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OF PUBLIC SPACES

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Equal Respect and Distribution of Public Spaces

Edited by
Enrico Biale and Chiara Testino

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Introduction

ANNA ELISABETTA GALEOTTI*

This collection of essays represents the first outcome of the Collaborative research project funded by the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme (SSH-2009-3.3.1) on the theme: "RESPECT Towards a 'Topography' of Tolerance and Equal Respect. A comparative study of policies for the distribution of public spaces in culturally diverse societies". More precisely, the following essays are the result of the first stage of the research work carried out by the team of the Università del Piemonte Orientale under my supervision and some contributions from other scholars who have worked extensively on these issues.

Within the RESPECT research project, our team has picked up a leading hypothesis orienting the work both at the theoretical and at the applied level, namely that equal respect should be seen as the fundamental value that underlies the two most common conceptions of toleration in contemporary political theory. Both the neutralist ideal of toleration, implying the advocacy of universal social, civil and political rights, and the approach of toleration as recognition, calling for identity-specific claims, refer to the fundamental value of respect for persons. Equal respect can thus constitute the normative ground for a revisited conception of toleration that is able to reconcile claims both of universalist and particularist nature. The equal respect due to each member of the polity requires that, when confronting with individuals and people who are not yet enjoying the full status of citizens, it should be articulated as the public recognition of his or her identity. In turn, identities which have been factors of exclusion should be conceived instrumentally, as subsumed under the universal umbrella of civil, political and social rights that are constitutive of the status of equal citizenship. In this way, toleration, based on respect, and implying the instrumental recognition of previously excluded identity, becomes part of the general scheme for fulfilling the promises of democratic citizenship where all people are considered and treated with equal respect.

This general hypothesis, which is explored in detailed in the essay by Roberta Sala "Toleration and Respect in a Multicultural Society. An Overview", requires to be specified in order to be usefully employed and tested in the analysis of applied ethics which constitute the perspective of most papers of this collection. The essay by Roberta Sala is precisely aimed at a preliminary conceptual clarification of the two key-concepts of our work, at a critical analysis of the current debate, and of the more significant options of contemporary political theory. Sala defends a conception of toleration as recognition as an instrument of justice and more precisely as an instrument to grant full inclusions to minority members and bearers of social differences.

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Once the theoretical background has been explored and mapped, before getting into the analysis of cases, the next step is to understand and the area of application: contested urban spaces.

The issues concerning the distribution of urban spaces are particularly apt to test and specify the nature of toleration claims in contemporary democracy. Through the analysis of the distributive matters focused on public spaces as specified below, it will be shown that the sharp dichotomy *distribution vs. recognition* is misleading, since in these cases questions of distribution usually involve claims of recognition. More precisely, distribution, for example of areas for religious buildings, is often the way by which claims of recognition can be effectively fulfilled. Alternatively, distribution follows from the recognition of members of minority groups as equal citizens, such as in the case of allocation of public housing. Finally public space can be seen also as a public good whose access is actually affected by restrictions following cultural and religious lines, restrictions that contribute to keep minority members in a position of less than equals in the polity. The controversy over dress codes, such as hijabs and even more burkas, can be seen as a conflict over the symbolic presence of identities in the public space. Moreover, when at issue there is urban area distribution, the problem of segregation emerges; and in order to prevent space allocation to engender group segregation, public recognition grounded on equal respect is crucial, as a normative guideline for urban policies. From all this, it follows that it is impossible to reduce one of these two issues, distribution and recognition, to the other within a liberal democratic framework; in fact, as we would like to argue, equal respect for persons can build a bridge between them and constitute the fundamental normative basis for directives and policies specifically aimed at a just and stable integration.

The paper by Federica Liveriero is focused on the analysis of space as a public good. In addition to being a scarce, and thus a contested good, public space is a place in which society produces and legitimates its own image and self-perception. Therefore, issues concerning public spaces always involve issues of recognition, as any redistribution of this particular good inescapably yields a new image of the *polis* and, from the perspective of the individual or group, a new paradigm of visibility. The drawing of some conceptual distinctions which are relevant to the case-studies taken up in the others papers is here in order. One thing is the distribution of public spaces for the communal-private use of a group such as sites for religious buildings or schools; another is the distribution of public spaces for the private use of individual members of a minority group such as in the case of public housing; and yet another thing is the symbolic distribution of the public space, meaning the access and use of public spaces for members of minority culture on an equal footing as residents, such as going to school with the hijab and opposing a unilateral definition of dominant symbols and standards, such as the cross or the crèche at school. In developing her argument, Liveriero points out at one crucial issue concerning the space distribution among different cultural group: At the level of theory, the liberal tradition regards the “public” space as neutral and impartial, therefore, the same theory has some reserve in legitimatizing unequal treatments as the mean for treating

persons as really equals. Yet, at the level of application, the majority accepts these claims with difficulty, since a secondary effect of sharing *via* the fair redistribution of public spaces with those who are not full members, also involves an enlargement of the paradigm of “normality”.

At this point, we have theoretically explored both the key-concepts which will constitute the main theoretical tools of applied analysis, and the contest of application, that is public space; so provided, the case-studies can be adequately taken up. They instantiate all three dimensions of spatial contested distribution afore mentioned: the paper by Giulia Bistagnino (“Let’s Play Democracy. Developing Multicultural Education and the Case Study of Young Immigrants in the Italian Schools”) is concerned with the symbolic dimension of public space, focused on the school as a major locus for democratic membership. In the context of secondary schools she reconstructs the interplay of strategies of integration, i.e., of fair inclusion, and of strategies of differentiation, signalling worries of assimilation by pupils and their families. Bistagnino’s work, however, was not meant as a description of how integration fares in Milano’s secondary school; but, rather, as an attempt to develop integration by educating pupils of diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious background to civil co-habitation in the common space of democracy. In this sense it is a research which pursues the normative project of teaching civic virtues, and of creating a common space out of a shared physical vicinity. The direction of the analysis, in this case, has mainly been “top-down”, representing an attempt to implement the ideal of democratic coexistence in a specified situation, taken as a paradigmatic example.

The second paper focused on school issues, by contrast, is concerned with a claim from the Egyptian community in Milano to manage an Egyptian school for its children. Hence the direction of the analysis is bottom-up, from claims of an immigrant group to the institutional response. In “Temporary Migration Projects and Children’s Education”, Valeria Ottonelli and Tiziana Torresi take up a well-known case in the Italian public debate: the case of the contested Egyptian school of via Quaranta, which gained national media attention few years ago, when local authorities closed down the establishment on the grounds of safety regulation. The case have been dealt with extensively ever since, yet Ottonelli and Torresi have found a special and original perspective to assess the claim for an “immigrant” school which has so far escaped the general debate. They take issue with those critics of the via Quaranta school who interpret the claim for a separate education as one for self-segregation, for rejecting co-habitation in the same public space. Such suspicion however fails to take seriously an alternative and more straightforward interpretation, namely that an immigrant school may serve the plan of many immigrants to go back home one day. The two authors illustrate the temporary immigration plan and show that precisely the principle of equal respect requires to consider such a possibility as a serious one, and to provide institutional help to this end.

Another case involving top-down analysis is that focus on the multicultural neighbourhood of San Salvario, in Torino, which is pursued by Enrico Biale (“Urban

Regeneration, Multiculturalism and Respect for Persons. The Case of San Salvario). San Salvario, which is located near the city center and closed to the main railway station in Torino, became explosive in the nineties, the negative example of diverse co-habitation, where the immigrant presence was resented by the original population as a risk to security and as degradation of property value. It was then the protest of the original population which suggested local institutions to intervene and try an experiment of multiculturalism in the area. The result, as Biale shows, are mixed especially in terms of participation and of effective involvement of the immigrant population, though, for example, schools are considered a success.

Finally the collection ends with the paper by Chiara Testino on the issue of Roma campsites (“Nomadism’ and Housing Policies. Roma in Italy: a Hard Case for the Theory of Minority Rights”). In this case, there is no clear direction of analysis, whether top-down or bottom-up, given that the preliminary point to clarify is whether Roma are a national, cultural or ethnic minority. Testino shows that Roma and Sinti groups escape all the usual categorizations for groups, according to established typology such as Kymlicka. Consequently, if their nomad lifestyle raises problem of public order, it is unclear how Roma, who have no definable collective identity, can be recipients of public policy and, being dispersed and disorganized, with different interests and aims, can play the role of collective agents asserting their rights. The controversy over the illegal occupation of public areas for camping symbolized their marginal location, at the outskirts of cities and of democratic society. Testino suggests that in their case, their identity cannot constitute the grounds from which advancing right claim, because there is no available identity for the whole people; yet the pursuit of a common identity should become a transformative goal and a future vantage point for fighting discrimination.

All the papers in this collection are example of applied ethics. The case-study are considered as paradigmatic examples of controversies over toleration and integration concerning urban space, in the various dimensions above specified. The empirical reconstruction of the cases make use of existing data and researches that are already available, while the point is to enlighten the normative dimension of the case and, finally, to devise principles and guidelines for policy. In the end, there is no single set of conclusions to draw from the different cases, since each presents special features and calls for specific answer. Yet we can draw some considerations on our applied ethics method which provides a distinctive perspective on issues and enriches the public discussion with rigorous normative analysis.

Diverse Distributions of Public Space – A Public Good for Whom?

FEDERICA LIVERIERO*

Introduction

In the contemporary multicultural context, liberal democracies face continuous negotiations among citizens and diverse groups. Some of these negotiations are rather intractable, involving claims from individuals belonging to minority groups. Often, such requests are not adequately managed by liberal institutions. In fact, they lack a theoretical flexibility that would allow them to identify the salient features of different claims and to reconnect these contextual differences to a more general theory. In order to improve the connection between the theory and the reality, it is important to develop analyses of actual concrete negotiations, focusing on specific kinds of claims that are raised. In this paper, I address the distribution of public spaces. In light of this subject (and at a very general level) my aim is to offer better definitions of the ways in which these claims should be laid (i.e. by who and how) and to develop a comparison with the economic theory of public goods.

In order to properly analyse the claim-negotiation relationship, the concept of public space stands to be extremely useful. In addition to being a scarce, and thus a contested good, public space is a place in which society produces and legitimates its own image and self-perception. Therefore, issues concerning public spaces always involve issues of recognition, as any redistribution of this particular good inescapably yields a new image of the *polis* and, from the perspective of the individual or group, a new paradigm of visibility¹. Hence, the intrinsically public nature of this kind of good allows me to emphasize the issue of recognition within public spaces, recognizing that “how” such spaces are distributed is at least as important as “what” spaces are distributed. In what follows, I will offer more details that describe how every claim also implies a public recognition of identity that can itself be divided in two parts:

- The actual claim for distribution of a particular good.
- The public recognition of diversity.

The basic difference between these two aspects is that the latter is never negotiable, even when it is impossible to reach a compromise when negotiating actual policies. That is, amidst various identity claims, what essentially is not negotiable is not the distribution of a particular good, but rather the act of recognition that this distribution as a rule implies².

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Analysing the issue of public space demands facing one of the most difficult tensions within multicultural democracies, as the public nature of such spaces inevitably involves the allocation of a good and a definition of the “we” that constitutes the *polis*. Indeed, the social meaning of the “we”, requires continuous reappraisals and adjustments that must be conducted in accordance with a just and dialogical process and according to a principle of equal respect, where all citizens are able to speak in their own voice³. Conceptually, this emphasis on membership in the *polis* as a pre-requisite to accessing any allocation, allows me to connect the struggle for the distribution of public spaces to the institutional management of public goods. Highlighting the similarity between the two (and though they emerge out of the different contexts of political theory and economics) stands to be useful for connecting the public debate on public space to a discussion about the lack of motivation for collective actions. According to my interpretation, in order to overcome this motivational impasse, we must establish criteria for determining legitimate claims by citizens; we must also study the ways in which institutions should manage particular issues through productive dialogue with citizens. Of course, in public political debate, the dialogic relationship between institutions and citizens does not always involve the same dynamic, much less the same number, of agents. In dealing with requests for the distribution of public space, I argue that the dialogical framework is nonetheless structured according to a triadic form, with three principal agents: political institutions, a majority and disadvantaged minorities.

1. Claiming the public space

Within every comparison between institutions and citizens, a fundamental issue is to determine “who” has the right to lay certain claims. This analysis argues that redistributive claims are never entirely disconnected from issues surrounding membership rights⁴. Determining who is entitled to belong to the *polis* is a complex issue because from a strictly moral point of view it is impossible to justify the existence of boundaries⁵. However, such boundaries do play a central role in the definition of a “political community”, as they are necessary for the maintenance of its institutions. Moreover, we are all accustomed to the idea that such boundaries are “normal” and justified; at least, we tend to accept the argument for their existence on the basis of their political effectiveness. Hence, leaving aside the discussion about the moral dimensions surrounding the legitimacy of a state’s boundaries, I suggest that in liberal democracies, contemporary public discussions about public space are inextricably linked to conflicts over re-determining membership criteria⁶. In fact, the membership issue shows that the associative character of the *polis* is always culturally mediated because it is impossible to start from a totally neutral paradigm of “citizenship”. Hence, associative bonds involve (sometimes implicitly) an adherence to social standards that are patterned after majority characters⁷. Moreover, the request to adhere to such standards is implicit and extremely equivocal, and as

such, it is not justifiable from the universal paradigm of democratic citizenship. As a result, this request for adhesion to some form of homogeneity (however veiled) is an intrinsic difficulty of every kind of collective association.

In the introduction I argued that in the case of liberal societies, every claim for the re-allocation of goods is connected to arguments about justice and membership. I would like to focus my attention next on the fact that redistributions that concern space as public good are emblematic of this strict connection between redistribution issue and struggle for membership. Moreover, the distribution of public space involves both theoretical and pragmatic difficulties. At the level of theory, the liberal tradition regards the “public” space as neutral and impartial, therefore, the same theory has some reserve in legitimating unequal treatments as the mean for treating persons as really equals⁸. Yet, at the level of application, the majority accepts these claims with difficulty, since a secondary effect of sharing *via* the fair redistribution of public spaces with those who are not full members, also involves an enlargement of the paradigm of “normality”.

Conflicts over the distribution of public space, more than other allocation-related issues, show how minority identities claim a more flexible and egalitarian way for defining public standards and that they need to struggle for such standards. In fact, such claims attempt to contrast the majority’s tendency to accept the status quo and its prejudicial arrangements as an established context that is neutral and just⁹. However these clashes are never zero-sum relationships, as minorities are not seeking unfair privileges or exemptions within a public space where all possess the same level of visibility. On the contrary, minority identity groups are demanding compensation for injustices rooted in the same paradigm of liberal neutrality. Consequently, not only do the majority of citizens have difficulty accepting such requests (a majority who already feel included under the umbrella of normality and interpret these claims as an inadequate invasion of public space by aggressive minorities), but also liberal theory itself does not possess, at least traditionally, the right tools for managing these demands for justice¹⁰. In this regard, I argue that such claims need to be negotiated publicly, that this should occur among the three relevant agents and that such a dialogue should also be “multilogical”¹¹.

2. Three different distributions

In the previous section I argued that the issue of public spaces is extremely important for contemporary debates about identity claims advanced by minorities within liberal democracies. Next, I will show how many of the problems created by these claims are born of a general confusion about the real nature of these requests. In order to develop a better understanding of the issues at stake, I suggest that such claims can be divided into three subcategories:

- a. the distribution of public spaces for private usage by communities.
- b. the equal right to the distribution of the public’s own spaces for private usage by minority individuals, advanced in terms of equal treatment *qua* individuals.

- c. the equal access to public space for minority members advanced in response to the majority's monopoly on the symbolic meanings of the public space.
- a. The first case involves claims for the equal treatment of cultures. Herein lies a community's claim for the opportunity to promote its own culture within a society's public spaces. The case of the Egyptian school in Via Quaranta belongs within this category¹². Indeed, the extension of the right to have confessional schools requires that institutions promote a public recognition of certain minorities in the territory. What causes the greatest problem with such claims is the fact that they are laid by citizens with respect to their belonging to certain groups. Consequently, both the manner in which the claim is submitted, as well as the answer provided by the relevant institutions, can entail significant confusion. The fundamental criterion for legitimate claims lies in the fact that certain individuals suffered discrimination because they belonged to a particular minority group; therefore, compensation *via* justice can only be affirmed by underscoring that the demand is acceptable based on the fact that these individuals belonged to a disadvantaged group. Moreover, difficulties can arise from the fact that some minority claims involve little more than a request to be treated as equals before the law (i.e., the right of having confessional schools is rule of law), while other claims demand an affirmative action by institutions and also involve unequal treatments in order to overcome earlier inequalities (e.g. distribution of specific territory to indigenous peoples).
- b. The second kind of claim involves, for example, the distribution of housing to immigrants or Roma¹³. In this case, what seems to be at stake is closer to the classical conception of an allocated good. However, these distributions, although enjoyed by individuals, are again justified with respect to a condition held by certain disadvantaged minority groups. Thus, these distributions are often strongly opposed, as they seem to be incompatible with two historic axes of liberal democracies: universalism and equality before the law. In fact, some citizens would receive different or preferential treatment, obtaining a favourable distribution. Again, what matters most here is the way in which such partial distributions are publicly justified. The classical approach to these issues manages such claims by means of blind neutrality, focused strictly on economic disadvantage (i.e., the allocative-wellbeing paradigm of the classic neutral liberalism), whereas an alternative answer evaluates not just the economic conditions but also the lack of integration and historical injustice suffered by individuals for belonging to a particular minority identity¹⁴.
- c. The third category involves cases of strictly symbolic recognition. Among those, we can count the struggle to wear the headscarf in public schools or the opposition to the presence of a crucifix in institutional places. In both cases, public space is understood as a symbolic context, within which the liberal ideal of neutrality has a duty to oppose the implementation of unilateral standards,

mistakenly taken to be neutral. The distribution of public space as a symbolic place, affirming the right of minority identities to be visible, is extremely complicated, as the allocative question (in this case) tends to coincide with the recognition of identity. Essentially, what is "distributed" is the equal recognition of all identities present within public and institutional contexts. In this regard, what is at stake here is the standard of normality to be accepted in a society.

3. Review of liberal paradigm

The analysis of the various claims for distribution of public spaces above suggests that liberal institutions, in dealing with such claims, should promote a important effort for revising some aspects of liberal theory, or, even more difficult, for developing new solutions that stand to contradict (in part) with the traditional liberal answers for such distribution-like problems. Indeed, all such claims, if accepted and justified for the correct reasons, would lead liberal democracies to construct a more inclusive concept of citizenship. However, we are very far from reaching this goal, as claims for recognition by disadvantaged identities are strongly opposed currently by some majority citizens and by the dominant institutions. The latter, in fact, are not inclined to review or reformulate liberal theory, as such revision is extremely complex and could only be developed in a dialogical manner, involving inescapably contentious negotiations with citizens. Nevertheless, if a framework for negotiations is built correctly, then liberal theory stands to become more suitable for the contemporary multicultural context¹⁵.

One of my intentions is to show that liberal institutions, should they remain entrenched in their historical positions, stand to lose a large slice of their legitimacy, as traditional liberal solutions can no longer respond adequately to certain claims laid by citizens of multicultural democracies. Thus, it is crucial that political and social action with respect to negotiations about public spaces be twofold, involving the following two types of movements:

- bottom up, in the case of claims made by individuals and communities to institutions (e.g., students' parents for the school in Via Quaranta) and
- top down, in the case of claims that originate in the autonomous will of institutions to address a problem of democratic society (e.g., Piedmont regional law in favour of Roma population¹⁶).

That said, accepting the premise that liberal institutions should promote a review of their answers to the claims of certain citizens, it is important to stress that these changes could be conducted while still maintaining an adherence to the classical liberal paradigm. For instance, I have already pointed out that in the case of distributing public spaces of the first type (for private community), one can employ two different justifications. The first argument starting from the normative principle of equal respect and refers only to individual rights, even though justified in view of compensation for those citizens who belong to a disadvantaged group. The second option, by contrast, stands to dramatically change the liberal paradigm, legitimizing

and promoting collective rights and justifying them by affirming the intrinsic value of different cultures or different identities¹⁷.

A further point of tension is exemplified by the second case analysed: the idea that the mere redistribution of goods is sometimes not sufficient. In fact, in order to prevent the allocation of specific urban spaces to particular communities resulting in the segregation and fragmentation of the city's fabric, it is necessary that such distributions be related to the appropriate recognition of identities. In fact, only through this kind of correct recognition can distributions of urban areas be planned in ways that promote a real integration of the minorities in question¹⁸.

Finally, the third case that I examined, the distribution of public space as a symbolic place, showed that even when the distribution of material goods is not at stake, the struggle could nonetheless be very contentious. Indeed, within the contemporary context, many of the most contested cases (e.g. *l'affaire du voile* in France, gay marriage, the crucifix in Italian courts, etc.) arise when the most salient issue at stake is precisely the public recognition of identity differences by the institutions of society. Assuming the traditional liberal interpretation of claims about redistribution, these last kinds of clashes should not be so vexed, as there is no distribution of "concrete" goods at stake. In fact, the traditional liberal paradigm tends to treat identity differences as personal choices that do not pertain to the sphere of justice¹⁹. In this regard, such a paradigm could not really achieve a fair solution when faced with the on-going clashes between different identities for control over the symbolic meaning of the *polis*. In fact, the struggle to widen the cultural paradigm of "normal" citizen, apart from the symbolic meanings already mentioned, has public and concrete outcomes as well. These outcomes involve a revision of the bonds of membership and would force the majority to accept normative constraints of equal respect towards all citizens, including members of disadvantaged minorities. In dealing with negotiations around symbolic space, the *polis* and its institutions must face issues that are intrinsically part of the definition of liberalism itself: the possibility of improving the ideals of inclusiveness and the legitimacy to be obtained through an ideal consensus given by all members of a society. Indeed, such regulative ideals risk being jeopardized by the fact that liberal institutions do not seem to be able to correctly answer these kinds of claims in connection with how justice and equality should be implemented in the *polis* in the face of minority identities and their hidden presence in the public space.

To conclude this first part of the paper, I compare the different ways in which the three claims about public spaces deal with the agents involved in the negotiation and the kind of reasons that support the distributions achieved. On the one hand, the first two claims for public space involve limited issues such as the distribution of goods locally determined and they imply a dialogue restricted to two agents: citizens who belong to minority groups and the institutions involved in the particular negotiation. Moreover (especially for the second case) there is the possibility for a distribution of public spaces that promotes segregation, rather than inclusion²⁰. On the other hand, in the third case, the "symbolic" enlargement of the public space to identities that had at one time been excluded implies the

involvement of all three actors in the triadic dialogic relation described previously. Indeed, such struggles for the public dimension involve a radical revision of the concept of "normality", an expanded discussion about the bonds of membership, and of course a shift in perspective about the liberal ideal of neutrality. This symbolic recognition requires an effort by all citizens belonging to the society, and unlike the situation in the first two cases²¹, where such concerns were actually irrelevant, it must be promoted and justified for the right reasons: by appealing to the normative principle of equal respect.

4. *The economic concept of public goods*

In the second part of this paper, I analyse how the economic theory of public goods casts some light on the discussion about equal distribution of public spaces. Starting with Paul A. Samuelson's classical definition of a public good: "which all enjoy in common in the sense that each individual's consumption of such a good leads to no subtraction from any other individual's consumption of that good"²², one observes, ideally, how public space should constitute a public good. In fact, according to classical liberal theory, the neutrality of the public sphere would allow anyone to pursue her own conception of the good life without interference or suffering undue disadvantages. Consequently, the public space is neutral in the sense that everyone should enjoy it, barring that such use prevents the full use of the same public space by someone else.

Within the economic theory of public goods, there are two main features that distinguish such goods from others:

- non-rivalry: consumption of the good by one individual does not reduce availability of the good for consumption by others;
- non-excludability: no one can be effectively excluded from using the good.

Moreover, public goods differ from private goods (excludable and rivalrous), club goods (excludable but not rivalrous) and common goods (non-excludable, but rivalrous).

One of the main issues concerning the theory of public goods is that they require the social management provided by some public institution. In these instances, the self-interest of individuals is deemed not able to provide a sufficiently strong motivation to produce such goods. Consequently, in the event that there is a condition of non-excludability for public goods, the economic theory of such goods regards it as rational to be a free-rider. Indeed, by definition, a system that provides public goods allows everyone to enjoy their benefits without fees, while simultaneously do not establish the necessary constraints that oblige every citizen to contribute to the production or maintenance (in case of natural resources) of these same public goods²³. Consequently, according to economists, in order for society to avoid losing its incentive to provide public goods, it is critical that the social benefits taken from those goods are greater than the cost of their production (this cost is directly proportional to the number of free riders). Thus, an analysis of

the concept of public goods evinces the classic description of a “free-rider” problem. It is emblematic of the lack of personal motivation that often occurs when public, rather than purely personal interests, are at stake. This insight could be useful for discussions about the public space, as the main tensions created by public space claims may relate to the lack of motivation in citizens for understanding the justice framed reasons that underpin these claims. In fact, the motivational issue recalls our earlier discussion of membership as a pre-requisite to obtaining the benefits associated with full citizenship in a liberal *polis*. Hence, we observe that in contemporary multicultural democracies, what is at stake is precisely the emergence of internal rivalries caused by the overcrowding of different identities within the same public space. Members of the majority feel that they have a “natural” right to share public goods, while other citizens have to struggle to obtain the same amount of public goods. In this regard, these rivalries for the distribution of public goods demonstrate that the access to citizenship should involve not only rights, but also duties. In fact, belonging to a liberal *polis* (a liberal society) on one hand, involves benefits derived from collective actions, but on the other, it requires everybody’s good will in maintaining a stable and just society (at least in some aspects). Hence, returning to the issue of public recognition, it is worth noting that a serious problem exists for claims by minority identities, as members of the majority often fail to see the justice-driven reasons that support them, much less the personal or motivational reasons for accepting them. Indeed, majority members tend to regard such demands as an unjustified aggression against the public space itself, without ever noticing (or perhaps refusing to note) that the status quo is already culturally mediated by stereotypes regarding who belongs to the *polis* by full right and who, instead, is not directly entitled to it. Thus, citizens belonging in the majority fail to acknowledge that the public space is always managed by some parties more than others. That said, some minority groups (especially immigrant or religious minorities) risk incurring the free-riding phenomenon, in the event that they demand certain recognitions without also accepting the structural rules that govern liberal democratic institutions²⁴.

Now, in order to better reconnect the arguments I have been describing in this paper, I would like to compare the different claims for public space using the economic concept of public goods. First, I will interpret the three case studies based on the two necessary features of public goods (non-rivalrous and non-excludability). In our first case (i.e., the claim to public space for use by specific communities) at issue is not a rivalry about the same space but rather the exclusionary power that could be exercised by a privileged majority. Conversely, in the second case (i.e., where public space is distributed to individuals by virtue of their belonging to certain disadvantaged groups), there is a significant problem on one hand, in terms of a rivalry for the distribution of a scarce good, and on the other, over the possibility of excluding certain groups from the distribution. Among the three cases, this account is the most consistent with the allocation paradigm for the distribution of social goods. Moreover, the public dimension assumed by such claims does not derive from a notion that the space distributed is strictly “public”;

instead, it is derived from a notion that what should be made “public” is the reason for justifying the allocation of some specific opportunities in order to offset previous disadvantages. Finally, regarding claims to conceptions of symbolic space, public space should, at least at the level of ideal theory, correspond to the concept of a *pure public good*: a good that can never be either excludable or rivalrous. Of course, the existence in theory of such a regulative ideal does not imply the real existence of this pure kind of public good in contemporary societies. On the contrary, as I suggested earlier, contemporary rivalries for public space as symbolic good are a source for many of the most disagreeable conflicts in multicultural democracies.

This comparison among different claims for public spaces coupled with the economic concept of a public good has allowed me to point out that public space (at least as analysed in these three cases) may always turn out to be associated with a public good:

Case 1: the allocation of public space reserved for use by specific communities tends to coincide with an *impure public good*. There is, in fact, the possibility that majority members could exercise their power of excluding minorities from obtaining some public space as a means towards a particular group’s end (e.g. confessional schools). However, such claims do not imply matters of rivalry, as the group’s use of the good in question does not reduce the possibility of its consumption by others.

Case 2: the possibility of allocating private spaces *via* public justification legitimated by a fairness argument seems to coincide with a *mixed merit good*. Here we are dealing with a distribution of private spaces that are both excludable and rivalrous; however, they assume a significant public value in light of their involvement with positive externalities. In particular, merit goods are defined as those goods or services to which the community ascribes social value because they are considered useful to the moral and social development of society itself (education, health care, housing, etc.)²⁵.

Case 3: the distribution of symbolic recognition could be defined in terms of a *pure public good*, because, as noted above, the liberal ideal of inclusiveness, including the normative principles of tolerance and equal respect, require liberal society to make public space over into something that is both non-rivalrous and non-excludable.

