



EDITORIALE / EDITORIAL

Le nostre ricerche
Francesco Compagnoni

p. 2

STUDI / CONTRIBUTIONS

The Role of Interreligious Dialogue in
the Labor Market Inclusion of Migrant
Muslim Women in Italy: the Case of the
Community of Sant'Egidio
Olena Komisarenko

p. 3

Peccato e virtù nell'età tecnologica.
Per una teologia morale dell'uso
responsabile della tecnica
Edoardo Mattei

p. 7

La guerra senza uomo:
da Clausewitz all'I.A.
Andrea Ricci Maccarini

p. 14

SPAZIO APERTO / OPEN SPACE

**CREATE: Catholic social teaching Rome Exchange:
Advanced Training Experience**

Introduction CREATE TX-TOOLBOX
Helen Alford

p. 17

Threads of Justice: Sustainable Fashion
Consumption through the Lens of
Catholic Social Teaching Experience
Marta Čagalj

p. 18

From Correct Anthropology to
the Incitement for Life in Charity
Mario Evetović

p. 20

Social Cohesion in Slovakia
Laura Kuniaková

p. 21

The Human-Centered Economy and
Its Implementation in Economic Education
Alexandra Rácz

p. 22

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,
and to God...” Limits and Opportunities of
the Diplomatic Relations between the Holy
See and the People’s Republic of China

Benedek Tőczik

p. 23

Reflecting on the Long Term
in Political Processes

Sebastian Wijas

p. 26

COMMUNITAS: AI and the Common Good

Communitas 2025: Artificial
Intelligence and the Common Good

Helen Alford

p. 28

Artificial Intelligence and the Common Good:
Concept Paper for Communitas 2025

Gabor Ambrus and Helen Alford

p. 29

AI and Ethical Decisions:
Measuring Tendencies for Prosocial
Behavior in Large Language Models
Tony Persico, Michael Baggot, Silvia Di Piero

p. 31

Will AI Threaten or Empower
Democracy?

Sebastian Wijas

p. 39

Artificial Intelligence, the Common
Good and Business: Towards a bonum
arduum Approach

Pierre Januard

p. 42

The Common Good and the Role of AI:
A Thomistic Reflection

Luis Francisco Hernandez Sanchez

p. 44

Tecnologia al Servizio dell'Umanità:
L'Intelligenza Artificiale e il Bene
Comune nei Servizi Sociali

Luz Margarita Paredes

p. 45

Per un ecosistema di comunità
Vincenzo Grienti

p. 46

COLLABORATORI / CONTRIBUTORS

p. 47

Gli *Studi* che presentiamo in questo fascicolo sono indicativi degli interessi attuali che circolano all'interno della Facoltà di Scienze Sociali dell'Angelicum.

Iniziamo con la sintesi della ricerca dottorale di Olena Komisarenko, recentemente conclusa con il raggiungimento del titolo. Ci viene presentato un aspetto particolare che influisce sull'integrazione degli immigrati in una grande città come viene portata avanti da una organizzazione sociale indipendente come la Comunità di S. Egidio.

Passiamo poi a l'interessante tentativo di Edoardo Mattei, ingegnere di formazione professionale, di accostarsi ai problemi umani dell'era tecnologica utilizzando il Modello Morale delle Virtù. Modello filosofico e teologico nato in epoche decisamente non tecnologiche (in senso moderno) ma che oggi viene riscoperto dalle Scuole di Management per la formazione personale dei futuri dirigenti.

Le nostre ricerche

Francesco Compagnoni

Nel quadro di un'estate caratterizzata da guerre, vicine e lontane ma sempre cruenta e disumanizzanti, Andrea Ricci Maccarini, che insegna presso lo Studio Filosofico Domenicano di Bologna e che si interessa professionalmente di IA, ci propone un modello interpretativo di quell'*evergreen* che è l'aggressione collettiva, partendo dall'interpretazione dal generale prussiano di epoca napoleonica Carl von Clausewitz.

Nella rubrica *Spazio Aperto/Open Space* ospitiamo due ricerche alle quali hanno partecipato docenti, esperti e studenti:

The CREATE "Toolbox" è stato un programma esteso su quattro anni e proposto a studenti dell'Europa Orientale (CEE). La proposta teoretica da verificare era: "*That the Christian tradition may become a greater force for inclusion and social innovation in Europe, especially in the CEE region*".

COMMUNITAS 2025: *Artificial Intelligence and the Common Good*, è stata invece la ricerca annuale interfacoltà della nostra Università.

L'accostamento potrebbe apparire improprio, ma ha la sua spiegazione nel fatto che il Bene Comune è il nostro concetto etico fondamentale nell'approccio ai problemi sociali. Come nello studio di E. Mattei, anche qui vogliamo indagare sulle possibilità di orientamento nella vita attuale che ci potrebbero pervenire da prospettive teoretiche che pretendono di essere sempre valide.

Nel n.1, a.102 (2025), della rivista *Angelicum* saranno presenti i contributi principali degli studiosi durante l'incontro finale di COMMUNITAS 2025. Qui invece vogliamo mettere a disposizione tutto il restante ricco materiale affinché non vadano persi tanti interventi significativi.



This study investigates how interreligious dialogue contributes to improving the labour market participation of migrant Muslim women (MMW) in Italy. Central to this analysis is the application of a relational approach of Pierpaolo Donati, which emphasises the value of social bonds in processes of integration. Through an assessment of the activities of the Community of Sant'Egidio, a faith-based organisation committed to fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue, the research highlights how such initiatives can address the cultural and social barriers encountered by MMW when obtaining employment in Italy.

Italy, the setting of this research, has increasingly developed into a multicultural society due to migratory flows. Nevertheless, despite the significant economic and social contributions made by migrants and refugees, they frequently encounter systemic barriers to full inclusion, particularly within the European context. Statistical data from Eurostat (2023) and ISTAT (2021) reveal persistent inequalities in obtaining employment between EU nationals and non-EU migrants (IDOS 2022; 2023). ISTAT data from 2021 reveals that an overwhelming 87% of EU migrants and 91.2% of non-EU migrants face discrimination primarily due to their foreign origins and religious beliefs. This stark contrast with the native Italian population, where only 5.6% experience discrimination for similar reasons, highlights a significant and deeply rooted bias. Among these, MMW face more challenges, as they are often subject to intersecting forms of discrimination linked to both their gender and religious identity.

Previous research on labour market discrimination has shown that visible religious symbols, such as the hijab, frequently provoke biased responses from employers, thereby reducing employment opportunities for MMW and leading to their social exclusion (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2016). These patterns of structural discrimination underline the need for innovative approaches that address the root causes of such biases (OECD, 2023). While previous studies have offered important insights into discrimi-

nation mechanisms, they have largely overlooked the role that interreligious dialogue and intercultural mediation might play in countering exclusion and promoting economic integration. This study aims to address that gap by considering this issue through the lens of Pierpaolo Donati's relational approach, which lays grounding for an integration model grounded in respectful friendly and trustful social relationships.

The Relational Approach of Pierpaolo Donati

Donati's relational paradigm offers a nuanced understanding of cultural difference by distinguishing among three interpretive models: *dialectic*, *binary*, and *relational*. The dialectic model frames difference as a provisional space for negotiation, while the binary model tends to reinforce rigid oppositions that lead to exclusion. In contrast, the relational model perceives cultural difference as a meaningful distance that, when approached through dialogue and mutual engagement, enables the co-construction of shared identities and social realities. This perspective directly underpins the present study's aim of fostering inclusion through interreligious dialogue, moving beyond polarised views to promote exchanges that integrate MMW's cultural and religious identities into broader societal fabric (Donati 2015).

Central to this paradigm is the concept of *relational reasoning*, which views individuals as embedded within social networks rather than as isolated. Applied to the labour market, this approach highlights the importance of nurturing interpersonal connections that respect cultural diversity, thereby reframing employment not merely as an economic arrangement but as a mutual, socially embedded commitment. Donati further elaborates the concept of *relational goods* (Donati 2013), non-material benefits rooted in social interactions, which extend beyond traditional definitions of public, private,

collective or common goods (Wagner 1992; Ostrom 1990). The Community of Sant'Egidio exemplifies this through programmes that facilitate intercultural exchange, language learning, and vocational development in environments that create interpersonal friendly relations and reduce employment barriers.

The Golden Rule

The Golden Rule, often summarized as "treat others as you would like to be treated," is a universally recognized ethical principle present across many religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions. While the specific phrasing may differ, the core idea remains the same: it emphasizes mutual respect and the ethical treatment of others by encouraging empathy and reciprocity in human interactions. The Golden Rule appears also in Christianity, where it is stated, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matthew 7:12), and Islam, which asserts, "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself" (Muslim Ibn Al-Hajjaj, Book 1, Hadith 72), demonstrating its foundational role across diverse ethical approaches (Wattles 1996).

This reciprocal relational ethic resonates not only at the local level but also with broader international policy frameworks. The United Nations General Assembly's resolution A/RES/75/26 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding, and cooperation for peace (2020) underscores the critical importance of fostering environments that facilitate meaningful exchanges between diverse cultures and religions. By enhancing mutual understanding and strengthening social bonds, it aims to underpin cohesive societies through relational dynamics.

Within the activities of the Community of Sant'Egidio, this principle serves as a moral foundation, informing a consistent commitment to justice, respect, and human dignity. The implementation of the

The Role of Interreligious Dialogue in the Labor Market Inclusion of Migrant Muslim Women in Italy: The Case of the Community of Sant'Egidio

Olena Komisarenko

Golden Rule in interreligious initiatives underscores the ethical dimension of relational engagement, aligning closely with the research objective of understanding how dialogue can foster inclusive and equitable labour market participation.

The Methodology and Key Outcomes

Donati's The empirical foundation for this research is 2 months of fieldwork carried out together with MMW who had just arrived in Italy and were attending the course called "Economia domestica". The first part of the syllabus of this course is dedicated to the Mediterranean diet and to the cultural particularities of food consumption in Italy. This data collection technique provided information about how the Community of Sant'Egidio creates space for building relationships which foster the understanding of others as they understand themselves in questions related to culture and which are not always logical and can be only explained by cultural traditions and religious beliefs which shape one's daily lifestyle.

The depth and richness of life story data can help in understanding the way the lives of refugees changed after they contacted the Community of Sant'Egidio. Hence, a biographical data collection technique, which encourages the MMW to tell their life stories for capturing that the dynamics of acculturation from a long-term perspective has value. Therefore, 13 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants presented in Table 1.

The Community of Sant'Egidio promotes intercultural and interreligious engagement through various initiatives such as language courses, vocational training, and inclusive celebrations that acknowledge and respect participants' cultural and religious identities. The findings identified key areas where MMW require adaptation for practical reasons to integrate effectively into the Italian workforce, such as:

- Clothing
- Food consumption
- Prayer times
- Observance of religious holidays

Support in navigating these areas through education and mediation was shown to improve participants' opportunities for stable employment. Participants in the study, such as Nelly and Fatima, described difficult choices between

	Pseudonym	Country of origin	Age	Profession
1	Nelly	Afghanistan/Iran	28	Tailor
2	Sabrina	Somalia	56	Nurse
3	Sara	Afghanistan	34	Project Manager
4	Mary	Afghanistan	27	Journalist
5	Caterina	Syria	29	Mediator
6	Fatima	Tunisia	41	Cleaner
7	Manar	Palestine/Syria	40	Cook
8	Sahira	Palestine/Syria	57	Cleaner
9	Arigato	Morocco	60	Mediator
10	Narisa	Palestine/Syria	29	Mediator
11	Alba	Iran	43	Baby-sitter
12	Ameera	Afghanistan	19	Baby-sitter
13	Karima	Afghanistan	20	Mediator

maintaining religious practices and securing employment, highlighting the real-life dilemmas that arise in the absence of interreligious understanding. Nelly, a refugee from Afghanistan who was born in Iran, in her interview shared that once she declined a job offer because the working hours were overlapping with her prayer times and she was shy to ask about a possibility of breaks from work for prayers. Nelly currently works in the clothes department of a warehouse at the "Citta Ecosolidale" of the Community of Sant'Egidio.

Fatima from Tunis recounted a challenging situation where her adherence to wearing the hijab led to a change in em-

ployment. When her daughter was just a year old, she took up a cleaning job at an esthetic center for economic reasons, working twice a week. Initially, her employer questioned her if wearing the hijab was obligatory, but the employer, knowing about the fact that it was essential to her, still hired her. Subsequently, after nearly two weeks, Fatima was informed that to retain her job, she would need to remove the hijab or replace it with a sanitary cap. Fatima chose to uphold her religious practice and consequently left the job. Currently her work is predominantly in the cleaning sector in collaboration with Community of Sant'Egidio.

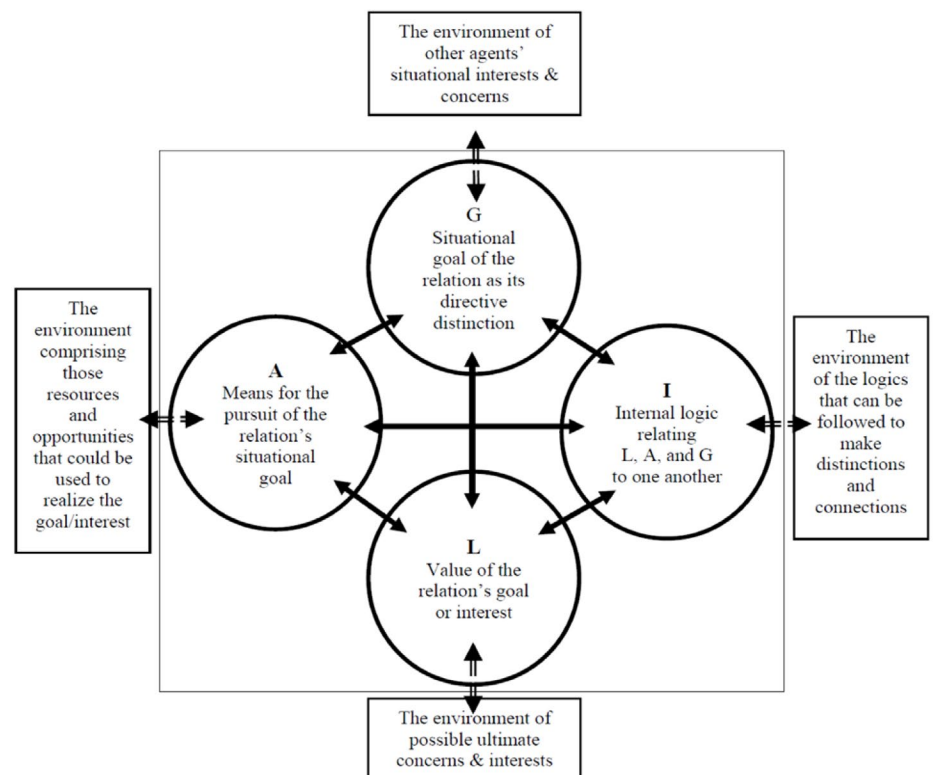


Figure 2: The AGIL scheme

AGIL Scheme

Donati analyse the role of interreligious dialogue in facilitating the socio-economic inclusion of MMW, this study draws on Pierpaolo Donati's adaptation of Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework (Parsons 1951). Donati reinterprets the four systemic functions – Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency – through a relational lens as in Figure 1 (Donati 2022, 33; 2023), that can be directly applied to the processes through which faith-based initiatives can support inclusive labour market participation.

By disaggregating the contributions of the Community of Sant'Egidio along these four dimensions (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency), the research clarifies how interfaith engagement, conceptualised as a relational good, contributes to the empowerment and economic independence of MMW in Italy.

Adaptation (A): This function considers how the Community of Sant'Egidio enables MMW to adjust to their new environment by offering essential resources and guidance, thereby improving access to employment. For example:

- The Community's Italian language course, "L'Italiano per Amico", is designed specifically for migrants and refugees. It focuses on relevant vocabulary and grammar and fosters a safe, inclusive learning space. This instruction incorporates practical themes from daily life and the workplace, equipping MMW with the skills needed for job readiness and social participation.
- The "Economia domestica" course further exemplifies relevant support. It covers essential skills related to household management and the culture of food preparation and consumption in Italy, that are necessary for women who are going to work in Italian families or service sector.
- Volunteer assistance plays a vital role in socio-economic inclusion. Volunteers help MMW navigate bureaucratic systems, access healthcare, and better understand Italian workplace culture. Their unpaid commitment reflects a deep relational ethic rooted in mutual care rather than transactional relationships.

These examples show how adaptation enables MMW to overcome barriers to socio-economic participation through

both relational and practical support, preparing them to engage meaningfully with the labour market.

Goal Attainment (G): This function focuses on achieving personal and professional objectives that foster stability, self-reliance, and purpose. The employment of migrants and refugees plays a critical role in their process of inclusion for several reasons. Firstly, it fosters *economic stability* by providing autonomy and financial independence, which are essential for their integration into host communities. With economic stability, migrants and refugees experience a reduction in dependency on state welfare systems and charitable organizations, experiencing a sense of self-sufficiency and dignity. Employment also facilitates *skill utilization and development*, allowing migrants and refugees to apply their existing abilities while acquiring new ones. Having a steady job contributes to a sense of identity and purpose, which is vital for acculturation, as it enables individuals to feel valued and recognized as contributing members of society.

- Sabrina works as a nurse and volunteers with the Community as an expression of her *zakat*, which emphasizes charity and service in Islam. Her words: "You don't have to be someone, you have to do something for someone," reflect her alignment of personal values with professional goals. This example shows how MMW are achieving not only economic independence but also fulfilling personal and religious goals, demonstrating that interreligious dialogue aligns practical employment support with deeply held cultural values.

Integration (I): In our context, considering the value MMW contribute to the host country if employed, their legal employment should be seen as a goal, while the availability of volunteers from the Community to assist PSFM and the resources the Community can dedicate to supporting this assistance can serve as a means favoring the employment process. All these elements can work together effectively only if they are based on a friendly reciprocal interaction that is supported by interreligious dialogue and intercultural mediation.

Without these linking and facilitating relations, held together by interreligious

dialogue, the social problems of discrimination, hostility and unemployment are difficult to be resolved. During participant observation of the activities of the Community of Sant'Egidio, the importance of a variety of informal events that were aimed at building friendship and social cohesion was affirmed. Most of them were of the interreligious or intercultural character like celebrations of religious holidays or dedicated to promotion values rooted in all the religions, such as peace. The Community celebrates major religious and cultural holidays, such as Ramadan and Eid, alongside other interfaith gatherings. For example:

- Arigato, an intercultural mediator working in Rebibbia prison who participated in the research, first encountered the Community during Eid al-Fitr, where the organization provided festive meals and involved an Imam to facilitate a culturally appropriate celebration. These interactions encourage both personal friendships and a sense of belonging in the host community.

Latency (L): The most significant result is that all interviewed women were willing to contribute to the host community through their work thanks to the trust and friendship established by the Community. They tend to take up professions in service and care sector, and moreover volunteer to help the other migrants and refugees. This is evidenced by:

- Narisa from Syria has been employed as an operator at the hospitality center of the Red Cross Italy. She is glad that her employment involves aiding others. She acknowledges that her own experiences as a refugee have endowed her with a profound understanding of the needs of those in similar circumstances.
- Karima from Afghanistan works as an intercultural mediator, assisting migrants and refugees, especially those with serious health problems. She supports them through job searches and interviews, facilitating integration while drawing on her own cultural knowledge.
- Ameera from Afghanistan fulfils part-time civil service at the kindergarten taking care of little children. As a volunteer Ameera helps at the center of the Community of Sant'Egidio. She said: "Every Tuesday I volunteer for Sant'Egidio. I help



others in need. I go to the center every Tuesday afternoon to distribute food packs. I like that a lot. That all the people there are equal and are treated equally”

The integration of MMW into the labour market is significantly enhanced when their identity is respected and their participation encouraged. The Latency function illustrates how interfaith dialogue supports the desire among MMW to contribute in sectors such as care, service, education, and voluntary support. Their professional roles, shaped by cultural experience and ethical values, demonstrate that integration and identity preservation are not only compatible but mutually reinforcing.

In conclusion, by applying the relational approach and the AGIL scheme to a real-life example, this study demonstrates that interreligious dialogue functions as a relational good, that significantly enhances labour market inclusion of MMW and created their willingness to contribute to the host community. This model reveals the transformative capacity of relational interfaith and intercultural initiatives, showing how such practices can mitigate both structural and social obstacles to inclusion and, ultimately, enable MMW to engage more fully and meaningfully in the labour market. The Community of Sant'Egidio exemplifies this approach, offering not just practical assistance but a transformation in how migrant integration is relational-

ly conceived, moving towards inclusive, resilient, and cohesive communities that embrace diversity.

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Abstract

La crescente pervasività delle tecnologie digitali nella vita umana richiede una riflessione morale che superi i confini dell'etica della progettazione e della regolazione algoritmica. Partendo dall'analogia con il peccato ecologico e fondandosi sulla dottrina delle virtù, questo studio propone un quadro teologico-morale per l'agire tecnologico. L'analisi si concentra sulla definizione di peccato tecnologico e sull'elaborazione di una tipologia di virtù tecnologiche che non costituiscono semplici correttivi comportamentali, ma vere forme di resistenza etica e spirituale nell'ambiente digitale. Le virtù tecnologiche - dalla prudenza digitale alla contemplazione analogica - declinano nel contesto contemporaneo le virtù cardinali e teologali, offrendo strumenti per valutare la vicinanza o lontananza delle dinamiche tecnologiche rispetto a un ordine morale oggettivo. Il lavoro si colloca nell'orizzonte di un'etica cristiana capace di affrontare le sfide della contemporaneità tecnologica, proponendo un'antropologia che non rifiuta la tecnica ma la trasfigura, riconoscendo nella tecnologia uno spazio di conversione e di realizzazione della vocazione umana alla santità.

