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**Into the Practical Application of Piecemeal Social Engineering:
Challenges and Solutions**

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“The choice for mankind lies between freedom and happiness and for the great bulk of mankind,
happiness is better.”

— George Orwell, *1984*

Abstract

This thesis will present an analysis of how the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering developed by Karl Popper in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) and in *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957) can be translated from a philosophical notion into a practical attitude. This application of Piecemeal Social Engineering into a practical context raises some challenges, some of which this thesis will look more in depth. The aim of this thesis is therefore to analyse three proposed general problems occurring upon the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering, as well as to answer the question of whether it is possible or not to act in order to solve them and how.

The three problems presented will be divided into ‘structural’ and ‘non-structural’ issues. While it is not possible to act directly upon structural issues since they are negative externalities of the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering, it is possible to reduce them with the continuous application of this method while gaining efficiency from direct experience. On the other hand, despite being ‘unnatural’ to the Piecemeal approach, non-structural issues are liable to be tackled by direct intervention, having a concrete solution. In order to unveil the solution to non-structural problems, it will be analysed whether contemporary Open Societies are sabotaging its fundamental feature of critical reasoning. It will be deduced that the way into the solution to this problem is to rebuild a strong critical reasoning framework within the Open Society, and to use it not only inside the Open Society but to the Open Society framework itself. This endeavour will be based on the idealistic dimension of Piecemeal Social Engineering corresponding to the Tradition of Liberty which not only coexists, but is in fact the foundation for the emergence of individual blueprints within a single Open Society.

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Introduction

In *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) and in *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957) the philosopher Karl Popper identified two different attitudes towards Social Engineering – Utopian and Piecemeal – which constitute two distinct approaches to the way men can interact with social structures in order to alter them. While being recognized by K. Popper that the piecemeal attitude is the only rational approach to social engineering, the study of how it is translated from a philosophical concept into practice becomes in this context paramount. The application of Piecemeal Social Engineering into a practical context raises some challenges, some of which this thesis will look forward to look more in depth. The aim of this thesis is therefore to analyse three proposed general problems occurring due to the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering, as well as to answer the question of whether it is possible to or not to act in order to solve them. While the disclosure of the solutions to the three proposed issues is within the scope of this thesis, a more comprehensive analysis of the solutions is outside its scope due to its superior complexity.

The first chapter of this thesis aims at introducing the concepts which will be used during the whole analysis. In a first instance the concepts of Popperian Open Society and of Closed Society will be presented and contrasted. While the former concept regards the existence of a critical attitude within a certain society, the second avoids the emergence of criticism. Secondly, the enemies of the Open Society – Historicism and Utopianism – will be analysed, and understood the relation between them and the Open Society. A following section will be dedicated to a more comprehensive study of Utopian Social Engineering since during the entire thesis this concept will be used to counterbalance the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering in order to understand how both differ in attempting to interact with social structures. Thirdly in this chapter, the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering will be analysed as well as the concept of Piecemeal Technology which provides a frame from where the Piecemeal approach may flourish. Finally, Utopianism and Piecemeal Social Engineering will

be contrasted and the important distinction between ‘utopian blueprints’ and ‘piecemeal purposes’ will be presented.

The second chapter of this thesis will provide certain considerations important to take into account if one is to apply the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering to practice. It will analyse the how the vagueness of the piecemeal concept makes it harder to understand in detail how it can be applied to practice but that this vagueness is also intentional: without it, a set of guidelines to apply this attitude in practice would resemble a utopian blueprint and lead us to the Utopianist realm. This chapter will also aim at exploring that the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering is necessarily framed within an Open Society and that Liberal Democracy is the closest practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering in contemporary societies.

The third chapter of this thesis will present three challenges to the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering. The first problem corresponds to the ‘Immediate and Permanent Adjustments’ issue, which has to do with the impossibility to extinguish the time gap between the moment where one acts in order to tackle a concrete evil and the corresponding result of such action. This gap may lead to the worsening of the evil and consequently, to a potentially dangerous increase of intervention. Secondly, the ‘Arbitrariness’ Problem has to do with the coexistence within the Open Society of measures in favour and against a certain policy, leading to neutral results or to the impossibility to act at all. Finally, the ‘Motivation Problem’ portrays the difficulty of Piecemeal Social Engineering in presenting itself as a more attractive alternative to Utopianism due to the powerful motivational allure of the utopian blueprint, particularly in times of great social struggle.

The fourth chapter will aim at unveiling the solution to these problems. While the ‘Immediate and Permanent Adjustment’ and ‘Arbitrariness’ problems are considered to be structural, the ‘Motivation Problem’ is depicted as non-structural. Although it is not possible to act directly upon structural issues since they are negative externalities regarding the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering, it is possible to reduce them by continuously applying this method and gaining efficiency from direct experience. On the other hand, non-structural issues despite being more dangerous since they are ‘unnatural’ to the Piecemeal approach, it is

possible to act from the exterior in order to tackle them. In order to unveil the solution to the 'Motivation' problem, this chapter analyses that the contemporary Open Societies may be sabotaging its fundamental feature of critical reasoning. The way into the solution to this problem is then to rebuild a strong critical reasoning framework within the Open Society, and to use it not only to make improvements by trial and error to the conjectures within the Open Society, but to use this Popperian scientific method of conjectures and refutations to the Open Society itself, while defying that Liberal Democracy and the Open Society are the final destination from the path that started in the Closed Society.

Finally, the conclusion of this thesis will provide the understanding that Piecemeal Social Engineering does have an idealistic dimension such as Utopian Social Engineering does, but which is not however in the form of a static and collective utopian blueprint. It is in the form of an ideal and corresponds to the Tradition of Liberty. This idealistic dimension of Piecemeal Social Engineering not only coexists, but it is also the foundation for the emergence of individual blueprints, of plural ways of life, existing within the same Open Society.

Chapter I – Friends and Foes of the Open Society

1. Brief Contextualization: The Concept of Popperian Open Society

The “Open Society¹” is a concept developed by Karl Popper in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945)². It portrays a society which “sets free the critical powers of man”³, where the ability to exert the use of critical reason is most highly valued. It is a society open to criticism, where within a democratic atmosphere⁴ each individual is free to express their own critical views towards the existing conjectures, being also free to proceed to their refutation. Hence, the Open Society is a dynamic arena of conjectures and refutations built upon the critical exercise of reason and within a democratic environment.

The Open Society is opposed to the “Closed Society” which is characterized by “*the belief in magical taboos*”⁵. In the Closed Society, individuals legitimate their source of authority not by an individual sense of responsibility in choosing between the existing options before a democratic consensus is reached, but rather on the belief that a mystical or natural higher force is on the control of such society, regardless of the actions taken by each individual. The Closed Society is therefore closed to criticism, where the unquestioned belief in a higher source of power guides the way of living. It is a society adverse to change, teaching that “*change is evil, and that rest is divine*”⁶.

In *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945)⁷, K. Popper aims at describing the arduous transition from the Closed to the Open Society, analyzing the ‘enemies’ who hinder this

¹ According to K. Popper, the concept of ‘Open Society’ was firstly introduced by Henri Bergson in *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1935). This author however insists in a more religious and moral characterization of the Open Society and in its distinction from the ‘Closed Society’. According to K. Popper, other authors such as Walter Lippmann also referred to the concept of ‘Open Society’ (see LIPPMANN, W. (1943). *The good society*. 1937 ed. New York, Grosset & Dunlap.).

² The concept appears in both volumes of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945).

³ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [xvii]

⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [xviii]

⁵ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [216]

⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. Paul [37]

⁷ The transition from the Closed to the Open society is present in both volumes of this work dated 1945.

process, attempting to drive civilization back to the closed society, abandoning the use of critical reasoning.

In the next sections of this chapter it will be provided a description of two of the most dangerous enemies of the Open Society – Historicism and Utopianism – and of the greatest friend of the Open Society – Piecemeal Social Engineering. In order to proceed to a proper reflection of the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering undertaken in the following chapters of this thesis, this chapter will particularly emphasize the analysis of both Utopian and Piecemeal approaches to social engineering. The aim of this present chapter is therefore to offer an introduction to the concepts approached and to provide a contrast between the two types of social engineering presented by K. Popper, in order to gain a deeper insight into the nature of the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering as a practical attitude.

2. The Enemies of the Open Society: From Historicism to Utopian Social Engineering

2.1. Historicism

The Historicist doctrine constitutes the first enemy to the Open Society presented by K. Popper⁸. It can be characterized by a particular attitude towards the scientific approach to the social sciences, namely in regard to the interpretation of social development. It is a doctrine which establishes that *“history is controlled by specific historical or evolutionary laws whose discovery would enable us to prophesy the destiny of man.”*⁹ To this extent, the scientific role of the social sciences is the discovery of *“the ‘rhythms’ or the ‘patterns’, the ‘laws’ or the ‘trends’”*¹⁰ which allow the prediction of the future unravelling through the historical tissue.

The premise that history unfolds according to certain inexorable laws of destiny is therefore accepted by historicists. Men become mere puppets of an omnipotent historical framework and impotent to bring about any social changes. This degree of powerlessness may vary from extreme out-and-out Historicism to less severe forms of this doctrine which allow

⁸ In *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) and more explicitly in *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957)

⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. Paul [4]

¹⁰ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [3]

some degree of 'activism'¹¹, of the ability to act and to interfere with "human affairs"¹² while denying the future as strictly inevitable¹³.

This *faith*¹⁴ in the inexorable laws of history condemns social sciences to become mere static observers of the unfolding of these laws, being impossible to interact with them and to alter their course. In this context, History is considered the only empirical source of knowledge, and sociology¹⁵ is reduced to the formulation of long-term predictions, aiming to foresee the future course of historical events. "*Sociology thus becomes, to the historicist, an attempt to solve the old problem of foretelling the future ... It is the science of things to come, of impending developments.*"¹⁶ Hence, according to the historicist method, the social sciences would adopt a passive approach towards their object of study. They would only engage into historical observation in order to make future predictions rather than in relying on historical experience and on sociological experiments in order to "*look for the various laws which impose limitations upon the construction of social institutions, or for other uniformities*"¹⁷. This latter attitude towards social sciences opposes Historicism or at least the more extreme forms of Historicism and can be defined as *social engineering*. The idea underneath this approach is "*the planning and construction of institutions, with the aim, perhaps, of arresting or of controlling or of quickening impending social developments*"¹⁸. If out-and-out forms of Historicism regard social

¹¹ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [6-7]

¹² POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [6]

¹³ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [6-7]

¹⁴ Either from an 'optimistic' or 'fatalistic' acceptance of Historicism it counsels us to submit the study of social sciences to the laws of historical development (in POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [45]), in the sense that Historical Laws may be perceived as the progress into an increasingly better social condition or from a fatalistic approach since "*historicism teaches the futility of any attempt to alter impeding changes*" (in POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [46])

¹⁵ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [35]

¹⁶ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [37-38]

¹⁷ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [41]

¹⁸ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [40]

planning and activism worthless “*under the superior sway of historical forces*”¹⁹, less extreme forms of Historicism can indeed accept to some extent, the possibility for men to intervene in the historical tissue.

If on the one hand “*an uncompromising and fully developed historicism would hesitate to admit that man, by any effort, can alter the laws of historical destiny even after he has discovered them*” and “*it would hold that he cannot work against them, since all his plans and actions are means by which the inexorable laws of development realize his historical destiny*”²⁰, a softer version of Historicism is compatible²¹ with social engineering.

K. Popper also argues that beyond compatible, the “*most obvious alternative to an out-and-out historicism*”²² is what he termed “Utopianism” or “Utopian Social Engineering”. Hence, by being a “*convincing and attractive*”²³ doctrine and “*the kind of methodological approach to attract all those who are either unaffected by historicist prejudices or reacting against them*”²⁴, Utopianism is considered by the author “*more dangerous, and its criticism more imperative.*”²⁵ It is in this context of less severe cases of Historicism that Utopianism breaks through. Although it is not exclusively necessary that all utopian thinkers are also Historicists, this “*combination is representative of quite a number of social and political philosophers who produced what have been later described as Utopian systems.*”²⁶

¹⁹ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [40]

²⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [19]

²¹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [167]

²² POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166]

²³ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [167]

²⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [167]

²⁵ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [167], see also Ibid. [166], where K. Popper states directly it is “*the most dangerous*” approach towards politics.

²⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [22]

2.2. Utopian Social Engineering (or Utopianism)

Utopian Social Engineering is the second enemy of the Open Society analysed in this thesis. It was previously seen that it emerges as an alternative to Historicism, although it is compatible with softer forms of this doctrine. It aims at designing and acting upon social institutions, denying the absolute impotence of men towards the historical laws of destiny.