To sum up, the comparison with the economic point of view has permitted me to emphasize that one of the most significant aspects of the production of public goods is an inherently motivational issue. In fact, besides the problem of the rationality of free-riding for individuals mentioned above, the theory of public goods must also face one of the perennial issues of collective choice: the possibility that achieving an efficient allocation of goods is not sufficient to motivate individuals towards agreement. Concerning public goods, the possibility of a Pareto-efficient outcome is outweighed by the difficulties of collective reasoning²⁶. Consequently, the last paragraph of this paper analyses the ways in which liberal theory could support the *polis*, showing how it could be used to improve the collaborations and negotiations among citizens and institutions.

5. Liberal Negotiations

The analysis of the economic concept of public goods allowed me to show that the various claims for distributing public spaces imply tensions and difficulties, yet for reasons that are different each time. Sometimes problems are created by the power of excludability possessed by the majority of the *polis*. At other times, what is at stake rather is the perception of a rivalry for a scarce resource and the concomitant fight to obtain such a good.

However, in all of the cases analysed, a problem seems to return from time to time: the difficulty of motivating people who feel they are “de jure” members of the *polis* to accept distributions of public space so as to offset disadvantages that have their origins in history. Members of the majority do not easily recognize that they are thinking according to double standards that discriminate between what is “normal” and what is defined according to a standard paradigm for membership. From the majority perspective, the public space has always existed; moreover, these “first class” citizens cannot effortlessly understand why the community should attempt to broaden its inclusiveness or accept new symbols and new identities into the public sphere. In this way, the hostile attitude of citizens who belong to the majority is explained using the theory of public goods. However, according to the theory of collective action, public goods are still produced by overcoming motivational deficits, when one individual benefits more from the public good than it costs him to produce it. Of course, majorities in our democracies belong to privileged groups whose membership in the *polis* is immediate and “inexpensive”, such that the benefits they obtain from collaboration are extremely high. Hence, the claims raised by minority identities for revisions of such membership standards or for the redistribution of public space are the means by which majority members suspect they will lose some of their privileges²⁷. Therefore, such requests create extreme tension, as the majority (idealized here as a homogeneous self-interested agent) has rational reasons for opposing certain claims laid by disadvantaged identities, who also have good reasons for contrasting a status quo that favours the majority groups. Thus, it can be said that the rational actions of different collective agents do not engender a fair and stable public agreement. In order to properly manage these tensions, it is necessary that democratic institutions engage in the development of a triadic dialogue, among majority, minority and themselves. Moreover, a fair solution requires that claims be assessed according to two different, though compatible, perspectives:

- a normative perspective that interprets claims in terms of justice and the equal respect that liberal institutions owe all individuals in the *polis* and;
- a dialogical and contextual perspective of negotiation for framing actual decisions about the distribution of space.

Whether public actions proceed top-down (decisions by institutions) or bottom up (*via* citizens’ requests), it is important to draw a line between these two perspectives. As a matter of fact, even when negotiations occur correctly, according to justice-oriented reasons, the outcomes are not always entirely satisfactory (and

vice versa). Again, the theory of public goods is useful, since it has already shown that in order to achieve collective actions, it is more important to evaluate individual dispositions and the manner in which certain common decisions are made, than it is simply to analyse questions of efficiency or rationality. In this regard, it is important to distinguish between the potential outcomes of a negotiation and the reasons that underlie it. Indeed, what should be most relevant is precisely the ground of justice that drives institutions and citizens alike to consider possible modifications of the status quo. Such a ground, because it is acceptable and thus legitimate for everybody, necessarily invokes a normative principle of equal respect. Indeed, by referring to this principle, it is possible to demonstrate that claims for the equal distribution of public space (Case 1 and 3) or for the reparative redistribution that favours the most disadvantaged (Case 2) similarly involve the same principle of liberal coexistence. Ultimately, these requests all arrive at the issue of equal membership rights and visibility in the *polis*. The principle of equal respect, along with an individualizing act of recognition, allows institutions to reach specific solutions for each particular case that must be negotiated. In fact, such individualizing acts facilitate the realization of the contextual disadvantaged condition of those making claims for redistribution. However, this procedure of finding *ad hoc* solutions through individualizing acts is not incompatible with the liberal ideals of universality and neutrality, as every recognition *via* equal respect requires a second background argument for resulting justifiable. This second argumentative step is a generalizing act that argues for the common humanity behind individual differences and, therefore, legitimizes the practice of giving equal respect to everybody as a universal moral constraints²⁸. Thus, every individualizing act is always subsumed under an umbrella of universal civil and political rights that constitute the social status of equal citizenship. Consequently, the underlying reason of justice for promoting different and contextual solutions is the universal principle that every individual is entitled to equal respect.

This last discussion about equal respect highlights how the proper management of the distribution of public spaces must be promoted for both normative and pragmatic reasons. On the one hand, if such public spaces are only entitled to a privileged majority, than the *polis* will lose part of its normative legitimacy, as institutions would not be treating all citizens with equal respect. On the other hand, promoting negotiations supported by good reasons and by a fair dialogical dimension not only allows justice to develop, but fosters the stability of the *polis*. Starting from a membership perspective, it is important to stress that liberal society, besides the necessity for it to be just, should also obtain its stability for the right reasons²⁹. Thus, fostering equal respect among citizens, and between citizens and institutions, is not only necessary from a normative point of view, but it is also relevant to maintaining a stable society. Indeed, from a pragmatic perspective, it is worth noting that democratic institutions, through adequate interpretations and theoretical revisions, could show its citizens that requests for sharing a public conception of justice are not too demanding. In fact, returning to the idea of the *polis* as the public space where citizens share rights and duties, I would stipulate

that the outcomes of fair negotiations could, at least from a contextual perspective, allow for overcoming the motivational deficits intrinsic to the collective production of public goods.

In this final part of the paper, I would like to address the possibility that the same dialogic practice between institutions and citizens could bind these same citizens to certain liberal background principles. That is, the analysis of particular claims to the public space shows that the same minority groups might already be carriers of certain ideals about political society itself. If one believes in being entitled (by right) to fight for the recognition of their identity, not only in terms of a public acquiescence for private individualistic differences (classical model of neutrality), but *via* a public recognition of these differences, then it means that individuals who raise such claims believe that liberal society has particular obligations towards its citizens. In this regard, if a claimant struggles for the public recognition of her identity (or for a specific need) and it is acknowledged that such recognition is “due” and publicly justifiable, then the same claimant (at least implicitly) has demonstrated her acceptance of a background of liberal principles. In fact, is the same dynamic of public negotiation that shows it: when citizens direct claims towards institutions and the public acts of doing so reflect the confidence of getting a positive answer; essentially they are declaring that they believe that these institutions can indeed respond properly to their requests. Consequently, the normative principles underlying liberal institutions are recognized, at least implicitly, by those advancing claims for an equal distribution and for a fair public recognition.

On the basis of this last part of the analysis, it can be argued that the dialectical relationship between those who claim recognition and the institutions that address such requests is the place where the *polis* realizes both the full inclusion of all its citizens and stability. Indeed, the right way for achieving stability is through the citizens’ loyalty. In fact, those citizens who claim recognition, not through force but by establishing a dialogue with civil society, show that they consider the public invisibility of certain identities as illegitimate and unjust within a purportedly liberal society. Consequently, they are starting to converge, at least in a minimal way, on the liberal paradigm of inclusiveness and equal respect towards all persons. Thus, liberal societies that show a flexibility and willingness to revise theoretical paradigms can promote stability *via* loyalty towards its institutions. Indeed, this is precisely the experience of public recognition grounded in the principle of equal respect. It improves citizen loyalty as the institutions of the *polis* prove their ability to respond properly to these requests. Thus, the same normative principles that have enabled the current arrangement are likely to be recognized and appreciated by those who have obtained a fair outcome on account of the liberal management of public conflict.

To conclude, I suggest that public negotiations achieved for correct reasons (i.e., justice, or the liberal ideals of equal respect and inclusiveness) and that produce a real increase in the equality of the distribution of public spaces can be normatively reconnected to the “social capital” of a liberal society³⁰. In fact, the liberal background culture, besides providing a connection to a normative core that legitimates redistributions and public recognitions, is also the means for developing

a fair dialogic relationship among citizens who are members of different groups (horizontal relation) and among all citizens and institutions (vertical relation)³¹. In this regard, I believe that assuming such a negotiating perspective could be the proper liberal way for achieving stability (i.e., by loyalty) and thus also for strengthening the bonds of membership.

Conclusions

The main objective of this paper was to show that the distribution of public space to minorities is one way in which liberal institutions can properly justify the ideal of inclusiveness and increase the stability of the *polis* and mutual respect between citizens³². Ensuring the fair distribution of the public space is an essential task for liberal institutions; moreover, by achieving this outcome, the same institutions also help to improve the liberal theoretical paradigm. The extension and development of this theory emerges from the fact that such claims involve eminently “public” negotiations and thus it is necessary that all members of the *polis*, as well as the institutions themselves, take part in a discussion that ultimately becomes a multilogic dialogue. Assuming a negotiating and work in progress perspective could be of a decided advantage to liberal institutions, as not all solutions are provided in advance by theory. This “incompleteness” of liberal theory permits institutions to be flexible while nonetheless maintaining the necessary argumentative rigour.

The three different cases of distribution of public spaces discussed in this paper have enabled me to interpret public space in terms of a public good, whose distribution involves all members of the *polis* even if from each own perspective of agent with personal interests and motivations. Moreover, this parallel has led me to stress that allocative issues are always related to a struggle for the redefinition of membership and that the rigid dichotomy between distribution and recognition does not allow us to distinguish some of the relevant points for managing the distribution of public space.

Finally, I have showed that these distributions, obtained by means of bitter and complex public negotiations, could be understood according two different perspectives: by a normative analysis that offers the reasons of justice, grounded on the equal respect due to everyone; and by a contextual analysis of the way in which principles of equal respect and liberal inclusiveness can lead to fair negotiations through a triadically structured public dialogue. Substantially, it is important to distinguish between the normative reasons for justice that can never be set aside, and the actual outcomes of a process that are always revisable. If liberal institutions accept and engage themselves in negotiations (viewed largely as work in progress) with citizens then the *polis* will be not just be the place where associative bonds are established and stabilized, but also the place where the associative paradigm could be questioned if it produces injustice and discrimination. In this regard, the *polis* would become exactly that “public space” in which all individuals are equally entitled to be first-class citizens.

Notes

¹ For a deep analysis of the philosophical concept of public space, see Ruppert, 2006.

² See Galeotti, 1999.

³ “The dialogue is justly structured and conducted only when all the relevant points of view are valued and heard and allowed to speak in their distinct voice. If it were to require all participants to speak in a single language, it would not only fail to render other languages their due but also enshrine the domination of the group or culture it represents”. Parekh, 2004, p. 207.

⁴ See Walzer, 1983.

⁵ For a deep analysis of this tricky issue see Sparrow, 2007.

⁶ For a new notion of membership see Soysal, 1997.

⁷ See Galeotti, 1993 and 1999.

⁸ See Dworkin (1977) for the distinction between moral equality understood as prescribing treatment of persons as equals (i.e., with equal concern and respect) and the often implausible principle of treating persons strictly equally.

⁹ Kymlicka (2002) promotes a deep analysis of this dynamic, focusing especially on the tension between the nation-building process and fair terms of integration claimed by ethnic minorities within multicultural societies.

¹⁰ By contrast, for a liberal approach that argues for the adequacy of traditional liberal theoretical instruments in pursuing a politics of indifference, rather than a politics of recognition, see Kukathas, 1998.

¹¹ See Moodod, 2010, p. 10.

¹² See the paper of V. Ottonelli and T. Torresi in this issue.

¹³ See the paper of C. Testino in this issue.

¹⁴ It is worth noting that sometimes the possibility of claiming a fair distribution of goods is not only compatible with public recognition, rather such claims need a preliminary sort of recognition. In fact, members of groups who have long been marginalized could have low self-esteem and poor motivation and, for this reason, are not able to struggle for better distribution. For an analysis of this problem of “double-consciousness”, see Parekh, 2004 and Tully, 2000.

¹⁵ It seems to me that the general tendency is to recall in a dogmatic way using either an historic or a theoretical model – the traditional liberal one – which had worked well in the past. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that such a liberal model was suitable to a certain context, but it is not clear that it remains the perfect tool now. Therefore, in order to avoid using the liberal model to manage disagreement like a bed of Procrustes, the same liberal theory should involve itself in a revision of its theoretical benchmarks.

¹⁶ “Interventi a favore della popolazione zingara” (Intervention in favour of Roma population), 10th June 1993 (n. 26, B.U. 16th June 1993, n. 24).

¹⁷ See Taylor, 1994.

¹⁸ For an analysis of the connection between distribution of urban spaces and the possibility of widening democratic politics, see Bickford, 2000.

¹⁹ For a relevant criticism of this neutral approach, see Sen, 1992. In his book, Sen argues that the distribution of bundles of different goods is never enough. In fact, real and fair inclusion in a society involves both the acquisition of right of sharing distribution and the “capability” of using such resources.

²⁰ Amin (2002), for example, analyses how urban segregation, connected with cultural and economic disadvantages, led to the harsh street fights in England in 2001 (known as “Oldham Riots”). In this study, the author highlights that riots broke out due to the strong claims of ownership of particular public spaces by young Asian inhabitants of these areas.

²¹ It is worth noting, in fact, that where a real distribution of material goods is involved, like in the two first cases analysed, it is possible that such distribution are granted for the wrong reasons. Of course, such results are not desirable; however, in these cases, the relevant aspect is the effectiveness of distribution. On the contrary, in the case of symbolic distribution what is distributed, equal respect, must necessarily be combined with a justification for the right reason, otherwise the distribution itself would be useless. For an analysis of wrong reasons in favour of the right to wear the Islamic veil in public schools, see Galeotti, 1993.

²² Samuelson, 1954, p. 387.

²³ Hence, it could be affirmed that free-riding is an optimum choice from an individualistic point of view, but that such choice is not Pareto-efficient from the social point of view. See Varian, 1997.

²⁴ “They are fellow participants, like the members of the opposing team in a basketball game, without whom there could not be a game, and who therefore have a right to score baskets and win, if they can. Problems arise only in the case of people who want to disrupt the game, while still claiming the rights of players and the protection of the rules”, Walzer, 1997, p. 166. Moreover, for a deep analysis of collective choice reconnected with this idea of fair play, see Miller and Sartorius, 1979.

²⁵ Is important to specify that these goods are called “merit goods,” but not because their distribution depends on the merit of single individuals. Rather, they are the same goods that have the merit of guaranteeing positive externalities if they are produced and distributed among citizens. See Fiorito and Kollintzas, 2004.

²⁶ Unlike private goods that are managed by the market, economic theory does not possess an instrument for evaluating the ratio between individuals’ self-interest and the price that everybody would be ready to pay for obtaining a portion of determined public goods. Hence, one of the main issues about public goods is the determination of the “demand function”. About this issue and for an interesting analysis of collective choice achieved *via* referenda, see Noam, 1982.

²⁷ Galeotti (1999, p. 42) speaks about the positional good of monopoly for the exercise of control about social standards.

²⁸ See Galeotti, 2010.

²⁹ See Rawls, 1993.

³⁰ See Rawls, 1993 and Soysal, 1997, p. 510.

³¹ Kymlicka (2007, p. 96), in this regard, speaks about a process of citizenisation: “The task for all liberal democracies has been to turn this catalogue of uncivil relations into relationships of liberal-democratic citizenship, in terms of both the vertical relationship between the members of minorities and the state, and the horizontal relationships amongst the members of different groups”.

³² Tully, 2000, p. 475.

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Toleration and Respect in a Multicultural Society. An Overview

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0. Premise

Toleration has been invoked as a philosophical and political ideal aiming at bringing social stability and pacific coexistence to modern societies. Nowadays, appeals to toleration animate the political debate about policies addressed to meet minorities requests and claims, among which the allocation of public spaces is more and more relevant. Although the theory and practice of toleration have been focused on from several points of view and largely discussed, those requests and claims give rise to reformulation and further articulation. In this paper I will analyze the meanings of toleration as a preliminary step to cope with the core question of the present research: the redistribution of public spaces conceived as urban, public, private and symbolic spaces, aimed at different groups within the multicultural societies. Specifically, this research aims at identifying the right model of redistribution corresponding to a revised idea of toleration grounded in the principle of respect. The hypothesis is that grounding toleration on equal respect for persons may contribute to developing redistribution policies combining the basic commitment to equality with the need to accommodate cultural diversity without undermining social cohesion.

My contribution to this research aims at showing how toleration has been conceived as the liberal strategy to respond to deep disagreement which makes a political agreement on liberal institutions difficult if not *prima facie* impossible. To do that, I will deal first with the notion of toleration, starting by emphasising the negative feelings connected to it. Then, as a second step, I will move on to consider toleration from a political point of view, hence it can be qualified as negative and positive toleration. Positive meanings of toleration as both moral and social virtue will be drawn by showing how it works in favour of a peaceful cohabitation among diversities with special regard to minority groups. The justification for toleration comes to be based on fairness as a principle of political justice. As the traditional articulation of the ideal of toleration as fairness corresponds to the liberal principle of neutrality - only constitutional settings which are neutral between different conceptions of the good may be reasonably accepted by everyone - in the third step, I will concentrate on cultural differences, those that seem to be resistant to the

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solution offered by toleration in its traditional meaning, that is, neutralization: those differences cannot be adjusted *via* political neutralization given that they ask for publicity and not privatization. The neutrality approach, moreover, implies insensitivity towards differences: the reappraisal of toleration as recognition constitutes a revision of the model of neutrality, claiming to be more sensitive to differences, without requesting them to be invisible in order to be included in the citizenry. Toleration is in need to be revised and ‘enlarged’ since some diversities require not only toleration but also recognition, given for granted that not all the groups claims can be met, that is in all the cases in which fundamental individual rights risk to be threatened or diminished by some practices and behaviours. In light of an overview of positions regarding multiculturalism and recognition I will sustain a reappraisal of toleration as recognition, in order to focus the demands coming from minorities. Defending recognition does not mean giving up the essentials of the just society, those grounding the very ideal of toleration. On the contrary, recognition backed by the principle of respect for persons is the appropriate way of inclusion of minorities on the same footing as majority. It should be immediately clear that recognition as here adopted is not to be conceived in its strong meaning, that is, as addressed to cultures *qua* cohesive and inflexible entities; rather, it is claimed as a way to address individuals’ claims within the groups in order to protect their rights on the same footing of all the others. I will conclude my contribution by announcing that, among the issues of recognition, the ones concerning public spaces are in need to receive special attention, since any redistribution of space as a peculiar good matters to fair inclusion, visibility, equal respect; in a word, it matters to justice. The next papers in this collection will be specifically dedicated to this peculiar issue

1. The idea of toleration

Toleration is the principle that allows for the peaceful coexistence of individuals and groups who hold different views of life within the same society¹. The problem of toleration arises in front of diversity so that diversity comes to be the first circumstance of toleration. Toleration has to do with *diversities* - beliefs, actions or practices – with which we feel uncomfortable, which we dislike or even disapprove: there is no need for toleration when similar people coexist harmoniously. Discomfort, dislike or disapproval towards things we tolerate fix the second condition of toleration. Without this ‘objection’ condition we do not speak of toleration but of indifference². Indeed, in all the cases in which diversities are not relevant to the tolerator – when they are morally neutral or indifferent to her – one should speak of indifference rather than toleration (Weale 1985, 18). Similarly, saying to tolerate what one likes or approves of is nonsense.

Now, the dislike or the disapproval accompanying toleration makes a sense of discomfort with the very idea of ‘toleration’: tolerating seems to be in some way wrong. Toleration seems in fact to imply a negative judgement about what one decides to tolerate. Then, the decision to tolerate something or someone that is disliked or

disapproved by the tolerator looks itself objectionable or, even, rejectable, since one generally does not admit what sounds evil or wrong. Furthermore, toleration entails a kind of concession on the side of the tolerator in front of the tolerated; it implies also that the tolerator finds herself in the position – having the connected power – to tolerate as well not to tolerate.

Having said that, we may say to tolerate something or somebody not absolutely but *at certain conditions*; toleration refers to the conditional acceptance of or non-interference with beliefs, actions or practices that one considers to be wrong but still ‘tolerable’, so that they should not be prohibited or constrained (Forst 2008). We need to set limits to toleration, thereof to think of toleration as something conditional. The adjective “conditional” qualifies the acceptance which toleration consists of. It depends on the context if we can overcome the negative meaning of toleration – its “objection component” – balancing it by the “acceptance component”, that does not remove the negative judgement but gives positive reasons that trump the negative ones in a relevant context (Forst 2008b, 19-20; see also Heyd 1996, 11). In this way, the limits of toleration lie at the point where reasons for rejection become stronger than reasons for acceptance. Reasons for objection are not necessarily reasons for rejection, insofar as the harm principle is not infringed (Forst 2008b, 19-20): toleration is granted to those practices with which one disagrees but which do not violate the criteria of reciprocity since these criteria work exactly as limits to toleration³.

A further circumstance of toleration consists of the power on the side of the tolerator who must be in a position to influence the behaviour of the tolerated, by persecuting or removing or prohibiting it. So, we may say to tolerate anything we dislike or disapprove having the power to interfere with it. One may say to tolerate something that she may decide not to tolerate, to repress or to eliminate (Mendus 1989, 8-18). By contrast, we may speak of acquiescence of things we do not have the power to constrain or to otherwise regulate (Crick 1971; Cranston 1972). This suggests that the relationship between the tolerator and the tolerated is asymmetrical and that, even though the two parties dislike each other, only the tolerator has the power over the tolerated (Galeotti 2002, 22; see also Weale 1985).

In sum: in order to become tolerant a person needs first to dislike or disapprove of a diversity, then she needs to overcome such feelings and adopt toleration. But why should one tolerate what is disliked or disapproved of? How can toleration be good if it requires putting up with what is disliked or disapproved of? (Galeotti 2002, 21). This question is known as the “paradox of toleration”. To disapprove of something is to judge it to be wrong. The content of the judgement, that something is wrong, implies that that something may properly be prevented. But, then, why should one tolerate? (Raphael 1988, 139) One speaks about a paradox because to tolerate what one maintains as wrong or evil appears to imply renouncing one’s own moral integrity. Thus, that paradox may be interpreted as a conflict between two moral principles: coherence, that compels to be absolutely ‘loyal to morality’; respect for others, since what one properly tolerates is the agent, not her acts (Bobbio 1990; Cohen 1967)⁴. Furthermore, it can be said that the right of others to be granted respect works as the moral reason for toleration. So conceived, toleration follows the

acknowledgement of the central value of autonomy: to tolerate diversities at odds with ours, in light of the principle of respect, does not imply that we are betraying our ideas and beliefs; rather, it means to assure others the same right to defend their own ideas and beliefs. Thus, we should refrain from defining this a paradox: what we are in front of is a conflict between theoretical reasons, compelling us to reject certain ideas, and practical reasons, inducing us to tolerate their holders. The value of autonomy is at the core of this argument, legitimizing the duty of respect for others' ideas or claims (Johnson 1992).

Summarizing: the paradox of toleration shows how the concept of toleration needs further clarification and even justification. No one is aprioristically justified in tolerating something or somebody if the object of toleration is judged to be wrong or to act wrongly; refraining from using power when there is an evil at stake needs to be justified (Feldman 2008, 402). If the use of power has to be legitimated, unless one does not appeal to mere force, at the same time, abstinence from using power has to be motivated when a wrong may be prevented or avoided. I have said that the paradox of toleration may be overcome on the condition that the tolerator has good moral reasons for suspending her convictions and for not interfering with what she dislikes or disapproves of. The goodness of those reasons permits to overcome the moral conflict, the one that the tolerator experiences between her values and the duty to let others alone. Furthermore, when letting people alone means recognizing their right to act freely, toleration appears to be a moral value, backed by the principle of respect⁵. The moral value of tolerance lies in the effort that one makes in setting aside one's own convictions in favour of a higher principle that is the principle of respect (Galeotti 2001).

Putting the matter in these terms, another question may arise: if toleration is assessed as a moral virtue permitting the tolerator to overcome her dislike or disapproval, would it not be the case that the recipient of toleration will view that fact as a sort of arrogance? Assessing toleration as a moral virtue seems to reduce the paradox of toleration to a moral conflict for the tolerator; the problem is that the moral reasons backing toleration do not give due weight to the relevance of the difference for the person who is tolerated (Galeotti 2001, 275). Toleration as a moral virtue exhibits, in the face of the tolerated, a negative meaning of mere non-interference, contrasting with the acceptance at which she aims. Furthermore, what emerges is that toleration as a moral virtue seems totally useless to cope with non-chosen differences like race, gender, ethnicity, that is, with the most relevant differences in the contemporary society. What I mean is that, so far, toleration has been referred to differences as individual's choices. Conceived of as choices, differences can be put at some distance from those who choose; to distinguish between a person and her differences in fact suggests that difference itself is a matter of choice, something that the agent who chooses can give up or at least modify (Galeotti, 2001, 285), leaving aside the question whether she is ready to modify them. However, toleration as moral virtue seems to be able to accommodate only differences that can be ascribed to autonomous choices; all other differences seem not to be conceivable as objects of toleration; it seems not well-equipped to address

to ascriptive or identity differences, since their holders cannot choose among them or giving up some of them. In fact, the power to interfere with differences cannot be exercised or, by contrast, refrained when its objects can neither be reassessed nor changed. It is quite clear that this kind of toleration does not help in facing the differences that inhabit the multicultural society, where the most divisive issues concern ethnicity, gender, race and so on, all those differences that are not chosen.

The question now is how to reappraise toleration, given that toleration as a moral virtue shows its limits in designing a society where nobody would like to be merely tolerated. How should one conceive of toleration in order both to solve the paradox of toleration and to treat people respectfully? How should one conceive of toleration both to respect people whose acts or habits are at odds with one's and to let those people feel actually respected? Trying to answer this question requires to put the matter into another perspective, that is, moving from the moral domain to the political one.

2. Toleration as a political ideal

In this session I will deal with toleration as a political ideal. So far I have illustrated the so-called paradox of toleration and I have gone on to look for any solution. Although that paradox seemed to be overcome by distinguishing between respect for person and disapproval of her choices, many perplexities can be raised about the tenability of this distinction in the political domain. Toleration as a moral virtue, there invoked as the best solution to the paradox of toleration, proves to be misleading on the side of the tolerated, given that people generally want to be equally respected, not merely tolerated. They want to be respected not in spite of their choices but as the makers of their choices, independently of what is chosen. What I mean is that, as citizens, people do not worry whether their choices may be agreeable to institutions or not; they expect instead the institutions to abstain from dealing with their choices on the basis of the principle of respect. What they claim is to be respected in their choices, then, to be left free to lead their life as they like. Toleration is here invoked as the acknowledgment that individual choice is sovereign when it concerns personal, religious and moral matters. Toleration, now conceived as a political principle, works as a 'public blindness' towards individual choices in contexts of disagreement or even in the circumstances of conflict about values, be they religious or moral (Galeotti 2002, 5). As a political principle, toleration provides a strategy for making the freedom of each individual in matters of beliefs, her values and way of life compatible with the same freedom of everyone else.

So reappraised as a political strategy for a peaceful coexistence in circumstances of disagreement, toleration is – and has been from its origins – strictly intertwined with liberalism; its task consists in making a rough demarcation between matters pertaining to the political order and matters unrelated to it, or, say, politically irrelevant. The latter are also claimed as the private realm in which institutions should have no business and hence no reason to intervene with coercion (Galeotti 2002, 25). Historically, toleration was worked out as the political solution to the religious wars

that broke out in Europe after the Reformation and represented the first step towards a liberal politics. The principle of toleration relied on the public/private distinction with two consequences: it created a barrier against state intervention in matters of religion; it relegated religion within a politically neutralized area in which no political interference could be allowed (Locke 1991). As conceived as abstention of any kind of political power from the private domain, neutrality meant also not favouring any religions or moral views over others in the public realm.

Starting from this model of neutrality, contemporary political liberalism has generalized that ideal so that it does not only represent a device for guaranteeing equal treatment of citizens, whose differences should be publicly ignored; it becomes also a fundamental element of the liberal institutions that should be designed independently of any religious or moral doctrine. So reconceived, neutrality grounds legitimacy and institutions are recognised as legitimate by people who agree with them in spite of their differences in religion or morals⁶. Neutrality thus grants citizens the right not to be discriminated against because of their religion or morals. Moreover, political neutrality is meant to fulfil the liberal principles of non-discrimination and impartiality and turns to act as a kind of public blindness in aiming at those. In this context, toleration and neutrality are the policies to be adopted with reference to the conceptions of the good, because everyone wants to live in a society in which her convictions obtain equal respect in the public arena.

If the above can work as a short description of the liberal ideal of toleration, a more articulated account of it is nowadays needed, given that there are further kinds of disagreement that cannot be counted as religious or moral ones. What gives rise to contemporary issues of toleration are, in fact, differences between groups rather than between individuals. What counts as essentially peculiar and far from the traditional issues of toleration is the kind of disagreement that concerns groups: that can be hardly qualified as moral disagreement and it should be more specifically spoken of as asymmetries in social standing, status and respects. This kind of disagreement is likely to generate conflicts as consequence of discrimination and lack of equal respect. Furthermore, as I mentioned before, group-differences can hardly be said to involve free choice: the members of a group cannot be required to renounce the traits of their belonging, since the differences they hold have an ascriptive nature which cannot be changed or hidden or removed (Galeotti 2006, 565).