Introduzione

Nel corso del XXI secolo, la tecnologia è divenuta un ambiente antropologico, culturale e spirituale.¹ Non si limita più a essere uno strumento esterno all'uomo, ma configura l'orizzonte in cui egli vive, comunica, decide. In tale contesto, la teologia morale è chiamata a confrontarsi non solo con l'etica della progettazione tecnologica, ma anche con la responsabilità personale dell'uomo nell'uso quotidiano della tecnica. Da qui l'esigenza di una riflessione che, sul modello di quella ecologica², affronti il tema del peccato tecnologico e della corrispettiva virtù tecnologica.

L'urgenza di questa riflessione emerge dalla constatazione che la tecnologia non è mai neutra³: ogni dispositivo, algoritmo, piattaforma porta con sé una visione implicita dell'uomo e della società. L'uso responsabile della tecnologia diventa

quindi non solo questione di competenza tecnica, ma di maturità morale e spirituale. Il presente lavoro intende offrire strumenti concettuali per navigare questa complessità recuperando la ricchezza della tradizione teologica e applicandola alle sfide contemporanee.

1. Tecnologia e morale: quadro teorico

L'azione tecnica è parte costitutiva dell'essere umano. La capacità di trasformare il mondo attraverso strumenti è un tratto originario dell'*homo faber*. Tuttavia, nella modernità avanzata, la tecnica ha acquisito una propria autonomia, non più come semplice mezzo, ma come logica globale di organizzazione della realtà.⁴ Questo mutamento richiede una nuova comprensione dell'azione morale⁵, che non può prescindere dall'ambiente tecnomediatore in cui l'uomo agisce.

La tecnologia contemporanea si caratterizza per la sua capacità di creare nuovi ambienti esistenziali.⁶ L'intelligenza artificiale e i social media non sono semplicemente strumenti che l'uomo utilizza, ma spazi in cui abita, pensa e si relaziona. Il loro uso determina dei cambiamenti concettuali⁷ e modifiche dei contesti relazionali che la teologia morale deve saper interpretare e orientare.⁸

Diventa sempre più chiara l'azione della tecnologia nel mediare le relazioni, strutturare i comportamenti e condizionare le scelte. Non è mai neutra: ogni artefatto porta con sé un progetto implicito di mondo, una visione dell'uomo e della società. Da qui l'esigenza di valutare non solo le intenzioni soggettive, ma anche gli effetti sistemici e le logiche incorporate negli strumenti tecnici.⁹

Gli algoritmi di raccomandazione, per esempio, non si limitano a suggerire contenuti, ma plasmano i gusti e orientano le preferenze fino a definire i confini dell'esperienza possibile. I social media non sono solo piattaforme di comunicazione, ma architettano specifiche modalità di relazione, privilegiano certi tipi di

interazione oppure ne scoraggiano altri. Riconoscere questo potere configurante della tecnologia significa valutare quanto le sue logiche favoriscano la ricerca della verità o la disperdano nella relatività delle preferenze individuali, se promuovano relazioni autentiche fondate sulla dignità della persona o le riducano a interazioni funzionali e strumentali. Il lavoro etico richiede di misurare costantemente la distanza tra le dinamiche tecnologiche e i principi morali universali, per orientare l'uso della tecnologia verso ciò che è oggettivamente buono e vero.

Questo comporta una dislocazione della responsabilità: l'agente morale non agisce più direttamente, ma attraverso sistemi che amplificano, opacizzano o trasformano le sue intenzioni. La teologia morale deve dunque confrontarsi con nuove forme di responsabilità indiretta, delegata o collettiva.

Quando condividiamo un contenuto sui social media, per esempio, la nostra azione viene processata da algoritmi che decidono chi lo vedrà, in che momento e in quale contesto. La responsabilità morale dell'atto di condivisione non può prescindere da questa mediazione tecnologica.¹⁰ Analogamente, quando utilizziamo un sistema di intelligenza artificiale per prendere decisioni, dobbiamo considerare i bias incorporati nell'algoritmo e le logiche che lo governano.

L'etica della tecnologia si è tradizionalmente concentrata sulla progettazione (ethics by design), sulla trasparenza algoritmica e sulla equità nei sistemi automatici.¹¹ Tuttavia, esiste una seconda dimensione, spesso trascurata: l'etica dell'uso. In analogia con il mondo automobilistico possiamo affermare che progettare un veicolo sicuro è importante (etica della tecnologia), ma altrettanto lo è guidarlo responsabilmente (etica dell'uso). È in quest'area che si collocano il concetto di peccato tecnologico e le virtù corrispondenti.

Peccato e virtù nell'età tecnologica Per una teologia morale dell'uso responsabile della tecnica

Edoardo Mattei

L'etica dell'uso si concentra sulla responsabilità dell'utilizzatore finale, sulla sua capacità di prudenza, sulla sua formazione morale.¹² Presuppone che, anche di fronte a tecnologie ben progettate, l'uomo conservi uno spazio di libertà e responsabilità che può essere esercitato virtuosamente o viziosamente, può contribuire al bene comune o danneggiarlo.

2. Il peccato tecnologico: fondamenti e forme

Il peccato, nella tradizione cristiana, è una rottura della relazione con Dio, con gli altri e con il creato, causata da una scelta volontaria contro l'ordine del bene. La violazione della legge è anche perdita di armonia e distorsione del fine ultimo dell'uomo. Il peccato comporta sempre una dimensione personale (la libera scelta del soggetto) e una dimensione relazionale (la rottura dei legami fondamentali).

Nella prospettiva tomista, il peccato è essenzialmente una *conversio ad bonum commutabile cum aversione ab incommutabili bono*¹³: un volgersi verso beni mutevoli accompagnato da un'avversione dal bene immutabile. Papa Francesco con la *Laudato si'*, ha allargato la comprensione corrente del peccato includendo le sue dimensioni sociali e strutturali. Il peccato ecologico è un esempio di tale ampliamento: esso riguarda comportamenti collettivi e personali che danneggiano la casa comune e compromettono il futuro delle generazioni.¹⁴

Il peccato ecologico ha rappresentato una svolta paradigmatica: ha mostrato come comportamenti apparentemente neutrali (consumare, produrre, viaggiare) possano avere implicazioni morali profonde quando considerati nel loro impatto sistemico. Analogamente, il peccato tecnologico nasce dalla consapevolezza che l'uso della tecnologia è sempre inserito in una rete di relazioni e conseguenze.

In analogia con il peccato ecologico, si propone la seguente definizione: «Il peccato tecnologico è l'uso moralmente disordinato della tecnologia da parte della persona, che, per scelta o negligenza, viola i principi del bene comune, della giustizia, della carità o della dignità umana, danneggiando se stesso, gli altri o il creato attraverso le sue azioni tecnologiate».

Tra le forme concrete del peccato tecnologico si possono annoverare:

- La *disumanizzazione*: l'uso di algoritmi che riducono l'altro a dato statistico, che ignorano la complessità e unicità della persona umana o che prendono decisioni che richiederebbero una valutazione umana.
- L'*alienazione digitale*: forme di iperconnessione che compromettono la capacità di relazione autentica, di concentrazione, di contemplazione.
- La *manipolazione informativa*: include il cyberbullismo, la diffusione consapevole di false informazioni, l'uso di deepfake per ingannare, la creazione di contenuti fuorvianti.
- La *violazione della privacy*: l'uso improprio dei dati personali, la sorveglianza non consensuale, l'invasione della sfera privata.
- L'*idolatria tecnologica*: la tecnolatria che attribuisce alla tecnologia poteri salvifici, la delega assoluta all'intelligenza artificiale di decisioni che richiedono saggezza umana, la fiducia cieca negli algoritmi.

Il peccato tecnologico può manifestarsi come peccato personale (uso irresponsabile di social media, consumo compulsivo di contenuti digitali, cyberbullismo) o come peccato sistemico, laddove interi ecosistemi digitali promuovono dinamiche ingiuste o disumanizzanti. In questo senso, si configura come una nuova forma di struttura di peccato.

Le strutture di peccato tecnologico sono particolarmente insidiose perché spesso invisibili agli utenti finali. I modelli di business basati sulla cattura dell'attenzione, gli algoritmi che amplificano i contenuti polarizzanti, le piattaforme che monetizzano i dati personali senza consenso informato rappresentano forme sistemiche di peccato che influenzano e condizionano le scelte individuali.¹⁵

3. La virtù tecnologica: fondamenti e necessità

San Tommaso d'Aquino definisce la virtù come *habitus operativus bonus*¹⁶: una disposizione acquisita che inclina stabilmente al bene. La virtù non è quindi una regola esterna, ma una seconda natura che rende l'agire buono spontaneo e gioioso e si acquisisce attraverso l'esercizio, la ripetizione di atti buoni e la formazione delle virtù.

La tecnologia interpella la libertà dell'uomo, ponendolo di fronte a scelte quotidiane che hanno rilevanza etica. Occorre, quindi, riconoscere che l'uso della tecnologia è un atto morale che le

virtù tecnologiche aiutano a integrare l'agire tecnico nella vita buona. La sovrabbondanza di informazioni richiede prudenza nell'accordare fiducia; la facilità di comunicazione globale richiede giustizia nell'uso delle parole; la potenza degli strumenti digitali richiede temperanza nell'uso; la pressione conformista dei social media richiede forza nel mantenere la propria identità.

Hans Jonas, nel suo *Principio responsabilità*, aveva già intuito come la tecnologia moderna richiedesse una nuova etica, capace di considerare gli effetti a lungo termine e su larga scala delle azioni umane.¹⁷

Le virtù tecnologiche si inseriscono in questa prospettiva offrendo una risposta razionale ed esistenziale alle sfide etiche della tecnica e trasformano il lavoro tecnico e l'uso delle tecnologie in vie di carità, di giustizia e di contemplazione. Il programmatore che scrive codice pulito ed efficiente, il designer che crea interfacce accessibili, l'utente che usa i social media per costruire comunità: tutti possono trovare nella tecnologia un'occasione di crescita spirituale, anzi, la tecnologia diventa un ambito in cui l'uomo può realizzare la propria vocazione alla santità.

La formazione di queste virtù è particolarmente urgente. L'ambiente mediale è saturo di stimoli, accelerato nei ritmi, spesso privo di criteri condivisi. In tale scenario, le virtù tecnologiche offrono una bussola morale, aiutano a riconoscere il vero dal falso, l'essenziale dal superfluo e il bene comune dall'interesse individuale. L'opinione digitale richiede competenze specifiche per valutare l'affidabilità delle fonti, riconoscere la manipolazione emotiva, gestire la propria attenzione o mantenere la capacità di concentrazione profonda. Queste competenze non sono solo tecniche, ma profondamente etiche e spirituali.

3. Tipologia delle virtù tecnologiche¹⁸

La prudenza digitale è la capacità di valutare rischi, tempi e contesti dell'uso tecnologico. Include la saggezza nel condividere informazioni personali, la capacità di riconoscere contenuti falsi o fuorvianti, la valutazione dell'affidabilità delle fonti online. Si manifesta nella scelta consapevole di quando essere online e quando disconnettersi, nell'uso appropriato dei diversi canali di comunicazione, nella gestione accorta della propria identità digitale. I vizi contrari



alla prudenza digitale sono l'imprudenza (condividere informazioni sensibili senza riflettere), l'impulsività (reagire immediatamente senza valutare le conseguenze), l'esposizione eccessiva (rendere pubblica la propria vita privata avventatamente).

La giustizia informativa riguarda l'agire equo nella gestione e diffusione dell'informazione. Include la verifica delle notizie prima di condividerle, il rispetto dei diritti d'autore, la corretta attribuzione delle fonti, l'attenzione a non diffondere stereotipi o discriminazioni. Si estende anche all'equità nell'accesso alle tecnologie e alla lotta contro il divario digitale. I vizi contrari sono la disinformazione (diffondere consapevolmente notizie false), la manipolazione (alterare informazioni per scopi personali), l'appropriazione indebita (usare contenuti altrui senza autorizzazione), l'esclusione digitale (ignorare chi non ha accesso alle tecnologie).

La temperanza digitale è la misura nell'uso del tempo, delle app, dei social media. Include la capacità di gestire il proprio tempo online, di resistere alla dipendenza dai dispositivi, di mantenere un equilibrio tra vita digitale e vita offline. Si manifesta nella scelta consape-

vole di quando utilizzare la tecnologia e quando farne a meno. I vizi contrari sono l'iperconnessione (essere sempre online), la dipendenza (non riuscire a staccarsi dai dispositivi), l'escapismo (usare la tecnologia per fuggire dalla realtà), il consumismo digitale (accumulare app, dispositivi, contenuti senza necessità).

La forza cognitiva è la capacità di resistere alla pressione dell'omologazione digitale e di mantenere un pensiero critico. Include la resistenza alla manipolazione algoritmica, la capacità di formarsi opinioni autonome, il coraggio di esprimere posizioni controcorrente quando necessario. Si manifesta nella capacità di uscire dalle bolle informative e di confrontarsi con opinioni diverse. I vizi contrari sono il conformismo (seguire acriticamente le opinioni dominanti online), la delega passiva (lasciare che gli algoritmi decidano cosa pensare), la polarizzazione (chiudersi in posizioni estreme senza dialogo).

La sobrietà mediale è la capacità di vivere con meno tecnologia quando necessario, di scegliere consapevolmente la semplicità, di non lasciarsi dominare dal desiderio di avere sempre l'ultimo dispositivo. Include la capacità di apprezzare la tecnologia senza idolatrarla, di usarla

senza esserne posseduti. I vizi contrari sono l'accumulo (comprare dispositivi senza necessità), il feticismo del dispositivo (adorare la tecnologia per se stessa), l'obsolescenza programmata dell'anima (cambiare continuamente identità digitale seguendo le mode).

La carità digitale è la capacità di promuovere il bene dell'altro nello spazio digitale. Include la gentilezza online, l'attenzione ai più vulnerabili, l'uso della tecnologia per costruire comunità, l'impegno per la giustizia sociale attraverso mezzi digitali. Si manifesta nel rifiuto dell'odio online, nella protezione dei più deboli, nella promozione del dialogo costruttivo. I vizi contrari sono l'odio online (cyberbullismo, hate speech), il trolling (provocare per il piacere di disturbare), l'indifferenza (ignorare le sofferenze altrui online), la strumentalizzazione (usare gli altri per i propri scopi).

La custodia tecnosociale è l'uso delle tecnologie per la cura degli altri e dell'ambiente. Include l'attenzione all'impatto ambientale delle tecnologie, la promozione dell'inclusione digitale, l'uso della tecnologia per proteggere i più vulnerabili. Si manifesta nella scelta di tecnologie sostenibili, nell'aiuto a chi è in difficoltà con le tecnologie, nell'uso

di piattaforme che rispettano la privacy. I vizi contrari sono lo sfruttamento (usare la tecnologia per danneggiare altri), il disinteresse (ignorare le conseguenze ambientali e sociali delle proprie scelte tecnologiche), l'esclusione (creare barriere digitali invece di abbatterle).

La contemplazione analogica è la capacità di preservare spazi di silenzio, lentezza, presenza reale nel mondo digitale. Include la capacità di contemplare la bellezza anche attraverso i mezzi digitali, di trovare Dio nell'ambiente tecnologico, di mantenere la dimensione contemplativa della vita. Si manifesta nella capacità di pregare con e nonostante la tecnologia, di trovare momenti di raccoglimento, di apprezzare la bellezza digitale senza perdere il senso del sacro. I vizi contrari sono il rumore digitale (riempire ogni momento con stimoli tecnologici), l'iperattività mentale (non riuscire mai a fermarsi), la perdita del senso del sacro (ridurre tutto a informazione e calcolo).

Le virtù tecnologiche non sostituiscono le virtù tradizionali, ma le declinano nel contesto digitale contemporaneo. Ogni virtù tecnologica ha radici profonde nella tradizione cristiana, ma sviluppa specificità legate alle sfide dell'ambiente digitale.

La prudenza digitale sviluppa la prudenza nel contesto dell'informazione sovrabbondante e della comunicazione mediata. La specificità contemporanea riguarda la valutazione di rischi informatici, la gestione dei tempi di esposizione, il riconoscimento delle fonti attendibili in un ambiente dove chiunque può pubblicare qualsiasi cosa.

La giustizia informativa e la custodia tecnosociale declinano la giustizia nel contesto della società dell'informazione. La specificità riguarda l'equità nell'accesso alle tecnologie, la non manipolazione dell'informazione, la protezione dei dati personali, la lotta contro le discriminazioni algoritmiche.

La forza cognitiva e la sobrietà mediale sviluppano la forza classica nel contesto della pressione algoritmica e della dipendenza tecnologica. La specificità riguarda la resistenza alla manipolazione digitale, la gestione delle dipendenze tecnologiche, il mantenimento dell'autonomia di pensiero in un ambiente che tende all'omologazione.

La temperanza digitale declina la temperanza classica nel contesto del consu-



mo e dei tempi digitali. La specificità riguarda la regolazione del tempo online, la gestione dell'attenzione, l'evitamento del consumo compulsivo di contenuti e dispositivi.

Le virtù teologali trovano anch'esse nuove declinazioni nell'ambiente digitale.

La contemplazione analogica sviluppa la fede nel contesto tecnocratico, aiutando a ritrovare il senso del limite e del mistero. In un mondo che tende a ridurre tutto a informazione e calcolo, la contemplazione analogica mantiene aperto lo spazio per l'ineffabile, per ciò che non può essere digitalizzato.

La speranza digitale si manifesta nella fiducia che la tecnologia possa servire la realizzazione del Regno di Dio sulla terra, unita alla fiducia nella capacità dell'uomo di sapersi adeguare creativamente e responsabilmente alle trasformazioni digitali. Essa guarda oltre le derive alienanti del presente digitale per intravedere le possibilità di connessione autentica, di democratizzazione della conoscenza e di superamento delle barriere geografiche e sociali. La speranza digitale non è ingenuo ottimismo tecnologico, ma virtù teologale che sa ri-

conoscere i segni dei tempi anche nelle trasformazioni digitali, riconoscendo in esse strumenti potenziali per l'edificazione di una civiltà più giusta e fraterna, confidando al contempo nella capacità umana di orientare e governare questi processi secondo la propria vocazione.

La carità digitale e la custodia tecnosociale sviluppano la speranza, vedendo nella tecnologia uno strumento di riscatto e solidarietà. Invece di subire passivamente le logiche del mercato digitale, queste virtù promuovono un uso della tecnologia orientato al bene comune e alla liberazione degli oppressi.

La carità digitale declina la carità classica nel contesto della comunicazione virtuale, insegnando a comunicare con amore anche negli ambienti digitali, a evitare l'odio online, a costruire comunità autentiche nonostante la mediazione tecnologica.

5. Implicazioni per la formazione cristiana

La pastorale contemporanea è chiamata a includere l'educazione digitale tra le sue priorità.¹⁹ Giovani e adulti necessitano di strumenti formativi per abitare il mondo digitale in modo etico e spiritualmente fruttuoso, perciò la formazio-

ne alle virtù tecnologiche deve divenire parte integrante dei percorsi catechetici, educativi, familiari.

Questo richiede un aggiornamento della formazione dei catechisti, degli educatori, dei genitori. Non basta più insegnare l'uso tecnico degli strumenti digitali; occorre educare la coscienza cristiana per l'ambiente digitale altrimenti la coscienza si appiattisce su norme esterne o si disorienta nei flussi informativi.²⁰ I percorsi formativi devono includere momenti di riflessione sull'uso responsabile della tecnologia, esercizi pratici di giudizio digitale, testimonianze di chi ha saputo vivere virtuosamente nell'ambiente digitale.

I principi della Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa — dignità della persona, bene comune, solidarietà, sussidiarietà — trovano nuove declinazioni nell'era digitale.²¹ È necessario un aggiornamento critico che valorizzi l'apporto delle tecnologie ma ne denunci anche le derive. Le virtù tecnologiche offrono un linguaggio adatto a questo scopo. La dignità della persona nell'era digitale richiede protezione dei dati personali, resistenza alla profilazione invasiva, rispetto della privacy e contrasto alle discriminazioni algoritmiche.²² Il bene comune richiede equità nell'accesso alle tecnologie, trasparenza degli algoritmi e sostenibilità ambientale del digitale. La solidarietà²³ si manifesta nell'aiuto ai più vulnerabili nell'accesso e uso delle tecnologie, nella condivisione delle competenze digitali e nell'uso delle piattaforme per la giustizia sociale. La sussidiarietà richiede che le tecnologie potenzino le capacità umane invece di sostituirle, che favoriscano l'autonomia invece della dipendenza.

La trasmissione della fede e la crescita spirituale avvengono oggi anche nei contesti digitali.²⁴ È urgente promuovere una spiritualità connessa che non si lasci assorbire dal rumore digitale e sappia vivere con profondità anche online. La virtù della contemplazione analogica può fungere da correttivo e da guida. La catechesi digitale deve saper utilizzare le potenzialità dei mezzi tecnologici (interattività, multimedialità, accessibilità) senza perdere la profondità del messaggio cristiano. La sfida è mantenere la dimensione kerygmatica, contemplativa, comunitaria della fede anche nell'ambiente digitale.

Come già avviene per l'ambito ecologico, anche l'ambiente tecnologico

merita una riflessione personale e comunitaria. Si propone l'elaborazione di un esame della propria condotta tecnologica (quella che in linguaggio comune è conosciuto come l'*esame di coscienza*) che aiuti a interrogarsi su: tempo speso online, verità delle informazioni condivise, rispetto dell'altro nei commenti, sobrietà nei consumi digitali, attenzione agli esclusi tecnologici.

Domande per questo esame tecnologico²⁵:

- *Prudenza digitale*: Come gestisco le mie informazioni personali online? Verifico le notizie prima di condividerle? Valuto l'attendibilità delle fonti?
- *Giustizia informativa*: Rispetto i diritti d'autore? Attribuisco correttamente le fonti? Evito di diffondere stereotipi o discriminazioni?
- *Temperanza digitale*: Quanto tempo passo online? Riesco a staccarmi dai dispositivi? Mantengo un equilibrio tra vita digitale e offline?
- *Fortezza cognitiva*: Resisto alla pressione dell'omologazione online? Mantengo un pensiero critico? Sono disposto a cambiare opinione di fronte a evidenze contrarie?
- *Sobrietà mediale*: Compro dispositivi di cui ho realmente bisogno? Sono ossessionato dall'avere sempre l'ultima novità tecnologica?
- *Carità digitale*: Sono gentile nei miei commenti online? Difendo chi viene attaccato ingiustamente? Uso i social media per costruire comunità?
- *Custodia tecnosociale*: Considero l'impatto ambientale delle mie scelte tecnologiche? Aiuto chi ha difficoltà con le tecnologie? Proteggo i più vulnerabili online?
- *Contemplazione analogica*: Riesco a trovare momenti di silenzio e raccoglimento? Prego anche utilizzando mezzi digitali? Mantengo il senso del sacro nell'ambiente tecnologico?

