

Democratic Public Discourse in the Coming Autarchic Communities

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Abstract

The main purpose of this article is to tackle the problem of living together – as dignified human beings – in a certain territory in the field of social philosophy, on the theoretical grounding ensured by some remarkable exponents of the Austrian School – and by means of the praxeologic method. Because political tools diminish the human nature not only of those who use them, but also of those who undergo their effects, people can live a life worthy of a human being only as members of some autarchic or self-governing communities. As a spontaneous order, every autarchic community is inherently democratic, inasmuch as it makes possible free involvement, peaceful coordination, free expression and the free reproduction of ideas. The members of autarchic communities are moral individuals who avoid aggression, practice self-control, seek a dynamical efficiency and establish (together with their fellow human beings) a democratic public discourse.

Keywords: democracy, democratic public discourse, libertarian, self-control, non-aggression axiom, spontaneous order, autarchic community

Agreeing with Winston Churchill's famous dictum "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time", the overwhelming majority of public voices within the Euro-Atlantic area (career politicians and prominent voters, academic political scientists and political commentators, mainstream journalists, philosophers and other opinion leaders) claim that democracy is the only acceptable form of political ruling and organization of a society, but also a panacea for all the diseases third-world peoples suffer from: wars,

tyranny, corruption, exploitation, (grinding) poverty, (racial and ethnic, sexual and gender, religious, age, caste, employment, language, disability,...) discrimination, environmental crimes etc. (Minogue 2010). On the other hand, the same voices state, lament or even denounce the fact that an increasing number of citizens choose not to get involved in the political life and that they prefer – as cynical observers – to criticize harshly and scorn those who participate in the ruling of society and who usually carry out their tasks lamentably. Inasmuch as the supposed basic components of the so-called “ruling of the people, by the people, for the people” – the sovereignty of the people, the separation of powers, the human rights protection, the equality before the law, the limitation of government power to interfere in the lives of people or communities, the majority rule in decision making, the protection of minority rights, the open debates on public projects, etc. – seem not to have been understood, appreciated and fructified well enough by the public, the political pundits exhort the communities to adopt various forms of democracy (anticipatory democracy, direct democracy, demarchy / lottocracy, deliberative / discursive democracy, e-democracy, grassroots democracy, interactive democracy, participatory democracy, radical democracy, etc.), to stimulate or to facilitate everyone’s involvement in political discussions and debates and, as a last resort, to accept political participation being compulsory, at least in the case of exercising the right to vote.

For most people it is highly plausible that: (a) the withdrawal of public participation is a major indicator of the erosion of democratic society (Nader 2004, 20), (b) the rich, powerful, well-connected, and intolerant members of a society tend to establish an elitist democracy, using the democratic institutions and procedures to concentrate wealth and power in their hands (Nylen 2003, 4), (c) the enhancement of democracy occurs only through a continuous and dynamic process of democratization of democracy (Vitale 2006, 753), (d) a true democracy is a communicative one, so that citizens should have formal access to both indoor and outdoor spaces for the staging of public events aimed at calling attention to issues, expressing opinions, and calling for action (Young 2002, 169), and (e) legal duty to

vote may be necessary to protect the right to vote for vulnerable minorities or to gain support for a system of proportional representation that is fair to all racial, ethnic or religious groups (Lever 2008, 35). Without questioning the relevance of such statements and the good faith of those who advocate them, we consider, however, that the problem of living together in a certain territory is often imprecisely formulated and fallaciously grounded. On the one hand, there are no specified limits of the population having to live, work and act together, or attributes of the type of cohabitation this population considers convenient (values, goals, processes and relations inside and between communities etc.). On the other hand, there is no indication of any theoretical frame or methodological instruments which together guarantee the reliability of our knowledge on the problem in question. Unconcerned with the validity of increasing knowledge, many authors formulate contingent propositions starting from (unexpressed) questionable assumptions (e.g. “The progressive politicization of communities is necessary and desirable, as concerns collective issues and actions, as well as individuals’ private lives”) or normative propositions directed towards goals groundlessly considered to be both feasible and universally accepted (e.g. “One has to look for the most democratic form of a society’s political organization and the most effective means to involve a population in its practice, in order to make political tools and actions as useful, legitimate and reasonable as possible”).

