CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL LIFE:
thoughts on the Italian case*

DIVERSIDADE CULTURAL, MULTICULTURALISMO E VIDA SOCIAL:
reflexões sobre o caso italiano

LA DIVERSIDAD CULTURAL, EL MULTICULTURALISMO Y LA VIDA SOCIAL:
reflexiones sobre el caso italiano

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Abstract: This article focuses on the subject of cultural differences and on the claim for rights originated from such differences. Since the beginning Italy has experienced the effects of cultural and linguistic diversity. Throughout Italian history, cultural differences have been denied by the fascist regime but recognized and safeguarded by the 6th amendment of the republican constitution. Later on, other laws have been written specifically related to the topic of which amendment number 482, issued in 1999. The aim was to set rules for an effective coexistence between linguistic communities as it's the example of Alto Adige, whose inhabitants, or at least a great part of them, belong either to the German-speaking community or to the Laden-speaking community. This also moved some authors to question the effectiveness of the currently enforced system, the so-called "quotes system", stating that the goal should be a pacific coexistence among different cultural, rather than linguistic communities. Nowadays the topic of cultural difference is once again an important one for Italy because of two issues: the existence of political parties that support local communities and the presence of foreign migrants and their communities. Moreover, the existence of minorities, as it is the case of such communities made by people who share the same political ideas or sexual orientations. The document explores concepts such as Culture, Ethnicity and Cultural Identity, and shows how they've been differently applied. At last, talks about the marks of a multiculturalism that respects everyone's rights, as well as individual rights.
Keywords: Cultural differences. Cultural Identity. Ethnicity. Multiculturalism.

Resumo: Este artigo centra-se sobre o tema das diferenças culturais e na reivindicação dos direitos oriundos de tais diferenças. Desde o início a Itália experimentou os efeitos da diversidade cultural e linguística. Ao longo da história italiana, as diferenças culturais foram negadas pelo regime fascista, mas reconhecidas e protegidas pelo sexto emendamento da Constituição republicana. Mais tarde, outras leis foram escritas especificamente relacionadas com o tema como a emenda número 482, emitida em 1999. O objetivo era estabelecer regras para uma convivência efetiva entre comunidades lingüísticas, como por exemplo o Alto Adige, cujos habitantes, ou pelo menos boa parte deles, pertencem tanto à comunidade de língua alemã como à de língua Laden. Isso também levou alguns autores a questionar a eficácia do sistema atualmente aplicado, o chamado "sistema de citações", afirmando que o objetivo deve ser uma convivência pacífica entre as diferentes comunidades culturais, ao invés de linguísticas. Hoje o tema da diferença cultural é mais uma vez um passo importante para a Itália por causa de duas questões: a existência de partidos políticos que apóiam as comunidades locais, e a presença de imigrantes estrangeiros e suas comunidades. Além disso, a existência de minorias, como é o caso dessas comunidades feitas por pessoas que compartilham as mesmas idéias políticas ou orientações sexuais. O artigo explora conceitos como Cultura, Etnicidade e Identidade Cultural, e mostra como eles foram aplicados de forma diferente. Enfim, fala sobre as marcas de um multiculturalismo que respeite os direitos de todos, bem como os direitos individuais.
Palavras-chave: Diferenças culturais. Identidade cultural. Etnicidade. Multiculturalismo.

Resumen: Este articulo se centra en el tema de las diferencias culturales y en la reivindicación de los derechos originados de esas diferencias. Desde el principio, la Italia ha sufrido los efectos de la diversidad cultural y lingüística. A lo largo de la historia de Italia, las diferencias culturales han sido negadas por el régimen fascista, pero reconocidas y garantizadas por la enmienda 6 de la constitución republicana. Más tarde, otras leyes han sido escritas específicamente relacionados con el tema como podría ser la enmienda número 482, publicado en 1999. El objetivo era establecer las reglas para una convivencia efectiva entre comunidades lingüísticas, como por ejemplo la de Alto Adige, cuyos habitantes, o por lo menos una buena parte de ellos, pertenecen tanto a la comunidad que habla alemán como a la que habla Laden. Esto también levó algunos autores a cuestionar la eficacia del sistema actualmente aplicado, el llamado "sistema de citas", afirmando que el objetivo debe ser una convivencia pacífica entre las distintas comunidades culturales, más que lingüísticas. Hoy en día el tema de la diferencia cultural es de nuevo un punto importante para Italia, debido a dos cuestiones: la existencia de partidos políticos que apoyan a las comunidades locales y la presencia de los migrantes extranjeros y sus comunidades. Por otra parte, la

