Paper prepared for the Second Euroacademia International Conference

Identities and Identifications: Politicized Uses of Collective Identities

Florence, 18 – 19 October 2014

This paper is a draft

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Trans-Groups Duties and Common Sense *or* the Politics of Multiculturalism

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Abstract

In the debate on multiculturalism, there is wide disagreement over which rights are basic in the relevant sense. At the heart of this article, in turn, there are two different commitments. First, the idea that multiculturalism has a dual dimension: the politics of multiculturalism and the realm of everyday interactions. Second, the awareness that special rights do not guarantee a profound understanding of the relational element that distinguishes multicultural societies. In this paper, by drawing upon Markell's notion of acknowledgment, I argue that, in contexts featuring multiple perspectives, a crucial need for political philosophers is to investigate how views are mutually related. First, by sharing a communal network of transactions and exchanges, people are bounded to consider different outlooks. Then, frequent interactions allow people to articulate their perspectival limits. Finally, this self-assessment makes people elaborate their cultural burdens and to design mechanisms of collaboration. The issue, thus, is to set institutional strategies to make this interaction possible. Decentralization, I argue, can be seen as positive answer in this respect.

Keywords
acknowledgment, duty, common sense, decentralization, multiculturalism

Introduction

For New Delhi diplomats, Pasolini wrote, making a lunch may be a very problematic enterprise: Hindus, Brahmins, Muslims, Western, Sikhs and a number of other minorities take a seat at the same table.[1] In today's cities, it is not rare to see different religious communities live close to one another. Often, at workplaces, people from competing ethnic groups cooperate peacefully. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. In recent time, there is so much hype about the failures of multicultural policies in European countries. Since the Satanic verses controversy, then the harsh debates about French bans on face veils, and now the remarkable results of some xenophobic movements in the last European elections, politicians and theorists have casted doubts on the destiny of the politics of multiculturalism.

These examples place interest on the dual dimension of multiculturalism. On the one hand, the politics of multiculturalism: measures involving cultural recognition and accommodation, economic redistribution, access to political participation and jobs opportunities, affirmative actions, etc. On the other hand, the real character of multiculturalism, namely, the set of ordinary exchanges through which cooperation, assimilation and radicalization are performed. So not everything is up to politics. Besides the domain of policy-making, people should pay more attention to the multi-coloured realm of everyday interaction. For instance, in some cases, a partial reach of the state has encouraged the development of local and micro dimensional mechanisms of mutual control.[2] There, the prospects of future interactions support cooperation and trust. Vis-à-vis the great mistrust, a persuasive picture of multiculturalism needs to illustrate why in our lives cooperation is a more common result than resentment and violence.[3] In this article, thus, I focus on the sphere of mutual respect, daily transactions and recurring bargaining. At the heart of this commitment, there is the thought that one accepts the other on the consideration that she is compatible with some overriding values, but also on the understanding that all values cannot be recognized simultaneously in the same sphere, and that, finally, one has to admit her own limitations as well as those of the others. That is, affiliation to certain groups provides some limitations, which people may overcome through the acknowledgment of these perspectival limits as a substantial communal condition.[4] In doing so, we do not erect a wall of separation among cultures and we deal better with the vibrant aspect of multiple belongings.

Despite an overwhelming literature on multiculturalism across the world, people paid little attention to the possibility of focusing on individuals in their daily interactions.[5]In the following, the starting suggestion is very straightforward.First, by sharing a communal network of transactions and exchanges, people are bounded to consider different outlooks. Then, frequent interactions allow people to articulate their perspectival limits. Finally, this self-assessment makes people elaborate their cultural burdens and to design mechanisms of collaboration.Such a simple

strategy may contribute to the debate at three levels. First, through the notion of trans-groups duties, this essay tries to describe an implication of the idea of acknowledgment.[6]Second, through the notion of *sensus communis*, it gives a workable philosophical reference to explain cooperation and peaceful interactions in multicultural societies. Third, this essay sketches key normative requirements. The issues are to set institutional strategies to encourage interaction and to narrow chances of defection as well as to allow people to take part into the process of decision-making. Decentralization, I argue, can be seen as positive answer in this respect.The purpose of this paper, indeed, is explanatory. This attempt rests on the application of a simple definition of duty in multicultural context. Since I define duties as limits on our scopes and actions, I shall focus on how we can reflect on others' limits and on what it implies in terms of mutual respect. In order to develop my argument, I will proceed as follows. In section 1, I shall set the terms of the debate on multiculturalism and justify a duty-based approach. In section 2, I shall examine the notion of trans-groups duties. This account places emphasis on the relational element of multiculturalism. Of course, it is other-oriented, but the process of acknowledgment involves a simultaneous elaboration of the self. In section 3, by analogy with the notion of common sense, I shall scrutinize how a system of cooperation can be possible across cultural affiliation. Eventually, in section 4, I shall demonstrate that the emphasis on the character of multiculturalism offers insights for discussions on small and local political spaces.

