the continuation of the Church's activities in the social field and from the eighties onwards in terms of the "third sector" which together with other NGOs developed their own strategies. In Germany, this competition between state responsibilities and activities, on the one side, and those of the Roman Catholic Church - and one may already add here the Protestant Churches as well - was inexistent. The principle of subsidiarity was not seen as a defence strategy to maintain domains of its own, on the contrary, social support given by the Church was interpreted as an help offer where the state was unable to help. From its very beginnings the social activities of the Church were thus complementary to others in society so that all shared the basic ideas of Bismarck's social policies and were willing to cooperate as much as they could without any specific claim of a field of their own. This is why the "third sector" has not developed as a competitive field with clear objectives, different from state policies but as an additional support of social state policies. This is true for Catholics and for Protestants as well as for non-religious groups in the society.

### **Protestantism**

Protestantism is a general term for a variety of churches and denominational groups which all trace their origins back to the Reformation period but stand for very different theologies and social teachings if compared one with the other. A good example for these differences is the comparison between Lutherans and Calvinists as concerns their ideas of the state. Lutherans defend a strict separation between the spiritual kingdom (as it is realized in the relationship between the individual and God) and the worldly reality of states on earth while Calvinists believe in Christ's rule over both the individual believer and the state and thus ask for active participation of the believers in worldly affairs, classically seen as a possibility to discover, on the basis of economic success, whether or not, in the perspective of predestination, the individual was chosen for heaven. In their theories, as a result of the two kingdoms-theory and in accordance with the letter to the Romans of the New Testament (13, 1ss), Lutherans accept state authority as given by God while Calvinists insist on each individual's responsibility and call for action if religious principles are not respected by the state (in accordance with the Acts of Apostles 5, 29). Differences are also noticeable in the understanding of poverty (according to Luther a spiritual phenomenon demonstrating the need of, and the hope for, salvation; according to Calvin, a lack of divine blessing or a sign of damnation) and of work (Luther stresses the link between professional work [Beruf] and vocation [Berufung], thus seeing in professional work a fulfilment of divine mission while Calvin's understanding of work is closely related to his teachings of predestination, namely as a way to discover the definite destination of the individual in the hereafter). Both terms, poverty and work, however, if interpreted in such a theological way, are hardly applicable to the conditions of poverty and work in modern societies. It is therefore not surprising that these theological differences have not played a great role in the most recent statements issued by the Protestant churches on the social situation in Germany during the second half of the twentieth century.

In Germany, Lutherans and Calvinists coexist with combined forms of the two, so that all these different theories have an impact on Protestant theology and social services of Protestant inspiration. The institutional organizations in forms of "Landeskirchen" (independent regional Protestant bodies) and free churches made it difficult to formulate common statements on social matters in the beginning of the Federal Republic of Germany but during the years a process of more and more unification has taken place and given birth to an umbrella organization such as the "Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands" (= EKD, i.e. the Evangelical Church of Germany) which, together with ecumenical attempts of more unified positions within the World Council of Churches, has led to a development that can nowadays easily be paralleled with the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Germany, namely that Protestant officials like Catholic bishops speak with one voice in their official statements in front of society and of the state. Most recently, moreover, statements issued by both, the EKD and the Catholic Bishops' Conference together, express the Christian answer in concrete cases of public interest. As concerns the social field, both emphasize subsidiarity and solidarity as formulated earlier in Catholic statements only. What still is typical of Catholic declarations is their reference to the common good, while Protestants rather stress the responsibility of the individual and social justice by insisting on the state's duty to offer equal chances for all members of society. Politically it is noteworthy that Catholics in general, for a long time, tended to support the CDU while Protestants were more in favour of the SPD as well as in support of Trade Unions. Those distinctions are, however, insignificant in more recent times.

Protestants as well as Catholics support the idea of a welfare state and criticize market policies that will lead to marginalization and poverty. In doing so, they both see the fulfilment of the biblical call for a more human society and are opposed to purely economic principles at the expenses of human values. They, moreover, encourage individual initiatives because they are afraid of a system that is so much embedded in social help that it may produce total passiveness and inactivity instead of encouraging forms of free creative participation on behalf of individuals and groups.

One Protestant document may suffice to underline these general statements. In 1973 the EKD published a memorandum on social security (*Denkschrift der Kammer für soziale Ordnung der EKD: Die soziale Sicherung im Industriezeitalter*), containing principles and guidelines for social security and the creation of social security. In the first chapter of the memorandum there are critical reflections on the situation, followed by considerations of, and discussions about, the mutual responsibility within society, the responsibility of the person, and the problems of social justice. With positive reference to the social law regulations in Germany specific fields are then mentioned and more precisely put forward: security during old age and invalidity, during illness with a strong emphasis on preventive measures for health protection, during illnesses caused by accidents, assistance to handicapped persons. Other topics are assistance to families, youths care, health care, etc. The claims in the conclusions are: the development of a special system of juridical help guaranteed to handicapped people; the improvement of all activities able to offer personal services; a check of uncovered risks within the insurance system against accidents and a reconsideration of old age pensions to guarantee a minimum life standard, including the necessity of more old people houses; a reorganization of the family and child compensation system.

The example shows the close link between religious demands and state obligations in the memorandum. Many more examples could easily be added where the addressee is the state and society in claims that are developed on the basis of biblical anthropology and religious interpretations of the "condition humaine".

The interesting result of this development is that Protestantism in Germany, over the years, became more ecumenical in its social doctrines by uniting different Protestant positions among themselves and, later on, often bringing them into one line with Catholic social teachings. Both have, from the eighties onwards, emphasized the structural aspects of marginalization and poverty so that charity alone was not the unique issue but it was paralleled with standard requirements in order to avoid negative consequences of the market. In this respect both in Italy as well as in Germany state regulation measures were welcome by the Christian Churches and led to a shift in policy, from a rather charity orientated system towards more framework considerations regarding the social sector as such.

The peculiarity of the German Welfare State (Sozialstaat) is that very different ideas and practices found a theoretical expression shared by all, believers as well as non-believers. Already in the nineteenth century the German Welfare State was based on conservative state theory combined with principles of Catholic social doctrine, requirements of the Trade Unions and of socialist labour forces, to which were added in the twentieth century constitutional elements and requirements from political sciences so that it was built on a large consensus in society to which all major tendencies made their own contributions. The aim of this Welfare State was and still is to give assistance to the needy and the poor, by accepting subsidiarity as a principle for the state to welcome assistance from non-Governmental organizations (including religious denominations), in order to guarantee a minimum of existence to all so that each person in the country is able to live a human life (both in its religious and humanistic understandings). It is the duty of the Welfare State to reduce extreme inequalities by promoting more justice and giving a fair chance to all in education and personal development and by assisting those who are disabled or need help for other reasons such as, for instance, as a consequence of weakness, inability, or social disadvantages. The Welfare State safeguards social security against risks which are unforeseeable or unbearable for the individual. It encourages self-aid and self-regulation and supports that by laws. It is in favour of increase and enlargement of prosperity and takes care for a policy of economic and financial stability.

Catholics and Protestants alike share these principles in general though they all know that in particular the policy of economic and financial stability can often not fully be maintained. Criticisms of concrete state policies are therefore quite frequent but they are not denominational as such. Germany, consequently, is the country where Christians of all denominations support social state responsibility and try to bring in their contributions not in a competitive but in a supportive way. It is the only country of the European Union where two mainstream Christian orientations (Catholic and Protestant) are of equal importance and equally integra-

ted into the system while in all the other countries in Europe there is one mainstream orientation alone in the lead and all the other denominations have more or less a minority status.

## Anglicanism<sup>17</sup>

Anglicanism is a specific form of British Protestantism, in a broader sense of the term, and therefore dealt with separately in this context. The Church of England interfered in major social issues in two fundamental manners: first by elaborating and diffusing its stance on particular public matters and its directives to the lay people, and second, by applying its own policies in various sectors of human activity. Beginning with the first pattern of ecclesiastical intervention, it can be observed that until the seventies it was either shrewd individual clergymen (such as Temple, Garbett, etc.) or institutions outside the central organizational structure of the Church of England (such as the progressive Christian Action, established in 1945) that formed and spread ecclesiastical viewpoints on social issues. In the late fifties, the then church Assembly modified its central consulting agency for social affairs, replacing the Social and Industrial Council with the Board for Social Responsibility, an advisory committee with the mandate to collect information, elaborate on social problems and report findings in such a way as to stimulate reflection and furnish guidance of both the Anglican congregation and the wider public opinion. Changes have then happened in the attitude of the Church of England with regard to the social role of the Church. In the age of Archbishops Geoffrey Fisher (1945-61) and Arthur Ramsey (1961-1974) Anglicanism was confirmatory, a very great deal more than it was confrontatory. The fact that traditional problems such as unemployment, bad housing, nationalization of certain key industries and better social security, for which radical clericals have been campaigning for years, were being addressed by the government combined with the anti-Communist consensus and the less radical personal leadership in Fisher and Ramsey conditioned this tendency. As a whole, it was an organization quite close to the centre of ecclesiastical power, with continuous interchanges with the Board for Social Responsibility.

The change in the attitude of the Church of England concerning the social role of the Christian church came as a result, first of the decline of British economy due to de-industrialization, and second, of the emergence and subsequent dominance of the "New Right" both in Britain and inside the Conservative Party. The Church of England has from the outset strongly opposed the moves to undermine the Welfare State by transferring many of its responsibilities to the private sector which was a basic policy of the then Conservative government. It has also consistently defended the re-distributive revenue policies and Welfare State programmes which came under severe attack. Particularly important here is the opposition against cuts in social security, the long established "social wage", public housing and the National Health Service which were proposed and supported by the New Right.

The Church's of England resolute support for the Welfare State, which in the eyes of most high ranked Anglican officials should ensure its success through an adequate level of funding, has been repeatedly and consistently declared in various high-profile publications, of which *Not Just for the Poor: Christian Perspectives on the Welfare State* which appeared in 1986 and *Faith in the City* which came out in 1985, are very good examples, the latter quite important in terms of the programmes which followed its pronouncement, since maybe for the first time, the Church moved away from middle axioms and towards the logic of making specific concrete proposals which was a policy favoured by the supporters of a more socially active Anglican Church.

*Not Just for the Poor* reflects in detail the thinking of the Anglican Church and the appropriate role of the state in the society, and it is significant in terms of its content which offers a useful summary of the continuing stress of the need for state provision of welfare entitlements, while at the same time, it deals with some of the fiscal inadequacies and the bureaucratic shortcomings of the British Welfare State in practice. It contains an important theological section which spells out the most important reasons for the role of the Church in establishing the Welfare State and reminds the readers of the extent of continuing public support for health and welfare services, not even excluding the possibility to pay more taxes in order to finance some of the public services more generously. It begun with an examination of the trends which affected the development of

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<sup>17</sup> The following section on "Anglicanism in Great Britain" (1945-1989) is based on investigations carried out by Christis Konnaris as part of the TSER project of the European Community on "European Identity, Welfare State and Religions" and draws heavily on his own formulations.

the Welfare State at the time, and concludes by offering an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses in the light of general criteria and theological presuppositions.

The discussion on current trends included an explanation of the breakdown of the Welfare State consensus and the rise of subsidies, tax benefits and infrastructural provisions which have to be referred as "private Welfare State", something which is criticized very strongly, in that the state often ironically gives more to the middleclass and the rich than it does to the poor. Its fundamental presupposition is that the Welfare State is to be genuinely conceived of as being a societal arrangement which promotes the *common good* of all classes and groups of citizens. The report emphasizes that the appropriate role of the Welfare State is to act, first, as funder and setter of the appropriate standards to be followed, and, second, as a provider of essential benefits which are not satisfactorily provided by the market and the voluntary sector. Among the most important conclusions of this report is that one cannot expect from the family to do more than it is already doing, that the public sector is as dignified and effective as the private sector and in many instances it even works better, that tax and benefits policies should be formulated in tandem and seen as mutually supportive instead of contradictory, and finally it states that an open mind is necessary on issues such as the role of the voluntary sector and the question of whether benefits should be universal or selective.

*Faith in the City* begins by noting the fundamental and established Christian notion of the mutual responsibility linking all citizens in a network of covenant obligations and insisted that all enjoined to care about and care for one another. In order for this task to be reached, it is necessary to use state facilities in order to protect the least advantaged and to ensure a descent standard of living for its citizens. All the policy recommendations of the report are made on the implicit acceptance of the need for a Welfare State and it calls for more money to be spent on providing for well established needs for public housing, health care, social security, education, employment training and unemployment relief. It also supports the idea that Church leaders are expected to speak out on behalf of the poor, and to be a sort of "loyal opposition" to any government, particularly one which seems to be pursuing policies that constitute a violation of the "bias to the poor" which so many theologians consider as a basic motif of biblical faith.

The position of the Church of England regarding social questions and the Welfare State has consequently, gone through a significant change in terms of a shift from a confirmative attitude towards a much more critical one, due to radical changes in society and within economic as well as social politics. It supports the Welfare State as a system and demands more money to keep it going because of biblical obligations towards the poor who serve as a reference without any precise definition of the term that would clarify which category of citizens is meant and up to which living standard the term implies who is thought of in such a reference.

### **The Greek Orthodox Church<sup>18</sup>**

The situation in Greece is significantly different from what has been described so far with regard to Catholicism, Protestantism, and Anglicanism.

Already since its establishment in 1829, the modern Greek State had taken over all the competences held by the local communities before the liberation, including those of social care and education. Although the state appeared to be the major umbrella institution for Greek society, it only performed this task at a slow pace and in a selective way. The social care system was founded in Greece in the period between the two world wars. It developed rather slowly after World War II and was completed after the fall of the dictatorship (after 1974). The share of public spending on welfare was small compared to other European countries and it only grew after 1974.

The implication of this short description of the Greek situation is to say that the Orthodox Church of Greece had, on the one side, been linked to the modern Greek state since its establishment and Orthodoxy had played an important part in shaping the traditional Greek culture, yet, on the other side, neither the building of the state nor the establishment of the public welfare system were affected by the religious culture; they were

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<sup>18</sup> The following section on "Orthodoxy in Greece" (1945-1989) is based on investigations carried out by I. S. Petrou, N. Zacharopoulos, A. Petrou, C. Tsironis, and K. Mygdalis as part of the TSER project of the European Community on "European Identity, Welfare State and Religions" and draws heavily on their own formulations.

affected by the political culture, which followed respective developments in Western European countries (there was simply a delay in terms of the implementation of the ideas concerned).

Consequently, with regard to history up to the end of the seventies, need is to say that the welfare services provided by the church or other religious bodies were only occasional, more intense in times of crises or emergencies (e.g. earthquakes), and mostly restricted to local levels only. They supplemented the welfare services provided by the state and dealt with areas not covered by it or with emerging problems.

A change in the attitude of the Orthodox Church vis-a-vis social problems has, however, taken place in the eighties of the twentieth century. It came from a rapprochement in the positions of the Orthodox churches rather than from the Orthodox Church of Greece. Though it cannot be argued that the debate of the Orthodox churches was directly related to the Welfare State crisis, it must at least be seen that it was driven by the aggravation of social problems and thus led to the formulation of some general statements on the issue. It was first witnessed in the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The first important document was from a conference on the diaconia (service) of the church, which took place in the Orthodox Academy of Crete in 1978. The Orthodox Church of Crete is semi-independent and belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The conference was jointly organized with the World Council of Churches. The positions included in the document were of major importance for the development of following documents on the issue.

The document points out that Christian diaconia is not an optional act, it is rather a necessary expression of communion with Christ, stemming from the eucharistic life of the church. The idea of service (diaconia) as a duty of the Christians and of the church was thus developed, and stances were taken on various social problems, which nevertheless remained at the level of statements, without further elaboration. Nevertheless, the shift was highly significant in two respects: one is that the traditional lack of any general or uniform theory of the state and, in particular, of the Welfare State has been overcome through concrete social concerns expressed on the basis of principles (love expressed as solidarity and mutual help; freedom of the human being, not understood in individualistic terms, but as being in communion with other persons; justice, combining ancient Greek tradition and the Christian one); the other one is that all the documents, which mark the shift, were elaborated in collaboration with either the World Council of Churches or the Conference of the Christian Churches. That shows the impact of ecumenical and international collaboration for the development of regional theological positions.

As in the Anglican case, the Orthodox example shows that general documents on the Welfare State were, from a religious point of view, only expressed from the late seventies onwards. They mark, so to speak, a second phase while the first was of more occasional help leaving welfare questions to state policies without any comment on behalf of the Orthodox Church of Greece. This has changed in the eighties and the Church's social claims now go beyond concrete help actions but require state policies of general order to guarantee and promote human life conditions in society.

## **Jewry: British and French<sup>19</sup>**

### **British**

The situation of Jewry is very much characterized by its minority position in Britain. The remainder of the Jewish voluntary social welfare organizations remained autonomous. They had grown up since the resettlement in the 1630s, when the Jews had been forced to promise that they would not become public charges "on the parish" and that they would take responsibility for their own poor. This was not regarded as an imposition by the Jewish organizations, since they felt that Jewish tradition demanded the community to assume such responsibilities. The structure of the Jewish community resembled that of the rest of society with its own local Boards of Guardians (London 1859), Orphanage (Norwood 1795), Blind Society (1819), Home for Aged Jews (1840), etc.

After the Beveridge reforms introduced by the Labour government in 1947/48, the Jewish voluntary sector was expected to respond to all cases of "need". The demand for service grew simultaneously, due to demographic factors such as aging, family breakdown, and, after 1973, unemployment. The Jewish community established a series of projects and organizations as new needs emerged and existing problems were more clearly delineated. These services went beyond such standard voluntary functions as self-help, advocacy and community development. By 1985 there were 87 different Jewish agencies, all seeking support from the same numerically declining Jewish community.

Though there are different positions within British Jewry and none can be declared the official one, acting Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks formulated the guiding principles, dear to all Jews, in *Wealth and Poverty* (1985). He suggested that the rabbinic tradition saw poverty as evil and as a result, nobody should suffer personal impoverishment in order to relieve the poverty of others, nor should poverty relief be allowed to harm the economy. The best method was to help the poor rise from "welfare dependence" to independence. The rabbinic tradition did not conceive of relative poverty in the socialist sense of the need for egalitarian income redistribution. He stated that Judaism was not biased to the poor, but treated rich and poor alike in terms of religious practice, the law and the Sabbath. He attacked the power of the Trade Unions, suggesting that even though protection of workers from exploitation was important, preserving the freedom of workers to work for whom and under whatever conditions they chose was more important.

### **French**

With regard to French Jewry, it is noteworthy that no work has been devoted to the question of Jews and welfare or the Welfare State, apart from a sociological survey by Erik Cohen [1991] on Jewish studies and education in France, which does not directly address the subject under discussion here.