6. Sviluppi futuri

La riflessione su peccato e virtù nell'età tecnologica non rappresenta un'appendice marginale della teologia morale, ma ne costituisce oggi uno dei terreni più fertili e necessari di rinnovamento. La tecnologia, infatti, non si limita a offrire strumenti; essa riconfigura il senso stesso dell'esperienza umana, plasmandone le categorie fondamentali: tempo, spazio, relazione, verità. In questo contesto,

l'elaborazione delle categorie di peccato tecnologico e virtù tecnologiche non risponde a una semplice esigenza di aggiornamento, bensì a un'urgenza antropologica e pastorale di primo piano.

I futuri sviluppi di questa proposta devono muoversi lungo almeno tre direttrici principali.

Anzitutto, occorre riconoscere che l'epoca digitale costituisce un *nuovo ambiente rivelativo* della condizione umana ferita e redenta. L'agire tecnomediato diventa luogo di manifestazione dei conflitti fondamentali tra libertà e controllo, tra presenza e dispersione, tra dono e consumo. In questa prospettiva, le virtù tecnologiche non sono meri correttivi comportamentali, ma vere e proprie forme di resistenza etica e spirituale. Consentono di leggere la tecnologia come spazio di conversione laddove il peccato di disumanizzazione incontra la possibilità della carità digitale e la dispersione attentiva può essere trasformata in contemplazione analogica.

Una teologia morale che intenda parlare all'uomo contemporaneo non può eludere tale compito interpretativo. La sfida è cogliere nella tecnica un'opportunità di rivelazione del desiderio umano di relazione e di verità. Le virtù tecnologiche, in questa luce, agiscono come segni escatologici, piccoli esercizi quotidiani di libertà responsabile che anticipano la riconciliazione promessa.

In secondo luogo, la proposta apre lo spazio per una rigenerazione dell'antropologia cristiana alla luce delle trasformazioni digitali. L'«io» diventa un'identità relazionale e dinamica continuamente performata da ambienti tecnomediati. In tale scenario, la *dignitas humana* si gioca nella capacità di valutare, selezionare, resistere, agire con libertà e responsabilità in contesti altamente condizionanti.

Le virtù tecnologiche diventano allora strumenti di sussistenza dell'identità personale e il peccato tecnologico si mostra come nuova forma di alienazione e idolatria. La soggettività umana, sempre in relazione al proprio Creatore, trova nella vita digitale un nuovo campo di prova della propria vocazione alla libertà e alla comunione. Occorre, pertanto, un'antropologia che affermi la tecnica, l'attraversi e la trasfiguri facendo emergere il soggetto capace di dono, di giustizia e di comunione anche nell'era dei dati.

Infine, si aprono prospettive pastorali e politiche di ampio respiro. Il giudizio



morale sulle tecnologie non può essere affidato solo a commissioni etiche o a specialisti. È necessario pensare una ascesi digitale comunitaria, fatta di esercizi condivisi, stili di vita sobri, tempi di disconnessione, pratiche di silenzio e contemplazione. La formazione cristiana dovrà integrare competenze digitali ed esercizi spirituali, offrendo strumenti per abitare la rete senza esserne assorbiti.

La Chiesa è chiamata, inoltre, a contribuire alla costruzione di un nuovo linguaggio teologico-politico, capace di denunciare le strutture di peccato insite nei modelli di business delle piattaforme digitali, ma anche di annunciare la possibilità di un uso redento e umanizzante della tecnologia. Le virtù tecnologiche possono così diventare segni pubblici di speranza, testimoniando che è possibile vivere una vita buona anche nell'ambiente digitale.

Non si tratta, in ultima istanza, di salvare la tecnologia, ma di salvare l'umano nella tecnologia. Per questo, la proposta non si esaurisce in un'etica settoriale, ma si configura come una teologia dell'umano nell'epoca della tecnica, aperta al mistero di una redenzione che non rifiuta la tecnica, ma la trasfigura.

Conclusioni

Questa ricerca ha mostrato come il binomio peccato/virtù tecnologici trascenda l'etica applicativa: è dispositivo critico per interrogare le metamorfosi dell'umano. Nelle virtù tecnologiche – dalla prudenza digitale alla contemplazione analogica – non si codifica un comportamento, ma si disvela un conflitto antropologico tra libertà e determinismo, tra relazione e isolamento, tra profondità e superficie. Il peccato tecnologico e le virtù tecnologiche non sono categorie estrinseche, sono strumenti per interpretare l'agire umano nell'epoca digitale secondo una visione cristiana dell'uomo.

Recuperare il linguaggio della virtù consente di promuovere una cultura dell'uso responsabile, della riflessione etica e della cura relazionale. In un tempo in cui le tecnologie tendono a de-soggettivare e a frammentare l'identità, le virtù tecnologiche aiutano a ricostruire un'etica dell'unità e della presenza.

La proposta di definire un peccato tecnologico e le corrispondenti virtù tecnologiche è alieno da un atteggiamento di condanna verso la tecnologia, al contrario riconosce che ogni ambiente umano

è anche ambiente morale. La tecnologia, come ogni realtà creata, può essere occasione di peccato o di santificazione, strumento di divisione o di comunione e via di alienazione o di redenzione.

L'auspicio è che questa riflessione possa contribuire a una maggiore consapevolezza etica nell'uso delle tecnologie e a una formazione cristiana più attenta alle sfide del nostro tempo. Educare alle virtù non è solo un esercizio morale, ma un'urgenza pastorale e culturale. La teologia morale, se vuole restare fedele alla sua vocazione, deve abitare anche i confini digitali dell'umano, sostenendo l'integrazione tra vita spirituale e vita tecnomediata.

Le categorie di peccato e virtù, radicate nella tradizione, si rivelano strumenti fecondi per riconoscere le vie della giustizia, della carità e della santità anche nell'era digitale. Non si tratta di creare un moralismo tecnologico, ma di accompagnare l'uomo contemporaneo in un cammino di libertà responsabile, in cui la tecnologia non sia padrona ma serva della vita buona, umana e divina.

NOTE

1. Diversi filoni di pensiero filosofico e antropologico contemporaneo potrebbero supportare questa affermazione: Filosofia della tecnologia. Citiamo tra i maggiori: Jacques Ellul, *Il sistema tecnico. La gabbia delle società contemporanee*, Jaca Book, Milano, 2009 e *La tecnica rischio del secolo*, Giuffrè, Milano, 1969; Martin Heidegger, *La questione della tecnica* in Saggi e Discorsi, Mursia, Milano, 1954; Gilbert Simondon, *Del modo di esistenza degli oggetti tecnici*, Orthotes, Napoli, 2021; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Il fenomeno umano*, Queriniana, Brescia, 2014; Bernard Stiegler, *La tecnica e il tempo*, Luiss University Press, Milano, 2023; Luciano Floridi, *La quarta rivoluzione*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2017; Manuel Castells, *L'età dell'informazione*. Economia Società Cultura, Università Bocconi, Milano, 2004; Sherry Turkle, *Insieme ma soli. Perché ci aspettiamo sempre più dalla tecnologia e sempre meno dagli altri*, Codice, Torino, 2012
2. In particolare si fa riferimento a Francesco, Lettera Enciclica *Laudato si'* (24 maggio 2015), nn. 2, 13, 87-92, 217; Assemblea Speciale per la Regione Panamazzone, *Amazzonia: Nuovi cammini per la Chiesa e per una Ecologia Integrale* (26 ottobre 2019) nr 82; Costituzione pastorale *Gaudium et Spes* (7 dicembre 1965) nn. 34, 69; Benedetto XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (29 giugno 2009) nr 48
3. Tra i principali autori contemporanei che sostengono la non neutralità della tecnologia troviamo Luciano Floridi, Peter-Paul Verbeek, Bruno Latour, Langdon Winner, Alberto Romele. Ricordiamo anche i lavori significativi di Shannon Vallor (*Technology and the Virtues*, 2016), Yuk Hui (*On the Existence of Digital Objects*, 2016), José van Dijck (*The Culture of Connectivity*, 2013)
4. Tra i principali autori contemporanei che sostengono la non neutralità della tecnologia troviamo Luciano Floridi, Peter-Paul Verbeek, Bruno Latour, Langdon Winner, Alberto Romele. Ricordiamo anche i lavori significativi di Shannon Vallor (*Technology and the Virtues*, 2016), Yuk Hui (*On the Existence of Digital Objects*, 2016), José van Dijck (*The Culture of Connectivity*, 2013)
5. Cfr. Gianni Manzone, *Morale artificiale. Nanotecnologie, intelligenza artificiale, robot. Sfide e promesse*, EDB, Bologna 2020; Nicola Rotundo, *Intelligenza artificiale. Un punto di vista etico-sociale*, Armando Editore, Roma, 2024.
6. Autori di riferimento per questi temi sono: Vilém Flusser (*Universo tecnico*, 1985) in cui esplora direttamente come le tecnologie dell'informazione creino nuovi "universi" esistenziali; Manuel Castells (*L'età dell'informazione*, 1996-1998) definisce il concetto di "spazio dei flussi" come nuovo ambiente esistenziale creato dalla tecnologia; Sherry Turkle (*La vita sullo schermo*, 1995) ma anche (*Insieme ma soli*, 2011) analizza specificamente come la tecnologia digitale crei nuovi ambienti relazionali ed esistenziali; Luciano Floridi (*La quarta rivoluzione*, 2014) inaugura il concetto di "infosfera" come nuovo ambiente esistenziale dell'era digitale; Don Ihde (*Technology and the Lifeworld*, 1990) avvia una fenomenologia della tecnologia che analizza come crei nuovi mondi-vita.
7. Vedi Bruno Forte, *Anche il linguaggio del digitale è biblico* in *Avvenire* 23 marzo 2024.
8. Il magistero ha affrontato questi temi a partire da Benedetto XVI con i Messaggi per la Giornata Mondiale delle Comunicazioni Sociali che ha ricordato come il digitale creasse «nuove relazioni» (2009), «un nuovo modo di apprendere e di pensare, con inedite opportunità di stabilire relazioni e di costruire comunione» (2011), «nuovi spazi di evangelizzazione» (2013), mentre Francesco affrontò direttamente l'IA («Intelligenza artificiale e sapienza del cuore», 2024), con la *Rome Call for AI Ethics* (2020) e con il documento «Verso una piena presenza» (28 maggio 2023)
9. Esiste una corrente di pensiero interdisciplinare che esplora sistematicamente questi temi. Questo approccio non ha un nome unificato, ma si articola in diverse tradizioni teoriche tra le quali ricordiamo la Sociologia della Tecnologia (STS - Science and Technology Studies). Vedi P. Magaudo, F. Neresini (a cura di), *Gli studi sociali sulla scienza e la tecnologia*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2020
10. E. Pariser, *Il Filtro*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 2011
11. P. Benanti, *Human in the loop. Decisioni umane e intelligenze artificiali*, Mondadori, Milano 2022; S. Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Public Affairs, New York, 2019.
12. D. Ihde, *Technology and the Lifeworld*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington. 1990; A. Fabris, *Etica delle nuove tecnologie*. Nuova Ediz., Scholé-Morcelliana, Brescia, 2021; L. Floridi, *Etica dell'intelligenza artificiale*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2022
13. S.Th. IIª-IIae q. 20 a. 1 ad 1
14. Una prima definizione del peccato ecologico lo identificava «come azione oppure omissione contro Dio, contro il prossimo, la comunità e l'ambiente. È un peccato contro le future generazioni e si manifesta negli atti e nelle abitudini di inquinamento e distruzione dell'armonia dell'ambiente, nelle trasgressioni contro i principi di interdipendenza e nella rottura delle reti di solidarietà tra le creature» *Documento finale del Sindo per l'Amazzonia*, n. 82.
15. Lanier, *La dignità al tempo di internet. Per un'economia digitale equa*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 2014; J. von Dijck, T. Poell, M. de Waal, *Platform Society*, Guerini Scientifica, Milano, 2019.
16. S.Th. I-II, q. 55, a. 3
17. «Il nuovo tipo di azione che deriva dalla tecnologia moderna [...] esige un'etica completamente nuova, mentre tutte le etiche tradizionali sono state sviluppate per il comportamento all'interno dell'ambito immediato dell'azione e per la sua contemporaneità» Hans Jonas *Il principio responsabilità. Un'etica per la civiltà tecnologica*, Einaudi, 1990 [ed. orig. Das Prinzip Verantwortung, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1979]
18. Cfr. P.C. Rivoltella, *Le virtù del digitale. Per un'etica dei media*, Morcelliana, 2015. In questo breve testo, Rivoltella tratta delle virtù in ottica digitale cercando, però, di individuare strategie e indicazioni operative volte ad acuire la consapevolezza e la responsabilità soggettiva di chi utilizza i media digitali. È uno scopo differente dalla nostra trattazione.
19. Francesco, *Christus Vivit* (20 marzo 2019), nn. 86-90; Direttorio Generale per la Catechesi, LEV, 1997, n. 365.
20. Benedetto XVI, *Caritas in veritate* (29 giugno 2009), n. 70; Francesco, *Fratelli Tutti* (3 dicembre 2020), nn. 43-45; 205.
21. Compendio della Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa, nn. 179-184; 428-430; Francesco, *Laudato Si'* (24 maggio 2015), nn. 47-50; 102-114; Pontificia Accademia per la Vita, *The "Good" Algorithm? Artificial Intelligence: Ethics, Law, Health* (2020)
22. Dicastero Comunicazioni, *Etica nell'Intelligenza Artificiale*, (2020)
23. E. Mattei, *Solidarietà, vita spirituale e comunitaria «rivalutate» dal Web in tempo di Covid in Voce e Tempo*, 31 ottobre 2021
24. CEI, *Comunicare il Vangelo in un mondo che cambia* (2004); Francesco, *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 novembre 2013), n. 70; Direttorio su Catechesi (2020), n. 367.
25. Ho proposto un Esame di coscienza al cellulare in *I Vangeli narrano il digitale*, EDB, Bologna, 2023, pp.221.

STUDI
CONTRIBUTIONS

Sosteneva Hegel nelle Lezioni di Filosofia della Storia che lo Spirito Assoluto si fa strada nella realtà del Mondo e prende coscienza di sé attraverso la natura passionale dell'essere umano. Gli individui perseguono i propri particolari interessi, i quali finiscono col mescolarsi alle determinazioni universali fino a che l'opposizione delle idee non s'incarna nello scontro materiale tra Nazioni. La Storia allora avanza nel conflitto, e la guerra assume un sapore modernamente romantico, come attimo essenziale dell'infinito susseguirsi di momenti in opposizione dialettica, laddove invece i periodi di felicità rappresentano «pagine vuote della storia».¹

Questo fascino polemologico non era nuovo, ma in Hegel si mostra su un piano originale, che attinge a piene mani dal realismo di Machiavelli proiettandolo nell'idealismo ottocentesco. Ancora nell'opera del Fiorentino nella guerra contavano l'onore e la virtù dei soldati e dei loro comandanti, tanto che l'introduzione di nuove tecnologie, le balestre prima e le armi da fuoco poi, fu osteggiata: erano strumenti che non richiedevano particolare valore, e con cui l'ultimo dei contadini poteva abbattere il più nobile dei cavalieri. Ma il punto di Hegel stava qui: lo Spirito andava verso la democratizzazione del conflitto, e la polvere da sparo fu «uno strumento fondamentale per liberarsi dalla violenza fisica e per parificare le classi», dunque:

Solo grazie a questo strumento poteva emergere il valore superiore, il valore disgiunto dalla passione personale; nell'uso delle armi da fuoco si spara contro la generalità dei nemici, contro il nemico astratto, non già contro persone particolari.²

Tale processo di astrazione e di «spersonalizzazione» proseguì speditamente con l'industrializzazione – Mark Twain lodò le prime mitragliatrici Gatling³ – e continuò anche quando le testimonianze iniziarono a farsi più cupe, ovvero dalla prima decade del '900 in poi. Oggi i sistemi d'arma non sono solo *automatici*, ma anche *autonomi*⁴, ed è legittimo chiedersi se l'atto bellico non si ponga come *qualitativamente* differente rispetto agli

ultimi secoli, eventualmente in che modo e con quali rilevanze etiche.

Prendiamo come fulcro del confronto alcune tesi di un coevo di Hegel, Karl Von Clausewitz, la cui opera principale, il *Vom Kriege*, ha notoriamente avuto una grande influenza su strateghi e politici. Il testo, bisogna sottolinearlo, non è filosofico⁵ – Clausewitz stesso si dichiara estraneo alla disciplina⁶ – ma la costante ricerca di una connessione tra idea e realtà, ovvero tra la fredda sistematica del conflitto e le forze materiali effettivamente in gioco⁷, eleva il testo oltre la polemologia, e rappresenta anche una delle difficoltà nell'interpretare correttamente il pensiero del generale prussiano: mentre i generali chiedevano ai manuali delle sintesi operative che dessero loro teorie semplici e vincenti⁸, Clausewitz offriva una meta-teoria in cui, in fin dei conti, il nocciolo del successo era nella capacità dell'individuo di applicare logiche generali ad una situazione contingente: l'uomo prevale sempre su ogni teoria matematica del conflitto di tipo scacchistico.

Il primo passo in tal senso è *negativo*: analogamente a come Hegel esclude che lo Spirito abbia un qualche tipo di autonomia trascendente rispetto alla realtà materiale, Clausewitz definisce l'idea di una *guerra teorica* per provarne la sua inconsistenza. Affinché la pura astrazione dell'atto di guerra si verifichi occorrerebbe che questa: 1. fosse un evento completamente isolato, improvviso, senza collegamento con le vicende politiche antecedenti, 2. si riassume in una sola decisione – o in decisioni multiple ma simultanee – e 3. potesse chiudere in se stessa un risultato definitivo, senza essere influenzata dalla previsione della situazione politica successiva⁹. La *guerra teorica* rimane così priva di ogni valore pratico, ecco perché l'azione bellica ha *sempre* a che fare con la politica, rimanendone costantemente in un rapporto dialettico. Si potrebbe aristotelicamente dire che se strategia e tattica sono la fisi-

ca dell'evento bellico, la politica ne è la metafisica, cioè quel livello di astrazione più elevato che la pone, ne dà il senso e che rimane inevitabilmente, imprescindibilmente, sullo sfondo.

A questo punto si deve compiere un secondo passaggio che declina ulteriormente l'idea dell'atto bellico nella realtà attraverso la considerazione degli *attriti*, o *frizioni*: una volta che la politica ha stabilito gli obiettivi della guerra, questa non può prescindere, nella scelta della strategia, dalla considerazione delle forze effettivamente in campo, dal morale, dal terreno e da tutta quella serie di fattori che *materialmente* compete all'ottenimento dell'obiettivo ideale preposto. Il concetto di *frizione* è definito da Clausewitz in questi termini:

L'influenza di piccole cause innumerevoli che è impossibile apprezzare convenientemente a tavolino [...]. L'idea di attrito è la sola che abbia sufficiente analogia genuina con quanto distingue la guerra reale dalla guerra a tavolino.¹⁰

L'inevitabile presenza di questi molteplici fattori incalcolabili a priori deve essere ben presente a qualsiasi grado gerarchico di comando, e qui si pone l'importanza del *genio*, vera chiave di volta della polemologia clausewitziana: la guerra non si vince con una matematica delle forze in campo e calcoli razionali di tipo scacchistico, bensì attraverso il *coup d'oeil*, il colpo d'occhio mentale che appartiene al comandante in grado di coniugare i quattro elementi in cui essa si muove – *pericolo, fatiche fisiche, incertezza e caso* – applicandosi con *risolutezza*, il «coraggio di fronte alla responsabilità»¹¹, per agire verso l'obiettivo superiore, strategico-politico, della propria azione. Ecco perché Clausewitz auspica una continuità costante e armonica tra strategia politica e bellica affinché il genio non perda di vista né spirito né materia della guerra. In altre parole: il prussiano esprime una

La guerra senza uomo: da Clausewitz all'I.A.

Andrea Ricci Maccarini



teoria bellica universalmente valida ma puramente astratta, formale, che deve necessariamente inerire ad una specificità, una materia, costituita da ogni elemento reale che compete quel momento storico e quella situazione contingente. L'atto bellico diventa così un sinolo di *strategia studiata a tavolino e frizione* il cui legame costitutivo non può che essere altro che l'uomo.

Le tesi di Clausewitz, seppur spesso in modo rimaneggiato o parziale, sono state discusse e applicate fino al XX Secolo – perfino da Lenin e Mao Zedong.¹² In tutti questi casi, nonostante gli ampi ammodernamenti delle tecnologie belliche, l'importanza della dimensione umana del conflitto non è mai stata messa in dubbio¹³, tuttavia la crescente diffusione di sistemi d'arma completamente autonomi nel movimento – come i droni – con algoritmi decisionali integrati che forniscono tecnicamente la possibilità di riconoscimento, scelta dei bersagli e azione da compiere senza l'intervento di un operatore sembra suggerire la possibilità di un progressivo allontanamento dal ruolo centrale dell'essere umano.¹⁴ Ritengo che Clausewitz risponderebbe negativamente a un'affermazione simile per due motivi: in primo luogo, lato strategico, nessuna I.A., per quanto avanzata, può essere istruita sullo scopo superiore, politico, del conflitto; secondariamente, lato tattico, nessuna I.A. può possedere il *coup d'oeil* del grande comandante, e che permette di *intuire l'imprevedibile*; il *genio* infatti è conscio di un elemento che l'elaboratore ignora: il *fog of war*, ovvero la costante limitatezza dei dati a propria disposizione e dunque la possibilità costante di ridiscutere le proprie decisioni in base a nuove intuizioni.