existencia de las minorías como es el caso de las comunidades de este tipo realizadas por personas que comparten las mismas ideas políticas u orientaciones sexuales. El artículo explora conceptos como Cultura, Etnicidad e identidad cultural, y muestra cómo han sido aplicados de manera diferente. Por último, habla de las marcas de un multiculturalismo que respeta los derechos de todos, así como los derechos individuales.
Palabras clave: Diferencias culturales. Identidad cultural. Etnicidad. Multiculturalismo.

Cultural differences and multiculturalism are not new problems in Italy. Ever since its origins, in the middle of the XIX century, intellectuals have been aware of the different points of view regarding the world, languages, literature, the Italian tradition encompasses. Slight differences of language and literature have been studied by many demologists of the time, such as Costantino Nigra from Piemonte, or the Sicily based Giuseppe Pitré, and even by some linguists such as G. Ascoli[1]. Such an awareness has also inspired the political thinking of Carlo Cattaneo, forerunner of the unification of Italy, whose belief was that only a federal form of government could have ensured an efficient and yet compatible with the Italian mentality administration of the country. As a matter of fact though, such diversity hasn't been represented by the centralistic ruling configuration of the newborn Kingdom of Italy. The fascist regime after labelled such diversities as folkloric and, later on, proceeded to deny they ever even existed; that is the case of the German speaking populations of the alpine region of Alto Adige with Tolomei's translation of German toponyms into Italian. Furthermore, starting from 1938, such populations were forced to choose between two given options: either move to Germany or switch to Italian as their primary spoken language (TOSO, 2006, p. 77). "Cultural rights" were only recognized with the sixth article of the republican constitution, which refers specifically to language, tradition and religion. Such rights have been better specified later on by international treaties and following laws (the most recent being n. 482 dated December 15th 1999 and named "Norms regarding the tutelage of historical linguistic minorities"). The approach to the matter of cultural differences has therefore been based on the concept of "minority", idea though that leaves space to a degree of ambiguity, in fact: "such concept is originated whenever a political and economic elite sets certain criteria as typical of a determined country from a cultural point of view, or, whenever a State institutionalizes a group of symbols as marks of its own "national identity" (TOSO, 2008, p. 14).

For what concerns Alto Adige, the most safeguarded region in Italy, the relationship among those linguistic cultures that share the same territory has been regulated with the "*quote*" system. Such system keeps different ethnic groups separated and each entitled to a number of political-professional representatives, which varies in compliance with the demographical size of each group. Critiques to such regulations have been moved throughout the years and have lately been renovated, arguing that they can be held responsible for the "hardening of the boundaries that define the characteristics of each minority". As an example, it is enough to point out the case of political leader Alexander Langer, who refused to specify his ethnicity, as doing so is opposed to the principle of collaboration among different linguistics groups (LANGER, 2010). In 1985 he wrote the following lines in the belief that multiculturalism in Sud Tirolo could be differently interpreted:

> To belong to a minority, but without complaints nor nostalgic remembrance, to develop our distinctive features, but without confining ourselves in some sort of ghetto, and end up racists; to experiment the potentialities of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnical cohabitation; to participate to ethnical-nationalistic movements without restricting ethnical features; to work for the development of inter-cultural communications… sometimes I believe that many aspects of Europe's future could be tried out and tested […] with great achievements (LANGER, 2010, p. 111).