France has long been an excessively centralized country, organized according to the Bismarckian pattern of welfare. With the development of the Welfare State, welfare was regarded primarily as a duty of the national collective, either directly administered by the state or by other national bodies. Consequently, the role allotted to private religious or non-sectarian associations was limited, both in the doctrinal sense and on the practical level. Organizations associated with other constituents of French society, in the same way as the Jewish organizations, served those who were excluded from the general framework of the Welfare State or supplemented the help already provided by the state. Those excluded were primarily foreigners and those seeking a first place of employment, since the healthcare system was tightly linked to employment until the end of 1999. Although France was organized as a Welfare State system, the term "Welfare State" was never adopted.

As concerns statements on social questions, there is a difference between the attitude of Jewish and Christian religious authorities. Whereas the Catholic and Protestant churches tend to express themselves on a number of important societal problems, such as bioethics, the place of work in contemporary society, the

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<sup>19</sup> The following sections on "Jewry: British and French" (1945-1989) are based on investigations carried out by Maurice Roumani as part of the TSER project of the European Community on "European Identity, Welfare State and Religions" and draw heavily on his own formulations.

environment, etc., the rabbis have generally been more reserved. That has changed somewhat in the nineties of the twentieth century.

In comparing British and French Jewries with each other it becomes clear that both communities had different starts in their respective political situations but both have developed towards a more representative voice in society in terms of questions of general interest and have thus become a political and social factor for society as a whole.

The question of this long chapter was whether or not there is a relationship between the different Welfare State models referred to in the beginning of this second part and the main religious traditions in Europe. The analysis has shown that neither yes nor no is the right answer to this question. It was shown quite clearly that the answer is more complicated than that.

Catholicism had an impact, indeed, on the social policies in Italy and Germany in the first decades after World War II. This influence seems to suggest why Italian Catholics were somehow more cautious in moving forward towards the Welfare State. They were afraid of too much state regulation and too little room for Church activities if the whole social responsibility was, as they thought, handed over to the state. Those fears were unknown among Catholics in Germany because of their active participation in the Bismarckian Welfare State model which had its influence on France, Austria and somehow Italy as well. It is important to note in this respect that the model itself was also composed of elements of the Catholic social doctrine besides many others so that the influence of religion on it is undeniable. This influence should never be neglected in descriptions of the Bismarckian model made by social and political sciences.

As concerns Protestantism and Anglicanism it became obvious here that in the first decades there was no coherent social doctrine but help relied on charity activities in individual cases. And the same can be said about the Orthodox Church of Greece and Jewry, both British and French. However, it should not be forgotten that the driving force towards helping the poor has its roots in the biblical concepts of Jewish justice and Christian charity/love. Both go beyond the secular idea of solidarity because they do not make any distinction between fellow believers and foreigners living in the area and thus constantly remind the believers/citizens of their duties with regard to other people, not thinking that their personal situation is just of their own responsibility but emphasizing a community duty involved. This is indeed - to refer to Habermas again - part of the biblical heritage which has given its form and legal expression to Europe's social policy. It is not obvious in itself though being shared by all Europeans so far, be they religious or not. A more vigorous social claim has started in religion(s) in Europe from the seventies onwards. It was the shift from individually conceived help actions towards structural reflections on poverty and risks. It implied more emphasis on state regulations and therefore an openly expressed support of the Welfare State as such because it became clear that individual help actions alone are unable to overcome the structural problems that produce marginalization and poverty in European countries. The social concern of religion(s) in Europe finds its concrete expression in a shift from a more confirmative stance towards a more critical one with regard to welfare state policy. It is critical if financial cuts lead to less help for the poor. It thus tries to defend the Welfare State system in a situation where the limits to help become obvious because of less money to pay it. It reminds society of its duties with regard to the poor though no precise definition is given to the term quoted from the Bible without any specification as such.

As concerns the Welfare State it is noteworthy that all Christian denominations have, during the second half of the twentieth century, changed their policies in so far as they moved away from an individual assistance model towards structural claims of aid to avoid poverty and marginalization. The latest and perhaps most striking example is that of the Orthodox Church of Greece which slowly developed a social doctrine on the basis of newly defined concepts of diaconia (service) so that state and society have duties which were never formulated before. This development shows what has been seen also in the cases of Protestantism and Anglicanism as well as somehow with regard to Judaism, namely that modern society is a societal one and not only the field of action for the individuals it is composed of.

The preceding paragraphs showed also that the leading ideas that form the basis of the Welfare State concepts are shaped by their religious origins even if expressed in non religious terms. Charity concepts and ideas of solidarity stem from different ideological sources but have common roots while that of charity is wider than that of solidarity. It is this concern that has, from the seventies onwards, found its concrete expression in a shift from a more confirmative stance towards a more critical one with regard to Welfare State policy. The voice of religious statements is directed more and more against all state and market measures that help to produce, or let come into existence, poverty and less care for many people. In the name of the poor and the needy these claims on behalf of religion(s) are made and try to emphasize the duty to work for the common

good and not to serve the interests of the fittest. In this respect religion in Europe has, from the seventies of the twentieth century onwards, become a social and hence political factor that acts as a corrective of social state politics and should therefore be seen as such. It was this concern that, from the very first beginnings in post World War II Europe, was the driving force to be actively committed to the social sector and it was this concern that has its roots in the biblical prophetic tradition and was and still is shared by others of the same cultural background, be they religious or secular in their personal convictions. In this specific sense religion has shaped Europe historically and mentally but since the seventies a more concrete influence can be stated, in accordance with Kepel's observation, namely that religion has officially taken position in the development and claims regarding the Welfare State as the structural frame for promoting a society in which human dignity is respected for all and by all notwithstanding the fact that the existing different models of Welfare State found in Europe cannot directly be linked to any of the mainstream religious traditions which made their contributions to Europe's growth and specificity. These traditions insist, in times of less money and hence a crisis to finance the Welfare State system as planned originally, on maintaining its principles at what cost ever in order to preserve and promote a society which respects human dignity and fulfils its duties for help to the poor, in spite of the unprecise use of the term which is never defined in its contents but referred to as a general reminder of social justice in the biblical tradition.

The innovative conclusion from these studies about religion(s) is that both European Identity as well as the Welfare State have a lot to do with religion(s) in Europe and this not only - as stated by Kepel - from the mid-seventies onwards but also in the period prior to these years though in a more implicit way. To restrict studies on these issues to political and social studies alone is a mistake because it narrows the perspective which should be seen in its broader framework including the cultural shaping of Europe through and in its religious forces and the fact that nowadays a shift has taken place in religion(s) from a more confirmative stance towards a more critical one with regard to Welfare State policy. That in itself is a political factor of social and economic relevance which should not be neglected in politics.

Today, in the face of the welfare crisis, religions are adopting positions which avoid nostalgia for a state-controlled welfare system and also liberal positions. The line that is being adopted is to take on the burden of the new situation and to try to shape it in such a way as to support the positive dynamism that the Welfare State has maintained whilst neutralizing the deviations that has weakened it. This means in concrete terms:

- No to the assistential State, in the name of a correct principle of subsidiarity.
- State intervention in terms of rights, above all those of the weak and vulnerable. The State has the duty to defend a just juridical framework in order to allow the development of individuals and groups. The State has the task of intervening to avoid monopolistic situations that impede development, and to defend collective goods such as the natural environment, whose protection cannot be assured by simple market mechanisms. The State must offer guarantees in the face of the exuberant offshoot developments of the market.
- Activate social strategies to promote solidarity: this means focusing a lot on "social society", which must be involved in the running of services, with the State adopting an auxiliary role that does not block competition.

What religions seem to be proposing as the solution to the welfare crisis is the value of solidarity at the centre of a social pact. This principle involves acceptance of the inevitable asymmetry of the human condition; the response to it is solidarity, which means treating different needs in different ways. Solidarity is an axiological principle that guides social life and must therefore be concretized in:

- juridical channels that convert into constitutional norms and general laws, into more concrete and procedural norms;
- political options through adequate institutional instruments that make solidarity historically possible.

The foundation and origin of these applications lie in a general ethical sense of solidarity, which religions have preserved in their memory and in their customs. As regards this, it needs to be noted that what is involved here is a principle that at a political level has not been sufficiently developed. If political modernity finds expression in the ideals of the French Revolution (liberty, equality, fraternity),

it can be said that the first two have been widely developed in theoretical terms and have been principles that have oriented social and political life. The ideal of fraternity/solidarity has not yet had the same fortune. Perhaps the European project requires us to assert this principle as one of the fundamental principles of social life and perhaps religions have an indispensable contribution to make in this project.

#### **4.1 Associations and Welfare State**

Although markedly differentiated in its nature and origin, the third sector is undoubtedly a product of the crisis in welfare systems and against which, as we have seen, a number of fundamental objections have been advanced.

In the 70's there was a distinct initial phase of crisis in the Welfare State: this was evident above all in financial terms, where a dramatic gap opened up between income and social spending. One of the reasons for this was the current increase in life expectancy, which led to more demand for social services. In the 80s, on the other hand, the crisis was more ideological in nature, and involved a questioning of the complex and bureaucratic apparatus of the entrepreneur state. The third stage of the crisis began in the 90s. This was theoretical and was related to the emergence of a new social issue. There were two particular problems. The first was the crumbling of the guiding principles of solidarity, the second was the undermining of the traditional conception of social rights in the face of exclusion and new forms of poverty. What was called into question was the universalistic nature of the welfare system, that is the current incapacity to define what should be understood as the "collective good". Turning to non-profit organizations was not so much a question of supplementing and completing public policies, but rather of dealing with the requirement to reduce the complexity of problems by identifying organizations outside the public system to whom the responsibility for finding a solution could be delegated. This made it possible to avoid overlapping and waste.

It is important to recall the background that lies behind the emergence of the new role of the third sector in general, which, as we will see, has led in the countries that have been examined to significant changes and distinctly characteristic processes of solidarity.

The emergence of a religiously-inspired voluntary sector committed to helping vulnerable subjects has historically speaking – on the basis of the doctrinal positions of the various religious institutions – a quite differentiated and rich morphology which has been gradually transforming itself. There were the "charitable Vincenzian ladies" devoted to "our deserving but unfortunate poor", who were willing, honest and clean in comparison to other poor people, dirty savages for whom measures of social control needed to be applied. In Great Britain there were the charitable works whose origins lay in the Victorian age. In the lay sector, another trend was the solidarity of movements deriving from 19th-century socialism, while yet another one is that of H. Spencer, according to whom the private citizen will gradually align his or her needs with the public ones of the whole community. Basically the culture of lay solidarity tends to differentiate itself from the notion of charitable handouts; it tends to posit itself as a rationally-based phenomenon with empathic connotations, and to base itself on organizational principles without drawing on any meta-worldly referent. It is worth emphasizing that in the meantime fresh demands on and criticism of the state on the part of an increasing number of voluntary associations has led to different forms of diffidence. The Christian churches, in particular social Catholicism, has become diffident towards the state because the latter does not respect Divine Law – of which the Catholic church is guardian and guarantor – as it should do. Consequently, this sense of diffidence is also accompanied by a sense of rivalry towards the state, which, apart from anything else, wanted to control and finance only some areas of associative life. A further element of friction and marked differentiation is ideological in nature. Consider, for instance, the antinomy that existed at the beginning of the 20th century between solidarity and charity. At the beginning of the new century, in a period of full-scale secularization, many of those contrasting positions have disappeared. Although there are distinct formal differences, religiously-oriented and explicitly humanistic voluntary organizations are gradually assuming commitments towards vulnerable groups; priority is given to the affirmation of social rights, combining solidarity with social citizenship rights, the promotion of concrete opportunities, provision of the means to gain access to social, economic and relational resources. This involves meeting needs while respecting the individual choices of those people who live in

disadvantaged and marginal conditions, such as the quite distinct vulnerable categories that characterize modern social reality.<sup>20</sup>

Against this background there emerge original, responsible and creative civic and community bodies which are capable of expressing forms of solidarity. The incalculable value of the voluntary sector is its flexibility, local knowledge and powerful motivation.

Groups are considering themselves more and more as the tangible sign of a gap that needs to be filled, of a shortcoming on the part of the welfare state. They feel that they are privileged witnesses of excluded society, and that they are assuming an intermediary function as a kind of 'zip' between disadvantaged peoples and public power. They see themselves as setting out with the excluded individual in order to retrace the steps of the path that the individual has come down in order to reinsert him or her into society.

The fact that in the most developed regions there are a greater number of organizations is further proof that development produces needs and requirements that have not been met. The voluntary sector claims a participatory role for itself and wishes to be involved in debate on social policies, while at the same time being unable and unwilling to substitute the state.

In this report we will try to build up a picture of the various distinct positions by questioning some of the main witnesses of this informal network, a network that extends across Europe and is a vital 'set of lungs' for the organization of European civic society from a transnational, transcultural and transconfessional perspective.<sup>21</sup> It consists of a myriad of associations engaged in social and non-profit activities in a wide variety of ways and forms. These organizations are founded on a variety of quite different legal principles. The extreme diversity of the third sector makes the phenomenon difficult to quantify in overall terms.

At a European level, these systems have historical roots and connotations that contribute to delineate the framework of four social Europes:<sup>22</sup> Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, Continental and Southern European/Mediterranean.

We will now present the results of the research concerning relations between voluntary organizations and the Welfare State in the various countries and in the face of the crisis of Welfare State systems. The results are presented in the following order: France, Germany, Sweden, Greece, Italy.

a) France

France can lay claim to having produced the first law on associations in Europe; passed in 1901, it regulates the fiscal and juridical regime of non-profit organizations. The term 'voluntary work' is used to indicate the non-paid work carried out by individuals in support of groups or associations<sup>23</sup>, or in any case as part of a structured organization. It is estimated that there are 700,000 associations in France and that about 70,000 new ones are established each year. French legislation enables us to know how many associations are established each year, but not the number that in the same period cease to exist.

On the basis of data from research conducted in 1990, 1993 and 1996 by the *Laboratoire d'Economie Sociale* (LES) set up by the *Fondation de France*, in 1996 the total number of voluntary workers was about 10,400,000. The number of voluntary workers has been increasingly constantly since 1990, rising from 7.9 million in 1990 to 9 million in 1993.

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<sup>20</sup> See M. Valagussa, *I fondamenti di una nuova cittadinanza*, in A. Cipriani (ed.), *Oltre la solidarietà di classe per una solidarietà di cittadinanza*, Rome, 1988.

<sup>21</sup> P. Ranci, *Equívoci e paradossi del non profit*, in "Micromega" 4, 1996, p. 122.

<sup>22</sup> M. Ferrera, *Le quattro Europe sociali tra universalismo e selettività*, in Quaderni di Ricerca Università Bocconi, "Poleis" no. 5.

<sup>23</sup> The term 'volontaire' is not necessarily a synonym of 'bénévole', which is voluntary in all senses. The term 'volontaire' indicates a person involved in various areas that are alternatives to military service, or in social activities organized for the long-term unemployed.

#### 4.1.1 France: the rejection of the redistributive role of Welfare State

The great majority of people hereof met, has a negative consideration of the notion of Welfare State. Only 8 charity associations with Catholic origin and 10 with lay origins, have expressed a positive definition, while 82% of the others, therefore, looks at the social role of the State, in its traditional concept of equalisation through material redistribution, in a very critical way; this system is rejected as being conducive to the relieve of responsibilities of individuals in precarious situations. A term, very often used, summarises this position: assistantship. The public taking upon poverty would foster and settle oneself in dependence on it, while removing all the capacity of initiative from the beneficiaries. It is remarkable that this position concerns both Catholics and lay people and two quotations, among all others, allow us to confirm that. From the lay side: "The State has never found other ways than assistance in dealing with poverty, which is conducive to survive, in a condition of dependence, inferiority and uselessness" (R16); from the Catholic side: "The Welfare State is conducive to different types of assistantship, which is something that interrupts our work, as the individual is not able to regain his/her dignity other than having the possibility to invest in his/her own projects (this concerns especially the RMI)" (S13).

The great majority of representatives of private social aid, therefore, shares what many observers have called "the crisis of Welfare State". More precisely, they ideally explain the "third stage" of it, recently pointed out (Rosanvallon, 1995). The first stage of the crisis, opened in the seventies, and involved mainly financial aspects, expressing the striking increase in the difference between remedies and social expenses. The second stage, during the eighties, was more ideological and corresponded to the further bringing Entrepreneur-State up against its being a complicated and bureaucratic establishment. The third stage, which started the nineties, has a more philosophical nature and comes together with the coming of a new social issue: "Two major problems have appeared: the breakdown of the organising principles of charity and the defeat of the traditional concept of social rights as instruments able to offer a satisfying frame to address the situation of outcasts" (Rosanvallon, 1995:9).

Actually, the rejection of the members of charity organisations of the redistributive State matches the remark for the inadequacy and the scarcity of a public system which has not been able to find appropriate solutions for the new forms of poverty and exclusion: "The answers are sometimes just a brush of paint on problems" (R14), "The State is omnipresent where is not necessary, always displaying its pomp" (L4), "At Ministry of Labour, you talk about "stocks" for what unemployed people is concerned" (P13). In this way, in addition to the refusal of State intervention, disguised as distribution of resources, there is the vindication of a new public reflection on methods to be adopted in order to try to re integrate those who have been excluded from the economic system.

In an even more precise way, charity associations affirm to **act as intermediaries** between disadvantaged or outcast population and public powers.

Even if they don't use the term "representation", they are rather glad to adopt that one of "relay" or "zip".

It concerns the possibility to show a social reality, that one of the "left-behind", that the imperatives of economic growth would have rejected to the borders of social visibility.

##### 4.1.1.1 Reintegrating individuals

The lengthening of the unemployment period and the daily swaying into precariousness of a part of the population call for a change of perspective, which is, at the same time, a change of range: "The State runs the flow, not the individual, it's not able to do that, as that is the role of associations" (P1).

The financial taking upon poverty cases by the State is compared to a denial of dignity of individuals. Supplying what is necessary to live, what is necessary to survive is "assuring the social peace" but it is not **assuring the social reintegration**: "People who lives with subsidies does not receive from that any social acknowledgement or any integration" (P20), "giving a new definition to poverty and to the policies for the poorest" (R13), "with RMI, it is something that completely discourages people from taking upon themselves the responsibility for their support, and this really contrasts integration" (S13)

Now, for the great majority of charity associations, in the new context of exclusion and unemployment on a wide range, social aid must be dedicated exactly to the latter scope. The great majority of social charity organisations, included Catholic ones, as we will see further on, are trying to walk the path that **starts from the outcast individual in order to run again through its way in the opposite direction and to integrate him/her back in the society.**

In this sense they agree on the analysis prescribing, against the "Passive-Welfare State", which is satisfied by the mere break between indemnification and integration, the definition of an "Active-Welfare State" which defines a new social right: the right to integration (Rosanvallon, 1995).