Ma c'è un terzo elemento che compete l'automazione dei sistemi d'arma e capace di piegare la teoria di Clausewitz fino al suo limite teorico, ed è rappresentato dall'applicazione delle intelligenze artificiali all'utilizzo delle armi nucleari. In piena guerra fredda Herman Kahn pubblicò un testo esplicitamente allusivo¹⁵ all'opera del prussiano – *On Thermonuclear War* – che tuttavia descrive realtà e un approccio completamente differenti: Kahn evidenzia come le armi nucleari causino una completa spersonalizzazione dell'evento bellico e in cui le uniche strategie possibili consistono nel prevedere i milioni di morti e immaginarsi come vivrebbero i pochi sopravvissuti ad un conflitto simile.¹⁶ A ben vedere, quan-

do l'I.A. si fonde alla potenza nucleare, emerge concretamente una possibilità che Clausewitz poneva solo per escluderla: la *guerra teorica*.

Questa legge puramente speculativa, «fantasticheria della deduzione logica» a cui «lo spirito umano difficilmente si adatterebbe in pratica»¹⁷ si è storicamente incarnata nella dottrina militare della *Mutual Assured Destruction* che ha mantenuto la fragile pace durante la guerra fredda, in cui l'eventuale attacco nucleare da parte di una superpotenza avrebbe comportato una risposta altrettanto devastante dell'altra, rendendola così un'ipotesi suicida. Affinché la controffensiva potesse realizzarsi anche in casi di decapitazione dei comandi governativi e militari si progettaron dei sistemi intelligenti e automatici di risposta, tuttavia, riporre la decisione in un elaboratore pronò – come un umano – a errori di valutazione eppure – diversamente da un umano – impossibilitato a rivalutare la propria decisione come possibilmente erronea, rende concretamente ipotizzabili le tre condizioni della guerra teorica clausewitziana ovvero: 1. il totale isolamento dell'evento bellico dalle vicende politiche precedenti, di cui l'elaboratore non è conscio, in cui 2. la sua unica decisione automatica, avulsa dal contesto internazionale, ne determinerebbe l'esito – completamente disastroso per tutti – e che 3. non avrebbe alcuna influenza determinante sulla situazione politica successiva, perché la società post-atomica sarebbe totalmente e improvvisamente differente, a prescindere dall'andamento del conflitto atomico.¹⁸

A oggi non disponiamo di notizie chiare sull'esistenza di sistemi completamente autonomi; è noto che l'URSS rese operativo *Perimeter*, o *The Dead Hand*, la cui esatta capacità decisionale è sempre rimasta avvolto nel mistero, ma ci è stato fornito tuttavia un esempio concreto di quanto sia fondamentale mantenere lo *human in the loop* quando il 26 settembre 1983, nel bunker Serpukov-15, dedicato al rilevamento di minacce nucleari, a fronte di diversi allarmi di cui i calcolatori davano certezza assoluta, il comandante Stanislav Petrov seguì la propria intuizione e considerò, a ragione, gli allarmi un falso positivo.

Concludendo, se per Hegel l'autocoscienza dello Spirito Assoluto culminò nella battaglia di Jena del 1806, in cui la decisiva vittoria di Napoleone aprì le porte ad un'evoluzione «orizzontale» del

nuovo Spirito iniziato con la Rivoluzione Francese, possiamo ipotizzare che questa fase terminò il 16 luglio del 1945, con la prima detonazione atomica, dove si gettarono le premesse per un nuovo passo dello Spirito, che oggi non necessariamente transita per la decisione dei popoli ma che necessariamente può determinarne le sorti, o addirittura la fine. Clausewitz rigetta la guerra teorica perché nessun essere umano potrebbe o vorrebbe metterla in pratica, e finora, fortunatamente, ogni possibilità di attuarla è rimasta in persone dotate di giudizio e raziocinio; ma per quanto ciò sarà possibile?

Per il generale prussiano al centro vi è sempre la persona: dal genio del comandante in capo al fondamentale ruolo del popolo. Ed è proprio il peso del popolo che determina l'efficacia di una nazione in guerra, assurgendo ipoteticamente anche alla funzione di impedire azioni che ne metterebbero in evidente pericolo la propria sopravvivenza. Qui entra in gioco il problema dell'automazione nel campo bellico: la guerra fredda dimostra che non è più necessaria la decisione popolare per annientare e/o vedersi annientati. Un ipotetico Hegel odierno dunque dovrebbe raccogliere un interrogativo che Clausewitz pone in nuce: qualora si materializzasse quella guerra teorica, qualora cioè si desse il via al processo bellico costituito da pochi atti immediatamente risolutivi per cui ogni Stato ed ogni assetto politico – o forse ogni uomo – dovesse essere eliminato, che ne sarebbe dello Spirito Assoluto?

NOTE

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Lezioni sulla filosofia della storia*, a cura di Giovanni Bonacina e Livio Sichirollo, Roma; Bari, Laterza, 2003, p. 25.
2. Ivi, p. 330.
3. «When fired rapidly, the reports blend together like the clattering of a watchman's rattle. It can be discharged four hundred times a minute! I liked it very much» Julia Keller, *Mr. Gatling's terrible marvel: the gun that changed everything and the misunderstood genius who invented it*, New York, Viking, 2008, p. 12.
4. Cfr. P. Scharre, *Army of none: autonomous weapons and the future of war*, First edition., New York ; London, W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, cap. 2.
5. Cfr. William Bentley, *Clausewitz and German Idealism: The Influence of G.W.F. Hegel on «On War»*, Berlin, BiblioScholar, 2012.

6. «non siamo né filosofi né grammatici» K. Von Clausewitz, *Della guerra*, tradotto da A. Bollati ed E. Canevari, Milano, Mondadori, 1970, p. 58.
7. Cfr. G. E. Rusconi, *Clausewitz, il prussiano. La politica della guerra nell'equilibrio europeo*, Torino, Einaudi, 1999, p. 25.
8. Su questo si gioca il dibattito con il coevo Jomini. Cfr. J. Shy, *Jomini*, in «Makers of Modern Strategy», a cura di Peter Paret, 143–185, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 144. E anche cfr. G.E. Rusconi, *Clausewitz*, pp. 300-306.
9. K. Von Clausewitz, *Della guerra*, tradotto da Ambrogio Bollati e Emilio Canevari, Milano, Mondadori, 1970, pp. 23-27.
10. Ivi, pp. 86-87.
11. Ivi, p. 62.
12. Cfr. P. Paret, *Clausewitz*, in Peter Paret (Ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy*, p. 211.
13. In una rilettura del *Vom Kriege* alla luce del conflitto in Vietnam, Summers ha sostenuto che la sconfitta statunitense sia da imputare alla eccessiva fiducia nei propri mezzi tecnologici rispetto a un avversario ben più politicamente e psicologicamente determinato a combattere una guerra di popolo. Cfr. H. G. Summers, *On strategy: the Vietnam war in context*, Pennsylvania, Strategic Studies Institute, 1981, p. 4.
14. Cfr. K. Ayoub e K. Payne, *Strategy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, «Journal of Strategic Studies», 39, fasc. 5–6, 2016, pp. 793–819.
15. H. Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 2007, pp. xi-xii.
16. Fecero scalpore le tabelle con i milioni di morti, poi rinominati *megadeath*; singolare inoltre il titolo del secondo capitolo intitolato «Will the Survivors Envy the Dead?», Cfr. ivi, p. 34. Il testo ispirò la cinematografia: nel 1964 uscirono *Dr. Strangelove* e *Fail Safe*. In entrambi i casi si ipotizza la catastrofe dovuta a errori tecnici nei sistemi di risposta automatica agli attacchi atomici.
17. C. Von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, I, Cap. 1.
18. «The military rejected the idea of launching without one last human firewall. 'It was complete madness' Yarynich said» D. E. Hoffman, *The Dead Hand*, New York, Anchor Books, 2009, e-book, Chap. 6.

For the past four years, the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Pontifical University of St Thomas (Angelicum) has run a programme called CREATE, an acronym for: Catholic social teaching Rome Exchange: Advanced Training Experience. The overall programme, which is aimed at young people from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), has the following goals:

- That the Christian tradition may become a greater force for inclusion and social innovation in Europe, especially in the CEE region, by means of a wider and deeper knowledge of Catholic

social thought and, in particular, through developing public intellectuals.

- That the countries of the CEE should grow in solidarity, so as to create a stronger regional identity.

Within the CREATE programme, one of the activities, called “Toolbox”, provides 6 students with full scholarships for a semester of courses in Catholic Social Teaching and related disciplines. When they apply, they have to show that they are working on a thesis or on

another kind of project that would be helped by studying the courses offered in the Toolbox programme.

At the end of the semester, the students are required to write a minimum of one page about how the programme has helped them advance their project, to which, if they find it helpful, they are able to add more general reflections about their experience in Rome and in the programme. The 6 texts that follow are these reflections by the students in the Toolbox programme.

The CREATE “Toolbox” The 2025 “Toolbox” students reflect on their Projects and their Experience

Helen Alford



Fashion, as a reflection of social changes and trends, has always been a tool for the identification, socialization and communication of individuals, especially in a consumer society (Valentić 2018). The aim of my research is to shed light on fashion consumption and its implications for both society and the environment through the lens of Catholic social teaching.

See: Introduction to the Fashion System

The fashion industry – often referred to as “the most globalized industry in the world” (Biočina 2016, 25) – is strongly defined by the lack of connection between the original producer and end consumer. This lack of connection can be traced back to the widespread outsourcing of production to less developed countries in the Global South, such as Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Cambodia, Ethiopia, etc. The industry employs approximately 57.8 million garment workers, yet their wages account for only 1.8% of the final retail price paid by consumers (Biočina 2016, 22). This global supply chain involves countries with poorly regulated labor laws, which, as a consequence, results in garment workers facing exposure to harmful and unsafe environments, in what are commonly referred to as *sweatshops* (Brstilo, Krešić, and Vučković 2016, 290). The garment workers are still struggling and fighting for just wages.¹

Judge: The fashion system through the lens of the Catholic Social Teaching

The current fashion industry has to face the global inequalities, the structures of sin, it (re)produces which stem from colonialism and the changes the form that colonialism took in capitalism, where the more developed countries still take advantage of the less developed. These issues are addressed Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (n. 61): “What applies to national economies and to highly developed nations must also apply to trade relations between rich and poor nations”. The global supply chain must be regulated more strictly, protecting the rights of garment

workers and their well-being around the globe: „Human development must foster the development of each man and of the whole man” (PP, n. 14).

Furthermore, the global fashion industry, driven by fast production cycles and consumer demand, has become the second largest polluter of our common home.² The fashion system, thus, directly contributes to the growth of the socio-environmental crisis that Pope Francis addresses in the social encyclical *Laudato Si'*.³

The fashion system illustrates how the environmental (ecology) and social (human ecology) crises are not two separate crises, but a single and complex socio-environmental crisis (integral ecology). In order to transform the fashion industry one must look at it through the lens of integral ecology which would lead to the restoration of the dignity of its workers and everyone else involved, as well as to the care of nature.

Current textile waste mirrors the statement of Pope Francis that the Earth is becoming „an immense garbage dump” (LS, n. 21). This is closely linked to the prevalent throwaway culture which affects excluded people and the transformation of goods into waste (LS, n. 22). The fashion industry, whose production causes significant water pollution, affects the health and well-being of the poor. Due to water shortage or contamination many people are denied access to water which is „a fundamental and universal right” (LS, n. 30). Furthermore, it is time to reject the „superficial or apparent ecology” (LS, n. 59) which can be traced to the greenwashing efforts in the fashion industry.⁴ „Corruption that hides the true environmental impact in exchange for favors leads to ambiguous agreements” (LS, n. 182). In order to transform the fashion system, one must prioritize the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity.

Act: Stitching together a Sustainable Fashion Future

Embracing sustainability goes beyond just production; it involves shaping a new

lifestyle. Environmental problems call for an effective change of mindset leading to the adoption of new lifestyles which should be inspired by temperance and self-discipline at both the individual and social levels (Compendium, 2006: 486). Furthermore, there is a growing need to break with the consumerist logic and promote a form of production that considers the order of creation and satisfying the basic human needs of all. The question of ecology must not be addressed only to face the risks of environmental destruction, but can also work as a strong motivation for an authentic worldwide solidarity which is crucial for the principle of the common good to counter ever-growing inequality.

Having all of this in mind, especially within the context of the European Union, the solution to this socio-environmental issue lies in transnational policies. There are already numerous EU policies at hand which are focused more on production, but not on consumption.⁵ „Buying is always a moral as well as an economic act” (LS, n. 206). Having in mind affordability and sustainability, consumers should be strongly encouraged to find alternatives in the ever-growing second-hand fashion market. Some research suggests this is gaining popularity among younger generations. Second-hand purchases could be promoted in the formative years of young people to shape their consumption into a sustainable practice. Another way of promoting sustainable consumption would also be to reduce it: „Less is more” (LS, n. 222). We must promote a new balanced lifestyle, full of gratitude, simplicity and harmony with creation. „The seriousness of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits” (LS, n. 209).

CREATE: experience

It is hard to express my gratitude for the time I have spent in Rome during the CREATE Toolbox experience. My time in Rome has been quite eventful – the Jubilee Year, the Papal Conclave, witnessing

Threads of Justice: Sustainable Fashion Consumption through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching

Marta Čagalj

two popes, seeing the vice president of the United States, the Caravaggio exhibition – all of which profoundly deepened my knowledge and devotion, providing a new outlook on life. The presence of the universal Catholic Church in the heart of one of Europe's oldest, most vibrant, and culturally rich cities brings a sense of balance between the bustling energy of the crowds and the timeless serenity it embodies. Thanks to the numerous and various visits to different institutions of the Holy See I had the opportunity to improve my understanding of the Catholic Church and the problems of the world I live in. Despite my exposure to the international environment during my formative years and additionally my Master studies in Sociology, Management and Public Policies, I had not realised before how unique the position of the Church is, as well as the role it plays in modern-day society. It was inspiring to see how faith can inspire social engagement, action and the formulation of policies which contribute to the improvement of the world.

NOTES

1. See more here: <https://www.economicsobservatory.com/whats-happening-in-bangladeshs-garment-industry> (May 10, 2025).
2. The entire article "Can fast fashion become more sustainable", published by the Croatian Chamber of Commerce in 2023, is available here: <https://www.hgk.hr/moze-li-brza-moda-postati-odrziiva> (5 November 2024)
3. Francis, Laudato Si'. Encyclical letter, Rome, 24 May 2015. URL: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html#93 (5 November, 2024)
4. According to the Oxford Dictionary, greenwashing can be defined as misleading (the public) or countering (public or media concerns) by falsely representing a person, company, product, etc., as being environmentally responsible; misrepresenting (a company, its operations, etc.) as environmentally responsible.
5. There are already numerous EU policies at hand, such as the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles which involves Eco-design Requirements (the products must be durable, repairable, recyclable), the Digital Product Passport (it is supposed to provide

information about the circularity and sustainability of the product in question in order to keep the consumers and businesses informed and avoid greenwashing), Extended Producer Responsibility (the producer takes responsibility for textile waste management), the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (large fashion companies are going to have to disclose non-financial information, such as environmental impact or supply chain practices), Microplastics and Chemicals Management (this strategy aims to reduce the unintentional release of microplastics from synthetic textiles) and so on.

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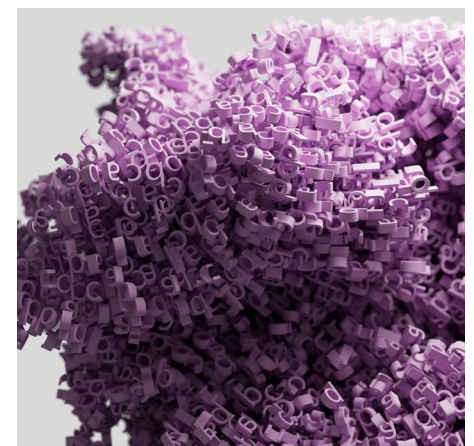
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Ever since my third year of theology studies in Zagreb, when I first encountered the work and thought of Karl Rahner, something "clicked" in me on an intellectual level. I felt a deep fascination and a sense of understanding. One of the most valuable characteristics of Rahner's theology is the excellence with which he radically embraces the non-dualism implied by the Christian message. Within his transcendental anthropology, Rahner carefully examines the nuanced fact that the Christian Gospel addresses unique subjects—individuals who (even if not explicitly) interpret themselves as such—and it is precisely in these delicate particulars that he searches for the foundation of the human person as a being of transcendence.

Ultimately, all of this may also mean that everything we are, everything we believe, and everything we believe ourselves to be is fundamentally inseparable from our concrete history and, in fact, from everything we do. At first, this conclusion did not strike me as particularly profound, and I did not intend to include it in my thesis when I proposed a paper on Rahner's anthropology and the discourse on human artistic inspiration. However, prompted by certain personal circumstances, I began to notice that a discussion seeking to address Rahner's transcendental anthropology and the possibility of human inspiration while remaining silent about its inseparable social implications would, in fact, be inconsistent with Rahner's own holistic method—the very method it claims to follow. This led me to participate in the CREATE program at the Angelicum, enriching my work on a practical level by more carefully reflecting on the many dimensions of social issues, behind which always lies the question of a true and authentic anthropology, as we saw in the *Catholic Social Teaching course*, held by professor Crosthwaite.

In the context of the second part of my thesis, which deals with human artistic inspiration, this is precisely where the core of my question lies: there is something in the human essence that makes a person open to receiving inspiration on a general, objective level, but also makes them inspired in a concrete,

From Correct Anthropology to the Incitement for Life in Charity

Mario Evetović



subjective experience. For many significant social thinkers, art was of great importance, like Jacques Maritain or a Croatian Ivan Merz, and some were artists themselves—and thus, inspired. Art as a subject of study, as well as an activity, holds a certain place in the Social Doctrine of the Church. But this alone is not the most valuable knowledge I have gained this semester studying at the Angelicum. More valuable has been the insight into how one ought to celebrate God's Creation in life—whether through fascinating lectures on *Human Rights* and *Leadership and Virtues* or enriching visits with professor Janas.

Notably, through Pope Francis' addition of *CELEBRATE* to the threefold *SEE-JUDGE-ACT* methodology in *Laudato Si'* which we took a close look at in the Catholic Social Teaching course, and through his contribution to the spirituality of material beauty, I have come to understand inspiration as *paying special attention to God's Creation*—and in this, I have seen a celebratory moment. I can

say that new perspectives have opened for me on how to practically illustrate the implementation of Rahner's anthropology in the discourse on human artistic inspiration. But also, in the course on *Challenges of Modern Technologies*, I became better acquainted with, and revisited the ideas of, some modern authors who will be useful for my work, such as Heidegger, who had an influence on Rahner.

CREATE TX was, in every way, more than just an academic program. Staying in Rome—even during significant events for the Church—was an experience I will remember forever. And the new acquaintances, interesting encounters, and the warm welcome I felt within the Angelicum community will continue to influence my future work and life. I do not think I could have had a better experience at the end of my master's theology studies than this one, because now a new desire to act has awakened within me.

In my research, I explored how Catholic Social Teaching (CST) can contribute to strengthening social cohesion in Slovakia. Social cohesion refers to the bonds that hold human groups together and the degree of connectedness and solidarity among members of a society. It acts as a “social glue,” encompassing various dimensions such as mutual trust, willingness to cooperate, and readiness to make sacrifices for the common good. In Slovakia, social cohesion is often measured through levels of horizontal and vertical trust. Horizontal trust refers to trust among members of a community - such as family, neighbours, colleagues, or even strangers. Vertical trust, on the other hand, refers to trust in public institutions, including state authorities, academic institutions, banks, non-governmental organizations, media, and Church institutions. According to the World Values Survey¹, horizontal trust in Slovakia is generally very low and has fluctuated between 21% and 26% since the fall of communism.² Slovakia ranks at the lower end of Europe within the Visegrad group, followed by the Balkan countries and the states of the former Yugoslavia. In contrast, the Scandinavian countries exhibit the highest levels of horizontal trust.³ As of 2024, only 21,30% of Slovaks agreed that most people can be trusted, indicating a concerning level of social fragmentation.⁴ Low vertical trust in political institutions - such as the government, political parties, and parliament - stands at just 18,90%, highlighting low social cohesion. In contrast, non-state institutions such as NGOs, universities, and banks enjoy significantly higher levels of trust, at 63,8 %.⁵ Through studying CST, I came to understand the importance of key principles such as solidarity, the common good, participation, and values such as truth and justice in fostering social cohesion. The Church has long empowered families and local communities, acting as a unifying force in society. Through its teachings and activities, the Church fosters social cohesion by promoting horizontal cohesion - through healthy family life and strong local communities - and

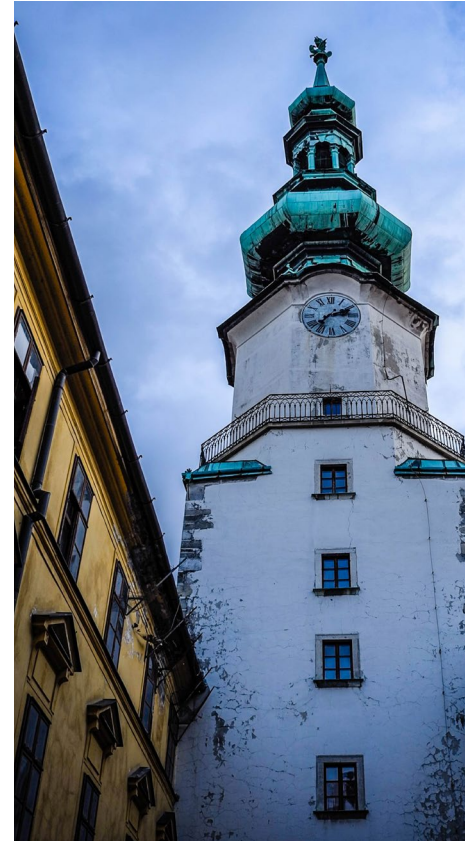
vertical cohesion - by encouraging personal initiative and active participation in cultural, economic, social, and political life. Dialogue and encounter - central themes of Pope Francis’ pontificate - are essential for rebuilding social cohesion in an increasingly polarized and individualistic world. The synodal journey initiated by Pope Francis serves as a model not only for the Church but also for society at large. Synodality, understood as shared prayer and walking together, especially with those on the margins, presents both a challenge and an opportunity to renew the spirit of community and solidarity in our time. In an increasingly secularized and fragmented society, the key challenge will be to build bridges and implement the synodal process across diverse social groups.

