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INTRODUCTION

The Padua Team, coordinated by the University of Padua's Human Rights Centre comprises a diversified group of academics, international civil servants and representatives of international NGOs. The group's heterogeneousness has brought noteworthy enrichment. In particular, the participation of NGO representatives has ensured added value in terms of greater attention to positive actions and policies for intercultural dialogue.

The challenging task consisted in addressing the issue of «intercultural dialogue and human rights, civil society and world order issues» in a multi- and inter-disciplinary way. The authors focused on capturing and illustrating the most significant aspects of such debate, departing from the assumption suggested in the original working paper of the European research project, that: «the human rights paradigm can be assumed as a powerful trans-cultural facilitator to move from the (increasingly) conflicting stage of multi-culturality to the dialogic stage of inter-culturality».

The authors summarised the complex debate by linking intercultural dialogue to issues-challenges of building both the inclusive city and a more just, peaceful and democratic world order. Concerning the latter aspect, an analysis on intercultural dialogue was extended to comprise dialogue that is *internal and external* to the European Union to find a common thread to enable and enhance its orientation towards «dialogue» and its vocation to be a «civil» actor endowed with soft power within the world system.

In moving in such direction, the Padua Team paid painstaking attention to publications of the European Commission (Directorate-

General Education and Culture) that provide a rich array of essays by «Jean Monnet» professors, on the occasion of four EU international conferences, organised in Brussels (Charlemagne Building), in cooperation with the European Community Studies Association (ECSA)-World, that deal respectively with the following themes: «Intercultural Dialogue» (20-21 March 2002), «Peace, Security and Stability. International Dialogue and the Role of the European Union» (5-6 December 2002); «Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures; Actors in the Dialogue» (24-25 March 2004); «The European Union and Emerging World Orders: Perceptions and Strategies» (30 November - 1 December 2004).

The Padua Team found that such precious material, could clearly provide the guidelines of an organic EU strategy in the field of intercultural dialogue and «dialogue» in general, and had to be valorised more, in an interdisciplinary way, so as to update and develop a scientific analysis of such a complex issue.

The Team's work has a common base: the intent to explore the political core of the phenomenology of intercultural dialogue in a space that starts from the city and extends to international institutions, involving state, intergovernmental and global civil society actors. The essays of the current volume are grouped into four main thematic blocks. In departing with the definition of the new concept of citizenship (plural, democratic) and of inclusive city, important questions are tackled like those on: what is the suitable ground for the concrete realisation of the new plural, democratic citizenship based on the principles of equal dignity, equal opportunity, non-discrimination, social inclusion; how to promote and benefit from, the active role of civil society organisations and movements within and beyond national borders; how to promote and foster the policies of inclusion that cities carry out in the framework of multi-level and supra-national governance; and finally how to stem fanaticism, especially religious fanaticism.

As regards the first thematic area, the starting assumption is that intercultural dialogue, to be fruitful, must be developed from a basic code of values, that aside from being universal in character and therefore possible to share, must also be a trans-cultural facilitator. Arguably, the international law of human rights provides the axio-legal paradigm for the human-centric foundation of citizenship, then for its (re)definition as plural citizenship. It presents the human rights approach to citizenship *ad omnes includendos*, that is for the

inclusion of all human beings, as «members of the human family» in a large and multi-level space (Antonio Papisca). The horizon for active citizenship is much broader than the territorial dimension of the traditional nation-state; it is the European and world space of internationally recognised human rights. In this light, the European integration process and system, being a laboratory of «constituent activities, provide an evolutionary context in which new citizenship and inclusion practices can be built. Thus an implementation of plural citizenship is strictly linked to re-launching a democratic practice beyond the national borders, and rescuing statehood providing it with new sustainable dimensions. The active and inclusive women citizenship is strictly linked to guarantee the effectiveness of women's rights and to develop a gender mainstreaming approach in the decision-making process» (Paola Degani).

The paradigm of internationally recognised human rights and international democracy, intended as a direct legitimation of international institutions and as popular political participation to the decisional processes of these institutions, are some of the main independent variables for the development of the inclusive city and the building of a more just, equal, solidaristic and democratic international order (Papisca). The EU, as global actor with a clear vocation to establish its strategic culture on «soft power», is widely perceived within the system of international relations as the macro political entity that is more legitimated to pursue such objectives. In such a light, the EU role as «norm-promoter» or «rule-generator», carried out through «association» and «cooperation agreements», is not just a role of exporter of its own foundational values to other countries, but it is primarily a role of a key participant in multilateral processes and institutions to foster the effectiveness of international law (Marco Mascia).

Democracy is intended as a multidimensional concept, an intrinsic element of human development, therefore sensitive towards motions of social justice. In addressing the theme of dialogue between cultures and civilisations in the specific context of traditional partnership relations between the European Union and Latin America, what emerged was the need to develop, more intensely, the commitment on the international arena of the two macro partners in order to pursue strategic priorities of the political agenda which include: respecting human dignity and human rights,

implementing the principles of democracy and the rule of law as well as liberty, equality, non-discrimination, solidarity, and social cohesion. In starting with the shared common commitment of guaranteeing human rights, democracy and multilateralism, the EU, as a global player, must accept Latin America as partner in the system of international relations. The objectives of such closer partnership must certainly include the strengthening and democratising of the United Nations (Rosa Maria Piñon Antillon and Carlos Ballesteros).

