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.

* Professor, Philosophy, Università del Piemonte Orientale.

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
tipology 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 tranformative 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.