Utopianism is based on the creed that it is possible to reach an ideal state of society portrayed by a utopian blueprint. This blueprint is rationally chosen and constitutes the culmination of the work of the utopian engineer. Utopian engineering aims at channelling all the resources and efforts from a given society to the accomplishment of the blueprint which is continuously and consciously pursued. K. Popper highlights the difference between ‘final’ and ‘intermediary’ steps in the pursuit of the utopian end²⁷. While the final step corresponds to the utopian blueprint itself, the intermediary steps are necessary milestones, crucial to reach the blueprint. These intermediary steps are not dispensable; they are part of the process to achieve the utopian blueprint, not being ends in themselves.

In “Æstheticism, Perfectionism, Utopianism”²⁸, K. Popper provided an extensive criticism of Utopian Social Engineering, which will be further analysed in four topics. This analysis will provide a further understanding of the distinguishing features of Utopianism and why it is considered to be the most dangerous approach towards politics²⁹.

The first important aspect to take into consideration, is that in order to implement a blueprint that would culminate into an ideal state, a strong centralized leadership is needed and is likely to lead to an authoritarian government³⁰ with the rule of a few. Although the utopian blueprint is many times designed to accomplish high ideals of happiness or freedom for all, the benevolent dictator will face issues regarding the lag between his original ‘good’ intentions and the criticism that some individuals may present due to the fact that a certain blueprint may not

²⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166-178]

²⁸ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166-167]

²⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166]

³⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [169]

represent – and it most probably does not – the same standard of ideal society for everyone. The benevolent dictator will hence be obliged to suppress dissident opinions and criticism so that the ‘perfect plan’ can be implemented. The problem is that not only “*unreasonable objections*” but also “*reasonable criticism*” will be neglected, leading the dictator to a situation where “*without some such check, he can hardly find out whether his measures achieve the desired benevolent aim*”³¹. This situation can escalate to another where violence is used in order to annihilate all criticism, as ultimately, from the benevolent dictator’s eyes, the responsibility for the unsuccessful achievement of the ‘high moral ideal’ embodied in the blueprint will be of those who resist the implementation of such plan, and therefore, of such ‘high moral ideal’.

The second problem of Utopian Engineering is of the “dictator’s successor”. This problem arises from the fact that the time span needed for the full implementation of the blueprint will largely exceed that of the lifetime of the benevolent dictator. Hence, he will be faced with the need to find another equally benevolent dictator to continue the project. However, “*if the successors do not pursue the same ideal, then all the sufferings of the people for the sake of the ideal may have been in vain.*”³² K. Popper argues that the realization of a Utopian Blueprint would require not only “*the Platonic belief in one absolute and unchanging ideal*” but also the rational methods to determine what that ideal is and the determination of the best means for its realization. He then settles that “*only such far-reaching assumptions could prevent us from declaring the Utopian methodology to be utterly futile*”³³ arguing that even the most ardent Platonists would acknowledge that there is no rational method to compose the aim, other than one based on intuition, leading him to his conclusion: “*any difference of opinion between Utopian engineers must therefore lead, in the absence of rational methods, to the use of power instead of reason, i.e. to violence.*”³⁴

³¹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [169]

³² POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [169-170]

³³ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [170]

³⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [171]

The third problem of Utopian Engineering emphasised by K. Popper and somehow related to the previous one is that *“Utopian plans will never be realized in the way they were conceived, because hardly any social action ever produces precisely the result expected.”*³⁵

Finally, the fourth issue of Utopian Engineering can be illustrated by Montesquieu’s idea of a despotic government: *“When the savages of Louisiana wish to have fruit, they cut the tree at the bottom and gather the fruit. That is exactly a despotic government.”*³⁶ Utopian engineers are also moved by the impetus to cut the tree at the bottom and gather the fruit. If the fruit can be embodied by the implementation of a blueprint, the act of cutting the tree at the bottom is analogous to what K. Popper referred to as “canvas cleaning” which is *“the conviction that one has to go to the very root of social evil, that nothing short of a complete eradication of the offending social system will do if we wish to ‘bring any decency into the world’”*³⁷. This idea was already present in the second issue where the benevolent dictator would ultimately violently suppress all sorts of criticism in order to “bring decency into the world”. Canvas cleaning is related to an uncompromising radicalism³⁸ and has a particular shade worth analysing – æstheticism. Æstheticism is *“the desire to build a world which is not only a little better and more rational than ours, but which is free from all its ugliness: not a crazy quilt, and old garment badly patched, but an entirely new gown, a really beautiful new world.”*³⁹ K. Popper recognizes that we may all *“suffer a little from such dreams of perfection”* but if it is not backed by reason, by responsibility and a sense of humanity it becomes *“a dangerous enthusiasm, liable to develop into a form of neurosis or hysteria”*⁴⁰ which will propel the utopian dictator to eradicate the old ‘evil’ institutions, traditions and elements of the old society in order to establish new ‘good’ society, moved by a sense of purification. This

³⁵ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [173]

³⁶ Chapter XIII from MONTESQUIEU, C. D. S., NUGENT, T., PRICHARD, J. V., COLE, G. D. H., & ROUSSEAU, J.-J. (1955). The spirit of laws. Chicago, Encyclopædia Britannica.

³⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [174]

³⁸ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [174]

³⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [174]

⁴⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [174]

unrestrained radicalism and æstheticism replace rational reasoning by “*a desperate hope for political miracles*”⁴¹ that can only be regarded as irrational as this “*intoxication with dreams of a beautiful world*” will always appeal “*to our emotions rather than to reason*”⁴². To this, K. Popper designates as *Romanticism*. Romanticism can also be associated with the belief that in a certain unknown future moment the dream “*of the apocalyptic revolution*” will “*radically transfigure the whole social world.*”⁴³ This irrational belief, or rather faith, that a perfect future will take place in an unknown time frame, is therefore another characteristic of Romanticism. To this faith, K. Popper refers to as “faith in dogmatic reason”.

3. Piecemeal Social Engineering: The Friend of the Open Society

The concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering appears as the opposing force to Utopian Social Engineering according to K. Popper. It is presented by the author not only as the single rational⁴⁴ alternative to Utopian Social Engineering, but ultimately as the only alternative at all since the practical enforcement of Utopianism is unfeasible according to the author. This is so because the idealized blueprint goes beyond the limits of possibility, always creating unintended consequences in the midst of the process of the practical materialization of the utopian blueprint, requiring the utopian engineer to improvise in order to tackle such unexpected issues, thus leading him to a sloppy application of what is essentially Piecemeal Social Engineering in order to systematically tinker the blueprint⁴⁵.

The first thing important to take into account when analysing the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering is that it admits that “*perfection, if at all attainable, is far distant, and that every generation of men, and therefore also the living, have a claim; perhaps not so much a claim to be made happy, for there are no institutional means of making a man happy, but a*

⁴¹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [177]

⁴² POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [178]

⁴³ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [174]

⁴⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). *And The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166]

⁴⁵ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. Paul [63]

claim not to be made unhappy, where it can be avoided."⁴⁶ This idea is related to the non-existence of any idealistic blueprint in Piecemeal Social Engineering aiming at designing society as a whole. In fact, the piecemeal social engineer "*does not believe in the method of re-designing [society] as a whole. Whatever his ends, he tries to achieve them by small adjustments and re-adjustments which can be continuously improved upon. His ends may be of diverse kinds*"⁴⁷ for he does not have to have a pre-established blueprint to guide his political agenda.

Piecemeal Social Engineering accepts that men have the power to change the present situation and denies that human activities are dependent on historical forces or laws of destiny characterized by an immutable character. The Piecemeal Social Engineer will to a certain extent adopt the attitude of "Socratic Ignorance" and recognize how little he knows, designing social institutions in a way that they can be improved continuously as flaws appear and are liable to be tackled.

"The task of the piecemeal engineer is to design social institutions, and to reconstruct and run those already in existence".⁴⁸ A social institution has, according to K. Popper, a broad sense which includes both public and private bodies. Hence, Piecemeal Social Engineering encompasses public as well as private social activities⁴⁹. The piecemeal engineer realizes that *"only a minority of social institutions are consciously designed while the vast majority have just 'grown', as the undersigned results of human actions."*⁵⁰ In regard to this, I believe one may assume that a certain institution has some kind of purpose that provides it the vitality to be maintained over time. If not, if it has no useful purpose, it will most likely disappear having no need to survive. Note that in this case, "purpose" is different from "function". While a function would correspond to the establishment of a concrete end for a certain institution, the purpose is merely the use of such institution to serve any undertaking chosen by men. While a function has

⁴⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [167]

⁴⁷ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [61]

⁴⁸ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.[59]

⁴⁹ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.[59]

⁵⁰ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.[59]

an immutable character and is defined before the institution, the purpose emerges with the institution and is materialized by experience. A certain institution may have different purposes which are liable to be changed over time as men find new uses to a certain institution. Hence, the Piecemeal Social Engineer will look at social institutions from an ‘instrumental’ point of view. This means that *“he will see them as means to certain ends, or as convertible to the service of certain ends; as machines rather than as organisms”*⁵¹. Once institutions stop being useful in reaching those ends, they will naturally be extinguished and not preserved as static organisms continuously obliging men to fulfil certain immutable and predefined ends.

The definition of Piecemeal Social Engineering can be in sum characterized by a continuous and infinite⁵² process of institutional improvement, which is made little by little as flaws are identified in the system and are to be tackled.

3.1. Piecemeal Technology: A Frame to Piecemeal Social Engineering

Beyond the classic definition of Piecemeal Social Engineering, K. Popper also distinguishes another concept which is equally relevant – “piecemeal technology”. It provides the structural framework from where Piecemeal Social Engineering can grow and is shaped as a particular mindset in approaching scientific theories and social policies. It is the environment found in Open Societies which allow the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering.

Piecemeal technology is then characterized by the combination of piecemeal tinkering and of critical analysis in order to provide practical developments in social and natural sciences⁵³. According to K. Popper, *“the social sciences have developed very largely through the criticism of proposals for social improvements or ... through attempts to find out whether or not some particular economic or political action is likely to produce an expected, or desired,*

⁵¹ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.[60]

⁵² By ‘infinite’ I am merely assuming that the small improvements do not have a goal or an end, there is not a previously defined static end in institutional tinkering by Piecemeal Social Engineering. For this reason, piecemeal improvements are applied indefinitely in time.

⁵³ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.[53]

*result*⁵⁴. Hence, the piecemeal technology corresponds to this predisposition to engage into the dynamics of criticism of conjectures and their refutation, in order to understand the suitability of a certain scientific theory or policy to the practical context, through the observation of their practical results. If the results of a certain scientific theory, economic or political action are considered to be undesirable, according to the piecemeal technology they shall be refuted in order to extinguish and replace them by a new theory or policy, in a continuous process of adjustment. Piecemeal technology is then the predisposition found in the Popperian approach to the scientific method⁵⁵ which advocates that it is through conjectures and refutations that we become closer to the truth, without however knowing with precision what is the truth, but being able to grasp what is not part of the truth – what is false – as the observation of the results given by experience reveals the flaws of a certain scientific theory or policy, and the underlying necessity to replace it by another in a trial and error basis⁵⁶.

K. Popper maintains that *“besides helping us in the fundamental task of selecting problems, the technological approach imposes a discipline on our speculative inclinations (which, especially in the field of sociology proper, are liable to lead us into the region of metaphysics); for it forces us to submit our theories to definite standards, such as standards of clarity and practical testability.”*⁵⁷ This passage suggests that the piecemeal technology is an attitude which allows us to ponder our alternatives in a critical manner and which is inserted into an environment of speculative discussions that are filtered by certain standards of Popperian testability. Piecemeal technology provides then the environment from where the emergence of hypothesis created by Piecemeal Social Engineering may emerge. It provides the critical mechanism allied to the acceptance of standards of testability which comprehend the ambiance that should be settled before Piecemeal Social Engineering can be brought off. The

⁵⁴ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.[53]

⁵⁵ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.Paul [38-39]

⁵⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [426]

⁵⁷ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [54]

harmonious interaction between piecemeal technology and Piecemeal Social Engineering can be found and constitute characterizing features of Open Societies.

4. Contrasting Two Concepts of Social Engineering: Utopian & Piecemeal

In order to understand both concepts in a more comprehensive level, it is relevant to highlight the differences between Piecemeal and Utopian Social Engineering.