The EU's institutional commitment to promote rights-based political, cultural, and democratisation processes, and to support civil society networks, intercultural dialogue, regional integration in other regions, as well as to carry out human development and human security partnerships and «dialogue policies» beyond its border, has become more and more marked of late. In an era of planetary interdependence, internationalisation of human rights and the development of the global civil society, international «dialogue» has become a crucial instrument for the construction of a new world order based on human rights and democratic principles. It is argued a possible relationship between the emerging EU policy for intercultural dialogue, the internal EU «social dialogue» and «civil dialogue», and the EU external «political and human rights dialogues» (Mascia). The result is that, although the human rights paradigm is mainstreaming the three areas, «intercultural» sensitivity as such is not yet marking, at less explicitly, the ongoing practice of external dialogue. This emphasizes the need for the EU to harmonise the three dialogue tracks or levels, in order to make the EU's role as «civil» actor with soft power in world politics more visible and effective. Such outcome would also be a significant indicator of the way internal and external variables can be combined in a coherent strategy of new world order (Mascia).

In the area of intercultural dialogue a refreshing repertory and evaluation of recent initiatives by UNESCO, OSCE, and the Council of Europe (Stefano Valenti) enhance this thematic block. Useful information to facilitate the interaction between the present European research project and other similar initiatives was reported in the field of intercultural dialogue. The three organisations are presented in their respective identity within a framework of functional division of labour. It points out that there is a common denominator in the mainstreaming of intercultural dialogue that was

carried out by these institutions, and that the increased efforts made so far have brought an «added value» in the progress of cultural dialogue among peoples and nations. Great room still remains for improvement, since significant parts of population in those countries that are most concerned by ethnic and cultural strife, are harder to reach directly by international organisations.

The second thematic block by the Padua Team is devoted to the role of the city: the promotion and dissemination of the intercultural and interreligious dialogue – presented in a horizontal way. Here again the original working paper of the overall research project provided the conceptual scheme. Being «territory, but non border», thus a natural womb for intercultural dialogue, the city is fully eligible to claim a world order that would not run counter, or disrupt, its sound institutional mission for «inclusion». Arguments were raised in favour of the thesis according to which the promotion of universal citizenship strengthens the eligibility of local government institutions to have a more visible place in the architecture and functioning of the world political system. Emphasis is put on the primacy of the international law of human rights over national and sub-national legal systems. Human rights mainstreaming in local policies is considered one of the greatest challenges for reshaping and developing inclusive infrastructures (Antonio Papisca). The human rights legal instrument gives way to a system of empowerment at the core of the human security agenda. Such approach provides three concrete and elegantly presented examples of how to meet the requirements of an inclusive city for human rights at the local level: reference is made to the European Charter for Human Rights in the City, to the network of Human Rights Cities, and to the Coalition of Cities against Racism. Intercultural dialogue is considered both an aim of the policies and a method of participatory democracy. Relying on empirical evidence, arguments are indicated to advance the research policy- and action-oriented: with regard to human security, all societies are developing; the inclusive city is an objective that ought to be pursued by participatory democracy and «solidaristic individualism»; the human rights culture is a suited ground for the resolution of conflicts, as a bottom-up approach that balances the paternalistic conceptions of protection from governments (Klaus Starl).

The role that local authorities are expected to devise and encourage dialogue among religions is questioned (Enzo Pace),

raising arguments that, as in the international environment, even the city public institutions and community-based organisations must confront the issue on the need to overcome the boundaries that each religious community tends to trace and preserve, and to set up the conditions and opportunities for different religious leaders and believers to meet around a common civic project. The starting point being the tension between cultural uniformity and the differentiation of identities. This aspect can be well-captured by observing the evolution of socio-religious dynamics in European cities. Thus a city is the place where the trans-national and trans-cultural (and trans-religious) are striving to cope with possible conflicts, and needs to promote a cross-fertilisation and inter-religious cooperation around *common values*. The topic should be approached using a bottom-up methodology to compare the cultural and social effects of the dialogue policies among cultures and religions in Europe's multi-religious cities (Enzo Pace).

The third thematic block comprises essays on the challenges of inclusion for minority membership. Inclusion for them means having true opportunities to have a say in the political community and therefore make them protagonists in the dialogue particularly in making public policies that involve them directly. The motto of the movement of persons with disability is «nothing about us without us». It sums up such value and is also a universal value that is applicable to the entire human race.