Then, a first tentative conclusion follows: the traditional ideal of political toleration shows to be unable to face contemporary issues of toleration as springing from group-differences for some reasons: a) the first is that those differences are ascriptive and not chosen: members of the groups cannot be granted respect on the basis of autonomy and freedom of choice; they claim respect independently of the non-voluntary nature of their characteristics (i.e. the differences they hold); b) the second is that, as a consequence, group-differences cannot be neutralized; to say to tolerate a white person in spite of her 'whiteness' is non-sense; her being white cannot be neutralized since it is a visible trait that cannot be removed from the public visibility; c) third, on the side of the tolerated, the white person is likely to demand respect not in spite of her colour but with it or, even, thanks to it. What she wants is

indeed equal respect and thus public recognition of her difference as something that she is not willing – would she want to be – to give up or to be ashamed of.

If all the above makes sense, how to re-conceive toleration? What kind of treatment should be addressed to group-differences?

3. From toleration to recognition

3.1. Unsatisfactory neutrality

Now I move on to reappraise toleration as recognition. Having said that the traditional ideal of political toleration does not assure equal respect and non-discrimination to members of groups – whose differences cannot be politically neutralized, that is, made invisible – another way to treat them respectfully must be worked out. According to some authors, the right way to grant group-differences equal respect is recognition, interpreted in many different ways. It is in fact a very central point of the ongoing debate concerning multiculturalism, the definition of which is itself in dispute. So far I opted for not speaking of cultures: many ambiguities surround the notion of 'culture' and it is likely to be misled in assessing group-differences and trying to accommodate their requests. Nonetheless, I think that a short discussion about multiculturalism is now requested to interpret what is at stake in the contemporary debate about toleration.

Let me recall some points. I said that the holders of group-differences are not claiming toleration but respect *for* their being bearers of their own differences and not *in spite* of them. Let us remember that what liberal neutrality traditionally aimed at has been a sort of difference-insensitivity in order to equalize all citizens in their political profile, independently of their personal characteristics; since citizens held the same majority identity, their peculiar differences could receive protection by toleration, in light of which they had been reduced to the private sphere. The question arises when equal treatment in the public arena is claimed not by those who already belong to majority but by those who hold minority differences: how could it ever be desirable for the members of a minority to hide their group-differences? The equalization goal should be oddly reached by denying their special identity. This kind of equalization does not reach the aim of assuring full citizenship to all those who wish to be included in it on the same footing, since they have to renounce what they consider as relevant for their identity (Raz 1986, 113-14). Indeed, if the neutralist stance is in abstract the most equitable way of contrasting the rise of potential discrimination, it is not so in the actual societies, where the majority differences are incorporated in political institutions and social arrangements; in the real world, where privileges and costs have already been linked to moral and cultural differences, neutralizing differences turns to be discriminating against those that have been rooted in a history of discrimination (Galeotti 2002, 58 ff)⁷. What liberal neutrality can assure is just privatization of differences that, in a multicultural society, are not only a private matter but they may be publicly relevant (McKinnon, Castiglione 2003; Jones 1999, 73). Furthermore, neutralizing differences by their privatization implies in some way

the conviction that they had better remain invisible rather than be publicly visible (Phillips 1999). Given that the traditional ideal of neutrality intends to construct a fair polity with disregard to differences, it is not uneasy to recognize that such a neutrality does not meet the demand of inclusion of those people professing minority views. In the face of them, the normative response cannot be toleration as non-interference, since toleration can obtain only privatization – given that privatization is a sufficient way to manage majority differences only, since they are more or less ‘standard’ differences, an oxymoron which suggests the privileges attached to majority traits and claims; by contrast, privatization is not a good way to face minority differences. This criticism to the traditional idea of neutrality leads to a readjustment of the way in which equality – which the idea of neutrality aims to protect – can be pursued; if neutrality aims to correspond equal treatment to people, it has to be reformulated in order to reach this goal (Waldron 2003).

To adequately deal with minority differences, toleration should transform itself into a kind of recognition: since marginality and exclusion come to individuals as the consequence of their membership of minority groups, a positive assertion of differences in the public space is seen as the first step towards recognition. Public recognition requires a positive consideration of the differences in question and this goes beyond a merely neutral stance. That positive consideration does not have to be considered as a form of evaluation of differences; in considering them, one is not interested in their ‘content’ in order to assess it and thus decide if they are suitable for the liberal society; the point is rather to grant differences a sign of their public acceptance. What I mean is that recognition should not be intended as a consequence of an attribution of some value; on the contrary, recognition should be addressed to the bearer of difference insofar as that difference is important to her.

So reconceptualised as a kind of ‘moral avoidance’, or of abstention from assessing intrinsic value to differences, neutrality is still an ideal for a liberal society, provided that it is backed by the attempt to look at citizens independently of their personal setting. In this sense, the public recognition of differences, being independent of their content, is in fact compatible with public neutrality, even though it has to be revised. If differences have been sign of exclusion, then a compensation as a public consideration of them is consistent with what neutrality stands for, that is indeed the liberal principle of equal respect.

To conclude: the reappraisal of toleration with regard to group-differences implies – following Galeotti – “a double extension compared to liberal models: first, a special extension from the private to the public domain; second, a semantic extension from the negative meaning of non-interference to the positive sense of acceptance and recognition” (Galeotti 2006, 573).

3.2. *Recognizing cultures. Pro et contra*

Yet, toleration as recognition meets some criticisms especially from the side of those that find it as contrasting liberal principles, namely impartiality, universality and neutrality. Recognition seems to them to imply a special treatment for differences, a positive recognition infringing the impartial stance of liberalism.

One of the main criticism to recognition comes from Brian Barry who sees in the claims of cultures not an appeal to respect but a defence of cultural relativism. According to Barry, egalitarian liberals cannot be multiculturalists. This statement rests upon two claims: the first is that justice is a matter of equal opportunities; the second is that an opportunity is an objective state of affairs. Calling on these two claims, Barry hopes to deny that justice requires special rights for minority groups, while simultaneously preserving his credentials as an egalitarian; it is a concern for equality and specifically for equality of opportunities that will deliver the conclusion that special rights are not a requirement of justice. To Barry, liberal egalitarianism has *universal* validity and is perfectly able to manage each difference as well, be it moral, religious, social or cultural. So, all societies can be perfectly assessed by liberal standards and all claims must be translatable into the rubric of individual rights. To the extent that cultural groups fail to meet them, they deserve not toleration but condemnation (Barry 2001).

The ‘negative’ universalism of Barry excludes any accommodation of cultural differences, given that citizenship as consisting in an identical set of legal, civic and political rights and obligations grants sufficient protection to those differences understood as private and extra-political matters. Indeed, the liberal proposal of privatizing differences is the only way in which they can be given equal treatment. Liberals – maintains Barry – cannot accept the view of a society in which group identities and loyalties have primacy over any broader society identity and loyalty⁸, since that view, misleadingly assessed as responding to an ideal of diversity, rests indeed on a rejection of what it may be called, in contrast, the liberal politics of solidarity (Barry 2001, 299 ff).

Coming to a comment of Barry’s objection to multiculturalism, I think that, on the one hand, Barry is probably wrong when he trusts liberal institutions to be well-equipped to cope with social disadvantages as caused by membership; indeed, the privatization and subsequent invisibility of differences concur to keep minorities in a marginal position of second-class citizenship; if justice is a matter of equal opportunities, as Barry claims, some kind of recognition of minority groups is a requirement of justice precisely because justice is a matter of equal opportunities. In order to attack multiculturalism from the perspective of liberal egalitarianism, Barry needs to assume a distinction between chance and choice; he also needs to show that religious and cultural beliefs fall on the choice side of the line⁹. On the other hand, Barry is probably right when he worries about certain requests of recognition, since they seem to be sustained by an essentialist and holistic interpretations of cultural differences. What I mean is that Barry’s criticism against recognition relies on a questionable conception of culture – a “billiard-ball concept of culture” (Tully 2002, 104) – according to which culture is a sort of monad, a seamless and cohesive entity; consequently, recognition is here interpreted as an acknowledgement or even an endorsement of differences as intrinsically valuable or, otherwise, as totally rejectable. Conceiving of culture in this essentialist and holistic way, individuals are in parallel thought of as embedded in it, unready for personal choices, nearly or totally absorbed – sometimes subjected to – by community and its traditions¹⁰.

A view in some way similar to Barry's has been defended by Moller Okin, for whom the liberal state should not protect minority cultures but individuals within cultures. She thinks especially of women, traditionally oppressed by cultural traditions and made unable of free choice. The liberal state, says Okin, should act positively not to protect cultures but, on the contrary, to discourage certain cultures from perpetuating their traditions insofar as they do not accord women equal dignity (Okin 1998). Okin's position has been in turn widely criticized by those who see in it an excess of "culturalization" of groups; it means that, by emphasising the differences between cultures, Okin gives the impression that each reproduces itself in isolation. Okin seems to fancy women in traditional societies as inescapably slaves, deepen in a kind of 'false consciousness' that leaves them incapable of becoming aware of their oppression (Phillips 2007, 26; Kukathas 2001).

What can conclusively be added is that, when given a *strong* meaning, culture is employed as denying human agency; individuals are defined through their culture and culture is in turn treated as the explanation for everything they say or do (Phillips 2007, 9). Furthermore, that kind of strong idea of culture, backing the parallel idea of *strong* recognition, seems to suggest that citizens act as totally distant entities, at the expense of what they have or may have in common (Miller 1995, chap. 5).

Although I feel sympathetic with these criticisms against a strong interpretation of culture and recognition, it must be honestly acknowledged that multiculturalism in its strong interpretation has represented a way of challenging liberal solutions to the problem of dealing with differences, insofar as those solutions have failed to appreciate the nature of the demands made by particular groups. Where groups wanted recognition of some kind, liberal institutions have responded by offering them the same treatment as reserved to most part of citizenry, in spite of their peculiarities. The point was that – exactly contrasting the universal ideal defended by Barry's liberalism – what groups required was recognition of their dignity not as members of a universal community but as individuals and groups distinct from everyone else. So, the idea that the liberal state might be seen as a neutral framework in which they, along with all others, might flourish under difference-blind principles was simply an illusion: toleration and impartiality were not enough to grant them equal respect and consideration.

According to Taylor, the reality was that liberalism did not work as a meeting ground for all cultures, but the political expression of one range of cultures quite incompatible with other ranges (Taylor 1992, 62). By doing so, liberalism turns to devalue cultures and underestimate their relevance for recognition; non-recognition as deriving from a negligence of culture in regards to individuals can inflict harm, imprisoning them in a distorted or reduced understanding of themselves. Beyond this, they are condemned to suffer the pain of low self-esteem. For all those remarks, the kind of recognition Taylor puts forward is a strong one: but, as such, it proves to be far from consistent with liberal claims, since it assumes that cultures are good in themselves, acting as the background for self-esteem and self-respect, with disregard to the practices and the values that cultures entail. In light of that, I think that Taylor

is right in focusing on the relevance of cultural differences for their holders, as they find in them the source of their identity and self-recognition; at the same time he is wrong in appreciating cultures or differences in themselves, as intrinsically good, misconceiving the cases in which cultures are oppressive towards their members, especially against those that within cultures are discriminated (as women are in Okin's account).

Another interesting criticism against liberal universalism is advanced by Young, for whom assimilation as homogenization lies at the heart of the liberal project. She advocates a "politics of difference" as contrasting the liberal politics of identity and aiming at group assertion, including the marginalized within the political process (Young 1990). The core idea is, again, that universalism simply perpetuates existing patterns of dominance, albeit in the name of impartiality. The point of Young's argument is that liberal egalitarianism places concern for social and cultural groups in the wrong place. The problem is not simply of distributing rights and resources to groups and cultures in order for their members to be regarded as 'equal': the problem is about the underlying social norms that constitute opportunities in the first place.

Keeping some distance from the strong interpretation of recognition, backed by an idea of culture as value-laden, that is, as an intrinsic good deserving protection, I believe that a weaker idea of recognition should be embraced, with the aim of sorting out problems of discrimination on the one side, but without running the risk of protecting cultures over individuals on the other.

Thus, another interpretation of multiculturalism has to be advanced with this exact goal of caring of people not of groups, by taking into consideration their differences as relevant for their autonomy and self-esteem (Benhabib 2000, 53). A version of it has been advocated by Kymlicka who calls it "liberal culturalism". According to Kymlicka, the protection of cultural minorities is consistent with the universalistic commitment of liberalism: liberalism is absolutely capable of conjugating its commitment to moral universal standards with respect for cultural differences (Kymlicka 1989; Kymlicka 2001). The central argument is that what matters to humans is being able to live autonomously. Liberalism has traditionally recognized the importance of autonomy, interpreted as a good to which each person does have an equal claim. But far from compelling the assimilation of cultural minorities into the universalist way of belonging to liberal state, respect for autonomy requires respect for cultural communities, within which autonomy can be properly exercised. The position that Kymlicka maintains against both liberal universalism *à la* Barry and cultural relativism, into which the multiculturalism *à la* Taylor may degenerate in stating the intrinsic value of any culture, is a differentiated-rights solution. That means, basically, that cultural groups must be protected from external interferences from the outside society to ensure their cohesiveness and integrity; groups have the right to maintain themselves as they provide members with real possibilities to exercise their freedom of choice and live autonomously according to their choice. Without those protections, some groups would see their differences decline and disappear, causing individuals the perpetuity of their disadvantages. Kymlicka goes on to insist that cultural protection does not

entitle communities to impose *internal restrictions* on their members, who remain members of the universal human community and bearers of the same rights granted to all citizens. That means that, according to Kymlicka, individuals come before cultures and cultures deserve as much protection as needed to protect individual freedom¹¹. A similar position has been defended by Raz, who assigns a special role to culture for autonomous choices and individual well-being (Raz 1994). On the basis of the central value of autonomy, Raz argues for governmental support to allow cultures to flourish, but conditionally on a respect for the individual rights of their members. It can be said that the recognition granted to minorities is restricted to those compatible with liberal defence of individual rights.

What emerges from the positions advocated by Kymlicka and Raz, in spite of their differences, is the common claim to minorities rights. Against this claim some authors propose a more traditionally liberal perspective individual-oriented *but* sensitive to differences. To understand this intermediate position against minorities rights and in favour of an acknowledgement of differences, I will concentrate on the proposals by Kukathas and Phillips, who try, although in quite different ways, to deal with differences without invoking any special protection for groups. According to the former, groups are to be regarded not as established with the right to protection or guarantees of perpetuation, but as associations of people who are entitled to continue in association with one another if they so desire. Each is free to depart and the authority of the group's leader rests only on the willingness of the members to acquiesce in their rule. The stance is of *radical toleration* rather than recognition: no association can be privileged, but groups must be tolerated even when their practices are intolerant (Kukathas 2003). Kukathas maintains that liberalism is a regime of toleration since it recognizes the importance of the fact that people see the world differently having different values; a regime of toleration is the one in which different groups, recognizing different authorities, coexist (Kukathas 2003, 191 ff). The idea of freedom of association is the basis of a legitimate authority; thus, the liberal state has no special commitment to protect minorities but only the commitment to assure liberty of conscience and freedom of association. Liberal institutions are sound when they leave people free to pursue their ends, whether separately or in concert with others, under the rule of law; by implication, they must leave people free to live by differentiated cultural standards, provided that doing so does not threaten the legal and political order which allows for peaceful coexistence. Contrasting the politics of recognition, Kukathas maintains ironically that liberalism is not a politics of cultural integration but, instead, a politics of indifference: by saying this, he does not intend to identify liberalism as indifferent to any issue in political policy; but rather to make a point about the good of public policy that corresponds to preserving order. The liberalism he advocates is the "liberalism of the archipelago of discrete and separate, though also sometimes overlapping and interacting communities, jurisdictions and association" (Kukathas 2003, 206). In this perspective – concludes Kukathas – it should be better to stop describing society as constituted by majority and minorities; society should be conceived of a plurality of cultures coexisting in a condition of mutual toleration.

Recently, Phillips has put forward her new interesting idea of "multiculturalism without culture" (Phillips 2007). Criticizing both Kymlicka and Kukathas Phillips assumes that cultures do have to be considered neither as cultural communities enabling autonomy nor as free associations of people aiming at whatever they want, be that freedom or subjection, thus pretending away the effects of oppression and underestimating the bounds among individuals and their groups. Furthermore, against any form of radical multiculturalism in which institutions aim at strong recognition of culture as intrinsically good, Phillips argues for a recognition of similarities without discounting the differences: what she means is that multiculturalism needs to be rethought since it is one of the ironies that, in the name of equality and mutual respect between peoples, "it had encouraged us to view peoples and cultures as more systematically different than they are" (Phillips 2007, 25). It means that for 'saving' people from cultures, for defending individuals from the risk of oppression, cultures have been paradoxically conceived as static, isolated, sealed off, so that their members cannot but be held as totally absorbed and even subjected by them¹². On the contrary, cultures are not separate, bounded or internally uniform but, rather, overlapping and internally negotiated (see also: Tully 1995, 7-14). So, the alternative she puts forward is of a multiculturalism without culture, that is, a multiculturalism without any particular conception of culture. Cultures – says Phillips – matter to people in many different ways. Some people endorse the cultural norms that helped form them, others live their norms without thinking about them, and others reject the suggestion they live as their cultures want them to live; for those, to say that something is cultural makes it seem unthinking and not chosen. But, whatever their belief about the norms and practices through which they have become the people they are, people – claims Phillips – are cultural beings. Saying that, however, neither means to say that people are from a particular culture nor that cultures deprive them of their agency. On the contrary, people are agents, not captives of their culture, programmed by cultural rules. Against the idea that culture is a thing and that cultural identity is natural, permanent and original, 'multiculturalism without culture' sees it as an attribute of the individual rather than of the group; this kind of multiculturalism is indeed grounded on the rights of individuals rather than of groups.

3.3. Cultural dynamism and social transformation

So far I intended to provide an overview of different ways to think of multiculturalism. Independently of their respective notion of culture and, consequently, of multiculturalism, the common concern is about how the group should matter to the individual plan of life. Granted that no one lives in abstract but within a context culturally characterized, no matter whether it is a natural or a political construct, the question is: how long may the individual be free with regard to cultural bonds which link in some way her to her group? I believe neither that any member of a group might be completely and permanently deprived of opportunities to exit nor that any group is definitely closed, frozen and oppressive towards its members. What I mean is that, being aware that in a lot of cases minorities within

the minority groups are discriminated (see women's condition in several cultural contexts), those groups are not necessarily closed off the wider society; in this sense, I agree with Phillips when she says that those writing on multiculturalism have often exaggerated not only the solidity of cultures but also the intractability of value conflicts; many of them do not involve deep disagreement, so that they can be accommodated, and many other are comparable to disputes within the same group (Phillips 2007, 8). On the contrary, in a liberal and democratic scenario a large number of citizens from minority cultural groups take already part into the country's legislative and deliberative process. Solutions to multicultural dilemmas – but I prefer to think of them as different and sometimes conflicting claims to recognition – can be best reached through discussions and dialogue, where people can explain to one another why they favour a particular law or sustain a particular practice, and develop skills of compromise and negotiation. Negotiation, indeed, is not necessarily between clearly reified groups or totally distant values and perspectives; cultural differences are not necessarily so great as it is often said to be, and can find forms of reasonable accommodation instead of negotiation. What has probably to be encouraged is an “attitude of engagement” (McKinnon 2003; Bohman 2003), implying an effort to understand different values, practices, forms of association and community by attempting to engage them in public discourse. Given that, a practice should be evaluated not in the abstract, but by locating it in the system of meanings and values of the community or association concerned; of course, we can be persuaded that it is not legitimate for a number of reasons and decide to ban it, but we owe it to the community to do so after giving it an opportunity to explain and justify it (Parekh 1999, 164). In this sense, a public dialogue is expected to make place for arguments for cultural recognition (Festenstein 2005). This position is partially shared by Benhabib, when she defends a deliberative democratic model as the one which permits maximum cultural contestation within the public sphere. Democratic practices are quite compatible with cultural experimentation and with new legal and institutional designs aiming to accommodate cultural pluralism (Benhabib 2000, x). The proposal of a “dual-track approach to multicultural issues” consists of arguing for a compatibility between democratic institutions and certain forms of multicultural jurisdictions that do not undermine the principles of individual and public autonomy, of egalitarian reciprocity and universal respect (Benhabib 2000, xii; Shachar 2001). Eventually, we have to put our trust in democratic deliberation, and in the incentives it gives to members of particular groups to seek a fair compromise over issues relevant for them. Members of groups are less extreme that they are often held and they may be asked to consider modifying its own norms to engage in a real democratic discussion (Miller 2002, 58). This conclusion is backed by a philosophical thesis according to which cultures are not to be understood as discrete wholes. A culture is a complex human practice of signification and representation, formed through complex dialogues with other cultures (Benhabib 2000, ix). “A culture is made through change; it is not defined by an essence which exists apart from change” (Modood 2007, 93). Coherently, human identity too may change; thus, “the public recognition of our identities requires a

politics that leaves room for us to deliberate publicly about those aspects of identity that we share with other citizens” (Gutmann 1992, 7).

To conclude, recognizing the dynamism of culture and rejecting the notion of a strong sense of the importance of cultural belonging is the first step towards a strategy of internal reform (Shachar 2001, 66).

3.4. *Public toleration as symbolic recognition*

I am now back to toleration as recognition. From the point of view of a ‘multiculturalism without culture’, toleration can be reappraised as a way to meet claims and instances from minorities; thus it can be better interpreted as recognition. Quitting to conceive of cultures as solid and unchangeable entities, minorities claims can be welcome as demands of inclusion and of visibility for their members. Questions of toleration arise when minorities members refuse to keep their differences within the private sphere, but decide to display them by vindicating their public visibility. What they ask for is not to be granted special positive treatments insofar their differences can be seen as disadvantages to be compensated by forms of redistribution; by reasoning so, institutions prove to be condescending and patronizing towards minorities, not to confer them equal respect¹³. What they ask for is indeed to be free and to be free to be different. In this way, toleration concerns not the private sphere as in the typical liberal way to tolerate differences; it concerns instead the public sphere. This revised notion of toleration as public toleration implies that what is tolerated is the presence of different forms of behaviour *in public*, i.e. in public spaces such as schools. Acts or policies of public toleration, then, are those that allow the presence and expression of differences in the public domain; toleration has to be extended to cover social arenas beyond those traditionally conceived of as private (Galeotti 2002, 573).

Following Galeotti, public toleration of differences is pursued for its symbolic meanings, that is, it aims at obtaining public acceptance of a different behaviour or lifestyle, hence the recognition of differences. By officially accepting those differences in the public sphere, toleration symbolically affirms the legitimacy of them: the legitimization of their presence in public means their inclusion in the public sphere. Their public presence is acceptable not just as the public presence of the individuals as individual, but of the individuals as bearers of minority identities. “The argument for the symbolic meaning of toleration as recognition is based on the hypothesis of a causal chain linking the legitimization of different identities, as the symbolic result of the public toleration, with the feeling of public respect of one's identity and, consequently, the opportunity to build up self-esteem and self-respect, feeling confident in themselves as member of the polity and of society at large” (Galeotti 2002, 101).

The important thing is that public toleration is *publicly justified* with reference to the goal of full inclusion of minorities. It is when public toleration is justified with reference to the exclusion of minorities as an effect of their unequal social standing and the need to include them as full citizens as a requirement of justice that it turns into symbolic *recognition* (Galeotti 2002, 102-103; see also Lægaard

2008). The *act* of recognition, then, is primarily a gesture that gains its symbolic meaning from the appeal in public justification to the aim of inclusion of minorities; the *object* of recognition is not the particular identities that differentiate groups from one another, but the common citizenship which all members of society, regardless of group membership, should be included in (Galeotti 2002, 105; Fraser 2003, 28-33; Lægaard 2005, 330). Citing Fraser, what is here at stake is not an “identity model of recognition”, so that what requires recognition is a group specific cultural identity; alternatively, a “status model of recognition” puts forward the recognition of the status of group members as full partners of social interactions (Fraser 2003a). In this sense recognition is properly assessed as a matter of justice (Benhabib 2000, xii).

To sum up: in order for toleration to be satisfactory while dealing with minorities claims it is crucial to recognize the central problem of exclusion. In this sense toleration ceases to be assessed as private toleration, adjusting clashes of values or moral conceptions, and starts to be publicly relevant, as a way to compensate social asymmetries between the dominant cultural standards and the different practices, attitudes and lifestyles of minorities. Toleration is thus endorsed for reasons of justice, in order to repair injustices of the unequal respect granted to the bearers of differences.

As specified above, symbolic recognition as the right way of public toleration of differences is not intended in a strong sense, that is endorsing the intrinsic value of differences, but, more weakly, as their public acceptance within the range of ‘normal’ alternatives inspiring different social lifestyles.

The institutional recognition of differences has nothing to do with the public appreciation of it, or with the declaration of its value. The notion of public recognition signifies the inclusion of a different trait, practice or identity in the range of the legitimate ‘normal’ options of an open society. Now, institutional recognition of difference is compatible with public neutrality, since it requires no assessment and no evaluation of differences present in a pluralist democracy. Hence, symbolic recognition, while implying a positive attitude towards differences’ bearers, is content-independent: they are granted recognition insofar as they are relevant to their holders thereof their equal inclusion and respect. If the above makes sense, symbolic recognition finds its only limit in the harm principle. Symbolic recognition, differently from the strong notion of recognition, is compatible with neutrality and impartiality; in fact, on the one hand the content of differences need not to be assessed to be admitted into citizenry; on the other hand, it does not entail favouring some particular group at the expense of the others, but can be extended to all claimants.

4. Conclusion

The previous discussion about recognition ends by suggesting that a valuable distinction could be made between recognition as it relates to whole cultures and its

role in relation to injustices affecting individuals. If strong multiculturalism is rejectable as backed by the idea of an intrinsic value of cultures, what can be retained from it is the insight into the psychological harms and social iniquities of some groups within liberal society. In this sense recognition has to be assessed as a normative framework that seeks to bring cultural demands with parameters set by justice. The theoretical proposal by Galeotti who defends a peculiar idea of symbolic recognition offers an important version of it (Galeotti 2002). She deservedly highlights the illusion of liberal democracies to be able to cope with social conflicts by reallocating rights and liberties. Toleration has to be claimed to in the face of the new kind of disagreement that characterizes the multicultural society, albeit it is to be reappraised so that it comes to mean equality of public standing between minority cultures and majority preferences. This revised idea of toleration is defended in light of justice: it means in fact that no single culture is favoured over any other. Emphasis is rightly placed upon the idea that there is public interest in overcoming the alienating effects of the culturally based processes of normalization and stigmatization.

Conclusively: toleration as recognition has a huge potential for a liberal engagement with differences. It signals the likely developments of practical attempts to move into the terrain between liberal justice and multicultural claims. This concept of recognition is not alien to the family of liberal thought, despite the hostility of some liberal theorists. On the contrary, it represents a way to grasp the complexity of the social conflicts still caused by the presence of diverse and differently positioned social groups within democracies. Specifically, the reappraisal of toleration as recognition implies taking seriously the discussion of what the various theoretical distinctions and clarifications mean in practice. The practical matter is to which extent differences should be granted toleration in the public domain. It must be clear that any gesture of symbolic recognition may have costs for the majority, because of the need to accommodate minorities’ requests.

It is exactly the aim of the following papers of the present research to illustrate the extent to which the implementation of neutrality-inspired policies risks undermining the pursuit of such basic democratic commitments as those to equality and social cohesion and solidarity. The following papers aim at showing, through the analysis of issues concerning public spaces as involving recognition, that the traditional concept of toleration may be indirectly self-defeating in the sense that, if politically implemented, it will tend to reduce toleration and the form of equality that was supposed to be safeguarded by it.

Notes

¹ Galeotti 2002, 20. I decide to use the term ‘toleration’ instead of ‘tolerance’. I will use the term ‘toleration’ with two meanings: referring to moral attitude and virtue on the side of the tolerator and referring to the political outcome of the negations of intolerance. About the difference between tolerance and toleration: King 1998, xi ff; Nicholson 1985, 159.

² According to Nicholson, toleration is appropriate only in the case of morally grounded disapproval, not in the cases of simple dislike, distaste or disgust. The reason is that toleration is a “matter of moral choice, and our tastes and inclinations are irrelevant” (Nicholson 1985, 160-61). Warnock replies to Nicholson by denying that such a difference can be drawn between the moral and the non-moral; by saying that, she does not claim that there is no difference between what she dislikes and what she disapproves of; on the contrary, she goes on to distinguish strong toleration, which involves moral disapproval, and weak toleration, which involves only dislike (Warnock 1987). Details about this opinions exchange in Mendus 1989, 10-11.

³ The idea is that the differences regarded as issues of toleration are those disagreeable but not universally wrong; they are objectionable but non universally condemned (in which case they are not tolerable at all). See Galeotti 2006, 565-66.

