

True Development and the Human Person: Transcending Contradiction in Discerning a Sustainable Capitalism

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This article seeks to discern the foundation of a sustainable capitalism and development through the lenses of language, law, and Catholic social teaching. In identifying confusion in modern understandings of capitalism and sustainability, it argues for the necessity of a transcendent understanding of the human person to achieve a sustainable capitalism and true development. In essence, a capitalism in which the human person is viewed as a nontranscendent regulated commodity is inherently unsustainable and contradictory. In order to transcend contradiction in seeking a sustainable capitalism, man's principal resource, which is man himself, must be cultivated and respected above all others.

In recent years, various capitalistic societies have attempted to link the notion of sustainable capitalism to the prevention or destruction of human life in the name of economic regulation and development. This article argues that this approach is contradictory to the nature of capitalism, as fundamental to the overall sustainability of any form of capitalism is the safeguarding of human capital and thus the human person as such.¹ To this end, the article is divided into four parts. First, I will seek to identify difficulties in discerning a sustainable capitalism. Second, I will offer principles of analysis to assist in discerning a sustainable capitalism. Third, I will then apply the principles explored to the problems presented in the previous two parts. Finally, I will offer a brief conclusion.

Problems of Discerning a Definition of Sustainable Capitalism

Confusion in Language and Meaning

The *Wall Street Journal* recently published an article entitled “If the Election Is About Capitalism, What Does That Mean?”² The article describes that “capitalism has long been a problematic idea for many Americans” as the “public understanding of the term is so vague that the current debate is probably less about the economic system and more a reflection of how people feel at the moment about their own well-being.”³ This is attributable, according to the author, to the fact that “there is also a lot of confusion at work,” evidenced by his claim that in the 1980s researchers found that just 35 percent of Americans could even define capitalism.⁴ According to the author, “in other words, it isn’t clear we’re all talking about the same thing.”⁵

Historical definitions speak to this confusion. The *Oxford Dictionary of Politics* notes in this regard that the term “has increasingly gained credence across the political spectrum, although this has inevitably produced inconsistency in its employment.”⁶ In articulating three spectrums of development and usage, both commonalities and divergences are clear.⁷ The first understanding presented, attributed to the thought of Werner Sombart and Max Weber, emphasizes rationality and reorganization of production directed toward maximum efficiency.⁸ A second understanding, attributed to the German Historical School, emphasizes profit-focused organization by way of the market economy.⁹ An understanding attributed to Karl Marx is then considered, with an emphasis on production, capital, social relationships, and the inherent power struggle therein, leaving one with an appreciation for the reality that a clear definition of capitalism remains elusive for many.¹⁰

A purview of some popular modern English language dictionaries yields the following definitions in what seems to be an attempt to streamline historical understandings. According to Merriam Webster, capitalism is “an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market.”¹¹ The Oxford Dictionary defines capitalism as “an economic and political system in which a country’s trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.”¹² The Cambridge dictionary defines it as “an economic, political and social system based on private ownership of property, business and industry, and directed towards making the greatest possible

profits for successful organizations and people.”¹³ Noteworthy here is that the definitions span from citing simply an economic system, to citing an economic *and* political system, to finally an economic, political, *and* social system, echoing once again the definition’s elusive nature.

In an attempt to get to the root of the confusion, though noting that the situation “is obviously complex,” John Paul II made his own assessment of the situation in *Centesimus Annus*. In juxtaposing two divergent understandings of capitalism, he begins to expose the key conceptual roots at the heart of the problem.¹⁴ On the one hand, capitalism can be understood as “an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector.”¹⁵ Conversely, he offers that capitalism can also signify “a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious.”¹⁶ In his characteristic way, John Paul II invites thus not only the consideration of the external elements of capitalism but also the conceptual underpinnings crucial to illuminating these definitional elements.