1. From Minority Rights to a Duty-Based Approach to Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has long been identified with the protection of certain minority rights from the claims of collective authority. In this tradition, the most powerful claim for special rights comes from Will Kymlicka, who articulated his account of multiculturalism in a series of works covering more than fifteen years. In *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, he emphasizes the special importance of societal cultures to personal agency and development.[7]Cultural structures, as he says, arecontexts of choice ascribing specific forms of lives with exceptional meaning. Access to a viable societal culture is therefore a necessary precondition for our ability to choose good lives for ourselves. In one sense, a life within the norms, attitudes, and values of a particular cultural group might be a necessary condition for people ability to make choices. That is, wisdom, practices and narratives intrinsic in a societal culture shape the actions of its members, designing"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".[8] Moreover, societal cultures encourage a sense of self-respect. Here, culture is to be observed as "a source of emotional security and personal strengths".[9] Likewise, only coming into terms with the significance of their social environment and through a comparison among different ways of life, people make an autonomous and informed choice regarding their membership in the group. For Kymlicka, "it's only through having a rich and secure cultural structure that people can become aware, in a vivid way, of the options available to them, and intelligently examine their values".[10] These claims inform his conception of minority rights as supporting the individual's ability to select between significant forms of life. Specifically, once we acknowledge the importance of societal cultures for the individuals, we also attest the connection between the respect we give to the cultural group and the individual's self-esteem. "What matters, from a liberal point of view", he writes,"is that people have access to a societal culture which provides them with meaningful options encompassing the range of human activities". [11]

Something of what is at stake can be captured from looking at how Western states have been persistently perpetrated severe injustices on cultural minorities. Economic discrimination, forced assimilation and the denial of political rights as well as linguistic barriers, politicization of identities, the accent on religious and ethnic differences demonstrate majority groups' efforts to prevent minorities from the access to social institution and from the exercise of their rights.[12] Minority groups, thus, Kymlicka argues, "are caught in contradictory position, unable either to fully participate in the mainstream of society or to sustain their own distinct societal culture".[13]At this stage, taking that 1) cultures provide contexts of choices and enable individual autonomy, and that 2) inequality in fully accessing cultural membership stems from luck (roughly, embryos cannot decide where they will be born); self-government rights help secure access to a societal culture as well as the flourishing of liberal autonomy. While, "failure to recognize these rights will create new tragic cases of groups which are denied the sort of cultural context of choice that supports individual autonomy".[14]Thus, Kymlicka argues, "within a liberal egalitarian theory…which emphasizes the importance of rectifying unchosen inequalities",[15] members of minority groups, disadvantaged in terms of fully accessing to their peculiar culture, should be entitled to forms of special protections (i.e. rights of self-government, public funding for supporting cultural practices; religious or cultural exemptions from laws).

Taken together, this argument seems to lie on an ambivalent appeal to the idea of culture. On the one hand, as Markell puts it, he treats culture as an external – primary – good to which we are or are not denied to have access. On the other hand, since culture is a source of meaningful options, "the idea of a particular culture as one's own suggests – it has to suggest - not just that I possess my culture but that it possesses me".[16] Moreover, another problem