⁴ There are many criticisms against this statement; some authors deny that toleration can be granted to people rather than to their actions. It is evident that for them toleration is not a value but, on the contrary, a disvalue. Their idea is to stop speaking of toleration that implies a sort of negative forbearance. What I intend here is toleration as a positive attitude towards those with whom we disagree.

⁵ According to Williams, disapproval and dislike have to be grounded in some reasons if we want to speak of the moral attitude of toleration. In the absence of those reasons, respect for others should prevail by stopping disapproval of differences. See Williams 1996 and Williams 1996b.

⁶ Many authors devoted their analysis to neutrality as grounding liberal legitimacy (see, as one over the others: Rawls 1993); a useful discussion of main political liberal positions can be found in Galeotti 2002, 30-34.

⁷ A different position is held by Waldron 1997: according to Waldron it is good to be sympathetic to cultures that have been damaged and exploited by the coming of settlers or that, claiming for inclusion in the citizenship, are indeed treated as discriminated minorities; however – he comments – political theory must be forward-looking and should consider as justice can be addressed to all people as equals, not as it should compensate the ‘historical’ disadvantaged. Waldron puts forwards the so called “cosmopolitan alternative” to multiculturalism.

⁸ Barry has in mind specifically the culturalist view adopted by Parekh 2000, according to whom human beings are culturally embedded.

⁹ About this consideration, see Mendus 2002, 34-35.

¹⁰ A critique to Barry’s notion of multiculturalism is raised by Tully 2002, especially 103-04; the author accuses Barry of doing battle with caricatures of the multiculturalists’ arguments, translating his philosophical partners into enemies whose work constitutes a threat to his idea of egalitarianism. As a result, Tully argues, the problem how to address fairly and effectively both growing inequalities and oppression of cultural minorities is occluded more than illuminated.

¹¹ Similarly, Walzer sees the so called cosmopolitan (i.e. universalistic) ideal of citizenship as making a little sense (Walzer 1999). Walzer’s position grounds in the idea that societies can hardly be judged from the standpoint of universal morality, since a large part of morality is tied to local understanding. His inclination is thus of advocating toleration of difference, to the extent that group practices go against the individual rights.

¹² Phillips 2007, 25-27: the author criticises Okin’s position about the subjection of women within cultures, that she finds too exaggerated.

¹³ The debate about recognition and redistribution is extremely important; generally speaking, those who consider liberal neutrality well-equipped to deal with differences and object to recognition as a way to give away liberal solution to disadvantage opt for policies of redistribution as compensation of past discrimination; conversely, those who see these solutions as failing in addressing real consideration and respect to minorities put forward forms of recognition. See Fraser, Honneth 2003.

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Let's Play Democracy! **Developing Multicultural Education and the Case Study of Young Immigrants in Italian Schools**

GIULIA BISTAGNINO*

1. Introduction

Migration is recognized as a crucial issue not only for political agendas, but also for political philosophy. On one hand, laws and policies have been enacted and transported in legal schemes in order to shape integration and equality. In particular, in Europe directives have been launched¹ in an effort to tackle explicit and implicit forms of discrimination within societies. On the other, in the last years philosophical debates upon different forms of citizenship apt to address the problem of pluralism in liberal, democratic societies have increased considerably². Within this discussion, one of the most contested issues concerns how liberal democracies should relate to ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities and their claims for recognition. Within political philosophy, three prominent lines of argument have been put forward, namely various liberal theories defended conceptions of individual rights, neutrality, and toleration³, while others focused on multicultural claims for group rights and recognition of group identities⁴. Finally, an intermediate position has argued for cultural claims to be interpreted and in favour of negotiations, intended as those forms of deliberation apt to promote a wider democratic outcome.⁵

To understand the debate about liberal justice and multicultural claims, the concept of public space is extremely relevant. Public spaces are those spaces where citizens and individuals living in a society are publicly visible. In this sense, public spaces not only are opposed to private properties and private homes, but are also to be considered as those places in which a political society produces and proposes its

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image, conception, and perception. For these reasons, the organization of public spaces always involves issues of recognition and identity. Indeed, in the definition of what is legitimate in public spaces, the boundaries of a society's membership and the demands of inclusion are at stake.

In the contemporary multicultural context of liberal democracies, schools represent a fundamental public space in reference to which different kinds of claims of recognition are cast upon. For example, schools involve claims for the equal treatment of cultures, claims to equal rights which are already embodied in the democratic constitution, but from which minorities are excluded by some social practices and special norms. A paradigmatic case of such claims is that of the Egyptian private school which was closed down in Italy in 2006. In such a situation, the real problem was not concerned with safety requirements, as the political authorities claimed, but with the right of the Egyptian community to set up a bilingual private school. Moreover, schools are also public spaces in which strictly symbolic recognition is demanded. To make a well-known example, the acceptance of the wearing of the Muslim veils in public schools is a classical case in which minorities affirm their right to be publicly visible and require society to recognize them in their differences. Finally, it is important to mention the issue of the legal rights held by migrants regarding education. The question whether migrants are morally entitled to a range of legal rights, including rights to education for their children, has never been evaluated by systematic philosophical reflections⁶. However, it is a pressing issue, especially considering the need for normative criteria in the enforcement of immigration laws.

Given such examples, schools and education appear as a crucial dimension in contemporary liberal society and a necessary condition for inclusion and discussion of the justification of minorities' claims. Thus, understanding the potential of education in relation to the multicultural context is a pressing need. The present work focuses on the part played by multicultural education in the integration process and democratic development of migrant students. The issue under discussion is whether providing an educational program focused on civic values, respect, and public deliberation can be considered a useful and effective strategy towards social integration and political inclusion of students holding different cultural backgrounds and habits. On the basis of a research, carried out in the school year 2008/2009 by CeSEP, the Center of Public Ethics of the University Vita-Salute San Raffaele, it considers the potential of multicultural. In what follows, it will be described a program of multicultural education focused on civic values and democratic deliberation. The idea gained by working with young students in Italian schools is that discussing issues of cultural recognition, public spaces, and pluralism is not only possible, but also crucial for the development of a shared public culture in complex democratic societies.

The aim of this work is to provide theoretical and scientific frameworks for enhancing multicultural education, intended as that discipline which not only seeks to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups⁷, but also to pursue an educated, autonomous citizenry able to live together respecting cultural differences and to discuss the organization of public spaces and their shape.

Given its scope, the present article is divided into two parts. First, a theoretical section is devoted to those ideas of liberalism, pluralism, democratic discourse in their relations to civic education. Reasoning among such concepts is essential to understand the framework within which the research takes place for such ideas shape and inform the educational program set up and conducted in the classrooms. In particular, the research design relies heavily on John Rawls's conception of liberalism. Second, the article proceeds by describing the outlook of the educational program and the results collected within the research. It is important to stress from the beginning that, in what follows, not all the data are going to be presented, but only some significant examples which show the effectiveness of the educational model. In this sense, the present work is neither a descriptive study of school integration, nor a work of normative theorizing only. On the contrary, it places itself on the boundary between the realms of theory and practice and it is to be considered a sort of experiment in *public philosophy*⁸, a down to earth application of philosophical reflections to a pressing and crucial problem which affects contemporary democratic societies.

2. The Potential of Education

When we talk about civic education we refer to those educational strategies and set of rules which are to prepare young individuals living in a country to become good and politically engaged citizens. To put it in Gutmann's words, civic education is "the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation"⁹. Although it is true that schools are not to be regarded as the only institutions to raise civic characters¹⁰, it is also true that schooling is one of the most appropriate methods to prepare future citizens who are to participate in political life for it holds a great democratic potential and deliberative instruction¹¹. Schooling is crucial to the primer development of individuals' capacities to reflect upon common issues, it is fundamental in learning to discuss and socialize with interlocutors holding different political and moral views. It is essential in shaping one's civic identity. Indeed, it is usually at school that individuals meet persons holding different ideas and points of views for the first time and are confronted with the possibility of creating a community with them. For these reasons, following Gutmann's account of democratic education, it is possible to argue that, within its aims, schooling needs not only to teach students the content of the different subjects covered by their curricula. It needs also to educate individuals to be able to participate in the on-going, collective deliberation carried within a society to shape its forms and the relations among its citizens.

In this sense, the primer goal of a democratic educational model is to prepare future citizens to critically evaluate competing conceptions of the good life and the good society, to judge among different normative sets of principles and images of justice in order to participate in "conscious social reproduction"¹². Civic education is also a means to achieve a higher-order view on oneself for it enables individuals

to consider their own positions, ways of life, and moral commitments and, thus, to critically reflect upon them. The argument holds that if civic education can provide the basic capacities towards democratic deliberation and evaluation of competing normative conceptions, it enables individuals not only to judge and discuss those views held by others, but also their own, to question their justification and legitimacy. In this sense, the acquisition of autonomy, which in this respect means the ability to scrutinize and assess one's ends and conception of the good life, is to be considered part of the educational enterprise. However, this does not mean that civic education necessarily aims at the production of autonomous citizens. As Rawls sees it, civic education needs to teach students to become independent members of a society, capable of being motivated by a society's political conception of justice¹³. To put it in Kymlicka's words, "the promotion of personal autonomy [is] the indirect consequence of civic education, not [...] its direct and explicit purpose"¹⁴. Independency is a prerequisite for normative judgment and critical thinking which civic education within a liberal framework seeks to develop.

Given the scope of civic education, it is necessary to ask whether and to what extend the presence of migrant students in contemporary schools changes its task and in what manners. If migrant students are not to be considered as temporary residents, but future citizens of the receiving society, what kind of civic education is to be expected to work for their integration? Moreover, it is important to note how the issues of education and integration in pluralist societies concern not only migrant students who arrive in the receiving country. It also affects those resident students who are to confront themselves with those very migrant students. It is not only a matter of school life for it is not a problem concerned only with the way students behave towards each other at school. Rather, it is a problem related with the development of those capacities necessary to confront oneself with diversity in general, in one's social and political relations.

In the school year 2008/2009, CeSEP, the Center of Ethics and Public Affairs of the University Vita-Salute San Raffaele, has realized a research project about the potential of multicultural education working within the urban area of the city of Milan, in the north of Italy. In the project "Interculturalità e Valori civili nelle scuole secondarie di primo grado milanesi", ten Middle School classes¹⁵ were involved and two hundreds and eighteen students, aged between twelve and thirteen, coming from twenty-three different countries, participated. The aim of the project has been that of not only analyzing the state of social integration within the context of one of the most important city of the north of Italy, where migration has increased considerably in the past few decades¹⁶. The project's pursue has been also that of shaping an educational model based on some considerations of normative political philosophy, namely on liberalism, respect and democracy, to foster social integration among students. The idea has been that of modelling schools as sites for encounters between students from different cultures exercising common interests, political values and fraternization; to provide students with organized spaces and methods to reason, reflect, and discuss upon their different

ways of life, usages, and values. In this sense, the project aimed to defend and stress the importance of schools in the multicultural development: "liberal citizenship requires cultivating the habit of civility, and the capacity for public reasonableness in our interaction with others. [...] Precisely these habits and capacities [...] need to be learned in schools, for they are unlikely to be learned in smaller groups or associations [...] which tend to be homogenous in their ethno-cultural background and beliefs"¹⁷.

Reflecting on the role schooling should have, the project presented education as the most important medium for developing democratic capacities for future citizens of contemporary societies who are to be able to exercise their human citizenship and rights. For these reasons, the educational model has focused on the development of civic values, starting from the political principles stated by the Italian Constitution, and on students' deliberative capacities.

The project addressed two main questions which constituted the study's lines of research. First, is it possible to think of schools as sites for democratic development and fraternization through deliberation and communication in pluralistic societies? Second, is a civic attitude teachable? How is to be organized an educational model viable to teach civic values and respect to young students holding different cultural backgrounds and views of the world?

3. Liberal Principles and Recognition in Multicultural Education

Given the aim, the purposes of the project, and its lines of research, the idea has been that of starting from Rawls's *Political Liberalism*¹⁸ in finding principles and political values apt to shape a model of civic education to address students of schools with a high percentage of migrants. In particular, despite the convergence of comprehensive and neutral forms of liberalism on civic education and its enforcement¹⁹, the project has been structured from a rejection of the former²⁰ and an acceptance of the latter. As a matter of fact, the project has been shaped drawing from Rawls's conception of liberalism as a distinctively political doctrine whose principles are to shape the political life of society only. In this sense, principles of justice are limited to politics and their justification is independent of any competing conception of the good one may endorse.

In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls's problem is to define a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable, though incompatible doctrines about how to conduct one's life. Thus, political liberalism argues for a "priority of the right over the good"²¹ when it comes to those normative principles which shape the life of a democratic society. Claiming the priority of the right is not only to refer to the idea that principles of political justice should set limits to permissible ways of life, but also to argue that claims made by citizens of liberal democracies in the public arena cannot appeal to beliefs which transgress the limits set by the political conception.

Since the normative principles of political liberalism are committed to

neutrality and their justification does not depend on any conception of the good for the political conception of justice it defends is *freestanding*²², an educational program consistent with political liberalism teaches students only how to become good citizens. On this account, schooling is not meant to foster any idea of the good life unless it is necessary to good citizenship for its aim is only to develop liberal democratic skills and deliberative capacities. In this sense, the project has mainly focused on those ideas of justification and *public reason* which are crucial to the structure of political liberalism.

According to Rawls, the possibility of a political conception of justice is based on public justification and, thus, on the reasons reasonable citizens²³ may hold in accepting the conception of justice. Public justification is the liberal ideal which states that a political conception is legitimate only if it is reasonable from every individual's point of view. And legitimacy is strictly linked with a moral criterion of reciprocity which applies not only to the use of political power²⁴, but also when citizens explain their particular political views to one another²⁵. Such a criterion is crucial to Rawls's idea of *public reason* which is a standard for political dialogue between citizens in pluralistic liberal democracies. *Public reason* requires citizens to be able to justify their political claims and ideas to one another using publicly available values and standards. Moreover, it is committed to a *duty of civility* which recommends citizens not to justify political decisions on fundamental issues with partisan values that could not be publicly redeemed and, thus, it imposes on them a duty of respect and civic friendship²⁶. Indeed, Rawls believes there is a "natural duty of mutual respect which asks [individuals] to treat one another civilly and to be willing to explain the grounds of their actions, especially when the claims of others are overruled"²⁷. And the ideal of citizenship imposes to all citizens living in a society a "moral duty [...] to be able to explain to one another on [...] fundamental questions how the principles and policies they advocate and vote for can be supported by the political values of public reason"²⁸.

Given such a framework, the educational model set for multicultural education within the research has had its core in the development of students' deliberative attitudes and in showing the importance of trying to provide reasons to one another, reasons endorsable from everyone's point of view. In particular, attention has been focused on the need to consider everyone's point of view in the decisions making process which affect the life of those very individuals living in society.

Moreover, through the practice of discussing issues of toleration and recognition, the particular subject of integration and migration has been introduced. In this sense, the crucial point of the project has been that of presenting and discussing the problem of public spaces, understood as a symbolic context, and of claims concerning the legitimation and justification of certain cultural practices which highlight the public visibility of certain cultural traits. In short, the focus of the educational program has been that of public spaces in the distribution of equal recognition of all cultural identities present within the public and institutional contexts. It is important to note that what is at stake in considering claims concerning the visibility of cultural traits is the standard of

normality to be accepted in a society and, thus, it is a question which affects directly and indirectly both minorities and majorities. For these reasons, discussing public spaces and their organizations at schools where migrant students learn side by side with resident students is peculiarly interesting and useful.

Students were asked to discuss cultural recognition to develop their capacities to interact towards each other civilly, with respect to each one's ideas and identity, in an effort to reach an agreement upon normative principles concerning how students are to behave in school. In this sense, the project asked students to see themselves as citizens of a peculiar kind of society, that of their class, in need of principles to regulate the behaviour of its members. In this sense, the project's educational model has not been thought to promote policies of cultural recognition or multicultural principles *per se*, but to engage students in discussing these very claims and those issues of value conflict and stability connected with them. Since the "fragmentation objection"²⁹ to multiculturalism holds that practices of cultural recognition undermine the unity of political communities and, thus, that multiculturalism, as a normative enterprise for public policies, is something to be sceptical about, the project's model of multicultural education combined the needs of reconciling the legitimate demands of unity and diversity by cultivating a common sense of political community and respect. To promote a shared sense of belonging, it is necessary to set up a political inclusive identity which a variety of culturally diverse citizens may be able to share. However, to shape bonds of affinity and identity citizens may endorse in their relations towards one another, recognition of diversity is not to be silenced, but to be discussed upon using the resources of political liberalism and its reliance and trust on civic values. For these reasons, the notion of civic respect is crucial to the research.

Drawing from Rawls's work, it is possible to identify civic respect as a political, liberal account of mutual respect. Civic respect requires for citizens to acknowledge the fact of reasonable pluralism and, thus, the need to endorse *public reason* in debating principles of justice. Moreover, civic respect is a kind of *recognition respect*³⁰ that is owed to individuals *qua* citizens. As Darwall points out, recognition respect is a kind of respect which is owed by individuals solely in virtue of some features they possess. In contrast with *appraisal respect*, recognition respect is not concerned with considerations of qualities a person might have, but is due to individuals in their sharing citizenship. In this sense, civic respect is the expression of how citizens are to interact among each other in a fair society and, in turn, an education based on it teaches students the skills and concepts necessary for them to cooperate and discuss together.

4. Research Design

The research project "Valori civili e interculturalità nelle scuole secondarie di primo grado milanesi" covered a year of study, from September 2008 till September 2009.

The project was divided in four main steps: collection of beginning surveys; a first theoretical educational activity; a second practical educational activity; collection of ending surveys.

The program provided the students with two different training sessions, one in which university professors of moral and political philosophy explained to them, in an interactive way, several general topics and concepts, such as what is to be considered a society characterized by the fact of reasonable pluralism, the concept of civic respect, and the basic political principles of the Italian Constitution. Following Rawls in starting from the fundamental ideas expressed by the public political culture of a society, it has been decided to focus students' attention on the first twelve articles of the Constitution of the Italian Republic which are general principles addressing individual rights to liberty, equality of opportunity, social security, and condemning discrimination, violence and attitudes contrary to reciprocity among citizens.

The second training activity, on the other hand, has been structured in a practical manner. Students have been asked to focus on different problems concerning cultural identity, the relation among different rights, solidarity and respect. Through the discussion of examples and practical situations, students had to exchange their ideas and views in order to write a "Chart of Civil Convivence at school". Every class had to complete a Chart on its own, divided in five articles prescribing behaviors and attitudes to be held at school.

In order to understand whether the two-stages educational program is efficient in developing students' capacities to deal with issues of integration, their deliberative abilities and capacities to reason from the point of view of the public, a survey concerning was submitted to students at the beginning of the program, before the attendance of the two training activities. The survey concerned not only students' experience with cultural difference, but also their knowledge of civic values. The exact same survey was submitted to students again at the end of the research, after the two training activities, in order to check whether their political and civic understanding had improved. In this way, it has been possible to test the educational program, its results and merits with respect not only to migrant students' integration, but also to the general understanding of civic values among all the students who participated in the program.

4.1. The Surveys

The surveys prepared for the project have been divided in three main sections. A first section was devoted to collect personal data concerning students' age, gender, country of birth, level of parents' education, faith, places where they meet and interact with friends holding different cultural background. A second section was devoted to collect data which specifically concern students' perception of cultural diversity. The survey asked students whether they have ever been witnesses of episodes of injustice related to discrimination; whether they thought there is more respect for cultural diversity at school compared to what they hear and see watching television, or outside school, or at home. Finally, a third section was devoted to

address precisely the problem of integration and civic values. Students were asked to argue whether they thought that discussing issues of cultural difference is of any help towards integration; whether having a set of rules is fruitful in accomplishing a shared basis for living together; whether they know what a Constitutional framework and political institutions are and why it is important for a country to have a Chart of citizens' rights and duties.

It is clear that, given the research design so defined, its results are to be considered qualitative in character. Moreover, it is important to stress that the research's main purpose is neither explanatory nor descriptive. Rather, its focus is the evaluation of strategies in multicultural education.

4.2. The first Educational Training

In the first educational activity, students have been provided with a general overview of the project's topic and fundamental issues connected with cultural diversity. The meaning of civic values, respect and reciprocity were presented and discussed. First, a theoretical framework has been exposed in explaining the shape of a multicultural society, intended as a normative concept which describes a society in which various groups with different cultural backgrounds live together peacefully, respecting anyone's identity as long as it is not in contradiction with the values of the Constitution. Particular attention has been cast upon the concept of dignity in outlining how, in a democratic society, all individuals living in it are to be treated with equal respect.

Second, addressing the problem of whether a multicultural society is possible, students were asked to reason among a specific problem of identity recognition. In particular *l'affair du foulard*, the contested acceptance of the Islamic headscarf in French state schools has been proposed for discussion³¹. The point of addressing such case was not only to treat a problem of recognition and a classical example in the literature upon toleration, but also to focus students' attention on a case of school regulation.

During the discussions in class, the harsh conflict upon competing ideas was not denied. On the contrary, students' attention has been focused particularly on those reasons supporting different instances: on one hand, those reasons concerned with individual freedom to wear a traditional outfit showing a cultural belonging were presented. On the other, those concerned with harmonizing relations among students via the eradication of public cultural practices which may constitute a division and a source of conflict were considered. In particular, students were asked to judge upon the issues and to confront the French solution with the Italian one, in which students who are Muslim can wear the headscarf at school as long as it does not cover their faces and it does not hinder their participation in school's activities.

The third part of the first educational activity had been devoted to the fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution. The significance and meaning of the Chart has been explained, and the focus had been set on rights and duties Italian citizens have towards each other. In particular, the ideas of equality and

reciprocity were discussed and presented in details.

Finally, in the first educational activity, the complexity of democratic deliberation was shown to students in the explanation of what it means for a normative claim to be justified on the basis of reasons "nobody could reasonably reject"³², to put it in Scanlon's vivid form.

4.3. The Second Educational Training

In the second educational train, we set up a practical activity in which students were asked to discuss problems of justice, equality and respect. We suggested an interactive classroom activity using some case studies as bases for role playing with debates and group discussions. We asked students to see themselves as legislators seeking for an agreement among principles of civil convivence at school. Students of each class have been divided in five groups discussing five different examples involving questions of appropriateness in the relations among fellow students. Each group had to reason about such cases and come up with a principle of justice suited to address each of them and a normative directive apt to regulate the behaviour of all the components of the class. Finally, each group had to present the principle found during the deliberative process, to explain the reasons why the group had chosen it, and, finally, the class all together had to accept or modify all principles presented by each group.

The scope of the second educational activity has been that of increasing students' democratic attitudes, internalizing the processes of democratic deliberation, and discussing issues of convivence from the point of view of *public reason*. Moreover, the organisation of such game and role play permitted the transmission of participatory dispositions, political attitudes and values in an active manner with its positive effects in the process of learning. Indeed, much research in social psychology suggests that a significant source of attitude change is role playing behaviour, as individuals come to adopt attitudes and cognitions consistent with the behaviours that they are acting out³³. As Finkel and Ernst notes, "the successful transmission of political attitudes, values, and participatory dispositions [...] is likely to require [...] factors related to credible and likeable instructors, active methodology, and an open environment for political discussion"³⁴

5. Data Collection

In order to analyse the sample of students who participated in the research, their differences in culture and habits and, thus, to understand whether the educational model is to be considered effective, in what follows I shall focus on the general data concerning students' personal details. Sketched a picture of the group of students, I will turn to the interpretation of the data concerning students' learning and comprehension of civic values and respect.

Given a total sample size of 218, the number of Italian students involved in the program corresponded to the 69,37% of the total, whereas the non-Italian students

Table 1: Students' countries of origin

Countries	Students
LATIN AMERICA	23
Perù	12
Ecuador	7
Brazil	1
Colombia	1
El Salvador	1
(non specified)	1
ASIA	22
Philippines	11
China	5
Sri Lanka	4
Bangladesh	1
Turkey	1
AFRICA	15
Egypt	9
Morocco	2
Mauritius	1
Angola	1
Tunisia	1
Somalia	1
NON-ITALIAN EU	7
France	2
Moldavia	2
Serbia	1
Ex-Yugoslavia	1
Germany	1

were the 30,73%. Non-Italian students came from all continents, except Oceania, for a total of 22 different countries, as table 1 shows in details.

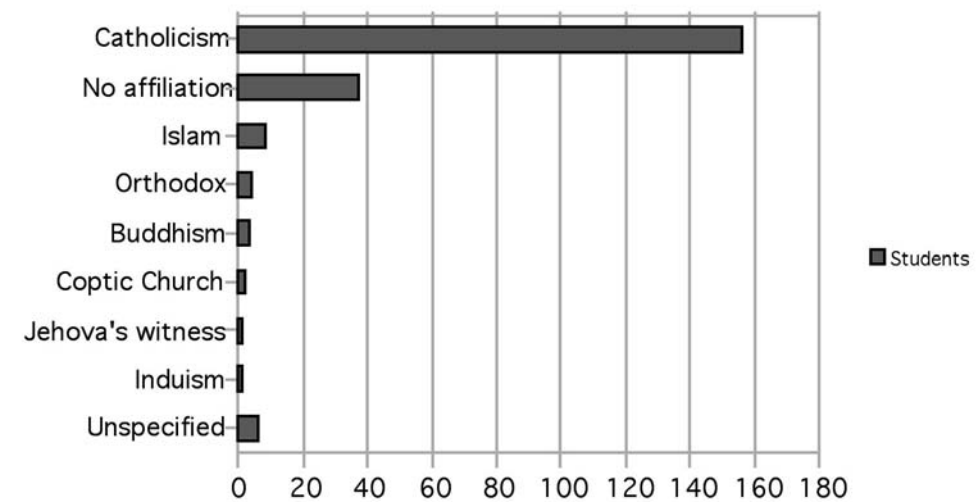
It is important to note that the number of students whose family comes from a non-Italian country, but were born on the Italian territory is considerable. Given the total of non-Italian students participating in the research (sixty-seven), the number of students born in Italy is twenty-three which corresponds to the 34,35% of all non-Italian students. This is an interesting datum for the number of migrant children born in Italy has been increasing in the past years³⁵. Not only second-generation immigrants represent a consistent phenomenon in Italy, but it is also peculiarly important in relation to the problem of education. In particular, it is crucial when considering issues such as that of the recognition of citizenship to those born on the Italian territory and their right to vote. If it is a fact that the

number of newborn coming from non-Italian families is high and that they will be engaged into the political process of the receiving society they live in, it is also true that the task of education in providing tools of political understanding becomes more and more essential.

Coming to students' expression of religious belonging, the data collected show that most of the students declared to hold a Christian-Catholic faith (71,5%) The second largest group is composed by those students who declared not to belong to any religious affiliation (16,9%) In a minor percentage, students were Muslim (3,6%), Christian-Orthodox (1,8%), Buddhist (1,3%), Coptic of the Orthodox Church of Alexandria (0,9%), Jehova's witnesses (0,45%), and Induist (0,45%). Finally, some of the students did not answer the question (2,75%).

See table 2.

Table 2: Religious Affiliation



Turning to the collected data concerning students' knowledge of public discussions and civic values, the analysis of the data gained from the second and third parts of the surveys has been difficult and challenging. In order to check knowledge and comprehension of civic values, students were asked to answer some open questions. Since open questions require long answers they are difficult to analyse, categorize, and interpret in the proper manner. Indeed, in answering open questions, each student expressed his or her opinion defending different and personal claims. In this sense, answers are complex and articulated and do not fit into any interpretative framework. For these reasons, it has been decided to focus mainly on the vocabulary employed by students in their answers. Confronting the different choices in the usage of words, it has been possible to test their comprehension and internalization of concepts. In particular, a set of specific words of special interest to political philosophy, liberalism, and civic values has been selected. Drawing from such set, which comprehends terms such as those of "rights", "justice", "duties", "principles", and other similar expressions, it has been possible to verify the effectiveness of the educational model and its merits in developing civic attitudes and political understanding. Moreover, attention has been focused on the arguments students provided in their answer. One of the most interesting point which the analysis of surveys has risen concerns students' improvements at constructing argumentations and at explaining opinions with coherence and adequacy. The change in the kind of reasons students used to support their claims has been determining to test positively the educational model. In this sense the analysis has focused not only on the content of students' answers, but also on the way those very answers were articulated.

Starting with some general considerations, confronting answers at the beginning surveys and those at the ending surveys, a general increase of appropriateness in the

usage of words has been registered. Furthermore, the overall number of students answering either not to understand the question or to find it impossible to respond is considerably diminished at the end of the project.