In order to surpass these shortcomings, we will discuss the problem of cohabitation in a public space appropriate for human nature in the field of social philosophy, on the theoretical grounding ensured by some remarkable exponents of the Austrian School – Ludwig von Mises (1998), Albert Jay Nock (1936; 1950), Frank Chodorov (1959), Robert LeFevre (1966; 1976; 1977), Murray Rothbard (2006; 2009), Hans-Hermann Hoppe (1995; 2001), Jesús Huerta de Soto (2009) etc. – and by means of the *praxeologic* method (von Mises 1998; Rothbard 1976; Hoppe 2001). More precisely, we intend to formulate valid knowledge items about the way some individuals come to live together in self-governing communities by means of establishing a democratic public discourse, in the

shape of *a priori* synthetic propositions about necessary facts and relations. These propositions can be obtained by means of the intellectual apprehension or comprehension of the nature of things, and their validity does not depend on historical experience. (Hoppe 2001, xv) Therefore, we will not attempt to validate – by means of a collection of factual data – some hypothetical propositions (like “Citizens’ jury creates an informed public opinion about what they feel policy makers should do”, “Longer education in public schools will lead to higher productivity”, “Employees are not capable to cover their illness risk” etc.), because they stand for contingent state of affairs and, as such, need to be permanently reevaluated. Contingent propositions do not further valid knowledge and do not deserve to be valued greatly not even in the social sciences. However, we will not try to generate *practical* items of knowledge, as they are inherently subjective, widely dispersed, changeable and often tacit. In correlation with the spontaneous or extended orders, practical knowledge does not help the knowing agent to generate a representation of the field under investigation because collecting and systematizing it is humanly impossible. Connected to unique life experiences, practical items of knowledge are unusable in the field of scientific or objective knowledge. Obviously they are useful to every individual in the context of using entrepreneurial creativity for increasing one’s prosperity. Practical knowledge is generated and fructified by individuals separately when they succeed or fail in the many social games in which they engage. Basically, the theoretical propositions we will derive hereafter are based on the following theses: (1) the bounds of any community are variable and impossible to legitimize by political means; (2) people have the (natural) right to live together as they believe to be right, on the one condition of observing the non-aggression principle; (3) political means are intrinsically evil because they diminish the human nature not only of those who use them, but also of those who undergo their effects; (4) people can live a life worthy of a human being only as members of some autarchic or self-governing communities; (5) every autarchic community is inherently democratic, but not in a political sense; (6) the members of autarchic communities are

moral individuals who avoid aggression, practice self-control, seek a dynamical efficiency and establish (together with their fellow human beings) a democratic public discourse.

Political communities, economic communities, affinity communities

The term “community” is associated with so many and so diverse adjectival phrases – black, Baptist, atheist, Romanian, Kiev Jewish, international, business, academic, scientific, libertarian, fishing, beer-drinking, Romanian facebook, online gothic, Internet cannibal, etc. – that the only fitting definition is that of a group of interacting people that live or grow together. Either in the real world, or in cyberspace, people use race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, region, occupation, worldview, interests, hobbies, fantasies, etc. to affiliate and work together with their fellow men.

The countless and manifold human communities can be grouped in three categories, depending on the following four criteria: (a) the regulatory principle, (b) the essential resources, (c) the specific feedback and (d) the fundamental values.

	Political communities	Economic communities	Affinity communities
Regulatory principle	<i>government / state</i>	<i>market</i>	<i>tradition</i>
Essential resources	<i>command</i>	<i>money</i>	<i>gift</i>
Feedback	<i>reward vs. punishment</i>	<i>profit vs. loss</i>	<i>integration vs. isolation</i>
Fundamental values	<i>justice / equity</i>	<i>efficiency / productivity</i>	<i>charity / solidarity</i>

1. Types of human communities

Political communities are delimited by the state by means of commands, i.e., through prescriptions establishing – by force or by threats of using force – a certain ratio of forces between

individuals, groups or social classes, a certain mechanism to redistribute wealth and a certain path of evolution for social order. In democratically organized political communities, the commands are called laws and are declaratively grounded on the value of justice (or equity); they establish rewards for those who observe the instituted social order and sanctions for those who transgress it.