confronting Kymlicka's solution is that a too ready acceptance of culture matters has encouraged cultural stereotypes. It has, Anne Phillips writes, "enabled critics of multiculturalism to represent it as more intrinsically separatists".[17] For Kymlicka, in turn, "the desire of national minority to survive as a culturally distinct society is not necessarily a desire for cultural plurality, but simply for the right to maintain one's membership in a distinct culture".[18] In this way, a focus on special rights as a way to preserve cultural borders may accentuate closure and radicalization of differences. Contrariwise, vis-à-vis political backlash against multiculturalism, exploring social relationships and avoiding reaffirming structures of self-exclusion seem to be significant theoretical ambitions. Indeed, when theorists focus on the way a societal culture is preserved, as also Carens puts it, the real problem of multiculturalism, namely, the interaction between cultural differences, is left aside.[19]What makes, thus, possible to put together different worldviews? How are members of such a community bound to one another? Is there a way to treat people as equals and to preserve their difference? Is there a concept that is applicable to accord groups' different concerns? Why should we respect others as equals, as our co-members? The search for a relational property that weights specific attachments and that explains peaceful interactions beyond cultural commitments is what characterizes this essay. This means to be sensitive to the breaking and rethinking of agreement across affiliations. The ways of approaching the shape of this sort of changing identity implies an inquiry of the real character of multiculturalism, where the work of cooperation, coordination, marginalization, and differentiation is performed.[20]More specifically, a duty-based approach may help to define the cross-referring structure of the actions of individuals from different groups in multicultural contexts. Reasoning about multiculturalism in terms of duties puts emphasis on the person's obligation to express her point of views according to specific criteria. In analogy with deontological ethics, looking at human interactions through the lenses of duties means to explore the very nature of certain acts, what determines their wrongness and to investigate how people stipulate 'what they are supposed to do' and the ways these commitments are performed and defended.[21]

Duties may be defined relative to one's particular place in life, a person's involvement in a particular relationship, a person's belonging to an alleged community, or even one's position in a division of labour. Typically, duties play a role in multicultural debates in three recognized domains. The first level embodies those situations in which people find some impositions as arbitrarily pervading. For instance, the acceptance of religious symbols at school, and the obligation to respect detailed dress codes. The second realm opens to the self-construction of moral duties that can be sources of motivations for political action. For instance, religion may legitimate the construction of a moral code that informs political engagement for non-secular political parties. The third territory is the one that investigates specific binding relations towards co-members in a group. This field has received enormous attention in sociology and anthropology, but too little has been said on the philosophical side of the question. Do such special duties exist? Do they produce actual moral constraints? Are multicultural societies open to negotiate these cultural duties? The rest of the paper is dedicated on this third area of disagreement.

2. Trans-Groups Duties and the Character of Multiculturalism

So far, I have sketched the debate on multiculturalism, provided reasons for emphasizing the relational dimension of the politics of multiculturalism, and gestured towards finding a new starting point, focusing on the role duties can play in that context. In the following, I shall explore with more depth how a duty-based approach can provide compelling insights for investigating how socially situated actors share parts of the threats, burdens, satisfactions and gratifications involved in the regulation of the fact of living together. This point can be enriched going back to the very idea of duty, where we find a prescriptive element in most of its connotations.[22]Taking duties as political obligations, it is easy to grasp such a prescriptive colour in sentences like 'voting is a right and a duty'. Similarly, when one performs a certain action, duties explicitly convey some prescriptions, i.e. 'your duties will include taking orders, making cocktails and preparing sandwiches'. Equally, when we do an action because of a sense of moral obligation, we emphasize the prescription that has encouraged us to behave in such a manner. This is the case of sentences like 'a duty praise' or 'a duty welcome'. Finally, the 'Golden Rule' (in its negative form). A sentence like 'Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself' tells us how things ought to be done. These explicit or implicit references to a past, present or future imposition emphasize a peculiar feature of the idea of duty: the attempt to provide some limits to individual actions. On the one hand, the commonality of these limitations establishes special links among agents, between individuals and laws and, someone could say, if universally shared, may imply global concerns. On the other hand, the idea of a perimeter for individual actions stresses the finitude of human beings. After all, as Markell also puts it, human beings have a limited temporal posture. Our life is filled with turns and accidents, which limit expectations and our strategies of interaction. We also are spatially finite. Our spatial posture results from

the social environment where we usually move. Then, there is what people called cognitive finitude, which reproduces our fundamental perspectival limits.[23]