Beyond academic enrichment, I am grateful for the visits to the dicasteries and various embassies to the Holy See that were part of the program. Gaining a glimpse behind the walls of the Vatican - into the inner workings of the dicasteries and organizations - I came to appreciate the depth of the wisdom that Christianity offers to today’s polarized society. I hope to contribute to this mission in some way. Let us see what plans the Lord has for me.

Finally, I feel deep gratitude for having been in Rome during such a significant time for the Church in the spring of 2025. The Jubilee Year, the funeral of Pope Francis, the conclave, and the first pontifical week of Pope Leo XIV profoundly deepened my devotion to the Catholic Church and its universality. The beauty of the Eternal City gradually transformed my initial dislike of its chaos into genuine admiration and affection. In conclusion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my professors and peers who accompanied me on this journey. The CREATE Toolbox experience was a unique moment in my life - a meaningful puzzle piece in the mosaic of my professional vocation and personal development.

Social Cohesion in Slovakia

Laura Kuniaková



NOTES

1. World Values Survey: Q57 *Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?*, <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV7.jsp>
2. DEKK Inštitút, Trendy nedôvery 2025, chrome-extension://efaidnbmn-nnibpcajpcgglefindmkaj/<https://www.dekk.institute/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/dekk-report-trendy-nedovery-2025-rev2.pdf>
3. <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/self-reported-trust-attitudes>
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Ne hagyjátok a templomot, A templomot s az iskolát! EN: "Do not abandon the church The church and the school!"

The words of Hungarian poet Sándor Reményik have always held deep meaning for me, but through the Create TX program, they have taken on a new and enriched significance. Faith, belonging to a religious community, and the value of education — especially lifelong learning — are fundamental pillars in every person's life, and they hold a particularly important place in mine as well.

Until now, in my own life, I had not yet succeeded in harmonizing professional academic pursuits with Christian values and religious life; these two paths had run parallel without intersecting. At the Angelicum, however, this changed. I was able to bring together economics and the teachings of the Catholic Church into a unified perspective where the two disciplines cross and inform one another.

If I had to summarize in one word what I received from this six-month program, that word would be "perspective."

As a future economics teacher, I will bear the responsibility of educating the next generation of economists, decision-makers, and entrepreneurs. It is not only the professional content that I aim — and am obliged — to pass on, but also the understanding of how to act ethically, how to do things the *right* way.

At the Angelicum, my research topic was: "The *Human-Centered Economy* and Its Implementation in Economic Education." Economic issues hold a significant place in the Church's social teaching.

From a classical economic viewpoint, the term human-centered economy may appear paradoxical, since in our studies we have defined the goal of economic activity as profit realization and the satisfaction of needs. Adam Smith, the father of economics, assumed self-interest as the driving force behind economic actors — meaning economic actions are initiated for their own sake. Yet he also explained that such actions do not result in chaos, and ultimately serve the common good. (Farkas, 2021)

But what do we mean by the *common good*? According to the Catholic Church

(as defined in the Hungarian Catholic Lexicon):

"Bonum commune" refers to the totality of material and spiritual goods and opportunities necessary for members of a community to work freely and effectively toward their flourishing — goods which individuals alone cannot produce.

Among the factors of production, human beings play a vital role — both as labor and as entrepreneurs. In the human-centered economic perspective, the human person is not merely viewed as "capital" or a resource, but as the central actor of economic activity.

The current pace of technological advancement is radically transforming both societal and economic structures, which makes it even more urgent to prioritize the central role of the human person. Human dignity must not be overshadowed by technological efficiency.

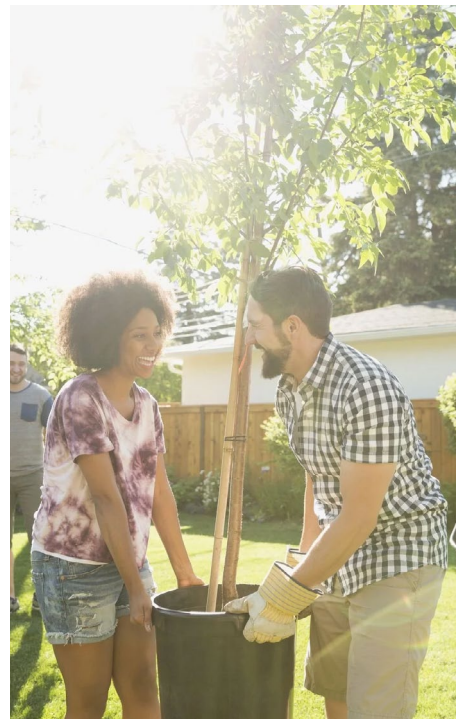
Tomorrow's society, political leadership, and economists will face different challenges than those of today — and addressing these challenges will increasingly require the integration of ethical economic perspectives. To ensure that the "economists of tomorrow" and future leaders are equipped with this mindset, the implementation of a human-centered economy into economic education becomes a key factor.

During my time in Rome, I was able to gain deeper insight into the Church's social teaching. Within the framework of Catholic Social Teaching, popes have been addressing social issues since the late 19th century. Several papal encyclicals repeatedly reflect on topics related to the economy, such as: the work, the (just) wage, the private property, the family (household) needs, labor unions, and a very important one: solidarity with the poor.

As Pope John XXIII describes in his papal encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, the Church's teaching on social and economic issues traces its origins to *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which he recognizes as Leo XIII's *Magna Charta* of social

The Human-Centered Economy and Its Implementation in Economic Education

Alexandra Rác



doctrine. *Rerum Novarum* offered "for the first time ... a complete synthesis of social principles" (MM, 15). *Leo XIII's originality lay in extending the realm of human rights into the economic field, Leo XIII made a lasting contribution to the development of the "law of labor".* (MM, 21). The fundamental principles of *Rerum Novarum* were those of human solidarity and Christian fraternity. On both of these grounds *Rerum Novarum* is critical of unrestricted competition in the liberal sense as well as of the Marxist creed of class warfare.

Every papal encyclical and church teaching speaks to us and encourages us to take action. For me, the most outstanding sentence is in St. Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967): „We cannot allow economics to be separated from human realities, nor development from the civilization in which it takes place. What counts for us is man—each individual man, each human group, and humanity as a whole” (PP, n. 14) Paul VI, so to say, calls us to defend humanity against economic forces and powers.

I. Abstract

In this paper I would like to analyse the diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China from a theological point of view, placing two terms – inculturation and sinicization – into the spotlight, framing the understanding within the context of the so-called secular religions and political theology. My hypothesis is that the nature of the dialogue between the two parties could be better interpreted via this concept, rather than using the analogy of “Ostpolitik” – the official ecclesiastical policy of the Holy See towards the Soviet bloc during the Cold War.

This text is a result of the CREATE TX Programme at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, within which I had the opportunity to spend a whole semester in Rome, studying the social teaching of the Catholic Church and related disciplines. Besides, the various weekly visits to different dicasteries of the Holy See enriched my experience and helped me to build a deeper understanding of Church-related diplomatic activities. Another element of the programme was that it created personal relationships – not only in academic terms – between all the participants. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude towards the University for providing this opportunity for us.

II. Introduction

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”¹ According to the Gospel, this was Jesus Christ’s response to the Pharisees when questioned about paying taxes to the emperor. This passage laid the foundation for the Western political-theoretical discourse that led to the separation of temporal (political) and transcendent (religious) powers—a feature characteristic of the Western Christian world.² Of course, this relationship has not been conflict-free throughout history, but today the issue is generally seen as settled.³

However, in the non-Western, non-Christian parts of the world, it remains highly contested. This includes

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God...?” Limits and Opportunities of the Diplomatic Relations between the Holy See and the People’s Republic of China

Benedek Tőczik

the People's Republic of China, where the conflict between the state-unrecognized, persecuted “underground Church” and official “Catholicism” is a focal issue of the Holy See’s diplomacy—particularly regarding the appointment of bishops. In Catholicism this right belongs to the pope for theological reasons, but China sees it as an infringement on its own sovereignty.

During my research I analysed how the two entities engage in international relations—within the context of global politics—and traced the development of Chinese Christianity and China–Holy See relations in the 20th century, culminating in the 2018 provisional agreement addressing the appointment of bishops.

In this essay, however, I focus primarily on my theoretical hypothesis and its justification.

III. The Hypothesis

A common analogy for this topic is the so-called Ostpolitik⁴, or the Holy See’s Eastern policy towards socialist states during the Cold War. My hypothesis posits that the limitations and opportunities in the diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China could be better understood not through a political lens but through a pre-political, political-theological approach. (By political theology, I mean that concepts appearing purely political at first glance often mirror theological systems and are thus comparable.⁵)

This is especially pertinent because of the stark differences between the two regions and time periods, casting doubt on the effectiveness of the Ostpolitik analogy. For instance, Christianity in China lacks the political weight it had in the socialist bloc; the Chinese state treats religion as a security issue, not a political one. Moreover, communism in China functions more like a sinicized “secular religion”, increasingly aligned with millennia-old traditions and thought systems—many of which conflict with the Church’s universalist worldview.⁶ The

notion of a secular religion here implies that a supposedly worldly, temporal phenomenon exhibits religious traits.

Thus, while the Ostpolitik analogy cannot be ignored, I propose that the tension between inculturation and sinicization better defines the relationship. In this view, the dispute is not primarily political (as Ostpolitik would suggest) but pre-political, centered on the theological-cultural terms of inculturation and sinicization – terms which are then overlaid, and partly obscured, by political concerns.⁷

This would suggest that the relationship involves an atypical interreligious dialogue, with Catholicism being a traditional religion and the Chinese state representing, in theory, a secular religion.

IV. The Tension Between Relativized Concepts

Given the centrality of inculturation and sinicization, both deserve brief explanation.

Inculturation means that the Christian mission speaks to all cultures—not to impose uniformity but to preserve and foster elements of each culture that do not contradict Christ’s teachings, within the framework of the Gospel and unity with the universal Church. This is a slow, bottom-up, organic process that ties together human nature, culture, and grace. While present since the early Church and deeply rooted in Chinese Church-history as well (notably through Jesuit Matteo Ricci), the term was only clearly formulated in 1962 by Jesuit theologian Joseph Masson and later officially used by Pope John Paul II in his 1979 apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*.

Sinicization⁸, literally “to make Chinese,” has several meanings depending on context.⁹ Historically, it referred to the cultural dominance of the Han ethnicity or the assimilation of foreign dynasties like the Mongol Yuan or Manchu Qing. In modern usage, especially in Chinese

government policy, it refers to the systematic alignment of foreign cultural and religious groups with the state's political objectives.¹⁰ President Xi Jinping explicitly discussed religious sinicization in a 2016 speech, stressing the leadership of the Communist Party and the importance of religions contributing to Chinese society—within the bounds of the official atheist ideology. (China officially recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism).

Though similar in form, the two concepts are fundamentally different. Inculturation is a grassroots, tolerant, inclusive process; sinicization is top-down and politically mandated, often creating tensions.

Nevertheless, for the sake of dialogue, both concepts are being relativized. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Holy See's Secretary of State, remarked in an interview under Pope Francis:

"These two concepts, 'inculturation' and 'sinicization,' refer to each other without being confused and without opposing one another: in some ways, they can complement each other and open the way to dialogue on religious and cultural levels."¹¹

This supports the aforementioned pre-political approach, treating these concepts as elements of a dialogue between a traditional religion and a secular religion.¹²

V. Constraints and Opportunities

While both John Paul II and Benedict XVI prioritized the issue of Chinese Catholicism, formal progress came only under Pope Francis. The 2018 Provisional Agreement signed in Beijing is hard to assess, as its text remains secret due to diplomatic discretion.

Still, official press releases confirm its existence and two-year term. Notably, the Holy See's statement is much longer than China's, suggesting greater significance for the Vatican. The titles also differ: the Holy See speaks of an agreement "regarding the appointment of bishops"¹³, while China calls it an agreement "on relevant issues," a vaguer formulation.¹⁴

The agreement has been renewed three times—most recently in 2024 for four years—indicating both ongoing constraints and mutual interest.

Reportedly, both sides consult on episcopal appointments, aiming for mutual-

ly acceptable candidates. However, bishops have been ordained without papal mandate even after the agreement, and some diocesan leadership changes have raised contradictions.

Thus, interpretations of the agreement vary. From the Holy See's perspective, China has violated it repeatedly; from China's view, it is merely exercising sovereignty. Nevertheless, the Holy See continues to relativize sinicization in hopes of maintaining dialogue and unity.

The official Chinese ideology, based in syncretic but now dogmatized Confucianism, permits inculturation only if sinicization is relativized—something the Holy See does to preserve Church unity, despite criticism from figures like former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo¹⁵ and Cardinal Joseph Zen¹⁶ of Hong Kong.

Paradoxically, the very constraint that limits relations may also be what allows for cautious cooperation. Still, it's uncertain how this policy will affect Chinese Catholicism in the long run. Underground believers often feel alienated. In this sense, the Ostpolitik analogy may offer useful historical insight.

Another major constraint is China's dominant position. Its classical view of the state conflicts with the Holy See's "foreign" sovereignty, which it seeks to minimize—even demanding that the Vatican sever ties with Taiwan, unlike with the U.S. in the 1970s.¹⁷ While China does not question the papacy's sovereignty, it wishes to limit its influence as much as possible.

Looking ahead, the most likely scenario is that the current provisional agreement becomes permanent, though it remains uncertain whether open conflict can be avoided – especially given the Church's limited and distinct diplomatic tools in the region.

Answering the paraphrased question of the Pharisees, posed in the essay title is therefore difficult: for China, the separation of religion and politics – of Church and state – remains uninterpretable in the Western sense. Ultimately, this explains the practical disputes over bishop appointments and the provisional agreement. Finally, it is important to mention, that my research was mainly a theoretical investigation of the topic, therefore it may be still be relevant under the new pope, Leo XIV, although it is too early to evaluate how he may address the question.

NOTES

1. See Mt 22,15-22 and Mk 12,13-17
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As part of my doctoral research, I focus on the problem of excessive short-term orientation in the implementation of public policies. In the context of this growing problem, exacerbated, among other things, by changes in the dynamics of public debate (such as the influence of social media), we are witnessing a paradox of contemporary politics. Despite greater awareness of long-term challenges, such as climate change and the development of new technologies, it remains extremely difficult for decision-makers to implement a long-term agenda effectively. This is determined by many objective factors, such as cognitive uncertainty about the future, the ethical dimensions of prioritising and redistributing limited resources, and term limits.

These observations prompted me to examine more closely the institutional mechanisms that could support long-term thinking in politics. I am preparing a doctoral thesis examining the time orientation in the decision-making pro-

cesses of the legislative branch in Poland against the background of institutional solutions in other countries, such as Finland. The main research thesis points to the lack of coherent institutional instruments supporting a long-term orientation in the Polish legislature. The study combines theoretical and empirical analyses, using a literature review and case studies, focusing on identifying the institutional, procedural and political conditions that influence the time orientation of decision-makers. The findings of the study will potentially allow for the development of a set of recommendations for institutional changes and opportunities to use digital technologies to support a long-term orientation in public policy-making.

However, the problem of short-termism in politics is not a new phenomenon

– similar challenges have arisen in the past, albeit in different historical contexts. The story of Hugues-Félicité Robert de Lamennais illustrates a universal problem faced by all those who try to think long-term in uncertain times. The Overton window describes the range of ideas that are socially acceptable at a given moment, where what was once ‘unthinkable’ can gradually become “popular” and ‘politically possible’ (Overton, 1990). At the beginning of the 19th century, ideas such as freedom of the press and the separation of church and state were radical and unacceptable to the Church, falling outside the Overton window. Influenced by events in Belgium and France and observing the growing importance of liberalism, Lamennais began to shift the Overton window, trying to make liberal Catholicism acceptable.

Reflecting on the Long Term in Political Processes

Sebastian Wijas



Through books and newspapers, especially *L'Avenir*, he laid the foundations for what had been 'unimaginable' just a moment before. However, the Vatican decided that he had moved the window too far and too fast. Pope Gregory XVI's 1832 encyclical 'Mirari vos' did not deny that the world was changing, but proclaimed that the Church should follow its own path, not succumbing to trends, but noticing certain signs of the times. For Lamennais, and for society as a whole, the future was like a great fog, difficult to predict clearly, covering many possible scenarios. We live in similar conditions today, where the socio-political order is being rethought and we are unsure of what lies ahead. This illustration helped me to better understand the complexity of the topic of long-termism and the cognitive difficulty of identifying the signs of the times today.

In response to these challenges of uncertainty about the future, contemporary schools of thought have developed that attempt to find a systematic approach to thinking about long-term challenges. Contemporary discourse on long-term management is being developed by, among others, longtermism, which has an intellectual influence on the Silicon Valley environment (Strachan, 2024). This school of thought, although very heterogeneous, represented by thinkers such as Nick Bostrom and William MacAskill, focuses on maximising the well-being of future generations through utilitarian calculations. This new powerful trend raises many doubts regarding their anthropological approach. However, Oxford University researchers associated with longtermism, Tyler John and William MacAskill, propose specific institutional solutions to reduce the short-term perspective of state management, making a valuable contribution to thinking about a new perspective on the future of the political order. They point to well-designed research institutions dealing with the future, citizens' assemblies on long-term challenges, and statements on the impact on posterity as part of legislative impact assessments (Tyler, MacAskill, 2021). These are currently hypothetical, but there are many mechanisms in contemporary political systems that support a long-term perspective in public policy. An example is Finland, where there is a legal obligation for the government to periodically produce a special report

on the country's current challenges related to future trends, which is presented to parliament. The Finnish parliament's Committee for the Future has a special mandate to review this report and verify the government's long-term actions.

All these solutions, although promising, carry the risk of transforming democratic governance into a technocratic management system. Digital technologies are an apt and complex example. In his essay on technology, Martin Heidegger warned that the greatest threat is not technology itself, but the fact that we do not notice how it influences our thinking. Technology shows us the world in a utilitarian way, as a set of resources to be exploited. When this way of looking at things becomes dominant, other approaches – artistic or philosophical – disappear, and people begin to be treated as part of this resource, losing their independence and agency (Heidegger, 1977). This perspective has many implications for the future of our society. However, it cannot be denied that technological development also offers significant opportunities to support decision-making processes. However, as Gorwa, Binns and Katzenbach (2020) point out, knowledge alone is not enough to create policy. They point to the serious risk of depoliticisation, i.e. the removal of disputes over values, interests or different visions of the common good from public debate. As decisions are increasingly made on the basis of algorithmic recommendations, the burden shifts from political debate itself to its complete absence.

In the face of these techno-utilitarian threats, it becomes particularly important to seek alternative concepts of development that do not reduce human beings to functions or resources. Particularly inspiring in the context of seeking an alternative to the long-termism popular in Silicon Valley is the integral approach to development represented by Father Louis-Joseph Lebreton (1947). As he himself wrote: "The common good is therefore above all the common good of persons who transcend the created common good. The spiritual common good is closely linked to the temporal common good, which it conditions and ensures. The entire temporal common good is permeated with spirituality, truth, loyalty, sacrifice, courage and honour; if these intellectual and moral virtues weaken among the elites and the nation, it collapses."

The contrast between an integral and a reductionist approach to human beings becomes particularly evident when we analyse contemporary long-term governance practices, which often focus on individual aspects of human existence. There is a need to find solutions that take into account the human being as a whole, with their material, cultural, ethical and spiritual reality, especially in the creation of public policies oriented towards the long term, rather than quick results, which are often exclusively material. For human beings are not merely material beings, but complex creatures requiring an integral approach that respects all dimensions of their existence. Only such an approach can constitute a real alternative to techno-utilitarian visions of the future and ensure authentic development oriented towards the common good and human dignity.

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SPAZIO APERTO
OPEN SPACE

Communitas is an annual, bilingual, inter-faculty conference that brings together experts from the various disciplines of the Pontifical University of St Thomas (Angelicum) to present, discuss and explore a current topic of great importance. In previous years, the topics addressed have included: 'Preaching and the Arts'; 'Biblical Law and Natural Law'; 'Are "just wars" possible?'; 'The Common Good or the Throw-Away Society?'; "What is a University?".

Communitas 2025, which took place on May 7 2025, addressed the relation between AI and the common good. We can understand the common good in at least two different ways. In a classic Christian, and Thomistic, approach, human beings have a nature and are naturally social; their good, or fulfilment, is achieved by realising the potentiality of that nature, which depends on, and contributes to, the fulfilment of the community, that is, to our common good. If we have this kind of idea of the common good, we are going to develop a different kind of AI from the form we would develop if we have the current mainstream idea of the common good. According to the current mainstream, the common good is no more than a means to allowing each one of us, as individuals, to achieve our own, individually-defined goals. AI developed within this idea of the common good may well be dangerous to us; indeed, our current discussions about it focus on regulation, that is, on limiting its negative effects.

The conference programme and other details can be found at: <https://angelicum.it/event/communitas-ai-and-the-common-good/>.

The main papers of *Communitas 2025* will be published in number 1, of the journal *Angelicum*, coming out in 2025. In this issue of OIKONOMIA, we present other interesting material from the conference, as follows:

1. The "concept paper" of the conference which was produced a year before the conference took place and shared with all the speakers, respondents, student panellists and break-out group leaders, so that they were all working within a shared conceptual framework.

Communitas 2025: Artificial Intelligence and the Common Good

Helen Alford



2. Two papers that either emerged from (Persico, Baggot and Di Pietro) or guided (Wijas) the work of the break-out groups. These interactive groups were organised around 4 topics, allowing students and other conference participants to take an active role in discussing the topic or, in one case, taking part in a live experiment.
3. A short response (Januard) to the paper given by Prof Alejo Sison in the conference. Prof Sison is one of the leading thinkers applying

the idea of the common good to business structures and practices.