From the charity actors point of view, it is frequently asked for a public intervention on a mere legislative level: State has to provide the legal instrument that may guarantee the protection of fundamental rights, and specifically the right of everyone to live *in* the society, the right to have access to labour, which solely allows the above specified integration: "Everyone is responsible to get on his/her feet, to stop being assisted but the State, however, has to provide something" (R18), "it's necessary to give people the means for living, job is not enough recognised" (S8), "the acknowledgement of people consists, at the same time, in the interest for job and salary" (S15).

Therefore, one of the major news within the environment of social associations consists in the flowering of organisations specialised in the **economical integration**; they represent the 16% of the associations we have met (R1, R8, R9, R11, R17, M4, M8, M13, M17, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S15). Even the 16 groups of the Emmaus movement can be added to those as they are specialised in collecting, choosing and selling all kinds of objects, insisting on the job level.

The innovation of social economic integration consists in the definition of a new field, to be placed in a middle position between public and private domain. Its representatives call it "**an intermediate area between private enterprises and State**" (P14) or , moreover, "a joint economy which aims to mix public service and market" (R8). The trend of associations environment toward the imperative of integration is therefore translating the willingness to "retake the economic train", and this is in contrast with an exclusively charitable concept of solidarity, in the only social meaning of it: "The task of integration is changing the common portrayal of the dichotomy between the economic and the social field" (R11).

Labour appears to be an unavoidable condition for the return of the outcasts to society; for associations it is not any more a question of distributing food or clothes, and not even of assisting and addressing people in precarious situations inside the labyrinth of their social rights, rather than to bring them to employment. The principle is to offer them an intermediate place between unemployment and an ordinary job contract.

The various activities are often focused on collecting, repairing and recycling products which are similarly "excluded" from the consumers circle: old household appliances (R11, S15), papers and cartons (R8), recycled clothes (R17). They may also involve services: area enterprises (S6), building (S5, R9, M8), home delivery (S7, S8), or more directly training in welcome professions (M4), connections with job environment (R1, M17), support of economic projects (M13), temporary jobs (S10).

The development of associations for the economic integration has paved the way for a new type of social agents which are more close to enterprise managers than to fellows of good will. The environment of associations opens therefore to economic values and activities. It is possible to find a growing number of salaries in this area. The growth of employment in the Third Sector between 1981 and 1991 raises to 39,6% (3,3% to 4,5% of the total employment) while it is employing just the 2,2% of the total active population (Archambault, 1996:110).

Above all, the growth has been focused on the social side of the Third Sector which, in the same period of time, has observed a **growth of 123% of the paid staff** (more than 200.000 additional employees, 8,4% above annual average)

This explosion has been accompanied by the State which has prepared appropriate mechanisms to allow the economic support of associations. They can be inserted into the frame of Local Plans of Economic Integration (PLIE, created in 1993) which provide that, in order to receive grants, specific conventions have to be signed between public services and associations.

The perspectives regarding the evolution of the intermediate area of economic integration are therefore more or less optimistic. Associations are uncertain between the need of State support, in order to accomplish their task of integration, and the refusal of public control, always perceived as detached

from the reality of situations: "The State is increasingly asking us to be brought back to its schemes and problems, which is sometimes difficult and opposite to what is happening on the field" (M9), "The State, for its pleasure, wanted to regain the associative mechanism in order to newly set it up and better manage it, with often dreadful results" (S10), "It's OK that the State might be there to start, help and support, but I say no if it is there to manage and carry out" (S8). Public procedures are therefore felt as intrusive, and they are criticised for their complexity, their slowness and their control: "I don't know why there are so many partners to be informed" (concerning an approval dossier to be envied to 19 different institutions, S15), "every year you have to present a project (...), and very often it is approved when the year is already over" (S20), "you have to negotiate it every year and in case you are doing something which is not consistent with the opinions of a municipality or a department, you are forced to stop doing it" (S18).

It is not possible, therefore, to deduce that associations look for State disengagement in the social field; on the contrary they insist on the **necessity of a co-operation between public powers and associations**. This requirement may be negative: "you cannot replace the State, it would be too easy to discharge everything on associations" (R5), but it's more widely positive: "becoming citizens again means to be allied again with the State" (R17), "It is necessary that charity organisations are complementary to the State" (R1), "State is able to integrate if we are present and vice-versa" (R2), "It's not possible to take public powers' place, we are partners" (R5). What is actually asked by private charity actors is that their actions might be acknowledged by public institutions and that they might be, at the same time, supported and encouraged. At the same time it is highlighted the necessity of a professional training in the social field, meaning that it is not possible to avoid for public powers this delegation to associations: "we are going to make charity professional, specific missions with specific funds" (S18).

The privatisation of the social action is therefore frequently announced: "Public powers are increasingly willing to discharge charity activity and to entrust associations with it" (L2), "non-governmental actions are those who light the fire of solidarity" (M15), "associations must enter the market area, first they must be supported by patrons because you cannot hope that State is able to respond to every need" (M17). At this regard, private charity actors do not conceive their action in terms of competition yet; They call for the recognition of an intermediate level, carrying on a new approach to poverty and a new project to fight exclusion. And these unexpected perspectives are exactly those who are willing to be integrated by public powers: "our task is to act for the State take upon itself the responsibility for appropriate social policies" (P8).

#### 4.1.2 Germany

In Germany, policies of social welfare are characterized by the application of the principle of subsidiarity; this tends above all to favour the intervention of family solidarity, associations and ecclesiastical institutions. Only if these fail does the state intervene. This situation tends to encourage an almost monopolistic position in social affairs for the third sector organizations. The relation between third sector organizations and public institutions can be defined as "institutionalized privatization", with the third sector as the main supplier of social services which are publicly financed<sup>6</sup>. Another characteristic of this model is the presence of apical and second-level organizations which lobby and participate in policy making. This confers on the German system a marked neo-corporative character. In this model, ecclesiastical institutions play a primary role both because the concept of subsidiarity has been developed within Catholic social doctrine and because the apical organizations have developed and differentiated themselves along ideological lines. Some of these, such as Caritas and the Diakonisches Werk, are linked respectively with the Catholic and the Protestant Church. This explicit recognition of the role of ecclesiastical institutions and the third sector organizations connected to them, and their consequent involvement in the decision-making process, have led to the development of an improved relationship between public institutions and private organizations in the field of social affairs. The German system can be summed up in terms of three principles:

1. the state assumes general responsibility for the welfare system;

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<sup>6</sup> See H. Anheier, *An elaborate network. Profiling the third sector in Germany*, in B. Gidron, R. Kramer, L. Salamon (eds.), *Government and the third sector. Emerging relationships in welfare states*, Jossey-Bass Publ., San Francisco, 1993.

2. third sector organizations have the right to assume a role as agents of social policies within the framework of the general objectives established by the state;

3. the state is obliged to guarantee third sector organizations the necessary financial support to ensure an adequate level of social services for its citizens.

#### **4.1.3 Sweden**

As is well known, generally in Sweden the central role of the public sector means that the third sector role has traditionally been very limited<sup>7</sup>. The role of ecclesiastical institutions has been oriented towards forms of integration and non-conflictuality with the state. In the last 15-20 years, however, such organizations have been assuming a growing role connected with the deep mutations that the Scandinavian welfare system is undergoing and the independence of the Lutheran Church. In fact, the development of voluntary organizations to a greater extent than in other countries is based fundamentally on a widespread voluntary participation that in the past tended to focus not so much on the provision of services but on the political role of advocacy and the promotion of reform. In recent years, following the growing economic and financial difficulties of the country, there has been growing public sector attention towards the third sector and towards voluntary organizations, not only as regards their cultural-political role but as potential suppliers of services.

In Sweden there are over 200,000 extremely active organizations, mainly popular in nature (folkroerelse), who do not like to be defined as charities because they feel the term has paternalistic connotations. It is in these organizations that voluntary work has taken root; in Sweden, voluntary activity is understood as the giving of time and effort freely (i.e., it is neither imposed nor paid) on the part of an individual. The volunteer thus devotes his or her work in associations motivated by a general humanitarian, ecological or other ideal. Associationism, participation in the democratic process and strong cultural connotations has the effect of rendering the collaboration between paid staff and volunteers, and the links between unemployment, voluntary work and employment stronger than in other countries.

#### **4.1.4 Greece**

At first sight Greek voluntary organizations do not seem to fit into a single model. Possibly the greatest challenge for the Greek voluntary sector is to shape itself into a network and to be open towards European integration. The Orthodox Church can effectively regard itself as being part of civic society and for this reason can promote cohesion in the areas over which it has influence. According to the *Volmed* initiative (Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy), out of a sample of 200 voluntary organizations it emerges that more than half of them are geographically situated in southern Greece in the Greater Athens area. For the most part these are well-structured bodies, though 4.5% of groups are informal in nature. The historical variables, namely the distribution over time of the organizations that were surveyed, are particularly interesting. Only a marginal proportion (13.9%) of the organizations were established before 1940, while four fifths were founded after the Second World War and one third of the sample group were established after 1986. This indicates that the Greek voluntary sector is a very modern phenomenon which has evolved since the 70s. What are the relations with religious institutions in Greece? What is their ideal reference?

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<sup>7</sup> See E. Jeppsson Grassman, L. Svedberg, *Voluntary Action in a Scandinavian Welfare Context: the Case of Sweden*, in "Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly", 4, 1996.

#### 4.1.5 Italy

Unlike in other states, in Italy the growing use of third sector organizations in the field of social welfare has occurred in a context of mutual agreement between organizations and the public sector. This has created a form of “non-programmed partnership” distinguished by relatively unregulated contractual transactions. A further characteristic was the absence, until a few years ago, of formal channels for the representation and recognition of private organizations that frequently had to resort to clientelistic or informal channels in order to influence public-sector decisions. 12,909 organizations were surveyed in Italy, and it is estimated that on average 600,000 volunteers dedicate at least 5 hours to a socio-economic, environmental, cultural or human rights service. The typical volunteer is 40 years old. There are more volunteers in the north than in the south<sup>8</sup>.

Some ecclesiastically-oriented organizations which do a great deal of humanitarian work are not enrolled in any regional or provincial register of voluntary services.

In 1993, 40% of groups in Italy had a confessional profile, while in 1997 this figure had dropped to 36%. In the meantime, lay or non-confessional groups increased from 57% to 61%. This movement began to have a strong impulse from the middle of the 80s onwards, with the general disengagement from political organizations. In the past the local parish was the nearest place for people to go to offer their services to, but in recent years lay organizations have made progress and it is now easier to choose how and where to offer one's time and work.

The majority of voluntary organizations have been established in the last 30 years; this is partly due to the first symptoms of the welfare state crisis in the West. Many of these organizations represent an element of rupture and innovation both within social policies and in the third sector. If on the one hand the identikit of the voluntarism tends to be very similar in the various different countries being examined, on the other Italy seems to be characterized by a much more marked voluntary participation in welfare activities. This is probably due to shortcomings in our social welfare system.

The response from Catholic organizations is not so much a rejection of welfare policies, but rather the feeling that there is a risk of a loss of identity. One group in Bologna underlined the fact that they arrived at the point of not stipulating an agreement with the local government on a matter of principle. “As we wanted to maintain complete freedom to act”, the decision was taken not to stipulate the agreement because “it would have limited our autonomy in managing the service” with control procedures. A group in Palermo did not question measures of control as such, but rather the entrepreneurial logic being adopted also by “social enterprises”. The utopic vision is that “from voluntary associations there might emerge a cooperative guided by a mentality and logic that is different from that of a traditional enterprise”. The explicit aim of the projects of many groups is based on three criteria:

1. full acceptance of the logic of the “social market”
2. radical rejection of the notion of reducing the relation of help provision to that of “work”
3. integration into the logic of the welfare system whilst maintaining one's “otherness”

In the various geographical areas considered (north, centre, south), the social state is more a form of welfarism than it is care and attention for people. In some cases there is the view like the one expressed by the Palermo-based group *Inventare insieme*: “There's lots of talk about the welfare state... I think that in this area it is inexistent where the number of children dropping out of school is extremely high” and many families “have no guarantees in life”. The welfare state seems, then, to be indiscriminate welfarism, without any guarantee of continuity, and above all, with effects that are limited if not actually counterproductive. Indeed, the proliferation of social cooperatives supplying social welfare services is merely a demonstration that in Sicily “the local council can't cope”. “What is the big boom in the welfare business due to? (...) (to the fact) that it's become clear that people's welfare needs are immense, enormous, which (...) local councils will never be able to provide for!” In a situation

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<sup>8</sup> It can be supposed that a lot of work traditionally regarded as feminine and involving the provision of help for family members and neighbours, is not recorded. It is also difficult to represent in the official “active citizenship” records other forms of solidarity and reciprocal help present in southern cultures.

characterized by a pressing need for jobs, social enterprises emerge which are destined to substitute voluntarism. Thus the short circuit triggered by the crisis of the welfare state and job demand ends up calling into question the value of gratuitous altruism. But is it possible to maintain one's ethical and religious identity and at the same time be a protagonist in the social market? This is one of the dilemmas. The importance of professional competence and hence the professionalization of "charity" does not seem avoidable. Quite independently of any descriptive value, the judgement that emerges is that in relation to the Welfare State the various organizations examined tend to place the needs of the person before that of the organization. What is the position of the lay organizations? Here too what is being called into question is the universalistic nature of welfare systems, that is the current inability to define what should be understood as the collective good. Public welfare policy seems to have lost its traditional function of synthesizing and bringing together particular interests, so turning to non-profit organizations is not so much a question of supplementing and completing public policies, but rather of dealing with the requirement to reduce the complexity of problems by identifying organizations outside the public system to whom the responsibility for finding a solution can be delegated. The efficacy of these lies in the capacity to avoid overlapping and waste, and certainly not in overcoming fragmentation and particularism. In comparison to confessional organizations, lay ones seem to underline the need to respect criteria of efficiency and efficacy. If related to the "perverse effects" of traditional welfare models, they perhaps indicate a possible redefinition of the Welfare State based on a plurality of subjects, where regulated competition between them can set in train the virtuous circle of citizenship.

## 5 Religions and values: the drive for a solidarity-based Europe

What is the value of the emerging network of extra-state solidarity in dealing with the crisis and the redefinition of European welfare needs? Confessional or non-confessional, what are the values and criteria that inspire voluntarism and the types of organization that make up the third sector? To what extent has the process of secularization, together with the individualism of consumption and the marketplace, really led to an irreversible “desertification of souls”? To underline the contribution of the groups, quite apart from juridical and institutional considerations, an attempt has been made to build up a map of an experience fuelled by ideals. What emerges is a landscape with great ethical and religious implications and a great potential, a significant reserve of human and spiritual resources.

### 5.1 France

There's a growing majority of members of Catholic associations (90%) that refuses to consider religious belonging and faith as preliminary criteria for employment. When you ask them about personal motivations and values carried out by their group, the denial of religious dimension is much lower. Three different positions are highlighted: in the first one **Christian identity is recognised and claimed (35%)**, in the second one it is **minimised and seen with a sense of proportion (45%)**, in the third one it is **hidden or refused (20%)**.

A third of the people belonging to a confessional group that we have met, has expressly made reference to their faith or to the Christian teaching in order to explain their commitment.; you can call them **"confessants"** (35%), which are the same people that declares to maintain tight connections with Catholic Church. Nevertheless the way by which this belonging is expressed changes in its intensity. Some of them, very few, do not hesitate in mentioning Christ or holy texts: "our mission comes from the Gospel, we are in the logic of the Good Samaritan" (L18), " we follow a call from Jesus to share our life with the poorest" (P9).

Others use religious vocabulary without mentioning confessional terms: "you cannot live your faith if you don't take into consideration who's next to you" (R7), "we bring this aspect of faith: believing in a kind of love which is stronger than us and makes us free and high" (R18), "the individual is created as an image of God, we have to go and meet him, go and meet a brother" (P5), "Love for others is in prayer" (M15). Others, finally, connect directly religion and solidarity: "starting from a religious training, we devote ourselves to the charity of closeness" (R7), " human rights comes for their great part from Jew-Christian values" (R14), "charity is a dimension of faith" (S4), "human rights are important and this goes along with religion" (R4).

To the other end you can find both members of associations refusing to consider the religious dimension of their movement and those who want to be separated by it; you can call them the **"laicizants"** (20%), which are those who keep the looser connection with the Church, or that refuse it. Their positions sometimes appear to be in obvious contradiction with the reality of the life of their organisation, like that association whose president and many members are part of a congregation and, at the same time, affirm: "here, at religion level there's nothing, religion is outdoor" (L16). In the great majority of cases, we have noticed that the hiding the confession almost came from a political will: "we have chosen to increasingly set aside confessional dimension" (M6). The argument, or rather the revealed motivation, (as never admitted as such) shows a willingness to be integrated in the civil society and this can be found in the frequent use of the rhetoric of laicism: "laity offers more flexibility" (L11).

One of the explanations of this laicizing attitude may be seek in the fact that the specific public to which charity associations address is not only very differentiated but also, in particular, characterised by Islam: "50% of the persons we help are Muslims" (S2). You can also find in Catholic conversations an obvious willingness to respect other beliefs, willingness that passes through the silence on own religious beliefs: "we don't expose our beliefs in order not to hurt Muslims" (L11).

The trend toward de-confessionalisation seems also be an imposed element from "sociological" exigencies connected to the public concerned by charity.

More widely, it translates a basic trend followed by many Catholic associations, and specifically the intermediate group of "**limitaters**" (45%), toward a laicization of their values and their motivations. This intermediate group, as a matter of fact, is characterised by the refusal of all confessional determinations in employing and for a tendency to see with a sense of proportion the confessional origins of the association. Above all, when values are concerned, the adopted attitude is to avoid all references to religion and to concentrate the aims on "humanist" values: "we are not there for Catholics, what matter is human being" (L17). Catholics join the lays on this aspect and this shows the meeting of associations on the same ethical knot.

### **5.1.1 A common ethos: place human being in the centre**

Even if all the associations never explicitly mention it, this does not, in any case, mean to deny that the greatest majority of them identifies human being as the ultimate value to whom connecting all their actions: this is the case for the 70% of the Catholic associations and for the 90% of the lay ones. The similarity of the thesis of one side and the other is evident, it reveals the ethical homogeneity in the social field of private solidarity, and always and everywhere concerns the "placing of human being in the centre" (R14). Some quotations show this ideological meeting: from the lay side, "we defend the right to be recognised as a human being and not to be left on the ground" (R2), "I believe that we have to re-discover the word *human* that we tend to forget" (S7).