Certainly, given the point that the idea of duty functions as a limit on human actions, people may argue that such a prescriptive connotation makes marginalization and self-exclusion even more acute. Now, in order to counter this objection, we can read the relation between special duties (S) as bearers of particular identities and general duties (G) as community members through the lens of necessity and sufficiency. Given that cultural groups are subset of a multicultural community, we can speculate that general duties are necessary for special duties (S). It is the same thing as saying that "whenever you respect prescriptions from S you are respecting the idea that community members deserve equal respect". Simultaneously, to say that special duties are sufficient for the general ones is *as if* we assert that respecting S, we find an acceptable ground to conclude that people deserve equal respect beyond their peculiar identities. In other words, special ties are elliptical: they focus on what we owe to a certain set of people, but they seem to hold an implicit idea of equal worthiness of other community members. Now, the ambition is to make this character explicit instead. Human beings are active participants in the universe. Of course, they try to make sense of their environment and to find suitable ways of life. Special duties express more explicitly the prima facie reciprocal limitations to people's scopes and means – their peculiar posture. No matter the group we take into account, moral concerns are mediated and expressed through contextual practices or prescriptions. Nevertheless, this stand does not exclude that there could be agreement beyond affiliations. Indeed, while practices and obligations are different, having limited scopes and worldviews looks as it is a universally shared attribute. For multiculturalism, accepting this point means to take duties as a valid theoretical tool to overcome particularistic claims.

The idea is that mutual acknowledgment of this sort produces a peculiar mediation, which I call trans-groups moral duties.Trans-groups duties are forms of self-limitation we develop because of interactions with members of other groups. The prefix *trans* describes their transversality and the act of going across existing borders. The notion of *group* points out that these borders characterise a collection of individuals with similar spatial and cognitive finitude. *Duties* are taken as limits to action and views. Thus, trans-groups duties are the negotiation between our perspectival limitations and insights from other people. From the encounter of finite postures, they open a new space of action. For instance, we can define trans-groups duties in analogy with Hans Georg Gadamer's idea of hermeneutical openness. Hermeneutical openness is showing respect for another tradition or culture. Entering in dialogue implies a process of understanding and the effort of reaching an agreement (*Verständigung*) through this mutual learning. "To reach an understanding in a dialogue" he writes "is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were' we owe to the limitations that undermine others' perspectives."[24]

An alternative formulation of the same point is the following. Our special duties cannot long survive without an adaptation, redefinition with others similarly engaged in this relation. Trans-groups duties accentuate our moral concern to compare others with us, where perpetual confrontation tempers wide disagreements between how we see ourselves and the way we see others. In a similar way, assuming that every person – even young children and bitterly handicapped people – expresses, at least through such instances as crying, laughing or through a peculiar mimicry, their approval or disapproval towards actions, beliefs, desires or ideas; the difference, thus, regards the motivation people apply in order to explain their moral feelings. What is more, even not considering others' reasons as valuable, we develop evaluative judgments (literally, as acts of judging or assessing a person or situation or event) on what they do, think and believe (i.e. "this is bad" "this is good"). Such an evaluation, even negative ones, attests, at least indirectly, our reference to allegedly shared standards, which we hope to be valid beyond our finite posture. Once again, I can spell out the argument as follows. First, it seems uncontroversial to state that affiliation to a group makes people expect exceptional sympathy from fellow members. Second, people value their membership in the group according to different degrees, taking specific aspects of the groups as reason giving, and as particularly stringent moral bindings. Third, vis-à-vis daily interaction, people become aware that membership in a specific community has influence on their range of actions and worldviews. This triggers a reflection on others' perspective, either emphasizing their shortcomings or opening to them. The starting point, thus, is the reactive attitude that informs dialogical interaction. This dialectic relationship implies a dual consideration, not only of others' constraints, but also of our burdens. Trans-groups duties rise from the replication of other cognitive finitude on our perspective. Acknowledging that other persons' actions are as limited as ours are sets the scene for reciprocal understanding and for implicit or explicit agreement on mutual obligations.

Accepting the validity of this argument means that we owe respect to the limitations that undermine others' perspectives (what these duties mean), that the sphere of ordinary interactions plays a regulative role (the foundational terrain of such duties), and that holding specific duties towards co-members does not affect the possibility of having commitments to people from other groups (to whom these duties are addressed).In summary, hereI have tried to describe the shared dimension among diversity. Through something like a maieutic effort, I have scrutinized aspects

usually taken either as a platitude or as politically irrelevant. That is, very often people interact peacefully in multicultural contexts. In this sense, by putting emphasis on finitude and prescriptions, an comparison with duty-based approach enables us to explain the relationship between agency and cultures.At the same time, the notion oftrans-groups duties allows to explain the encounter and the negotiation among people with different perspectival limits.