The term “state” is surrounded by a halo of connotations, so that the definition one professes – however descriptive and axiologically neutral – reveals a certain philosophy of life and a certain perspective on society. Thus, people who are actively involved in government and as such are more aware of the advantages than of the disadvantages are inclined to consider the state being made up of the territory and the population on which this organization exerts its authority. Conversely, people who dislike political means and are more preoccupied by the fact that their freedom to follow (peacefully) their own path to happiness is restricted and that they are deprived (through taxes and contributions) of the fruits of their labor consider the state to be only a component part of society. Those who – out of fear or shame – avoid assuming responsibility for using political means tend to consider the state an impersonal structure, made up of institutions, authorities and other abstract entities. Contrariwise, those who value personal autonomy treat the state as an ensemble of individuals who are responsible individually and collectively for every activity where political means are used. Finally, people who wallow in a “praxeological myopia” tend to accept the modification (i.e. the extension) of the state domain, on the one condition of profiting – in the short run – from certain positive effects, whatever the negative short term consequences on other categories of individuals or long term effects on the whole of society and whatever the immoral political means. By contrast, individuals with a vision and an acute sense of individual and collective responsibility tend to concentrate on the fairness of the intended goals and the honesty of the means chosen to attain them. In the light of these specifications, we subscribe to the definitions of the concept of state given by libertarian thinkers, such as the sound observation of Franz Oppenheimer that the state “is a social

institution, forced by a victorious group of men on a defeated group, with the sole purpose of regulating the dominion of the victorious group over the vanquished, and securing itself against revolt from within and attacks from abroad“. (Oppenheimer 1926, 18) Thus, for Hans-Herman Hoppe, the government is “a territorial monopolist of compulsion – an agency which may engage in continual, institutionalized property rights violations and the exploitation – in the form of expropriation, taxation and regulation – of private property owners.” (Hoppe 1995, 94) In a similar manner, Murray N. Rothbard said that the state is “that organization in society which attempts to maintain a monopoly of the use of force and violence in a given territorial area; in particular, it is the only organization in society that obtains its revenue not by voluntary contribution or payment for services rendered but by coercion.” (Rothbard 2009, 1)

The following implications can be derived from the definitions above: (a) the state is an element apart of any society, so that not even a totalitarian state coincides with the society it governs; (b) the state is not an abstract entity, but an ensemble of individuals, who are individually and collectively responsible for their actions; (c) the state holds the compulsory monopoly to use force proactively for obtaining the resources necessary for it to function, as well as for establishing rules of conduct for the whole society; (d) the sphere of action of the democratic state is confined by the eminently public nature of both transacted goods and services and of the social environment where the goods are created and distributed.

Economic communities are shaped out by voluntary exchanges of private goods and are governed by market laws (especially those of supply and demand). Economic transactions are lubricated by the most marketable commodity – money – and the people involved in them are motivated by the will to maximize their profits and to reduce or even eradicate losses. The fundamental value of economic activities is efficiency or productivity. The market is a very democratic regulatory mechanism, as all those who possess the specific systemic resource – money – are free to obtain the goods they want and to enjoy them exclusively. The market establishes no artificial

barrier (such as origin, intelligence, education, profession, or high moral values) between the consumer and the desired product. And yet the market discourages those who are unproductive and ineffective in consuming scarce products, coveted more by those both productive and efficient. The quantity and quality of private goods transacted on the market, and the exclusivity of those goods makes the effort of acquiring them take place in a climate marked by envy, rivalry and competition.

The affinity communities are governed by the regulatory mechanism of tradition, the essential resource is the gift (or gratuitous help), feedback takes the shape of integration or isolation of social agents, and the fundamental values of action are charity and solidarity. Viewed as an ensemble of heritages, conceptions, myths, legends, superstitions, customs, beliefs, etc. passed on from one generation to the next, tradition fashions – in a narrow – the behaviors of the individuals involved in various voluntary associations: families, parishes, clubs, (sport, charity, neighbors') clubs, think tanks, etc. Gratuitous help strengthens personal virtues, decreases the cost of living and increases the community's cohesion. Affinity communities are favorable environments for learning self-rule, inhibiting aggressive tendencies and voluntary coordinating efforts in collective projects.