Distortion of Conceptual Underpinnings

Complicating the question even further is the changing socio-political vision of the human person, which has led to what could be termed an *anthropological identity crisis* in modern culture.¹⁷ Societal perceptions of the conceptual foundations that have historically upheld capitalism and the free market, such as truth, freedom, and the transcendent value of human life are all affected.¹⁸ Marguerite Peeters refers to this process as the “globalization of the western cultural revolution,” which results in a “new global ethic.”¹⁹ Peeters argues that there exists a causal link between the cultural espousal of deconstructionist anthropology and the global breakdown in systems of governance and institutions as such.²⁰ This process is attributable to an inadequate system of values²¹ that modern governments rest on and that she understands as unsustainably artificial and abstract, rooted in an anthropological separation from the human person’s transcendent aspect.²²

Unsustainable Application

The fruit of this widespread confusion and changing cultural value system is the increasing effort to attach policies to capitalism that are theoretically foreign

to its nature, purportedly to effectuate sustainability. As John Paul II explains, “an unbridled capitalism which puts the quest for power and profit and the cult of an often soulless efficiency” can then occur that does not address the crux of present-day challenges.²³ The resulting *contradiction* becomes, in a word, “inhuman.”²⁴

As the great global economic crisis illustrates, the effects of these policies are counterintuitive, and sustainability is increasingly elusive. The breakdown of proper linguistic use and commonsense meaning is evident as the concept of demographic control is introduced to the idea of capitalism and economic policy through terms and phrases such as “sustainable development,” “eliminating poverty,” and “good governance.”²⁵ This has vast implications, experienced, according to Peeters, even to the remotest corners of the world.²⁶ Programs of economic assistance aimed at financing campaigns of sterilization and contraception become frequent and the acceptance of these campaigns becomes the condition of acceptance of such economic assistance.²⁷

Humanity as Nontranscendent, Regulated Commodity

Archbishop Francis Chullikatt illustrates the reasoning of such campaigns in the following summary. Current discussions on economic development are led by a notion that human reproduction is a commodity that must be regulated and improved in order to encourage market efficiency.²⁸ This leads to the view that population growth must be decreased in order to address poverty, illiteracy, and malnutrition.²⁹ This in turn contributes to antireproductive technologies and adoption of laws discouraging parents from exercising their right to have children.³⁰ Greater emphasis is placed on limiting, suppressing, or destroying life than toward defending and opening up the possibility of life, the possibility of development, and the opportunity to flourish.³¹

The problem is multifaceted. One aspect has to do with linguistic issues of capitalism. Another aspect has to do with presently changing cultural understandings of the conceptual underpinnings of capitalism. A third aspect concerns the practical application of the first two aspects, relevant to the overall sustainability of capitalism itself. Ironically, all three aspects are caused by and combine to perpetuate the same root problem: a view of human life as a nontranscendent, regulated commodity, which, as will be shown, is contrary to a sustainable capitalism.³²

Principles of Analysis

“Demythologization” of Language Reveals Truth and Transcendence

In *Fides et Ratio* John Paul II characterizes the human person as “one who seeks truth” but notes that “the search for truth, of course, is not always so transparent” as “the natural limitation of reason and the inconstancy of the heart often obscure and distort a person’s search.”³³ However, he makes the most important observation that “the unity of truth is a fundamental premise of human reasoning, as the principle of non-contradiction makes clear.”³⁴ The nature of truth, drawing the human person outside himself toward the nature of reality itself and stretching him to the limits of the universe and beyond, reveals the human person as being undeniably transcendent.³⁵

Pope Benedict XVI has expressed this idea of seeking linguistic transparency by the term “demythologizing.”³⁶ In *Deus Caritas Est* Pope Benedict provides an example of this process, which in essence desires to arrive at the fundamental conceptual realities expressed by a word. He first evaluates forms of usage, then moves to the conceptual meanings present in the various forms of usage, and finally to the presence or lack of underlying conceptual unity amongst the usage and meanings.³⁷ In this way, the realities expressed by the linguistic usage are demythologized and made transparent, revealing a truth that transcends.³⁸

Concepts of Transcendence and Authentic Anthropocentricity

Regarding the most fundamental conceptual, as well as practical, underpinning of capitalism, John Paul II puts it succinctly in his 1991 encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*. He states, “*man’s principal resource is man himself*” as “his intelligence enables him to discover the earth’s productive potential and the many different ways in which human needs can be satisfied.”³⁹ What John Paul II describes is the heart of the notion of human capital. Human capital refers to the skills, education, health, and training of individuals, and of course, as John Paul II points out, presupposes and relies on the consideration of the human person as such.⁴⁰ Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone eloquently describes what can be termed *transcendent anthropocentricity*:

