Progressive Governance - Policies to safeguard Diversity

General thoughts

1. Globalization could appear to pose a threat to diversity, through its homogenization of communication models and practices. The imposition of a single language, of single codes of practice can lead to the adoption of models to the detriment of the special characteristics of each culture. However, the relationship between diversity and globalization has to be seen in a different light, if one considers that *communication can only be creative when it interconnects what is different, when it serves as a bridge between those who have developed distinctive identities and ways of life, who therefore can "offer" something novel to each other*. Therefore, preserving the differences is a precondition for the evolution of the kind of society that is breaking free from the bonds of ethnic, economic, technological or political isolationism and can promote communication in all levels. Communication within the framework of a dull uniformity would only lead to a mechanistic "robot" society, in which personal autonomy would no longer have a place.

2. This observation has the following consequence: In the past diversity was an automatic outcome of isolation, and therefore was an exogenous element of social formations. In contrast, today diversity is not assured, but a dedicated policy target, *something that can exist only if we desire it*. Indeed it will exist only if it is the object of a *progressive* politics that has at its center personal and collective autonomy. Neoliberal or conservative politics, on the other hand, are better suited to the depressing uniformity of *homo economicus*, without any intermediation by specific cultural models.

3. Globalization poses a challenge to diversity partly because it constitutes a spontaneous, uncoordinated process powered by market dynamics. Regional integration, on the other hand, is a political phenomenon consciously planned and controlled mainly by political processes. Regional integration, thus, could be thought to be a positive factor for the preservation of diversity.

4. We should also appreciate two positive and one negative elements of globalization and proceed accordingly: The **positive** elements are: a) the tendency to

reinforce decentralized initiatives on a local level. This tendency is further favoured by new technologies, and ultimately encourages diversity. b) The easy incorporation of elements of different cultures (e.g. music etc) made possible by access to a great volume of information enabled by modern technology. On the opposite side, there is the **negative** element of facile conversion of the different culture into simple "fashion", to be adopted superficially and temporarily, without leading to a genuine reinforcement of diversity within a common multicultural environment. Nevertheless, even if they cannot fully establish a multicultural society, ethnic fashions *can* serve to familiarize that which is unfamiliar,.

5. Another danger to be taken into account is the creation of circumstances of isolation due to the collective claim of the right to diversity. Placing claims in a collective and not simply personal fashion is natural, as this is the only way that someone may expect results, when faced by a dominant culture. Nevertheless, this natural practice should be prevented from leading to distinctive "ghettos" which essentially reproduce isolationism.

Ways of encouraging the respect of diversity

1. Regional integration and diversity

i) Under which circumstances could forms of regional integration (e.g. the European Union) operate as factors favoring diversity within the globalized international system?

2. Cultural diversity / cosmopolitanism

i) Respect for diverse cultures already exists as a principle in international treaties (e.g. Treaty of Amsterdam). How should this principle be integrated and further defined within the national legislation of each state?

ii) Should there be a criterion for the point beyond which diversity becomes isolationism? The starting point of such a problematic is that *diversity should serve communication* in the framework of a common cohabitation space. We defend diversity because it enriches our knowledge and experience of the world, because it opens up new possibilities, *not* in order to be separated from the "Other". This criterion will indeed be very general but it should not be totally vague. It should also run through all national

legislation. It is clear enough that, for example, racist, fascist or any similar cultural models should be explicitly excluded.

iii) Should educational programs promoting cultural diversity be developed and, if possible, be operated in a multicultural audience of children? It is generally pointless to promote relevant policies if they are addressed to culturally homogeneous audiences.

iv) How should the encouragement of cosmopolitanism associate diversity with personal autonomy? Actions need, therefore, to be disengaged from associations, organizations etc that promote a logic of cultural "supremacy" and, ultimately, of isolationism. On the other hand, they should be connected with NGOs that are especially active in the field of human rights.

v) How should the independent National Committees for Human Rights take the relevant initiatives?

vi) How should affirmative action programmes be formulated to encourage multicultural participation in collective action, while avoiding disincentives and "easing of effort" on the part of participants?

3. Ethnic / Religious diversity

i) Legislation needs to be scanned in order to be purged of vestiges of ethnic and religious isolationism.

ii) Initiatives need to be initiated, particularly in cooperation with NGOs, for discussion and development of common action in sensitive social fields by representatives of all known religions and dogmas?

iii) Religious diversity is sometimes connected with the practices of closed groups that operate with insufficient respect for the autonomy of their members. Could the appropriate reform of the manner in which religion is taught at schools, by insisting upon associating religious freedom with the other fundamental rights and democracy discourage extreme expressions of "fundamentalist" inspiration?

iv) How could the common characteristics of the various faiths be highlighted in aid the realization that, independently of the differences there is a common underlying theme, which ultimately points towards tolerance?

4. Migration policies

One of the most visible aspects of globalization is large-scale international migration. Migration on the scale experienced in many countries recently has important repercussions on the economy, society and demography of *destination (host)* countries. Migration *can* play a positive role by enhancing growth and relieving bottlenecks, yet it *may* prove disruptive in the short term. At the same time, emigration has equivalently significant implications on *source* countries, while it is linked in complex ways with phenomena such as flows of remittances, spread of know-how and direct investment. Migration *can* act as an important social and economic safety valve, while it *may* deplete a country's human capital.

It is increasingly apparent that the balance of cost and benefit is not outside the scope of control; there *exist* progressive policies that maximise the long-term benefits, minimise the long-term costs and cushion the short to medium term adjustment problems.

Macro- policies

i) How can the management of migration flows help the economic and social development of *source* countries?

ii) To what extent should migration be integrated as an aspect in overall regional development, embracing both host and source countries? Can externalities be internalized?

iii) Can the formalisation of the legal status of immigrant workers have a positive impact on their economic contribution and reduce the influence of illegal processes?

iv) Is there a role for bilateral or multilateral initiatives to influence the flows of migrants and to ensure positive outcomes?

v) Are there policies, which can favour the growth-enhancing effects of immigration and limit any transitional negative impacts on the labour market?

Micro- policies (on the level of the individual)

i) Social security rights accumulated by immigrants are frequently not portable in the case of return. How can the transfer of these rights be handled in order to avoid discrimination and further development?

ii) Labour legislation is sometimes used as an exclusion device, while the avoidance of labour standards is frequently the reason for employers to engage immigrant labour. How can minimum labour standards be enforced for the benefit of all workers?

iii) Housing is a critical area for immigrants, which frequently gives to discrimination and problems. Are there any initiatives that can help insertion?

Legal issues

i.   Should the acquisition of citizenship be encouraged, especially to those living with their families in the host country?

ii.   Should citizenship be acquired automatically by "second generation" immigrants?

iii.   Should charters of rights of immigrants be embodied either in national legislation, or in international law?

iv.   Should there be an effort to ensure participation of immigrants in trade unions, e.g. by the use of quotas?

v.   Should there be a minimum set of civil and political rights for legal immigrants, especially of the suffrage and of being elected in local government?

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