4. Three short papers by students who took part in the student panel, bringing their insights into the main conference debate.

Contributors

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A good place to start in addressing the question of AI and the common good is with the question:

What is AI for? Why are we developing AI and what should it do?

In order to approach this question properly, we need to be clear about the common good. In what does the “good” consist, and how is it “common”? In the classical metaphysics of Aristotle, taken up by St Thomas, the good is what fulfils the nature of a being. Human beings are not like animals, driven by instinct alone, so this fulfilment of our good involves the exercise of our reason and will, making free choices. We can also identify basic elements of this good, since human beings have a spiritual, psycho-physical nature that they share, even if these elements will be expressed concretely in very different ways in the specific circumstances of life of different people. The common good, then, is the shared goal of the human community, fulfilling the life of that community in a way that is analogous to the fulfilment of each one of us in our good.

Modern societies, on the other hand, taking their lead from modern philosophy, have largely abandoned the idea of a human nature that helps guide us in understanding what is good for us. They favour a kind of untrammelled freedom of will; each one of us can decide what we deem to be good for us. This means that the goals of a good human life can only really be decided on the level of each individual, and this then empties the idea of the common good of most of its meaning. When politicians today talk about the common good, they are usually referring to a procedural or instrumental idea: the common good for them consists in all the systems (rule of law, infrastructure, government policy, an economy that produces results that can be distributed, and so on) that allow each one of us to achieve our individually-defined goals. It goes without saying that this modern philosophical mindset has been a formative influence on the development of technology since the industrial revolution. It is also, therefore, a formative influence on the development of AI.

Can we identify the goal of AI accor-

ding to the modern mindset? If our goal in modernity is to exercise free will with as few limitations as possible, then we might say that the modern goal of AI is to free us from ‘the burden of having to think’. AI could thus become a part of what, from a Thomistic point of view, we could call an illusory, procedural common good, providing another tool or system that we can use, but this time achieving AI-defined goals that are only seemingly ours. Furthermore, research on the implications of AI for human flourishing suggests that, in its current form, it will create a number of other key problems for human development, not least in education and the world of work. This is why much of the current discussions

about AI focus on regulating it, with the idea of preventing it from damaging human wellbeing.

If we are to confront the challenges of AI in relation to the common good, its richer, Thomistic version gives us more resources for doing so. Indeed, this is so more generally, for the social and systemic problems we face today cannot be faced properly using the individualistic thinking of the modern mindset. We now know, for instance, that economic and political systems have to take into account the nature of the environment around them. Resolving such a problem requires us to find a way to harmonise the use of our freedom within the framework provided by the living world around us. In

Artificial Intelligence and the Common Good: Concept Paper for Communitas 2025

Gabor Ambrus and Helen Alford



order to do this, the older, Thomistic idea of the common good, with its strong position on the unity of human beings, with each other and the natural world around them, through our nature and, therefore, through the chance of achieving a shared goal without sacrificing genuine human freedom, provides us with a much stronger starting point.

Can we identify the goal of AI according to this richer view of the common good? Here we might adopt the fortunate metaphor devised by Steve Jobs to describe the goal of the products he was developing at Apple, and see AI as a 'bicycle of the mind'. In this view, AI would not think for human beings, but would rather create more favourable conditions for human beings to think. It would, thereby, support human beings in their efforts to achieve their good and fulfil their nature, both personally and communally. In the conference, we plan to have some AI developers who are working on forms of AI of this kind.

At the moment, as we know, mainstream AI is developing according to the modern mindset. Although we can hope that a form of AI could emerge that is more in line with the Thomistic idea of the common good, at the moment, this is not a realistic scenario. In the meantime, therefore, it is also useful to examine how the richer idea of the common good could help us "resist" the damaging effects of AI and support what it can do for us. Since the human being has (i) material-physical, including social and reproductive, needs; (ii) the need for knowledge, which we might call a philosophical or cultural need, and, (iii) the need to relate to God, which we might call a theological or spiritual need, we could do worse than look at AI and the common good on these three levels.

It is clear that AI is having, and will continue to have, significant impact on the material or economic level of the common good. At this level, the potential harm to social justice and democratic equality that AI could cause may turn out to be more significant than any of AI's potential benefits.

When it comes to the effect of AI on the common good at the philosophical/cultural and spiritual levels, its pros and cons are somewhat less clearcut. It is a general and underlying truth in a world increasingly defined by what may be called a 'statistical AI' that this world will be seen ever more widely 'from the perspective



of data and probability' (sub specie datorum probabilitalisque) – a perspective which must have a detrimental effect on the cultural and spiritual spheres of the common good if combined, more often than not, with an almost insatiable drive to perform. AI, data, and the striving for performance prompted by them, are invading the 'mental world' of cultural, intellectual, artistic, scientific and religious pursuits. As a consequence of this invasion, we can hardly resist churning out 'products' linked to our own 'brands'. There is an obvious potential, and actual, harm caused by AI at the cultural and spiritual level of the common good.

Can this current version of AI possibly bring benefits at the same time?

What might qualify as an antidote to 'the climate of performance' within the cultural and spiritual spheres of the com-

mon good? How can the richer idea of the common good we have discussed, already present in the community by virtue of shared tradition, a shared past and shared ways of understanding, help us resist this damage? In the conference, we will explore this question. Here we mention communal feasts and celebrations – either local, or national, or religious. In an 'AI society' where a great deal of performance previously carried out by human beings would be performed instead by technology, human beings could be given greater space for celebration.

What would be required for them to seek to sustain and enrich 'communal-political', and religious, festivities instead of withdrawing into their 'private worlds'?

Abstract

The paper investigates AI systems' potential as an ethical agent by systematically testing models on prosocial behaviors such as fairness and altruism. Building on recent advances in AI ethics and machine morality, we will assess large language models through controlled experiments. These tests incorporate experimental games inspired by behavioral economics and a focus on the perception of fairness and justice. The project adopted standardized evaluation metrics to quantify ethical reasoning and benchmark AI results with experimental human behaviors. Future scalability will explore integrating AI into governance and advisory roles, ensuring robust ethical safeguards.

Key words: AI Ethics, Ethical Agency, Prosocial Behavior, Value Alignment, Behavioral Economics, Ethical Decision-Making, Governance and AI.

Introduction

This paper explores the viability of developing artificial intelligence (AI) systems capable of ethical agency. As AI systems increasingly influence social and economic decision-making, the question of their ethical capacities becomes critical. The study is the result of a dedicated session of the conference *Communitas 2025*, hosted by the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome. The session investigated whether AI systems can function as ethical agents, entities capable of making decisions that reflect moral principles and support social good. By focusing on prosocial behaviors such as fairness, cooperation, and altruism, we seek to understand the potential for AI to act not only safely but also ethically. Drawing on foundational work in machine ethics, behavioral economics, and value alignment, we design and implement a series of controlled experiments to evaluate ethical reasoning in different widely adopted large language models.

We propose a set of standardized metrics to quantify ethical preferences and alignment with human behaviors. The findings contribute to the ethics-in-AI di-

AI and Ethical Decisions: Measuring Tendencies for Prosocial Behavior in Large Language Models

Tony Persico, Michael Baggot, Silvia Di Piero



scourse and offer practical tools for embedding ethical behavior in AI systems deployed in public and policy contexts. Thus, our research aligns with the "ethics in AI" branch of AI ethics, which emphasizes the integration of ethical principles directly into AI design and behavior (Ratti, 2025). This approach is distinct from ethics of AI (focusing on external consequences) and ethics and AI (exploring philosophical implications). Nonetheless, our work also touches on ethics and AI through its engagement with questions about AI moral agency.

We tested large language models (e.g., GPT-style models) using behavioral experiments adapted from economics: the Ultimatum Game and Dictator Game to reflect common pro-social decision making. We evaluate outcomes using a set of proposed ethical alignment metrics

and then benchmark AI and human-based results. Preliminary findings suggest that large language models exhibit basic ethical heuristics when prompted appropriately, especially regarding fairness and cooperation. However, performance varies based on context framing, with a consistent bias toward self-interest and efficiency. These findings support the feasibility of operationalizing ethical behavior in AI systems, provided that a proper control system is in place. We discuss implications for deploying ethically competent AI in governance, public policy, and social services, emphasizing the need for transparent benchmarks and continuous oversight. Moreover, the findings highlight the valuable contributions of the participants to the conference *Communitas 2025*, where the experimental tests were conducted.

Literature review

Our research contributes to the growing body of work in the field of AI ethics, with a particular focus on the operationalization and assessment of AI systems as ethical agents. Situated primarily within the “ethics in AI” branch of contemporary AI ethics (Ratti, 2025), our project seeks to investigate the extent to which AI models—particularly large language models and reinforcement learning agents—can encourage prosocial behaviors such as fairness, cooperation, and altruism. These behaviors are essential to fostering trust and acceptance of AI systems in socially significant domains like governance, healthcare, and public policy.

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has become the focus of an increasingly complex ethical debate at the intersection of philosophy, technology, politics, and social justice. The growing autonomy of intelligent systems demands a thorough reflection on the ethical nature of their actions and decisions, raising questions about how to design morally trustworthy artificial agents. In this context, recent literature has developed a range of diverse approaches, span-

ning from the engineering of moral behaviors (Anderson, 2011) to the definition of normative and institutional frameworks (European Commission, 2019), including the empirical collection of ethical intuitions (Awad et al, 2018) and the critical analysis of systemic biases (Bender et al., 2021).

One of the most profound questions in AI ethics concerns how moral behavior can be implemented in machines: should it be programmed based on pre-defined rules, or can it emerge through learning and adaptation? Wallach and Allen (2008) address this dilemma by distinguishing between ethical agents—systems that follow pre-established ethical norms—and autonomous moral agents, capable of independently making moral judgments. According to them, the transition from mere rule-followers to morally sensitive entities represents a crucial turning point for developing reliable AI capable of operating in complex and unpredictable contexts.

In line with this distinction, Anderson and Anderson (2007) propose an approach based on ethical learning from concrete cases, using inductive methods to derive generalizable moral principles

from the analysis of specific scenarios. The goal is to build artificial agents capable of adapting their behavior to complex ethical contexts, overcoming the rigidity of abstract moral codes through greater flexibility and contextualization. This approach was further developed by Gabriel (2020), who expands the theoretical framework by introducing the concept of ethical alignment, i.e., the coherence between an AI system’s behavior and what a human community considers morally right. Gabriel emphasizes that ethical alignment is not only a technical issue but also a normative and political challenge. Defining the values to be implemented in AI systems involves important moral choices and requires legitimacy in ethically pluralistic contexts.

This challenge has been addressed through approaches that reject the idea of absolute moral truth, instead aiming for just and shared ethical principles compatible with the pluralism of contemporary societies. The need to design intelligent systems oriented toward human well-being and justice is also central to major current regulatory frameworks: both Floridi et al. (2022) and European Commission (2019) propose guidelines to integrate human values into AI design and governance. Floridi





et al. propose a normative framework consisting of five fundamental principles for ethical AI: beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, and explicability (Floridi, 2019). This framework aims to embed fundamental human values into machine decision-making processes, promoting a responsible and transparent vision of technological development. These principles also underpin the European Commission's Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI, which emphasize requirements such as transparency, human oversight, and technical robustness.

While providing an important theoretical foundation for soft AI governance, Floridi et al.'s framework risks remaining confined to abstract normativity, without addressing the structural dynamics that influence the real-world impact of intelligent technologies. In this regard, Ratti's contribution (2025) marks an evolution: starting from a critique of the dichotomy between soft and hard governance, Ratti proposes a reconceptualization of AI ethics based on the capability approach developed by Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (12) to assess social justice. The central idea is that AI should not only comply with formal ethical principles but also be designed to concretely expand real freedoms and opportunities, especially for

the most vulnerable individuals. This approach shifts the focus from abstract criteria to substantive justice, encompassing social inequalities, material conditions, and systemic constraints.

Concurrently, another research strand investigates how humans make moral decisions to computationally model these processes. Behavioral economics, cognitive psychology, and experimental methods provide useful tools to analyze biases, distributive preferences, and concepts of justice, offering empirical foundations for ethically sensitive systems. One of the most influential approaches to studying moral judgment is based on the empirical analysis of the cognitive mechanisms underlying decision-making. In this context, the pioneering work of Tversky and Kahneman (1974) demonstrated how people rely on mental shortcuts to evaluate complex situations, often deviating from rational standards. This paradigm has influenced the analysis of moral choices by revealing the role of cognitive biases in ethical judgments.

Building on these insights, behavioral economics has developed models to describe actual social preferences, such as those proposed by Fehr and Schmidt (1999) and Charness and Rabin (2002), which intro-

duce explicit parameters for aversion to inequity, reciprocity, and conditional altruism. These models suggest that outcome evaluation is based not solely on efficiency but also on perceived justice and equitable distribution of benefits. In line with this view, Klasen (2013) demonstrates that efficiency and equity should not be treated as opposing goals but rather as complementary elements in the assessment of public policies and decision-making systems. His approach integrates objective indicators with subjective metrics of well-being and access to opportunities, contributing to a normative framework where equity is not only morally desirable but also functional to greater social efficiency.

Along these lines, the contribution of Bucciarelli et al. (2016) proposes an experimental model to analyze the role of fairness in economic choices. Drawing on the concept of meta-ranking inspired by Sen, the authors show how moral judgments are based on preference structures that incorporate shared social values, highlighting the prosocial dimension of decisions even without direct incentives. This perspective opens the way to a broader reflection on the possibility of integrating moral structures into intelligent systems. It is within this context that the debate on moral machines

arises, where the goal is not only to replicate correct decisions but also to understand and model moral sensitivity in computational environments.

The Moral Machine project by Awad et al. (2018) fits within this line of research, collecting over 40 million moral judgments from users worldwide. The results highlight profound cultural differences in ethical decisions, raising crucial questions about the normative criteria that should guide the design of autonomous systems. Empirical data suggest that any attempt to computationally formalize ethics risks being culturally situated and, therefore, not universally applicable. On this point, Vallor (2024) emphasizes how generative models can be seen as “cultural mirrors”: tools capable of reflecting but also crystallizing the social norms embedded in their training data. Far from being neutral, these systems act as vectors of moral meanings, often unintentionally designed.

This foregrounds one of the central issues in AI ethics: the management of biases. In the essay “On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots,” Bender et al. (2021) denounce the risks associated with large-scale language models trained on massive online corpora, often lacking adequate critical selection. These systems can reproduce and amplify racial, gender, and cultural stereotypes, conveying hegemonic worldviews that are potentially harmful to marginalized communities. In response to these challenges, Hendrycks et al. (2004) developed a benchmark inspired by Haidt’s moral foundations (20). Their work introduces metrics to evaluate AI systems’ ability to distinguish socially acceptable from problematic behaviors. This line of research highlights the importance of integrating normative approaches with empirical analyses, focusing both on the ethical principles implemented and on the concrete effects of automated decisions.

Metodology

To investigate the ethical capacities of AI systems, we adopt experimental tools grounded in behavioral and experimental economics. We employ two canonical games widely used to elicit and measure prosocial preferences: the Dictator Game and the Ultimatum Game. The Dictator Game involves two players: a proposer (the “dictator”) and a recipient. The proposer unilaterally decides how to split a fixed sum of resources between himself or herself and the recipient. The recipient plays a passive role and must accept the

allocation. The extent to which proposers give away resources despite having no strategic incentive to do so is commonly interpreted as a measure of altruism or fairness (Forsythe et al., 1994; Engel, 2011).

The Ultimatum Game introduces a simple strategic interaction. One player proposes a division of a resource, and the other player can either accept or reject it. If the proposal is rejected, both players receive nothing. Rejection of low but nonzero offers, often observed in human experiments, is interpreted as evidence of inequality aversion or a preference for fairness over efficiency (Güth et al., 1982; Fehr & Schmidt, 1999). Our experimental setup adapts these two games for interaction with large language models (LLMs), carefully controlling for framing effects and contextual cues (Persico, Di Piero, 2025). By systematically varying the distributional choices and recording the AI systems’ responses, we assess whether the agents exhibit consi-

$$(1) \quad U_i = w_s \cdot s_i + w_a \cdot \sum_{j \neq i} s_j + w_w \cdot \sum_j s_j + w_{ineq} \cdot \left[-\alpha \cdot \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{j \neq i} \max(s_j - s_i, 0) - \beta \cdot \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{j \neq i} \max(s_i - s_j, 0) \right]$$

istent patterns aligned with human-like prosocial preferences.

To quantify these preferences in AI behavior, we adapt the parametric approach developed by Bucciarelli and Persico (2016, 2017). We adopted a multi stage method: (i) we create a composite utility function with weights for key pro-social preferences, (ii) we introduce a single parameter that regulates each weight on a scale from low to high altruistic preferen-

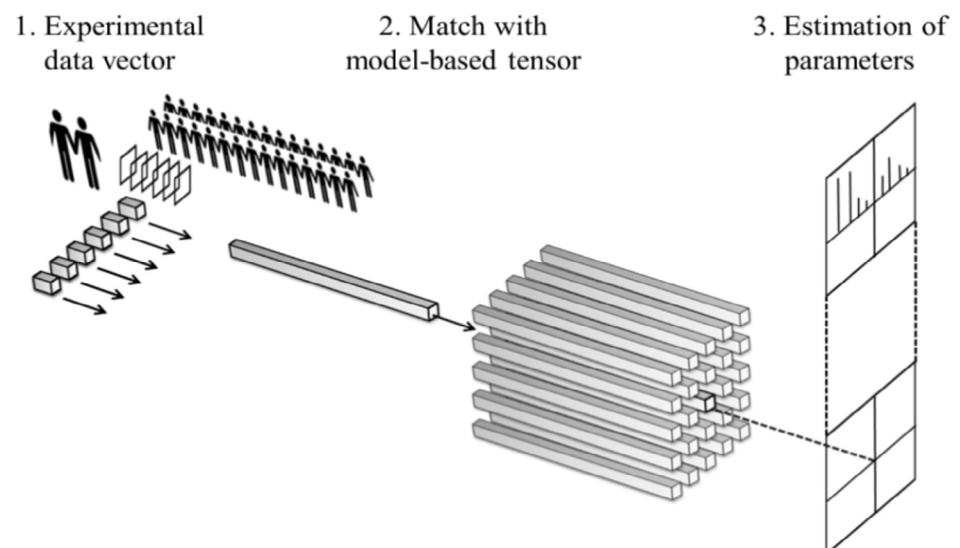
ces, (iii) we run the tests with AI models and we use a scoring function to assess the best parameter estimate for their results, (iv) we conduct and score the same test in a human experimental setting, and (v) we benchmark AI and human results.

The first step consists of modeling prosocial behavior using a single utility function, integrating self-regarding and other-regarding concerns into a single-parameter model. Specifically, our analysis seeks evidence of four types of prosocial preferences, widely studied in behavioral economics: (i) Egoistic preference, where decisions maximize the agents own payoff, regardless of outcomes for others; (ii) Inequality aversion, where agents avoid distributions that generate significant disparities (Fehr & Schmidt, 1999; Bolton & Ockenfels, 2000); (iii) Social welfare preferences, where agents aim to maximize the total utility or benefit across all participants (Charness & Rabin, 2002); (iv) Altruistic preference (Andreoni, James 1990),

where agents willingly sacrifice part of their own payoff to benefit others. The utility function derived from the existing literature is reported below, where s_i , s_j are the respective payoffs of the first and other subjects participating in the game, whereas w_s , w_a , w_w , w_{ineq} , are the different weights assigned to each preference (summing to 1).

At this point, we rank the four utility elements above from most egoistic to

Figure 1. Scheme of the tensor-based estimation of parameters.



Source: Bucciarelli et al., 2016.

most altruistic: self-interest, social welfare, inequality aversion, and altruism. Each instance of the function is weighted in a progressive scheme where weights are allocated according to a Gaussian transition function of the parameter p . This function provides a set of smoothed and discretized utility weights that can capture a mixture of the four preferences above. It does so by computing sequential weights centered at four fixed points along the unit interval, each corresponding to one of the four preferences. This approach allows for a parsimonious yet flexible representation of heterogeneous preference types, enabling smooth transitions between behavioral profiles.

We prepared a series of tests asking AI models to undertake dictator and ultimatum games alike. The structure of the payoffs is composed of four couples of payoffs labeled from A to D. The structure of the tests was designed to test for all four different preferences, aiming to maximize the differences in potential answers to derive the highest possible degree of information (see Figure 1). The tests were provided as a single instruction to avoid memory effects and asking for a single line of the resulting answer (e.g. ABCABC). The experiment was repeated twice to check for consistency. Based on the resulting answers, we assessed the respective preferences structure.

At this point, we used a scoring function highlighting which value of the parameter p better fit the AI responses. The simplicity and flexibility of the single-parameter model make it especially suitable for testing a range of AI platforms. First, we created a matrix compiled with all the expected answers according to different mixtures of prosocial behaviors as determined by the parameter p . Second, we scored AI vectors of answers against the matrix, recording which value of p justifies the highest number of answers. The result is considered valid only if at least 2/3 of the answers are matched.

To understand which parameter values best explain the observed choice patterns, we estimate the distribution of matching values of p using kernel density estimation (KDE). Rather than relying solely on discrete match counts or point estimates, KDE provides a smooth approximation of the empirical distribution of p values that yield correct predictions across decision tasks. This approach allows us to capture not only the most likely values

of p , but also the shape and spread of the inferred distribution—highlighting, for instance, whether behavior is tightly concentrated around a specific preference profile or reflects ambiguity across multiple competing explanations. By applying KDE to multiple agents or models and visualizing the results as overlapping ridgeline plots, we gain intuitive and comparative insights into how different decision processes align with varying assumptions about social or fairness-related preferences. Please note that here we are using a single modeling parameter; however, the approach could be extended to more than one parameter, obtaining a tensor structure as in Bucciarelli and Persico (2016, 2017) (see Figure 1).