Political, economic and affinity communities are intrinsically variable. Throughout time, they ceaselessly change their composition, values, interpersonal processes and relations, territory, etc. Interestingly enough, the variability is unanimously recognized and accepted in economic and affinity communities, but is denied or abusively interpreted by political communities. Nobody is surprised when a joint venture is ended, a rental contract is canceled, a married couple divorces, a religious denomination suffers a schism, a charity changes its target audience, etc. without violent conflicts. It seems to be axiomatic that no one needs to use violence in order to associate with or dissociate from someone. Obviously, this does not mean that there is no resentment or non-canceled manifestation of discontent: avoidance, defamation, discrimination, boycott, etc. However, in the case of political communities, state agencies

invoke the argument of legitimacy to maintain or extend – by force or by threats of using force – a certain territory. Thus, variability is accepted only in the sense of augmentation, in no case in that of diminution. But neither language, religion, nor the past justifies incorporating individuals or groups in a political community despite their will. Besides, history confirms the contingency of all political communities (gilgic 2007). A state agency does not control a certain territory thanks to the legitimacy of its borders, but by its political force.

By choosing freely to integrate peacefully in certain communities or to leave others, each person looks for his own path to happiness, appreciating subjectively the benefits derived from taking decisions. The only legitimate thing in this context is precisely everyone's freedom to live together with other people in those communities he considers adequate to his aspirations.

The non-aggression axiom as golden mean

Whatever the political, economic or affinity communities they are involved in, all individuals relate (implicitly or explicitly) to the libertarian non-aggression principle, living their life in strict accordance with the logical implications of the position they adopt. The non-aggression axiom asserts that aggression is inherently illegitimate, that is to say, the *initiation* of physical force against persons or property, the threat of such, or fraud upon persons or their property is unjustified under any circumstances. Since reason is the essential human trait, it is necessary for all of us to deal with other people through reasoning and persuasion rather than violence and coercion. (Wiebe 2010) We should keep in mind, however, that the non-aggression principle forbids the initiation of (physical) violence, and not any use of force. To deal with others through force is to act in a subhuman manner, like a beast of prey; but refusing to use force against aggressors is to act in a superhuman way, like a saint. The non-aggression principle can be seen as striking an appropriate balance – a Golden Mean – between subhuman aggression and superhuman pacifism. (Long 1999, 123-124) As upholders of the non-aggression axiom, libertarians abstain

from initiating force, but can resort to violence to protect themselves from aggressors.

The people who relinquish violence as means of regulating social relations progressively learn to practice self-control by tempering their affects, drives, passions, thoughts, etc. which can make them appear as aggressors to their fellow men. Preoccupied to rule themselves, they usually have no interest in ruling others. (By contrast, those who make no effort to control themselves tend to govern other people arbitrarily.) As they have only their reason and persuasion to obtain what they want from the members of the community they are part of, libertarians are forced to pursue only reasonable and generally acceptable goals. Governed by the *quid pro quo* principle, they act so that the desired results – due to the added value they create – are appreciated and desired by their fellow men. The non-aggression principle inspires the love of liberty. Those who do not try to appropriate (by means of molestation and spoliation) the fruit of other peoples' labor can only attain their goals by freely using their faculties and resources. Convinced of the benefits of the freedom to accomplish personal objectives by fully using one's capabilities, they grant freedom a universal value, more so as they accept the Kantian maxim that the human being is always a purpose, not a means. Individuals who acknowledge the freedom they enjoy develop an acute sense of responsibility and take on obligations in relation to the consequences of their actions. Self-control, consideration for the life and property of the others, the commitment to offer value for value, the love of freedom and the high level of responsibility prove to be indispensable moral ingredients in the fight against mass values. The mass man can be found in a position of leadership in the church, in business, in the classroom, on the farm, in government and all committee-type organizations. He lives by a double standard of morality; more exactly, he acts in the mass (collective, committee, commission, organization, etc.) in a manner inferior to the way he acts on his own responsibility. (Read 1962, 50) By developing a unitary personality, the true libertarian is the exact opposite of the mass man. He always manifests himself as a factor of organic growth of the communities he is part of.

The traits of the people who prefer to acquire the goods they desire by means of coercion are obviously contrary to the libertarians' attributes: (a) instead of practicing self-control, they strive to control the others; (b) by choosing the status of predator instead of producer, they systematically engage in infringing on the life, liberty and property of their neighbors; (c) not being engaged in voluntary goods exchange, they have no consideration for the value for value principle; (d) because they do not need freedom to fructify their faculties and resources, they interact with other people based on the relationship master-slave; (e) in the absence of freedom, they behave irresponsibly, at most accepting the idea of social responsibility; (f) in most interaction situations within a community, they apply double moral standards.