More precisely charity associations want to pave the way for the restitution of human dignity: "every human being must live according to his/her fundamental rights and live fully his/her dignity" (R13), "make it happen that dignity of people in difficult situations appears at its great day" (R19), the lays say, "every individual has to play his/her own role in the functioning of society and has his/her dignity to preserve" (S3), "we see the respect of human being in its wholeness, in its right as a citizen" (L9), the Catholics answer in choir.

This centrality of human beings is accompanied by an improvement of the individual dimension of help, and there, again, is the foundation of both lay and catholic groups.

The accent placed on human being, in its individuality and dignity, constitutes the ethical base of the social project of charity association, project that do not separate the individual from the totality formed, on the other side, by the society. It concerns the possibility to accompany all outcasts to re-enter the social system: "in order to be in the society, you must be connected to others, not starting from what you don't have, but from what you already have" (P1), "we hope that there's a place for everyone in the society and that this place is worthy" (P16).

This willingness to integrate translates a very different of point of view of associations relating to social charity. We have already mentioned it concerning economic social integration, but it is necessary to insist on it as it represents one of the most evident and weighty teachings of the meaning of this inquiry. If the State is criticised in its charitable role, associations, at the same time, refuse the solution of compensation. They all come to the traditional expression of private social charity as a distribution of material help to the victims of poverty, in order to highlight the involvement of these individuals in the integration project: "we don't say the people we take care of, but with whom..."(M8), "we must get out of this logic of services supplied and make those who are the poorest partners more than beneficiaries" (R13), "make it possible that people raise their head and fight on their own" (P8), "moving from charity to acknowledgement of the other, give back a place to poor people in the social rites" (P1), "allow human beings to find again a dignity for job" (R15), "it is necessary to give back a place and the power of speech to poor people" (S4). The actors of the social field move from a distributing concept of solidarity to a participative one.

This call for a partnership with the outcasts in the integration project is obvious when you analyse the statements: "we say that, the association cannot do anything for you if you don't do it with us" (P13). Here, again, there is no difference, not even in the level, between the two groups: lays and Catholics. It is demonstrated by the great tolerance and mutual acknowledgement asserted by mutual judgements.

From the lay side there's a sovereign consensus; only 8 people have expressed a certain reserve about groups having a religious origin, and 92% shows acceptance and legitimating of Catholic associations: "this is not because they are confessional or not, according to me it deals with human

values" (M13). Moreover, consensus is achieved on the meeting of goals pursued and values defended: "whatever might be the religion, all this people brings a human touch" (P19), "we have all the same projects, which consist in helping those who are forgotten", "Christian associations defend the same values as us, those of humanity and solidarity" (P14).

Few cases underline a difference and it concerns the same idea: "on their side, it concerns mostly of giving gifts, it's not frankly connected to job" (R1), "the confessional charity is more close to assistantship, they work more for people than with people" (S9), "the trend is to make on behalf of, is pushing on the head of people" (R19). Catholic associations are therefore vilify for their old fashion approach to social aid. We have come to observe that, notwithstanding the fact that they meet the lay ones on the necessity to abandon the repairing logic for a participative one. The best evidence is, with no doubts, the small revolution which Secours Catholique has known in 1996, for its 50th anniversary: "we have passed from a pedagogy of assistantship to a pedagogy of doing together" (M1), declares one of its members relating to its new charter. This one defines for ten years a national programme based on three different axes: "promote place and faculty of speech of poor people, act for the social transformation, be witnesses of the Gospel". We can verify that the partecipative dimension is obvious, and that this is the break with half century of re-distributing and philanthropic charity.

Against a blind material help and an anonymous distribution, the actors of the social charity, both lays and Catholics, claim a new definition of the way by which less favoured people is helped: no more assistance but support, no more distribution but co-operation, no more survival but integration. They define therefore the conceptual frame in which the State, whether it's willing to do it, must place itself, and it already witnesses the reaction to changes of social situation, adapting its answers to these new exigencies.

## 5.2 Germany

One main interest of our questionnaire was to collect information about motivations to work for a social organisation and the relevance and significance of religion for the respective decision. It is very significant that the majority state, over the formal profile of associations, believe, but practice very little or not at all. Many have described themselves not as anticlerical or antichurch, but as very church-critical. Religion and religious community have further more importance as "givers of moral and social basic values". To be a member of a religious community did not play a role in joining a social organisation. One thing is to believe, other thing is to belong to. An exception was only seen in the Diaspora situation and on the part of Catholic Church. High official position like the management of a care home are limited to confess adherents to Catholic Church. Also the Maltese Order tries to employ only catholic workers, which does not work in protestant or secularised regions. Otherwise the interviewed officials of Caritas in Berlin pointed out the high importance of religion, but not of doctrine and church's leading.

More important reasons were the desire to help people, to make and maintain social contacts, feelings of social responsibility and meaningful leisure activities. Within the fields of functionaries the argument to get a job was dominant, too.

As a "reward for their work" they gave the following reasons:

- § Thankfulness and joy of the affected persons (clients/users)
- § Contact to other (like-minded) people
- § Opportunities to develop her or his own personality
- § Opportunities of further education

Especially considerable is the fact, that **nearly all interviewed persons gave the same answers**. Only a very few regard it is more important to "act" on the reforms, including with unpopular measures, than only to "react" on political decision, which will take place inexorably. No differences, may be different as expected, have been found between religious and secular organisations. Also the latter ones use the same values as the religious but in a secular interpretation!

Further social engaged need to manage the uncertainty, which partly is a consequence of increased openness, manifold society and international exchange. This is the reason behind why

international organisations like the Red Cross have different form of organising in different countries. From this point of view is less interesting to analyse religious and humanitarian as independent organisations. Rather we should analyse the interplay and competition between different forms of organising. For a deeper understanding of social solidarity and its potential for future t is relevant to study solidarity in a local context, focusing on horizontal relations, alliances, partnerships and interdependence. In this local context we might find linkages between micro and macro levels in the local, national and European society, constituting the citizenship and identity among people.

### **5.3 Sweden**

On the conceptual or ideological level most organisations share the vision of solidarity and welfare society. On the practical level we see that they have different functions (organisations do different things). This functional and organisational differentiation is central for an understanding of both religious and humanitarian organisations.

However these organisations often work together or receive mutual support in their community role. Further these organisations engage people being part of different networks. This is important because individual roles are based not only in the individual itself but also in the social network he or she is representing in the specific situation. On individual level a socially engaged worker may act in different roles. This observation of interchangeable roles of social solidarity is important to understand the premises for solidarity expressed by SVO's. Social solidarity is a phenomenon, which extends organisational borders as well as the borders of public, private and voluntary sectors. Local government's ability to have influence on social welfare will not only be dependent on their formal authority but also on their capacity to govern within a system of other organisational actors, outside their formal control. The role of voluntary social work partly needs to be "reconquered" without being perceived as a retrograde step or a return to a past.

The most salient opinion is that the Welfare State in Sweden is "cracking", which is a widespread feeling that the security the public sector offer in terms of different kinds of welfare, are diminishing. The humanity and dignity of all people are salient in this group.

Several in the respondent group have noticed this trend in the governmental attitude, a switching from a "good complement" to a "good resource". The basically positive opinions the respondents have towards the growing interest from the local municipality and national government is mixed with the feeling of "being used" in a negative way. From governmental perspective there is also an interest of the potential of the voluntary sector concerning its ability to contribute to the common welfare and even in creating new jobs and economic growth.

The sense of and the need for cohesion are quite salient among the respondents. To create a belonging to a community it is not enough just to be a member of the local municipality. Relations to other people, associations, clubs and the like create this sense of cohesion. Voluntary organisations seem to be a central link between people in the local context and in civil world.

It is quite clear that the respondents believe in expanding the domain of voluntary work. The basic argument for this is that these units manage this kind of work more effective than public administration or at least with more enthusiasm and lower resources.

Which is the Swedish situation, then?

When we asked for conditions to be listed the most important matter is that they share the aims of the organisations and accept the programme and its methodology. Religious belonging and ideological placing is of secondary order. This was true even for based organisations, though they of course appreciated if they have the religious faith. But this was not something they insisted on. Within the humanitarian group the ideological conviction is of higher importance than in the religious group. In a secular society it is an advantage to refer to strong human values, but not confessional values.

### **5.4 Greece**

The humanitarian organisations of the sample, asked whether they have relations with religious or church institutions or the church itself, answered that about 50% have relations (permanently or occasionally) with religious institutions. In some cases, institutions active in the field of people with

special diseases, reported that the local Bishop is honorary president or vice-president of their organisations, even if he doesn't play a special part in the operation of the organisation.

The remaining 50% doesn't have relations with religious institutions or the church, either because they have not pursued this or because they believe that there is nothing special that they can offer.

As far as religious organisations are concerned, many of them act directly related to the Church of Greece. It is important to mention that some religious organisations replied to this question saying that they have also relations with other religious bodies and organisations, and underlined that they described themselves as religious organisations as opposed to ecclesiastical ones, therefore they don't have an organic dependence on the church and their members are lay.

Looking at the values that inspire the voluntary activity, we realised that both between humanitarian and religious organisations, few of them answered this question, probably because it was thought that almost all organisations, with only a few exceptions maybe, were based on fundamental human values like peace and solidarity.

Many humanitarian organisations suggest that we are going through an era of dramatic changes (large population movements, difficulties to accept difference, etc) and, at the end of the day, problems prove to be universal, therefore solidarity is a universal value. In this respect the distinction between "we" and "they" is problematic, since most people after all have the same basic needs (work, family environment, safety in their lives, etc.). Given the above some humanitarian institutions suggest that solidarity organisations will play a complementary role, which will tend to legitimise the political choices of governments, given that no government will be able to apply humanitarian social policy on its own, without the help of NGOs. NGOs will be the intermediaries between disadvantaged or socially excluded groups and governments, advocating the rights and defending the demands of these groups. Cooperation among NGOs can become a factor of peaceful coexistence, in order to satisfy, through solidarity, the material and moral needs of many people.

Between the religious organisations, some of them made some reference to the spiritual affair, by saying that it can support and strengthen their activity.

According to their relationship with the church there are three positions: some of the religious organisations interviewed answered that they are not interested in the theoretical context of other organisations as long as they serve the same goals; other institutions answered that organisations operating on the basis of values other than theirs pursue different objectives, that they aim to alter the Greek Christian tradition and that they are very sceptical because they believe that there is an attempt to strip religious connotations off charity work; according to the third position, almost in between the others, the differences with organisations based on different values are "spiritual"; human beings should seek the source of the values of justice, love, joy, purity and, as long as they do not find it, imbalances are created. In that context all the resources should cooperate in order to find a new equilibrium.

According to some of these religious institutions, their presence is necessary and this need will become even more visible, because social solidarity is indispensable for the satisfaction of material and moral needs of many people; the development of truly useful projects in the fields of education and defence of human rights will contribute to social inclusion. The social contribution of solidarity organisations has been recognised throughout Europe. These institutions hope that the same will happen also in Greece, by an official act of the Hellenic Parliament.

It is very important, according to the aim of this research, to underline that both humanitarian and religious institutions aim to build a frame made of solidarity, peace, respect of life, acceptance of differences, cooperation and mutual understanding. In order to reach this aim some of them are opened to deal also with institutions which base their work on values different from their own values.

With regard to the future of no-profit organisations, we can point out three trends, the first and the second belonging to humanitarian institutions, the third to religious organisations.

The first trend defends true voluntary offering and provision of services aiming at meeting the needs of the target groups. The scope is seen as vast and the future role of the NGOs as very important. According to this opinion, fast economic development has caused new problems in human relations and human needs. At the same time, with European integration, many things naturally shift to the centre and the interest focuses on the economic situation of the Member States, rather than on security and human rights, which are downgraded. In this new landscape, the role of private initiative, which should not operate under nobody's control but as an expression of collective proposals from the grassroots, will be

to focus attention of violations of human rights. Many NGO activities can not be carried out with a civil servant's mindset, no matter how good the organisational framework is, since they require more initiative and active involvement. The state is already seen as too weak to respond to the new needs on its own, so it should decide to play the role of coordinator, partner, supporter of NGOs and put to good use the creativity and enthusiasm of the organisations. However, this supporting role taken by the NGOs does not imply that they should replace public care in the fields where the state is seen as being responsible. The aim should be the coordination of NGO activities without the state having a hegemonic role. It is suggested that the work of NGOs should be judged by state agencies and that financing should be granted depending on the results of the evaluation; this will put in place the conditions that will ensure NGO viability and transparency in management of funds. It should also be pointed out that these complementary roles for the state and the NGOs are presented as the political will of the European Commission, too.

The second trend believes that the welfare state has shrunk, so that the third sector (which does not belong to the public or the private sector) complements government policy and fills in its gaps. However there is also an overall view of the past and the present of NGOs. According to this trend, at the European level a hybrid system of governmental and non-governmental policy is emerging. This gives rise to new concerns, due to the emergence of organisations which are on the borderline of the political system and operate as private corporations of the state. The vertical internal structure of the organisations, based on corporate management models, has been the outcome of the conditions, which have to be met in order for organisations to implement European projects. This has led to the emergence of giant international organisations, with budgets equal to those of nation states, which are fully integrated in the political system. This has had a direct impact on their action. They have moved too far away from the grassroots organisations, which were established after the 1950s and the 1960s and gradually posed new issues, highlighted new problems through their militant action and put pressure on governments in order to make political decisions. Such NGOs have lost their grassroots support, the citizens' representation where they started from. Thus, there is a need to define NGOs and set certain criteria for classification. In spite of the above, they believe that NGOs may become a form of social movement in future, promoting dialogue and co-operation in order to respond to social problems, given that traditional structures, such as the political parties, are on the decline.

Among the religious organisations, many of the interviewed answered that they were in favour of no profit organisations' action by saying that their role will be decisive in the future and their scope of activity will expand, since they become supporters of public welfare services in a spirit of selflessness and voluntary contribution. They have stated that the response to a utilitarian and purely materialistic society like the modern one should be a strong Christian philanthropy, based on the teachings of the Gospel and offered with love and in a disinterested way. They have expressed the view that in Greece, contrary to Western Europe, it is not evident how the Church and the monasteries can accomplish social work and respond to contemporary problems of a globalized society. They see themselves as maybe the only social agency able to provide social services and as the best suited one, thank to their internal structure and organisation; however, they should also have financial assistance from the state in order to be efficient. At the same time, they look forward to EU financially supporting the charity work of all the Bishopsrics of the Church of Greece, in particular of those that have not been that active so far due to financial constraints.

In assessing the overall results of the study, we are drawn to the conclusion that third sector organisations in Greece have been growing at a very fast rate, especially after the 1980s. Their action in Greece provides complementary assistance in social care fields, which the welfare state is unable to fully cover. The effort to improve the services provided is a decisive factor for the organisations' transition from spontaneous voluntary contribution to a more regular and more professional service provision, achieved through a series of structural changes, such as the efforts to improve their organisation and management, to recruit professionals and specialists, to train their members and to develop partnerships with public agencies, which often provide a solution to the financial problems all organisations are faced with. All the above is pursued without affecting their non-profit character. On the other hand, such action give rise to tensions and discussions on the future independent existence of NGOs, due to the dependence produced by close co-operation with public bodies.

In the study it has become clear that the humanitarian or religious grounds on which organisations operate is a decisive factor determining their scope and the way they implement their

activities. It appears that religion is a parameter, which does not play a key role in the activities of the humanitarian organisations, nor does it affect their views. All organisations acting on humanitarian grounds, regardless of the field they are active in, aiming at defending human rights. This leads them to recognise the needs of individuals or groups that are at a disadvantage for various reasons (social, economic, health) and to provide services to them. At the same time, they see the European Union as a framework in which they can develop partnerships with other organisations. They have the opportunity to draw on the positive aspects of know-how and experience gained through international co-operation, in order to improve their services and participate in developing a common policy to address social problems. On the other hand, few religious organisations have taken action in the above context. Most of them perceive social work as a form of traditional diaconal service. At the same time, in many cases this is combined with missionary work. Moreover, religious organisations tend not to be interested in integrating their work in a broader framework of systematic social care, because they associate it with Christian philanthropy and personal offer. Of course, in recent years the action of some organisations has demonstrated that they have moved away from this pattern and opted for co-operation in a broader framework, which fosters the provision

## 5.5 Italy

It is interesting to note how in Italy almost all the organizations that were surveyed have (or will have) the juridical status of ONLUS (*Organizzazioni non lucrative di utilità sociale – Socially useful non-profit making organizations*). But what is even more significant is, on the one hand, the motivation that is given for this, and on the other the tendency by explicitly religious organizations to set up, even when they are one themselves, further operational structures. They become non-profit making organizations or apply to set up as third sector associative bodies in order to gain access to public funding. It is no accident that the largest proportion of their budget consists of agreements established with local government bodies and other public institutions.

The view expressed by the President of *Conorzio Zenit* in Florence is in many ways paradigmatic. Indeed, while on the one hand he judges the welfare policies of local government as “court charity” dispensing “funds and aid without distinction” rather than “creating real opportunities”, at the same time he urges a slimming down of the tendering process to allow “us third sector entrepreneurs (...) to run our businesses better”:

*“Every three years, when our agreements expire, a third of my workers are plunged into a crisis situation because they could lose their jobs overnight if service provision the agreement is not renewed.”*

The President expresses extremely clearly the nature of “social entrepreneurial activity”, of what for others is still the “gift of oneself”, “a witness of faith” or “charitable work”. However, it is an eloquent sign of a process of transformation that is also affecting religious associations in the general reorganization of the Italian welfare state. An indication of this comes from the *Caritas* of Bologna: though quite different to the entrepreneurial activity mentioned above, it established a *Mosaico di solidarietà* (*Mosaic of solidarity*) in 1996, an “operative tool” – as the member of the executive council who was interviewed put it – or an “association established with the criteria set out in the law governing the voluntary sector”, and which therefore, as such, “can establish relations with institutions” for “financial agreements, project proposals, etc.”.

However, though significant, this tendency does not seem to be prevalent everywhere, or at least not to the same extent. The positions of organizations in Turin and Bologna are very different from each other in this respect, as are those of Palermo and Rome.

The assessment of the welfare state is significant from this point of view. Generally speaking it is never entirely positive; even those people, like the representative from the *Volontariato del centro storico* of Bologna, who recognizes that “at times” the state manages to “respond to the needs of citizens” also point out that it is often done “in a very limited way, according to the available budget”.