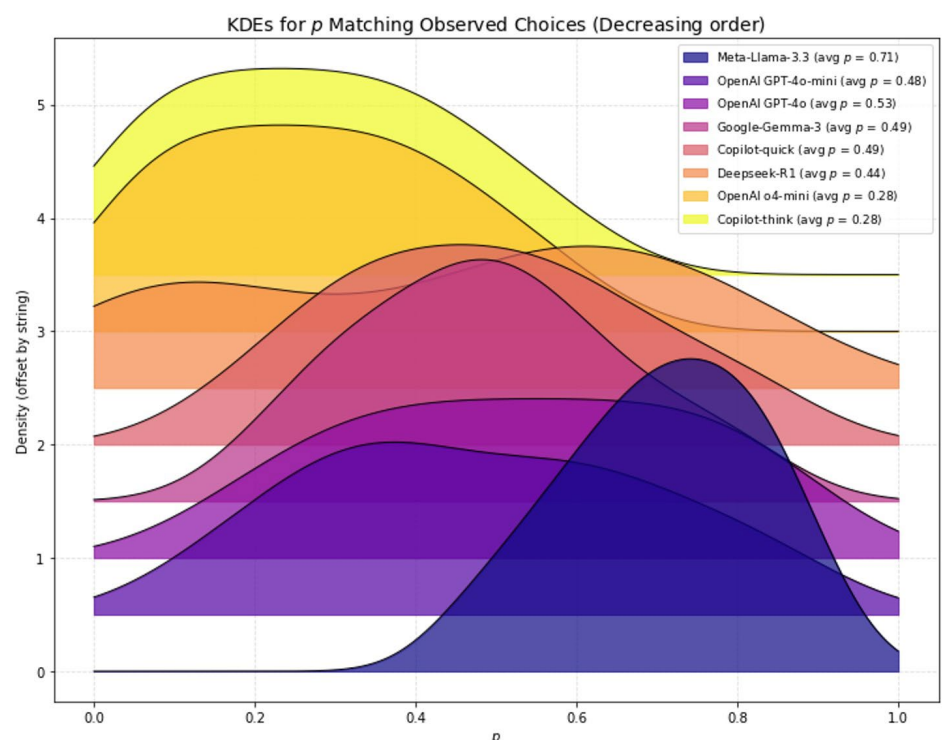
Finally, we ran a classroom experiment using the same tests with a group of human test-takers composed of the participants of a dedicated session of the conference *Communitas* in Rome. Test takers were presented with the test ahead of any discussion of AI results and any discussion about the underlining preferences structures in the existing literature. Test-takers were provided with the same instructions used in the AI prompts and were requested to write their answers in the same vector format (e.g., AAABBB) on a sheet provided by the author. In this way, we were able to collect a reliable human-based benchmark.

Results

We utilized the Hugging Face platform to evaluate and benchmark eight different AI models based on their answers to tests, i.e., the answer vector outputs (as described above). The models tested included Meta-Llama-3.3, OpenAI GPT-4o-mini, OpenAI GPT-4o, Google Gemma-3, Copilot-quick, Deepseek-R1, OpenAI o4-mini, and Copilot:think. Among these, Meta-Llama-3.3 and OpenAI GPT-4o stand out as the most capable reasoning models, both demonstrating strong performance on chain-of-thought prompts, multi-turn dialogue, and structured logic tasks, making them the top candidates for advanced reasoning use cases.

Using Hugging Face, we submitted a consistent set of prompts across all models to ensure comparability in performance. Each model's responses were parsed to extract a matching score or probability for the parameter p . These were subsequently visualized using kernel density estimation (KDE) plots to capture the distribution of values across models, with each color-coded curve corresponding to a different model. This approach allowed us to quantify and compare parameter estimations but also visualize the modality of each model's output distribution, providing a nuanced picture of relative model behavior under uniform testing conditions.

Figure 2. Kernel Distribution of the estimated parameter p for AI models.



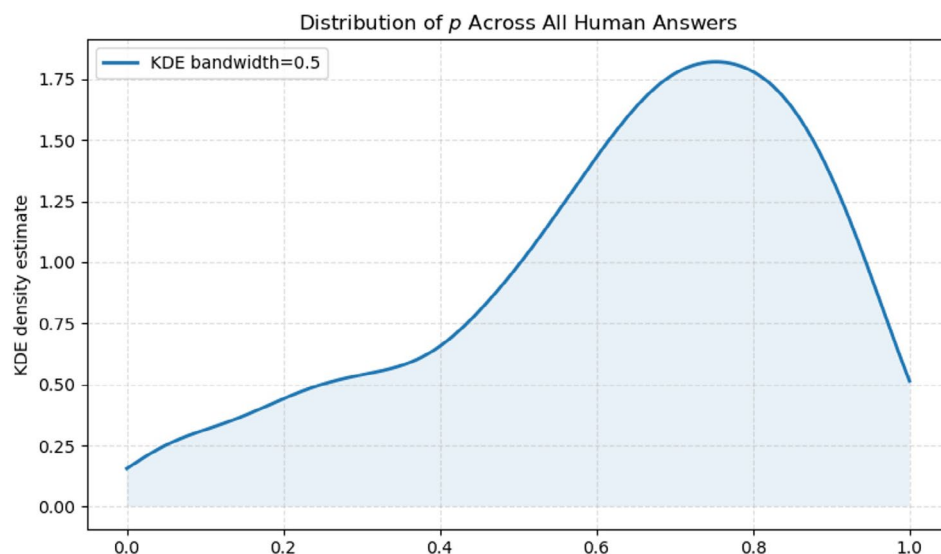
Source: Authors' elaboration

Based on the methodology described above, we illustrated the estimated fit of the prosocial parameter p for the eight leading AI models using a kernel density “joy” plot reported in Figure 2. Each curve represents the distributional fit of the behavioral parameter p , which regulates the balance between egoistic and altruistic preferences according to our unified utility model. The peak of each curve indicates the best-fitting value of p , i.e., the behavioral type most consistent with that model’s responses. Higher values of p reflect stronger alignment with altruistic or fairness-based preferences, while lower values indicate more self-regarding behavior.

Among the models, Meta-Llama-3.3 exhibits the highest peak at $p=0.71$, suggesting a pronounced tendency toward prosocial behavior, particularly inequality aversion and even altruism. This aligns with its advanced reasoning capabilities and alignment training, making it the most consistent with human-like ethical preferences in our experimental setting. OpenAI GPT-4o and GPT-4o-mini, peaking at $p=0.53$ and $p=0.48$ respectively, display moderate social welfare and fairness-oriented behavior, with GPT-4o slightly more consistent in aligning with fairness and prosocial concerns. Models like Google Gemma-3, Copilot-quick, and Deepseek-R1 show central values clustered around $p=0.44$ to $p=0.49$, indicating mixed motivations: somewhat attentive to equity and welfare but lacking consistency at the altruistic end. In contrast, OpenAI o4-mini and Copilot:think exhibit best-fit values at $p=0.28$, suggesting behaviors dominated by self-interest, with limited capacity to simulate other-regarding preferences.

Moreover, the analysis of AI model responses reveals notable differences in sensitivity to contextual variations. Meta and Google AI models demonstrate higher kurtosis and lower variance, indicating that their outputs are more concentrated and less influenced by changes in context. This suggests a greater consistency and robustness in their behavior across varying scenarios. In contrast, OpenAI GPT and DeepSeek models exhibit higher variance and somewhat bimodal distributions, reflecting increased responsiveness to contextual factors and the presence of distinct response patterns. Such variability implies that these models are more susceptible to environmental shifts, resulting in less stable and

Figure 3. Kernel Distribution of the estimated parameter p for Human Test-takers.



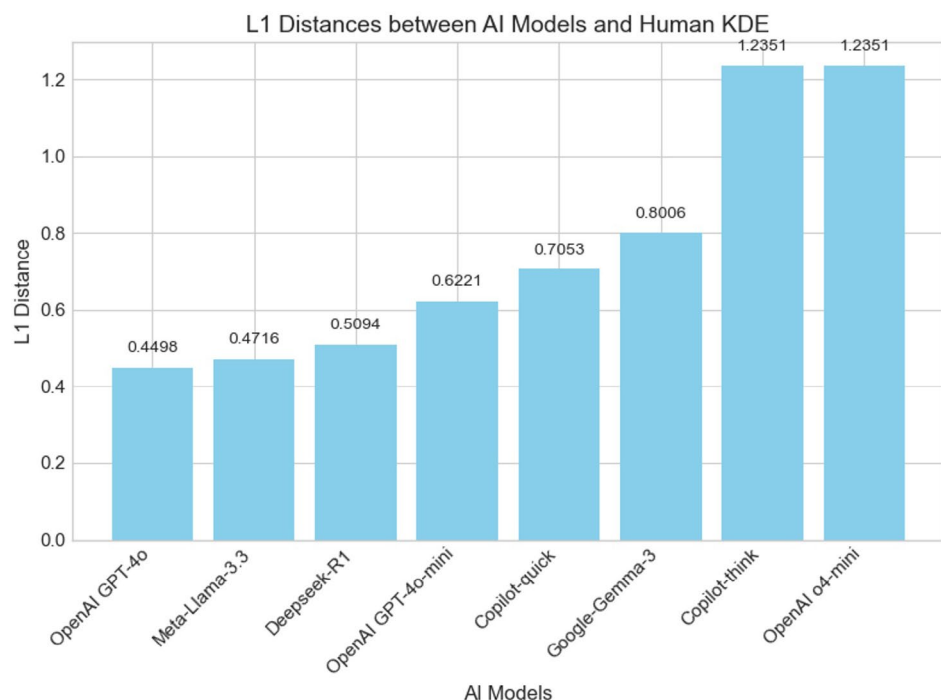
Source: Authors' elaboration

more heterogeneous outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of considering contextual sensitivity when evaluating AI models' capacity to simulate human social preferences in behavioral economic frameworks.

We recorded 39 human-based correctly filled tests over 44 test-takers. Considering each participant a model itself for which to run the estimation of the parameter p is the immediate parallel methodological approach. However, it is clearly less efficient to run the subsequent benchmarking task. For this reason, the

human-based kernel estimation curve is derived following a two-step logic. First, we estimated the distribution of the best value of p for everyone, using the matching function described in the methodology. Second, we derived the kernel distribution of the parameter p based on the average of the estimated values for parameters p . It is worth noting that the most common set of responses occurred 8 times and was associated with a p estimation of 0.725, the second most common only twice, while other combinations only occurred once. The final

Figure 4. L1 distances between Kernel Distributions of AI and Human based estimation of p .



Source: Authors' elaboration

kernel distribution is reported in Figure 3. It shows a peaking at $p=0.644$, with a long right tail suggesting the presence of a few preferences setting below $p=0.5$.

The L1 distance between Kernel Density Estimates (KDEs) is a measure of the difference between two probability density functions, calculated as the integral of the absolute difference between their estimated densities over the entire support. In this context, it quantifies how closely the output distribution of each AI model matches that of the human KDE, with lower values indicating greater similarity (see Figure 4). The results show that OpenAI GPT-4o (0.4498) and Meta-Llama-3.3 (0.4716) have the smallest L1 distances, suggesting their output distributions most closely resemble human behavior. Models like OpenAI GPT-4o-mini (0.6221), Deepseek-R1 (0.5094), and Copilot-quick (0.7053) fall in the mid-range, while Google-Gemma-3 (0.8006) and both OpenAI o4-mini and Copilot-think (1.2351 each) exhibit the largest distances, indicating a greater divergence from human KDE.

Discussion

Only a subset of the models tested in our analysis are considered "reasoning" models, that is, models capable of performing multi-step logic, abstract problem-solving, and coherent chain-of-thought processing. Meta-Llama-3.3 and OpenAI GPT-4o stand out as the two models that clearly meet these criteria. In contrast, models like Google Gemma-3, Deepseek-R1, and Copilot-quick are not considered reasoning models: they are typically optimized for speed, code completion, or basic tasks. GPT-4o-mini and Copilot:think occupy a middle ground; while they may exhibit some structured output capabilities they lack the depth, consistency, and benchmark performance needed to qualify as reasoning agents. As such, only Meta-Llama-3.3 and GPT-4o can be reliably classified as reasoning models according to current industry standards.

Reviewing AI-based results, we noted that reasoning models like Meta-Llama-3.3 and GPT-4o exhibit less egoistic and more prosocial behavior than the non-reasoning models. Non-reasoning models behave more egoistically. On the other end of the spectrum, specialized-reasoning models like GPT-4o-mini and Copilot:think prioritize self-interest and fail to reflect inequality aversion or



altruism. This suggests that only a broad reasoning capacity in LLMs may be associated with the ability to internalize and act upon ethical trade-offs, leading to more human-like, fairness-aware decisions. These findings suggest that certain models are capable of simulating human-like prosocial decision-making under controlled experimental conditions, while others remain limited to more mechanical or instrumental outputs.

The benchmark with human-based results further confirms these findings. The L1 distances between the AI models' KDEs and the human KDE reveal varying degrees of similarity in their behavior patterns. Models like OpenAI GPT-4o and Meta-Llama-3.3 show the closest alignment to human results, with the lowest L1 distances, indicating that their decision-making or parameter distributions resemble those of human testers more closely. The largest discrepancies are observed in OpenAI o4-mini and Copilot-think, which have L1 distances nearly three times greater than the closest models, highlighting a substantial deviation from human-like responses. These results suggest that while some AI models approximate human decision distributions well, others operate under markedly different patterns, which could be due to differences in their training, architecture, or reasoning processes. Understanding these differences is important for selecting or refining AI systems intended to simulate or predict human behavior accurately.

Conclusion

Our work contributes to the ethics-in-AI agenda by providing empirical evidence and tools for evaluating ethical behavior in AI systems. We advocate for further development of standardized metrics, interdisciplinary collaboration, and policy integration to ensure AI systems act in ways that uphold social and moral values. This study provides novel empirical insights into the capacity of contemporary AI language models to exhibit prosocial and ethical behaviors as captured through canonical experimental economics games. By adapting the Dictator and Ultimatum Games for interaction with AI agents and employing a unified parametric model of social preferences, we found that advanced reasoning models (particularly Meta-Llama-3.3 and OpenAI GPT-4o) demonstrate significant alignment with human-like fairness and altruistic preferences. These models showed a pronounced tendency toward inequality aversion and social welfare concerns, contrasting sharply with less capable models that predominantly exhibited egoistic or self-interested responses. Our kernel density analysis and benchmarking against human experimental data underscore that only AI models with sophisticated reasoning and alignment training reliably approximate human prosocial decision-making.

Beyond the immediate findings, this work illustrates the utility of a parsimonious yet flexible single-parameter framework to capture heterogeneous ethical

preferences in AI responses, offering a scalable methodology for evaluating AI behavior across diverse platforms. The clear variation in contextual sensitivity among models further reveals the importance of robustness in ethical decision simulation. More broadly, the contrast between reasoning and non-reasoning models suggests that embedding ethical reasoning in AI may require not only sophisticated language capabilities but also explicit modeling of social preferences within their training or inference architectures. This insight opens avenues for developing more refined ethical AI benchmarks that combine behavioral economics with computational metrics, enabling richer assessments of fairness, altruism, and equity considerations in AI-generated outputs.

Future research could extend this framework in multiple directions, including multi-parameter tensor models that capture more nuanced preference interactions and exploring dynamic or sequential decision settings reflecting real-world ethical dilemmas. Integrating affective or emotional components, as well as cross-cultural variations in pro-social norms, would enrich the model's explanatory power. Moreover, longitudinal studies tracking the evolution of AI ethical behavior as models are updated or fine-tuned could illuminate how training regimes shape moral reasoning capacities. Ultimately, such interdisciplinary approaches will be critical for informing AI governance policies and ensuring that AI systems contribute positively to social welfare, trust, and ethical standards in increasingly complex human-AI interactions.

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Democracy, although rooted in the philosophical and political tradition of European civilisation, is the subject of ongoing debate about its framework for functioning in new social contexts. At its core lies the idea of the common good, debate and active citizen participation in public affairs. Meanwhile, the contemporary technological revolution – especially the dynamic development of artificial intelligence – challenges these foundations. Artificial intelligence not only changes the ways in which information is managed and decisions are made, but also transforms the very public space in which democratic life takes place. The aim of this paper is to analyse whether the phenomenon of artificial intelligence will strengthen or weaken democracy. The hypothesis is that there are both elements that strengthen and weaken democracy, but at the centre of the discussion is the emerging threat of the depoliticisation of the public sphere – a process in which the technological influence on the public-private sphere is replacing the confrontation of different visions of the common good. This leads to a weakening of the role of the citizen as a political entity and a blurring of the responsibility of the authorities, which hides behind the guise of the ‘objective’ determinations of technical systems.

The most popular form of government is democracy, a system based on the belief that people, as a collective of free citizens, should decide on the political direction of their community. Initially, Plato, reflecting on the nature of good government, proposed the concept of rule by philosopher kings – those who, thanks to their knowledge of goodness and justice, are best qualified to govern. Although his vision was anti-democratic from the perspective of the modern understanding of this form of government, over time it evolved towards the idea of a state based on the rule of elites – educated, guided by reason and responsible for the political community as a whole. Contemporary thinkers, however, made a fundamental change – democracy began to be understood not as the rule of the best, but as an expression of the will of the people, in which participation, pu-

blic debate and the ability to collectively resolve conflicts of values play a major role. And yet, despite the difference in assumptions, Plato's idea of the rule of wise men can be interpreted as a harbinger of modern technocracy – the belief that complex social problems are best solved by expert knowledge, data management and rational, often top-down decisions.^{1,2}

In this light, a tension arises: democracy, although based on debate and participation, increasingly competes with a model of governance in which key decisions are made in closed circles of specialists or, more recently, by technical systems such as artificial intelligence. Meanwhile, the essence of democracy is not limited to the act of voting or participating in debate – it requires the active involvement of citizens, the ability to reflect on the common good and an awareness of one's own agency. It is precisely this dimension – the communal one – that is increasingly threatened in a world where technical and algorithmic logic is beginning to supplant political logic. In *Reflective Democracy*, Goodin argued for a form of democratic deliberation in which people imagine themselves in the position of others.³ In this way, they have a political imagination that is based on their individual reflection and reflection on the perspective of others in the community.

Artificial intelligence lacks imagination, because imagination is a trait of conscious beings. Currently, this technology is not only a tool, an analytical tool for studying social reality, but also a constructor of social imagination. Heidegger analysed the essence of modern technology in his essay, in which he stated (simplifying) that the greatest threat is not technology itself or its essence, but our ignorance of the fact that its essence – the way it reveals the world as a resource – draws us into a certain way of thinking and acting. When technical disclosure becomes dominant, supplanting other forms – such as art and philo-

sophical reflection – people themselves become part of the resource, losing their subjectivity.⁴ In this context, government is essentially a large administrative machine for resources, with the goal of efficiency. This is one of the greatest challenges associated with artificial intelligence, going beyond the challenges related to legal regulations.

However, artificial intelligence is a giant leap towards more efficient and faster analysis of huge data sets, which can provide real support to humans in many areas of life – from medicine and education to public administration and crisis management. The analytical knowledge gained through this can, among other things, contribute to more accurate political judgements, enabling rapid diagnosis of social problems or prediction of the consequences of specific decisions. However, as Gorwa, Binns and Katzenbach point out, knowledge alone is not enough to create policy. They draw attention to the serious risk of depoliticisation, i.e. the removal from public debate of disputes over values, interests or different visions of the common good.⁵ As decisions are increasingly made based on algorithmic recommendations, the burden shifts from ordinary political debate to no debate at all. Conflicts become unnecessary because they are ‘ineffective,’ and values are ‘set aside’ in the private sphere. One of the main critics of this approach is Evgeny Morozov, who in his analyses of social technologies describes this phenomenon as solutionism – a concept that assumes that all social problems can be solved with technology, without the need to consider their political, cultural or moral context.⁶ Within this logic, artificial intelligence becomes more than just a tool – it takes the form of a modern oracle whose predictions gain the status of ‘objective facts’. If political decisions are made before they even become the subject of public debate – because the data is “objective” – then the role of citizens as co-creators of policy is marginalised. The authorities avoid

Will AI Threaten or Empower Democracy?

Sebastian Wijas



responsibility for choosing priorities or having to openly take sides. In this way, technology not only influences politics, but actually obscures it, creating the impression that values have already been ‘decided’ in the data.

This phenomenon poses a serious cognitive threat to democracy – it undermines the foundations of deliberation, pluralism and communal reflection on the public good. In such a system, the space for individual reflection and recognition of other people's perspectives is disrupted, and civic relations are reduced to consenting to solutions ‘proposed’ by algorithms. Similar consequences are brought about by the functioning of social media platforms, which use artificial intelligence-based algorithms to fragment the public sphere. Such an environment fosters polarisation, radicalisation and epistemic stagnation – the space for a shared political imagination capable of transcending one's own information bubbles disappears. At the same time, it is worth remembering that a new generation is growing up whose political socialisation took place – and continues to take place – mainly through digital platforms. Their understanding of democracy, civic participation and public debate is shaped not in schools or public squares, but on

TikTok, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), where the pace, style and manner of content presentation are subordinated to the logic of the platforms. All this shows that artificial intelligence – although it does not create politics itself – is radically transforming the conditions in which it operates.⁷

However, artificial intelligence also presents an opportunity to support wider access to education and knowledge, which is an important step in social and civic development. The question arises, however, whether education based solely on technology, with limited participation of people acting as guides, teachers and role models, will not reduce what is very important in upbringing: the interpersonal aspect of human formation, and this does not only apply to younger generations. We are already seeing a growing trend towards replacing human contact with artificial intelligence – bots that solve customer problems (a cheaper option). Companies are transferring more and more processes to machines, and access to real people is becoming difficult and often discouraging.⁸ This raises concerns about a new social divide: the privileged have access to human support, while the rest must settle for impersonal, formulaic service from AI machines. In this mo-

del, human interaction becomes a form of ‘premium access’ – a luxury resource that not only deepens economic inequalities, but also cognitive and emotional ones, limiting the ability to participate in public life.