Essentially, the non-aggression principle is trespassed by two categories of individuals: *the villains* (thieves, bullies, criminals, procurers, rapists, etc.) and *the statists* (politicians, lobbyists, voters, sinecurists, etc.). The former frankly admit the violent and immoral nature of their means, whereas the latter insist on the so-called legitimate nature of the coercive actions they perform. Although engaging in a milder form of aggression, politicians – reunited in a political agency – radically debase the life of all human communities. Thus, for economic communities, the state agency turns into a population poverty factor, because it (a) reduces the financial capital accessible to entrepreneurs (by increasing public debt), (b) turns the workforce from directly productive activities (by increasing corruption), (c) generally restricts market resources (by taxation), (d) penalizes the frugality, prudence and future planning of some of people (through inflation), (e) disorients entrepreneurs (through preferential credit, tax exemptions, bonuses, overtaxing, excises, etc.), (f) hampers the equilibrium of supply and demand (by restricting “excessive” profits), (g) hinders the optimal occupation of the workforce (by guarantying minimum wages and taxing work), (h) makes certain goods or services scarce and inaccessible (through monopoly policies and administered prices), (i) disorients consumers (through stimulating programs like “The Clunker”, “The First Home”, etc.), by making them buy goods they do not

need or that exceed their level of productivity at unfair prices, (j) exacerbates the consumers' expectancies (by proclaiming a so-called welfare right), so that many people take on a much too high life standard, to the detriment of the future generations, etc. (Farte 2010, 116) When intervening in the affinity communities, the state agency dissocializes, alters the maturing process of individuals and hampers the learning of virtues. Thus, the "generous" social assistance services have reduced the economic and mutual aid functions of the family, parish and local community. The decay of domestic economy and taking care of the elders by the state made children undesirable, as can be seen by the proliferation of contraceptive practices (and accepting the most inhumane form of contraception, abortion, as something natural). Consequently, the institution of marriage became superfluous, because in the absence of children, adults no longer need a home and a special form of solidarity. Without fertile conjugal relations, the partners are no longer bound to mutual fidelity and have no sufficient motivation to build an exclusive lifelong partnership. The state's paternalism discourages young people to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, as can be seen in prolonged schooling (often continuing after 30 years of age). If the state did not make private life problems public (education, working place, family, income source, health, etc.), people would take their lives into their own hands sooner and would not wait for certain "political commissioners" to take care of their personal problems. (Farte 2010, 116-117)

Examining the consequences of observing *versus* violating the non-aggression principle, we may say that true libertarians have a natural right to live together in various communities as they see fit, as long as the rules of action they follow necessarily generate benefits and do not prejudice the others. On the other hand, those who disregard the non-aggression axiom affect the welfare of other people whatever the communities they are part of, the goals they pursue and the justifications they bring to support their actions.

Are political means intrinsically evil?

Yes, they are. Political means are necessarily incongruous with legitimacy, rationality and utility, even if used by a democratic government.

The lack of legitimacy characterizes the agents of political actions, the desired political goals and the range of applicability of political means. Basically, any action that violates the non-aggression axiom is illegitimate, but for the sake of the argument, we could accept individual and collective self-binding actions as legitimate. Democratic states seem to be in the latter case, as they affirm that society is self-governed (or self-controlled), either directly, by referendum, or indirectly, through its representative institutions. Yet no society has ever been fully validly represented. For example, the report on the final results of the elections for the Chamber of Deputies on the 30th of November 2008 indicate that the entire Romanian people (roughly 21,500,000 people) was not called to choose its political representatives, but only 85% of its members (that is 18,464,274), who were on the electoral lists. Out of these, only 6,886,794 (about 32% of the total population of Romania) manifested their sovereignty by valid votes, and the parties that exert the political power in the name of the sovereign people (The Liberal-Democrat Party and The Magyar Democratic Union of Romania) were delegated by 2,653,868 voters (representing 12.34% of the population of Romania). (BEC 2008) Under these conditions, the representativeness of the Romanian government is no better legitimized than an oligarchy or a monarchy. The difference is more one of degree rather than nature. In relation to the objectives pursued, legitimacy seems to derive from the agreement of the members of the community regarding their pertinence. The question remains however as to whether the objectives of political actions are legitimized by the number of persons who approve them and whether the circumstances of reaching majority are correctly defined. The majority may be wrong about the pertinence of an objective as well as an individual, and what the majority approves of on a regional scale may be rejected by the majority on a national or, why not, global scale. Who can