In contrast to the piecemeal method, the concept of Utopianism is exclusively concerned with the public sphere and aims “*at remodelling ‘the whole society’ in accordance with a definite plan or blueprint*”⁵⁸ and at “*extending ‘the power of the State ... until the State becomes nearly identical with society’*”⁵⁹. Utopian engineers aim at controlling the inexorable laws of destiny (historical laws) by either arresting change or by trying to ‘foresee’ those laws and adjusting society to it. However, the Utopianist faces the problem of the uncertainty of the human factor, forcing him to try to control this human factor by institutional means. This represents the extension of his program that goes from the transformation of society, according to a blueprint, to the transformation of man who should follow his blueprint. Man should therefore be moulded to fit that new society. One could dwell on the moral implications of this aspect of Utopianism and also on its practicability, or rather impossibility, “*for those who do not like living in it only admit thereby that they are not yet fit to live in it; that their ‘human impulses’ need further ‘organizing’*. But without the possibility of tests, any claim that a ‘scientific’ method is being employed evaporates. The holistic approach is incompatible with a truly scientific attitude”⁶⁰ and is according to K. Popper, impossible in practical terms⁶¹.

But what is the main difference between Piecemeal Social Engineering and Utopian Social Engineering? Firstly, in order to explain this main difference, K. Popper maintains that both a constitutional reform within the public sphere and a series of piecemeal reforms inspired

⁵⁸ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [61]

⁵⁹ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [62]

⁶⁰ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [64]

⁶¹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166]

by one general tendency fall under the scope of Piecemeal Social Engineering. While this statement may seem at first counter-intuitive, assuming that Piecemeal Social Engineering does not adopt any blueprint, the main difference then between the two concepts in practice “*not so much in scale and scope as in caution and in preparedness for unavoidable surprises.*”⁶² If “*holists reject the Piecemeal Social Engineering as being too modest*”⁶³, their more ambitious blueprint-based agenda is as we have seen, impossible to be enforced in practice since “*they always fall back on a somewhat haphazard and clumsy although ambitious and ruthless application of what is essentially a piecemeal method without its cautious and self-critical character.*”⁶⁴ Hence, Utopian Social Engineering is impossible to be applied in practice due to the large scale of unintended consequences the attempt of applying a blueprint to society as a whole creates. It forces the holistic engineer to a process of improvisation, of ‘unplanned planning’. The holistic engineer is therefore always struggling to tackle those unintended consequences that emerge from his own program without having the ability to indulge into a self-critical approach to the ‘surprises’ that appear over time as the piecemeal engineer has. He cannot make small changes on social institutions overtime as a means to tackle those mistakes since he has a rigid political agenda he has to follow – the utopian blueprint. Then, “*while the piecemeal engineer can attack his problem with an open mind as to the scope of the reform, the holist cannot do this; for he has decided beforehand that a complete reconstruction is possible and necessary.*”⁶⁵ The holistic engineer violates then the principle of scientific method, while the piecemeal engineer does not. The ability to tackle unintended consequences is then the main different between the two methods of social engineering presented by K. Popper.

⁶² POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [63]

⁶³ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [62]

⁶⁴ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [63]

⁶⁵ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [63]

4.1. 'Piecemeal Purpose' and 'Utopian Blueprint': An Important Distinction

The distinction between the concepts defined as 'piecemeal purpose' and 'utopian blueprint' respectively based on K. Popper's concepts of Piecemeal Social Engineering and Utopian Social Engineering is crucial in order to understand the differences inherent to the application of Utopian Social Engineering and Piecemeal Social Engineering as practical programmes.

If the 'utopian blueprint' is the core structural feature of a theoretical utopian society being the strategy behind the creation of the utopia, the 'piecemeal purpose' behaves as the theoretical structural basis for the set of several piecemeal adjustments that Piecemeal Social Engineering encompasses. In K. Popper's words, what is here defined as 'piecemeal purpose' is not more than the "*blueprints for single institutions*"⁶⁶ already mentioned above, or "*what we actually were doing when we intervened with a certain aim in mind*"⁶⁷. It is the purpose that will motivate the piecemeal adjustment or adjustments. Taking this into account, it is relevant to pinpoint the main schisms between these two concepts to further clarify the distinction between Utopian and Piecemeal Social Engineering since they both are the gist of each of these two concepts focusing on its essential on the behaviour regarding the arrest of change, which is, according to K. Popper the fundamental distinction between Piecemeal Social Engineering and Utopianism⁶⁸. This analysis is essential in order to understand how to apply Piecemeal Social Engineering as a practical programme to the account that it is necessary to understand where the 'piecemeal purpose' ends and when the 'utopian blueprint' begins.

Firstly, let us consider a definition of Utopianism by K. Popper:

*"Any rational action [that] must have a certain aim. It is rational in the same degree as it pursues its aim **consciously and consistently**, and as it determines its means according to this end. To choose the end is therefore the first thing we have to do if we wish to act rationally; and*

⁶⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [168]

⁶⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [143]

⁶⁸ POPPER, K. R. (1957). The poverty of historicism. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [63]

*we must be careful to determine our real or ultimate ends, from which we must distinguish clearly those intermediate or partial ends which actually are only means, or steps on the way, to the **ultimate end**. If we neglect this distinction, then we must also neglect to ask whether these partial ends are likely to promote the ultimate end, and accordingly, we must fail to act rationally. These principles, if applied to the realm of political activity, demand that we must determine our ultimate political aim, or the Ideal State, **before taking any practical action**. Only when this ultimate aim is determined, in rough outline at least, only when we are in possession of something like a blueprint of the society at which we aim, only then can we begin to consider the best ways and means for its realization, and to draw up a plan for practical action. These are the necessary preliminaries of any practical political move that can be called rational, and especially of social engineering.*⁶⁹

In this definition of Utopianism, it is possible to identify three⁷⁰ distinguishing features of Utopian Blueprints. The expressions from the passage in bold respectively correspond to each of these three features:

1. The first feature is the pseudo or dogmatic ‘rationality’ of the ‘utopian blueprint’. It is pursued in a systematic way over time and the gathering of resources previously collected are to be employed in the future in order to reach the ultimate end. From the idealization of the blueprint until its fulfilment, this methodology seeks total control over external factors which may lead to the deviation from the original strategy of the utopian blueprint. Also, the improvisation measures during the course of application of the utopian model should be minimal since it ought to be broadly planned in advance.
2. The second distinguishing feature it is its characterization as the propeller to an “ultimate end”. The blueprint is therefore a long-term strategy, which will only fulfil itself at a single moment in the (unknown) future.
3. The third characteristic of utopian blueprint presupposes that this concept is a theoretical one and therefore, that it is not only possible but rather compulsory that the

⁶⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166-167]

⁷⁰ Emphasized in ‘bold’ in the passage.

blueprint is defined before taking into account the environment to where it will be applied. The blueprint is static and the environment is malleable. This characteristic highlights again the idea of planning in advance.

In a nutshell, the Utopian Blueprint is a *'theoretical long-term ultimate end which will only materialize in the future after a rational, systematic and total allocation of resources that should be foremost planned ahead, within the context of a malleable environment'*. Considering this definition, let us now look upon the definition of 'piecemeal purpose':

K. Popper admits that *"the piecemeal engineer will adopt the method of searching for, and fighting against, the greatest and most urgent evil of society, rather than searching for, and fighting for, its greatest ultimate good."*⁷¹ Hence, the 'purpose' which backs Piecemeal Social Engineering is a "search" and "fight" against something⁷², implying movement and a sequence of actions. The Piecemeal approach does not set us an ultimate goal which guides our actions towards it, contrary to Utopianism. It is rather a journey, a constant fight against an issue which, according to the author, seems to be recurring and impossible to be completely annihilated in general terms and to all society. Hence, while the 'utopian blueprint' is the destination, the 'piecemeal purpose' is a journey, since it would be absurd to believe that what is meant to be a constant 'search' can be achieved in a single step, in a single action, in a single plan. The concept of 'piecemeal purpose' therefore implies its replication with no sequence – meaning that the previous piecemeal action applied may not be related to the following one – within the context of a changing environment. The 'piecemeal purpose' tries not to control that environment, but to dynamically adapt to it overtime as it changes.

⁷¹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [167]

⁷² Against *"the greatest and most urgent evil of society"* in POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [167]

Chapter II - Applying Piecemeal Social Engineering as a Practical Programme:

Considerations

After understanding the nature of the concepts of Utopian Social Engineering and of Piecemeal Social Engineering, this chapter will focus on important considerations upon the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering. It will be in some instances counter-balanced with Utopian Social Engineering in order to provide a further understanding of the differences between the two attitudes and the strength of Utopianism when confronted with the Piecemeal method.

Although the aim of this chapter is not yet to provide an extensive criticism of the issues which may emerge upon the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering – which will be undertaken in the following chapter of this thesis – it will however present certain delicate considerations that are important to take into account before proceeding to the translation of Piecemeal Social Engineering into practical terms.

1. Piecemeal Social Engineering: A Vague Programme

The analysis of how to apply Piecemeal Social Engineering as a practical programme is a hard task since K. Popper does not exactly specify any concrete methodology in order to translate this philosophical concept into a programme. By the application of a ‘practical programme’ one refers to the process of implementing Piecemeal Social Engineering in a given society with the aim of not only drawing new social institutions but also of providing maintenance to the existing ones.

In the following passages from “Æstheticism, Perfectionism, Utopianism”⁷³, K. Popper presents the closest to a set of guiding principles in order to apply Piecemeal Social Engineering as a practical attitude. However, the author does not specify any concrete model in detail, many times describing procedures in a vague tone and without a systematic approach. These selected

⁷³ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166-178]

passages are those which seem to describe more closely the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering into a practical programme.

Firstly, K. Popper claims that *“the piecemeal engineer will, accordingly, adopt the method of searching for, and fighting against, the greatest and most urgent evils of society, rather than searching for, and fighting for, its greatest ultimate good.”*⁷⁴ Also, *“the existence of social evils, that is to say, of social conditions under which many men are suffering, can be comparatively well established. Those who suffer can judge for themselves, and the others can hardly deny that they would not like to change places.”*⁷⁵ From this passage, we can understand that Piecemeal Social Engineering does not aim at idealizing the ‘good society’ but rather, at fighting against the “greatest and most urgent evils” that are a constituting part of such a society. We can also grasp that by “evils” or by “social evils”, K. Popper is referring to situations which cause men to ‘suffer’. We can therefore, associate ‘evil’ with the ‘state of suffering’ in order to understand the meaning of the concept of ‘evil’ is in K. Popper’s terms.

K. Popper also admits that *“blueprints for piecemeal engineering are comparatively simple”*⁷⁶ as opposed to utopian blueprints. *“They are blueprints for single institutions, for health and unemployed insurance, for instance, or arbitration courts, or anti-depression budgeting, or educational reform”*⁷⁷ and not blueprints to remodel society as a whole as utopian blueprints are. In this statement, Popper appears to be defining the scope of the ‘piecemeal’ concept when it comes to the definition of the scale of intervention on a particular object. It seems that the scale of piecemeal intervention will depend on the scale of the evil. If the whole institution is democratically decided to be maintained since it still fulfils a desirable purpose, but is however contaminated by a certain evil, the scale of intervention would be larger than in a case where there is only a smaller evil in a particular feature of such institution. The piecemeal concept varies according to the scale of the evil but it never aims at remoulding the whole

⁷⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [167]

⁷⁵ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [168]

⁷⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [168]

⁷⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [168]

society. While in the first case the extension of the concept of piecemeal encloses the improvement of a single social institution as a whole, making sense to design a blueprint for a single institution as K. Popper suggests⁷⁸; in the second case the piecemeal concept refers to smaller reforms within social institutions, not enclosing the whole institution but rather certain particular aspects of such institution.

Secondly, Popper claims that *“if it is easier to reach a reasonable agreement about existing evils and the means of combating them ... then there is also more hope that by using the piecemeal method we may get over the very greatest practical difficulty of all reasonable political reform, namely, the use of reason, instead of passion and violence, in executing the programme.”*⁷⁹ With this, K. Popper advocates the use of reason as a fundamental ingredient to operate under Piecemeal Social Engineering as well as the necessity to engage into public discussion in order to reach *“a reasonable compromise and therefore of achieving the improvement by democratic methods.”*⁸⁰ K. Popper maintains that politics should then *“begin to look out for their mistakes instead of trying to explain them away and to prove that they have always been right.”*⁸¹ Hence, we may conclude that the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering encloses the application of the Popperian scientific method to politics, based on trial and error and one the *“readiness to learn from mistakes”*⁸².