In particular, considering the change in students' perception of civic values, it is possible to claim that, in the ending surveys, the number of students who answered positively to the acceptance and importance of principles of justice to regulate a pluralistic society is greatly increased. For example, let us consider the question in which students were asked to think whether a set of rules is helpful in bettering the relations among individuals holding different cultural backgrounds. The number of students who held that rules are generally negative has decreased significantly: if at the beginning surveys, they were sixty-three (29,58% of the total students), at the ending surveys they were twenty-seven (12,67% of the total students). Similarly, considering the question whether public discussions are a useful method toward the reach of an agreement, from the beginning survey to the ending survey students' answers have changed considerably. If the data collected at the beginning of the research showed that generally students were skeptical about discussing issues of social and political convivence, the data collected at the end of the research were completely different. Indeed, in the first case most of the students argued for discussions to be unprofitable and inapt to solve any kind of problem. At the end of the program, on the contrary, students claimed for discussions to be necessary and important in addressing circumstances of conflict and in need of settlement. However, what is really interesting and intriguing for the purpose of the research and its experience is connected with the words and arguments students employed in their responses. First of all, the answers to this question – which is crucial to the project considering the importance devoted to public discussion and *public reason* in the teaching activities – at the ending surveys are more sophisticated. They denote a clearer, deeper, and more complex vision of the problem of a pluralist society in which individuals holding different cultural backgrounds and moral principles are to live together peacefully. In particular, students employed in their answers a substantive use of words such as “agreement”, “rules”, “common point”, “compromise”. Moreover, at the beginning surveys students who saw discussing political issues positively argued in favour of it stating that discussions are necessary to find mediation among competing claims. At the ending surveys, on the other hand, the argument in favour of debating such issues were sustained by the idea that discussions are the only possible solution to conflict for they permits individuals to express and confront their ideas and, thus, to reach an agreement on shared principles and rules to live together civilly and harmoniously. In this sense, at the beginning of the project, students defended discussions mainly on the basis of instrumental reasons. On the contrary, at the end of the project, discussions were treated as valuable means *per se*, fair in character and outcome. These examples do not constitute all the data which confirm the positive results of the experience and of the educational model. However, these are among the most relevant examples of the data collected and represent an important test for the effectiveness of the model.

Another example which is of particular significance is constituted by the answers to the question concerning the role and importance of a Constitutional Chart. Since the

educational program heavily relied on the Italian Constitution and its basic principles, an important test for the research has been that of students' comprehension and understanding of what a Chart in which citizens' rights and duties are presented is. It is important not only to note that, from the beginning to the ending surveys, the number of students not able to provide an answer decreased impressively (they were a hundred-and-three at the beginning and forty-one at the end of the project). But it is also fundamental to consider the terms used to describe what a Chart is and its task in providing rights and duties. As it is possible to see in table 3, at the ending surveys students employed in a more substantive way expressions as “law”, “justice”, “duties”, and so on.

Table 3

	“I don't know”	“Rules”	“Law/Laws”	“Rights/Duties”	“Justice/Equality”
Beginning surveys	103	38	48	30	13
Ending surveys	41	50	84	50	41

Finally, in confronting the answers students provided with regard to the Constitutional Chart, the change in students' attitude towards the idea of citizenship is of great relevance and importance. Indeed, the data collected at the beginning of the project showed that students regarded a Constitution as necessary and fundamental in securing the order of the society. In particular, the most defended argument was that of the necessity to prevent a form of anarchy inevitably connected with the circumstance of individuals living together on a same territory without a system of laws. At the ending survey, on the contrary, students argued for a Constitutional Chart to be essential for the construction of a just and fair society in which everyone is respected and recognized as a distinct individual with her or his own identity.

The data collected, and in particular the idea of citizenship students demonstrated to have interiorized, show that the educational model is a viable tool to teach civic values in pluralist societies, and that the research experience is to be considered extremely positive.

6. Conclusions

I attempted to report the experience carried on within the research “Interculturalità e Valori Civili nelle scuole secondarie di primo grado milanesi”. It is important to stress that the research has always been intended as an experience for political philosophy in the realm of practice. If *public philosophy* is “to address public affairs

[...] working on the pressing political problems of our times [...] in contrast with the dominant theory-building approach”³⁶, it is proper to characterize the research as an experiment in *public philosophy* for it is an attempt to use political philosophy, its methods and reflections, to address an explosive problem of contemporary societies. In this sense, it is also important to stress that the research is not descriptive. On the contrary, the data are a test for the effectiveness of an educational program which is normative in character. In this sense, the data are irrelevant in capturing the status of integration of students in the urban area of Milan. However, they provide some important evidence for the efficacy of the model of multicultural education set up within the research.

Notes

¹ Directive 2000/43/EC of 29th June implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of race or ethnicity and Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a General Framework for Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation.

² See, Benhabib, 2004; Cohen, 1999; Galston, 1991; Macedo, 1990; Okin, 1992; Rawls, 1993; Walzer, 1983; Young, 2000.

³ See, Barry, 2001.

⁴ See, Kymlicka, 1995.

⁵ See, Galeotti, 2010.

⁶ See, Carens 2008.

⁷ See, Banks, 2008.

⁸ See, Nussbaum, 1998; Sandel, 2005.

⁹ Gutmann, 1987, p. 287.

¹⁰ “Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people’s reach, they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it”. (Toqueville, 1840, p. 46)

¹¹ See, Gutmann, 1987, pp., 3-16.

¹² “Political education prepares citizens to participate in consciously reproducing their society, and conscious social reproduction is the ideal not only of democratic education but also of democratic politics”. (Gutmann, 1987, pp. 39-45)

¹³ Rawls, 1993, pp. 199-200.

¹⁴ Kymlicka, 1999, p. 93.

¹⁵ The educational system in Italy is organized into two stages. Primary school lasts five years. Until middle school, the educational curriculum is uniform for all: although one can attend a private or state-funded school, the subjects studied are the same, except in special schools for the blind, the hearing-impaired, and so forth. Secondary education (*Scuole Medie*) is further divided in two stages: “Medie Inferiori”, which correspond to the Middle School grades, and “Medie Superiori”, which correspond to the High School level. The lower tier of “Scuole Media” corresponds to Middle School, lasts three years, and involves an exam at the end of the third year; “Scuole Superiori” usually last five years and requires an exam at the end of the final year to graduation.

¹⁶ http://www.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non_calendario/20091021_00/.

¹⁷ Kymlicka, 2001, p. 304.

¹⁸ Rawls, 1993.

¹⁹ For a fruitful and clear discussion on the differences and similarities of comprehensive and political liberalism in regards to civic education see, Gutmann, 1995, pp. 557-579.

²⁰ See, Galston, 1995.

²¹ Rawls, 1988.

²² See, Rawls, 1993, pp. 12-13.

²³ According to Rawls, reasonable citizens are those citizens who, on one hand, accept that political society is a fair system of social cooperation, arranged for mutual benefit. On the other, they are subjected to the *burdens of judgments* whose action leads to reasonable pluralism which is a constituent and eliminable feature of contemporary societies. It is important to note that, according to Rawls, disagreement does not result from a failure of reason or a failure to reason. On the contrary, it is precisely because individuals’ reason can deliver moral and political values that disagreement arises. (See, Rawls, 1993, pp. 49-51)

²⁴ “Our exercise of political power is fully proper only when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution the essentials of which all citizens as free and equal may reasonably be expected to endorse in the light of principles and ideals acceptable to their common human reason”. (Rawls, 1993, p. 137)

²⁵ To argue that citizens owe to one another to supply reasons for their political actions, Rawls holds two arguments those of legitimacy and civility. Since the project on multicultural education has focused mainly on the problem of fair relations among citizens who are to consider themselves free and equal, in this paper I shall concentrate on reciprocity which, according to Rawls, is a primary and non-derivative obligation of citizens.

²⁶ In the last years, some critics have argued that political liberalism cannot coherently be articulated. First of all, it seems that addressing reasonable pluralism only, Rawls’s view is not really effective for it does not take into account pluralism in its radical form. As Scheffler points out, political liberalism “appears to presuppose a society in which liberal values are already well entrenched”. (Scheffler, 2002, p. 146). Moreover, political liberalism has been criticized also for its ambitions to do without both a metaphysical (Hampton, 1989) and epistemological foundations (Raz, 1990). Although the critiques outlined above may be very sounded, addressing them is beyond the scope of the present article. In this respect, this work is not concerned with political liberalism as such, but with the effectiveness of using its principles for the development of a multicultural model of education.

²⁷ Rawls, 1971, p. 179.

²⁸ Rawls, 1993, p. 217.

²⁹ Shorten, 2010.

³⁰ See, Darwall, 1977.

³¹ For a discussion of the case of the Islamic veil in French public Schools, see, Galeotti, 2002, pp. 115-136.

³² Scanlon, 2002.

³³ Zimbardo and Leippe, 1991.

³⁴ Finkel and Ernst, 2005, p. 341.

³⁵ <http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/news/istat18mar2010.pdf>.

³⁶ Tully, 2009, pp. 3-5.

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Temporary Migration Projects and Children's Education

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It is often assumed that the main goal of the education offered to the children of immigrants should be their full inclusion and integration into the host society. There are different views on how this goal should be achieved. Some advocate an assimilationist policy and the full immersion of the immigrants' children in the culture of the host society, while others argue that the best way to make migrant children develop their potential as members and future citizens of the receiving society is to allow them to draw from the cultural resources of their original background. No matter how divisive these issues can be, the underlying assumption that integration and full inclusion should be the aim of education is hardly contested. However, this is far from obvious.

An important challenge to such an assumption comes from the claims of those migrant parents who are planning to return to their country of origin and insist that the education offered to the children who are living with them abroad should not aim at making them fit to live in the host society, but should rather prepare them to continue their studies and find work once back in their home country.

These claims are indeed recognized as unproblematic in many familiar cases, as exemplified by the existence throughout Europe of private national schools (American, French, German, etc.) providing special curricula modelled on the education system of the country of origin. However, as we will see, they can become highly controversial when the foreigners involved are identified as "migrants", because of the strong emphasis in the public debate on the need for their full integration in the host society and the related assumption that the best option for them and for their children is to become permanent members of the receiving community.

We want to argue here that the requests of those migrants who are planning to return to their countries of origin are worthy of consideration and should be accommodated in devising the education offered to their children. Our claim will be based on factual and normative considerations, which will be presented respectively in the second and third sections of this paper. On the factual side, we will point to the growing importance of return migration as a key feature of contemporary population movements. On the normative side, we will argue that not taking

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seriously the claims of those migrants who are planning to return, or treating them as futile, is a form of serious and unjustified disrespect for the migrants' original culture and for their capacity to form sensible life plans. In the last two sections of the paper we tackle two legitimate worries involved in this discussion, namely the concern for the social and political cohesion of the host society, and for the welfare and equality of opportunity of the children involved.

The starting point of our discussion will be the story of the so-called "Islamic school" of via Quaranta, Milano, a real-life case that caught the attention of the Italian public a few years ago. This case, which involved a harsh battle over the logistics of a private school founded by a group of migrants, is an exemplary illustration of the form of misrecognition that may lead to overlooking, or dismissing altogether, the requests of those migrants who are planning to return with their children to their countries of origin.

Via Quaranta

In September 2005 the Italian media brought to the attention of the general public the case of the so-called "Islamic School" of Via Quaranta, Milano. The event which cast the case into centre stage and stirred public debate was the decision by the City Council of Milano to close the school down, with the official justification that its premises did not comply with safety standards. At the time about 430 students were enrolled in the school.

Notwithstanding that the justification of the City Council only referred to logistic and safety matters, the tone and content of the debate that ensued made it apparent that other and more controversial issues were at stake. The discussion in the media and the declarations by many representatives of local and national institutions focused mainly on the quality of the education offered at the school of via Quaranta. The teachers were accused of inculcating children with a form of religious instruction that did not comply with the mandatory curriculum of Italian schools and basically failed to meet the children's constitutional right to receive adequate education. Accordingly, many opinion makers and representatives of local and national institutions insisted that the only viable "solution" to the case was to force the parents involved to enrol their children in Italian public schools rather than finding a better site for the school.

The parents, on the other hand, claimed that the school was not a religious school at all, but was instead an Egyptian school, founded by a group of immigrants who wanted their children to be educated according to the curriculum adopted back in their home country. In fact, children from other nationalities had begun attending the school, but this was because the Egyptian curriculum is accepted as qualifying also by other North-African countries.

After the closing down of the school, the parents protested vigorously, with the support of some Italian organizations. Eventually, a year later a new school was created at a different location, in Via Ventura, this time with the official support and

assistance of the Egyptian Consulate. The curriculum of the new school is bi-lingual and complies with the standards of Italian and Egyptian mandatory education. At the end of each year the children (aged 6 to 13) need to pass official exams at the Egyptian consulate and at the Italian public school in order to have their certificates recognized¹.

Notwithstanding the support of the Egyptian consulate and the inclusion of the full Italian curriculum, even the new school in via Ventura faced very harsh opposition not only from public opinion but also from local institutions. Once again, just a week before the opening of the school, the City Council denied its authorization alleging the violation of security standards and the unfitness of the premises, despite the fact that they had been completely renovated for the purpose of use as a school. The school eventually received the required authorizations, but this new clash with the local institutions made apparent once again the irritation of large sectors of public opinion, including party representatives, at the idea of having Arab schools on Italian soil².

There are some important facts to comment on regarding the story of via Quaranta. First of all, much of the public debate on this case revolved around the content of the curriculum offered at the school, and rightly so, since all the children involved were at an age when they should receive mandatory education. Although Italian law allows a wide latitude as to what counts as the fulfilment of the duty to educate one's children, all forms of private education must meet some adequacy standards as far as the content and the qualification of the teachers are concerned³. This is an obvious and legitimate proviso for the constitutional right to receive an education not to be a sham.

Secondly, and very importantly for the present discussion, a striking feature of the story of via Quaranta is that the central claim advanced in order to defend the adequacy of the school curriculum, and indeed the very need to establish a special school, was completely neglected and overlooked in the public debate on the case. As we recalled, the parents of the children enrolled in the school claimed that the first and main reason why the school was established was to comply with the requirements of the Egyptian school system. This was essential to their plans to have their children continue their education back in their home country, and also explained why they could not be asked to enrol them in Italian public schools. If we look at the history of the school, how it was created and what it eventually became, we can conjecture that these claims were genuine⁴. Nevertheless, public debate was entirely focused on the allegedly religious nature of the education that the children were receiving and was brought within the context of the heated and highly divisive controversy over the compatibility of Islamic culture with Western institutions. Furthermore, the key watchword in the debate was "integration", as though the fundamental issue at stake was whether having a bilingual curriculum, in the case of Arab schools, was conducive to, or at least compatible with, full integration of the immigrants' children within Italian society. The idea that having a dual curriculum could serve a purpose other than full integration, namely offering the children involved the opportunity to continue their education in the country of origin, was not even discussed.

Thirdly, we should note that this case is in some sense very peculiar to the Italian situation. Italy has experienced immigration much later than other European countries, where special programs for the children of migrants, often based on bi-lateral agreements with the sending countries, have been in place for decades⁵. This is partly what causes the claims of the migrants involved to be couched in the language of a right to *private* education, rather than as a claim to be met through the support of public institutions. At the same time, this feature of the Italian case serves to highlight that the claims at stake are coming from the migrants themselves as the result of their life projects, rather than being the product of top-down agreements between source and destination countries.

Fourthly, the battle over the schools in via Quaranta and via Ventura was obviously about the right for an immigrant community to establish a school with a special curriculum, but most of it was actually fought around logistic matters. The institutional opposition to the school was channelled through administrative acts declaring its premises unfit and unsafe, and this was taken as further evidence of the unfitness of these parents to provide adequate education for their children. On the other hand, those supporting the school assumed that if the community could not find or afford the needed premises, then the city Council had the duty to help find them. In other words, they were advocating the public provision of spaces for the purpose of creating a school with a special curriculum⁶. Indeed, this minimal form of support and cooperation with the Egyptian consulate would have appeared quite natural once it were assumed that the reasons offered by the parents for establishing the school were genuine.

This brings us to a final point. It might be thought that the reasons backing the migrants' claims were irrelevant to the assessment of the case. The main issue, it might be argued, was whether they were able to fulfil the essential requirements of compulsory education; beyond that point, their constitutional right to private education should have been established without further enquiry into the reasons why they wanted to make use of it. However, as we just saw, the dismissal of the reasons offered by the migrants had an obvious import on the way the institutions treated the case and on the degree of support that could be expected from them. Furthermore, we want to argue that the failure to take those reasons seriously involved a grave form of misrecognition and disrespect towards the immigrants involved. Their claims were interpreted either as an expression of religious or ethnic attachments, or – worse – as a cover-up for the plan to inculcate their children with the tenets of Islamic fundamentalism, because the idea that they could be seriously planning to return was not even considered. The same sort of assumptions are behind the current dismissal, in other countries, of the programs that provide education in the language and culture of origin of the migrants⁷. These programs, originally designed as preparation for migrants' children return to their home country; are now perceived as remnants of a past in which migration was intended – by the receiving countries – to be temporary, while it should be now obvious that migrants come to stay forever.

These assumptions, we argue, are unjustified and gravely disrespectful. In order to substantiate our claim, we propose to look first at the reality of return migration as

a defining feature of contemporary population movements, and then to consider more closely the kind of disrespect that is implied by not taking the migrants' plans to return into consideration as weighty and serious reasons when addressing their claims.

The reality of return migration

It is a common assumption in the imagery of public opinion, and in many academic discussions, that migrants always, or mostly, intend to move on a permanent basis. This perception is corroborated by the experience of the guest worker programs run in the Sixties and Seventies by many European countries. These programs were devised to create a short-term labour force that was intended to eventually return to their countries of origin and to have a high turnover rate. What happened instead is that many of the immigrants who had come on a temporary basis eventually stayed and asked for family reunification. In countries like Germany, where the naturalization laws were particularly restrictive, this eventually led through time to the creation of a large body of estranged permanent residents⁸.

These past experiences with guest workers are a source of deep scepticism about the current proposals to revive temporary migration programs⁹. Grave concerns are expressed about the limited protection these programs afford to the migrants participating in them, but the opposition to reviving the programs is also motivated by the fear that they will fail as the old ones at inducing temporary migrants to actually go back, short of violating human rights and falling below essential democratic standards¹⁰.

Notwithstanding these qualms, voluntary return migration has been a constant feature of the movement of people throughout human history and appears to be a phenomenon on the rise; indeed, according to some accounts, circular and temporary migration is the key feature of contemporary trends in population movements¹¹.

In fact, even the past European experiences with guest workers still witnessed large numbers of returns. For example, it is reported that more than two thirds of the foreign workers admitted into Germany had returned by the mid-Eighties¹². Recent data from the UK shows that 40 percent of male migrants and 55 percent of female migrants leave Britain within 5 years¹³. As for Italy, it is estimated that between 2000 and 2005 about 50.000 migrants per year left the country¹⁴. Although the welfare of children can have a significant – and usually negative – impact on the decision to return¹⁵, among those who return there are migrants who have school age children¹⁶.

What is more important, is that if we look at the few existing qualitative studies on return migration based on interviews¹⁷, we realize that the percentage of those who return because this was their intended plan is very high, much higher than the percentage of those who are forced to return¹⁸. In other words, not only many migrants do return to their country, but most of them do so as the result of a migration *project*¹⁹.

Still, one might object that the qualitative studies on return migration also show that although many return plans do succeed, in many other cases they fail or are significantly delayed, often with a very negative impact on the migrants themselves. Therefore, we might want to ask why, in addressing the migrants' plans of return and the public claims they ground, we should focus on successful returns, rather than on the many cases of failure. Even before that, however, it might be pointed out that the mere fact that a line of action is undertaken does not prove that its goal is worth pursuing; although it is a fact that many migrants succeed in returning, we might still want to ask whether we should acknowledge and accommodate the projects of those who want to do so.

These are questions that cannot be answered by appealing to factual matters only. In order to address them, we need to look at the normative implications of the failure to take migrants' intentions to return to their country seriously.

A matter of respect

We argue that the main reason why the migrants' projects of return should be taken seriously and publicly recognized as worthy of consideration, especially once they are aired in the public sphere, is a matter of respect. More specifically, it is a matter of respect 1) for their cultural origins and 2) for their capacity to form a rational plan of life. This claim can be better appreciated by looking at its converse, namely that not taking seriously migrants' return projects shows serious and unjustified disrespect for their original culture and their life plans. Let us consider both points more closely.

Assuming that the project to return is not worth pursuing implies that there is not much to be missed by migrants in their home country, or, if there is, it is definitely less valuable than what they can find by establishing themselves forever in the host society. The unspoken assumption is that return is obviously undesirable, hence, the fact that migrants may want to go back when they could remain in the host country is simply disbelieved, when not considered unbelievable, and therefore not worthy of serious consideration and debate. The impression that this is in fact what is implied when the migrants' plans of return are not acknowledged – as in the case of *via Quaranta* – is confirmed by the fact that such a lack of acknowledgment is more likely to concern migrants coming from countries that are perceived as “backwards” and disadvantaged. Conversely, return to countries that do not share this characterization goes just as unremarked, as perfectly explicable and “natural”; furthermore, this kind of attitude is associated with the condescending public rhetoric according to which migrants coming from those countries are in search of a “better place to live”.

This kind of comparative assessment is not only highly disrespectful towards the origins and background of the migrants involved, but is misguided as an explanation of why migration takes place. Although often people move because they are trying to improve the course of their lives and those of their families, this does not imply

that they are moving to a "better place", nor that in the host society they will find better living conditions, not even in economic terms²⁰. This is not always the case even with permanent migration, but certainly does not hold for the temporary migration plans that are undertaken by many migrants. The rationale of these projects very often simply consists in exploiting the differential between the cost of life in one's country and the level of wages in the host society, with the purpose of investing the resources so collected back home. Nothing in this scenario implies a comparative judgment between the life conditions in the two countries, not even in terms of economic opportunities or the general trends of the local economies, and certainly does not extend to judgments about ways of life or cultural context. Assuming that once migrants have managed to enter the host society they necessarily have reasons to stay forever, therefore, draws too many undue and disrespectful implications from their simple choice to migrate. The fact that the plan to return is thought to be all but inconceivable, so much so not to be even worthy of being addressed, indicates an attitude that takes it as self-evident that the way of life and set of opportunities offered by the host society are necessarily superior and more attractive, a judgment that, as we have argued, is not at all implied by the mere fact of migration²¹.

One may reply that not taking seriously migrants' plans to return as worthy of being publicly recognized and accommodated need not rely on invidious comparisons between sending and receiving societies. This judgement could be founded, instead, on statistical evidence of return projects' high rates of failure and procrastination. In other words, the projects of return might be deemed unworthy of consideration not because their goal is not valuable *per se*, but because they are unrealistic and unfeasible, as shown by their high failure rates.

This way of phrasing the assumption that migrants' plans to return should not be taken seriously succeeds in avoiding offensive and disrespectful implications about the migrants' original culture. However, it implies a form of disrespect for the migrants' capacity to make rational life plans. It represents them as prey to self-deception and incapable of taking into account well-known facts about their condition and chances of success. Their declared intention to return is taken as a delusional expression of their longing for their home country, which would not even be aired if they had a clearer and more realistic view of their fate and prospects²². This points to the second way in which publicly acknowledging and accommodating the projects of those who express the wish to return is a matter of respect, i.e. respect for the rationality of their life plans.

It is true that many temporary migration projects fail, and many of those who intended to return will never do so. However, this does not make their plans delusional or irrational. They are simply very risky, given current circumstances. But this is a characteristic that they share with many life plans, including many of those formed by citizens, which we would generally deem worthy of being accommodated and given due consideration despite being highly risky. In fact, often plans that are highly risky are applauded, in our societies, as showing initiative and entrepreneurial flair. What is more important, among key sources of risk for migrants' plans of

return are factors that are, at least partially, under the control of the receiving states and could be tamed by appropriate policies at the national and international level. Once due attention is given to the strong correlation between the institutional settings in which migration takes place and the probability of success of return projects, we realize that the idea that return projects should not be acknowledged and accommodated because they are unlikely to succeed and unrealistic very much resembles a self-fulfilling prophecy.

First of all, an important factor that determines the success of return projects is the possibility to keep strong ties with the original community. Indeed, one obvious explanation of the growth of return migration in the past decade is the development of affordable and convenient means of communication and transportation²³. But international mobility and frequent exchanges with the home country do not only depend on material resources. A fundamental factor, in this respect, is the visa regime. There is strong evidence that a restrictive visa regime induces migrants to settle on a permanent basis, because it prevents them from travelling back frequently and makes them perceive their choice to migrate as irreversible²⁴.

A second facilitating factor that bears on the decision to return is the possibility to redeem and export the social security and retirement benefits earned by working in the host country²⁵. Again, the availability of such an option obviously depends on institutional factors like the laws and regulations of the receiving country and the existence of bi-lateral agreements with the sending countries.

Thirdly, the institution of programs to facilitate the conversion of human and economic capital collected abroad into new economic activities in the home country contributes to feasible and successful returns. Here, too, the host countries can play a fundamental role, by establishing special funds and specific programs and agreements in conjunction with sending countries²⁶.

Fourthly, a strong positive correlation exists between the length of stay of migrants and the poverty of their earnings: temporary migrants often overstay because they save less than they had intended to²⁷. This arguably depends on the fact that temporary migrants are amongst the most vulnerable workers, thus, they are easily subject to losing their job or to seeing their earnings reduced by unexpected circumstances. Here, the role of institutions in creating conditions conducive to return is less salient; the receiving state cannot directly guarantee that migrants will find well-paying jobs or that they will keep them. Still, the earning potentiality of these workers can be facilitated and increased by a visa regime that guarantees their mobility and flexibility in the job market.

Finally, and most importantly for the purposes of the present discussion, the actual possibility to return, for those migrants who have children, depends on how smooth their offspring's reinsertion in the original culture and society can be. In this context, mastering the language and possessing the school certificates needed to continue their education once back are crucial factors. Knowing that their children will have to start the whole cycle of mandatory education all over, or that their certificates will not be recognized by employers and schools in the home country is an important reason for postponing or abandoning the project to return.

If those migrants who plan to return were granted these forms of institutional support, arguably, their plans would not be subject to failure as often as they are now. This means that dismissing the requests of those who ask for a recognition of their plans to return because they look unrealistic and unfeasible is not only disrespectful, but it is so in an especially unfair way: it does not acknowledge their life plans as worth pursuing, and it makes it look as though this depended on their faults as rational planners, therefore representing them as less than fully rational agents, where in fact the failure of their plans depends very much on the lack of institutional support.

All this does not imply that all migrants should aim at returning or should be expected or pushed to do so. Nor should we assume that recognizing the rationality and worthiness of these return projects means that those migrants who set up to return cannot change their mind at a later time. The need or chance to change our life plans, even dramatically, is a common trait of the human condition and is not necessarily a mark of irrationality or ill-planning. Indeed, recognizing a life plan as rational and worth pursuing, and therefore devising the institutional means to accommodate it, also means creating the conditions by which the failure or change of the plan do not result in disastrous consequences. A feasible plan is a plan whose *exit options*, although costly, are not unbearably so.

Segregation and allegiance

Recognizing migrants' intentions to return as rational and worth pursuing does not imply that these plans should be accommodated at any price. There might be strong reasons for judging that the institutional facilitations required are too demanding in terms of collective resources or other important social values and goals. In this section and the next, we consider two important reasons that could be offered for not accommodating migrants' return plans as far as educational policies are concerned: first, the interest of the receiving society and, second, the interests of the migrants' children.

A powerful objection to allowing special school programs for the children of those migrants who are planning to return is that this would undermine the fundamental interest of the receiving society in educating its members so as to make them develop the skills and attitudes needed to become full participants in its social and civil life, and the sentiments of allegiance needed to be good citizens²⁸. Allowing or facilitating special curricula and segregated schools for the children of the migrants who request them, according to this line of reasoning, essentially undermines these educational tasks, especially when it is motivated by the goal of preparing the children to become members of a *different* society, with a different cultural background and a different political constitution.

Here again a short reply could be that these concerns are never at play in the case of certain nationalities – nobody in Italy worries, for example, about there being American children residing in the country who are educated according to a foreign

curriculum – and therefore should be treated as irrelevant in all cases. However, this reply fails to consider that the worries at issue are prompted by the fact that the communities of immigrants involved may be very large, and the cultural differences may be much wider than those separating Americans and Italians. The numbers involved and the cultural gaps make a substantial difference, which calls for a careful consideration of the worries at stake.

In addressing such worries it should first be noted that they evidently fail to raise a serious issue in those cases in which the migrant children eventually return to their original country. The fact that they do not develop the necessary skills for becoming fully participating members of the host society is inessential, since they will never need to exercise those skills.

The real worries come from a different case, namely those children who will eventually stay after being set on a different and separate educational track aimed at their reintegration in their country of origin. Although the migrants' plans of return need to be recognized and respected as rational and feasible, we should still acknowledge the fact that they can fail or be revised, leading to a permanent stay. In these cases it may be feared that the children involved will be much less prepared to be fully participating members of the host society than if they had been put on the regular educational track. When the numbers involved are large enough, this can be seen as a potential threat to the social cohesion and to the constitutional unity of the host society.

These fears are of course justified to a degree. They are not, however, we argue, a decisive argument against allowing migrants to found and run their own separate schools. There are two main reasons for this. First, the decision to allow schools to teach children according to the curriculum requirements of another country need not mean that the children receive no education relevant to the host country. For example, a compromise could be reached, as was the case for the Egyptian school in via Ventura, where a dual curriculum is organized, covering those elements considered essential to prepare the children to life in the host country should they end up remaining. This does place a burden on the children, who are then to satisfy the requirements of qualification in two school systems, but it can also be seen as anyway enriching the educational experience of the children, who will then have gained, by their migrant experience, a fuller insight and knowledge of another culture and social context if they do return to their country of origin, or will be fully equipped for life in the host country should they stay²⁹.