decide in what context the public support of the majority needs to be acquired? As to the delimitation of the community a state agency is allowed to govern, we think it is practically impossible to find irrefutable criteria. The “cemetery of states” history shows us proves the fact that any government temporarily controls the greatest possible community in rapport with the political means it commands. Race, nationality, language, religion or economic infrastructure are not factors of legitimacy for state borders. All the states are doomed to have variable borders and, finally, to disappear.

Political means are unsuitable also because of the shortage of rationality of the actions undertaken. The advocates of participative democracy remind us of H. L. Mencken’s pithy remark that “democracy is the pathetic belief in the collective wisdom of individual ignorance” (*cf.* Caplan 2007, 3), by their enthusiasm with “the miracle of the [fortunate] aggregation of votes”, i.e., with the fact that the number of well-informed citizens in a society does not influence significantly the result of the election. In other words, it does not really matter if the average citizen’s level of political knowledge is extraordinarily low, because democracy can function well under almost any magnitude of voter ignorance. It follows that as long as ignorant people are not *systematically* mistaken, their individual votes do not radically influence the result of the vote. Unfortunately, as Bryan Caplan noticed, many citizens who exercise their right to vote are not humble agnostics, but self-important ignoramuses, who let prejudices deeply rooted in the collective consciousness hold sway over their actions. Moreover, these biases, prejudices, stereotypes, myths, etc. are speculated in electoral campaigns to create conditioned reflexes in the voters’ ranks.

The pernicious nature of political means is also highlighted by their uselessness. The goods or services that politicians offer do not abide by the law of universality and do not rise to the level of quality desired by citizens. In addition, their distribution by the citizens invariably gives rise to discontent, whatever the variant. First of all, it is practically impossible for a political agency to estimate correctly the needs, desires or expectations of each citizen, not to mention their respective degrees of

urgency or importance. On the market, the intensity of the consumers' desire to have a product is accurately reflected in its price. Yet in the political sphere (where the monopoly of legitimate violence is at work) there are no free prices, but more or less arbitrary costs. Secondly, politicians are not motivated to estimate correctly the needs, desires or wants of each citizen as long as they are in the situation – correctly and ingeniously presented by Milton Friedman – of spending other people's money for other people. (*cf.* Sidewinder77 2009) If they do not assess correctly the consumers' demands, businessmen go bankrupt, lose their capital and exit the market, whereas if they do not estimate accurately the citizens' interests, politicians lose nothing of their own resources and often not even their political influence. Thirdly, the members of the state agency cannot offer goods and services according to the specifics in electoral, and then government program. The need to persuade an electorate that is increasingly unpredictable, greedy and squeamish pushes the politicians to promise on the one hand, an increasing quantity and quality of goods and public services, and decreasing taxes, on the other. But such a promise is obviously contradictory. Politicians are doomed to offer less than they promised, i.e., to cheat the citizens' expectations, not nearly to satisfy (or surpass them). Finally, as Robert Higgs (2009) well noticed, the diversity of the citizens' values, convictions and interests makes formulating a unanimously accepted solution practically impossible, even when there is a consensus on one problem. Especially in a socio-economic context, someone's problem may be someone else's solution. For example, the raise of contributions to the social insurance fund has negative effects on both employees and employers, but ensures the pensions of the elderly. What dissatisfies some reassure the others. Moreover, even in the same category there are different degrees of content and discontent. For example, the same quantum of the building tax makes some tax payers mutter in discontent, while bringing others to despair, pushing them to actions of fiscal disobedience.