These selected passages allow us to conclude that when applied in a certain society as a practical programme, Piecemeal Social Engineering should promote the debate of ideas in a rational way in order to reach a “reasonable agreement” about the “existing evils” of such society and “the means of combating them”. By denying the idealization of what is ‘good’, of how the ideal society should be designed, Piecemeal Social Engineering promotes instead the fight against the “most urgent evils” in that society. Once those evils are consensually agreed

⁷⁸ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [168]

⁷⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [168-169]

⁸⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [169]

⁸¹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [173]

⁸² POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [173]

upon as harmful, the “means of combating them” are also to be discussed “by democratic methods” in order to reach another “reasonable compromise” before one proceeds to fight them. Then, after both the “evils” and the “means of combating them” are consensually decided, improvements should be carried out in order to “fight” those evils. These improvements are undertaken based on the Popperian approach to the scientific method, by trial and error, by proposing conjectures and proceeding to their refutation in a continuous basis, allowing us to “reform institutions little by little, until we have more experience in social engineering”⁸³.

In *Piecemeal versus Utopian Engineering*⁸⁴, K. Popper highlights some of the points covered above. However, the author does not go into further detail when specifying the methodology for applying Piecemeal Social Engineering. In that section of *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957) the author focuses more in how the piecemeal social engineer looks upon social institutions⁸⁵, why he is more inclined to Piecemeal Social Engineering than to Utopianism⁸⁶ and how the Piecemeal Social Engineering concept differs from Utopianism⁸⁷. This work covers a more philosophical reflection about Piecemeal Social Engineering as a single concept and as a force opposed to Utopianism, than a methodological approach to apply a Piecemeal Social Engineering programme, not being for this reason so relevant for our analysis.

Finally, it is important to consider that the fact that the K. Popper does not give us a defined guideline in order to apply Piecemeal Social Engineering in practice may be intentional. If the author created a guideline for the practical application of this attitude, he would indeed be providing a static blueprint of how the Piecemeal method should be applied in practice, restricting to a certain extent the possibility to apply it in accordance to its suitability to the preferences of the individuals in a given society and the possibility to alter it by trial and error. He would most likely be falling into the Utopianist realm.

⁸³ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [177]

⁸⁴ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [58-64]

⁸⁵ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [59-60]

⁸⁶ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [60-61]

⁸⁷ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [61-64]

2. Is Piecemeal Social Engineering necessarily Framed within the Open Society?

In order to analyse how the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering could be translated into a practical attitude, it is relevant to question whether or not a context of Open Society is a prerequisite to the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering.

Although there is no explicit claim that Piecemeal Social Engineering demands a context of Open Society, K. Popper argues that “*we can never return to the alleged innocence and beauty of the closed society*”⁸⁸ as Plato’s social theory suggested, based on the idea that the arrest of all political change would bring happiness⁸⁹. K. Popper adds that “*once we begin to rely upon our reason, and to use our powers of criticism, once we feel the call of personal responsibilities, and with it, the responsibility of helping to advance knowledge, we cannot return to a stage of implicit submission to tribal magic. For those who have eaten of the tree of knowledge, paradise is lost.*”⁹⁰ These statements seem to imply that from the moment reason and criticism start being used, namely in answering the call of personal responsibilities and in the advance of knowledge, one does not encounter himself in a Closed Society any longer since reason and openness to criticism are characteristics of an Open Society only, as well as the possibility to have different ways of life within a single society. The author adds that once one has drifted away from the Closed Society, it is not possible to go back.

As we have seen in the previous section, Piecemeal Social Engineering is necessarily founded in reason and in the critical debate of ideas that would lead to a reasonable compromise in order to act⁹¹. This concept also defends the scientific method applied to the realm of ideas in a trial and error basis⁹², promoting to this extent the ‘advance of knowledge’. This type of social engineering would hardly have space to be applied to its full potential in a Closed Society, where reason and criticism are replaced by the ‘submission to tribal magic’. Logically, a Closed

⁸⁸ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [214]

⁸⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [214]

⁹⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [214]

⁹¹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [168-169]

⁹² POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [143]

Society would probably not have the capacity to adopt Piecemeal Social Engineering since there would not have a criticism prone environment.

The consideration that an Open Society is indeed a pre-requisite for the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering raises a relevant question – how open should a society be in order to embrace Piecemeal Social Engineering successfully. If a fully opened society would be well prepared to embrace the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering, then, in which cases and (if in any at all) could an ‘embryonic’ Open Society adopt Piecemeal Social Engineering effectively. This is a very difficult question which answer goes beyond the scope of this thesis. It is however a question of extreme importance, namely in order to understand the degree of consolidation that an Open Society should have in order to make the use of Piecemeal Social Engineering achievable.

3. The Link between Piecemeal Social Engineering and Liberal Democracy

Liberal democratic institutions do not aim at following a blueprint for the whole society. Rather, they aim at solving issues which are consensually considered to be harmful in a similar way Piecemeal Social Engineering does. Bertrand Russell called to K. Popper’s *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) a “vigorous and profound defence of democracy”⁹³ due to this parallelism between K. Popper’s defence of the democratic tackling of consensual evils instead of the pursuit for a higher ideal of good and happiness in the shape of a blueprint. One could however argue that it is not absolutely true that liberal democracies strictly follow in practice this approach of solely tackling issues in a negative sense, or in other words, of using negative utilitarianism. Rather, liberal democracies adopt an imperfect attitude of Piecemeal Social Engineering since they also do try sometimes to reach consensus in order to formulate social policies for existing issues in a positive sense. The decision in those cases is not based on what evil to eradicate but rather on whether a certain good is desirable or not, and whether it should be implemented. It is the imperfect Popperian scientific method applied to the realm of politics,

⁹³ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [i]

embedded in the human inability to always formulate the problems to be solved and decided upon in a negative sense.

It is also not absolutely true that liberal democracies always decide with an utilitarian mindset, basing all choices in tackling ‘the greatest’ evil, in negative utilitarianism, or of choosing ‘the larger’ good, in case of an imperfect application of Piecemeal Social Engineering. Nevertheless, this section does not aim at condemning these small considerations, being however interesting to take them into account. One may argue that liberal democracy is the closest application of Piecemeal Social Engineering in the real world practical context.

Chapter III – Challenges Upon the Application of Piecemeal Social Engineering in a

Practical Context

This chapter constitutes the most crucial part of our analysis concerning the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering. It intends to explore some critical issues faced by this attitude upon its translation into an effective programme. The aim of this chapter is to raise awareness to the obstacles that Piecemeal Social Engineering may face when translated into a practical programme in order to encourage the search for solutions and the weighing of the risks associated with its practical application.

It is hard, or even impossible, to list all the obstacles which may result from the application of this attitude. The different contexts of its application in various societies characterized by a wide range of distinctive features and by singular social-cultural-economic backgrounds would necessarily differentiate the way Piecemeal Social Engineering would result in practice. This is true due to the vague conception of this attitude and to the lack of a pre-established programme to guide its practical application, as it was explored in the previous chapter. The degree of openness of a certain Open Society and the notions of what is ‘good’ and ‘evil’, are for instance factors which could impact the personality of the outcome of the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering in a particular context. Considering this, the effort of enunciating all the issues which could result from this procedure is most likely an impracticable effort since it would require a beyond human reasoning capability.

Considering this limitation, the three issues explored in this chapter are broad enough to be transversal to all the variants of Piecemeal Social Engineering due to their comprehensive nature, not substantially dependent on the societal context where it is applied.

1. 1st Issue: Immediate and Permanent Adjustments

The first issue considered to be relevant upon the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering as a practical attitude has to do with the time gap between the emergence of a problem to be solved by piecemeal methods and the actual enforcement of the adjustment.

Between the identification of a certain ‘evil’ in society which is considered harmful enough in order to be tackled using Piecemeal Social Engineering and the actual action of correcting the issue, there is a ‘dead’ time gap where simply no action is taken into course. It is important to note that it is being considered in this case that the time lapse between the application of a corrective policy and the outcome effect is null. In practice this is hardly true as Popper argues, maintaining that “*hardly any social action ever produces precisely the result expected*”⁹⁴ which would raise another problem: there is another gap between the expectation of the application of a certain piecemeal policy and its result in reality. Nevertheless, this question is outside the scope of this thesis, not only due to its complexity but primarily because it is not a direct problem resulting from the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering as a methodology.

Until now, this issue is not exclusive to the Popperian piecemeal approach. It is a problem found in the application of nearly every policy to a certain problem in a given society. However, what makes this problem relevant to this particular methodology is the fact that without immediate adjustments, the problem at stake may worsen and gain larger proportions if not solved in the adequate time frame. The longer the time gap between the need to act and the action itself, the worse the problem will tend to get. Hence, what started off as the fight for smaller “*concrete evils*”⁹⁵ will tend to become a problem with a denser complexity which may require a wider scale of intervention.

This raises a huge problem for K. Popper since interventionism is extremely dangerous for the protection of freedom. K. Popper raises this question taking the particular case of economic interventionism into account, claiming that “*intervention, even the piecemeal methods advocated here, will tend to increase the power of the state. Interventionism is therefore extremely dangerous. This is not a decisive argument against it; state power must*

⁹⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [173]

⁹⁵ POPPER, Karl. (1972). *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. London: Routledge. [361]

always remain a dangerous though necessary evil.”⁹⁶ In this statement K. Popper is referring to what he called the ‘paradox of state planning’: “*if we plan too much, if we give too much power to the state, then freedom will be lost, and that will be the end of planning.*”⁹⁷

The impossibility to make piecemeal adjustments to social issues in the adequate time frame will increase the scale of the issue and require more intervention which will put freedom at stake. In 1948, M. Oakeshott wrote a letter to K. Popper expressing concern for these consequences: “*no problem in politics should be allowed to get out of proportion & to exclude the real business of politics – which is to keep the society as a whole, in all its arrangements, coherent and stable as well as progressive.*”⁹⁸ It is not farfetched to believe that in many cases, perhaps in most cases, it is difficult to make adjustments perfectly coordinated with necessities, due to the reasons mentioned above.

This problem has another dimension related to the necessity to engage into ‘permanent adjustments’ in order to solve “*concrete evils*”⁹⁹ in regard to a certain political issue. These permanent adjustments are in accordance with the nature of the process of Piecemeal Social Engineering, which as inspired by the Popperian scientific method, tries to compel “*us to submit our theories to definite standards, such as standards of clarity and practical testability*”¹⁰⁰. However, the problem lays in the argument that “*no problem in politics is ever solved permanently*”¹⁰¹, that there is no such as thing as a closure to political problems. K. Popper agrees with this point claiming that “*I fully agree ... that no problem is solved*

⁹⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [141]

⁹⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [141]

⁹⁸ OAKESHOTT, M. (1948, January 28th). [Letter to Karl Popper]. Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge

⁹⁹ POPPER, Karl. R. (1972). *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. London: Routledge. [361]

¹⁰⁰ POPPER, K. R. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. 2002 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [54]

¹⁰¹ OAKESHOTT, M. (1948, January 28th). [Letter to Karl Popper]. Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge.

permanently” and adds that “I should even put it this way: no problem in politics can be solved without creating a new one.”¹⁰²

The fact that no political problem can be solved permanently and that it might eventually create a new one if solved is not alone a substantial criticism to Piecemeal Social Engineering. It only means that in order to find solutions to the new problems and to continually adjust the resolution to permanent issues, the trial and error process will have to become more agile to come up with new rational and consensual solutions. What some authors claim is that there is *“common to markets and democracy, a trial-and-error ability to exit from bad situations without needing to figure out what has gone wrong. But such experimentation takes so long in politics that except when it is used to get rid of a monstrous tyrant, it must be supplemented by non-reactive, explicit human reasoning about what has gone wrong if it is expected to satisfy the ambitions of the social democrat.”¹⁰³* The concern expressed in this statement has to do with the long time period that goes between the application of a corrective policy to a problem by trial and error and the actual appearance of a result from such process. If many piecemeal adjustments are necessary in order to correct a certain issue, the process will require a substantial time frame that will lead again to the increase of the scale of that problem and to certain collateral effects resulting from the failed application of previous piecemeal adjustments, before having reached a policy solution.

2. 2nd Issue: Arbitrariness

Some authors¹⁰⁴ may argue that this second issue is only found, or found with more strength, in the Continental Tradition than in the Anglo-Saxon one. This problem regarding the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering concerns the lack of long-term planning in the application of a Piecemeal attitude. The aggregation of the various piecemeal purposes do not necessarily conduct to the realization of any specific predetermined target, whereas, in the

¹⁰² POPPER, K. 1948, (January 31st). [Letter to Michael Oakeshott]. The London School of Economics and Political Science, London.