Nowadays, the theme of cultural difference (and cohabitation among communities that claim to be culturally different) has reappeared in different shapes as a result of certain social phenomena. Concepts of the likes of "culture", "ethnicity", "cultural individuality" or even "ethnic individuality" are part of the ideology of autonomist movements and local type parties. Italy has witnessed, throughout its history, the birth of communities that requested autonomy or special tutelage in the name of cultural and linguistic homogeneity, common tradition, certain historic perspectives, and the constant presence on a territory. As said by Geertz, such elements paradoxically contributed throughout the nineteenth century to the creation of national consciousness and, later on, of the national State: thus the confusion originated by terms that appear no

longer capable of individuating specific objects (TOSO, 2008, p. 27)[2]. Today, concepts such as "nation" and "population" seem to describe independent identities within, if not opposed to, the national government. "localistic" political movements (of which the best known and most ancient example is surely the Lega Lombarda) legitimate themselves on their claimed deep relation with territory and its population, of which they wish to represent the "tradition" (DE MATTEO, 2011). Such groups (like the autonomist groups), by rethinking cultural roots (among which even catholic religion is listed, as part of tradition) and the very local history, distinct between different "populations" within the national boundaries[3]. They also encourage political practices that focus on communitarian or even familiar aspects, utilizing specific symbologies, often inspired to those archaic worlds of which they regard themselves as descendants[4]. As it has widely been noted, the globalization of economic and international relations is connected to a fragmentation of political and cultural references, as well as ethnicization (RINALDI, 1996)[5]. It also appears that the course has been reversed from theory to practice: in fact, whereas anthropology believes the concept of ethnicity to be an historical product of western civilization, many local communities define their existence, peculiarities and goals as means to have their own "ethnicity" acknowledged and recognized. In the end, even if denied as descriptive, the concept of ethnicity remains a widely recognized pragmatic criterion.

Migration from southern countries is also an important phenomenon partaking in the discussion around cultural differences. The kind of multiculturalism that ensues differs from the one aforementioned in that it is not originated by either cultural or political project; it rather is the effect of two combined "revolutions": the job market's and demographical growth's (GARCIA CASTRO, 2008). A complex and contradictory phenomenon, it requires for the hosting population to rethink themselves as a no longer homogenous community, and, at the same time, to face any requests, both implicit and explicit, of the immigrant populace (of which many, indeed, touch the matter of culture). As said by Kymlicka, migrants' communities ask for inclusion in schools, healthcare, housing and workplaces; but also recognition of their own cultural peculiarities: the right to publicly practice religion, to have their linguistic skills recognized, and that to have their values and traditions respected or, at least, not discriminated. Eventually, by gathering in groups such as ethnic and national associations, migrants contribute in widening the political and cultural horizons, as these associations are created for the purpose of achieving a more favourable placement within the society (KYMLICKA, 1999). The approach of matters of multiculturalism referring to the presence of foreign migrants has been quite common in Italy, whilst the existence of local parties and movements asking for autonomy was often ignored or kept implicit. Yet these two phenomena (local parties and migration) may be related to for at least two reasons: the use of culture and cultural identity for the purposes of requests affecting the life of the whole collectivity and the fact that local parties are generally opposed to migrations, as demonstrated by the currently enforced law regarding migrants, Bossi-Fini.

Nowadays there's one more phenomenon that has to be taken into account when talking about multiculturalism: that is the formation of groups of electors who share similar life styles and values. These minorities could be referred to as "minorities due to opinions" as their members share the same political or religious views, or even sexual orientation. They are, in all respects, expressions of a different culture and should therefore be granted the right to have their life styles (sexual or ethical behaviours) tolerated and declared as legitimate, and also to be granted a certain degree of autonomy (SEMPRINI, 1999, p. 146). Thus the request of a new set of favourable or, at least, not discriminatory norms.

The existence of cultural diversity in Italy is a known fact. Culinary and folkloristic diversities are the basis on which many touristic initiatives are started, and the underlying cause of many cultural-distinction claims. Even multiculturalism is a fact, not a few migrants live in Italian cities, work in its factories, enter many a family for assistance purposes. As previously stated, these people gather in groups for political purposes and set forth requests; often also to question and protest against norms perceived as discriminatory or unfair.