3. Common Sense and the Character of Multiculturalism

The sort of commitment shaped *via*trans-group duties can be illuminated by going back to the modern idea of *sensus communis*.[25] The argument may benefit from the rehabilitation of common sense for two reasons. First, it puts emphasis on the mutuality (*Gemeinsamkeit*) of the living together.[26] It is, indeed, a feeling for common good, which we mature through sociability. This implies a critical detachment from intangible philosophical speculations and a focus on the historical position of human beings.[27] Second, the idea of common sense stipulates a social disposition not a universal attribute like natural rights. Common sense, indeed, implies sympathy among human beings and self-control, a bracketing, people would say. It serves, Reid wrote, "to direct us in the *common affairs of life*, where our reasoning faculty would leave us in the dark".[28] The reference to the "sense of the common", thus, allows us to stress the dual dimensionality of multiculturalism. That is, the purely political domain and the sphere of social exchanges, where principle of conduct result from the human aptitude for community and civility. Specifically, in a series of essays, Lord Shaftesbury provided a representation of common sense as "the sense of public weal, and of the common interest, love of the community or society, natural affection, humanity, obligingness, or that sort of civility which rises from a just sense of the common rights or mankind, and the natural equality there is among those of the same species".[29]

It is, thus, a public spirit coming from original social feelings, a sense of partnership with humankind. Every animal is part of its species as well as groups are parts of a more general community. This *maneuvre* allows us to postulate the possibility of a system of needs and benefits that may regulate collective interaction beyond finitude. For instance, people acknowledge that promoting their interests requires the involvement in several social interactions, which bring them to some rules of coordination. For a person robustly attached to her special duties, not considering these public conception, would put in danger the access to minimal societal provisions, but also would jeopardize her chance to partake in public deliberation, to advance her own interest and to defend the legitimacy of her own view. Therefore, the analogy with common sense does not attempt to escape personal (cultural) attachments. Rather, for multiculturalism, it sheds light on a shared sense that ground community. This concrete universality is the result of a practically oriented ethical knowledge, which reposes on human interactions.[30]In this sense, contrary to political vulgate,the idea is that an increment of the chances of encounter maximizes the possibility of reciprocal understanding as well as the internalization of social norms. Eventually, this should lead to more liable forms of cooperation in the long run. Given the diversity of outlooks, to reach an understanding in a dialogue is not a matter of sharing a point of view only. It is a process of elaboration and translation into a communal vocabulary, which interlocutors can understand equally. At the same time, such a vocabulary becomes a medium for preserving autonomy and for bringing about individual emancipation. People, indeed, come to realize that not only this mutual learning minimizes defection, but also that developing arguments considering different perspectives allows them to make interests and claims more relevant socially.

Yet, one could argue that multiculturalism does not take the shape of a positive communicative interaction. Often, minorities are just too small to be relevant. Simultaneously, many groups find particularly problematic the flawlessly understanding of implicit meaning in others' statements. I try to answer this objection by referring to a very basic example. Briefly, let us suppose that I am dating with a girl and I decide to go with her to a wedding party. For that occasion, she decides to wear a black dress. At the dinner table, I look at it saying "Nice dress, that black is so appropriate!" Arguably, the tension between the fact and an implied set of habits or manners makes irony successful. Clearly, this is dependent on the context, and on my girlfriend knowledge of some social habits. That is, 'never wearing total white or total black at a wedding party!' Let us also imagine that she grew up in a remote island, and that this is the first weeding of her life. In this case, she probably would fail to get the ironical touch of my statement, taking it as a compliment. It is true. However, in most of the cases, multicultural interaction is not an occasional encounter; neither is it a finite sum of discrete information. Potentially, multicultural confrontations can be continually produced and reproduced, bringing traces of what already happened, of what exists only in the actual moment of action, of what will be created in the future. There is a set of mental and physical postures thought to be effective in a specific situation. They can be articulated or acknowledged only in action. In the first place, one needs to track information that occurs in the moment of exchange. During the very first meeting, deep-rooted burdens influence our conceptions; then, forced by the stimuli received from outside, the state of discomfort encourages a progressive reorganization of perceptual habits. It seems to me, thus, that there is a peculiar and often neglected (at least in