Undoubtedly, one cause of the economic crisis is the pervasiveness of a false ethical notion of efficiency, that would make personal profit into an absolute. Behind this “ethic” lies not only greed, but above all a concept of man severed

from all relations: man fundamentally alone, pursuing his own fulfillment within a restricted horizon that is exclusively materialistic. Whereas putting man back into the center means rediscovering the relations that make him who he is and make possible his integral human growth. We are not talking here about merely functional relations, but rather relations that could be defined as “ontological.” ... Putting man back into the center means valuing and favoring his transcendental dimension. Man is not truly at the center unless he in turn can affirm the centrality of God, and unless his economic choices guarantee the life conditions that are indispensable if people are to be able to rise towards God.⁴¹

As the ultimate resource is the human person as such, it follows that the more human beings there are, the more inventors, producers, problem solvers, and creators there are to transform material resources and to create new resources.⁴²

If it is true that “man’s principal resource is man himself,” then the family is the fundamental and primary economic catalyst.⁴³ Human beings, human capital, and all other forms of capital, ultimately find their source in families.⁴⁴ The family is, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms, “the natural and fundamental group unit of society” (Art. 16.3).⁴⁵ Thus policies that are destructive to the family must not be attached to any notion of capitalism and the free market if a sustainable capitalism is to be attained.⁴⁶

Authentic Anthropocentricity Yields Sustainability in Application

Pope Benedict XVI frequently calls for the replanning, rethinking, and rediscovering of our human existence and nature as ethical beings to circumvent this current economic crisis, even as a prior step to considering the other various needed reforms.⁴⁷ Marguerite Peeters echoes this sentiment in critiquing the modern values precipitating the crisis. For Peeters, insofar as present day values represent artificial and abstract constructs and accentuate the divorce among faith, reason, and life, their breakdown is a providential opportunity to move beyond them.⁴⁸ At the root of this understanding is the notion of proper human relationship, based in the idea of humanity as one family composed of many families, with each one containing uniquely valuable persons with equally unique and valuable contributions to make to society.⁴⁹ This is only possible if an adequate appreciation of the transcendent dignity of the human person as such is established.⁵⁰ This transcendent nature is rooted in none other than the human person created in the image and likeness of God who is primordially “family.”⁵¹

It is when the human condition is appreciated as transcendent that adequate preconditions are available for sustainable capitalism to develop. Recognition

of this inviolable and transcendent dignity does not allow for the human being to merely be another “thing” as such, or far worse a thing to be exchanged or sacrificed for a false notion of “development.”⁵² For capitalism to be truly sustainable it must be a part of an authentically human development, that is, the integral development of each human in the totality of his or her humanity, both material and spiritual, and directed toward the common good.⁵³ True development, and thus truly sustainable capitalism, cannot consist in the simple accumulation of wealth and in the greater availability of goods and services but must be pursued with due consideration for the social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the human being.⁵⁴

Analysis

The Conceptual Presupposition of the Human Person as Nexus

From the aforementioned considerations, four common concepts to the notion of capitalism as such can be deduced: person(s), thing(s), exchange, and development.⁵⁵ The question of how one understands the proper relation of the four is fundamental. No matter how one chooses to define capitalism or understand the proper relation of the four fundamental concepts of person, thing, exchange, and development, a further common denominator that must be conceded is that all four of these concepts are dependent on the first and primary reality: that of the human person. Without the reality of person, the entities of thing(s) and concepts of exchange and development lose their nexus of activity and meaning. Things (an inanimate material object as distinct from a living sentient being),⁵⁶ exchange (an act of giving one thing and receiving another in return),⁵⁷ and development (an event constituting a new stage in a changing situation)⁵⁸ all presuppose the human person as their reference point. As the human person is revealed as the foundation of the concept and linguistic use of capitalism, sustainable capitalism must also “sustain” this foundation.