Indeed, since long the homogeneity of cultural and moral references that has existed for a long time has disappeared. Laical movements gained importance and now ask for new norms regarding gay marriages and adoptions, euthanasia and other ethical subjects, in a certain opposition to the Christian-catholic tradition.

Although there are differences between these phenomena, they are alike for at least two reasons: a stressed sense of belonging to a specific culture, and, as a result, a need for implicitly or explicitly requested additional rights. In this document I will limit my considerations to local political movements and migrants communities. My opinion is that, even though the proximity of different cultures is a fact, it is not possible to state that a clear idea of multiculturalism has yet been formed, that is one encompassing the principles of cultural freedom and parity of opportunities.

As we all well know the definition of "culture" has changed throughout the history of anthropology: in older times the word "culture" defined those things belonging to intellectual and technical stock of knowledge, but, more recently, also the fashion of communication through language or symbols within a certain group. According to Godelier's definition, a culture is defined as follows: "the whole of those principles and representations of reality, which consciously organize aspects of the social life, and that determine the values ensuing such manners of thinking and acting" (GODELIER, 2009, p. 75).

Three are therefore the foundations of a "culture": how life is envisioned, the behaviours that follow, and lastly, the language generated. Local political formations such as the Lega Lombarda (but including those that came before and after) believe, as noted, to represent the culture of their territory, the desires and expectations of its population. Yet, these parties also openly state of being capable to organize (thus also unify) in coherent shape the elements of people's daily lives (language, behaviours, and values). This way though, they not only describe culture, but also describe it, offering a conceptual pattern (revolving as a matter of fact, around terms such as culture, ethnicity, tradition) and most importantly constituting the basis of territorial control. Without a doubt the extraordinary longevity of the party Lega Lombarda may found explanation in the capacity of its leaders to coherently (and politically successfully) organise the different points of view and ways of marginal or marginalised groups, those that were lacking representatives in politics.

The local movements envision culture, territory and ethnicity as coincident, tightly connected. Culture constitutes the "tradition", thus being ideographic, easily identified and encompassed within a territory, in precise qualities such as language, material culture, religion[6]. The concept of referring to a territory that isn't the one where the community dwells, instead the one where it has originated, belongs to the migrant populations. For such populations the traditions of the origin, especially regarding religion and values refers to an archaic "place", the roots considered essential.

Looking into the typical practices of the migrants' communities, it is possible to state that references to culture are essential, both for individual purposes (as claiming distinction between them and the hosting population or other minorities), and as an instrument of political competition to request acceptable norms in matters of jobs, religion and so on. As we've said already, even if migrants ask for inclusion into the society (in regard to school, healthcare and such), they also ask for a certain degree of autonomy felt necessary, due to cultural peculiarity. The "right to culture" is manifested through religious and linguistic behaviours but also through many other particular traditions such as those belonging to the field of health and medicine. Reference to the territory is instead displayed in the form of "ethnical and territorial roots", often coincident with national roots, or, as it's the case of the Senegalese's Murids, in shape of religious and ethnical origins. For this last mentioned community (the Murids), the appeal to values and religious traditions in which they strongly believe (to the point of considering them worthier than the western set of values), is an important symbolic inheritance to oppose against the western populations.