political philosophy) learning dimension in multicultural exchanges through which we establish trans-groups duties and we commit to common sense. Along with a sociological trend, this relation is the result of a sense of empathy gradually acquired, day after day, which remains as background knowledge for next interactions. During seminars, for instance, we expect our arguments to be understood by other colleagues. Either our positions are very controversial or those ones that people easily agree with, in elaborating our judgments, we still assume the existence of shared criteria to set a discussion on the appropriateness of the argument. This happens also in academic institutions with a huge diversity of views among students on hot issues, such as religion, gender discrimination and international affairs. Now, the relevant factor is the acknowledgement of an intersubjective action-guiding sense, constructed on the respect of other people's finitude. Indeed, in concrete situations, in order to formulate an understandable statement, we apply to categories seen, at least by the speaker, as uncontroversial. This opens to a social dimension. In so doing, we postulate a shared domain, and our statements emerge as a synthesis between our firm beliefs and the collective understanding. Within this space, we adjust our views, and we commit ourselves to consider demands from outside seriously.

4. Going Back to the Politics of Multiculturalism

The title of this paper puts the dual dimension of multiculturalism in the shape of a dilemma. This does not entail that the character and the politics of multiculturalism are two incompatible domains, but rather my aspiration is to differentiate two distinct points of departure with equal philosophical and political relevance. The issue of multiculturalism read through the lenses of common sense and trans-groups duties allows theorists to accentuate the significance of local bonds and provides a conceptual framework to assess hybrid identities. People open the door to other people and find elements of their narrative in the others. The mediation between content difference and cognitive unity, I have argued, produces constructive forms of social action. Still, what does such a focus on the character of multiculturalism brings to the political sphere? Is this a critical and negative effort only? Trans-groups duties and common sense, I have claimed, allow us to describe cooperative interactions in multicultural contexts. Then, it is reasonable to ask whether this argument is worth more than a theoretical portrait of some specific types of social interactions. In this section, I shall demonstrate that horizontal learning, proximity and frequent contacts encourage discussing cultural burdens, but also they set the stage for political strategies across groups. One way to spell out what is normatively distinctive of this position is to investigate feasible strategies to encourage people to stipulate trans-group duties and to engage with common sense.

Developing the spirit of mutuality and cooperation is not an impossible operation. First, immigration, the easy access to information and market economy are three deeply explored aspects that dissuade from the attempt to reduce culture to a catalogue of peculiar features. Common sense, thus, may be achieved by stressing the anachronistic value of cultural particularism. Then, in several cases, the construction of an alternative imaginary of mutual solidarity to overcome a collective problem makes the commitment to a shared dimension easier. Trans-groups duties arise and common sense turns out to be evident when people become conscious that, across specific belongings, they are all striving to defend some basic principles and to find solutions for communal problems. In this sense, informal actors (i.e. civil organizations, social movements and NGOs) are potential vehicles to strengthen transversal awareness. One landmark case in India was the alliance formed by three civic organizations to fight poverty in Mumbai. "Instead of finding safety in affiliation with any single party or coalition in the state government of Maharashtra or the municipal corporation of Mumbai", Appadurai writes,

> the Alliance has developed a complex political affiliation with the various levels of state bureaucracy. This group includes civil servants who conduct policy at the highest levels in the state of Maharashtra and who run the major bodies responsible for housing loans, slum rehabilitation, real estate regulation and the like. […] From this perspective, the politics of the Alliance is a politics of accommodation, negotiation and long-term pressure rather than of confrontation or threats of political reprisal.[31]

In a similar vein, we may look at social movements. Often, the kaleidoscopic composition of the social movement makes protests cover a very large social spectrum. The solidarity across potential conflicting interests became one of the reasons to justify the rightfulness of the protest. This means to develop manners of mutual politeness and an appropriate language to articulate a peculiar political strategy and to elaborate transversal claims.[32]Furthermore, trans-groups duties and common sense may be read as demands for more inclusive democratic procedures. Beyond the narrative of cultural clashes, we need to see examples of cooperation and respect as resources against radicalization of cultural difference at the political level. Of course, ensuringparticipation of minorities in decision-making processesincreases chances of interactions among groups. Then, creating local space of political

interaction may pluralize political conflict. Vis-à-vis politicization of identities at the national or international level, reciprocal control and trust among groups can be easier in small-scale contexts. Again, in front of problems considered as communal, decentralized politics may encourage people to behave cooperatively. Being akin to the distinctive social character of each setting, decentralized public spheres seema promising solution to defend the equal character of deliberation. Certainly, I see that this picture may seem as a naïve and optimistic portrait. At the same time,I understand that minorities are to be able to collect their claims and that a positive enabling terrain (i.e. achievements in education, literacy and poverty reduction) is a requirement to accommodate decentralizing aspiration. Nevertheless, localizing political agency in divided societyseems the most feasible strategy to make informal practices politically relevant and thus to motivate agents to monitor reciprocal commitments both at the social and at the political level.