Capitalism: Unsustainable Unless the Human Person Is Safeguarded

The problem of associating population control with economic growth and sustainable capitalism can be characterized by dueling contrary assertions: one linking population growth to lack of development while the other observing that population growth is a prerequisite for development. The latter argument holds that the most urgent issue is actually that of underpopulation, which means that using tax money to “invest” in destroying human capital is not only inhuman but

also counterproductive.⁵⁹ It is clear that capitalism is inherently linked to the idea that human population will always grow for the simple reason that more people create more demand for products, supply, and labor.⁶⁰ History illustrates this, as new businesses typically seek to establish themselves in areas where population is growing and leave areas where population and demand are falling.⁶¹

Perhaps the greatest argument against linking sustainable capitalism to policies of demographic control are the practical effects of these policies, which render it difficult to deny the need for adopting a definition of sustainable capitalism in line with the human person's transcendent dignity. In Western societies, the United States of America and many European countries illustrate situations of unsustainability.⁶² While these nations may not have governmental regulation of human reproduction as such, widespread belief in overpopulation and a pervasive culture of contraception and abortion have resulted in falling birthrates. The situation is such that, excepting a few countries such as Ireland and France, the vast majority of European countries do not even have replacement-level birthrates.⁶³ It is projected that the total European population (including Russia) will decline from 728 million in 2000 to below 600 million in 2050.⁶⁴ In 1950, five of the top twelve largest countries by population were in Europe, while in 2005 only one was in Europe, and it is projected that by 2050 none will be in Europe.⁶⁵ This will bring chronic shortages in young-adult manpower that will pose significant challenges to economic and national security.⁶⁶

In the United States of America a scenario in which fertility rates fall even further due to widespread efforts of "family planning" and "women's health care" could trigger a collapse in fertility rates similar to that which has occurred in Europe.⁶⁷ Particularly, young people of this generation find themselves in a precarious position.⁶⁸ As they try to protect their diminishing standard of living by having even fewer children, less human capital will be produced, with a subsequent loss of national economic and military power.⁶⁹ Difficulties include rising costs of supporting the elderly, the consequent raising of taxes, and ever mounting educational costs.⁷⁰ According to Phillip Longman, "If current projections prove true, the working population of the United States essentially will wind up paying one out of every five dollars it earns just to support retirees, while simultaneously trying to finance more and more years of higher education, as well as paying for a military that sees more and more of its resources devoted to yesteryear's soldiers."⁷¹ Another notable example is China where the situation is potentially catastrophic. The one-child policy instituted in 1979 has caused a decline from 2.9 births per female to an estimated 1.54 in 2011, which is considerably below the replacement rate of 2.1.⁷² A large number of Chinese now who have already left or are now leaving the workforce are causing what could be

called an “age wave.”⁷³ In 2009, the number of those sixty and older increased by 7.25 million to 167.14 million.⁷⁴ This age group will more than double by 2030 with the Chinese workforce shrinking.⁷⁵ The working-age population will fall from about 995.8 million people in 2015 to 789.0 million in 2050.⁷⁶ Taking these developments into account, the economy will have to overcome extremely challenging population factors instead of being aided by them.⁷⁷ In general, a shrinking workforce and shrinking population will mean shrinking economic output, which in turn will mean fewer resources.⁷⁸

In essence, the main problem confronting a sustainable capitalism can be characterized more properly as underpopulation and politics, not overpopulation.⁷⁹ According to Longman, shortages of raw materials may or may not appear in the future, depending on geopolitical and technological factors and advancements,⁸⁰ but what makes today’s economic growth unsustainable is the consumption of more human capital than it produces.⁸¹ As the economy demands increasingly more education from its workers and provides them with neither time nor money to educate their replacements in the next generation, the stock of human capital falls and is not easily renewed, with the consequences being disastrous.⁸²

Conclusion

A capitalism “in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious” is unsustainable.⁸³ A sustainable capitalism must emphasize the “how” as well the “what” of social and political conditions of economic activity, seeing not only to rules but also to the moral quality and meaning of capitalism as well.⁸⁴ A capitalism in which the human person is viewed as a nontranscendent, regulated commodity is inherently unsustainable and contradictory. In order to transcend contradiction in seeking a sustainable capitalism, *man’s principal resource, which is man himself*, must be cultivated and respected above all others.