In both cases culture has been given a fundamental role even though its main purpose is supposedly the identification of the culture, an effective description of behavioural patterns, and consolidation of interpersonal relations. Moreover, the right to express one's culture is an instrument for requesting additional related rights (identity, religion, accessing resources, etc.). Both these "models", tend to intensify the interpersonal relationships within the reference group (social and symbolic relationships) and to dissipate as much as possible those with other groups, perceived distant. An example can be found in the tendency of migrants communities to constitute "ethnic" associations, and, on the "natives" populations' side, the discovery and the proliferation of local celebrations, of celebrations of patron saints or dedicated to the local products. Some questions arise. The first, already anticipated, is the meaning given

to terms such as "culture" and "ethnicity"; the second is about the kind of social project that ensues. For the pro-autonomy and pro-local groups, culture is seen as the sacred foundation of the way of being, ethnicity is, if not a biological, yet an historical reference point, territory establishes an exclusive relationship. Ethnicity in particular, is interpreted as some kind of family expansion, a spontaneous and pre-political form of aggregation that does not respond to the "social contract" but rather, to empathic participation, which sprouts from the continuous, constant and close presence on a given territory (TOSO, 2008, p. 25). From the "recognition" of an ethnic-cultural originality, whose boundaries are sacralised, is born a particular symbolic configuration, using myth, language, narration, description to state and consolidate a vision of the world. In fact, as Godelier writes, the existence of kinship groups (therefore of ethnic groups intended as widened and symbolic kinship) alone is not sufficient to "make those groups a society" (GODELIER, 2009, p. 73). The political and symbolic practices are thus used to "produce society" (GODELIER, 2009, p. 89). The same happens in migrants communities that tend to gain value from being "ethnic community" (cultural or religious).

These concepts are not neutral: from the acceptance of cultural "diversity" comes a conception of social life that perpetrates the scheme of subordination. The various local confederations (we are nowadays forced to think of many) have their own idea of cohabitation between human groups that differ for culture, and thus, their idea on multiculturalism. The fundamentalist vision of culture, basically comparable to a religion, implies the idea that it is unquestionable, being some kind of closed world, incompatible with other ways of living. Consequently, the presence of many culture groups on the same territory, would inevitably lead to a conflict, to a "civilizations" clash. Furthermore, from the affirmation of a "sacral" bond with the territory (whose borders are celebrated) derives from some sort of primogeniture right towards human groups that came after, such as migrants. "Control of the territory" means control over its resources, that, in a welfare society, means the services offered from local councils and the control of the symbolic resources (language, representative institutions, rituals)[7]. Undoubtedly the symbolic and language dimensions are essential to "constitute" societies, since "the kinship relationships, the economic activities are not

the basis upon which society is formed and exists as a whole in the eyes of its members" (GODELIER, 2009, p. 73).

The cohabitation plan that derives carries then the idea of a difference within the cultural rights and in general, within the citizenships rights: the only ones that can freely express their values and their cultural belongings would be the "natives", while the ones that have arrived after would comply to some restrictions, for example, the capacity of adaptation to the context leaving cultural practices within their home walls. These can also see their opportunities of accessing to goods and services reduced. According to this idea, belonging to this autochthon culture would produce more rights than those that can be granted to foreigners: they are political, economical rights and so on (for instance, bonus for Italian families, right to vote facilitations for assistance and so forth). A social stratification on an "ethnic" base arises again, following which relationships between cultural groups become mainly power and subordination relationships. Class conflict is substituted by the "ethnic" conflict (of which it still remains an expression). As stated by Hell, the notion of hegemony implicates a politic of identification of the imaginary (BHABHA, 2001, p. 39; BOBBIO, 2009, p. 48).

So, there are some aspects worth discussed, about the use that local groups (and often foreigner's communities themselves) do of the concept of culture and about the planning of society. Of course, we must be well aware of the differences: in the case of our national local movements, as said, the political plan consists in the constitution of a society in which "culture" is a hierarchy establishing tool. In the case of migrants' movements, this can come across as a "resistance" plan, as it happens, according to some interpretations, for the *quilombolas* movements of Brazil.

We often state that "great narrations" are over: still if considering civilizations clashes we'd think culture as a great narration, an ideological and sacral dimension, unquestionable and intangible, a basilar ideology. In this vision, what keeps society together and avoids conflict would be, more than an agreed sharing of common principles, the belief of an archaic original unity. Following Durkheim's lesson, we reckon that social norms are possible only because a sacralisation of the community in its whole existed before.