Conclusion

In the debate on multiculturalism, there is wide disagreement over which rights are basic in the relevant sense. At the heart of this paper, in turn, there have been two different commitments. First, the idea that multiculturalism has a dual dimension: the politics of multiculturalism and the realm of everyday interactions. Second, the awareness that special rights do not guarantee a profound understanding of the relational element that distinguishes multicultural societies. In this paper, thus, by borrowing insights from Markell's notion of acknowledgment, I have argued that, in contexts featuring multiple perspectives, a crucial need for political philosophers is to investigate how those views are mutually related. Often, people, I have claimed, negotiate their finitude and translate their view into a shared feeling of common good. This aspect, widely explored in empirical studies, changes the direction of the explanatory vector from internal dynamics within groups to the moment of sharing things among them. Moreover, it also raises the political question on the design of institutional settings to make people interact peacefully.

There is still, however, much to do. These ideas allow for a substantial analysis of everyday interaction as well as for careful investigations of decentralized institutional forms and collective actions. They encourage further inquiries of the role played by representatives and epistemic community to set the terms of cultural exchange. They indeed open up the debate on crucial philosophical notions such as sympathy and solidarity, which were only in the background here. But, I think that focusing on the real character of multiculturalism and finding reasons for cooperative interactions can be thought-provoking lines of thought for future work in this field.

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Notes

For helpful comments and valuable support, I would like to thank Antonella Besussi, Martina Belmonte, Valeria Lauria, Francesca Pasquali, Valeria Resta and Ram Adrian Sabaratnam. Previous versions of this paper have been presented at MANCEPT workshops 2014 and at "Thinking (about) groups", University of Copenhagen.

[1]See Pier Paolo Pasolini, *L'Odore dell'India* (Parma, IT: Guanda, 2002): "Tutto in India, a osservare bene, tende a classificarsi, cioè a fissarsi degenerando. Di questo si hanno infiniti, per quanto confusi esempi. Nelle case e negli alberghi le mansioni dei servi hanno divisioni e prerogative patologiche: un bramino non potrà fare quello che fa un sick, e un sick non si adatterà mai a fare quello che fa un intoccabile. Entrare in un albergo significa entrare nel cuore di una serie di specializzazioni folli. Altre specializzazioni folli si hanno durante i pranzi: e lo sanno bene le mogli dei diplomatici, quando devono organizzare qualche cena, a cui sono invitati indù, mussulmani, bramini eccetera: ci devono essere cento qualità di cibi, perché il cibarsi è rituale, e il rito non è trasgredibile".

[2]See Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*: *the evolutions of institutions for collective action*(New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 61-69.

[3]This claim takes inspiration and evidence from James Fearon and David Laitin, "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation," *American Political Science Review* 90. 4 (1996), 715-717. This is also consistent with findings from Helena Karjalainen and Richard Soparnot, *"Interpersonal Cooperation in Multicultural Working Context,"International Business Research* Vol 5. 6 (2012). In the article, they suggest that intercultural cooperation in multicultural working context is a dual process based on a political-dimension and on an identification-dimension, where the political dimension is found not to be relevant in an intercultural context.

[4]Limits and limitations are taken as synonyms. Specifically, they can be defined as "restrictions on the range of acceptable point of views".