¹⁰³ FRIEDMAN, J. (January 01, 2005). Popper, Weber, and Hayek: The epistemology and politics of ignorance. *Critical Review*, 17, 1-58. [xxxix]

¹⁰⁴ ESPADA, J. C. (2014). *Portugal, a Europa e o Atlântico*. [Portugal, Europe and the Atlantic]

fulfilment of a utopian blueprint, all efforts and resources are designated to the reaching of a single goal. Synergies, scale economies and unification of efforts become weaker in the pursuit of various piecemeal purposes rather than in the pursuit of a utopian blueprint.

K. Popper stand against the arbitrariness of the decisions of rulers, suggesting the necessity to “*guard persons against their arbitrariness*”¹⁰⁵ through a mechanism of checks and balances. However, this arbitrariness is slightly different from the one mentioned above. This one regards the unpredictability of human behaviour, in this case reflected in the choices of rulers in power, and alerts that “*while the political question of the day may demand a personal solution, all long-term policy—and especially all democratic long-term policy—must be conceived in terms of impersonal institutions.*”¹⁰⁶

The arbitrariness as an obstacle to the practical implementation of Piecemeal Social Engineering is then more related to the first notion of arbitrariness than to the one presented by K. Popper. It expresses the concern that in a single society there can coexist piecemeal purposes in favour¹⁰⁷ and against the same evil to eradicate. Will that not produce neutral results or a struggle within a struggle? This is particularly sound in the difficulty to reach long-term goals which need some degree of consistency, namely when it comes to economic policies. In this case, the coexistence of contrary policies would undermine the measures already taken into course. The interruption of a certain policy aimed at the long-term and its substitution by another policy, resulting for example from a change of the ruling party with a different solution to that single issue, would provoke the delay or the impossibility of fighting the evil at stake, and the waste of resources.

Of course one has to note that Piecemeal Social Engineering does not aim at full efficiency in the application of resources in a society, preferring multiplicity of purposes to the union of forces in order to achieve a single goal. It should be however noted that in the case of

¹⁰⁵ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [142]

¹⁰⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [142]

¹⁰⁷ Although formulated negatively to be in accordance with Piecemeal Social Engineering.

some long-term policies, the interference of contradictory actions could strongly undermine their realization.

3. 3rd Issue: The Motivation Problem in Fighting “Concrete Evils”¹⁰⁸

This section aims at analysing a third issue liable to occur upon the implementation of policies based on Piecemeal Social Engineering which is the most dangerous of the three. It is related to the incentives paradigm intrinsic to the expression of this attitude in a practical fashion. More specifically, it will focus on the subject of the fight against “concrete evils” epitomized by this method, highlighting the implications resulting from its concrete application in a certain society.

3.1. The Strength of the Utopian Blueprint

The concept of Utopian Engineering by K. Popper was previously introduced in this thesis as the “*attempt to realize an ideal state, using a blueprint of society as a whole, ... which demands a strong centralized rule of a few, and which therefore is likely to lead to a dictatorship*”¹⁰⁹. K. Popper emphatically stresses that “*the Utopian method must lead to a dangerous dogmatic attachment to a blueprint for which countless sacrifices have been made*”¹¹⁰, characterizing the Utopian method as the most dangerous approach towards politics. Hence K. Popper not only recognizes, but above all aims at exposing the power of Utopianism in influencing political thought, present ever since Plato’s time being prominent during the struggle against the new ideals of Pericles and the Great Generation of Athenian democrats. Taking these considerations into account, allied with the more in-depth description of Utopianism provided in the first chapter of this thesis, it is possible to understand the power and high impact of Utopian Engineering to which K. Popper dedicates plenty of attention in both of

¹⁰⁸ POPPER, Karl. (1972). *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. London: Routledge. [361]

¹⁰⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [169]

¹¹⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [172]

his most relevant political works *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) and *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957), with the aim of extensively dismantling this concept in order to present a comparably strong criticism of it¹¹¹. This alternative to Utopianism¹¹² and to the existence of an idealistic utopian blueprint is, as we have previously analysed, the Piecemeal Social Engineering attitude which aims at fighting concrete evils in a society.

However, upon the application of this attitude, a very relevant question needs to be raised: is it really true that when applied in a practical framework, the strength of the ‘piecemeal purpose’, described with more detail in the first chapter of this thesis as the purpose that will motivate the piecemeal adjustment or adjustments equates the power of ‘utopian blueprint’? Can we say that the idealism brought by the utopia which has fostered so many passions and extremism, is proportional to the motivation to fight smaller¹¹³ and “concrete”¹¹⁴ evils in a society? These questions constitute obstacles to the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering as a practical attitude, for the suspicion that the utopian blueprint may present itself as a stronger motivator to create social policies than a piecemeal purpose, may lead to the fracture of a society employing the Piecemeal method and the resurgence of Utopianism due to its power of prevalence.

3.2. The Prevalence of Utopian Blueprints over Piecemeal Adjustments in Times of Crisis in Liberal Democracy

“Because the tragedy of the world's poorest peoples is so heartbreaking, an appropriately large response is more appealing in development economics than in more

¹¹¹ Along with Historicism, considered by K. Popper the other great enemy of the Open Society.

¹¹² And to an out-and-out Historicism also extensively criticized by K. Popper as the “obvious alternative” to Utopianism or to a less radical Historicism. See POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166].

¹¹³ The adjective ‘smaller’ in this context is related to the comparison between evils tackled by the Piecemeal method and the evil which the utopia attempts to arrest. Only in this case it makes sense to say that a concrete evil, using K. Popper words’, is smaller. This also has to do with the fact that the evils tackled by the Piecemeal method do not naturally have propensity to trigger unintended consequences. That it is why one may say that the evils in the Piecemeal method are characterized as smaller than those in the utopia, since the latter are more abstract and liable to launch unintended consequences than the former.

¹¹⁴ POPPER, Karl. (1972). *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. London: Routledge. [361]

emotionally neutral areas like, say, the efficiency of the stock market ... because it seems to promise a quick end to the tragedy."¹¹⁵

This citation portrays the gist of the tendency towards Utopianism. Naturally, a big tragedy seems to call for a proportionally big solution. Following this line of thought, it makes sense to think of an utopian blueprint to remodel the whole society in times of great crisis, in order to re-establish a new and more desirable order, free from the evil brought by the ancient one. It is not the case that Utopianism is always badly intentioned. Actually, it may emerge from the *"dreams of a beautiful world"*¹¹⁶, from *"the best intentions of making heaven on earth"*¹¹⁷ and from the *"fundamental benevolence"*¹¹⁸ of the blueprint's designer. K. Popper confirmed that *"the strength of both the old and the new totalitarian movements rested on the fact that they attempted to answer a very real need, however badly conceived this attempt may have been"*.¹¹⁹

Before proceeding with this argument regarding the prevalence of the Utopian approach over the Piecemeal one in times of crisis, it is relevant to remind ourselves of a crucial point which we have already looked upon in the previous chapter of this thesis and which is most relevant to this analysis. The point is that it is easy to establish a link between liberal democracy and Piecemeal Social Engineering.

Many times during the course of the History of our Humanity, in times of turmoil, radical movements have materialized over apathetic liberal democracies, based on this Utopianist creed of 'canvas cleaning'¹²⁰ in order to establish a new order built upon the promise of a better future. *"In 1933, the Soviet and Nazi governments shared the appearance of a capacity to respond to the world economic collapse. Both radiated dynamism at a time when*

¹¹⁵ EASTERLY, W. (January 01, 2006). The Big Push Déjà Vu: A Review of Jeffrey Sach's 'The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities For Our Time'. *Journal of Economic Literature* (Stanford), 44, 1, 96-105 [96-97].

¹¹⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [178]

¹¹⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [178]

¹¹⁸ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [183]

¹¹⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [183]

¹²⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [175]

liberal democracy seemed unable to rescue people from poverty. ... The Nazis and Soviets both had a powerful story about who was to blame for the Great Depression ... and authentically radical approaches to political economy."¹²¹ It is extremely important to notice how these two authoritarian creeds based in two different utopian blueprints were both capable of presenting themselves as more appealing alternatives to a liberal democracy. It had not necessarily have to do with the essence of the blueprint, of its promise, of its aim, but rather to the fact that both the Soviet and the Nazi utopian blueprints "*appealed to the necessity of a single and vigorous will that was liable to replace the alleged debility of parliamentary politics and the alleged blindness of market economies.*"¹²² The allure of the utopian ideal, the promise of a solid blueprint to remodel society as a whole, able to eradicate evil with a more aggressive impetuous, was more enticing than the mere fight against concrete evils in a piecemeal approach until the calamities were neutralized.

This tendency to embrace authoritarianism instead of a Piecemeal approach based on the gradual elimination of evil in a crisis situation, has essentially two sources. The first one, already mentioned, has to do with the human natural tendency to approach a big evil with a big solution. The bigger the problem, the bigger the remedy. The consequence of this attitude is a blind faith in an utopian ideal that promises the absolute eradication of all the evil and the establishment of a better order dictated by an idealized blueprint. As K. Popper suggested, this type of belief will only lead to violence due to the impossibility to reach the utopian goal.

The second source has to do with the nostalgia for the tribal society. Upon the breakdown of the tribal society "*the strain of civilization*" began "*to be felt*"¹²³, deeply impacting the way society was organized and perceived itself. If in a tribal society the individual has no space to reason and to "*doubt how he ought to act*"¹²⁴, the disintegration of the tribal society and the subsequent progression to an open society led the individual to become

¹²¹ SNYDER, T. (2010). *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books. [17]

¹²² Free translation from ESPADA, J. C. (2014). *Portugal, a Europa e o Atlântico*. [Portugal, Europe and the Atlantic]. [28]

¹²³ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [189]

¹²⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [185]

autonomous in terms of reasoning, of acting and deciding. This autonomy and the bearing of this strain is, according to K. Popper, *“the price to be paid for every increase in knowledge, in reasonableness, in cooperation and in mutual help, and consequently in our chances of survival, and in the size of the population. It is the price we have to pay for being human.”*¹²⁵ However, this strain is felt more intensely *“in times of social change”*¹²⁶. K. Popper also suggested that it *“seems as if historicist ideas easily become prominent in times of great social change.”*¹²⁷ Even though K. Popper is referring to Historicism, a similar inference can be made to Utopianism, since Utopianism is as we have seen not more than an alternative to Historicism, based on the same promptness to renounce to this autonomy of reasoning and to the accountability for one’s self-ruling decisions.

The examples of the Soviet and Nazi authoritarian regimes are generally considered to be the strongest utopias History has record of. This is true considering the strength of their *“spell”*¹²⁸, their power of attraction and the brutal consequences of the attempt to their implementation. However, other situations of great crises nurtured the emergence of ideas of this sort, both historicist and utopian, namely when the *“Greek tribal life broke up, as well as when that of the Jews was shattered by the impact of the Babylonian conquest.”*¹²⁹ In support of the emergence of a nostalgia for the tribal society in times of turmoil, K. Popper adds that *“there can be little doubt, I believe, that Heraclitus’ philosophy is an expression of a feeling of drift; a feeling which seems to be a typical reaction to the dissolution of the ancient tribal forms of social life. In modern Europe, historicist ideas were revived during the industrial revolution, and especially through the impact of the political revolutions in America and France.”*¹³⁰

¹²⁵ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [189]

¹²⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [189]

¹²⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [14]

¹²⁸ Reference to the title of the first volume of ‘The Open Society and Its Enemies’: *“The Spell of Plato”*, where K. Popper refers precisely to the ‘spell’ of the Platonic utopia in the context of its influence over political and philosophical thought over time.

¹²⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [14]

¹³⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [14]

After these considerations, it is important to highlight the conclusion that the utopian¹³¹ danger presents itself as more powerful during a situation of crisis, in times when democratic institutions are weaker. Let us notice however that this weakening of democratic institutions does not necessarily start along with the emergence of a sudden evil prone to create chaos. The factors responsible for diluting the vigour of democratic institutions may be silent and antecedent to the pinnacle of a crisis situation, being however furtive enough to the decrease of the trust in liberal democracy. Once democratic institutions are fragile, their predisposition to trigger a sound crisis situation and prepare ground for Utopianism sharply increase.

3.3. Is an Ideal Vital in the Piecemeal Society?

What we have been analysing up to now is the tendency to rely more in utopian blueprints rather than in piecemeal purposes in situations where democratic institutions are fragile and going through a concrete or eminent social crisis. We have also seen that this happens mainly due to the natural impulse to apply big remedies to big problems, and as a result of the increase in the strain that the responsibility and accountability of liberal democracy puts in individuals in times of turmoil, making them yearn for a return to the tribal society.

The idealistic utopian blueprint seems then to have a guiding strength that appeals more than a piecemeal purpose free from an idealized aim towards a utopia. If this is so, it is relevant to ask where does the motivation to fight for liberal democracy comes from, to strive for the application of the Piecemeal method particularly in times of great crisis instead of succumbing to the dangerous appeal of Utopianism.