Secondly, one should not overestimate the importance of being educated through the national education system to become full citizens. To see this, one has only to think of the case of adult migrants, who are generally thought capable of fully integrating in the host society despite not having gone through the national education system. One may argue that this belief is not actually widely shared, as seems to be indicated by the – indeed very controversial – introduction in many Western democracies of citizenship tests for adult migrants³⁰. However, no matter what we may think of these policies, they indeed confirm, rather than rebut, the claim that going through the national education system is not the only possible way to prepare for citizenship. Furthermore, the heated debate on these policies is

evidence of how it is in general very difficult to say with any certainty what can and does prepare individuals for citizenship.

A different and somehow subtler reason for being suspicious about the request of having special school curricula in view of the project to return might come from the fear that these requests are insincere and instrumental to other plans. This is especially the case when the migrants involved are representatives of cultures or nationalities that are perceived as a threat to the cultural and social cohesion of the host society and to its liberal-democratic ethos. It might be thought that behind the request of having one's plans of return accommodated there might be a very different and dangerous purpose, i.e. building segregated forms of education as an alternative to the school system of the host country, where there is no real intention to ever return. This fear, as we saw, was obviously at play in the case of the Egyptian schools in Milano.

It is hard to know whether these fears could be justified or not in some specific cases and for some members of the minorities involved. However, even if they were, this would not be a sufficient reason to deny *everybody* a valid claim expressed in good faith: to have one's children prepared, through their education, for a return to the country of origin. A liberal-democratic regime cannot support blanket denials of valid claims to a whole group on the suspicion of abuse by a minority of its members.

Moreover, where these concerns exist, the best way to address them is precisely through a serious and open consideration of the claims expressed by migrants in the form in which they are expressed. Within this dialogue it will be possible to discuss and negotiate appropriate curricula, which serve the publicly declared purposes of the migrants and, at the same time, satisfy the justified demands and concerns of the host society. By taking seriously the migrants' claims, we can engage in a form of dialogue that does not imply any form of disrespect towards the migrants but allows the justified reasons and concerns of the host society to be put forward, fostering a climate of reciprocal respect.

The interest of the children

The respect and recognition of the migrants' plans to return may be important, but this should not make us forget that these life decisions have a significant impact on the welfare and prospects of success of the children involved.

To these concerns, it cannot be simply replied that the parents should be assumed to be the best judges of their children's interest, not only because this is obviously not always the case, but especially because this principle is openly disavowed by the very institution of compulsory education. The objection that the plan to return may be highly detrimental to the children's interests, then, cannot be answered just by appealing to an unconditional right of parents to decide for their children, but needs to be discussed on its own merits.

In opening this discussion, it should be noted straight out that the interest of the children cannot be assumed to coincide with their remaining in the host country,

since this assumption must rely necessarily on the kind of invidious comparisons between the country of origin and the host country we have already argued are profoundly disrespectful and unjustified.

It would be reasonable, however, to object that in the case that the children end up remaining within the host country – a possibility, we recognised, would still exist even if the plans of return are accommodated and facilitated by appropriate institutional provisions – the children will be made to pay a very high price, in terms of lost opportunities for a fuller integration, because of the high risk life plan strategy chosen by their parents. This is of course true. But note how the converse also holds. What if the children are made to participate fully in the host country's educational system but then actually end up returning? In that case, too, the price the children would pay would be similarly high³¹. It seems evident to us that once again the best solution, one that minimises the risks for migrant children, is the opportunity to attend a school with a dual curriculum, which will prepare children for life in either community³².

It is also important to note that ensuring that the children receive an education also complying with the mandatory curriculum of the host country – as opposed to requiring that they adopt such a curriculum as their *only* form of education – does not necessarily express a sceptic or dismissive attitude about the plans of return of their parents. As we remarked earlier, in fact just the opposite is the case: a dual curriculum, along with similar institutional provisions, can be seen as a means to provide a feasible *exit option* for those migrants who, for whatever reason, will need or decide to revise their plans of return. The availability of such an exit option should be listed among the conditions and factors that serve to increase the feasibility and minimize the risks of their life plans.

Still, someone might point out that having a dual curriculum is far from being sufficient to provide migrants' children with an effective opportunity to integrate in the host society in the case their families eventually decided not to return. An essential factor of effective integration, it might be argued, is the mingling and socialization with permanent residents and citizens. This opportunity would be denied to the migrants' children enrolled in separate schools offering a special curriculum, since they would be segregated from the rest of the children of their age living in the host society. And the lack of integration, one might argue, can have adverse effects on their prospects of social and economic advancement in the host country.

This objection expresses a reasonable concern. But we should be careful not to put too much emphasis on the socializing effects of the school system as a factor of promotion of the social and economic advancement of migrants' children, for at least four main reasons. First of all, it appears that in most of the countries for which extensive studies exist the main factor influencing children's success at school, and their economic and social advancement after the school years, is the socio-economic status of their families, rather than the level of socialization with their schoolmates³³. Secondly, the socializing effects of the public school system decrease as the children grow older and appear to vanish after they have completed their

mandatory education³⁴. Thirdly, the debate on the effects of bi-lingual and special education for first-generation migrant children is still open³⁵, and many studies show that the performances of first-generation migrants are improved when migrant children are allowed to follow special curricula in which they are taught in their mother tongue and allowed to cultivate their pre-existing linguistic skills³⁶. This means that, even if the socialization with native schoolmates had positive effects on the prospects of social and economic advancement of the migrants' children, we might still need to discount the adverse effects produced by their receiving an education that is not making full use of their resources and potential. Finally, at a more fundamental level, the assumption that "dispersion" and desegregation is conducive to social advancement has been challenged by the sociological literature on the social mobility of migrants, which tends to emphasize the importance of ethnic networks in providing a useful background not only for the migrants' first settlement, but also for their social advancement and mobility³⁷.

This is not to say that the efforts that are being made in many countries to build curricula aimed at the full inclusion of the migrants' children in public schools and the national educational system are not worth pursuing. On the contrary, they are highly commendable, since they respond to the need to provide full recognition to the life plans and choices of those migrants who decide to settle permanently in the host country and become full members of the receiving society. What we have pointed out, rather, is the fact that these recognitional needs and claims should play a central role in devising the school curricula for migrants' children, since the redistributive effects in terms of socio-economic opportunities are not significant enough to override such claims of recognition: the evidence collected so far does not support the claim that the opportunities provided by public schools, rather than private schools offering bi-lingual curricula, make any significant difference in terms of the social and economic advancement of the migrants' children in the host country.

Conclusion

We have argued that the migrants' plans to return to their home countries cannot be dismissed as delusional or unworthy of attention, and that doing so constitutes a serious form of disrespect towards them. Accordingly, when these plans are announced in the public debate as grounds for requesting special arrangements and institutional provisions, including special school curricula, they should be taken seriously and addressed in the terms in which they are expressed.

This does not mean that there is no need to balance the importance of these claims with other social values and goals. As far as the school curriculum is concerned, we have argued that the host society's interest in its own internal social and political cohesion and children's interest in having opportunities for social and economic advancement make it reasonable to seek the establishment of dual curricula, by which the migrants' children can also fulfil the educational requirements of the host country, along with the curriculum targeted at their country of origin.

Notes

¹ For a brief summary of this case, see Cesareo, 2006, pp. 25-26, and Cesareo, 2007, pp. 20-21.

² "Milano, riapre la scuola araba di Via Ventura", *Corriere della sera*, September 6, 2006.

³ See Dlgs 76/05, art. 1.

⁴ A telling evidence of the sincerity of these claims, at least for some of the parents, can be seen in the fact that about sixty children, out of those originally enrolled in the school, were eventually taken back home by their families and enrolled in Egyptian public schools ("Scuola araba, niente lezioni in via Ventura", *Corriere della sera*, September 10, 2006, p. 2).

⁵ Two well-known examples are the ELCO (Enseignement de langue et culture d'origine) programs in France and the OETC (Onderwijs in Eigen Taal en Cultuur) in the Netherlands.

⁶ An apparent complication of this debate comes from the fact that the Italian Constitution forbids the funding of private education by the state. However, this veto has been de facto bypassed as the regulative and financial competence on education has been increasingly transferred to local authorities.

⁷ See for example the recommendations of the French Commission Stasi about the ELCO program.

⁸ For a well-known negative assessment of this past experience, see Walzer, 1983, p. 58ff.

⁹ See Ruhs, 2006.

¹⁰ Castles, 2006.

¹¹ Hugo, 2005.

¹² See Böhning, 1987, p. 147, cited by Dustmann, 1996, which offers an accurate overview of the European experience.

¹³ Dustmann and Weiss, 2007. For an overview on return migration, see OECD, 2008. On return migration to Egypt specifically, see Bauer and Gang 1998; Wahba, 2004.

¹⁴ Gentileschi, 2009. These numbers are approximate estimates based on the numbers of permits issued per year.

¹⁵ Dustmann, 2003b.

¹⁶ Dustmann, 2008.

¹⁷ The most important study of this kind is the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP). A general presentation of the study can be found at http://www.diw.de/english/soep_overview/33899.html.

¹⁸ For example, the data from the SOEP show that 84% of the German migrants who returned to their countries between 1984 and 1997 had expressed their intention to return in previous years, while only 16% had expressed the opposite intention (Dustmann, 2003b).

¹⁹ We have first introduced and discussed the idea of temporary migration *projects* in Ottonelli and Torresi, forthcoming.

²⁰ A MIREM survey on return migration to Maghreb countries reports that 54% of migrants who returned voluntarily think that their living conditions (*niveau de vie*) are better in their home country and only 24% think that they are worse (see Cassarino, 2007).

²¹ This is not to deny that, of course, some migrants may come, with time, to prefer life in the host society; the point is simply that this is not a necessary component, nor consequence, of a migration experience.

²² Of course migrants may be delusional -as anybody else- and the elements of self-deception associated to the "myth of return" are well documented in the sociological literature (see for example Sayad, 2004, Parreñas, 2001). We are not denying this, but simply pointing out that we cannot assume that *all* migrants necessarily are delusional about their projects of return, and assuming that they are is extremely disrespectful towards their capacity to form rational plans of life.

²³ G. Hugo, 2005, Cassarino, 2004.

²⁴ This is a well-documented phenomenon, for example, as far as the movements from the British Commonwealth to the UK are concerned (Messina, 2007, pp. 107-110).

²⁵ Hunter, forthcoming.

²⁶ For a discussion of these measures, see. Agunias and Newland, 2007.

²⁷ Stark, Helmenstein and Yegorov, 1997; Dustmann, 2003a.

²⁸ We have explored the tension between temporary migration and allegiance to the receiving society in "Temporary Migration, Identity and Allegiance", paper presented at the *CIPL 2010 Workshop: Allegiance and Identity in a Globalised World*, Canberra, July 19-21, 2010.

²⁹ Of course, this solution would not be possible should the migrants claim that the very exposure to the host country's educational principles in itself represents an obstacle to the children's settling back into their own country after return. This would indeed be problematic, as it may then clearly be the case that the children's opportunity would be restricted should the plan of return fail. This reason may be sufficient to deny, then, such more radical claims. It is worth noting, however, that this argument has, to the best of our knowledge, never been made by temporary migrants, and certainly not in the case we are discussing. There have been, however, claims of this sort advanced by national minority groups, like for example the Amish in the United States (see Gutmann, 1980).

³⁰ See, for example, Etzioni, 2007.

³¹ For a bleak picture of the effects of remigration on children's school achievements see Hatzichristou and Hopf, 1992.

³² Denying migrants' children the option of being educated according to the curriculum of their country of origin, in addition to the curriculum of the receiving country, deprives them of some meaningful and feasible opportunities in their future lives. This violates a fundamental requirement of mandatory education in a liberal country, namely the requirement that it expand, rather than reduce the alternatives of meaningful choice open to children (on this requirement, see Gutmann, 1980).

³³ OECD, 2006.

³⁴ See for example Davey, 1987.

³⁵ For a survey of the literature on English-speaking countries, see Slavin and Cheung, 2005. For a recent assessment relative to some European countries, see J. Söhn, 2005.

³⁶ For a survey on eight different ethnic groups in the U.S., see Feliciano, 2001. David Spener (1988) explicitly correlates migrants' higher rates of success at school and in the host society's job market not only with bilingual education and the maintenance of the original culture, but also with the anti-assimilationist attitude associated to the retaining of the option to return to the country of origin.

³⁷ Waldinger, 2005.

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Urban Regeneration, Multiculturalism, and Respect for Persons. The Case of San Salvario

ENRICO BIALE*

A brief introduction

The questions of whether multiculturalism present positive opportunities to contemporary society, or whether it only threatens social stability, and how resources should be distributed to sustain respectful and stable integration among minorities and the majority are questions that characterise the debate on multiculturalism and our concern over the relationship between respect and the distribution of a scarce resource like public space. Because formulating a clear-cut solution would be simplistic, I present and analyse a case study involving these issues to create some guidelines that can help address such questions.

To achieve this goal, I will focus on San Salvario, a multicultural neighbourhood in Turin that has been depicted as a paradigmatic case: in the 1990s, it was considered a ghetto and one of the most dangerous and degraded areas of Turin, where the cohabitation of immigrants and natives seemed impossible. At that time, "multiculturalism" was perceived as a politically correct expression used by hypocritical intellectuals and politicians to avoid the real problems caused by waves of immigration (including intolerance, criminality, and the exploitation of immigrants). However, San Salvario today is an example of sustainable cohabitation between immigrants and natives, and multiculturalism is presented as a source of opportunity for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood and the city.

This shift is primarily due to a set of policies and private initiatives that confronted the problems raised in the 1990s and deeply changed urban spaces by reducing housing degradation, revitalising commercial activities, and organising cultural initiatives. Thus, these policies transformed San Salvario into a positive example of a multicultural neighbourhood.

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San Salvario therefore seems to represent a good test case for urban policies that support respectful and stable integration between minorities and the majority. It is worth adding that because the process of urban regeneration is still in progress, it would be useful to develop guidelines for further development.

This paper will therefore seek to identify the values in which urban regeneration has been grounded and to specify some guidelines for further policies that can support tolerance among groups without undermining the stability of the polity. The analysis will be carried out by means of a reconstruction of the claims raised by the inhabitants, both Italians and immigrants, and of the answers provided by public institutions.

The paper will proceed as follows: in the first section, I will describe the main features of San Salvario (its location within the city, architectural structure and historical development). In the second section, I will briefly present the case of San Salvario as it was discussed by natives' associations in the 1990s. In the third section, I will describe the set of urban regeneration policies that were applied to this case, with a primary focus on their impact on urban (public and private) space and on the involvement of (native and immigrant) inhabitants in the process of regeneration. In the final section, I will suggest that although the process of regeneration has been a success, it ought to be completed by including the perspectives of marginalised individuals as much as possible; I shall argue that only through this method will immigrants not simply be tolerated, but treated as equals.

The context

Before analysing the policies of regeneration developed in San Salvario, it is necessary to specify its main features beginning with its physical borders, which deeply influenced its potential development.

San Salvario is a square-shaped neighbourhood surrounded by the main train station (Porta Nuova) and the biggest park of Turin on the north-south axis (between Nizza street and D'Azeglio road) and by two major roads on the east-west axis (Vittorio road and Marconi road), which define a break between downtown and a residential district of Turin.

The proximity to the train station has historically caused a high rate of immigration into San Salvario (from the south of Italy in the 1950s and 1960s and from outside the Italian national borders since the 1970s). Like other parts of Turin, San Salvario has been influenced by the development of FIAT (its offices are located on Marconi road), but it has never been a working-class neighbourhood. In fact, it has been classified as a standard middle class neighbourhood¹ characterised by commercial activities (Madama Cristina street, which has 219 shops, is the fourth of 52 commercial areas of the city)². This characterisation has been confirmed by the many ethnic shops opened by immigrants in the last twenty years and by the recent trend of organic and fair-trade stores.

The most important commercial zone is the market in Madama Cristina square

(which is the only open and public space in San Salvario), which is the third-largest open market in the city. Other features of this district are its density (the number of people per square metre is more than double the average) and the lack of public spaces. Aside from places of worship (in San Salvario, there are Catholic and Protestant churches, a Hebrew temple and some buildings used as mosques) and some schools, all buildings are privately owned.

The mix of the middle class and immigrant populations represents one of the most interesting features of San Salvario, but it is also a major cause of neighbourhood instability, as confirmed by the anti-immigrant protest carried out in the 1990s by native inhabitants. Before analysing this protest, I would like to present some data that might clarify this dual nature of San Salvario.

Though the circumscription of San Salvario is the third as immigrants' rate (11,4%) the quad of San Salvario is home to more than half of these immigrants (who make up 24.3% of the population)³. The majority of immigrants in San Salvario live on the two streets that border the train station, and these are the most degraded streets in the neighbourhood. This suggests that even in a small district like San Salvario, immigrants are not randomly distributed but concentrated in very limited zones that overlap with the most degraded buildings. Another interesting feature of San Salvario concerns the level of education: the percentage of college graduates is among the highest in Turin, but the neighbourhood also has the highest rate of illiteracy.

Although it is not possible to speak of San Salvario as a ghetto it is reasonable to imagine San Salvario as a segmented area where two main classes live together.

Two remarks may be made regarding the idea that San Salvario is a problematic neighbourhood due to its multicultural composition: first, some may argue that degradation is inevitable given San Salvario's proximity to the train station. Second, others may suggest that the problem is not related to multiculturalism but to poverty or economic marginalisation.

Here I will briefly address each of these points. Although the neighbourhoods around the train stations are usually among the most degraded of any city, San Secondo, the city that is on the opposite side of the station and that is structurally and architectonically identical to San Salvario, has not had similar problems. This twin neighbourhood therefore demonstrates that the urbanistic explanation is too simplistic.

Second, issues of distribution and recognition are indeed intertwined⁴, so it would be simplistic and false to hold that all of the problems and tensions that characterise San Salvario are due to cultural issues and not economic factors (unemployment, low education). However, the opposite contention is also false. San Salvario has always been characterised by a high rate of immigration and degradation, but because previous immigration was from the south of Italy, there were no explicit protests or social conflicts even though the economic differences between natives and immigrants were significant. Therefore, San Salvario cannot be reduced to a case of culture clash, but it is also not possible to maintain that cultural differences did not play a role in the protests that exploded in the 1990s, as I will show in the next section.

San Salvario, a new Bronx

On September 13th, 1995, the front page of “La Stampa” (the main newspaper of Turin and one of the most widely distributed Italy) ran the headline “Voglia di spranghe a San Salvario” (The will of bars in San Salvario). With the publication of this shocking article, in which don Gallo, the priest of the main Catholic church in the neighbourhood, reported the conflicts between natives and immigrants, San Salvario became a case of national interest. It is of interest to quote some passages from the article to clearly portray its shocking nature: “Commercial licenses are purchased in cash [by immigrants] while Italian shop keepers have to deal with economic problems [...] African drug-dealers work in the morning. We know that the police arrest them, but after a few hours, they are released [...] People are tolerant, but when their properties are damaged, they rise up”⁵. As will be demonstrated in this section, don Gallo was able to identify native inhabitants’ sense of frustration and impotence and their desire to react against the state of affairs once their properties have been damaged.

It is important to understand the background of this statement to understand why a traditional immigrants’ neighbourhood (between 24% and 28% inhabitants of San Salvario came from the south of Italy)⁶ could be considered one of the new Italian ghettos. As I previously stated, San Salvario was one of the most degraded areas of Turin. This is illustrated in the figure below.

Urban deterioration of Turin in the early 90’s

Neighbourhoods (1992)	Degraded buildings	Occupants	Total population	% occupants / population
Centre	109	5.414	46.716	11,59
Barriera di Milano	697	17.604	48.912	35,99
Aurora	385	12.780	43.022	29,17
San Salvario	231	10.654	39.437	27,01
San Donato	211	5.870	50.283	11,67
Crocetta	20	1.108	41.998	2,64
Others	2.192	41.318	685.458	6,03
Turin city	3.845	94.749	955.827	9,91

Source: Osservatorio Giovanile Comune di Torino, 1993.

To understand the gravity of this problem, it is important to highlight that San Salvario is the only neighbourhood on the list that is geographically close to the centre with a level of degradation close to that of the worst peripheral districts. Moreover, it is important to note that housing degradation is exacerbated by a large population. This means that many people are affected by this problem (CICSENE,

Italian Centre for Development and Cooperation, estimated that 12% of inhabitants lived in a degraded house in 1996)⁷, and that overcrowding worsens the condition of housing. As confirmed by a study conducted by CICSENE, this state of affairs was primarily due to a lack of investment by the municipality⁸, which, until the release of don Gallo’s interview, had never considered San Salvario as a case worthy of public discussion. The neighbourhood’s degradation accompanied the first wave of immigration, which exacerbated inhabitants’ sense of frustration and rage. The case of San Salvario demonstrates that immigration from outside the Italian borders was a new phenomenon for which Italy was unprepared. Although the proportion of immigrants was small within the population of the neighbourhood (5%, compared to current 24% currently), they undermined the stability of the neighbourhood because it was not managed by the municipality or other political institutions.

Before focusing on this specific case, it is worth noting that according to some empirical studies conducted by the Institute of Socioeconomic Research of Piedmont (IRES), during the early years of immigration, services were only provided to immigrants by civil society organisations (churches, religious associations, trade unions) and not by political institutions. Although this situation changed somewhat after a few years, there were no structural reforms because “in public offices, the necessity to deal with immigrants’ needs does not necessarily imply a formal constitution of new structures. In many cases, public officials try to arrange the previous service to satisfy the needs of new clients, even if there is not any formal decision regarding this point”⁹. Thus, the lack of planning for the management of a complex phenomenon like immigration inevitably had destabilising effects on problematic realities like those facing San Salvario.

Because it would be impossible to analyse the relationship between the lack of political guidance in the process of immigrants’ integration and the tensions that exploded in San Salvario, I will instead provide an overview of this problem by focusing on housing degradation (in this section) and on the policies implemented to regenerate the neighbourhood (in the next section).

Because Italy lacks a housing policy and because building quality in San Salvario is very poor, immigrants did not have any alternative to living in the most degraded areas of the neighbourhood, which resulted in marginalisation and enhanced degradation. Some of the buildings could not be rented because they violated health and housing laws, creating a vicious cycle. These buildings were rented without official contracts, so the price of rent and the number of people living in each flat skyrocketed. Thus, the people who accepted these conditions did not have any interest in improving the quality of the buildings. This process therefore enhanced degradation and facilitated the creation of outlaw zones where criminality could develop unchecked. Although San Salvario was officially considered less dangerous than Porta Nuova train station or San Carlo square¹⁰, it would be simplistic to attribute the discrepancy between actual and perceived criminality to bias or racist attitudes. The most degraded zones of the neighbourhood were indeed characterised by prostitution and drug-dealing that was primarily controlled by Moroccans and Nigerians without intervention from the police or other public authorities.

It was against this background that don Gallo released his first interview, which, by transforming San Salvario in a national case, produced two opposite processes.

On the one hand, because the media depicted San Salvario as a ghetto, the perception of the danger of criminality and immigration increased, so some natives left the neighbourhood, and housing values fell. As don Gallo emphasised, this aspect is not marginal because it is an important indicator of degradation and marginalisation that indirectly measures natives' perception of danger and degradation.

On the other hand, these factors produced a strong reaction by inhabitants and their associations, who started to protest against this state of affairs and to suggest that San Salvario could not be reduced to a degraded area. It is worth noting that although the media were indirectly responsible for San Salvario's fame, they also made it possible for these associations and their claims to have a deep impact on the municipality and public opinion. Because the first phase after the release of the interview was characterised by spontaneous eruptions of rage and protests, it would be impossible to analyse all of the claims made by the people and associations. I would therefore prefer to provide an overview of these claims to describe the background against which the municipality and policy makers had to develop the regeneration process.

Although many proposals were made by various parties, the overall political agenda was defined by members of civil society, such as the newborn spontaneous committee of San Salvario and some commercial associations, who were able to reflect the rage and sense of frustration that characterised the majority of natives. The following quotes illustrate the feelings that were present among natives at that time:

"We are tired of suffering violence, injustice and brawls. To see drug addicts and drug-dealers, immigrants, the degradation of the neighbourhood... Citizens, defend yourselves" (Flyer distributed by inhabitants).

"We want to remind the politicians that while their children are going to school in safe cars, our children are going to school walking on the blood of the last brawl. Just a word: Shame!! Mayor, less sermons about tolerance and more concern" (Flyer).

The state of continuous emergency and high level of excitability produced simplistic proposals and ambivalent attitudes toward immigrants, who were identified as a main cause of problems like prostitution, drug dealing, laundering, illegal renting and commercial activities used to cover up illegal affairs. This attitude positioned the interests of natives against those of immigrants, even though they were both negatively impacted by this unjust state of affairs.

A paradigmatic example of this simplistic but understandable attitude can be identified in the critiques of the municipality's politically correct blindness. The underlying idea was that natives and immigrants were judged by a double standard in the public debate. Politicians and public officials were viewed as positively biased toward immigrants and insensitive to their choices and behaviours, and they were considered to depict as racist anyone who dared to report immigrants' illegal affairs. Under this view of politicians, they always considered differences to be positive elements, and public money was used to assist in immigrants' integration instead of

to alleviate the degradation of the neighbourhood, which was sometimes caused by immigrants. The request was therefore to face the real problems of the neighbourhood by letting go of this hypocritical double standard and judging the immigrants based on their actions.

As previously discussed, it is true that the municipality did not deal with the degradation of the neighbourhood or, contrary to what was officially claimed, manage the complex process of immigrants' integration. Nevertheless, there was no double standard because the municipality treated both natives and immigrants unfairly. Therefore, the only way to resolve this injustice was to invest money to regenerate the neighbourhood and facilitate the integration of immigrant and native inhabitants.

Within such a context, the actions of the NGOs and religious associations that actively participated in the political life of the neighbourhood were very useful given their experience and expertise. Moreover, they conducted studies of the socioeconomic structure of San Salvario and the relations between natives and immigrants. Their aim was to understand the state of affairs to be able to raise clear claims to the political institutions and to assess whether the situation described by the media corresponded to reality or was distorted. It was very important, when studying the case of San Salvario, to detach it from the state of emergency that characterised the protest phase and to be seriously concerned with immigration and degradation without either collapsing them or hiding their potential correlation. These studies constituted the basis of the policies implemented by the municipality and associations during the regeneration of the neighbourhood. Before continuing, it is important to make a final clarification to clear up a possible misunderstanding and to underline a feature that will characterise all of the phases of the case of San Salvario: I described San Salvario as a multicultural neighbourhood, but I have not presented the perspective of immigrants. In this first phase, only a few immigrants, who had lived in the neighbourhood for many years, were involved in NGOs or religious associations. Their involvement was marginal, however, because they did not officially represent their community, and they did not have any influence on the public agenda of the neighbourhood.

Although this de facto exclusion from the public arena, which implicitly entails a misrecognition of immigrants as equals, is significant and problematic, it can be justified by the fact that the majority of the immigrants had just arrived. It was very difficult for them, therefore, to be organised and be considered by the natives as political actors. Nonetheless, although it is explainable, this marginalisation confirms that Italy and, more specifically, San Salvario, at least in the mid-1990s, could be considered a society where deep asymmetries characterised the relations between immigrants and natives, and where awareness of multicultural issues was not widespread.

San Salvario mon amour

Having described the case of San Salvario and the inhabitants' protest, I will now present and analyse the regeneration of this neighbourhood, which started in the late

1990s and continues today. As I will try to show, this process has not been characterised by systematic planning, but by various actions that are not always coordinated. The municipality first faced the emergency without defining guidelines for structural interventions, thus incentivising the involvement of civil society and delegating to it the actual process of regeneration. Moreover, it is worth noting that the integration of immigrants was not a primary goal of the process of regeneration; instead, this outcome was a side effect of the policies. Though the neighbourhood certainly underwent regeneration, and the involvement of civil society represents a positive feature of this case, it would be interesting to understand, as I will try to address in the next section, whether the lack of a systemic plan undermines integration between natives and immigrants or promotes it because it is more spontaneous and less demanding. Before analysing the concrete policies implemented to regenerate the neighbourhood, some preliminary remarks are necessary to explain the specificities of the case and the conceptual framework I will adopt in my analysis.

First, it is important to remember that, at least at the beginning of the process of regeneration, the municipality had to manage the native inhabitants' protest against immigrants and their accusations of positive bias toward immigrants. Thus, policies should not only satisfy natives' requests, but also reduce their rage and their sense that they are treated unfairly. This was likely one of the reasons that the municipality decided neither to invest resources in social policies nor to sustain the integration of immigrants, but instead to focus on security policy, incentives for building regeneration and commercial activities.

Second, the absence of open spaces and the high numbers of individually-owned buildings did not allow traditional strategies of regeneration to be applied (these are usually financed by private companies, which make profit buying and selling regenerated buildings). Because this kind of action was not available, it was necessary to incentivise individual processes of regeneration. The same can be said for the approach to security: security could not be achieved if inhabitants in the neighbourhood did not actively support the actions of public officials. Thus, by involving the inhabitants, it was possible to realise the regeneration of the neighbourhood while at the same time, exploiting the participatory force created by the protest.