What everybody underlines, as is clearly illustrated by the representative from *Aczas* in Turin, is that in their view the welfare state is “more a form of welfarism than it is care and attention for people”. This position is expressed more dramatically by the young Franciscan President of *Inventare insieme* in Palermo:

*“There’s lots of talk about the welfare state... I think that in this area it is inexistent... (where) the number of children dropping out of school is extremely high” and many families “have no guarantees about their existence”.*

The welfare state seems, then, to be indiscriminate welfarism, without any guarantee of continuity, and above all, with limited effects if not actually counterproductive. Even in its new form of welfare mix, it does not seem to the Catholics who were interviewed to be an instrument for promoting people’s human rights. Indeed, the proliferation of social cooperatives supplying social welfare services is, according to the person responsible for training at the *Gruppi di Volontariato Vincenziano*, merely a demonstration that “the local council can’t cope”:

*“What is the big boom in the welfare business due to? (...) (to the fact) that it’s become clear that people’s welfare needs are immense, enormous, which (...) local councils will never be able to provide for! Given the urgent need for jobs, what we end up with is the emergence of this welfare economy, of the welfare business.”*

But he also adds that this creates the possibility that voluntary associations might disappear. In other words, in his view welfare businesses are destined to replace the voluntary sector, and there are at least two reasons for this: there are fewer and fewer young people willing to “give their time to others”, and secondly, and there is an increasingly pressing and widespread “demand for jobs”. Thus the short

circuit triggered by the crisis of the welfare state and job demand end up calling into question the value of gratuitous altruism.

It seems possible to conclude, then, that two forces co-exist which are unlikely to fit into what the widely-quoted ex-President of the Gruppi di Volontariato Vincenziano has defined as a utopia: the establishment of a cooperative from a voluntary association, which, at the same time as it is creating jobs, also adopts a logic which is different from that of a business.

In the Italian case study, it is worth focussing above all on what emerged from the interviews, for instance the differences between associations in the cities that were surveyed in relation to the value options. As it was natural to expect, religiously-inspired subjects declared that their social work is a “witness of faith”. What is significant is the difference that emerged in this respect in the groups according to which of the “three Italys” they operate in. In Turin, for the majority of associations, sharing the same Catholic faith is one of the conditions for being accepted as members, while in Bologna and Florence this is never a necessary condition, and nor is it in Rome and Palermo. In the centre and south of Italy, all that is required is that individuals should be in agreement on the programme and on the method of working. The key factor is the willingness to test one’s altruistic motivation, and it does not matter on what beliefs or value systems this is based.

There arises from this an equally diverse judgement of lay associations. While in Turin, Islam is viewed negatively by Catholic groups because it “works to legitimize conflicts” – as the coordinator of Aczas commented, a view echoed by the manager of Crescere Insieme, the President of the Cooperativa Parella, the representatives of the Centro Federico Peirone, the Centro Come Noi–Sandro Pertini and Vides – in the associations of other cities a starkly different view prevails; there is recognition that other faiths contribute to social integration and to reciprocal recognition. As a volunteer from the Florentine branch of Caritas put it: “I believe that there are common values; many of the people who come to us have not even been baptized, yet they have exactly the same views as we do”.

The judgement on lay associations is more complex; while there is recognition of “equal dignity”, at the same time they sometimes stigmatize their tendency to operate as businesses, their concern to respect criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. But above all, as Don Baldassare Meli, President of the Centro Santa Chiara in Palermo, put it, there is the hope that “everyone is committed to motivating people and not only to providing jobs”, otherwise “the voluntary sector runs the risk of capturing the hopes of many people who will continue to need the voluntary sector in order to continue living” (Don Mario Golesano, President of the Centro Padre Nostro in Palermo).

This is an extremely interesting argument, and it would be reductive to simply view it as a certain kind of Catholic-inspired anti-state attitude. In fact, it is the fundamental problem of any reform of the welfare state, in that it relates directly to the relationship between forms of self-organization of society, the role of the state and the market economy.

If – and this recurs in all the interviews – the aim of welfare policies is to render every individual “free from need”, transforming solidarity with others and a free gift into work, is there not the risk of transforming the objective into the means? When poverty – however this is understood – becomes the “primary material” for the production of services, what will the latter be aimed at?

Caught between utopia and pragmatism, Catholic organizations pose (as we have just seen) crucial questions that cannot easily be avoided by policy makers, issues which become even more sharply-defined when seen in a European context.

Quite apart from the role ascribed to them as instruments for social integration, it is interesting to report the attitudes towards the building of a common European identity; this can be done by looking at the definitions that were given of certain key terms like “belonging”, “solidarity”, “faith” and “identity”. The position of a religious worker at the *Volontariato Centro Storico* of Bologna is particularly striking in this respect. In her view, what allows one to “feel a sense of belonging” and “a duty towards solidarity” is personal identity, because “a person who (...) feels that their personal identity is negated does not regard the community or even the nation as something which belongs to them and which will defend them in moments of need”. And faith? It helps one to live “other realities in a positive way. *However, when you are desperate (...) it grows weak because humans need to see certain needs satisfied*”.

Reciprocal recognition, equity in the distribution of wealth, the promotion of the universal dignity of Man: directly and inextricably connected, these three programme-values are what motivate the negative judgement of the “Europe of money” (“many choices are made in the name of the economy

which trample on the most sacrosanct individual rights” – *Centro Santa Chiara*, Palermo) and the commitment to “shaping alternatives to the system of consumption” (*Caritas*, Florence), and on the other hand the hope that European identity will be built “around solidarity, tolerant acceptance, and human rights” (*Mosaico di Solidarietà*, Bologna).

In conclusion, however, it is worth recalling the position of the National Secretary of the A.I.D.L.R. (Associazione Internazionale per la Difesa della Libertà Religiosa), according to whom, while it is certainly true on the one hand that in the building of European identity there is a clear commitment towards affirming principles of solidarity, on the other “little is being done to build it on the basis of freedom”. In his view, it is not a question of “tolerating” other religious faiths, but of guaranteeing “religious freedom”. For this reason, Europe “should not be built on religion” but on recognition of common cultural roots, and before their plurality of expression there should come only institutions which are entirely neutral. Catholic or non-Catholic, the important thing is to hope for civil co-existence.

## 6 After the militant, the volunteer beyond secularization

Within a large diversity of welfare systems we find various forms of voluntarism. This research, in the true sense of the word, with a specific methodology and a precise epistemologic sphere, aimed to find out whether the religious factor, in the heart of post-modernism, constitutes an element of social importance, a factor capable of facing, in some way, the processes of exclusion (also following the crisis of the traditional Welfare State) and, at the same time, in a comparative perspective, of promoting a new and united European identity.

The secularization of “confessional” associations and the participation in a common voice that makes Man, with his dignity of rights, the pillar of every social action guarantees a strong homogeneity. The relationship between the separate groups is founded upon a new conception of the acknowledgment of exclusion.

Our research into the network of associations reveals that irrespective of their formal identity, they focus on concrete problems, pinpoint concrete needs, and rooted solidarity for concrete needs in order to engage in a genuinely constructive criticism of the bureaucratization, separateness and radical autonomy of politics and of the concrete forms of the market. The research fundamentally stresses that only an ethics based on fellowship can achieve a valid antidote to the colonization of civil society by political power. At the root of the different experiences there are forms of suffering present in civil society that states are unable to mitigate or heal, and despite the differences, there is a crucial need for affirmation of the value of the ethic of fellowship as a foundation for the affirmation of a solidary citizenship.

The system of relations currently comprising the organizational structure of welfare in the five countries should be mentioned. While in Sweden the associative fabric has almost entirely existed, up to today, within the social policy put in place by the Government, in the other countries the third sector, be it confessional, secular, singular or in a consortium form, has always been constituted as a grouping of independent and autonomous subjects, when not alternatives to government politics. Currently, although we are facing differing national models and situations, the associative panorama seems to present more similarities than differences. Although it is true that in Sweden only in these last few years has the third sector become an object of research and consideration, it is also true that every country is developing new strategies able to satisfy the rights of citizens.

Irregardless of the specific solutions adopted in each country, all of the associations found themselves involved in a process of radical transformation, so much so that they began to question their own original structures, with a different organization of the relationships between state and market within a form of development founded upon a re-balancing of available resources. This is an ethical-political option of extraordinary importance against the different forms of poverty and isolation that mark the Old Continent. Thus while a country such as Sweden is beginning to reflect on the social economy and its importance for employment and wealth produced, we have a country like Germany that, after the reunification of East and West, is struggling to reduce the new social complexity within its own welfare systems. Then there is France, which more than every other country studied, has provided for, as has Greece, and also Italy to a lesser extent, not only for the legality of the new social subjectivity but also for the drawing up of legislation for setting up a “system of opportunity” for all citizens. But what results from the research, apart from the formal institutional profile, is that the majority of the associations seem to be founded on the new centrality attributed to each single subject. It does not seem to be of importance what they belong to. Even when the action of the organizations remains limited to a local level, it is not implicitly aimed at the defense of identity or local traditions but at the social integration of others according to universalistic ethical principles of freedom, equality and fraternity. From this point of view, comparison of the replies furnished by the associations of the many countries involved in the study is paradigmatic: approximately 80% of the associations say that religious beliefs or ideologies are not considered necessary conditions of acceptance for members, but membership is based on the mere affiliation to mankind. Within the associations, the individuals make reference to religious beliefs or other ideals which remain a personal inclination or choice within a group that is moved by personal motivation and the presence of values directed at coping with needs and pain.

However, one aspect of the research emphasizes a contradiction in the investigated situation, namely that in relation to the building of solidarity between extraneous groups, what is placed to the fore is defense of identity. How can one combine the value of solidarity with the affirmation of identity? There are risks. The first one is that the scapegoat syndrome will come out, which, in pluralist societies, tends to make immigrants responsible for things that they have nothing to do with. The second is that of creating localistic barriers, almost as if identity cannot go hand in hand with solidarity for the extraneous, in the name of a more equal and solidary Europe that does not exist. Cultural pluralism becomes interpreted as an upsetting upheaval that might threaten not only the comfort of, for example, the Swedes, but also their existence as a population. The discrepancy for instance that separates the Swedes from the immigrants, from a social and economic standpoint, persists as tenaciously as the idea that the new Swedish identity must be defined once and for all. How can the question of transnational identity and solidarity be settled on a European level? If cultural diversity is an important challenge in the face of globalization, it is also a challenge in regard to the creation of Europe. Cultural governance has to be entirely re-invented in Europe as a whole.

By comparing the results obtained, we can see that what comes out as the most important element which is present in all countries of our sample, is the recognition of certain shared cultural values across Europe which are seen to be a fundamental element of European identity, whether this exists at the present or will exist in the future, since in all of the countries participating in our research, people have expressed their strong support in defending human rights and humanitarian principles.

On the negative side, what needs to be pointed out, is that a large part of our respondents expressed their doubts and their rejection of the denial of local and national particularities which are seen to be in danger from the need to produce a European economic space and the advent of globalisation, thus revealing an important dimension regarding the definition of a European identity itself which is that the national context in which the associations or organisations operate, seems to be decisive for the formulation of opinion.

Here we have a paradox or a dilemma which is clearly shown by our results, since on the one hand we have a claim for solidarity at a European level, while at the same time, people have also expressed their desire for the preservation of national or local cultures. In other words, while we have a claim for a wider sense of solidarity at a European level which is expected to be partially achieved through the gradual construction of a European identity which is open and not exclusive, at the same time, we also have a demand for the preservation of national and local identities which are exclusive and rather closed towards other cultures and identities.

One must also note that although a significant percentage of people have expressed their critique for the present state of Europe and have underlined the fact that the notion of European identity is not clear, the prospect of constructing a much more socially and culturally sensitive notion of European citizenship in the future remains open, since very few people have said that a European identity will never exist in the future. For example, even France, which has displayed a strong degree of scepticism, shows us that there is a real claim for a 'social' Europe, thus implicitly accepting Europe itself since the critique is directed to the particular form which Europe has, or is seen to have, at the moment.

Furthermore, apart from the cases of Greece, and to a lesser extent of Italy, we did not find significant differences between the answers coming from humanitarian and those coming from religious organisations, probably as another confirmation of the fact that despite the advent of modernity and the impact of the process of secularisation, we do not currently live in a 'moral abyss' as it is sometimes suggested, or that there can be no morality outside religious institutions. Rather, we can see that a certain degree of shared ethical and cultural values is common in all countries and it is shared among religious and humanitarian organisations more or less equally. The conclusion here might be that there has been no disappearance of moral values, but rather, the institutions which choose to express these moral values have changed, adopting to the changing social, economic and political circumstances.

Another crucial element which is revealed by our research, is the fact that approximately half of our organisations, both religious and humanitarian, have not established any relationships with other European partners but limit their actions at the local or national level. This last point should be taken very seriously indeed by all policy makers because it puts the finger on a crucial dimension of European integration, the fact that while the effects of 'globalisation' are felt in all countries, their experiences are not shared on the same extent at the European level. In other words, there is no such thing as a policy which takes into account all the different national experiences, a policy which without being uniform,

can compare and contrast these different experiences in order to arrive at a more appropriate way of tackling these problems.

This issue has two dimensions; the first is the importance of the national level and the second, which is related to the first but which is not exhausted by it, is the absence of a European wide network of these organisations, which can rise above the national level in order to engage the whole of the European Union. Thus, on the one hand we see that the national still matters a lot, but on the other hand and at the same time, there is a need to overcome its apparent limitations and construct new networks of European welfare provision as well as a new sense of belonging, which without necessarily rejecting the national, still rises above it to claim new allegiances and new bases for the legitimisation of welfare policies. Our research has shown that there is not a uniform response to the problems of welfare provision since different cultures adopt different attitudes and solutions. For example, in Italy and Greece, we did not find many people worrying that further European integration may threaten the quality or quantity of welfare services, while in Germany and Sweden, people were found to be sceptical that this might be a possible outcome and thus must be avoided.

Thus, and as far as the non-explicitly religious groups we have approached, perhaps what is made clearer from our research, is the fact that, without necessarily rejecting the free-market, the non-profit organisations we have approach, demand a new form of operating politics which takes into account the ethical and moral principles which are seen to dominate European history and which are shared, to some extent at least, by all countries of our sample. Furthermore, aware of their differences and the difficulties involved in trying to be true to one's self when it comes in providing the process of social integration with new stimuli, the non-profit organisations testify to the possibility of making Europe the field of equality in difference in a predominantly pluralistic environment.

Finally, we have also shown that religious values and norms, whether these are expressed by religious or non-religious groups, can play a significant role upon the formation of a European identity based on the normative foundation of tolerance, solidarity and the acceptance of the 'other' in strengthening solidarity and social cohesion in the present multi-cultural European Union.

The German theologian J.B.Metz, thinks that it is important to appeal to a theology of compassion in the Latin *cum-patior* etymological sense, whereby you put yourself in the place of the person who suffers, thus interpreting a category that would correspond to a particular secular confessional expression. But how can we render this acceptable on the political and cultural front?

From the research on the phenomenon of volunteer associations, a truly unlimited laboratory, we see that the traditional model of welfare is unable to guarantee the needs and the fundamental rights of the citizen due to the bureaucratization of the welfare structure. What is more, there is a substantial risk that voluntarism will end up being appreciated for the value of its testimony and opinions, or, worse yet, that it will become merely self-referential. Nevertheless, the risk factor should not deter us from a wide-ranging comparison when dealing in a phenomenon that represents, as a whole, a phenomenon of enormous historical importance to Europe. The creation of a European transnational conscience is faced by a problem that, to paraphrase the words of Habermas, we could express as follows: how can there be a solidarity between foreigners? Foreigner in this context not only means different national identities but a plurality of cultures with potential conflicts of values that neither the central banks, nor the great European bureaucratic organizations can manage in an effective way. In his intermediary considerations, Max Weber in explaining the pull that draws industrial society into the steel cage of modernity, explains how modernity produces a segmentation, a differentiation of the great organization systems of society, according to which each one would function according to its own autonomous principle, leading to the disappearance of what in his view was one of the fundamental roots of European civilization: the ethics of brotherhood based on the Jewish-Christian heritage. After the collapse of the communist world the major Christian institutions did not hesitate to issue document upon document acknowledging that it was a moment of strategic passage that history was offering to everyone in Europe for a re-writing of the fundamental rules of a new ethical treaty among peoples. A new European identity could not be created without having something to latch onto, but only by recovering those Jewish-Christian roots which serve for unification. There was a need, according to this perspective, to find a certain common ethical ground between cultures and different historical traditions by also taking Islam into account.

And yet, a careful reading of the information from our research requires that we contextualize this information by way of two historical events, first and foremost, the fall of the Berlin Wall and

subsequently the end of thought categories, epistemological paradigms for reading the world according to static dichotomist methods. To this note it must be highlighted that behind the fall of the Berlin Wall there were people who made it a point to report the signs of an Original Sin in European culture that ought to be sought in the humanistic tradition of the Enlightenment. Following the loss of mental fixed points, despite the affirmation of the principle of the value of pluralism, a theological revision between the major Eastern and Western Christian traditions appeared difficult to achieve.

If the sense of integration and European citizenship is strongly anchored to the Judaic-Christian tradition, European history in the last few centuries has been a field of tension between a subjectivity identified as a model of modernity and a state of belonging that clings to the past. In Europe, modern subjectivity, with its potentially explosive indeterminacy, with its Faustian yearning, with its impatience for everything that is not directly related to its autonomy, is coming up against an enormous block of history, of the past, of identification, of a stratification of socio-cultural, spatial and familial hierarchies developed over millennia and supported by a powerful religious force.

Huntington retains that the upcoming future will be known for a reawakening of the great historical religions. It is not my intention here to discuss a theory of this kind. Nor is it my desire to discuss the hypothesis of removing any reference to religion from the "EU Charter of Fundamental Rights".

It is my opinion that, at the start of a new century, investigating the future of Europe should take the religious factor into consideration, but not in aprioristic terms.

Against this backdrop, the political-religious framework described by Novalis in his celebrated excerpt *La cristianità ovvero l'Europa* seems very distant: "only religion can reawaken Europe, make the people safe with new magnificence, restating the Christianity visible in the land of its ancient office of reconciler". Today, the religious appears to be more of a quicksand experience.

Firstly, due to the fact that in the European Christian world there is a widespread gap between affiliation and belief. How many people state that they are Christians and then make the beliefs of the church they belong to their own? For many the nature of their belief is subordinate to the principle "I believe but in my own way." This phenomenon has such importance that it has been written that "in the Christian world belief seems to have gone on vacation."

The novelty on the religious scene, is not however sects or the so-called new religious movements, not 'the new age or the next age' or the like, but the production of an ultimate autonomous sense within and above all external to institutionalized religions. The tendency towards subjectivity involves moving the baricenter of the salvation functions of religion: from a centre that regulates individual and social life to a finite 'province' of meaning to which one can gain access with a prevalently personal relevance. Every religious system is compared to other systems, with other ethical behavior, differing and very often in contrast within and outside sacred areas.