We have concluded in the first chapter of this thesis that while the aim of Piecemeal Social Engineering is the continuous fight against concrete and immediate evils, the aim of Utopian Social Engineering is establishing a blueprint for the whole society based on a single higher ideal. But is the motivation to fight against a smaller and concrete evil the same as fighting for a large and luminous ideal? Previously in this section, we have observed that in

¹³¹ And Historicist danger.

times of turmoil, the motivation to fight for concrete evils until society is restored to a situation which is again desirable, is weaker than that for fighting for an all-promising utopian blueprint. Considering this extremely important point, it is very relevant to enquire how one could increase the motivation to fight for concrete evils, to an extent that this motivation becomes as great as that provided by an utopian blueprint. What can be done so that Piecemeal Social Engineering is preferred to Utopianism, even in times of great danger where social damage seems irremediable?

The appeal to fight for a 'positive' ideal in a liberal democracy, in a society applying Piecemeal Social Engineering seems to be a great challenge to the application of this attitude in a practical context, perhaps the greatest of all. Although this question remains unsolved, the last chapter of this thesis will aim to provide insights in how this question may be approached.

Chapter IV – Unveiling the Path to Solutions in Contemporary Open Societies

1. The Importance of Preserving the Open Society

As analysed in the previous chapter of this thesis, the adoption of the Piecemeal method of social engineering is prone to originate negative consequences upon its practical application. The challenges which constitute a barrier to the well-functioning of the Piecemeal approach may endanger liberal democracy, as the retraction in the use of this approach will necessarily force the adoption of other types of social engineering.

If the Piecemeal method is based on “*democracy and the market economy*”¹³², being constituted by “*fine mechanisms to avoid the entrenchment of errors*”¹³³ also allowing the possibility to “*make adjustments in the light of discussion and experience*”¹³⁴, its dereliction will necessarily debilitate the Open Society. The importance to preserve the integrity of the Open Society is paramount, since it constitutes the foundation from where Piecemeal Social Engineering can flourish. A fragile Open Society is more susceptible to become threatened by the strong and dangerously appealing forces of Utopianism, which is according to K. Popper¹³⁵, the single alternative to Piecemeal Social Engineering. The appeal of Utopianism lays in the illusion of the rather impossible quest to go back to the shelter of the Closed Society in a natural and non-violent manner, in times where rationality and democratic values are shaken by uncertainty.

¹³² DAHRENDORF, R. (1997). *After 1989: Morals, Revolution, and Civil Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford [57]

¹³³ DAHRENDORF, R. (1997). *After 1989: Morals, Revolution, and Civil Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford [57]

¹³⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [143]

¹³⁵ K. Popper only contrasts two types of social engineering: Utopian and Piecemeal. Since this author does not consider other alternatives other than these two, it will be considered in this thesis that they are mutually exclusive. The citation where K. Popper contrasts these two approaches (and not any others) is the following: “*The ... approach I have in mind can be described as that of Utopian engineering, as opposed to another kind of social engineering which I consider as the only rational one, and which may be described by the name of piecemeal engineering.*” in POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [166]. Nevertheless, K. Popper maintains that the piecemeal approach is “the only rational one”. For this reason, any other approach, even if it was not considered Utopian, would too be considered as equally irrational.

R. Dahrendorf (1997) depicted this phenomenon while maintaining that democracy and the market economy “do not offer people a home”¹³⁶, leaving “important human needs ... unsatisfied by the institutions of the open society.”¹³⁷ Hence, “people look around elsewhere; and if the going gets rough – elections disappoint, convertibility and privatization do not bring immediate prosperity – people want satisfaction quickly and comprehensively”¹³⁸. R. Dahrendorf (1997) denominated this circumstance as “the hour of false gods”¹³⁹ where “worldly spokesmen, the new dictators”¹⁴⁰ would provide new alternatives to those provided by the Open Society and the piecemeal method, in a context where democratic institutions are perceived as rotten. These alternatives are of totalitarian character, and prepare the ground for the emergence of Utopianism.

There are other authors, such as G. P. Grant (1954), who also identified this tendency to look for alternatives other than Piecemeal Social Engineering, in times when liberal democracy presents itself as stale. This author argues that “when the weaknesses of our tradition have been so radically exposed, men not only revolt against its inconsistencies, but against much of its truth as well. Having lost one ground of practical certainty, they look desperately around for another.”¹⁴¹ This sentence highlights the revolt against an entrenched tradition due to the perception of its vulnerabilities, and the consequent search for a practical and quicker alternative. This may very well portray the revolt against the Tradition of Liberty and the search for other alternatives. However, if we are to abandon liberty, if we are to abandon democracy in the Open Society and the Piecemeal approach to public policy, we are then likely to walk into the domains of totalitarianism, dangerously fuelled by the utopian dream.

¹³⁶ DAHRENDORF, R. (1997). *After 1989: Morals, Revolution, and Civil Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford [57]

¹³⁷ DAHRENDORF, R. (1997). *After 1989: Morals, Revolution, and Civil Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford [57]

¹³⁸ DAHRENDORF, R. (1997). *After 1989: Morals, Revolution, and Civil Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford [57]

¹³⁹ DAHRENDORF, R. (1997). *After 1989: Morals, Revolution, and Civil Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford [57]

¹⁴⁰ DAHRENDORF, R. (1997). *After 1989: Morals, Revolution, and Civil Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford [57]

¹⁴¹ GRANT, G. P. (May 01, 1954). *Plato and Popper*. *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue Canadienne D'economique Et De Science Politique*, 20, 2, 185-194. [193]

The importance in trying to lessen the negative consequences which may derive from the practical application of the Piecemeal method is then of extreme urgency. As forewarned by K. Popper, *“if we wish to remain human, then there is only one way, the way into the open society.”*¹⁴²

2. Approaches to Minimize Piecemeal Social Engineering’s Negative Impact

Considering the importance of preserving the Open Society, it is then fundamental to have a well operating Piecemeal mechanism, since this is the preferred social engineering method in the Open Society, being the only rational¹⁴³ one according to K. Popper. It was previously analysed that there are three major general issues regarding the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering as a public policy mechanism: adjustment issues, arbitrariness issues and the lack of motivation problem. This section will aim at trying to understand how a resolution to these negative consequences could be implemented and the extent to which these problems are a threat to the Open Society, to liberal democracy and to freedom.

In order to analyse the resolution of these issues it is important to distinguish structural problems from non-structural problems. The former are intrinsic to the Piecemeal attitude, not liable to be completely extinguished, only reduced upon the increase of the efficiency in the use of this method. They are structural, part of the constituent characteristics of this approach. For this reason, they are not necessarily a threat to liberal democracy and to the Open Society. We can say they are part of them. On the other hand, the latter non-structural issues are not intrinsic to the Piecemeal method of social engineering. They are external to this approach and not liable to be reduced upon an increase of the efficiency of this system. The origin of this problem has not to do with an operational failure of the system but rather with how the external factors embrace this system. It is an outside-in problem. The following sections will analyse how these two types of issues can be tackled.

¹⁴² POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [214]

¹⁴³ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [169]

2.1. Structural Issues

As mentioned, structural issues are part of the system, are constituent parts of the Piecemeal approach and therefore natural to the Open Society. Because they are structural, it is not possible to remove them completely. It is however possible to reduce them by increasing the efficiency of this attitude and by adapting it better to the type of society at stake. Structural problems of the Piecemeal approach are materialized as intrinsic operational problems of contemporary liberal democracies such as bureaucracy, large time-frames in decision making, indecision, poor allocation of resources, lack of information, inefficiency of agents such as corruption, bribery or job unsuitability, within others.

It is important to note however, that although it is unlikely that these problems alone may seriously put freedom and liberal democracy in danger, an attitude of inaction towards these problems may bolster the internal conflict within the Open Society and fuel the conflicts already existing within it which may not necessarily be structural. This attitude of inaction should be avoided as it can give space for revolt to materialize and incite other deeper and more dangerous type of problems.

From the issues analysed in the previous chapter of this thesis, two of them are considered to be structural: the ‘Immediate and Permanent Adjustments’ and the ‘Arbitrariness’.

In regard to the issue of ‘Immediate and Permanent Adjustments’, it mostly has to do with inefficiencies. The ‘dead’ time gap between the identification of a social issue and the action towards its resolution may happen for several reasons: the issue takes a significant amount of time to be analysed due to its complexity, there is difficulty in reaching “*a reasonable compromise*” in order to achieve “*the improvement by democratic methods*”¹⁴⁴ concerning the solution to be applied, there is bureaucratic impossibility to act faster, the resources to apply the solution consensually agreed upon are lacking, there is not sufficient information in order to act, within others.

¹⁴⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [169]

All these inefficiencies are however suitable to be confronted with measures such as programs to reduce bureaucracy, policies to fight corruption in order to have a better allocation of resources and a more democratic decision making, a better education system which is likely to increase the quality of democratic proposals and hence of democratic decisions, within many others. As we have seen, this issue only becomes truly harmful if, in the one hand, the discontentment provoked by this issue increases the already entrenched tension in democracy and in the Open Society resulting into the weakening of democratic institutions and the opening of the path towards extremism and Utopianism. On the other hand, and as we have already considered in the previous chapter, this issue may constitute an obstacle to the application of the Piecemeal method and of the maintenance of freedom if the time-frame between the identification of an ‘evil’ and the action in order to tackle it is so great that a ‘concrete evil’ becomes a larger evil. The consequence of this is a deeply undesirable, according to K. Popper¹⁴⁵, raise to which the amount of intervention is needed to solve such issue.

The other issue included in this category, the problem of ‘Arbitrariness’ has not so much to do with inefficiencies of the Piecemeal method in general terms, but rather with the view upon the nature of formulation of policies. The depth of this problem varies in different societies, although it is generally felt by all of them namely in the specific case of long-term economic policies. R. Dahrendorf takes a stand on this issue arguing that “*the most important point to remember is that there is no such thing as a seamless economic policy, important though it is to have one reformer on board who has a clear vision and the nerve to pursue it against many odds.*”¹⁴⁶ In this case, an agenda is usually seen as necessary in order to reach a long-term economic goal such as the case of austerity.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, this is a problem more present in Continental traditions rather than in Anglo-Saxon ones. While the former tend to “*perceive democratic*

¹⁴⁵ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [141]

¹⁴⁶ DAHRENDORF, R. (1990). *Reflections on the revolution in Europe: In a letter intended to have been sent to a gentleman in Warsaw*. New York: Times Books. [110]

*politics as a means to achieving a purpose*¹⁴⁷, in the latter *“democracy is less a means to an end than an ethos and a way of life”*¹⁴⁸. J. C. Espada viewed this phenomenon with particular clarity, stating that *“among English-speaking peoples ... democracy will sometimes go in one direction, while at other times it will head toward a different and maybe even opposite point of the compass.”*¹⁴⁹ Considering this, the author adds that *“no external substantive purpose, therefore, can be identified with democracy. Different, often opposing, purposes enter into the realm of democratic controversy and rivalry, the realm of parties, elections legislatures, and vibrant civil societies.”*¹⁵⁰

Taking these considerations into account, one cannot say that this problem is likely to seriously undermine the future of the Open Society since it is not felt in every society – being more present in those embracing the Continental tradition – and is in fact the price to pay for more freedom instead of more efficiency in social engineering. Hence, *“we should avoid mistaking the conflict between austerity and growth as the main source of resurgent extremism.”*¹⁵¹

2.2. Non-Structural Issues

The regarded ‘Motivation Problem’ is a non-structural issue. It is a distinct problem from the natural dynamics of the Open Society, generated outside its innate mechanism and being for this reason more dangerous than the structural issues which are to a certain extent, constituting parts of the Piecemeal system. Hence, the non-structural issues are not necessarily ‘negative externalities’ of the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering, but an external body which collides with the Piecemeal approach. Finding a solution to this issue is therefore critical in order to preserve democratic institutions, freedom, and the prosperity of the Open Society.