Finally, because my primary concern is the impact of the regeneration process on the distribution of public and private spaces, I need to distinguish these categories as clearly as possible. To achieve this, I will follow the conceptual framework developed by Chiodelli and Moroni, according to which "urban space can be divided into at least six subcategories, three of which are private in nature, and three public:

1. *Sensu stricto* public spaces: public spaces for general use like public squares and plazas, malls, streets and pedestrian areas,
2. Special public spaces: public spaces assigned special functions like public schools, hospitals, libraries, playgrounds, cemeteries, parks.
3. Privately-run specific public spaces: publicly-owned spaces that are leased to a private entity like swimming pools, marinas, lidos and temporary markets.

4. Simple private spaces: private spaces typically reserved for individual and private use like private houses.
5. Privately-owned collective spaces: private spaces that have public relevance such as restaurants, pubs, hotels, shopping centres and cinemas.
6. Complex private spaces: private spaces where the use is connected to a specific group of people (contractual communities) like associations or clubs, proprietary communities and residential cooperatives¹¹.

To these six categories, which were developed on the axis of private-public property, I will add a further dimension:

7. Symbolic space: public recognition of every member of society as a free and equal citizen; as a criterion to define this dimension, I will consider the opportunity to influence the public agenda.

Having made these preliminary remarks, I would like to focus on the policies of regeneration. Grouped according to their goals, these policies are:

- background urban regeneration ;
- participatory urban regeneration;
- promotion of San Salvario as a positive example of a multicultural neighbourhood.

The first group of policies was the most expensive, and its goal was to guarantee a safe background for the development of further interventions. The municipality managed and funded these policies, which consisted of the renovation of the traffic police centre, the regeneration of the open market in Madama Cristina square, the construction of a parking lot under the market, and the resurfacing of the streets in the neighbourhood. Two other interventions, which had deep effects on San Salvario but were not financed by the municipality and did not depend upon the process of neighbourhood regeneration, concerned the renovation of the Porta Nuova train station and the construction of a subway to link Porta Nuova with Lingotto and with three stops in San Salvario. These policies clearly impacted the issues raised by the protest (security, incentives for commercial activities and degradation), without being concerned with the integration of immigrants or the multicultural composition of San Salvario. Moreover, though fully financed by public funds, these interventions only marginally involved "sensu stricto public spaces" and were primarily addressed to "special public spaces" and "privately run specific public spaces". This shift from a public to a private dimension characterised the entire process of regeneration, which incentivised private initiatives while ignoring the lack of public spaces, even though this has long been considered one of the major problems of San Salvario.

Regarding "symbolic space", immigrants were marginalised because, unlike natives, they did not have any impact on the municipality's decisions. The agenda (of security and commercial incentives) was dictated by natives' protests, and the shift from public to private spaces confirmed this inequality because immigrants benefited less than natives from this strategy and suffered more from the lack of "sensu stricto public spaces".

The second group of policies involved more detailed interventions into urban regeneration that were addressed to specific problems in San Salvario. These policies were particularly interesting because they directly involved the inhabitants and their

associations. This joint action of public and private actors was the consequence of the municipality's disengagement and represents one of the most interesting features of the regeneration process. Policies implemented in this phase concerned private spaces ("simple private spaces", "privately owned collective spaces" and "complex private spaces") and were jointly managed by the municipality and associations. The ideal that underlay these policies was a guarantee of fairness and accountability through public action, which limited the market's influence, without undermining the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions made with the direct involvement of inhabitants and civil society. To achieve these aims, an Agency for the Development of San Salvario (referred to as Agency hereafter) was founded by the most important associations in San Salvario and by the municipality. The Agency had been considered a privileged intermediary between inhabitants, the associations of San Salvario and the municipality. It also took part in organising cultural events and, more broadly, in promoting a variety of activities organised in San Salvario.

It is worth noting that the spontaneous committee of San Salvario was absorbed by the Agency, which tried to exploit its positive elements (the willingness to improve the quality of life in San Salvario, its involvement and active participation in the public life of the neighbourhood) without accepting its approach (the Agency broadens the concept of security, which was a benchmark of the committee, and it is more sensitive to multicultural issues). Despite the Agency had a deep and positive effect on the regeneration of San Salvario, it is confirmed the impression that the municipality did not develop an organic plan of regeneration but preferred to incentivise and facilitate the actions of inhabitants and associations. All of the main interventions involved the Agency either directly or indirectly. For example, the Agency submitted a proposal for regenerating San Salvario ("studio di fattibilità"), provided technical expertise to define the guidelines for incentives to commercial activities, was an intermediary between the claims of inhabitants and the municipality's responses, promoted the integration of natives and immigrants (with the San Salvario Mon Amour program), sustained the associations ("casa quartiere"), and worked to revitalise the neighbourhood and its public spaces (through a Neighbour's Day).

As I argue in the next section, this bottom-up process was particularly efficient in solving the problems identified in the public debate, but it could also overemphasise the status quo and ignore the perspectives that were not represented in the public arena. This was not necessarily a problem unless the exclusion of some claims is systematic and does not depend upon the will of the participants, but on their actual opportunities to influence the public agenda. If this were the case, symbolic space would have been unfairly distributed, and this injustice should be corrected. In a context like that of San Salvario, where many interventions are delegated to civil society, a fair distribution of symbolic space became a necessary feature to guarantee that the process of regeneration is just, and that it corrected rather than enhanced inequalities among members of the neighbourhood. Having briefly sketched the benefits and burdens of this approach, which I will analyse more systematically in the next section, I will now summarise the main regeneration policies that were implemented.

Given the problems identified by the inhabitants (concerning security, degradation and well-being) and the constraints described above (lack of public space, individually-owned buildings and commercial economic structure), the suggested interventions primarily concern incentives for building renovation and commercial activities.

As the first intervention, the municipality provided landlords with the opportunity to regularise illegal apartments without paying any fees, provided that they complied with current health standards, and it also enhanced penalties and controls for apartments that were still rented illegally.

Other incentives were guaranteed to people who wanted to renovate their properties in the neighbourhood, and especially around Nizza street, provided that they were rented according to the "fair municipal rate". These policies were designed to renovate the neighbourhood without causing the expulsion of current tenants, especially immigrants and the poor. These interventions were intended to increase the value of the apartments, which would benefit the landlords, and to limit the rent amounts to safeguard the least advantaged. Although these policies were quite complex and not always successfully implemented, it is worth noting that unlike the "Roman Quad" (a regenerated area in the historical centre of Turin), San Salvario had not been characterised by a high rate of gentrification. Immigrants still reside in San Salvario, and the neighbourhood, though it is less degraded and more appealing to a broader audience, has not completely changed its features (commercial activities with a mix of middle-class and immigrant residents).

This is also due to the incentives provided to shopkeepers who decided to move their stores¹² to San Salvario (to obtain funds and tax relief) and to the promotion of San Salvario as a positive example of a multicultural neighbourhood.

Before analysing the last set of policies, I would like to add a few comments on the effective success of the incentives for commercial activities. Notwithstanding the crisis, which negatively affected this productive sector in the recent years, it is undeniable that San Salvario improved its commercial structure in terms of reducing the rate of closed activities, broadening its audience, and differentiating its offerings (to include traditional, ethnic and fair-trade shops). The success of these policies is confirmed by the direct involvement of shopkeepers and their associations in the regeneration of the neighbourhood. Regarding this point, it is interesting to note another asymmetry between natives and immigrants: in ten years, no association of immigrant shopkeepers had been created, nor have immigrant shopkeepers joined natives' commercial associations. This confirms the unequal distribution of "symbolic space"; immigrants not only have fewer opportunities to define policies that meet their real needs, but they also receive the benefits of the implemented policies only if they fulfil the requirements defined by the majority according to its interests. They were therefore not treated as equal citizens but as the passive recipients of policy.

Having described the policies of urban regeneration, it is necessary to focus on the joint actions of NGOs and other political actors to sustain and promote the integration of immigrants and natives as the only way to regenerate the neighbourhood and to change its public image. These policies represented a break from previous interventions

because they directly concern “sensu stricto public spaces”, “special public spaces”, and “symbolic space” in that they recognise all identities as equally worthy within the public and institutional contexts¹³.

To clarify the effect of these policies, it is important to remember that tensions exploded during the 1990s, and that the coverage by the media portrayed San Salvario in a negative light. To counterbalance this state of affairs, the Agency, cultural associations, and public schools organised public events that would depict San Salvario as a multicultural neighbourhood where people were learning to live together despite their differences. The strategy was to show the neighbourhood’s inhabitants and the city that San Salvario viewed its multicultural composition as an opportunity rather than a risk. San Salvario was presented as an early example of the future of Italian society, where people of different nationalities, cultures, and religions would live together as equals. Living in or visiting San Salvario would therefore be an opportunity to learn something about Italy’s future. Although it would be impossible to make an exhaustive list of all of the activities that were organised over the fifteen years, I offer two significant examples: the cultural festival “*SAN Salvario mon amour*” and the activities connected to the Bay school, especially “*The Flying Carpet*”.

“San Salvario mon amour”, which was organised by various NGOs and the Agency, could be considered the first policy aimed at valorising San Salvario’s multiculturalism. This cultural policy was designed to revitalise the neighbourhood and to change its public image. This festival started in 1999 and continued annually for five years. It involved the inhabitants as both audience members and actors. Art was used as a medium to tell stories about San Salvario and its new and old inhabitants, which gave them the opportunity to get to know one each other and showed that the neighbourhood was not the ghetto described by the newspapers. The festival thus tried to base the integration of natives and immigrants upon reciprocal knowledge and also asserted that the only way to regenerate the neighbourhood was to actively live in it. If “San Salvario mon amour” was the first event to promote San Salvario’s multiculturalism, it is undeniable that “The Flying Carpet”, the set of policies developed in San Salvario’s public schools, had the deepest impact on the daily lives of the neighbourhood’s inhabitants, representing the most outstanding example of integration among natives and immigrants.

“The Flying Carpet” was an educational joint program developed between the nursery, elementary and secondary schools of San Salvario (and later extended to some high schools in the neighbourhood) and the international museum of contemporary art in Rivoli (Turin). The goals of the project were:

- the valorisation of development spaces;
- the enhancement of the quality of the progressive curriculum from nursery school through high school;
- the promotion of immigrants’ inclusion;
- the development of an Integrated Formative System.

“The Flying Carpet” “did not want to sustain immigrant students only, but to develop the communicative and creative capabilities of all students to facilitate active participation and citizenship for every inhabitant of San Salvario”¹⁴. The idea behind

this program was to transform a school with a majority population of immigrants, who are usually marginalised by society, into an example of a top cosmopolitan school. Art is an appropriate tool to achieve this aim because “the educative value of creativity is not only limited to the new artistic and communicative capabilities that it provides to the children, but it ought to be extended to the social capabilities aimed at creating new forms of culture and social cohabitation”¹⁵. The name of the project represents these guidelines: “The carpet can symbolise the idea of exchange, the recognition of different individualities, and human experiences. Making a carpet requires intertwining yarns of different colours and forms, which, in their recognisable differences, all participate to achieve the final and common result”¹⁶.

Unlike other interventions, however, this program was part of a planned action that was primarily concerned with the recognition of differences among the inhabitants of San Salvario to develop a process of integration as respectfully as possible. Native and immigrant families were not left alone to face this issue because the schools worked to create a background of equality, where everyone could have equal opportunities to pursue her life goals. This set of policies was intended to involve both children and their parents. Although the immigrants’ participation was less significant than that of the natives, they were directly involved in organising events related to their cultures and countries, and they were asked to judge the quality of the project and suggest how to improve it. Immigrants were publicly treated as equals not because of or despite their differences, but by respecting their differences¹⁷; their participation was promoted and publicly judged as a necessary condition of the program’s success. Immigrants were not excluded or invisible to the rest of society, but publicly recognised as a part of it. “The Flying Carpet” not only guaranteed a better education and greater opportunities for every child, especially the least advantaged, but it also positively affected their public recognition as equal citizens. It is nonetheless interesting to note that even the most inclusive regeneration policy did not involve immigrants as active proponents but as active recipients, indirectly confirming their marginalisation. “The Flying Carpet” was neither addressed to nor managed by immigrants or according to their claims; though it has positive effects on their opportunities, it was clearly not enough to guarantee equality between immigrants and natives and to fairly distribute symbolic space among them.

Despite these concerns, I do not want to deny that San Salvario became a real example of a new way to approach multicultural education and that the “Flying Carpet” represented the most important attempt to deal with the issues of all inhabitants of San Salvario, including both natives and immigrants.

San Salvario today

Having presented the case of San Salvario and the policies implemented to regenerate the neighbourhood, I will attempt to evaluate the current state of affairs to understand the effects of this network of actions and to suggest some guidelines for further policies.

The neighbourhood has changed significantly in fifteen years, and this can be considered a successful outcome of the policies implemented by all political actors (the municipality, civil associations and the Agency). Although regeneration has not yet been completed, more than half of the buildings in the neighbourhood are no longer degraded, and stores and other commercial enterprises have differentiated their services and broadened their audience. In addition to the inclusion of ethnic and traditional shops, San Salvario is now considered a sustainable neighbourhood where many enterprises sell fair-trade or eco-friendly products. The economic structure is thus very active and comprises a healthy mix of old and new elements that are owned by both natives and immigrants, and that address the needs of the various inhabitants of San Salvario. The process of regeneration promoted the settlement of newcomers, especially students and professionals, without causing gentrification. This is primarily due to the municipality's and associations' use of small interventions to avoid changing the structure and "nature" of the neighbourhood.

An indirect confirmation of the success of these policies is the reduction of the tension between natives and immigrants that characterised life in the neighbourhood during the 1990s. According to one shopkeeper: "the neighbourhood has been totally changed, immigrants have the opportunity to be integrated and only honest people now live in San Salvario"¹⁸. This shift is confirmed by newspapers, which describe San Salvario as a cool and multicoloured neighbourhood in which "you can feel a new harmony"¹⁹ and encounter people of different cultures living together peacefully. The most clear example of this new wave of "cool multiculturalism" is represented by the Bay school, which is no longer "the school of the blacks" but an appealing place for Italian parents who want to provide their children with a multicultural education (the director of the school said that they have 62 places and 75 requests in queue from different zones of the city)²⁰. Multiculturalism is now considered a benefit; this is probably the most important outcome of the regeneration policies implemented in San Salvario.

Although the process of regeneration has been successful, I hold that it was still unfair because it did not take into account immigrants' claims and interests.

To support this claim, I would like to highlight that there are still degraded zones in "the quad" where immigrants and other marginalised people live. Marginalisation does not only concern immigrants, but also other groups like elderly people; according to a Caritas' research²¹, this category is excluded from social life, has economic problems, lacks family networks, and has difficulty living in a neighbourhood that has changed so much over the last twenty years.

It is also important to remember that the lack of public and open spaces, which especially affects the least advantaged and the most marginalised individuals (immigrants, elderly people, and children), has not yet been addressed by regeneration policies.

Finally, apart from the "Flying Carpet", the municipality did not develop specific policies to support the integration of immigrants as equal citizens (by giving to immigrants the opportunity to make their claims and by publicly recognising these claims as equally worthy of pursuit). As my previous analysis showed, immigrants

were usually considered passive recipients of policies who could only benefit from the process of regeneration if they fulfilled requirements defined by the majority (a paternalist and patronising strategy).

Rather because all of the implemented policies concern issues raised by natives during their protests (security, building degradation and commercial incentives), it is valid to claim that the process of regeneration was native-oriented.

To support this claim, it is necessary to understand that the lack of planned action and the participatory strategy adopted by the municipality represents a very efficient, though not necessarily fair, procedure. It is efficient because it does not require many economic and social resources, but instead depends upon inhabitants' participation in the political life of the neighbourhood. Thus, it excludes claims that are not represented in the public arena. If such an exclusion were the outcome of free choice, no injustice would be done because everyone would have the same opportunity to influence the public agenda (equal distribution of symbolic space). If, however, a group were systematically marginalised, this would obviously be unfair. If this were the case, the participatory approach would legitimise dominant groups to define the set of policies to be implemented. Once "symbolic space" is unfairly distributed, the involvement of civil society deeply disadvantages minorities.

Although it is usually not easy to evaluate whether people have equal opportunities to influence the public agenda, the case of San Salvario is straightforward. If, in a neighbourhood where immigrants represent 24% of the population, and where they have been living for many years as owners of shops and small businesses, there are no associations led by immigrants and immigrants do not seem to fully participate in the public life of the neighbourhood, something is wrong. A less-than-proportional number of immigrants involved in the public life of the neighbourhood could be explained by differences in the desire to participate, but when there is a clear asymmetry between the number of people and the number of associations, it means that something is structurally unfair and ought to be corrected. It is not possible to realise full and fair integration among natives and immigrants if the latter are marginalised and excluded by the public discourse.

Because this feature has never changed in San Salvario (immigrants were not involved in the public debate in the 1990s, during the process of regeneration or today), and because the municipality and other public institutions did not take any action to address this problem, it is valid to claim that the process of regeneration does not treat immigrants fairly.

This unjust state of affairs cannot be attributed to San Salvario alone because it is a broader issue that concerns the marginalisation of immigrants within Italian society. Nevertheless, San Salvario is a representative example that can be used to define some guidelines and policies that can be applied in other contexts as well. The case of San Salvario shows that although over the last twenty years Italian society has become more prepared to face a complex phenomenon like immigration, it still does not treat immigrants as equals but excludes them from the public debate and misrecognises this state of affair as unjust. It is important to publicly recognise this injustice so as to face it by means of, for instance, incentives for immigrants'

involvement in public life and concern for their claims. Clearly, this would not be enough to realise full equality among all members of a society, but it may represent a step in that direction without being patronising or paternalistic.

One final remark is needed: although this perspective is demanding in that it requires the inclusion of the claims of marginalised people and a focus on their issues, it cannot be considered too demanding because it simply requires that people are treated with the respect that is their due.

This does not necessarily imply the use of expensive policies or top down approaches; because one of the main problems is immigrants' marginalisation from the public arena, political institutions can reduce it by involving them as much as possible in the public life. They ought to be incentivised to found associations (through less demanding requirements) or to join associations led by natives (through a quota for immigrants) with as much assurance as possible that their claims will be listened to.

Moreover, it might be important to shift the focus of processes of regeneration from private to public spaces because public spaces affect everyone's lives and have a deeper impact on the opportunities granted to the least advantaged.

It is also possible to create policies like the "Flying Carpet" that are directly concerned with the promotion of active multicultural citizenship and that treat immigrants as equals without misrecognising their differences.

I do not claim that this process will be easy, but I simply suggest that to be a real example of sustainable integration between natives and immigrants, San Salvario ought to develop these kinds of policies to complete the process of regeneration with the involvement of the inhabitants who have actually changed the neighbourhood in recent years.

To conclude this article, I would like to summarise the major findings of my analysis. After describing the main features of the neighbourhood and of the protest that exploded in the 1990s, I shifted my attention on the process of regeneration carried out by the municipality and civil associations. Adding the dimension of symbolic space to the conceptual framework developed by Chiodelli and Moroni, I showed that this process of regeneration was successful because it reduced the degradation of the neighbourhood and the intolerant relations between immigrants and natives. However, I also showed that the process was primarily focused on the private, rather than the public, dimension and that it marginalised the claims of immigrant inhabitants. I finally suggested that such inequality could be resolved through a more inclusive perspective that guarantees equal symbolic space and shifts the focus of regeneration to public space.

Notes

¹ Bocco, 1998, pp. 17-19.

² Ravarino, Verderone, 2002.

³ Source: Ufficio statistico, Comune di Torino.

⁴ Fraser, 1995.

⁵ Martinengo, 1995.

⁶ Belluati, 1998.

⁷ Cicsene, 1997.

⁸ Cicsene, 1996.

⁹ Ires, 1994, p. 78.

¹⁰ Città di Torino, 2004.

¹¹ Chiodelli, Moroni, 2010, p. 6.

¹² D. M. 225/98 and D. M. 267/04.

¹³ For a more detailed analysis of the role of symbolic space, see Liveriero in this issue.

¹⁴ Various Authors, 2008, p. 13.

¹⁵ Various Authors, 2008, p. 36.

¹⁶ Various Authors, 2008, p. 12.

¹⁷ Galeotti, 2010.

¹⁸ Italiano, Migliardi, 2010.

¹⁹ Italiano, Migliardi, 2010.

²⁰ Minucci, 2009.

²¹ Caritas, 2009.

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“Nomadism” and Housing Policies. Roma in Italy: a Hard Case for the Theory of Minority Rights

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0. Introduction

Despite the title of this paper, it does not answer the question of what housing policies are most suitable for nomads today. Modern ‘nomadism’ indeed forces modern societies to face other engaging issues, and it is what I will focus on more specifically.

In this paper I shall examine what I think can be considered a borderline case for minority rights: Italian Roma, i.e. a fragmented group of communities whose members are often defined as nomads. The case of Roma in Europe, and more specifically in Italy, seems to put into question certain basic notions which are almost taken for granted in the discussions on minority rights.

On one hand, indeed, it is a test for the very conceptualization of what a minority should consist of. On the other hand, since it makes it difficult to define what a minority is, it leads us to question how group claims should be viewed under certain conditions. The question becomes, as a matter of fact, who is entitled to assert claims, what, and on behalf of whom. If the very notion of minority is to be put up to discussion with regard to the Roma case, the idea of minority rights should be as well.

As I will attempt to show, the difficulty in understanding what kind of minority Roma should be considered gives rise to very interesting questions especially concerning the distribution of public space. In fact, since they are often defined as *just* nomads the issue of public space, in particular when their housing conditions are involved, becomes crucial for the policies addressing them.

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1. Who is who

According to the Resolution entitled *A European strategy on the Roma*, “the 12 to 15 million Roma living in Europe, some 10 million of whom live in the European Union, suffer racial discrimination and in many cases are subject to severe structural discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, as well as multiple discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability and sexual orientation”¹. And this makes the Roma issue not only particularly engaging for a philosophical analysis, but also urgent and serious for political action. But who are Roma?

Roma and Sinti in Europe are a number of distinct populations with a wide cultural diversity as well. The generic name Gypsies used to refer to them – with its many translations: Zingaro, Tzigane, Zigeuner, etc. – is a heteronym. It is now commonly replaced with the term Roma by international Romani organizations, political leaders and intellectuals since it is more representative, and considered more politically correct in official documents of European institutions. ‘Nomad’ is another heteronym which should sound more neutral, but, as we will see, is a problematic label. However, despite what is widely assumed, 90% of Roma in Europe are settled². Where they are still nomads, they often move periodically for professional, family or religious reasons³. Some names of sub-groups such as Manouches, Kalé, Romanichals⁴ are more used as autonym. Thus “Roma” nowadays is basically a quite generic term to refer to such different and non-homogeneous communities.

For these reasons, it is already partially clear why it would be hard to define those populations as a single ethnic group, not only as a European minority, but often at a more local level as well. In fact, a proposal to define them as a “nation without a compact territory” has been advanced by some international Romani associations and Romani elites in order to achieve the status of transnational European minority⁵. However, it might be debated whether this would be a real improvement for the living conditions of the Romani communities⁶.

The Roma who live in Italy, while being a very small minority – consisting of a population from a minimum of 110,000 to a maximum of 200,000 inhabitants, a very small part of which are still nomads⁷, and 70-80,000 of which are Italian citizens, the others immigrants⁸ – represent a deeply complex and differentiated reality.

Despite the several differences between Roma people residing in Italy (linguistic, religious, cultural, etc.), Italian non-Roma tend to perceive the myriad of Roma communities as only one. Some general features are attributed to them as a whole, *qua* belonging to the biased and stereotyped category of ‘Gypsies’ (Zingari). But Roma communities in Italy are apparently not so homogeneous to be considered a single group. The way these populations call themselves should obviously not be overlooked when enacting policies, but it actually shows, if not that deep divisions between sub-groups are present, that a shared identity is missing.

2. Are Roma a minority?

As a matter of fact, Roma are recognised as a minority in Europe, and as national,

ethnic, cultural, or linguistic minorities in several European countries. This situation makes the legal status and the living conditions of Roma different from country to country and uncertain almost everywhere.

The Roma situation in Europe, and even more so in Italy, is a good example – maybe the most extreme one – of an alleged minority group which does not fall under any of the definitions of minority following the standard distinction between two different kinds of minorities in use in the debate about minority rights. From a philosophical point of view, this makes it hard to define Roma as a minority at all, and apparently, it puts us in the position of concluding either that they form as a whole a *sui generis*⁹ non-definable minority, or that their case tells us that we should revise in some respects the tools to tackle minority issues.

According to Kymlicka’s influential account¹⁰, modern states are confronted with two main patterns of cultural diversity corresponding to two different kinds of minority groups: on one hand, national minorities or indigenous people who claim forms of self-government and autonomy (such as territorial autonomy and federalism) in order to preserve their culture as distinct from the mainstream one; on the other hand, immigrants or ethnic groups that negotiate polyethnic or accommodation rights in order to integrate into the larger society, by learning the official languages and entering the political and economic institutions, while trying to make them more accommodating to some traditional aspects of their culture of provenance (such as customs concerning religious practices, dress, and so on).

What distinguish minorities in Kymlicka’s account is whether or not they possess a *societal culture* in the country they live: “a culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres. These cultures tend to be territorially concentrated, and based on a shared language. [...] [T]hey involve not just shared memories or values, but also common institutions and practices”¹¹. And societal cultures are the result of a process of modernization which usually requires a shared language and history, organized movements and intellectual elites in order to create a sense of common identity and solidarity¹².

Following Kymlicka’s approach, of course, the complex *galaxy*¹³ of groups labelled ‘Roma’ is not – as a whole – a national minority, since they have not shared a common national territory and institutions over time. Yet, they do not seem to possess the features to be considered an ethnic group, since they often do not even share a language and/or a well defined set of customs. Under these definitions, then, Roma should not be considered a minority, and as a consequence they might not be able to make cultural claims. For reasons apparently consistent with these considerations, this is the present situation of Roma in Italy: they are not recognised as a minority, neither national nor linguistic. As it happens in several countries, it can be said that they are almost ‘legally invisible’.

As I argued elsewhere¹⁴, however, there are good reasons not to abandon but to improve the standard model. As Kymlicka underlies, the standard model, indeed, works quite well in certain contexts and, as we will see below, it is probably helpful

in providing an interpretation of borderline cases¹⁵. Kymlicka’s account has undoubtedly the virtue of being able to justify clearly what kind of rights each model of minority should be entitled to, and why. National minority rights obey the logic of separation, while polyethnic ones the logic of integration. A different kind of minority, then, should find its own definition and logic, neither separation nor integration being available in the usual interpretation.

3. *Nomadism and housing*

Actually, in Italy, nomadism is the main cultural feature attributed to Roma and Sinti, which makes their status very problematic, and their housing conditions as well. It is usually seen as the most relevant when not the only feature that define them as a minority.

Nomadism *per se* should not be seen as in contrast to the values and the rules of modern liberal democracies. Given freedom of movement and respect for private and public property, nomadic lifestyle does not seem to generate problems of compatibility with other cultural options. This holds at a purely theoretical level. Indeed, it is well known that nomadism has always been viewed in a suspicious and discriminatory way by the rest of society, both because of the cultural value it represents, and for practical reasons of coexistence. Nomadic lifestyle, though, is not necessarily incompatible with the rules of ‘hosting’ countries, but it became increasingly harder to practice.

Roma culture seems to be profoundly different from the mainstream one of the countries where they choose to reside temporarily (in so far as they live as nomads) or not, and so they differ both from stabilised citizens and immigrants, who have a homeland and a country of adoption where they have (or desire) a long-term residence.

Some of them were nomads centuries ago, and some only until a few years ago, but now most of them have settled, and since this feature of their original culture, so to speak, is still attributed to them, as a matter of justice, tolerance and respect for it, it was deemed the best solution to help them, as a disadvantaged minority, continue to practice such a lifestyle, i.e. nomadism.

For these reasons, with regard to the housing issues Roma can face, apparently law (especially local ones) aims to protect their right to have a nomadic lifestyle, by giving them more options than to the non-Roma ‘disadvantaged’ citizens. On paper, they are indeed entitled access to both standard public housing and to more precarious accommodations in the so-called ‘nomad camps’, when preferred. Together with this cultural right, Roma have also title to various facilities like free school bus services for children, social workers and cultural mediators who help them to manage their relationship with institutions. Under this light, then, the institutional attitudes toward these populations would appear to be the most favourable for them, and one should be surprised to know that the living conditions of Roma in Italy are so problematic.

Actually, Roma in Italy live in several kinds of housing accommodation: camps, public and non-public apartments, houses and so-called equipped group facilities

forming communities administrated by associations and organizations. The situation of housing has not been mapped out yet¹⁶.