My point of view is that the essentialist vision of cultures cannot establish any multiculturalism. Religious affirmance of culture carries a fundament of integralism which contrasts with the relativism necessary to multicultural cohabitation. Besides, this vision, that recognises to one culture only the right to expression (while others would be confined to a merely private area), is clearly a source of conflict, because it disputes the criteria of equality and equal dignity (BOBBIO, 2009, p. 45).

In order to create a multiculturalism respectful of everybody's rights (meaning by this, the rights of various categories of people, especially women, young, people that are diversely oriented towards cultural values) culture must lose its "sacred" character to become a means of mediation within and among groups. As we see, a too strong idea of culture does not consider (and compels) the participating individuals' point of view. Even within any given culture, in fact, there are different conceptions, roles and anticipations, argumentations between minority and majority, prestige and power stratification. For example we can think about the problem of women and youth in those cultural traditions that are overbalanced towards the role of elder males, or about political, social and economical stratifications. If this is true, as Gluckmann wrote, that "an african miner is a miner" thus meaning the fact that his situation and his practices were to be interpreted according to the work relationships and not according to alleged tribal relationships (MAYER, 1994, p. 153-154), in the same way, for example, we could say that, referring to the present Italian historical moment, that "a young immigrant is a young" and so, all that concerns him or her must (or should) be interpreted according not to his or her presumed cultural specificity but rather according to his or her "political" condition within a scheme that, for instance, does not allow him or her to automatically access Italian citizenship, even if born in Italy. If this is the case, even his or her own community's ethnic politics can impede him or her, if they remain stuck on the "defence" of cultural purity or of tradition.

A theory of multicultural cohabitation, should probably refer to a "contractualist" criterion. In other words, public space should have its "laicity" that denies the possibilty of deriving civil norms from cultural beliefs of any society. The foundation of civil life cannot then come from culture, or at least cannot come from an essential vision of culture. In fact,

when each culture thinks of itself as expressing a non negotiable "truth", those uneven relationships that have constituted the history of the relationships among populations so far are repeated and reproduced. In addition to this (and this is to me of particular importance) the same uneven relationships are reproduced within the so-called "cultures", since there is no doubt that any "dissertation on culture" is also a dissertation on power. A "contractualist" vision basically means the possibility of "negotiating" every aspect of social life. But in order to do this it is important to cherish the principle of all cultural forms relativity. It is, as Bhabha wrote, in relativism that the notions of multiculturalism, of cultural exchange, of community are born (BHABHA, 2001). The various international Declarations (Declaration of Barbados of 1993, Declaration on the principles of international cultural cooperation of 1966, Declaration on race and racial preconceptions of 1978, Declaration on the tolerance principles) all of them insist on the need to adopt a pluralist and positive point of view, one which considers cultural variety as a richness, but at the same time, they tend to anchor this variety to concepts on which a reasoned accordance has been reached among the people's representatives. An example: it is known that women position is not very favourable in some traditions. However, the international community has equipped itself with very clear conceptual instruments also appertaining to gender equality. These principles thus appear to be binding, just as the ones related to equality, to democracy and so on, around these it is then necessary to orient and organize the different communities assent.

The second theme is given by the relationship between culture, community and rights. According to the previously described visions, we gain the idea that other rights can derive from the right to culture only when we are in a disadvantage situation: in the *quilombolas* case there is the necessity of a "recovery" and of a historical debt to pay. In this sense, ethnic politics can be justified as a mean to reach equality and until this is not complete[8]. But this is not necessarily true everywhere: it is not, for example, in those places, like Italy, where the right to culture has produced situations (such as the ones from the Alto-Adige, today slightly dull) in which some groups have prevailed over others, and it is not true where the model that is introduced is exactly a hierarchical cohabitation model, in which some

cultures have the right to goods to others denied. We must thus recover, as S. Benhabib states, the democratic principle that guarantees the access to collective goods to everybody, and especially the ones whose conditions are disadvantaged and for which it is necessary to assure the removal of obstacles, as written in the Constitution. We can state that one of the problems coming with multiculturalism is that of safeguarding the right to difference, and at the same time, the right to equality, within the democratic system schemes (understood as government of the laws, laicism, and refusal of any overly ideological vision).