By means of democratic public discourse to autarchic communities

It has become a commonplace that man is an imperfect being that lives in an imperfect world. All human beings are (at least partially) dissatisfied with the state of affairs they are in, perceive the scantiness and frailty of their knowledge of reality and are confronted with the scarcity of their (material, intellectual or spiritual) resources when acting to reach certain goals. Furthermore, the higher the level of civilization, the more acutely the vulnerability is perceived. Our ancestors bravely endured terrible calamities, like the plague, famine, religious persecutions or wars, while we whine when confronting a power cut, an Internet connection outage, a waste collectors' strike or a cut in children's allowance. Some time ago, a farmer could build his home all by himself; nowadays a teacher cannot make a writing instrument. Each step onwards on the path of civilization makes us more vulnerable and dependent on the cooperation of our fellow human beings.

Unfortunately, humans are not only marked by discomforts, but also prone to evil. From birth till death they are tempted to commit offences or sins against their neighbors (e.g. gossip, calumny, theft, adultery, rape, murder, etc.), as well as against themselves (e.g. alcoholism, drug addiction, masturbation, self-mutilation, suicide, etc.). Whatever the cause of this penchant to evil – ignorance, original sin, defects of social order, etc. –, it is obvious that without self-control or social control temptation turns into deed. Thus, in order to reach the goals by which we hope to improve our life and in order to resist the temptation to harm, we are bound to live together with our fellow men in a community, in accordance to certain principles and rules of behavior.

Despite of repeated failures throughout the history of humanity, the version of cohabitation in political communities is still appealing. Those who continuously experience the hardships of life, the scarcity of relevant information, the lack of perspective, the dearth of resources and the malice of their fellow men are tempted to accept that there may be an omniscient, omnipotent and beneficent entity capable to solve

all their problems. But no individual or collective agency can organize the myriads of relevant items of information so as to create a social design convenient for all the members of society, more so as the relevance of information depends on their strictly subjective preferences. For example, is it plausible for the Romanian state to have relevant information on the problems *I* consider priorities? And as long as the Romanian state is not preoccupied in acquiring this information, can anyone say it is acting in my best interest? Then, even if an agency had access to all the relevant information regarding all the members of the society, it still could not solve their problems, lacking the necessary means. To go even further, supposing it had the necessary resources to attain all goals, there is still a rare resource remaining, which prevents the actualization of the earthly Paradise, namely time. As long as reaching all goals must be stretched over time, the political agency that is to solve everybody's problems will end up creating privileged people and losers, with the latter having to wait the fulfillment of the former. Last, but not least, once we accept the universality of human malice – at least under the form of inclination or temptation –, can we imagine that the members of the political agencies are pure or at least that they are recruited from the ranks of the most moral members of society? Unfortunately, we can say that things are exactly the opposite. Decent people strongly believe they cannot accomplish good things by initiating aggression, more so as they know the information they detain is fatally insufficient. If the Son of God presented the Gospel as a proposal, who is he so bold as to affirm that grounded on insufficient information and using violence he is doing the work of the Lord? If it is difficult to protect ourselves from the aggression of villains, how much harder is it to defend ourselves from aggression considered to be legitimate.

A convenient alternative for the beings that lack omniscience, omnipotence and innocence is abandoning social engineering projects for self-organizing systems. If the social order strategically imposed by “experts” is necessarily dissatisfying and abusively imposed (at least for some members of society), the spontaneous order – we recognize in the market, the

common law, customs, language, science, the Internet, etc. – is voluntarily accepted and held as beneficial by all persons involved. (diZerega 1989; 2004) It is obvious for everyone that those who decide to sell or buy anything on the market do it of their will, and not pressured by an external agency. Moreover, sellers and buyers alike are satisfied by the results of the transactions carried out, at least at the moment of its completion. Were they not convinced they were receiving the desired benefit, they would be free to refuse the transaction, as in many other situations. Interestingly enough, the spontaneous order reclaims no altruism, self sacrifice, thorough knowledge of reality or high moral standard. Coming back to the spontaneous order of the market, it is obvious that the seller and the buyer act in their own interest. When I buy a loaf of bread for 1.50 lei from the baker, I think it is worth more than 1.50 lei, and the baker, less. Besides, altruism in commercial transactions would be detrimental, as it would distort the feedback of the market and would trigger a misallocation of resources (necessarily rare, as said before). Then, not all the persons involved in the spontaneous order of the market always make the best decisions. Pressured by time, buyers and sellers resort to all the simplifiers of information available to them (commercials, presentation material, journalistic articles, word-of-mouth, posts on forums and online social networks, etc.) and take the risk of a decision partially and subjectively grounded. Yet, even when they fail (talking of failure “not objectively”, but from their own point of view), they still have the advantage of an honest feedback that will help them in future decision making. Finally, the market is a truly democratic institution, as every participant matters as a normal rational agent. The saying “Our client, our master!” illustrates how important every customer is for the seller, whatever the volume of sales. When the market of a product drops by a tenth, sellers become worried and take action to retrieve their loss. When the number of voters is just larger than a third of the total number of electors, the political class does not even comment on the fact. Where is democracy to be found?