In this sense, single subjects often do not identify with the different religious confessions and are not an expression of a confessional pluralism, but rather of a many-faceted religion which cannot be attributed abstractly to a heritage of beliefs or of symbols of objective norms. The loss of the religious monopoly is no doubt a social-structural process as well as a social-psychological one.<sup>24</sup>

What name can we give to the new map of religion in the heart of post-modernity? What are the characteristics of the symbolic cosmos that pushes people to unite, to stand side by side, next to what is different, next to the "other", to express active solidarity towards those who experience isolation and social exclusion? Despite the secularization and the crisis of the great ideologies of the twentieth century, what are the radical reasons that are at the root of and feed the widespread phenomenon of social voluntarism? The work of voluntary organizations is more and more frequently placed within a sphere of civil citizenship with a process of deconfessionalization of confessional organizations and of symbolic transignification of "lay" ones.

In today's times, with a continually growing disillusion for politics and the coming apart at the seams of social stability leading to cynicism as a form of modern disillusionment, what value can we give to new voluntarism?

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<sup>24</sup> P.Berger, *La sacra volta*, Sugarco, Milano, 1984, p.165 (tr.ital).

The crisis of the “social state” is forcing the EU member states to seriously question the universalistic criteria that until now have legitimized their role as sole managers of the rights of citizens, and has led to the emergence of the extra-state solidarity networks, of which the volunteer is in a strict sense the most representative figure.

Like an invisible or barely perceptible trace, like a watermark, beneath the compact surface of goods, a thin but dense and widespread thread of positive atoms has been active for some time. Is there anything new? Unlike the militant, the social figure which preceded it in the long history of rebel identity, the volunteer appears to be a new actor. Anchored by a multiplicity of local situations, the profile of the volunteer, though fragile, ductile and evanescent, is blossoming despite everything in a cultural-historical perspective with its own potential on the European social scene. The volunteer has neither a flag or a uniform and is not therefore a soldier. He or she is an active citizen animated by a sense of responsibility and capable of doing things, of making him or herself useful in situations of need without considerations of profit. Quite apart from their formal set-up, the vast majority of volunteers are engaged in activities inspired by a commitment to Man as ultimate value. In comparison to the institutional logic of the specific religiously or humanistically inspired associations, the protagonists insist on a distributory and above all participatory conception of solidarity. This also marks a break with decades of redistributory and philanthropic charitable conceptions. Indeed, more recent associative movements are characterized by a concern with the immediate and concrete, a form of solidarity closely tied to daily needs. In fact, there are not a few people who believe there ought to be a requiem for the militant, for the soldier of the revolution. Moving beyond the 20th century, as suggested by the title of a recent work<sup>25</sup>, means recognizing the volunteer as a new protagonist of solidarity and rebellion, “distant both from the ideological rage and from the bureaucratic meanness of the militant”. In removing the figure of the militant with his load of ambiguity there is a fatal risk of eliminating an extraordinary source of energy and ideals, and of people who have characterized dramatic moments in our history. A perspective based on the cancellation of history is always ambiguous.

“Thinking in terms of a grid community of volunteers involved in activities that are not reducible to work because they are carried out free of charge and operate outside the logic of profit, engaged in the reproduction, here and now, of social ties and human relations, also involves accepting the need to move forward without historical assurances and without the support of material powers that the destructive creation of development can offer.

To what extent has the process of secularization, with the individualism of consumption and the marketplace, really led to an irreversible “desertification of souls”? We can see a process of secularization that does not lead to the “death of God”, even if there is a tendency towards a deconfessionalization of religious groups and a “fresh humanistic spell” of the “non-confessional” ones. What is at stake is the principle of subsidiarity, according to which it is possible to provide a more rapid and less costly response to problems at a local level. Solidarity is the ideal source that groups draw on and aim towards, even if it is still incomplete. Despite the returning tendency towards bureaucratization and institutionalization, it is promising that a large number of citizens dedicate their time and money to help the weak and marginalized.

After the militant, then, the volunteer appears to be an anticipatory figure of a new social phase beyond that of secularization. We are, in other words, faced by the fundamental problem of the “crisis of the modern” and of its so-called “truth”. The non-maintained promises of scientific ideology has not led to the nihilism of the marketplace, nor has democracy been transformed into a “fictio” to legitimize the logic of domination, but rather to a demand for the humanization of social relations and a resolute condemnation of all forms of suffering due to inequality. There is, then, a call for a “refounding of a form of politics capable of conceiving of itself in a way that is not detached from ethical challenges, challenges which need to be faced in the building of a European transnational conscience”.

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<sup>25</sup> See M. Revelli, *Oltre il Novecento. La politica, le ideologie e le insidie del lavoro*, Turin, Einaudi, 2001.

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## **Annexes**

### **EUROPEAN IDENTITY, WELFARE STATE, RELIGIONS**

#### **II. Cultural Trends , 1989-2000**

By Alfredo Jacopozzi

##### **Introduction**

When analysing the crisis of the Welfare State and of religions in Europe, a theological axiom comes to mind which was once very much to the fore in Christianity in the past: “There is no salvation outside of the Church”. Giving this axiom a secularized and laicized form, nowadays one might ask: is there salvation outside of the market?

The aim of this question is to give an overall idea of the second part of the EIWSR research, entitled “Cultural Trends, 1989-2000”. It should be made clear that the term ‘market’ is not here taken to mean an aseptic category of economic science, but the concrete capitalist economic system that dominated the decade under consideration, a decade marked by the end of real Socialism and by the globalization of human life. We consider it necessary to deal with this decade separately, precisely because of the changes that economic and social policy are undergoing. In this section of the research we have attempted to analyse how European society is reacting, looking first of all at ethical-religious values, the general vision that shapes human life. Ethical-religious reflection on economic and social systems is currently necessary, above all with a view to the building of a united Europe.

As is known, the European Union relies a great deal on economic factors as a favoured means of achieving integration. But it would be an empty illusion to think that convergence on economic parameters is a necessary premise for avoiding an ethically-founded integration. The foundations of such integration have yet to be built and they must be built together, in order to avoid both fundamentalist attitudes and cultural vacuums.

Our collective research project is conceived of as a generative and constructive line of thought, a project in the sense and to the extent that it manages to jump forwards (pro-jectum) towards the idea of a good or at least ‘decent’ society (A. Margalit) where ‘salvation’ might come to mean, aside from its specific religious meanings, an economic and social alternative that is more human and attentive towards weaker and more vulnerable categories of society.

##### **The Welfare crisis of the 90s and Religions**

The introduction of the single currency and the phenomenon of globalization, which necessitated a series of economic and financial readjustments, led in the 90s to a reconsideration of social welfare policies and extensive debate on the Welfare State throughout Europe<sup>26</sup>.

The way of structuring the economy has changed radically. The collapse of economic systems founded on socialism has been accompanied by a profound crisis of the Welfare State in the liberal democracies. Neither socialism, as a result of its political collapse, nor liberal democracy, due to its internal weakness, are any longer in a position to justify and orient current economic policies.

Social policies are still governed by principles inherent to national states, while the economy and the world of finance are dependent on international markets. Control over national life is gradually shifting from national governments to transnational companies. Proof of this is that approval of a new government is increasingly dependent on the reaction of the market. New technologies and the changed political context have also given impulse to the globalization of the economy and of finance. All this has taken place at the same time as the crumbling of centralized socialist economies after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, economies which are now being reorganized on neo-liberalist lines.

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<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the debate that for two decades has been at the centre of economic debate, see R. Petrella, *Il bene comune. Elogio della solidarietà*, Edizioni Diabasis, Reggio Emilia 1997.

In order to maintain industries in a country as agencies of distribution, work and wealth, governments have to create advantageous conditions for enterprises. This has the effect of diminishing the capacity of states to safeguard the material wellbeing of citizens.

Furthermore, globalization generates competition between advanced productive systems and those of developing countries, between our products and their products, which are now good quality, technologically-sound and cheaper. This leads to a need to reduce the cost of labour and the easiest cut to make is in social policies. The consequence of this is conflict between those who are covered and those who are not, between those who are able to protect themselves because they have contractual guarantees and those who are excluded, poor workers, those that work without being able to escape the poverty trap. In Europe, as in the rest of the industrialized world, poverty is on the increase and the number of weak and excluded is rising.

In this context, unemployment is becoming a problem not only for poor countries but also for developed nations. This is due to a readjustment of the international distribution of work and to greater plant productivity. Nowadays it is possible to produce anywhere in the world and it is done where it is cheapest. Globalization has transformed the world into a single big market in which the multinationals have a dominant role and are putting pressure on governments for total worldwide liberalization.

The other element in the crisis of the Welfare State is the move to the post-Fordist society. With the advent of the computer age, the world has entered a new phase of the Industrial Revolution. Nowadays more wealth is produced than in the past with the same amount of direct work. This has made necessary a new organization of labour but also of society. The problem is not only that of a reduced requirement for labour but also of a different internal organization in production and a different external organization. Jobs are being lost above all in industry, due to the gradual redundancy of humans in the productive process. This is the first crucial point that creates disadjustment. Loss of jobs creates the need for new job training and often long periods of unemployment.

The decisive input of scientific and technological knowledge has led to the discarding of the Fordist productive model, and the workplace is characterized by uncertainty, is highly complex, and holds both promise and threats.

Human resources become crucial both for the designing and the control of complex systems; investment in "human capital" and new technologies tend to be reciprocally reinforcing. Moreover, in order to be effective, these very same technologies require the involvement of working people, thus promoting participation.

Today it has become more important to "know how to do" rather than "to do". Information and indirect work is more important than direct work. This is causing radical change in the nature of work, in enterprises, the economy and society at large. Society is no longer conceived of and built around large factories, is no longer based on mass consumption, and no longer involves mass organized movements. There is no longer the worker-mass, the citizen-mass, the consumer-mass. Nowadays there is talk of the atomization of society, which is becoming ever more complex, giving rise to new needs and new forms of poverty, but also to the need for more human relations and for services that are capable of interpreting such relations.

The above-mentioned factors of globalization and post-Fordism have their own quite distinct significance but they converge on a single point: mutation of the Welfare State model, which is in profound crisis. The causes and effects of this crisis are complex and highly diverse. Below we outline the principal factors, which are at one and the same time causes and effects.

1. The end of full employment. Work is becoming a rare commodity, and new forms of employment are emerging: as we have suggested, work is becoming temporary, discontinuous, part-time, autonomous, irregular or illegal. The precarious nature of employment provokes obvious consequences: there is a drop in workers' claims and cohesion between workers; the relationship between employer and employee becomes unbalanced in favour of the former, and leads to an increase in the latter of mechanisms of subjection. Technological innovations worsen the job market, both quantitatively and qualitatively, because part of the population remains on the sidelines and work training becomes ever more costly.
2. Financial limits of the welfare system. This system relies on financial resources. However, when there is an increase in the volume of services offered due to the increase in needs, and when there is a reduction in the source of inland revenue, the State becomes insolvent. The

State deficit exceeds all limits and the consequence is cuts in services and therefore the end of the welfare system.

3. Changes in the value system. Social and economic transformations have been accompanied by an upheaval in the values system. "Suspensions" begin to arise in relation to excessive bureaucratization, excessive assistentialism and towards projects that are too egalitarian. The point is even reached where doubt is cast on the validity of particular social services. At the same time, the values of competition, private enterprise and individual liberty flourish. Hence, behind the crisis of the welfare system there lies a confrontation between different models of society and human life and therefore also of religious values.

In this complex situation, religions are experiencing something of a new rebirth in public debate. The public significance of the religious phenomenon does not seem to have faded away. Even if in all the countries examined the prevailing orientation is to keep the religious sphere separate from other sectors of society, the majority of the population, or at least a considerable proportion of it, is in favour of according a recognized public role to religions. There are numerous signs of the privatization of faith, but there are also counter tendencies as well.

Faiths and religions, far from disappearing from the social scene, seem destined to take on a different shape and form according to the specific context. In our research, these contexts range from ones that are still characterized by a high degree of religious conformity (as in Italy and Greece) to nations where there is an increasing plurality of religions (as in the UK and Germany). The most advanced Western nations are distinguished by a marked religious pluralism, where traditional faiths coexist alongside both new cults and religious movements and together with some minority religious faiths. In all the countries taken into consideration, however, the heterogeneity of the religious landscape does not derive only from the co-presence of a number of religious confessions but also from the great variety of positions within the population on religious, ethical and social issues.

Historically speaking, Christianity and its religious institutions have for centuries had a great influence in Europe on ethics and public life. With the onset of modernity, the ethical and public sphere, like other sectors of society, have become increasingly independent of religious control. Hence there is nowadays a very widespread view that the individual directly establishes what is right and what is not according to circumstances. Norms and values that were once considered absolute have now become a matter of choice on the part of individuals. The power and authority of Churches have been markedly reduced by the development of other institutions such as state bodies and organizations belonging to the economic system. Notwithstanding this, the Churches, above all the Catholic Church, still remain important institutions in almost all the European countries. The framework of relations between Churches and State varies considerably according to individual national contexts and there is not always a rigid separation of the two. Often the State directly or indirectly subsidizes religious organizations in important socially-oriented activities. A considerable proportion of social welfare services, even though this varies from country to country, are still provided by Churches. Moreover, in many ways the religious ethic has aligned itself with the secular one, for example as far as defending human rights or the environment are concerned. Indeed, redefinition of the religious message in relation to the most urgent and also more "modern" issues is one of the factors that has enabled religious institutions to recover a good deal of lost credibility<sup>27</sup>.

In recent years, the Christian Churches (Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodoxy) and some minority religious confessions (Judaism and Islam) in Europe have reflected upon the changes taking place in European society. Debate on the reform of the Welfare State has been subject to analysis by the Churches as well, who have not failed to offer a contribution whilst maintaining their own specific ethical-religious positions.

Religion has always had close ties with the economy. Religious centres and centres of economic power have interacted a great deal in the course of history. What is more, the economy has sought horizons of meaning, justification and orientation in religion.

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<sup>27</sup> On this theme, see Various Authors, *La religione degli europei*, vol. 2°, Edizioni della Fondazione Agnelli, Turin 1993.

## ***The official positions of religions and the internal debate***

On this point the research has focussed on analysing exclusively the official positions of the different Churches and religions and the most important areas of debate in recent years.

### ***Catholicism***

The Catholic Church has not failed in recent times to offer a contribution whilst maintaining its own specific ethical-religious position. When speaking of the Welfare State, Catholic Church documents distinguish between the “ideal plane”, namely the integral vision of Man and recognition of Man’s citizenship and social rights that must be guaranteed by the Welfare State, and the “political and organizational plane”, that is the system of rules whereby the State intervenes to balance the play of free market forces to ensure that individuals and families have a minimum required income and essential social services. According to Pope John Paul II, what has fallen into crisis is not the ideal aspect of the welfare system but its political and administrative organization. Therefore, according to the Pope, there is a need to reconsider not the idea but the functioning of the Welfare State: “If the latter functions in a moderate way, it will also avoid a system of excessive assistance, which creates more problems than it resolves. If it does this, it will be an example of genuine civilization, an indispensable means of defending less advantaged social classes, which are often crushed by the overwhelming power of the global market”<sup>28</sup>.

### ***Italy***<sup>29</sup>

In these years the Italian Church has not hesitated to ally itself with those who hold that it is necessary to maintain the Welfare State but that it is also necessary to proceed with decisive structural reform, reorganizing social spending and creating a new and harmonious balance between efficiency and solidarity, market and State, private and public.

The CEI (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana – Italian Episcopal Conference) issued three documents in the 90s in which the most urgent social problems were considered:

- *Evangelizzare il sociale* (22.11.1992): the aim of this document was to give impetus and drive to the social pastoralism of the Church in Italy, redefining and updating the general framework with appropriate orientation and directives in the light of the profound changes that have concerned Italian society in specific areas such as the workplace, the economy and politics, drawing on the social doctrine of the Church.
- *Democrazia economica, sviluppo e bene comune* (13.6.1994): this document made reference to *Centesimus Annus*, the encyclical of John Paul II, and to his analysis of capitalism and the market economy. It was a wide-ranging and thorough contribution on economic themes and problems.
- *Stato sociale ed educazione alla socialità* (1.5.1995): this document dealt with the crisis of the Welfare State, the need to relaunch it on the basis of a new participation and through a fresh process of educating people in social relations.

The Welfare State is today at the centre of debate concerning the crisis in public finance: its excessive expansion is stigmatized by some as the chief cause of this crisis, while others are resistant to interventions aimed at resolving the crisis of the public deficit and debt, on the grounds that such

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<sup>28</sup> John Paul II, speech given at the Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze Sociali, 25 April 1997.

<sup>29</sup> The following section on “Catholicism in Italy” (1989-2000) is based on research by Alfredo Jacopozzi (A.S.FeR. - Associazione per lo Studio del Fenomeno Religioso – Florence) as part of the TSER project of the European Community on “European Identity, Welfare State and Religions” and draws heavily on his formulation.

intervention would end up compromising the achievements of the welfare system. In the face of these positions, the Italian Church takes the line that it is necessary to begin a courageous reform of the Welfare State. Indeed, a new welfare system cannot be governed only by a centralized body conceived of as the top of society, nor can it only be shaped by the “invisible hand” of the market. The binary pair of State and market, which has constituted the main structural frame of modern society, and which has supported all the welfare regimes in the post-war period, is no longer sufficient or appropriate. Today the “table” of globalized and post-Fordist society needs a “third leg”, in other words the third or private-social sector, comprising free associations, voluntary associations, cooperatives of social solidarity, foundations and various other types of non-profit making organizations. What would be auspicious, according to the perspective of the Church, would be for the old organizational form of the Welfare State to give way to a new structure called the Welfare Society, that is a system in which the market and the State are integrated by a third subject recognized as a genuine social, liberal and responsible subject. The task of the third sector of the new Welfare Society will no longer – as is the case now – be that of filling the gaps that the State is unable to fill or which the market is not interested in managing. Its contribution will be to recover the essential values and needs of civil society – for example, respect for life, solidarity, the social integration of those who are marginalized – through the responsible participation of various sectors of civil society (families, cultural bodies, religious confessions, cooperation, associationism, voluntarism). This involvement must have as its aim the programming and running of social policy.

In conclusion, then, for the Church the Welfare State is a necessary ideal, but one that needs to be reorganized according to the fundamental principles of Christian social doctrine – subsidiarity, solidarity and co-responsibility, thereby enhancing the value of the most lively expressions of civil society. A Welfare State which is no longer an assistential or a patronage system, but a Welfare State belonging to citizens and the community.