¹⁴⁷ ESPADA J. C. (January 01, 2012). The Sources of Extremism. Journal of Democracy, 23, 4, 15-22. [21]

¹⁴⁸ ESPADA, J. C. (January 01, 2012). The Sources of Extremism. Journal of Democracy, 23, 4, 15-22. [21]

¹⁴⁹ ESPADA, J. C. (January 01, 2012). The Sources of Extremism. Journal of Democracy, 23, 4, 15-22. [21]

¹⁵⁰ ESPADA, J. C. (January 01, 2012). The Sources of Extremism. Journal of Democracy, 23, 4, 15-22. [21]

¹⁵¹ ESPADA, J. C. (January 01, 2012). The Sources of Extremism. Journal of Democracy, 23, 4, 15-22. [16]

As seen in the explanation of the ‘Motivation Problem’ in the previous chapter, Utopianism and its idealistic blueprints tend to present themselves as stronger sources of motivation in order to mobilize spirits and resources to the creation of new social policies than the fight against concrete evils which Piecemeal Social Engineering proposes. Taking this into account, K. Popper warned that some authors “*argue that democracy, in order to fight totalitarianism, is forced to copy its methods and thus to become totalitarian itself.*”¹⁵²

Curiously, even some liberal authors have indeed proposed a mechanism such as a ‘liberal utopia’. “*It is perhaps ironic that in CAR*¹⁵³, the book Popper dedicated to Hayek, he denied that there could be a liberal utopia, whereas in *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* (hereafter *PPE*), dedicated to Popper, Hayek expressed the need for a liberal utopian vision.”¹⁵⁴ In defence of a liberal utopia, to which K. Popper was absolutely against, F. Hayek argued that “*what we lack is a liberal Utopia, a program which seems neither a mere defence of things as they are nor a diluted kind of socialism [...] We need intellectual leaders who are willing to fight for an ideal, however small may be the prospects of its early realisation. They must be men who are willing to stick to principles and to fight for their full realisation*”¹⁵⁵.

If the idealistic dimension of Utopianism is portrayed by a blueprint, the idealistic dimension of the Piecemeal method is that of freedom and the possibility to fulfil happiness by each one’s means and will. In the words of K. Popper, “*the political demand for piecemeal (as opposed to Utopian) methods corresponds to the decision that the fight against suffering must be considered a duty, while the right to care for the happiness of others must be considered a privilege confined to the close circle of their friends.*”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [xix]

¹⁵³ Acronym for ‘Conjectures and Refutations’. See POPPER, Karl. (1972). *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

¹⁵⁴ HAYES, C. (2009). *Popper, Hayek and the Open Society*. London: Routledge. [124]

¹⁵⁵ HAYEK, F. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review* (Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press*; George B. de Huszar ed., *The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait* (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.]. [194]

¹⁵⁶ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [262]

The Piecemeal approach only provides a frame, a set of rules of the game where the Open Society can flourish. The Piecemeal approach *per se* does not aim at anything other than allowing the emergence of the Open Society, of the freedom to criticize, of the possibility to go further (or not) by trial and error. It is a political framework, and as K. Popper claimed “*the ‘higher’ values should very largely be considered as ‘non-agenda’, and should be left to the realm of laissez faire.*”¹⁵⁷

The path to unveil the solution to this fundamental non-structural problem of motivation, of an apparent lack of idealism in the Piecemeal method which affects liberal democracies and Open Societies, will be presented in the following sections of this chapter. A very important point should however be concluded from this analysis: if it should exist, the concept of an ideal in Piecemeal Social Engineering can only be materialized, not in the political frame itself, but within such frame – inside the Open Society.

3. An Open Society to Criticism Without Critical Spirit

The problems in the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering – structural and non-structural – are in general terms, sources of uncertainty in contemporary liberal democracies. We have seen that the structural issues are systemic, liable to be minimized with a higher scale of efficiency and with a superior degree of adequateness to the societies in question. They can naturally be tackled by the continued use of the Piecemeal approach, allowing Open Societies to learn with the accumulated experience in the use this kind of social engineering. Eventually, the issues will blend in the system without the need to intervene and interfere.

On the other hand, the non-structural issues come from the outside of the regular dynamics of the Piecemeal approach, being more dangerous due to their unknown, unnatural and seemingly powerful character. The following analysis will focus on the path to unveil the solution to the specific non-structural issue of the ‘Motivation Problem’.

¹⁵⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [262]

3.1. Revisiting The Importance of Critical Reasoning in the Open Society

In order to start preparing the ground to disclose the very beginning of the solution to the problem of motivation which concerns the lack of a guiding ideal in the Piecemeal method, it is important to revisit the concept which is at the core of where the solution may be.

It was stated that if there should be an idealistic dimension in this attitude, it will not be found in the political framework of Piecemeal Social Engineering since higher ideals cannot be provided by political structures. However, if we adopt a Piecemeal approach, an Open Society is likely to flourish. The Open Society, which combines a multiplicity of ideas, purposes and spheres, can provide grounding for the emergence of ideals, always based on free association and not on state imposition. If there should be a single or various higher ideals, they will indeed be guided by the principles of the Piecemeal approach to social engineering but will emerge within the Open Society. The Piecemeal approach is the precondition for their emergence and the Open Society their catalyser. Considering this, it is relevant to revoke the essential characteristic of the Open Society in order to understand the grounding where ideals can emerge.

Firstly, it is important to understand the circumstances behind the emergence of this concept. It appeared as an opposing force to the perception that reason was the search for certainty, and that certainty, on its turn, was liable to be achieved. K. Popper denominated this perspective ‘dogmatic rationalism’. It is characterized by *“the new tendency ... to discard proofs, and with them, any kind of rational argument”*¹⁵⁸ so that *“by making argument and criticism impossible, he intends to make his own philosophy proof against all criticism, so that it may establish itself as a reinforced dogmatism, secure from every attack, and the unsurmountable summit of all philosophical development.”*¹⁵⁹

In strong opposition to this view, K. Popper argues that we need scientific theories to be formulated in a way that they can be submitted to refutation. *“In so far as scientific statements*

¹⁵⁸ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [23]

¹⁵⁹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [43-44]

refer to the world of experience, they must be refutable; and, in so far as they are irrefutable, they do not refer to the world of experience."¹⁶⁰ The more 'forbidding' a theory is, the better it can be submitted to the test of refutation. If a theory is not forbidding enough, it cannot be identified as scientific.

This is where the concept of Open Society plays an exceptional role. It is defined by a society open to criticism and to contradiction, where we admit we know too little. It's a society where all scientific theories matter until they are refuted. Along with a "*critical and fallibilist approach*"¹⁶¹, every source of knowledge "*is welcome, but no statement is immune from criticism, whatever its 'source' may be.*"¹⁶² Hence, by scientific theory we understand every statement which is liable to be refuted. It is in the refutation where the most important part of science really is. By refuting a theory we become closer to the truth by excluding what is not true. "*Thus we can learn, we can grow in knowledge, even if we can never know—that is, know for certain. Since we can learn, there is no reason for despair of reason; and since we can never know, there are no grounds here for smugness, or for conceit over the growth of our knowledge.*"¹⁶³ This is how scientific progress is conducted in the Open Society.

Furthermore, the Open Society is characterized by an attitude termed 'critical dualism' which asserts that "*norms and normative laws can be made and changed by man, more especially by a decision or convention to observe them or to alter them, and that it is therefore man who is morally responsible for them; not perhaps for the norms which he finds to exist in society when he first begins to reflect upon them, but for the norms which he is prepared to tolerate once he has found out that he can do something to alter them. Norms are man-made in the sense that we must blame nobody but ourselves for them; neither nature, nor God. It is our*

¹⁶⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [15]

¹⁶¹ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [429]

¹⁶² POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [429]

¹⁶³ POPPER, K., (1945). The open society and its enemies vol. II. 2003 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [424]

business to improve them as much as we can, if we find that they are objectionable."¹⁶⁴ An Open Society is therefore distinguished by the possibility of its members to engage actively into critical thinking. It is a society 'open' to criticism. There are not any divine or natural norms exempt from criticism and from the possibility of being altered over time, if they cease to be desirable in their current design. Therefore, men have total accountability for the set of rules adopted within the Open Society, and are not willing to blindly accept norms merely because they are said to be God-given or Nature-given. Men "*have learned to be to some extent critical of taboos, and to base decisions on the authority of their own intelligence (after discussion).*"¹⁶⁵

Hence, we arrive to the very important conclusion that the concept of Open Society is akin to the crucial idea of continuous criticism and of the debate of ideas by the members of a certain society. The denial of this essential condition of critical reasoning would mean that the Open Society would cease to be 'open' and would become 'closed' – to criticism – instead.

Bearing in mind the importance of critical reasoning as a structural concept in the Open Society, it makes sense to infer that a healthy Open Society is one where such mechanism operates effectively. The question of whether this is this really happening in contemporary Open Societies becomes in this context striking.

3.2. Is the Open Society Sabotaging Criticism?

*"If the immobility of utopia, its isolation in time and space, the absence of conflict and disruptive processes, is a product of poetic imagination divorced from commonplaces of reality – how is it that so much of recent sociological theory has been based on exactly these assumptions and has, in fact, consistently operated with a utopian model of society?"*¹⁶⁶ This question posed by R. Dahrendorf (1958) is extremely relevant in the context of the influence of Utopian thought over the social sciences and over critical reasoning within the Open Society.

¹⁶⁴ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [62]

¹⁶⁵ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [216]

¹⁶⁶ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). *Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis*. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [118]

The author describes utopias as having five main characteristics: isolation in time¹⁶⁷, isolation in space¹⁶⁸, uniformity as absence of relevant social conflict¹⁶⁹, social harmony as the acceptance of the status quo¹⁷⁰, and the pursuit of recurrent social patterns which describe a dynamics which occurs inside the system and never outside it¹⁷¹. Despite arguing that “*it is obvious that such societies do not exist – just as it is obvious that every known society changes its values and institutions continuously*”,¹⁷² he asserts that “*the social system as conceived by some recent sociological theorists appears to be characterized by the same features as those contained in utopian societies.*”¹⁷³ R. Dahrendorf alerts us that modern social theory is tainted with the avid pursuit by modern sociologists of a “*conservatism of complacency*”¹⁷⁴, of the loss of problem-consciousness allied to the “*turning away from the critical facts of experience*”¹⁷⁵, the abandoning of the “*impulse of curiosity, the desire to solve riddles of experience*”¹⁷⁶ and the tendency to formulate social problems, similarly to utopias, with a sense of a “*highly general kind or ... general laws*”¹⁷⁷.

F.A. Hayek (1949) describes a similar phenomenon while maintaining that there is a tendency of orthodoxy, of the “*pretence that a system of ideas is final and must be unquestioningly accepted as a whole*”¹⁷⁸. This tendency occurs due to the emergence of a class

¹⁶⁷ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [116]

¹⁶⁸ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [117]

¹⁶⁹ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [116]

¹⁷⁰ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [116]

¹⁷¹ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [117]

¹⁷² DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [118]

¹⁷³ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [121]

¹⁷⁴ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [124]

¹⁷⁵ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [124]

¹⁷⁶ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [123]

¹⁷⁷ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [125]

¹⁷⁸ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review* (Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and

which he denominates the ‘intellectuals’. These, “*have probably never exercised so great an influence as they do today*”¹⁷⁹ in shaping public opinion¹⁸⁰. Intellectuals are “*neither that of the original thinker nor that of the scholar or expert in a particular field of thought. The typical intellectual need be neither: he need not possess special knowledge of anything in particular, nor need he even be particularly intelligent, to perform his role as intermediary in the spreading of ideas.*”¹⁸¹

The problem of the appearance of this class has to do with their determinant influence in disseminating the ideas created by the experts into the public opinion¹⁸², filtering the information that reaches the ordinary man. “*It is the intellectuals in this sense who decide what views and opinions are to reach us, which facts are important enough to be told to us, and in what form and from what angle they are to be presented.*”¹⁸³ What happens is that “*it is not the views of experts but the views of a minority, mostly of rather doubtful standing in their profession, which are taken up and spread by the intellectuals*”¹⁸⁴.

the publisher, The University of Chicago Press; George B. de Huszar ed., The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.]. [383]

¹⁷⁹ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review* (Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press; George B. de Huszar ed., The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.]. [371]*

¹⁸⁰ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review*(Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press; George B. de Huszar ed., The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.]. [371]*

¹⁸¹ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review*(Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press; George B. de Huszar ed., The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.]. [372]*

¹⁸² F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review*(Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press; George B. de Huszar ed., The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.]. [372]*

¹⁸³ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review*(Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press; George B. de Huszar ed., The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.]. [372-373]*

¹⁸⁴ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review*(Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press; George B. de Huszar ed., The Intellectuals: A*

This constitutes a deep problem in the natural dynamics of Open Societies concerning the engagement in critical reasoning for two reasons. First, because the average intellectual is said to “*know too little about the particular issues, his criterion must be consistency with his other views and suitability for combining into a coherent picture of the world.*”¹⁸⁵ Secondly, this influence of intellectuals in moulding the public debate hampers the possibility of real experts to have a voice in such debate, not allowing scientific evolution to be actually based on relevant facts, rather than on the general opinions of non-experts. F.A. Hayek addressed this second point by adding that “*one of the main handicaps which deprives the liberal thinker of popular influence is closely connected with the fact that ... he is not only not tempted into that long-run speculation ... but is actually discouraged from it because any effort of this kind is likely to reduce the immediate good he can do.*”¹⁸⁶ Social scientists have increasingly focused their attention in the implementation of the Piecemeal approach in order to tackle ‘concrete evils’ than they have engaged into long-run scientific speculations, which ended up being left to the intellectuals.