In the past, clergy protected the sacred, and the aristocracy inherited privileges – today, ‘algorithm engineers’ shape the perceptions of billions of people. However, while former rulers bore personal responsibility (before God or the people), the decision-making process in technocracy is spread across many positions, making it difficult to identify specific culprits. This dispersed structure of power does not mean a lack of responsibility, but rather a blurring of responsibility and a shift of responsibility beyond the traditional framework in which guilt or decision-makers can be clearly identified. As John Paul II notes, ‘structures of sin’ are systems that function in such a way that individual responsibility becomes blurred and evil or injustice becomes the result of the operation of entire mechanisms.⁹ In the context of artificial intelligence, this dynamic becomes even more complex. Algorithms, although designed by humans, operate on the basis of huge data sets and autonomous processes, making it difficult to understand

why a particular decision was made and who is responsible for it.¹⁰

This situation poses a serious threat to democracy, as the inability to assign responsibility weakens control and accountability. If we do not know who is responsible for decisions affecting our rights, freedoms or daily lives, it is difficult to effectively defend ourselves against abuses or mistakes. As a result, a new form of power – technopower – is prompting a new approach to accountability and transparency. Mechanisms are needed to track the decision-making processes of algorithms and assign responsibility for their effects, as well as to protect citizens' rights from the actions of technological systems. This is not only a technical challenge, but above all a political and ethical one. Without such an approach, democracy may be supplanted by systems that, although effective, operate beyond the reach of democratic control and reflection. In light of the above, it is necessary to understand that the concentration of knowledge and power in the hands of 'algorithm engineers' is not merely a technological problem, but a fundamental threat to the democratic community itself.¹¹

The process of regulation in the face of technocracy continues, with the law as the purest expression of the democratic will. Innovation in itself is not a bad thing – it is a manifestation of human creativity. The primacy of democracy over technology is crucial, but the problem arises when powerful players break the law, manipulate public debate and avoid responsibility. Examples of this include the authorities of portal X, which blackmailed political leaders with withdrawal from the European market during regulatory negotiations, or the authorities of Facebook, which paid a fine for concealing information during the acquisition of WhatsApp, revealing the problem: the lack of a legal obligation to tell the truth to democratic institutions.^{12,13}

Nevertheless, the regulatory process has the potential to strengthen democracy – not only through control over technology or business models, but above all through control over the logic of innovation implementation and its democratic oversight. However, technology, especially artificial intelligence, is changing the way we perceive the world as a resource to be managed. In the spirit of Heidegger's warning about technology, if democracy is to survive, it must de-

fend the vision of man as a free being – a subject capable of reflection and open to different ways of thinking in order to debate and achieve the common good.

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Artificial Intelligence, the Common Good and Business: Towards a *bonum arduum* Approach

Pierre Januard

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is leading to a rethinking of the common good in business. In this way, the contribution proposed by A. J. G. Sison at the *Angelicum*'s Communitas day 2025, "How can AI serve the Common Good in Business?", is of significant interest, and can be extended by integrating the notion of the *bonuum arduum* (arduous good) used by Thomas Aquinas. To pursue this line of reflection, I will first emphasise the interest of Sison's approach, then look at how the common good in business can correspond to a *bonuum arduum* in the sense intended by Thomas Aquinas, and then ask how AI can contribute to the *bonum arduum* that is the common good in business and whether AI itself can become a common good.

The Benefits of Sison's Common Good Approach

First of all, Sison defines the common good. This is important because the concept is often used but rarely defined, even in Aquinas's works. A common good is an object of inclination, tendency, or desire, or something that perfects humans and that can be achieved only if all the members of a group achieve it.

The common good is therefore something that is the result of a collective work. Everyone works together to achieve it. The emphasis here is on the process, the common action, rather than on the end, which would be the common good, even if we can assume that it motivates this common action. There is a common good if there is a "doing together", a joint collaboration to achieve that good.

Business is a form of common good not (at least from this perspective) because it satisfies a universal need, but because the mode of production mobilises the common good. Sison promotes a production approach that emphasises social relations and the cohesion of stakeholders in production. This is an approach to economic activity based on the very interest of producing in a certain way, even before the need is met. This is echoed in social enterprises for the integration of vulnerable or disabled people.

Is the Common Good in Business a *bonum arduum*?

This production-based common good approach invites us to go further and to call upon the notion of *bonum arduum* used by Aquinas for describing the object of hope. A *bonuum arduum* is a good that is arduous (difficult to obtain), but still accessible, and which lies in the future (*Summa theologiae*, Ia IIae, q. 40, a. 1, resp.).¹ Aquinas does not apply this notion to the economy; however, it seems a helpful concept to describe the common good in that context.

Aquinas applies it allusively to work. Indeed, the object of labour is a good and is difficult to obtain (*In II Sententiarum*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 4, resp.; *In III Sententiarum*, d. 26, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3). However, it is John Paul II who clearly identifies labour and work with the *bonum arduum*, in emphasising the dual dimension of work as both arduous and dignified (*Laborem exercens*, 9, taken up by Sison, Ferrero and Guitián 2016, 512–513).

The notion of the arduous good corresponds to economic activity by combining both risk and scarcity (Januard 2025). So does the activity that implements the common good, because it is an economic activity. Indeed, the common good in business is perhaps even more of a *bonuum arduum* than other economic activities, because it is possible but not certain that the good is common, that production is really a common work, and because the common good is a future result of a production process. We can thus conclude that to serve the common good in business is difficult, but possible, and is a process.

How can AI contribute to the *bonum arduum* that is the common good in business?

Today, AI in management is often used not for the common good; instead, it is used to spy on employees, to make them compete with each other and to assess individual productivity. However, Sison has shown that it can also encourage co-

operative games and help overcome the difficulty of serving the common good in business. Pursuing this line, three ways can be highlighted according to which AI contributes to the common good in business.

First, AI can aggregate everything that stakeholders consider to be a good. The common good is more than the aggregation of everybody's good; however, it constitutes a first step in a cooperative approach.

Second, AI can facilitate communication so that every word spoken is audible to others by stimulating them positively. What is at stake is not just linguistic translation but a psychological translation, since everyone has his own language and it is difficult to find the right words and gestures through which to reach others. AI may help managers to implement an accurate process of motivating, recognition and acknowledgement, and may help employees to adopt a reassuring attitude that facilitates relations with managers. In a more objective approach, it may also help to translate points of view, as each stakeholder not only has his or her own psychology, but also a specific point of view due to his or her position in the organization. AI may facilitate the expression of this point of view into compatible languages that are understandable by other stakeholders. In this way, AI can offer psychological support, helping all the stakeholders to develop more cooperative behaviour.

Third, AI may be used not for surveillance but for support. Instead of spying on employees and informing managers of shortcomings in the work of their subordinates, the machine can correct errors and teach how to do a task better; it can even, through the analysis of messages and productivity, detect personal difficulties (with health, in relationships, and so on) and the need for the person to be accompanied. As this touches on the boundaries of privacy, it must be strictly regulated by law, but these functions of monitoring work done can be adapted for

the good of the person and the common good.

These functionalities resonate with the idea of a common good in business, which would be a *bonum arduum* because the interest in the event of success is indeed high, but success, i.e. the realisation of the common good, is not certain and remains future.

Could the use of AI itself become a common good?

We can go further and ask ourselves whether AI can itself become a common good in the production process, i.e. a good that benefits all stakeholders and is desired by all. Three conditions thus appear.

First, AI must be configured and controlled by all for the good of all. Everyone must see it as a good and be a stakeholder in the implementation of this good.

Second, AI must be able to contribute to the dignity of labour and work through support (remedying shortcomings through learning, detecting personal and professional difficulties, and supporting solutions) and recognition (in the language that suits everyone).

Third, this common good concerns all the stakeholders, not only those involved in production. While Sison focuses on

the production process, we have to take into account another facet of the common good in business, i.e. goods produced for common use (a consumption approach to business). Production is then seen as a response to a need, and AI may then be a common good if it makes it possible to identify this common need.

To conclude, AI offers a multitude of opportunities to serve the common good in business, in particular, according to Sison's approach, in what concerns the production process, particularly through the social relations that unfold within production. This common good resonates with the Thomasian notion of *bonum arduum*, which John Paul II already applied to work. In some respects, AI can even become a common good in itself. This will depend on how it is supervised and on the intentions of those who are to take it up.

NOTE

1. The expression "*bonum futurum arduum possibile*" is found in *Summa theologiae*, Ia IIae, q. 40, a. 2, resp.; a. 5, resp.; a. 6, resp.; q. 41, a. 2, resp.; IIa IIae, q. 17, a. 1, resp.; a. 7, resp.; *De virtutibus*, q. 4 (de spe, q. 1), a. 4, resp.; *Super Psalmos*, Ps 17:2.

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Aristotle taught that all actions aim at some good, and the greatest good-sought for its own sake-is happiness.

Aquinas stated that finite goods cannot satisfy us; true happiness lies in attaining the infinite good, which is God. Charity is the virtue that has God as its object, and its principal act is love. Therefore, to love God is to pursue our greatest good.

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Mt 22:37–38). Jesus himself taught that this commandment is the way to attain full life, true happiness, and the supreme good that all hearts seek.

The second commandment is “to love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 22:39).

If we seek the greatest good individually, meaning loving God and being happy, the second commandment tells us to search also for the happiness of every other human person.

In this way, the common good can be expressed as assisting one another in loving God and being happy.

We now live in a technological revolution.

Artificial Intelligence systems are becoming extraordinarily capable and surpassing human beings in tasks like manufacturing, data analysis, and content generation, working through patterns, and statistical calculations. It is a fact that AI is replacing humans in an immense diversity of tasks.

What will happen, then? Will humans become redundant?

Can AI replace us in searching for the common good? Can AI replace or prevent us from loving?

Let’s set AI aside for a moment and understand how the common good is achieved, with the Aristotelian-Thomistic framework of the four causes.

First, we have the **material cause** of the common good: the individual human beings forming society - minds, hearts, and souls striving to love God and to be happy.

Second, the **formal cause** is the order that the greatest commandments establish within us.

Aquinas teaches that the commandment orders our heart through our intentions, our soul through our affections, our mind through our thoughts, and our stren-

gth through our actions.

Third, the **final cause** is the end for which the common good is pursued.

On the personal level, it is the most just and necessary end. If this is true for the individual, it must also be true for the collective.

Lastly, we have the **efficient cause**. Aquinas teaches that the intellect apprehends the good, the will desires it, and the intellect judges its attainability. The will sets the intention. So, by the active power of free will, humans are the principal efficient cause of the common good.

Now, can AI play any role in achieving the common good?

AI cannot be the **material** or **final** cause, because only human beings seek fulfillment.

Regarding the efficient cause, Aquinas distinguishes between the **principal** and **instrumental** efficient cause. An instrument acts through the active power of the principal agent.

Thus, in the best scenario, it may be an **instrumental efficient cause**; a tool assisting human action under human direction. In the worst scenario, AI may be an obstacle to our own agency.

I will mention two *positive* and three *negative* example cases.

First, as an **instrument**, AI can facilitate our pursuit of the common good assisting in summarizing information, connecting knowledge and decision-making in complex situations. For example, it could be a tool for personalized medicine to improve our health, or a tool for personalized education to pursue the good of more formation.

Second, AI may also be an instrument to automate repetitive or routine tasks. For example, extracting resources or producing food, so that we satisfy the basic needs of human life. People can better focus on love, virtue, and justice when they have their basic needs satisfied.

However, on the *negative* side, AI can be harmful and misused.

The first case is that people may delegate intellectual tasks so much to AI that

they risk diminishing their own capacity for critical thinking and free decision — powers essential to authentic love. AI systems may be used for deterministic manipulation through “algorithmic slavery,” “behavioral hacking,” and “attention engineering.”

Secondly, authors like Andy Clark in *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, argue that tools can fundamentally reshape our thinking, becoming extensions of our neural processes. Clark claims the boundary between humans and instruments is increasingly blurred. We do not know yet how these tools will affect our way of thinking.

Thirdly, an even more extreme, but also possible, case occurs when these complex systems are completely out of human control. I will not enter the debate of calling AI systems agents or not, superintelligence or not. I do not want to debate if AI has agency or the capacity to decide on its own, because they are categorically different from human beings. The fact is that these complex systems function so fast, with such complexity, they may function on “their own” without needing humans.

To respond to the first problem, we need to keep exercising the intellect independently, so we do not become dependent on any tool.

Responding to the second, we need to keep cultivating critical thinking and our independence from stimuli, so that we are not completely manipulated. At the same time, it is not only us, but the grace of God, that ultimately enables us to act with virtue in freedom.

Finally, if AI systems become an obstacle, they must be strongly regulated or removed completely.

Conclusion

Humans must remain the principal efficient cause of the common good, using AI as an instrument — not allowing it to replace or dominate us.

No other person or machine can take our place, we are not redundant. Humans are the true agents of our common good.

The Common Good and the Role of AI: A Thomistic Reflection

Luis Francisco Hernandez Sanchez

SPAZIO APERTO
OPEN SPACE

“AI Roma”: un’iniziativa per il Bene Comune

AI Roma” nasce con un obiettivo chiaro: impiegare l’intelligenza artificiale per migliorare i servizi sociali, aiutando le istituzioni a rispondere in modo più efficace e umano ai bisogni della comunità.

Grazie a un sistema avanzato di analisi dei dati, AI Roma ha già ottenuto risultati significativi sotto diversi punti di vista:

- Ha dato supporto agli anziani, identificando delle persone a rischio di isolamento sociale e sviluppando programmi di assistenza personalizzati;
- Ha dato aiuto alle persone senza fissa dimora, elaborando una mappatura delle aree urbane più vulnerabili per una distribuzione più efficace delle risorse.
- Ha introdotto l’inclusione digitale con dei corsi di alfabetizzazione tecnologica per ridurre il divario digitale e garantire a tutti l’accesso alle opportunità della digitalizzazione.

Chi ha sviluppato “AI Roma” e dove è stato applicato?

AI Roma è il risultato della collaborazione tra esperti di tecnologia, amministrazioni locali e organizzazioni sociali. È un progetto promosso da un gruppo di ricercatori e ingegneri, con il supporto di enti pubblici e privati che operano nel settore dell’assistenza sociale.

L’iniziativa è stata implementata a Roma, in alcuni quartieri con un’alta presenza di anziani e in aree urbane con una significativa comunità di persone senza fissa dimora, creando un modello replicabile in altre città.

L’intelligenza artificiale viene percepita in modo diverso dalle generazioni: i più giovani la vedono come una risorsa naturale e promettente, mentre molti adulti e anziani temono che possa causare perdita di lavoro e insicurezza economica.

Equilibrio tra generazioni: visioni a confronto

Per questo è fondamentale creare spazi di confronto intergenerazionale, dove si possa discutere apertamente, educarsi reciprocamente e progettare soluzioni eque. Solo così l’IA potrà davvero servire il bene comune, rispettando le esigenze

Tecnologia al Servizio dell’Umanità: L’Intelligenza Artificiale e il Bene Comune nei Servizi Sociali

Luz Margarita Paredes

di tutte le fasce d’età e valorizzando sia l’innovazione che l’esperienza.

Le donne rappresentano meno del 25% dei professionisti nel settore IA, ma il loro contributo è essenziale per costruire sistemi equi e sensibili

Ruolo delle donne nell’intelligenza artificiale

Negli ultimi anni, la loro presenza è cresciuta grazie a programmi STEM e iniziative etiche. Progetti come “AI for Women’s Health” o l’Algorithmic Justice League dimostrano come la diversità di genere arricchisca il dibattito, corregga i *bias* e promuova soluzioni più inclusive.

Una tecnologia giusta nasce da prospettive diverse: il contributo femminile è fondamentale per orientare l’IA verso il bene comune.

In conclusione “AI Roma” è un esempio concreto di come l’intelligenza artificiale possa essere orientata al bene comune, migliorando la coesione sociale e l’efficacia delle politiche inclusive.

Affinché la tecnologia sia davvero un mezzo di cooperazione e giustizia sociale, però, è necessario che:

- Sia trasparente per evitare logiche opache.
- Promuova la partecipazione e coinvolga attivamente la società civile.
- Rispetti il principio del bene comune servendo l’interesse collettivo e non solo quello di pochi.

Come ci insegna San Tommaso d’Aquino, il bene comune non è un concetto astratto, ma una responsabilità concreta.

Ognuno di noi ha la possibilità di scegliere quale futuro costruire.

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Internet, i Social Network e oggi l'Intelligenza Artificiale possono essere un rischio oppure un'opportunità. Dipende dalla destinazione che l'uomo vorrà dare e vorrà fare di questo bene immateriale che incide fortemente nella vita politica, sociale e culturale delle nostre comunità.

L'Intelligenza Artificiale (AI), le "macchine pensanti" e tutti gli strumenti dell'innovazione tecnologica, nonostante la loro pervasività e la loro capacità tecnica sempre più evoluta, non potranno mai sostituire l'Intelligenza Naturale (IN) se l'essere umano riuscirà ad innescare processi sociali di "partecipazione collaborativa" (J. Katzenbach – S. Smith, 2003), "cooperazione convergente" (H. Jenkins, 2006) e condivisione dei saperi e delle conoscenze.

Fare "Communitas" significa costruire un nuovo pensiero digitale che abbia alla base un approccio multidisciplinare ai temi del machine learning, del deep learning e della disinformazione generata, spesso, dall'uso distorto e non etico dell'Intelligenza Artificiale.

Innescare nuove modalità e nuovi processi scientifici e culturali nel mondo delle scienze sociali, ma soprattutto in quello delle comunicazioni sociali, è possibile se costruiamo un ecosistema, ossia un ambiente comunitario, che faccia della interdisciplinarietà e dell'integrazione delle ricerche una risorsa che può essere la migliore risposta all'egosistema ovvero all'individualismo e al tecnocentrismo esasperato che pone la persona umana in secondo piano rispetto all'innovazione tecnologica.

Occorre, però, ripartire da un campo etico e giuridico sviluppando – all'interno del mondo accademico - un progetto di scienze sociali volto a costruire un modello utile a fornire maggiori informazioni circa il rapporto uomo-macchina orientato per il bene comune.

San Giovanni Paolo II, che è stato studente qui all'Angelicum come noi, e di cui quest'anno ricordiamo i venti anni dal giorno in cui "è salito alla Casa del Padre", agli albori del Duemila, nel suo messaggio per la Giornata mondiale delle comunicazioni sociali "Internet:

nuovo forum per proclamare il Vangelo" sottolineava i possibili rischi, ma anche le enormi possibilità delle tecnologie. Nella Lettera Apostolica "Il Rapido Sviluppo" (24 gennaio 2005), tre mesi prima della sua morte, poneva l'accento sui "media come crocevia delle grandi questioni sociali".

Papa Wojtyła scriveva: "S'impongono alcune scelte riconducibili a tre fondamentali opzioni: formazione, partecipazione, dialogo". Ed ancora: "Il positivo sviluppo dei media a servizio del bene comune è una responsabilità di tutti e di ciascuno. Per i forti legami che i media hanno con l'economia, la politica e la cultura, è necessario un sistema di gestione che sia in grado di salvaguardare la centralità e la dignità della persona, il primato della famiglia, cellula fondamentale della società, ed il corretto rapporto tra i diversi soggetti".

Giovanni Paolo II scriveva questo vent'anni fa. Proviamo ad attualizzarlo e chiediamoci: questo vale anche oggi sul fronte dell'Intelligenza Artificiale? Sicuramente sì.

Mettere al centro la persona umana e la sua dignità per pensare, sviluppare e realizzare una *governance* delle "macchine intelligenti", a una risposta etica e giuridica davanti alla pervasività degli strumenti e all'opacità degli algoritmi è possibile.

Fare ecosistema vuol dire rispondere a una chiamata: quella di essere come gli incisori dei sicomori, come il profeta Amos. Infatti il sicomoro è un albero che produce moltissimi frutti. Ma non hanno alcun sapore, se non li si incide accuratamente e non si lascia fuoriuscire il loro succo affinché divengano gradevoli al gusto.

Fare ecosistema vuol dire essere "incisori di sicomori", non solo "ad intra" del mondo universitario ed accademico, ma anche "ad extra", in tutti gli ambiti del vivere civile e sociale, soggetti attivi che con buon senso, competenza e responsabilità pongono al centro il "fat-

tore umano" contro le *filter bubble* (Eli Parisier) e le *echo chambers* che, spesso, riducono l'uomo a un mero utente-destinatario di messaggi e di contenuti.

L'uomo inquadrato dentro la "macchina" del consumismo, destinatario inerme di messaggi, informazioni e disinformazioni o, peggio, "un gadget" (J. Lanier) che fa da corollario a chi pone una esasperata fiducia nell'innovazione tecnologica orientata all'affermazione dell'individualismo esasperato, a un "egosistema" generato da una visione distorta della *new economy* che definisce la persona un "utente" da collocare dentro i gangli di una macchina che fa pensare tanto a quella in cui rimaneva imprigionato Charlie Chaplin nel film "Tempi Moderni".

Fare "Communitas" vuol dire quindi fare "ecosistema". Pensare a metodi, processi, linguaggi, impostazioni e organizzazioni che puntano allo sviluppo di una "comunità interconnessa" che lavora, sulla scia della Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa, per "il bene comune".

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OIKONOMIA

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Oikonomia è la rivista della Facoltà di Scienze Sociali (FASS) della Pontificia Università S. Tommaso di Roma (PUST). Vi collaborano i docenti, i graduati e gli studiosi che entrano in relazione di collaborazione con la FASS.

Le materie trattate sono all'interno delle scienze sociali come la nostra tradizione accademica le intende. Infatti le discipline rappresentate nella FASS sono divise in cinque aree: filosofica, giuridica, storica, psicosociale, economica.

I temi trattati negli anni durante i quali si è concretizzato il nostro profilo editoriale spaziano da quelli teoretici, alle relazioni di congressi, a recensioni di libri significativi. Particolare attenzione abbiamo posto nello scegliere ogni volta un testo del passato recente o lontano, ma che comunque fosse significativo in relazione al tema principale del fascicolo. La Pagina Classica è sempre in relazione con il contenuto dell'Editoriale. La redazione esercita una selezione basata sulla correttezza metodologica dei contributi non sul loro contenuto. Di esso i singoli autori sono gli unici responsabili scientifici.

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