The debate underway in Italian Catholicism in recent years perhaps received its most articulate expression in three conferences held in Florence between 1995 and 1997 by the Italian Caritas, by the Coordinamento Nazionale delle Comunità di Accoglienza (C.N.C.A.), by the Gruppo Abele and by the Catholic magazine “Il Regno”<sup>30</sup>. This debate involving what can be considered to be the most lively and interesting “Catholic forces” revolved around the theme of charity, a dominant theme in the Italian Church in the 90s, which then continued with the Conference of the Italian Church in Palermo and then with the Progetto Culturale.

In the three conferences there was radical criticism of the absolute dominance of the economy over all other aspects of social life. The drive towards progress is an economic drive at all levels. It is an invasive phenomenon that ties happiness to resources. Anyone who is not part of this perspective becomes a disadjusted individual whose identity is at risk. In advanced societies the poor are not those who do not have economic resources but those who do not have resources and live in a state of “wonder” in relation to those who possess such resources, or who are impotent and aggressive in the face of them. In fact, needs generate anxieties and a sense of emptiness that prevails over rationality, self-control and social relations. The results are “careers of poverty” that generate a solitude which seeps into all layers of life: feelings, reason, relations, work.

The social and ecclesiastical forces engaged in this reflection refer to the political framework in relation to social policies, a world in which they are completely immersed. The end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s are remembered for their climate of “dismantling”, not only of resources and services, but – and this is even more serious – of any programmed response to such social unease. The State did not deal with the old and new forms of poverty that were emerging and growing. It always acted on a last-minute basis in response to emergencies, and then “blessed” the voluntary sector who were ready to plug increasingly evident gaps and shortcomings.

Summing up the pattern of these years, the Italian Catholic movements point to:

- An initial phase marked by a shrinking of resources destined to the social sector. This reduction was explained in financial laws by economic motives: the State cannot economically afford

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<sup>30</sup> The titles of the three conferences were: “Annunciare la carità. Pensare la solidarietà (22-24 September 1995); “Annunciare la carità. Vivere la speranza” (18-20 October 1996); Cercare la verità. Amare la giustizia (October 1997).

- welfare, in that the social welfare system is practically unlimited and therefore unsustainable. The public debt is growing and therefore needs to be reduced.
- A second phase involved the emergence of the dangerous concept of the uselessness or burden of social intervention: in a barely masked language, the hypothesis was advanced that increasing welfare spending meant rewarding layabouts and cheats, or at rate supporting situations where results were inferior to the resources devoted to them. It would not be right, according to this line of thought, to penalize hard-working savers in favour of hopeless people lacking in initiative.
  - The third phase revealed the true face of the political actions of those who count. There was a philosophy of economic laws that wished to safeguard the professional categories of industrialists and artisans while protection of weaker sections of society became increasingly difficult.

The first line of defence of the welfare system is the “safeguarding of a series of minimum rights”. All citizens and all families have a right to a basic framework of assistance, equal for everyone, beneath which it is not possible to drop. Institutions, the health service, social care and social security are the areas in which this framework takes shape. It is not a question of protecting certain categories of people, but of enabling a country to be civil. If this framework crumbles, equality and democracy cease and with it all social cohesion and liveability.

There has not been any very decisive expression of will in this area, indeed it is becoming increasingly evident that we are in the presence of an extremely limited social conscience. Solidarity, the urge for greater equality and the prospect of human investment are at a low point in Italy. There is a preference for small-scale interventions and occasional acts of generosity rather than significant large-scale investment.

In the analysis of the associations who organized the Florence conferences, the Church itself did not seem to have new perspectives in relation to a new social sensibility. There is plenty of talk of social concerns, but then the Church does not seem to have the courage to position the real issues at the centre of the debate. One example of this is the Conference of the Italian Church held in Palermo in 1996, where the view was that the question of the poor should not be approached in a specific field but that it needs to be dealt with in all the other fields (culture, information, economy, political commitment, young people, the family).

What the Catholic voluntarist and socially-engaged groups resolved in their conferences is that they should not regard themselves as protagonists in the field of solidarity, but should do everything they can to ensure that the vulnerable are taken in serious consideration by Catholic culture and by those Catholics present in politics, whatever their party affiliation, following the definitive disappearance of the Democrazia Cristiana.

In the debate between specialists from the Catholic domain concerning reform of the Welfare State, considerable emphasis is given to the principle of subsidiarity and to a correct relation between State and civil society. According to Colozzi, the principle of subsidiarity has a two-fold dimension: one that activates the State (promotional function) and the other that limits this intervention or is protective (protective function); Very often in the last few years, also due to objective reasons caused by the hypertrophy of state intervention, the second protective dimension has been underlined, with the result that the principle of subsidiarity has come to coincide with a liberalist policy of privatization and downsizing of state intervention in terms of public spending. The State should, however, bring together and valorize all the movements in society that are trying out new forms of solidarity in order to set out to build a Welfare Society. In order to do this it is necessary to promote private social provision with a form of regulation that avoids legitimatizing initiatives of social solidarity only when they are needed to cover the deficit of the State (reversed principle of subsidiarity), but recognizes them for what they are and valorizes them in a concrete way, providing them with the regulatory and fiscal means to enable people who want to enrich and not reduce their humanity to form an enterprise producing shared goods.

Zamagni also affirms that the civil society that we need cannot be merely regarded as the existence of a plurality of institutions capable of counterbalancing the power of the State. This is necessary but not sufficient. In countries like Italy, civil society will either find a means to express itself at the level of economic relations, as a force that is autonomous both in relation to the public and the private economy, or it will risk disintegration. The step in question does not in any way imply the withdrawal of the State

from its task of fixing qualitative standards and the rules governing the access of citizens to various kinds of service and the means of financing them. What is involved is gaining acceptance of the idea that carrying out these tasks has nothing to do with the direct management by the State of various Welfare institutions. Indeed, there is a trade off between management and regulation. The more the State manages, the less it is able to regulate, that is to extend the spheres of inclusion. Therefore what we need is a State that promotes an organized civil society, that is a subsidiary social State.

Chiavacci also argues that the correction foundation of the Welfare State has nothing to do with the managerial State. The main task of the State, of the organizational structures of polis, is not that of helping the poor and needy but of creating the conditions so that there are no longer any poor. Besides direct intervention, the State must therefore create, coordinate and pilot a network of interventions by private or local bodies in such a way that anyone can receive the support they need. The Welfare State must be an expression and instrument of justice, not so much of equity. The right to a dignified life is a genuine right of all human beings, whether they be ill, in prison or an immigrant. This concept of justice is still extraneous to the majority of Italian citizens. Feeling part of a social body, feeling a sense of responsibility towards the entire community to which one belongs, should be obvious for a Christian, as for any other person. But it is not like that at all, and in this respect the Church must bear an enormous responsibility and has a debt to pay to the poor, because it has hidden the fact that justice and solidarity are at heart the same thing. At this point it is useful to recall the political-social doctrines that are dominant in the US today, and which is in the process of being exported to Europe. According to these doctrines, the State is only supported by justice. Solidarity is not the task of the State, but is a sentiment and a virtue of the individual, which the individual may or may not have, and which in any case he or she can exercise as they see fit. This is the kernel of liberalist individualism and anyone who thinks differently must necessarily be a communist.

### ***Germany: the ecumenical perspective***<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The following section on “Catholicism in Germany” (1989-2000) is based on investigation carried by Peter Antes and Torsten O. Deecke (Hannover) as part of the TSER project of the European Community on “European Identity, Welfare State and Religions” and draws heavily on their formulation.

The welfare crisis of the nineties and religion(s) in Germany can be focused onto one large official document: “For a Future in Solidarity and Justice” the Common Paper of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Catholic German Bishops’ Conference on the economical and “Sozialstaat” in Germany.

On February 28<sup>th</sup> 1997 the common paper “For a Future in Solidarity and Justice“ of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Bishops’ Conference was published. After an in- and extensive process of consulting, not only in church but in social fields, the churches gave a statement on the future creation of the society. They looked for an agreement about the bases and perspectives of human, free and fair order of the state and the society in solidarity and justice. The primary contribution of the churches should be to offer normative orientations for the dialogue on the consensus of values, the fundament of social living together. Thereby the churches neither want to give exact political or economic orders either nor judge in social disputes. To contribute to the renewing of the society’s basic order in a manner, that justifies existential and basic needs and rights of all living human beings and future generations, is the churches’ aim.

Results and claims of the church statement can be summarised into three branches:

- 1) State order politics
- 2) Society as community of people responsible for itself
- 3) Role and task of the churches inside the society

Church demands on state order politics are directed against making economic-functional principles absolute to all social fields so that humanity, justice and responsibility for the poor and weak will disappear. Consequently under reference of human reason an order is stressed, which brings social security, ecological consistence and global responsibility into force. Further the churches advocate the social state. They do not argue the social state is too expensive but unemployment, which has to be reduced rapidly. It is not about maintaining living standards but to guarantee the provision and care, kept by the whole society in solidarity, against basic risks of life combined with sickness, old age, unemployment and unpredictability. Under remembrance of social duties of property the Christian principle of sharing is emphasised. The new all-covering principle of sustainability was received and a deborderisation of political, economical and ecological problems was undertaken, simultaneously with the postulate of needing a global order.

Not only the state is demanded in its political responsibility, but the society and the people, building this society, in the same way. Thereby a different accent on the dualism between individuals and the state was put into foreground. Contrary to the social process of fragmentation the churches put the term of social culture, which is shaped by communitaristic ideas. Additionally they oppose traditionalistic opinions, which only perceive a change of values as a loss of values. The change of gender relations and a honest and deeper perception of youth’s interests have to be taken into account as well as the greater participation in all political and social matters of all members of the society. Because participation and responsibility are both sides of one medal. In opposition to the incomplete and blunt use in political debates, the principle of subsidiarity is stated in its full meaning. Subsidiarity not only –means limitation of state competence in favour of self-responsibility of the individuals, but also the positive duty to promote and to protect actively the individuals and smaller groups in their activities. A look on the role and activities of the churches reflects some important features. First both churches care for a self-reflection and analysis of their own weak spots in institutional acting. Therefore they try to realise their claims themselves, what will be necessary for the credibility of their demands. Second they offer themselves as a dialogue partner, especially for a critical contribution on values’ orientation, and state the point they want to and can stand. The common paper demonstrates a great step of ecumenical co-operation too. So it is worth mentioning as well that it is astonishing for an ecclesiastical interpretation that the churches use the term “church” (singular) for theological self-concept as well as for a social and fair creation of the society. Thereby they prove that beyond different opinions it is possible to find common positions in a pluralistic society. If they want to take part as representatives they do it for the poor, the weak and the disadvantaged people, as a speaker for the speechless and their participation for the common good. Finally they set great store stressing their origin and the resulting consequences.

The ecumenical document was widely discussed at a political level by the CDU/CSU, by the Greens, by the Liberal Democrats, the Social Democrats and by workers' organizations, with different considerations according to the different political perspectives.

As far as the theme of the Welfare crisis is concerned, none of the interviewed specialists want to see Germany or the German society in a real deep crisis, however all state that we are now in a state of flux, of change reasoned in different but joining change. The term "crisis" was assessed (Aries) as an aggravated term of the media, which should not be taken over by the sciences. First of all the political one (crisis) of re-unification has been stated; combined with the changes and decline in the middle and east European states (Erpenbeck), added by the individualisation, the globalisation and specialisation (Homeyer, Koppe), and the change of traditional values and traditional social structures and relations (Geiger: breakdown of family, high numbers of divorce, strong egocentric and decrease of social responsibility for the common wealth). Such changes are not only dangerous but offer opportunities for reflection and new ideas, for better ideas (Erpenbeck) - but the concepts do not have a long-term perspective and the changes have taken place very fast, so that the co-lateral effects are not assumable (Aries). There is a lot of discussion among the population about social changes and its consequences and there is more understanding for the social challenges of the future as received by politics and politicians. With a concrete view on the German social state, all experts have testified that the social state is a great achievement in German history safeguarding that nobody will "fall through the net" [German saying for: nobody will fall in real strong poverty]. State money through safe social security is running short and the state has aroused desires and wishes that it can no longer fulfil. So new situations and challenges needs new answers. Important points, which have to be reviewed continually every twenty or thirty years (Erpenbeck) are:

- § social state is more than only the classic assurance system, and so all other benefits have to be examined (Erpenbeck)
- § more truth and honesty is needed (Erpenbeck)
- § the high state quota, the demographic development and the too strong combination with gainful employment (Homeyer)
- § the role of education and training in both meanings: what are our resources in economical competition and as a factor to come to social justice (Koppe, Homeyer)
- § some parts have been exploited and lead the whole to an inability of financing (Geiger)

Consequently "efficiency and social justice have to be newly balanced" (Homeyer) and new forms of social life have been established (Daiber) for example communities of self-aid have come up with effective or voluntary engagement in cultural affairs and have thus been strengthened (Geiger).

A further question was how the common paper of the churches has been received by the society. Generally the interviewed specialists assessed the statement as useful, meaningful, profound and justified, but misunderstood, too highly praised and put aside too quickly.

Such a statement is important, not only for church members, who ask for a positioning of their church but for all, who are not related to a religious community (Geiger). It has been regretful that so many people misunderstood (as describing a status quo) and misused (as a quarry of arguments for their own positions- painfully eclecticistically [Homeyer]) the paper by excluding the respective other parts (Homeyer, Erpenbeck). The real intention was to give a spiritual notice on origin and constitutive elements (Homeyer), but in the short term it will not have any results (Erpenbeck) in the society. However, the process of discussion and debate will continue as well as the churches will continue to state their opinions publicly. So a memorandum titled "Mehr Beteiligungsgerechtigkeit - Neun Gebote für die Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik (Greater Justice of Participation – Nine Precepts for Economic and Social Politics)" was worked out by a group of specialists appointed by the Commission VI of the German Bishops' Conference and published:

1. To promote self-responsibility and responsibility for other people
2. To safeguard core tasks of the state
3. To practise and to mobilise the spirit of entrepreneurship
4. To strengthen education and qualification as part of the generation pact
5. To enlarge employment and integrate unemployed people
6. To go new ways of social security
7. To put creation of prosperity on a wider base
8. To protect sustainably chances of participation for further generations
9. To take seriously the right of all individuals to participate in prosperity, wealth and knowledge.

Thereby it can be recognised that the Protestant view has been brought closer to Catholic formulations of social doctrine (Erpenbeck). Minorities have to deal with more urgent and important issues to fight for “normality” so that there was neither published a comment on the EKD/DBK paper nor a statement on the economical and social situation in Germany from ZMD or IRD (Islamrat für Deutschland). This is common to other minorities, for example the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland. There is no fully expanded Islamic social system with hospitals, homes etc. in Germany even not under the principle of subsidiarity with its state financing because this would prerequisite a juridical order of a corporation. But this is very church-oriented and very foreign to Islam. Actually there exists two tendencies among the Muslims, first the point of view to change nothing and to keep all accompanied disadvantages and a second one, which looks to get such corporation rights in accordance with Islam. Both ZMD and IRD are institutions of Muslims in Germany to go forward to the German majority society. Another form, preferred by Muslims is to establish private foundations, but this is only possible when enough money has been obtained. Nevertheless the Muslim structures of social security, are mainly family and mosque based and with a transnational character, because Muslims with a good or higher income support family members in other European countries or native countries for education, retirement or social assistance. Such forms, especially those headed by religious leaders (ex. sheiks), are not recognised by social sciences in Europe and consequently no data materials exist (Aries).

### **Anglicanism<sup>32</sup>**

It is very important to state from the outset that the Anglican Church is an organisation with a much more ‘open’ hierarchical structure than either the Catholic or other Christian churches, therefore, one has to point out that to a much higher degree, Anglican ministers and officials are able to express a more personal view which does not necessarily have to represent the view of other members of the church as well. In this sense, it might be very difficult and puzzling sometimes to attempt to trace an ‘official’ view of the Church of England on any issue, like for example unemployment, poverty, crime etc., since there is a plurality of views. However, there are various documents, reports, addresses etc. which can be seen -and indeed have done so in the past- to exercise more influence in the long run than others, and it is upon these that we have tried to focus in this report.

To a large extent, the proponent office for constructing this diversity of opinion or views, is the Board for Social Responsibility (BSR), whose primary function is to advise the General Synod on social, ethical and moral issues. However, it should not be considered as a grant-making or fund-raising body, or even a service-delivery agency. It publishes the magazine *Crucible* on a quarterly basis which contains articles which do not necessarily have to represent the official view of the Board, but are published as significant contributions to contemporary debates.

The motions which are carried at the end of General Synod debates are the nearest the Church of England has to official statements, but still, they can not be said to express ‘the view’ of every member of the Church of England. The reports of the BSR are offered as a contribution to the discussions and the

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<sup>32</sup> The following section on “Anglicanism in Great Britain” (1989-2000) is based on investigation carried by Christis Konaris as part of the TSER project of the European Community on “European Identity, Welfare State and Religions” and draws heavily on his formulation.

General Synod will sometimes endorse a motion proposed by the Board, but it is then left to the individual to make his/her own mind on particular issues.

*Important BSR Publications and other Reports (by subject)*

*Church and Politics/ Social Issues*

Faith in the City, 1985

Goals for Our Future Society, 1985 (*deals with the question of values which our society should hold in common*)

This list of themes makes it evident that the Church of England is involved in debate about specific issues that regard the welfare, and that this is supported by the good cultural background of the Board of Social Responsibility. Through this board the Church presents a clear and well-defined position on all the issues dealt, and so is presented in social debate in a pluralistic context and is able to receive a broad degree of consensus.

***The Greek Orthodox Church***<sup>33</sup>

In the official reports of the Orthodox Church and among a great number of Orthodox theologians, it is generally accepted that Christianity has sanctified institutions such as family, which is included in today's welfare issues, but it has also set the standards for the creation of social welfare institutions. It should be noted though, that the discourse on the Welfare State, within the Orthodox Church, presents certain particularities. In Central and Western European countries the case of Christian churches – mainly the Roman Catholic Church - forming certain political and social opinions, which are then channelled through various political structures into the wider social discourse, is not unusual. For instance, the Christian Democratic parties have contributed so that the privileges and institutions in the education and health sector (schools, hospitals, etc.) remain under the control of the Roman Catholic Church and are not passed to the state. This discourse with the secular authorities have encouraged a religious argumentation with references often drafted from politics. A common subject in the Greek bibliography, for example, is the "principle of subsidiarity", which has not arisen from the sophisticated handling required by European Treaties, but from papal circulars, with the intervention of Christian Democratic politicians. According to the principle of subsidiarity the responsibility for the care of the aged and children is rather a family than a social issue. The Orthodox Church has been the point of reference for many political ideologies; nevertheless, the Orthodox Church itself has never addressed a political proposition. This situation is in conformity with the century-long tradition of the State-Church relations as well as with the Constitution of the Hellenic Republic, pursuant which the Church is spiritually and administratively autonomous, yet it has no authority over political and state issues.