Notes

1. For an enlightening perspective here, see Luigi Zingales, *A Capitalism for the People: Recapturing the Lost Genius of American Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).
2. John Bussey, “If the Election Is About Capitalism, What Does That Mean?” *The Wall Street Journal Europe Edition* (July 26, 2012), B1, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444840104577551392833041130.html>.
3. Bussy, “If the Election Is About Capitalism,” B1.
4. Bussy, “If the Election Is About Capitalism,” B1.
5. Bussy, “If the Election Is About Capitalism,” B1.
6. *Oxford Dictionary of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 62, s.v. “capitalism.”
7. *Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, 62–65, s.v. “capitalism.”
8. *Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, 62–65, s.v. “capitalism.”
9. *Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, 62–65, s.v. “capitalism.”
10. Delving deeper, the etymology of the word *capitalism* is revelatory as well. Frederic Pryor explains:

“Capitalism,” of course, is derived from “capital.” The latter word comes from the Latin words *capitalis*, *capitale*, which in Western Europe in the Middle Ages designated, among others, “property” and “wealth.” In classical Latin, however, “property” was designated by a different word, namely *caput*. The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1906–1912, vol. 3: 43–44) provides examples of this usage: for instance, around 30 BC, Horace employed it to indicate “property” in his *Satire 1* (bk. 2, li. 14). Several decades after Horace, Livy also employed the word with roughly the same meaning. A common derivation linking “capita” to “head of cattle” (hence wealth) appears to be incorrect. Berger also claims the word “capitalism,” designating owners of capital, seems to have first appeared in the seventeenth century, although other scholars place the origins of this word a century later.

See Frederic L. Pryor, *Appendices of Capitalism Reassessed* (2010), available at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/Economics/fpryor1/Appendices.pdf>.
11. *The Merriam Webster Dictionary Online*, s.v. “capitalism,” accessed September 14, 2012, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/capitalism>.
12. *The Oxford Dictionary Online*, s.v. “capitalism,” accessed September 14, 2012, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/capitalism>.
13. *The Cambridge Dictionary Online*, s.v. “capitalism,” accessed September 14, 2012, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/capitalism?q=capitalism>.

14. John Paul II, encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus* (May 1, 1991), 42.
15. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 42.
16. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 42.
17. See Pope John Paul II, encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor* (August 6, 1993), 32:

As is immediately evident, *the crisis of truth* is not unconnected with this development. Once the idea of a universal truth about the good, knowable by human reason, is lost, inevitably the notion of conscience also changes. Conscience is no longer considered in its primordial reality as an act of a person's intelligence, the function of which is to apply the universal knowledge of the good in a specific situation and thus to express a judgment about the right conduct to be chosen here and now. Instead, there is a tendency to grant to the individual conscience the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil and then acting accordingly. Such an outlook is quite congenial to an individualist ethic, wherein each individual is faced with his own truth, different from the truth of others. Taken to its extreme consequences, this individualism leads to a denial of the very idea of human nature.

18. John Paul II goes on to say,

The attempt to set freedom in opposition to truth, and indeed to separate them radically, is the consequence, manifestation, and consummation of another more serious and destructive dichotomy, that which separates faith from morality.... Totalitarianism arises out of a denial of truth in the objective sense. If there is no transcendent truth, in obedience to which man achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people. Their self-interest as a class, group or nation would inevitably set them in opposition to one another. If one does not acknowledge transcendent truth, then the force of power takes over, and each person tends to make full use of the means at his disposal in order to impose his own interests or his own opinion, with no regard for the rights of others.... Thus, the root of modern totalitarianism is to be found in the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who, as the visible image of the invisible God, is therefore by his very nature the subject of rights which no one may violate—no individual, group, class, nation or State. (*Veritatis Splendor*, 88, 99)

19. See generally Marguerite A. Peeters, "A Spousal Hour," *Ave Maria Law Review* 8, no. 1 (Fall 2009): 1–12 and idem, *The Globalization of the Western Cultural Revolution* (Brussels: Institute for Intercultural Dynamics, 2007), 1–18. She explains that the freedom to choose by the individual, even to choose against that which is contrary to his or her nature, has now become foundational to a new vision of global ethics. Peeters argues that this deconstructionist juridical anthropology yields increasingly elusive bonds of unity at both the national and international levels where it is found.
20. Peeters sustains that the classical institutions and values were not replaced as such but greatly reinterpreted such that the effect is paramount to an erosion and out-