The issue is strictly linked to elaborating the new democratic citizenship based on the principles of equal dignity, equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and social inclusion. The debate on the issue considers the gender perspective in immigration policies and the conditions of persons with disability as similar to that of immigrant people, and to the administrative rights of the people living in countries undergoing democratic transition as the Balkan region. In advocating the broad conceptualisation of the gender approach, focus is placed on integrating immigrant women and respecting their human rights and is regarded as one of the greatest challenges the EU must face in intercultural dialogue. It is viewed as the problem of considering the way both public policy and the policy on equality can be integrated between the role of women and men in the intercultural dialogue (Paola Degani). An interesting analogy arises between the social condition experienced by persons with disability and persons who have immigrated.

Starting from the paradigm of human rights, the constitutive elements of the strategy of emancipation of persons with disability with particular attention to the concept of inclusion were analysed and applied to themes of intercultural approach. The inclusion process must guarantee the participation of the excluded and must lead to a condition of equal respect compared to other members of the community, in terms of social acknowledgement and participation to decisions on the social rules and the actions in order to obtain non-discrimination and equal opportunities (Giampiero Griffo).

A crucial topic refers to the impact of EU enlargement on the experience of democracy, in particular in those countries where nationalism and discrimination are a chronic feature. It is stressed that there is always the possibility and peril of the autocracy against minorities by majorities under the democratic nation-states. Intercultural dialogue is countered by a renewed prosperity of nationalisms even in a system, like the European Union, that aims at integrating societies and unifying states. The development of intercultural dialogue is strictly linked with the practice of democracy, that means that where there are no suitable processes of overcoming the «immaturity of democracy» nationalisms and populism will infect political parties (Kumiko Haba).

Finally, the Balkan region is a fertile ground for a study on the theme of citizenship as it is extremely complex and at the same time very evolutionary. One of the specific themes involves the rights citizens have against public administration. The impact of the common European model of administrative law on the public administration of five countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and Slovenia) was analysed. It was noted that to become EU members these countries have had to develop their administrative rights as a necessary condition for their entry (Roberto Scarciglia).

Suggestions of specific measures that might be necessary to spread or carry out the equality of all human beings, to prohibit any kind of discrimination, and to guarantee equal and effective protection against discrimination in all fields are illustrated. In this context, inclusion was considered as a right to full participation to public life, at a local, national and international level, based on equality without discrimination, respecting human dignity and giving more value to human diversity.

The fourth thematic block is centred on the problem of religious fundamentalism, explicitly in terms of religious fanaticism. Since interreligious dialogue is essential for the success of a broader intercultural dialogue, religions too, must tackle the paradigm of human rights, and therefore purify themselves at the universal source (Papisca). Fanaticism is a disease peculiar to religions since it claims to seize and use divinity for its specific aims, staining human history. Today fanaticism is being expressed with renewed and dramatic strength. Fanaticism, it was observed, can be stemmed in six ways, Through: dialogue, the respect of God's transcendence, symbolic language, the respect of the freedom of conscience, the distinction between political and religious power, and the refusal of all forms of violence (Giuseppe Grampa).

The work compiled by the Padua Team ought to be viewed as a heuristic contribution that strives to clarify, in realistic terms, the planet's condition that today is increasingly interdependent and globalised, in the positive and negative sense. In such evolutionary context, the question of citizenship deserves in-depth analysis and calls for old stereotypes of culture, and of the sovereignty of states intended as holder of an unconditioned *ius necis ac vitae* of their citizens, to be overcome. International human rights law has paved the way to a broader and pervasive process of liberation and promotion of the individuality of human beings within a space that extends beyond state borders. The thesis recommended by the Padua Team is that citizenship rights must be exercised in a broader «constitutional space» and hence, even the institutions of that particular space must be generated by processes of democratisation under the dual profile of a more direct legitimation of decisional bodies and a more extended and efficient popular political participation. The formation of a global civil society is operating in such a direction and the group from Padua considers that the political profile is the actor of such transformation. In particular, human rights defenders, together with the legitimisation they enjoy from the United Nations Declaration «on the right and the responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms» of 1999, are experiencing, in an exemplary way, plural citizenship along a continuum that starts from the city and reaches top international bodies (see Papisca's work). The time is ripe for international and transnational democracy as there are

both the legal principles and suitable actors to provide the appropriate ground and dynamics. Europe, as a leading promoter of «dialogue» and «dialogues» involving governments and civil society, is setting the example of how democracy can be extended beyond national borders to build an inclusive supra-national polity. But Europe should be aware that insurgent nationalisms and populisms not only in EU new member states but also in the oldest ones, could heavily hinder its original project of political democratic unification. Europe should wonder whether transformation for democratisation after the end of WW II in the context of globalisation brought the rise of nationalisms all over the world. Paradoxically nationalism started to assert itself under the label of democratisation and globalisation (Kumiko Haba). One more the response of Europe cannot but be «democracy», «all democracy»: political, economic, social, local, national, European, international as well as representative and participatory. The wrong response would be deregulating economics and institutions, that means substantive inequality of living conditions and unilateralism and/or multilateralism *à la carte*. Finally, intercultural dialogue is incompatible with the ongoing «marketisation» of politics and economics, even of education, instead it should be fostered by welfare and human security policies and institutions. Thus internal and external EU dialogues should necessarily deal with world order issues.