[5]A contiguous analysis to the view that I take can be found in Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[6]In this paper, I borrow the notion of acknowledgment from Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 38. "The cultivation of acknowledgment" Markell writes "may be a valuable part of struggles against injustice and subordination in social relations". Acknowledgement "is in the first instance self- rather than other-directed; its object is not one's own identity but one's own basic ontological condition or circumstances, particularly one's own finitude … acknowledgment involves coming to terms with, rather than vainly attempting to overcome, the risk of conflict, hostility, misunderstanding, opacity and alienation that characterizes life among others."
[7] Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 176.
[8] Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 76.
[9] Will Kymlicka, (1989), 175-176.
[10] Ivi, 169.
[11] Will Kymlicka, (1995), 101.
[12] Ivi, 2.
[13] Ivi, 101.
[14] Ibidem
[15] Ivi, 109.
[16] Patchen Markell, (2003), 159.
[17] Anne Phillips, *Multiculturalism without Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21.
[18] Will Kymlicka, (1995), 104.
[19] Joseph Carens, *Culture, Citizenship and Community. A contextual Exploration of Justice as Evenhandedness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 2-3.
[20]I owe the expression "the character of multiculturalism" and its definition to Patchen Markell (2003).
[21]Earlier version of this paper included an excursus on the disputes about global and special duties. For the sake of the argument, I shall borrow a rough account of duty without a substantial analysis of arguments pro and contra obligations on a global scale.
[22] Here, I follow the majority of philosophical debates and ordinary language to use obligations and duties interchangeably.
[23] Patchen Markell (2003), 14-17.
[24] Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York City: Crossroad, 1992), 379. See also Hans Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*, ed. P. C: Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press). For an extended analysis of the dialogical character of Gadamer's hermeneutics, see Lauren Swayne Barthold, *Gadamer's Dialectical Hermeneutics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010).
[25] The literature on common sense is immense. Among others, see Hans Georg Gadamer. Truth and Method (New York City: Continuum, 1989), I, 1, β. E. J. Hundert, "Enlightment and the Decay of Common Sense," in Common Sense: the Foundations of Social Science, ed. Frits Van Holtoon and David R. Olson (London: University Press of America), 133-149. Van Kessel, "Common Sense between Bacon and Vico," in Scepticism in England and Italy. Common Sense: the Foundations of Social Science, ed. Frits Van Holtoon and David R. Olson (London: University Press of America), 115-130. James McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy: Biographical, expository, critical from Hutchenson to Hamilton (London: Macmillan, 1875), 30-35; 178-208. John D. Schaeffer, Sensus Communis: Vico, Rhetoric, and the Limits of Relativism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990). Sophia Rosenfeld, Common Sense: A political History (Cambridge MASS: Harvard University Press), 56-89. For the sake of this argument, I will not delve thoughtfully through it, but I will focus on Shaftesbury's account with greater attention. Common sense has been a sort of touchstone for moral philosophy and theories of truth since Aristotle's koinē aisthēsis. See, Aristole. De Anima, ed. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin Classics, 1986). Traditionally, common sense has two primary meanings: a ground for perceptual judgment and a common convictions or understanding. Vico takes common sense as the milieu for practical judgment. It is a combination of memories, descriptions, imaginaries that justifies a judgment without reflection. See Giambattista Vico, On the study Methods of Our Time (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990). Reid suggests that common sense functions as a justification for our knowledge of the external world as well as it is the faculty that reveals impressions and ideas to us. In his third critique, Kant, in turn, defines common sense as a human faculty, which enables us to take into consideration the collective reason of humanity. See Immanuel Kant. Critique of Judgement, ed. J. H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 2014), § 40. See Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, ed. D. Brookes (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002). William James combines the two peculiar connotations of common sense. Sometimes, he takes it as a 'funded experience'; in other occasions, he means with it an intellectual form or categories of thought that connect all the 'remoter parts with what lies before our eyes'. See William James. Pragmatism. The Works of William James, eds. Frederick H. Burkhardt, Fredson Bowers, Ignas K. Skrupskelis (Cambridge MASS: Harvard University Press, 1975). John D. Kelly, "Seeing Red: Mao Fetishism, Pax Americana, and the Moral Economy of War," in Anthropology and Global Counterinsurgency, ed. John D. Kelly et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 77.
[26] Hans Georg Gadamer, (1992), 19.
[27] Ibidem
[28] Thomas Reid, *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, Essay IV, Ch: XX. Quoted by Hans Georg Gadamer, (1992), 21. Emphasis mine.
[29] Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. L. E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 48.
[30]George Duke, "Gadamer and political authority," *European Journal of Political Theory* Vol. 13 (2014), 29.
[31]Arjun Appadurai, "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics," *Environment and Urbanization* Vol. 13, No. 2 (2013), 29.
[32]For this account of the social cooperation in Gezi Park protests, I am indebted to Iay Örs Romain and Ömer Turan's contribution "The Manner of Contention: Pluralism at Gezi" in the 2014 Istanbul seminars.