- right refusal of the ideas on which the original institutions were built. See Peeters, *A Spousal Hour*.
21. Robert Sirico adds, “Civilizations fail. The reason they fail is also plain. When civilizational virtues are eroded from within, people lose the capacity to defend the good things those habits enabled previous generations to achieve...” See Robert A. Sirico, *Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy* (Washington: Regnery, 2012), 2.
 22. See Peeters, *A Spousal Hour*, 3–10.
 23. John Paul II, Address of His Holiness John Paul II to the Participants in the Colloquium on “Capitalism and Ethics” (January 14, 1992), 2.
 24. John Paul II, Post-Synodal apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day (March 25, 1992), 7.
 25. The Pontifical Council for the Family notes that sustainable development is “a development where the different factors are brought into harmony so as to avoid unbalanced growth and the waste of resources. The developed countries define for other countries what must be, from their point of view, ‘sustainable development.’ This explains why certain rich countries and major international organizations are willing to help these countries, but on one condition that they accept programs for the systematic control of their births.” See Pontifical Council for the Family, “Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends” (May 13, 1994), <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/pcfifrend.htm>.
 26. Peeters notes that a fruit of the Cultural Revolution is a dramatic shift in the way policy and decisions are made, often through the use of veiled language designed to imply equality, that yields undemocratic imposition in practice. Some examples of changes she cites are “from government to governance; from hierarchy to equal partnerships; from representation to participation; from majority vote to consensus-building; from institutional power to people-power; from authority to empowerment; from identity to diversity; from formal to informal; from majority power to the power of minorities; from hard to soft; from content to process; from intergovernmental to multistakeholder; from national sovereignty to global governance, and so on.” See Peeters, *The Globalization of the Western Cultural Revolution*, 2–3; and Jesús Colina, “In the Wake of Cultural Revolution: Interview with Author Marguerite Peeters,” *Zenit.org* (June 24, 2008).
 27. Pontifical Council for the Family, “Dimensions of Population Trends.”
 28. Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, Statement by H.E. Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See at the Economic and Social Council 44th Session of the Commission on

“Population and Development, Fertility, Reproductive Health and Development” (April 12, 2011), <http://www.holyseemission.org/statements/statement.aspx?id=72>.

29. Statement by H.E. Archbishop Francis Challikatt.
30. The argument would proceed as follows: “Essentially if there were fewer poor children there would be less need to provide education; that if there were fewer poor women giving birth then there would be less maternal mortality; and, that if there were fewer people needed to be fed then malnutrition would be more easily addressed and that greater resources could be allocated to development.” See Statement by H.E. Archbishop Francis Challikatt.
31. John Paul II, Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to the Secretary General of the International Conference on Population and Development (March 18, 1994), 6.
32. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, reflecting on John Paul II, adds,

However, mindful of what he had just written in *Centesimus Annus*, namely, that “the Marxist solution ha[s] failed,” the Pope pointed out the “error of economism (or capitalism)” underlying both systems though at different levels. In *Laborem Exercens*, of 1981, he had already explained that “economism” viewed “human labour solely according to its economic purpose.... Economism directly or indirectly includes a conviction of the primacy and superiority of the material, and directly or indirectly places the spiritual and the personal in a position of subordination to material reality.”

See Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, Remarks by H.E. The Most Rev. Celestino Migliore, Apostolic Nuncio to Poland, on “Catholic Social Teaching and the International Economic Crisis” (February 24, 2012), 4.
33. Pope John Paul II, encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* (September 14, 1998).
34. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 34.
35. “Human language may be conditioned by history and constricted in other ways, but the human being can still express truths which surpass the phenomenon of language. Truth can never be confined to time and culture; in history it is known, but it also reaches beyond history.” See *Fides et Ratio*, 95.
36. Benedict explains, “We are continually obliged to undertake new demythologizing in order that reason may truly come into its own.” See Pope Benedict XVI, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroad; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 27.
37. He states concerning love that it “has become one of the most frequently used and misused of words, a word to which we attach quite different meanings” and as such he “cannot simply prescind from the meaning of the word in the different cultures and in present-day usage.” See Benedict XVI, encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* (December 25, 2005), 2.