As stated by Kymlicka, it is possible to assure minorities the right to culture (natives or made by immigrants) provided that the two basic rights of equality and individual freedom are safeguarded. On this aspect exactly can we deepen our dissertation: the individual can in fact, decide to exit the community, question or refuse it. Often, we can see, the clash between different cultures witnesses a person (often a woman) standing against his or her own group's values and claiming, on the grounds of autonomy, the right to a different vision of life[9].

In fact, even the idea of rights can be different according to the position that a single person holds within the group. For instance, a young migrant can be much more interested in the right to access schooling, or the right to citizenship, than an adult oriented towards a comeback to his or her homeland.

So, the right to express one's own culture is basically personal and, exactly for this reason, it also includes the possibility of questioning it. The rights derived from culture and that are connected to it (language, access to services and so on) must be granted too, since the individual is a "citizen", indeed, belonging to human genre, and do not derive, in my opinion at least, form his or her belonging to one given community, be it aboriginal or coming from the outside. This is because, it seems to me, the individuals' expectations and abilities do not end within the area that is offered by culture. And also since the aim of all political actions cannot be determined by other principles than freedom and justice. In 1959 Bobbio (2009, p. 48) wrote:

> If we set ourselves on a general philosophy of history point of view and ask ourselves: 'Does human history has a direction, providing with a meaning to the huge labour of centuries of fighting, wars, blood and shambles? And if there is such a direction, which is it?', it seems to me that we can find only one answer:

human history goes towards a progressive equality among human beings, among class and class, among nation and nation, among race and race, among man and man. I have often wondered about this question, but I can not find other answer than this: the sense of history is equality among humans. If it does not have this aim, then it is insane folly.

NOTAS

1. From the linguistic point of view, Ascoli's studies are very important. Ascoli locates the Ladino (especially from the Dolomites area) and *Franco-provenzale* dialect groups (ASCOLI, 1854; TOSO, 2008, p. 17).

2. Geertz (1999) points out the confusion of terms existing between the concepts of people and nation, especially in countries, such as Canada, or Sri Lanka, where there are many levels of political stratification.

3. On the relationship between Lega Lombarda and Catholic Church see Bertezzolo (2011).

4. In a very small municipality on Lombardy's Pre-Alps, one of these "legas" run for administrative elections suggests a periodical assembly of "householders" in its program.

5. The concept of "ethnic group" is intended by Godelier (2009, p. 75) such as: "an ensemble of local groups, aware of having the same origin, that speak related languages and that share a number of social organization principles and a common representation of social and cosmic order, and of common values". There is no doubt that this definition, if on the one hand is able to adequately describe homogeneous situations (as that of the Baruyas of New Guinee, that he studied), on the other hand does not entirely stick to other situations, such as Italy, where the so-called "ethnic-groups" have for centuries had an history of contacts and blending.

6. The fact that any tradition (even religious ones) is indeed not homogeneous, and thus can be seen in different ways even by its members, is completely overshadowed.

7. In this case, it seems to me, the various *Legas'* ostility to the building of mosques comes not only from the fright of Islamic terrorism, but also from the idea that the "symbolic" capital that must be expressed is "only" the one that can be drawn back to a local tradition. Plus, the building of worship places, for their religious value, is seen as an uncontrollate occupation of the territory.

8. About the Brasilian dispute, see, for example, Theodoro M. (2008). In which the absence of a conceptual basis for the formulation of politics and programs to overcome racial discrimination is underlined. Also see Andrade e Souza Filho (2008).

9. I have been called to be part of the Jury for the case (that had great impact in Italy) of a pakistani girl killed by her father for behaviours

that he did not think consonant to the family's and the community's name, while the girl was pleading to her right to free choice. In this case the values conflict was not abstractly between communities, Italian and Pakistan, but was implicating an individual that demanded a different way of seeing things, and that became the victim, for this exact reason.

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