Other more modern authors have also identified this phenomenon of apathy within Open Societies, characterized by a lack of engagement with critical thought. J. Baudrillard (1994) argues that “*the disappearance, as if by magic, of all contradiction ... tells us that what we have is not a historical evolution, but an epidemic of consensus*”¹⁸⁷. C. Paine (1997) also alerted to the fact that many “*American intellectuals and educators are dismayed by the crisis*

Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.] [373]

¹⁸⁵ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review*(Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press*; George B. de Huszar ed., *The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.*] [376]

¹⁸⁶ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review*(Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press*; George B. de Huszar ed., *The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.*] [381]

¹⁸⁷ BAUDRILLARD, J. (1994). *The Illusion of The End*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press. [44]

in public discourse ... they worry over the "decline of the public sphere" and a 'degeneration' in 'rational-critical debate'."¹⁸⁸

If this climate of orthodoxy and apathy is indeed taking place within our contemporary Open Societies, if it is true that there is a bottleneck in the free flow of relevant information into the public sphere, and if the characteristic critical spirit is weakened either because of the influence of a class or due to the decrease in the desire to reach further, to actively engage into critical debate, we are then leaning towards a society which will become crystalized within its own set of ideas. A static, isolated and stable society, most resembling the R. Dahrendorf's idea of utopia than of a Popperian Open Society.

4. Rest is Evil, Change¹⁸⁹ is Divine

It has been discussed that the implementation of Piecemeal adjustments is hampered by a sense of lack of motivation in order to pursue piecemeal purposes. In contrast, Utopianism has an intrinsically idealistic dimension which seems to strongly motivate the utopian approach to social engineering. Furthermore, if one considers that contemporary Open Societies are to a certain extent losing its crucial element of critical reasoning, they may become as static as an utopian model when it comes to the denial of change and eventually, of progress. The atmosphere of apathy in contemporary Open Societies as presented above is a danger for those who intend to aspire at higher ideals within the piecemeal framework. It undermines the existence of a cause which is both more appealing and worthwhile than a utopian blueprint. If one does not accept accountability, the willingness to embrace the "*the strain of civilization*"¹⁹⁰ and to pay the price for freedom that the engagement into critical reasoning constitutes, he will be in path to totalitarianism. But if however, one wants to preserve freedom in liberal

¹⁸⁸ PAINE, C. (March 01, 1997). *The Composition Course and Public Discourse: The Case of Adams Sherman Hill, Popular Culture, and Cultural Inoculation*. *Rhetoric Review*, 15, 2, 282-299. [282]

¹⁸⁹ The change motivated by criticism, by the dynamics of trial and error. Change in itself is nor desirable or undesirable. Criticism formulated by the use of reason is however always desirable in the Open Society.

¹⁹⁰ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [189]

democracies and the possibility to set their own higher ideals within the Open Society, he ought necessarily to engage in a constant process of criticism.

Change epitomizes the permanent debate of ideas, the dynamics between their emergence and refutation, the possibility to pursue an individual idea of happiness and to discard it whenever one feels likely to. Only “*if we regain the problem-consciousness which has been lost in the decades*”¹⁹¹ we will not “*fail to recover the critical engagement in the realities of our social world which we need to do our job well.*”¹⁹² This recovery of critical engagement lets us leave the utopia blueprint behind, that “*world of certainty*”¹⁹³ which will not allow us to reach further.

Such great source of motivation will appear once we start engaging into the discussion of what we aim for our democracies, of dreaming about how we can go further even if reality does not go hand-in-hand with our plans, of abandoning the tendency that “*once the basic demands of the liberal programs seemed satisfied, the liberal thinkers turned to problems of detail and tended to neglect the development of the general philosophy of liberalism*”¹⁹⁴. We must allow ourselves to become greatly motivated by the possibility of progress, by abandoning the view that liberal democracy is the final form of political framework and that the Open Society is conditioned by a stationary degree of openness. Taking the Open Society for granted will worsen the motivation problem as the possibility to reach out for more will be inexistent. For this reason it is crucial to develop mechanisms in order to promote a higher critical reasoning spirit, for instance in the scientific and in the intellectual spheres and particularly towards the Open Society itself. The application of Piecemeal Social Engineering in order to improve the current political framework translated into contemporary liberal democracies

¹⁹¹ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [124]

¹⁹² DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [124]

¹⁹³ DAHRENDORF, R. (September 01, 1958). Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2. Pp. 115-127. [127]

¹⁹⁴ F.A. HAYEK. (Spring 1949). *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. [Reprinted from *The University of Chicago Law Review*(Spring 1949), pp. 417 - 420, 421- 423, 425- 433, by permission of the author and the publisher, *The University of Chicago Press*; George B. de Huszar ed., *The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait* (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1960) pp.371- 384. The pagination of this edition corresponds to the Huszar edited volume.]. [380]

should be more actively sought. Obviously, these changes can never be drastic or aiming at remodelling the whole framework, to avoid falling into the Utopianist fallacy. It is crucial to always adopt the scientific posture of aiming to refute the existing conjectures that seem to promote ‘concrete evils’ in the Open Society, of not accepting the status-quo if it handicaps our wellbeing¹⁹⁵.

Although the answer to the motivation problem is indeed an extremely hard undertaking, too complex for the scope of this thesis which merely aims at identifying and trying to unveil the beginning of the path to the solution, it seems that the way to solve it is through the embrace of the critical reasoning spirit applied not only into the Open Society but also to the Open Society itself. To avoid the crystallization and the arrest of all change which will not allow progress, the Popperian critical spirit, the process of Piecemeal tinkering must be permanently exercised and not abandoned once one arrives to the Open Society from the Closed Society.

Afterwards, the path from the Open Society to the unknown – if there is any unknown at all – cannot be arrested, *“you will have to let the huge wave of modernity, market, glitter and all, roll over you and make sure that you come up again once it has passed, otherwise the risk of a fascist backlash will be even greater.”*¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ If the status-quo is desirable, we are free to embrace it as it is and not proceed to its change.

¹⁹⁶ DAHRENDORF, R. (1990). Reflections on the revolution in Europe: In a letter intended to have been sent to a gentleman in Warsaw. New York: Times Books. [107-108]

Conclusion

The answer to whether it is possible to act in order to solve the proposed challenges to the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering is dual since it differs according to the nature of each problem.

In the first chapter of this thesis we analysed the main differences between Utopian Social Engineering and Piecemeal Social Engineering. We concluded that while the Utopian approach is based on a higher ideal aiming at remoulding the whole society, Piecemeal Social Engineering aims at fighting concrete evils based on the Popperian approach to the scientific method of trial and error, characterized by critical reasoning. It was argued that Piecemeal Social Engineering is the only rational approach to social engineering since it is the only one which allows the way into the Open Society, the only possible way further according to K. Popper. Utopianism attempts the impossible quest to arrest change and lead the way back to the lost innocence of the closed society, to the seizure of critical thought, the return to the beasts¹⁹⁷, ultimately leading only to an authoritarian regime and to violence.

In the second chapter of this thesis we have established a crucial relationship between the concept of Open Society and the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering. It was maintained that the former is a pre-condition to the latter since the impossibility to engage into critical reasoning would make it impossible to formulate conjectures and to proceed to their refutation according to democratic procedures, which characterizes the piecemeal attitude. Only within the Open Society the piecemeal approach to social engineering can flourish. It was also established that while Piecemeal Social Engineering is a philosophical concept, liberal democracy is the closest practical translation of this idea into practical terms. The vagueness in the formulation of the concept of Piecemeal Social Engineering, meaning that there is no such a thing as a guideline to be followed in order to apply such concept in practice was also raised. However, it was seen that this vague formulation of the piecemeal approach is most likely

¹⁹⁷ POPPER, K., (1945). *The open society and its enemies* vol. I. 2005 ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [214]

intentional since the existence of a guideline would correspond to a blueprint and the entrance into the utopian domain.

The first two chapters of this thesis provided the pre-conditions necessary to take into account in order to further allow the formulation of general problems to the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering and to proceed to the analysis of whether it is possible to act upon them in order to unveil their solutions.

The analysis undertaken in the third and fourth chapters lead us to the conclusion that while structural issues are not liable to be solved by direct intervention, non-structural issues are. The path to the solution of non-structural issues, namely of the ‘Immediate and Permanent Adjustments’ problem and of the ‘Arbitrariness’ problem is through the continuous exercise of Piecemeal Social Engineering. When applied to these problems, the Piecemeal attitude will continuously reduce the inefficiencies that are the root of evil of these two problems. Although it is not possible to completely eradicate inefficiencies from the system, since human structures always imply human errors, the more experience gained from the practical application of the Piecemeal method, the more these issues will be tackled by trial and error and be reduced in proportion. In this case, the Open Society’s mechanism of subjecting its internal constituent parts to the Popperian scientific method advocated by Piecemeal Social Engineering should function properly in order to tackle these issues.

The other identified type of issues, the non-structural ones, are liable to be tackled by external intervention, outside the normal functioning of Piecemeal Social Engineering. The ‘Motivation Problem’ in fighting concrete evils was categorized as a non-structural problem in the practical application of Piecemeal Social Engineering and characterized as the most dangerous one. This problem lays on the analysed assumption that ‘utopian blueprints’ provide a higher motivation – particularly in times of crisis in liberal democracies – to alter an undesirable situation in the social and political framework than the ‘piecemeal purposes’. It was questioned whether Piecemeal Social Engineering had or should have a higher ideal similarly to Utopian Social Engineering.

What we may conclude is that ideals and utopias are two different concepts. The Piecemeal approach should not be based on a utopian blueprint since the blueprint constitutes an end in itself, draining all the resources and individual aspirations of each member of the Open Society. In that case, the society would cease to be opened as the individual purposes are replaced by a collectivist aspiration. Hence, the answer to whether Piecemeal Social Engineering should be based on a utopia to motivate action in times of great struggle is no.

However, one cannot deny that Piecemeal Social Engineering can be based on an ideal. An ideal suitable to be changed over time and which does not replace the individual will of each member of the Open Society by a static collective end. While one may think that 'piecemeal purposes' have no idealistic dimension, being a mere dynamics of plural actions struggling against concrete evils, this is not absolutely true. In contrast to the 'utopian blueprint' which portrays the dream, the ideal of a perfect society according to a certain mould, the idealistic dimension of the 'piecemeal purpose' does not aim at building the perfect society, it does not generalize perfection recognizes that perfection may not be at all attainable and if it is, it is a variable concept from man to man. By being able to choose the purpose behind a single piecemeal action without the necessity to coordinate the aim of such undertaking with a collective blueprint for society, we are in a position to choose our very own idea of perfection, of happiness and of personal will. Hence, we may say that the idealistic dimension of the plurality of 'piecemeal purposes' is to sustain the Tradition of Liberty, where each member of society is free to live according to their own will.

But is this idealistic dimension of 'piecemeal purposes' motivating enough to outshine the motivational character of the utopian blueprint? The answer to this question is that the Tradition of Liberty may not be alone a sufficiently strong motivational ideal in order to outshine the utopian blueprint. As we have seen, in times of great struggles even democratic societies sometimes preferred the power of the utopias of Nazism and Communism than that of liberty, in an attempt to restore order and end conflicts.

However, the idealistic dimension portrayed by the Tradition of Liberty is what allows individual blueprints to coexist within the same Open Society and to have plural ways of life.

This Tradition of Liberty is the foundation for the application of Piecemeal Social Engineering characterized by the submission of conjectures to refutation in within a democratic framework. Without this ideal, it is not possible to be free to exercise the use of critical reasoning. The idealistic dimension of ‘piecemeal purposes’ is therefore a foundation to the process of criticizing conjectures within the Open Society and the Open Society itself. Although we may have freedom to criticize, although we may have a strong ideal of liberty, if we are not proactive to engage into criticism such ideal is worthless. Hence, the way to solve the ‘Motivation Problem’ of finding a stronger motivation source than a utopic blueprint in order to change the social framework in times of great struggle, is perhaps through the perception that the Open Society itself has more to aspire than being a mere final stage of the race against the Closed Society. Critical reasoning should then be applied not only within the Open Society, but to the Open Society itself. The attitude of not accepting that the current stage of things is the final one, should be the way into the solution to the ‘Motivation Problem’.

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