Yet, the most peculiar condition of living and housing for Roma is still camps of various kinds (*campi sosta, campi nomadi, aree di transito, aree attrezzate, piazzole*). In those areas freedom of movement is highly restricted: camps are closed off, and going in and out is controlled (often by NGOs selected by the local institutions). And, more generally, Roma and Sinti are forced to live in enclosed camps.

The historical origin of camps in Italy goes back to the mid-seventies and they were designed to be ‘ethnic camps’ for allowing people who were closer to nature to keep their chosen lifestyle¹⁷. While specific policies for Roma in Italy date back to the mid-eighties and consist of regional laws passed to set up camps for protecting Romani culture defined as ‘nomadic’, with the consequence of constructing the homogeneous institutional entity of “nomad”. However, the justification of respect for Romani culture is often only instrumental and takes place when social rights are denied.

In 2001 18,000 people lived in nomad camps¹⁸. An attempt to conduct a census of nomad camps was made by the Italian Ministry of the Interior in 2008, which was very limited (for only a few months, and only in the cities of Milan, Naples and Rome), and criticized for its methods of implementation (fingerprinting) by international institutions for breaching international human rights standards¹⁹. The result of the census was that there were, at the time, 167 “encampments” (*accampamenti*, using the Ministry’s word) – 124 of which illegal and 43 authorized –, with 12,346 people, including 5,436 minors. This more recent data, concerning only three cities, suggests that the current number of Roma in camps has increased. Anyway, given their number, dimensions and dispersion on the national territory, various kinds of Roma camps might well be considered a *unicum* in Europe. This phenomenon is so peculiar and invasive that Italy has been defined as a “Campland”²⁰ by the European Roma Right Centre.

4. *Housing conditions of Roma in Piedmont*

As I already mentioned, the co-presence of several different Roma communities can occur, also at the local level. In Turin, for example, the Roma and Sinti mainly come from three different areas: Piedmont (Sinti Piemontesi), ex-Yugoslavia (Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia) and Romania (south-west and western areas). These different immigration waves arrived at different times and this influenced their situation depending on the current political situation both in Italy and in the countries of provenance and the various strategies of insertion. Settlement form and conditions vary according to the historical period such populations arrived and their cultural specifications. Thus, for example, some Sinti live, especially in Turin and in other major cities in Piedmont, in campers or prefabricated structures in nomad camps owned by the municipality or in private areas. Other Sinti live in brick dwellings raised in pre-existing nomad camps, either legally authorised or simply tolerated. Others live in renewed farm buildings or small houses in villages. Only a few of

them were able to obtain public housing, either flats or condos. Balcanic Roma are more willing to live in flats or brick houses and only a minority of them still lives in roulettes, shanties and containers in nomad camps, often in very bad conditions. Romanian Roma live in low – often extremely low – quality accommodations: usually in shanties placed outside of the camps and so in contexts lacking any kind of hygienic sanitary facilities²¹.

Turin has had a long history of receiving these populations, unlike other Italian cities. Since 1982 the City of Turin has provided a specific office for tackling the issues of the so-called ‘nomads’, i.e. Roma coming from Yugoslavia and Piedmont Sinti. The presence of this office is quite exceptional, except for Rome where a similar office has recently been opened, even if with less committing purposes. Yet, the most significant peculiarity of Turin is that it was one of the first cities where the Italian ‘think tanks’ on Roma issues operated: associations founded by non-Roma and Roma and Sinti, which produced knowledge on the Roma communities in Italy²².

Thus, Piedmont should be considered a virtuous region, having tackled the issue earlier and apparently in a more articulated way. This notwithstanding, even there the conditions of the Roma do not always seem to be much better than in other Italian areas and the issue is far from being solved. In a recent document²³ Piedmont draws some conclusions after ten years under the law in favour of Gypsy populations. Concerning the housing issue, a change in the Roma and Sinti custom of nomadism and a subsequent change in the law and policies is recommended, from ‘camping facilities for roulettes’ to new reception areas and other housing options: going beyond the almost exclusive solution of nomad camps, investing resources in setting up settlements that are more sensitive to social needs. Villages, farmhouses and self-built homes are recommended, but also the acquisition of private lands, and access to public housing, when required, together with policies aimed at managing economic difficulties and potential problems with non-Roma neighbours²⁴. Indeed, what the report recommends is the conditions the law should have already produced over the last ten years. What actually happened is something very different instead.

5. The ‘protection’ of nomadism in Italy

As we have seen, nowadays Roma in Italy, as in the rest of Europe, live in various types of housing, and apparently nomadism and sedentariness are often due to economic reasons rather than only cultural-driven or free choices. Actually it is difficult to define their current lifestyle as “nomadism”, although traces of their nomadic culture remain in many of their social practices (labour organization, school attendance), sometimes they persist only in the way space and time are lived by them (i.e. the specific placement of caravans or cabins with respect to one another, the intolerance to extensive stays, etc). Yet, nomadism or forms of semi-nomadism are still practiced by Roma and Sinti in Italy for economic or family reasons. However, apart from religious travel such as pilgrimages, the tendency is leading to sedentarization. There have been several causes for this change such as:

the rapid modernization of economic activities in the last century; the modernization of transport, which has made traditional nomadism obsolete and more expensive; the explicit prohibition of halting in unauthorised areas, not even on private lands²⁵.

Despite this state of affairs, however, protection of nomadism, seen as a cultural feature, seems to be one of the main aims of Italian laws concerning Roma and Sinti, who, not without coincidence, are usually defined as Gypsies and Nomads²⁶. Despite the number of regional laws ‘in favour’ of Gypsy people and culture, the institutions have been geared toward eliminating the ‘problem’, or at least keeping it under control. Almost all of them refer to the protection of Romani and Sinti culture, but they end up with the creation of mandatory camps where Roma have to live. In addition, such laws have often resulted in forcing different groups to cohabitate and led to more marginalization. Thus, paradoxically, Romani and Sinti traditional values, which were supposed to be protected, have progressively weakened among younger generations.

According to the report, some housing solutions, alternative to camps but still conceived according to the nomadic tradition, like multi-family homes, renovated farmhouses and apartments, have already proved to be compatible with the preservation of the original lifestyle of some Roma and Sinti who chose sedentarization generations ago and more recently as well. Indeed, the more radical changes in social and family relationships have been due to economic transformations. And it is exactly such relationships that guarantee the survival of specific cultural traits of Roma and Sinti. It is not clear whether the process of sedentarization is a tendency toward assimilation or a free choice, a cultural evolution, or just a matter of adapting for surviving, reversible or irreversible.

The situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy is complex and highly diversified. Compared to other European countries, indeed, Romani and Sinti groups are less culturally and linguistically homogeneous. This great diversity among groups, together with their relatively small number, makes political organization and action more complicated. As already mentioned, it is exactly because of this justification, territorial dispersion and fragmentation of different sub-groups, that Roma and Sinti have not been recognised as a minority in Italy.

More specifically, regarding the housing issue, one might think that the problem is primarily the Italian legal framework. As one can read in a recent report on Roma housing conditions in Italy: “Housing policies and related provisions fall directly under the responsibility of Regional governments, within a general framework defined by national legislation. A major consequence of this decentralised housing policy is that different regions and autonomous provinces interpret and implement the national framework legislation in different ways, particularly with reference to migrants and Roma /Sinti minorities²⁷. On the contrary, one can think that it is precisely in the spirit of regional laws to provide local institutions with the autonomy to manage the highly differentiated situations they face. The lack of unity that prevented institutions to declare Roma and Sinti as a minority, in this respect, would justify the lack of a national law as well.

However, this is all in theory. In practice, the paradoxical result of such nuanced management of the issue produces a similar result in nearly every part of the country.

Indeed, the regional laws proposing several alternative housing solutions for Roma and Sinti have been largely disobeyed. For example, regulations on old unauthorized camps and halting areas are sometimes exploited, not to improve the inhabitants' living conditions but to reduce their presence in that area. Moreover, some local governments have failed in implementing the laws and have not found a proper way to invest the appropriated funds, often for technical and/or bureaucratic reasons. And the result – if not the aim – of these policies has been neither producing integration, nor, as they were designed for, promoting autonomy of those communities for enabling them to protect their culture against assimilation. Thus, what the policy of nomad camps brought about is often only segregation and marginalization.

6. Roma as a cultural minority

From a theoretical point of view, this state of affairs highlights several interesting points about minority rights. The Roma situation in Italy might be described as follows: there is a group of people defined as ‘nomads’. This is an institutional label attributed to them on the basis of an alleged cultural feature, their nomadic lifestyle: the only feature they are supposed to share. Thus, the group so labelled does not have the status of minority for several reasons: from a legal point of view, the group is too diverse, comprising Italian citizens, EU and non-EU citizens, and some stateless persons; from a cultural point of view, its members do not share the same language or a common set of customs and practices, and, as a matter of fact, they are territorially dispersed.

So, apparently, nomadism, alleged or real, is supposedly the cause of what is seen as a problem, and at the same time what should be protected. In my view, when it is made explicit, this can explain why policies inspired by these contrasting ideas can easily end up to be disastrous, if not unimplementable. Otherwise, this paradox can simply be exploited to show that any policies concerning Roma, an unspecified minority of ‘nomads’, are pointless and a waste of public money.

On one hand, nomadism seems to prevent the very possibility of being recognised as a minority, and as a consequence a group of nomads cannot have *by definition* the chance of being recognised as a minority. On the other hand, the nomadic lifestyle of these populations is defended in terms of minority rights, as if they were a minority culture. Thus, these people, who do not have the legal status of being members of a minority, are labelled by the institutions as if they were part of an alleged minority culture that is not recognised but simply tolerated and viewed as a problem the majority must control. In addition, being a member of this fake club often adds disadvantage to disadvantage. This is a clear inconsistency at the institutional level, which makes it difficult to see a solution to the problem.

In terms of what I call the standard distinction between two kinds of minorities, Roma defined as nomads can neither be seen as a national minority, which can claim forms of autonomy over a specific land, nor as a single group of immigrants sharing the same societal culture (language, citizenship, etc.) and claiming accommodation

rights, with the apparent exception of the ‘right to live in camps’. The lack of unity of these populations, then, apparently makes it impossible to define them as a minority in a manner that would enable them to really improve their conditions, which is obviously the very aim of any institutional recognition of a group that is disadvantaged due to cultural reasons.

7. From cultural minority to social issue: policies and public justification

Considering the fact that the laws and policies are different from place to place and that they are almost local in nature, the legitimating process of political action varies as well.

In Turin, the “equipped areas for nomads” (never called camps, not even in the City resolution to provide for its regulation in 1991) were set up at the end of the seventies as a reaction to the migration waves from Yugoslavia. Initially, the municipal institutions dealt with the housing emergency by providing halting sites and then organising them like the previous areas for Piedmont Sinti. In 1984 the first document for managing the “presence of nomads on the territory” granted “the right to long-stay...” (6-9-12 months) and laid down the requirements inhabitants had to satisfy. Roma was not consulted in the set-up of the camps. The City resolutions, both in 1984 and in 1991, justified the presence of halting camps by mentioning unspecified problems due to the presence of Italian and foreign nomads in the city that needed to be solved, given the necessity to control the phenomenon and out of respect for their dignity.

Actually, it appears that the real justification for this special treatment is the recognition of the right for Roma to preserve their culture, not having the material resources. But by the end of the nineties, Roma in Turin became a social problem rather than a cultural one and managed as such only by social services for the most part. Indeed, all members of Romani communities acquired the simple status of low-income people, so transforming the issue into a humanitarian question. In any case, official justification of their treatment did not change. Justification of ‘spontaneous sites’ has always been problematic, precisely because they are cases of squatting in public areas. The strategy has been that of hiding the phenomenon as much as possible. No information is disseminated on public intervention concerning these sites. Data are not public and hard to collect. The official position of the nomadism office is that these unauthorized sites are ‘monitored’²⁸.

As a matter of fact, policies toward Roma are managed in a very low-profile manner. Projects designed to improve Roma living conditions, often with the aid of European or regional resources, are not publicised, since they would be seen by the majority of the public opinion as a waste of public money committed to illegal sites.

The reason why that situation is ‘unofficially tolerated’ is basically that institutions are not able to tackle the issues involved. Thus, it seems to be a matter of the ineffectiveness of political action rather than one of respect for differences and sensitivities to cultural aspects that might conflict with the law.

Apparently, on one hand, the official original justification of such settlements was that of recognizing a significant cultural difference amongst those populations, and so as a matter of respect for their specific life style. It was presented, *inter alia*, as a solution for making their nomadic traits compatible with the possibility for their children to have a proper education in the Italian school system. Actually, that could be viewed as a compromise: they would be providing their children with extra education in addition to their alleged traditional one, and the Italian state would give them free to access to housing resources and options precluded to the rest of Italian citizens and non-citizens.

These justifications seem to refer to a purely negative notion of toleration, and, so to speak, to a *modus vivendi* approach. On the contrary their official aim is to appear to be inspired by a conception of toleration as recognition²⁹ and respect of cultural differences. Nevertheless the concrete state of affair leads to think that Roma and Sinti in Italy are often tolerated only insofar they are invisible. This contradiction between the justificatory process and the actual reasons for the policies and their implementations might also depend on the difficulty of conceptualize Roma as minoritarian culture, and as a consequence their possible legitimate claims.

The situation is therefore faced almost always by pretending that something unexpected happened, when problems comes out of their invisibility. But this is often an hypocritical response.

If nomadism, under certain specifiable conditions, is not in principle incompatible with liberal democratic principles of European countries, it should be tolerated. As a matter of fact, however, nomadism by itself is not necessarily a sufficient condition for defining a Romani or Sinti culture *tout court*. If the right to nomadism is to be claimed as a matter of recognition, it is something that should be up to people concerned to decide and negotiate. Otherwise, as we have seen, it can become a counterproductive move.

In this regards, some points are worth mention when attempting to deal with this question: (i) the importance of having a proper notion of minority which can be applied to actual significant minority groups, and (ii) the possible danger of a misleading definition and the subsequent political label of a group.

As far as I understand the issue of minority rights, the task of classifying groups becomes essential. Also from a mere legal point of view, it is clearly fundamental to establish who is entitled to be included in a specific group and, as a consequence, to be considered as legitimate claimants holding to – *those* – minority rights. Indeed, if minority rights must hold, minorities should be at least characterised so that one can determine who their members are. Some cases might be relatively simple. For example, Kymlicka’s distinction between national minorities and immigrants provides precise criteria. Of course a minority composed of several fragmented subgroups is not so easily grasped by clear-cut principles.

Minority identities and the various ways their members are labelled are not usually a matter of choice – neither individual nor collective – but they are ascriptive instead. However, all groups, whether minority or not, national or not, cultural or not, are to a certain degree all constructions of history, politics, society. What should be considered

as a good criterion for defining a number of people as a group in a proper sense is highly debatable and controversial. However, nationalities, languages, even religions and sexual preferences, seem to be trivially more promising characteristics than lifestyle, ‘nomadic’ or not, in defining minoritarian groups. So it should not be so surprising the decision of defining those population as nomads can become slippery. Especially because, for example, classifying all Roma and Sinti living in Italy as just nomads, on the basis of the fact that many of them are forced to live in camps, do not stress the other sometimes more important features they do share or do not. Indeed, those persons who are identified by others as Roma are not a group in a proper sense as they do not see themselves as such.

8. What kind of minority?

Criticizing Kymlicka’s account of minority rights Young suggests to think of cultural minorities in a *continuum*, and of differences among cultural groups as a matter of degree rather than kind. Cultural minorities vary also “in the degree in which they wish to integrate into a larger society and the degree they wish to be separate, and the degree to which the larger society welcomes their participation also varies”³⁰. So separation and/or integration should not be seen as mutually exclusive options of a dichotomous categorisation between nations and ethnicities. That conceptualisation indeed ends up in a picture of state-nations or multinational states, where every single nation is (or would have the right to be) an autonomous and separate unit, and where possible immigrants integrate into. But what would follows from this account, Young says, “puts into question the very possibility of a *multicultural society*”³¹. Those societal cultures are in fact, so to speak, *monocultural* independent nations. Moreover, “World order would be too unworkable if every people that rightly claims to be a nation were recognized as a sovereign state”³²: political unity would be permanently endangered. Furthermore, immigrants sometimes seem to seek both for economic integration and inclusion in political decision process, but not necessarily for cultural integration, so demanding some forms of separation. At the same time, national minorities might be only weakly separatists, claiming rights of self-government “partly in order to promote the inclusion of their members in the larger economy in ways that will most benefit them and remain compatible with their culture and values”.

Then, Young’s proposal is to soften this distinction in order to eliminate the Kymlicka’s idea of nation. She argues that self-government rights – with respect to certain issues and not others – can be justified in terms of rectification of previous injustice or progress in justice and not as “inherent” rights of a people sovereignty over a territory. This approach to the issue seem to fit much better than the other to the Roma case, since they would not have to be declared a ‘nation’ for being considered a minority. Indeed, as we have seen, both the logic of separation and the logic of integration hardly seem compatible with their alleged nomadism. Moreover one might be skeptical about both the effectiveness of giving self-government right

over a land to nomadic people, and the chance of actually integrating them into societies where they just want to travel through.

Nonetheless, in my view, a strategy of this kind would only beg the question, because it might work perfectly only after having a criterion for determining previously ‘who is who’ – i.e. who are the legitimate members of what kind of minority. But, if Kymlicka’s account is simply rejected, we do not end up with a more flexible definition, but without any definition at all. And in that case one loses a candidate for minority rights as well. If the criteria are neither being a member of a ‘nation’ (in Kymlicka’s terms) nor of an ethnic group, a further criterion is needed for selecting minorities among the several more or less informal groups which are present in our societies. Without a proper definition of minority, which would enable claims of membership to it, that minority does not exist and thus the access to its corresponding minority rights.

Moreover, the criterion of having suffered injustice alone would be too vague to inspire specific policies in terms of minority rights. If policies are to be justified their logic should be spelled out. And their logic, if any, should depend, as in Kymlicka’s account, on, so to speak, the ‘nature’ and the features legitimately attributable to the group concerned.

For example, a choice must be made between trying to integrate Roma children in a more hospitable school system, for enabling them to achieve the same result of children who speak Italian as first language, or promoting the study of Romani culture and language³³ in order to preserve their own culture. These two possible policies would be inspired by very different kinds of considerations, and it would be hard to consistently justify both. In addition, it would be difficult to implement them in any case, given the territorial fragmentation of Roma.

Also, the housing issue would appear to be twofold. Actually, policies concerning Roma recommend both access to public housing, so recognizing just, so to speak, an economic disadvantaged situation, and the housing option of the so-called Nomad camps, so recognizing a specific cultural trait. In other words, on one hand, they seem to be both objects of policies of mere redistribution, thereby being treated on equal footing as equally disadvantaged Italian citizens, on the other hand, they are targeted by policies to which is attached a form of symbolic recognition for their culture as well, and giving them special rights in this respect. Yet, the policy of ‘recognition’ implemented by allowing camps is apparently prevalent, because, in spite of appearance, it is less costly both from a symbolic and a monetary standpoint. On one hand, access to public housing indeed can be seen as an illegitimate concession to ‘immigrants’ – despite the fact that many Roma are Italians – at the expense of Italian citizens, and it is politically more controversial and sometimes it makes it hard to “reconcile all the sensitivities”³⁴. On the other hand, tolerating illegal and hidden halting sites without investing money in providing decent living conditions to the residents can be more acceptable for public opinion – especially when uninformed –, rather than representing the sincere expression of toleration and respect for Roma culture. Indeed, creating ghettos where the state can confine undesirable people, and where they can hopefully hide them from the rest of society,

might be described as a housing policy that gives a group a right to self-government over a public space. After all, it might be considered as a situation in between mere squatting on public property and the right of self-government on a land.

9. Conclusions

What I have tried to show is that the Roma case raises serious questions for a theory of minority rights. More specifically, it puts up to discussion some standard categories we apply to minority issues, without pointing out a valid alternative. The problem, both at the theoretical and practical level, is that Roma as a group do not fall under any specific definition of minority which can be politically relevant. The criteria proposed by Kymlicka, which makes a distinction between national minorities and ethnic groups, are unsuitable. However, other criteria are too weak to properly represent their specificity as a group, if any. Indeed, they have much more in common than what other historically disadvantaged groups share – like those groups discriminated against due to their religion, sex, age, disability, etc. Their situation makes them more similar to what Kymlicka defines a *cultural society*, but not similar enough.

This suggests that policies against discrimination and of recognition of their identity as worthy of equal respect³⁵ alone are not the solution, precisely because it is not clear what the identity of Roma is. In other words, it would not be enough to publicly recognize that Roma and Sinti are not second-class Italian citizens by placing a label on them that they have not yet had the chance to define.

I do not want to say that they should be committed to providing a clear-cut definition of themselves as a minority in order to be recognized as such. On the contrary, in my opinion, this would not only be a double-standard treatment, but also a requirement contradicting the very aim of recognition policies, since it would further burden the ‘disadvantaged’.

The examples of distribution of public spaces that I have given – camps and public housing – show how such a process of defining or labelling groups can work against rather than in favour of them. Thus, trivially, people concerned should be involved in such a process and consulted, both at the highest institutional level and at a local level – i.e. the implementation of policies. This strategy, however, is apparently difficult to be followed, precisely because it is not obvious who the people ‘concerned’ are. For this reason, the Roma case, which lies in a sort of grey area of the standard classification of minorities we already apply, might be more helpful to understand what becoming a minority is (or should be) rather than what a minority is. In other words, in similar cases one might focus on the arguments supporting actions to enable groups to become minorities, in one of the acknowledged senses, should there be good reasons for believing that a past injustice prevented them from fully developing their own culture and identity. In this way, their future choices, as individuals or as a group, would more likely be a matter of self-determination than a matter of need.

Notes

- ¹ European Parliament, 2008, art. A.
- ² Courthiade, 1995, p. 18. For a very interesting analysis of why to define Roma as Nomads might be very problematic, see Sigona, 2003.
- ³ Rothéa, 2003, p. 15.
- ⁴ Cf. Dell’Agnese, Vitale, 2007, pp. 123-4.
- ⁵ Rothéa, 2003, pp. 19-20.
- ⁶ See Testino, 2009.
- ⁷ 30% according to Various Authors 2001, 15% according to Sigona (2005).
- ⁸ Data is always approximate. About Roma population in Italy, Marta in Various Authors 2001 (p. 43) indicates 110-120,000 while other more recent works report 130-150,000 (cf. Dell’Agnese, Vitale, 2007; Lapov, 2004; Spinelli, 2003), while current unofficial assessments estimate them as being up to 200,000.
- ⁹ This is actually the way Kymlicka define Roma/Gypsies since – he observes – they “unlike national minorities, have a homeland that is everywhere and nowhere” (Kymlicka, Norman, 2000, p. 23).
- ¹⁰ See Kymlicka, 1995 and 2001.
- ¹¹ Kymlicka, 1995, p. 76.
- ¹² See Kymlicka, 1995, p. 77.
- ¹³ See Dell’Agnese, Vitale, 2007.
- ¹⁴ See Testino, 2009.
- ¹⁵ Kymlicka, 1997.
- ¹⁶ For some interesting examples of housing solutions, see Vitale, 2009, especially part VI.
- ¹⁷ See Piasere, 2006.
- ¹⁸ Sigona, Monasta, 2006, p. 27.
- ¹⁹ Cf. European Parliament, 2008b.
- ²⁰ ERRC, 2000.
- ²¹ In Turin there are two equipped areas for Roma, Aeroporto and Germagnano, and two for Sinti, Sangone and Le Rose. There are also ‘spontaneous’ – i.e. abusive and illegal – sites, which are encampments and not camps. These latter accommodations are isolated and in very precarious sanitary conditions (waste, rats, no facilities). These sites are located in Via Germagnano (3 sites) and in Lungo Stura Lazio (3 sites), Strada del Portone (1 site), Strada Basse di Stura (1 small site), Zona Reiss Romoli, 298-300 (former Cimi Montubi area, 1 site cleared in September 2009), Via Traves (1 site), Zona Cimitero Monumentale (1 small site), Strada Druento (1 small site), other areas, small sites comprising one nuclear family.
- ²² Like, for example, AIZO (Associazione Italiana Zingari Oggi).
- ²³ Franzese, Spadaro, 2005.
- ²⁴ Franzese, Spadaro, 2005, p. 54.
- ²⁵ See Franzese, Spadaro, 2005, pp.18-20.
- ²⁶ Actually some laws, like the one in Piedmont, mention nomadism only as one housing option among other possibilities.
- ²⁷ Enwereuzor, Di Pasquale, 2009, p. 7.
- ²⁸ When reporting the point of view of inhabitants, public officers state that Roma who live there prefer that solution as it is cheaper than any other option.
- ²⁹ See Galeotti, 2002.
- ³⁰ Young, 1997, p. 50.
- ³¹ Young, 1997, p. 51.
- ³² Young, 1997, p. 51.

³³ For an account of both the historical development and the present status and diffusion of Romani language, see Matras, 2004.

³⁴ Corriere della sera (online editorial staff), 2010. Minister of Interior Roberto Maroni recently gave this reason to justify stopping a program to place 25 Roma families in public housing flats (Aler) previously planned by all the subjects involved.

³⁵ For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the two concepts of recognition and equal respect, see Galeotti, 2010.

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¹ Luper-Foy and brown, 1994, pp. 5-6.

² Friedman (1990, pp. 56) distinguishes between to different kinds of authority (c.f. Jones, 1982; Smith, 1990, pp. 152-7).

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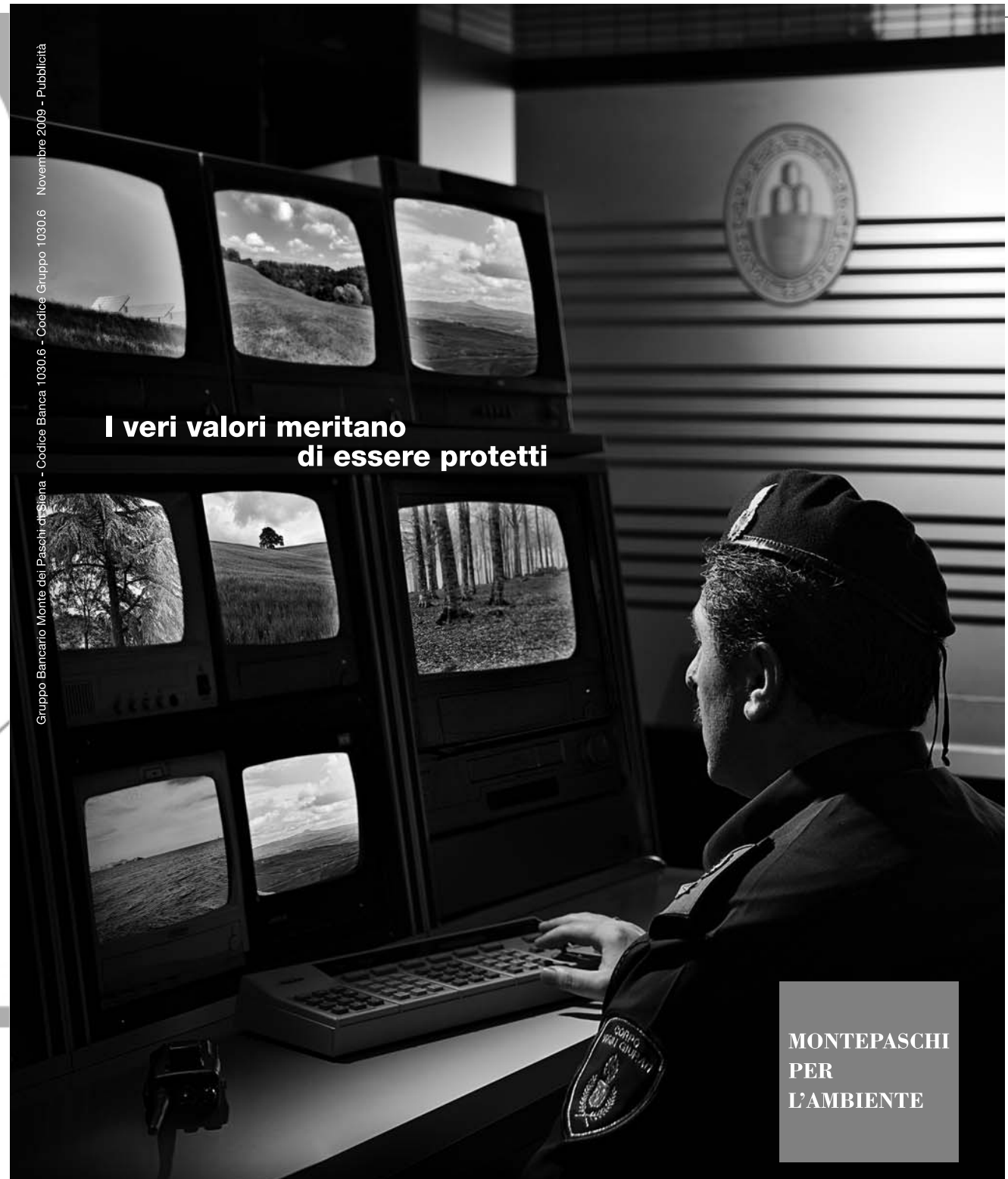
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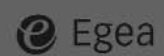
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