Thus, the argumentation on the Welfare State – whenever it was discussed by the church, mainly on the individual initiatives of lay theologians – has driven Church to participate in a discussion over its boundaries and its mission. Due to the aforementioned, particular relation of the Church with politics, the institutional ecclesiastical representatives always sense the danger of a potential degradation of the Church to a "social institution". The Church has chosen not to participate in the social discourse, while it rather be considered as the source of spirituality and one of the determinant factors for the citizens' identity. Thus, the official messages of the Orthodox Church on welfare issues shall be found in the general principles of spiritual life, referring to certain aspects of the Welfare State. Indicative cases are

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<sup>33</sup> The following section on "Orthodoxy in Greece" (1989-2000) is based on investigation carried by I. S. Petrou, N. Zacharopoulos, A. Petrou, C. Tsironis and K. Mygdalis as part of the TSER project of the European Community on "European Identity, Welfare State and Religions" and draws heavily on their formulation.

the policy for the social integration of refugees and disadvantaged groups, health and care issues, mutual aid within the family, support offered to the weaker members of society (the elderly, mentally or physically handicapped etc.).

In general, one could say that the Orthodox Church with its official statements has tried to respond to modern social issues, either with general theoretical principles - amongst which acceptance and love for man are the most important - or using references from the past); this fact has retracted the danger of «degradation» from the process of social discourse. These subjects, as well as other related to Social Welfare, were considered with the perspective of philanthropy, taking into account that, in reality, philanthropy is more than a social practice: it is a spiritual virtue and a way to exercise one's free will. Therefore it is attempting to express verbally its particularity, its unique identity which separates it from the rest of social institutions.

Nevertheless, it shall be noted that the modern world and issues arising thereof have challenged the theological thought to produce more concrete propositions and have criticised the general principles of all religious traditions, including the Orthodox one. Philanthropy and compassion, as expressions of free will, were considered to be social models of the past, since human free will does not always respond positively towards needs (causing occasional relief or its total absence) nor is it always innocent (e.g. the philanthropy of public relations). The relations of dependence and stigmatisation between people and the uncertainty of the follow-up of social work have led the academics of social policy to the demand of standard structures which could ensure follow-up and viability.

The above changes, which arrived along with the modern world, represent a new challenge for the theological thought. In the last decade, theology is examining modern social issues; a large number of theologians consider as a valid principle of discourse the fact that Christians are making welfare interventions to upgrade the quality of life, with a categorical reference to God. The virtues of orthodox spirituality such as ascetic life, faith, love, patience, abasing are set to be the boundaries of social intervention. The participation of the Orthodox Church in the discourse shall always be on a theological basis.

In the same spirit, one can claim that the state support to the church's work is a positive move, since this can allow the church to focus in its instructing and sanctifying work which is far more significant. Hence, it shall be stressed that the personal approach and participation is absent from the state welfare structures; the causes of this situation are mainly moral and spiritual and this makes the contribution of the church far more important: the church can participate and offer through its philanthropic activities, based on respect for the human being and faith to God.

The above presented opinions are frequently criticised by contemporary theologians, who are setting forth the demand for a more active participation of the Church and theology in the social discourse. Thus, the criticism towards the theological attitude centred around the theology of the person is supported by arguments declaring that the "social" element of Orthodoxy is not a side factor of the «spiritual» one, but consubstantial. Theology – according to this current - does not need to be politicised since its nature is «political». Consequently «it shall only become clearly aware and conscious of politics and take sides with the victims of history and not the executioners».

Conclusively, another team of theologians have attempted to treat modern problems arising from the crisis of the Welfare State. They principally examined issues being at the top of the social agenda, and searched for ways to comprehend the situation and co-operate with people from different cultures and traditions in order to solve common problems. These attempts resulted in the analysis of the basic characteristics of a new social model and the structuring of a general theory of Social Justice, policy and theological word in the social discourse. Moreover, these attempts were made using the verbal code of the wider social discourse without losing their theological foundation and, in some cases, they aimed at recording and analysing the modern problems with the final intention to start a discourse between theology and social issues. Even these attempts had a limited impact on the wider discourse for the reformation of the Welfare State and focused on a theoretical discussion on principles, resulting to a weak influence over the policies of action.

The debate on the crisis of the Welfare State in the Greek society has focused on the issues of pensioning, health care, redistributing national wealth, unemployment. During the last years, the national wealth has increased and the economic indicators are significantly improved. All this positive

course though, was not followed by the appropriate social upgrading (poverty and unemployment levels, health care, pensioning) to justify an optimistic perspective of the social security system in Greece. On the contrary, apart from the social state problems discussed in Europe, and also encountered in Greece, the demographic development and the inefficient management of the social security system were also considered as particular factors of the Greek discourse.

The structures and operation of the Welfare State, in its current form, were criticised by all theoretical analyses. The crisis of the Welfare State is the basis of the public discourse, where we find intense differentiation as far as the analysis of its generative causes and the proposed plans of action are concerned. The basic argumentation for the recording of this crisis converge, more or less, with what is suggested by the international bibliography. The social state did not eliminate poverty and inequalities; it mainly supported the middle classes and not the poorest part of the population. The unbearable cost of the supply of social services is disproportional to its quality return and has generated doubts as per its sustainability; pathogenic phenomena have been created, such as bureaucracy and "cliental relations" and thus the responsibility of the citizen is questioned and the citizen is driven - according to several researchers - to become dependent on state structures.

Some of the researchers reporting on the crisis of the Welfare State in Greece, and examining it within the wider framework of Northern Europe, are criticising the theoretical analysis on the situation. In this spirit, social security systems in Northern Europe are fostering and intensifying phenomena of decline and distortion of a conservative model which can be found, in any way, in the rest of Europe. Consequently, this results in the policy of offering benefits instead of social services, in the disproportional increase of pensions, when there should be provisions for the support of the unemployed, supplement for their income and effective measures taken against poverty. This theoretical description of the situation in Greece is often presented together with quantitative analyses, depicting the size of the problem in the Greek society.

The Greek social security system can be defined as a traditional welfare system which is based on employment. The continuity of the system, which is characterised by complicated bureaucracy procedures, is ensured by beneficiaries paying contributions to the appropriate social security fund. The structural organisation of benefits can be also characterised as traditional (referring to issues related to health, unemployment, the third age etc.); the size of benefits depends on the particular social security organisation and proportional to the size of contribution paid by the employed, to the negotiating force of unions and the administrative efficiency of the directors and the Boards of Directors of social security organisations.

The above observations on the social security system have led researches to the following conclusions:

There is no long term co-ordination of the various programmes, nor a general strategy comprising all particular policies.

The complexity of bureaucracy and the lack of information are making the procedure of benefit granting even more difficult for the applicants.

Even though the need for social benefits is continuously increasing (the new fields of social policy are particularly interesting), there is a general cutback on benefits, due to unemployment and population ageing.

The institution of the traditional family is undergoing a crisis period, mostly due to the irregular operation of the labour market and the constant possibility of cutback of the family income or of the vested interest of the employee. Moreover, the inadequate infrastructure (e.g. insufficient kindergartens and nursery schools) and the lack of measures for "reconciling" work and family life are the basic reasons leading to families with fewer children than planned.

Greece shall move on to becoming a mature social state, combining the radical reformation with the qualitative upgrade of services and the stabilisation of a developed economy, to guarantee its sustainability.

## **Judaism in Great Britain and France<sup>34</sup>**

This section of the research includes analysis of a religious reality in two different contexts. English and French Jews have developed over the centuries in quite different ways. The Jews of both countries are a minority, even if they are not recognized as such by the respective countries. British Jews are considered an ethnic group, French Jews a religious faith.

### ***Great Britain***

Jews represent 0.6% of the population and belong in general to a middle-upper social class which is fairly open towards society. The research refers to a survey carried out in 1995 into the political and social attitudes of British Jews.

There is a good relationship between the State and Jewish organizations. However, the State distributes funds on a strictly ecumenical basis and often Jewish organizations have to intervene economically to integrate services to the community, in particular schools and social services. The welfare network of the community is fairly developed and relatively decentralized, and extends beyond a purely religious dimension.

In the Jewish communities there is ongoing debate about the social welfare crisis. Generally speaking, the Jews are in agreement that there is a social and political crisis which generates poverty. Orthodox Jews are much more critical towards government policies. Amongst Orthodox Jews, 48% are in agreement about the specific task of providing specific social services for Jews, as opposed to 25% of progressive Jews. In fact, when the economic recession hit southern England in the early 90s, which also affected many Jewish families, five Orthodox synagogues in London founded an association to help their affiliates, and some services established an employment resource centre.

English Jews, like those in other countries, are influenced by two different tendencies, that of assimilation and that of a return to Jewish religious origins. There is therefore in Great Britain on the one hand an increase in progressive and reformist movements and on the other an increasingly large number of young people attending Jewish religious schools. But certainly the Jewish community in Great Britain is no longer a minority today, because Great Britain is a multicultural society and the Jewish community is fully integrated, making a sizeable contribution to society and taking care not only of its own members but also attending to other areas of society.

### ***France***

After the Second World War the increase in the migratory flows of Jews from central and eastern Europe led to the French Jewish communities organizing a well-structured and centralized welfare network which soon became responsible for all the religious and civil needs of its members. Some Jewish welfare institutions were asked by the State to take on responsibilities regarding different areas of the French population because of their competence in dealing with cultural differences. The Jewish organizations created a network that focussed not so much on global projects but on local-level initiatives designed to deal with the complexity of social problems (the ill, the elderly, the homeless, the unemployed). The leaders of Jewish welfare organizations in Paris are in regular contact with the government in order to make suggestions regarding social policy.

The new flux of immigrants from Russia, not all of whom are Jewish, has required a considerable amount of work from the Jewish community in order to integrate new arrivals in France.

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<sup>34</sup> The following section on “Jewry in Great Britain and French” (1989-2000) is based on investigation carried by Maurice Roumani as part of the TSER project of the European Community on “European Identity, Welfare State and Religions” and draws heavily on his formulation.

### ***Islam: the Italian and French cases***<sup>35</sup>

One of the recurrent questions concerning the Muslim presence in these countries relates to the difficulty of integration into the European community. Some people still tend to consider European Muslims as a separate, monolithic, immutable reality which is resistant to change and extraneous to our cultures.

The results of the European research into the welfare state dispel this perspective and demonstrate the degree to which Muslims are in fact in tune with the criticisms and aspirations of the protagonists of the third sector, both lay and religious. Islam is not only present amongst us, but is also asking to participate actively in the analysis of needs and in defining social policies designed to meet those needs.

In the two countries considered, interviews were conducted with leaders, opinion makers, religious leaders, intellectuals, and leaders of associations involved in dealing with issues of exclusion and social diversity.

The opinions expressed reflect a plurality of views: pietist, activist, more spiritual or more political, some openly "secularized". They also reflect the ethnic and national mosaic present in the societies examined, in particular in Italy, which does not have a majority population like the Algerian population in France. The interviewees underlined (and this in turn deserves underlining) that their statements could not in any way be considered "official positions" in relation to Islam as a confession, emphasizing, if it were necessary, the issue of the "representativity" of a Muslim minority which is highly composite and still at grips with the difficult management of its internal pluralism.

Unlike religious contexts like that of Catholicism and Protestantism, there is no official, systematic documentation in the Islamic context, either recent or historic, concerning the theme of the Welfare State. However, the Muslims are engaged in many social voluntary activities both in Italy and in France, and some of them are planning strategies and projects to deal with problems such as unemployment, social marginalization and forms of youth delinquency. A rather severe evaluation of the social consequences of economic parameters prevails overall in the responses. Muslims express a number of undeniable certainties concerning the need to radically rethink the current model of society centred on the rigid law of profit.

The Muslims interviewed perceive their participation in the social state as an opportunity to achieve two fundamental objectives:

1. Recognition of Islam in Europe on equal terms with other religions
2. The achieving of citizenship, which is not understood as an abstract and taken-for-granted concept. Rather it is a process involving a number of stages: a) becoming aware of one's rights and duties b) learning through adequate preparation to assume those rights and duties, and finally c) sharing the responsibility that these involve.

The two issues in fact often overlap. Fixing priorities depends on the type of links that the Muslims interviewed have with the religious sphere. When the emphasis is on the universalistic nature of Muslim ethics (this is the case with secularized interviewees), or on the centrality of spirituality (absolutely crucial in the eyes of black Muslims and of Sufi currents in general), access to citizenship, in so much as it is a civic and juridical link, is considered primary. For activists belonging to confessional associations (such as the Ucoii) or for some leaders from mosques, the rights of citizenship are closely connected with those of the public expression of their faith.

The strategies adopted to achieve these objectives follow two lines of direction: one is aimed at the internal structuring of the Muslim community, the other is directed towards the social context of residence and aims to integrate Islam into civil society.

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<sup>35</sup> The following section on "Muslims in Italy and France" (1989-2000) is based on investigation carried out by Chantal Saint Blancat as part of the TSER project of the European Community on "European Identity, Welfare State and Religions" and draws heavily on her formulation.

The process of introducing Islam into welfare mechanisms involves a number of stages. The first one involves beginning to collaborate systematically with existing structures in both the state and third sector areas. The experience of the mosque of Milan in the prevention and cure of alcoholism and drug use appears exemplary. Muslims describe their participation in social policies as an informal partnership. The second stage consists of finding interlocutors who are both willing and competent. In Italy the most severe criticism is towards the absence of any programming of or systematic approach to interventions. “We are already working in the male and female blocks of prisons, but it is always first of all a voluntary act, then a form of informal work, which is casual and therefore precarious. The experience risks ending up being marginal because it depends on the good will of a social worker, a prison governor or a judge.” Paradoxically, in France, which has a markedly state-oriented and centralized welfare model, the State is not always the best interlocutor in the eyes of the Muslim world. “The French state does not have competent observers in the religious field and even less so in relation to the Muslim world. This gap has been filled by the Church, and is explained thanks to the experience of the Catholic Church in providing a welcome for foreigners in general and in its missionary activities. The interest of the Catholic world towards Islam is not only due to theological issues but also to the expansion and transformation of Islam in France and Europe generally. Christian associations were the first bodies with which the Muslims collaborated in welfare activities in order to establish a constructive dialogue and to act together. And it is by working side by side with the Catholic world that Islam learns to manage social welfare activities and to enter into the mechanisms of intervention.

What is left to do is to enter the third phase of involvement in welfare policies, the formal phase. Muslims aspire to become functionaries in public structures and to be involved directly in the political and local management of social reforms. This strategy takes the form, for example, of the entry of a number of Muslims in the administrative councils of the French “Ligue de l’Enseignement” or in town councils. It takes place via the election of mosque leaders as cultural mediators in the councils of some Italian cities, in bodies where social policy strategies are formulated. This entry into politics coincides with a growing awareness of one’s rights as Muslims and citizens, and also of the need to defend them in decision-making bodies. The British case is often cited as an exemplary platform – becoming mayor of a city and participating directly in local politics.

Muslims attribute the acceleration and success of this strategy to two recent factors: on the one hand, to the collaboration between practising Muslims, activists and secularized (or rather ‘lay’) Muslims, already politically involved in their respective national contexts; on the other hand, to the role of converts, who are particularly active and present in Italy.

Some Muslims regard the delay in signing an agreement with the Italian state as an obstacle towards their entry into politics at a local level. Others, on the other hand, stress the fact that “not all Muslims feel the need to express difference”. In short, for many Muslims in Italy, “welfare must involve contractual power within the local political community, in which it is finally possible for Muslims to influence spending decisions and coordinate social priorities, expressing needs that are ignored”.

## ***European identity, Welfare State, religions***

The economic and social advantages that a united Europe brings with it are in front of the eyes of everyone. However, there is the very real danger of investing everything in economic Europe, ignoring or forgetting the profound social and cultural motivations that represent the most solid foundation of Europe. In this scenario, it is necessary to conceive of a project that does not regard culture as a subproduct of the economy. The Europe of peoples and cultures is not a given fact but an open project that contains many problems. The causes of these problems lie in the ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity of the European peoples, in the long series of wars, conflicts and tensions that have not yet been totally eliminated. The fear of losing one’s national and cultural identity in a process of flat equalization masked by unification increases closed attitudes and prejudices.

European identity as a project needs to be situated in a global context that recognizes and valorizes the multiplicity of cultural roots. Recognition of the many cultural contributions can help in the perceiving of Europe as a shared heritage to nurture. Above all in relation to religious roots, nowadays European feeling cannot be informed by the desire to identify “house owners” distinct from other “lodgers”;

As far as religions are concerned, therefore, it is important to distinguish clearly between working on the “European project” and working to construct religious values in Europe. The religions present today in Europe seem to be oriented towards making this distinction, and to searching for shared fundamental values such as the dignity of human beings with rights and obligations, peace, liberty and solidarity.

Our research seems to highlight this basic orientation. In the face of the welfare crisis, religions are adopting positions which avoid nostalgia for a state-controlled welfare system and also liberal positions. The line that is being adopted is to take on the burden of the new situation and to try to shape it in such a way as to support the positive dynamism that the Welfare State has maintained whilst neutralizing the deviations that has weakened it. This means in concrete terms:

- No to the assistential State, in the name of a correct principle of subsidiarity.
- State intervention in terms of rights, above all those of the weak and vulnerable. The State has the duty to defend a just juridical framework in order to allow the development of individuals and groups. The State has the task of intervening to avoid monopolistic situations that impede development, and to defend collective goods such as the natural environment, whose protection cannot be assured by simple market mechanisms. The State must offer guarantees in the face of the exuberant offshoot developments of the market.
- Activate social strategies to promote solidarity: this means focusing a lot on “social society”, which must be involved in the running of services, with the State adopting an auxiliary role that does not block competition.

What religions seem to be proposing as the solution to the welfare crisis is the value of solidarity at the centre of a social pact. This principle involves acceptance of the inevitable asymmetry of the human condition; the response to it is solidarity, which means treating different needs in different ways. Solidarity is an axiological principle that guides social life and must therefore be concretized in:

- juridical channels that convert into constitutional norms and general laws, into more concrete and procedural norms;
- political options through adequate institutional instruments that make solidarity historically possible.

The foundation and origin of these applications lie in a general ethical sense of solidarity, which religions have preserved in their memory and in their customs. As regards this, it needs to be noted that what is involved here is a principle that at a political level has not been sufficiently developed. If political modernity finds expression in the ideals of the French Revolution (liberty, equality, fraternity), it can be said that the first two have been widely developed in theoretical terms and have been principles that have oriented social and political life. The ideal of fraternity/solidarity has not yet had the same fortune. Perhaps the European project requires us to assert this principle as one of the fundamental principles of social life and perhaps religions have an indispensable contribution to make in this project.