38. Carlo Lottieri makes the point well:

When Leoni ... presents an analogy between two media as different as language and currency, his intent is to show that, apart from the obvious “artificial” aspects, these institutions rest on objective elements. This is demonstrated by the fact that, in general, any currency can be converted into another and any text written in one language can be rewritten in another. This is true for law as well. For Leoni, in fact, there is a postulate from which it is necessary to move: that there is a “minimum common meaning” for the term “law,” and thus any linguistic or other analysis ends up, one way or another, having its justification in the universe of social relations. Languages are translated because, beyond conventional elements that exist in any language, the communication is based on conceptual meanings. Currencies can be converted because they all refer to economic values.

See Bruno Leoni, *Law, Liberty, and the Competitive Market*, ed. Carlo Lottieri (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 23.

39. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 32.

40. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), 276.

41. Address of Card. Tarcisio Bertone, Holy Father’s Secretary of State to Representatives of the Aspen Institutes from Around the World (October 15, 2010).

42. Jay W. Richards, *Money, Greed, and God* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 206–7.

43. Robert Sirico writes: “The point is elementary: you can’t have sustainable capitalism without capital; you can’t have capital without savings; and you can’t save if you’re running around spending everything you’ve just earned.” One could add: you can’t have sustainable capitalism without human capital; you can’t have human capital without families; and you can’t have families if governments actively suppress them. See Sirico, *Defending the Free Market*, 3–4.

44. See Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 44; Ennio Antonelli, *La Famiglia è Vita* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012), 99–111; and Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Touchstone, 1983), 156–86.

45. Richards, *Money, Greed, and God*, 206–7.

46. Richards, *Money, Greed, and God*, 206–7.

47. Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, Remarks by H.E. The Most Rev. Celestino Migliore.

48. Peeters, *A Spousal Hour*, 11. Interestingly, as a corollary to the “globalization of the western cultural revolution” and “new global ethic” described by Marguerite Peeters, John Paul II in his 1995 address to the United Nations noted that “we are witnessing an extraordinary global acceleration of that quest for freedom which is

one of the great dynamics of human history” in that “men and women throughout the world, even when threatened by violence, *have taken the risk of freedom*, asking to be given a place in social, political, and economic life which is commensurate with their dignity as free human beings.” John Paul II explains that there is an “*inner structure* of this worldwide movement” in which “its global character which offers us its first and fundamental ‘key’ and confirms that there are indeed universal human rights, rooted in the nature of the person, rights which reflect the objective and inviolable demands of a *universal moral law*.” This inner structure reveals a “*moral logic* which is built into human life and which makes possible dialogue between individuals and peoples” whereby “the universal moral law written on the human heart is precisely that kind of ‘grammar’ which is needed if the world is to engage this discussion of its future.” See John Paul II, Address of His Holiness John Paul II at the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (October 5, 1995).

49. Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, Remarks by H.E. The Most Rev. Celestino Migliore, 7–10.
50. Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, Remarks by H.E. The Most Rev. Celestino Migliore, 7–10.
51. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* describes it accordingly,

Being a person in the image and likeness of God ... involves existing in a relationship, in relation to the other “I,” because God himself, one and triune, is the communion of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In the communion of love that is God, and in which the Three Divine Persons mutually love one another and are the One God, the human person is called to discover the origin and goal of his existence and of history. The Council Fathers ... teach that the Lord Jesus Christ ... has opened up new horizons closed to human reason by implying that there is a certain parallel between the union existing among the divine Persons and the union of the children of God in truth and love.

See Pontifical Council, *Compendium*, 34–35.

52. John Paul II explains:

In defense of the human person, the church stands opposed to the imposition of limits on family size and to the promotion of methods of limiting births which separate the unitive and procreative dimensions of marital intercourse, which are contrary to the moral law inscribed on the human heart or which constitute an assault on the sacredness of life. Thus sterilization, which is more and more promoted as a method of family planning, because of its finality and its potential for the violation of human rights, especially of women, is clearly unacceptable; it poses a most grave threat to human dignity and liberty when promoted as part of a population policy. Abortion, which destroys existing human life, is a heinous evil, and it is never an acceptable method of family planning.