The spontaneous order shows its virtues not only on the market, but also in communication. The language of a community is the result of the innumerable semiotic interactions performed by a population throughout its history. Nobody can claim to be its owner, control it or prevent its use in various language games. Unsurprisingly, the enemies of the spontaneous order – the political agencies – seek to control the media of communication as they try to regulate the markets. In societies considered to be democratic, censorship is less obvious because many discover that one can criticize and even slander anybody without being harmed. Few notice, however, that the political agency is ruthless to those who express points of view that can undermine its power. The Julian Assange – Wikileaks case is a perfect illustration of the severity with which actual free expression is repressed. (According to some sources, out of the 251,287 documents representing mail between the State Department of the United States of America and certain American embassies all over the world, only 15,000 were classified. What would the sanction have been had all documents been classified?)

Fortunately, however fierce the censorship some political agencies exercise, public discourse – as an ensemble of messages used to create a space of openness, transparency, evaluation and emergence of natural rules – is a haven of freedom and voluntary cooperation, if not for the masses, then for the supporters of the non-aggression principle. In the last resort, ideas are indestructible and can be infinitely reproduced in peoples' minds from one generation to the next. The new communication technologies – especially the Internet – give public discourse a truly democratic quality. Messages placed in the new media can reproduce virally and reach billions of computers and minds, so that no political agency in the world can control them. Every person *sui generis* involved in this public discourse matters as author, news retailers, commentators, continuators, etc.

The market and public discourse (as institutions associated with the extended or spontaneous order), as well as affinity communities (as institutions associated with narrow order) can be strongholds of the autarchic communities, made up of people

who practice self-control and observe the non-aggression principle. Autarchic communities must not be associated with reservations, ghettos, Black Homelands, monasteries, etc.; in other words, they should not be looked upon as closed and isolated small communities of freaks. A community is characterized by the fact that its members live or develop together and share certain values, customs and interests. It is neither necessary, nor always desirable for the members of an autarchic community to live in the same territory. Geographical concentration makes autarchic communities vulnerable to agencies who initiate aggression. Moreover, departing from one of Albert Jay Nock's ideas, we could add that it is not necessary for the members of an autarchic community to know each other (Nock 1936). It is important for them to be connected to a communicational infrastructure which would make possible free involvement, free expression and the free reproduction of ideas. Autarchic communities are transverse because they comprise supporters of the non-aggression principle belonging to more economic or affinity communities. (Personally, we believe that a self-consistent libertarian should not be involved in a political community not even as a voter. This point is very controversial. In the U.S.A. there is even a libertarian political party, which we consider to be a contradiction in terms.) Being always ready in times of crisis to help selflessly some members of his family, friends, neighbors, members of the parish he belong to etc., every libertarian acts in terms of their self-interest as part of the spontaneous order. His welfare depends on the cultivation of their own entrepreneurial creativity and the coordination with his fellow men. Entrepreneurial creativity is the typically human ability to seek, discover, and overcome different social maladjustments, in other words, the capacity to recognize opportunities for profit which appear in the environment and to act accordingly to take advantage of them. (de Soto 2009, 8-10) The risks they take give entrepreneurs the right to appropriate the results of their creativity. Deprived of the fruits of their entrepreneurial creativity (an always risky enterprise), entrepreneurs lose their motivation to repeat this kind of activities and society loses a vital agent of development.

Throughout the history of humankind, there has always been a remnant of humanity for which self-control, non-aggression, work, mutuality, liberty, responsibility and integrity were values indispensable to a life worthy of a human being. Aware of their own fallibility, they did not strive to create a perfect world, but to respect principles and rules capable to diminish injustice in the world. Autarchic communities do not try to change the world and do not seek to replace the power of political agencies by their own authority. They offer support and encouragement to those who refuse to aggress and govern their fellow men, preferring to control themselves.

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