See John Paul II, *Population Draft Document Criticized*, 5.

53. Permanent Observer of the Holy See, The Holy See's Explanation of Position at the Commission on Population and Development (April 2011), 3, 4.
54. Permanent Observer, Explanation of Position, 3, 4.
55. See John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 42.
56. *The Oxford Dictionary Online*, s.v. "thing," accessed September 14, 2012, at <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/thing?q=thing>.
57. *The Oxford Dictionary Online*, s.v. "exchange," accessed September 14, 2012, at <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/exchange?q=exchange>.
58. *The Oxford Dictionary Online*, s.v. "development," accessed September 14, 2012, at <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/development?q=development>.
59. Population Research Institute, *Seven Billion People: Cause to Celebrate?* at <http://pop.org/content/seven-billion-people-cause-celebrate>.
60. Philip Longman, *The Empty Cradle: How Falling Birthrates Threaten World Prosperity and What to Do About It* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 4.
61. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 4.
62. For a thoughtful analysis here, see Jonathan Last, *What to Expect When No One's Expecting: America's Coming Demographic Disaster* (New York: Encounter Books, 2013), 12–37.
63. Douglas Sylva and Susan Yoshihara, eds., *Population Decline and the Remaking of Great Power Politics* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2012), 34.
64. Sylva and Yoshihara, *Population Decline*, 70.
65. Sylva and Yoshihara, *Population Decline*, 70.
66. Sylva and Yoshihara, *Population Decline*, 70–71.
67. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21.
68. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22.
69. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22. For the scale of the entitlement challenges in the American context, see Nicholas Eberstadt, *A Nation of Takers: America's Entitlement Epidemic* (West Conshohocken: Templeton Press, 2012).
70. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22.
71. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22.
72. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22.
73. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22.

74. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22.
75. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22.
76. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 21–22.
77. Sylva and Yoshihara, eds., *Population Decline*, 172.
78. Sylva and Yoshihara, eds., *Population Decline*, 172.
79. Sirico adds, “Dumping money into political situations where corruption is rampant does not promote genuine economic development. Instead it often perpetuates the dysfunctional political and moral cultures that have kept the country’s people in poverty.” See Sirico, *Defending the Free Market*, 53.
80. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 40.

By 1798, the spread of teeming slums in England, along with increasing calls to redistribute wealth to the poor, alarmed the political economist Thomas Malthus enough to inspire his famous Essay on the Principle of Population. In it, he prophesized that human population growth would geometrically outpace the world’s food production, thereby producing mass famine. To this day, Malthusian thinking suffuses the environmental movement and casually informs most people’s thoughts about the future. But if Malthus was right about the factors that limited human population growth before his time, he was exactly wrong about what the next two centuries would bring. For even as human population has increased more than sixfold since the writing of his essay, the amount each person consumes has increased at a far more rapid pace. On a worldwide basis, per capita consumption increased 40 percent faster than population in the nineteenth century, and 34 percent faster in the twentieth century. Instead of widespread famine came a still-expanding system of mass production and mass consumption. Within the United States, population was 3.6 times greater at the end of the twentieth century than at the beginning, but living standards meanwhile are variously estimated to have increased by between 14 and 25 times.

81. Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 134–35.
82. Longman continues:

As the human capital the family creates is effectively taxed away, the family discovers it needs two incomes to sustain itself. Mothers join fathers in the paid workforce, thereby providing employers with new workers, and government with new taxpayers, which helps to replace the workers and taxpayers who are not being born because of the increasing tax on parenthood. The economy at least appears to grow, because the work a woman performs as a nanny, a day care worker, or any other paid employee counts in estimates of gross domestic product, while the work a woman performs as a mother and homemaker does not. The two-paycheck family, moreover, creates increased market demand for a broad range of products—processed foods, business attire, takeout service, an extra car—all of which is fully taxable—and measured gross domestic product increases. But the population ages,

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and the demand for human capital outstrips supply as the family is slowly taxed out of existence and other nurturing institutions are left with insufficient resources to even begin to make up the loss.

See Longman, *The Empty Cradle*, 142–43.

83. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 42.
84. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, 35.