

I. ESTUDIOS

IMMIGRATION AND RELATIONSHIPS. COMPARING PHILOSOPHIES OF INTEGRATION

MIGRACIONES, ENTORNO RELACIONAL Y MODELOS DE INTEGRACIÓN. UN ANÁLISIS COMPARATIVO

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Abstract: *Owing to the assumption that belonging to a community means to bind the single migrant to the host community, and to determine the conditions for granting hospitality, support, services, and rights in general, traditional policies of integration are concentrated on individual culture and subjective rights. In this article, I try to criticize traditional approaches to immigration and integration, which are based on such a functional and individualistic perspective: on the contrary, I try to demonstrate that immigration has to be understood not only in relation to the individual migrants and their talents, but also to the relational system moving with them (families and communities). Only considering these relations and focusing on the problem of recognition, it is thus possible to realize that integrating means to recognize relational models. Recognition is always connected to the identification, evaluation and regulation of practices shared by families, groups and communities living together in the same society.*

Keywords: *Immigration; Integration; Relational models.*

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Resumen: Partiendo de la base de que pertenecer a una comunidad significa ligar a al inmigrante individual a la comunidad de acogida y para determinar las condiciones que concedan hospitalidad, apoyo, servicios y derechos en general, las políticas de integración tradicionales están centradas en la cultura individual y los derechos subjetivos. Este artículo trata de criticar los enfoques tradicionales de inmigración e integración que se basan en esta perspectiva tan individualizada. Por el contrario, se trata de demostrar que la inmigración ha de ser entendida no sólo en relación al inmigrante individual y sus talentos, sino también en comunión con los sistemas relacionales que se mueven con ellos (familias y comunidades). Solamente tendiendo en cuenta estas relaciones y centrándonos en el problema del reconocimiento será posible darnos cuenta de que la integración significa reconocer modelos relacionales, El reconocimiento está siempre conectado a la identificación, evaluación y regulación de prácticas compartidas por familias, grupos y comunidades que viven juntos en la misma sociedad.

Palabras clave: Inmigración; Integración; Modelos relacionales.

1. MIGRATION AS A CRISIS

To regulate migration and manage cultural problems connected to it, it is necessary to understand the phenomenon of migration not just from a functional perspective (considering the scope of migration, the resources available for those who decide to migrate, the possibilities or difficulties encountered upon arrival), but more generally from an existential one. In other words, if migration is a phenomenon involving a series of choices and policies related to its economic and legal aspects, it should also be understood with reference to an existential level. On that level, migration is processed, shared, planned, and only with respect to this kinds of choices can migration be interpreted in a positive or negative sense. It is also upon consideration of this additional plan that it is possible to identify some criteria for the elaboration of sensible migration policies, able to deal not only with the migration flows, but also with the society to which they are directed¹.

¹ I have to clarify that I will focus, on this paper, on only one kind of immigration, precisely on the situation of permanent immigrants. I do not take

In this perspective, it is necessary to understand the phenomenon of migration in its critical dimension. In particular, it must be considered that migration comes from the rupture of a relational and existential structure of origins. Because of this separation from the affective, cultural, religious, and political horizon, this crisis implies the need to rethink —a task that every migrant must necessarily carry out— what should be kept, and what can be modified or abandoned. Now, it is precisely this aspect which is almost entirely missing from immigration policies, focusing on aspects more directly related to economic integration. In contrast, this is a pivotal aspect if one intends to achieve societal integration of recent immigrant population, and to avoid the risk of an increasingly fragmented and potentially conflicting society.

The outcome of the experience of migration (the separation from the original context, the inclusion in the destination context, the societal integration, the political and cultural integration) can be positive owing to multiple elements. Among these elements, personal expectations should certainly be considered, resources available for the migrant at various levels, the capacity of integration and the opportunities offered by the host community. Beyond that, other elements can not be neglected, such as the presence of family and social mandates which the migrant shall bear, the hopes that migration represents for the individual migrant and for its family group, the skills and ability to design their new life. For this reason, it is necessary to adopt a relational perspective to understand and regulate migration and the possibilities of acceptance, abandoning a strictly functionalist approach to manage societal integration.

With regard to the first point, one must stress the inadequacy of perspectives that govern the migration as a personally and temporarily limited event. In fact, we usually focus on the situation, expectations and capabilities of the single migrant, examining the factors that favour or hinder its inclusion in the societal context. Among these factors, the skills and career opportunities, expertise in a broad sense (linguistic, technical, legal), and a willingness to

into account neither temporary migrant workers, nor refugees. On that distinction, and for an analysis of different paradigms on immigration policies, see E. MEYERS, *Theories on International Immigration Policy. A Comparative Analysis*, *International Immigration Review* 34, n.º 4 (2000), pp. 1,245-1,282.

behave in compliance with those of the community are generally evaluated².

All this is very reasonable, but is the result of an essentially individualistic interpretation. Neither the relational constraints that determine and support the choice to migrate, nor the multi-generational time frame are considered³.

In fact, those who decide to migrate prepare that project taking into account the relational network that surrounds them at their departure, what is available to receive them at destination, and what they plan to build or re-build. The decision on the final destination of migration is developed considering the possibilities of entering into an already established relational system that can be identified in the community of relatives or countrymen, already protagonists of earlier, more or less successful, migratory events. In addition, these same networks play a major role in organizing the trip, in searching for a job placement and housing, in the fulfilment of legal obligations, and in providing economic and cognitive resources needed for the trip⁴.

These networks, if they can not compensate for functional deficiencies of the migrants or their lack of skills, are the essential reference on the existential level: They can actually make the implementation of the migration project, and provide necessary

² For a discussion about contemporary immigration policies, in relation to the major «countries of immigration» in the world, see J. P. LYNCH and R. J. SIMON (2003): *Immigration the World Over: Statutes, Policies, and Practices*. Rowman & Littlefield. See also, S. CASTLES and M. J. MILLER (2009): *The Age of Migration*, 4.th ed, p. 110. Palgrave-Macmillan.

³ In contrast, researches focusing on creation and consolidation of ongoing ties between the migrant and the original family group, are important. These bonds, according to some scholars, are typical of contemporary migrations, and they are certainly connected to the IT development, that determines the growing of a transnational space. Thus, these people could be called transmigrants, considering their lives as structurally placed in such a kind of space. See N. GERD SCHILLER, L. BASCH y C. SZANTON BLANC (1992): «Transnationalism: a new Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration». In N. GERD SCHILLER, L. BASCH and C. SZANTON BLANC, *Toward a Transnational Perspective on Migration*. New York, New York Academy of Science.

⁴ For this family-based immigration model, see M. LISTER (2010), «Immigration, Association, and the family». *Law and Philosophy* 29, pp. 717-745.

references for effective integration. Not to take these networks into account (in the same way that the European legislation does not) means not to understand a large part of the context in which the experience of migration has to be seen⁵.

In the same perspective, the family and societal context within which migration is developed should be considered, both in its horizontal or vertical dimension.

In the horizontal dimension, it is essential to consider the role played by the family in relation to the experience of migration. In this sense, the family cannot be considered as a simple background element nor a support for the migrant's decision. It is rather to be regarded as the real protagonist of the story. Both the decision to migrate, as the terms and stages of its development, and the evaluation of the results of migration are all factors that are evaluated, developed and programmed within the household reference.

The family as a whole implements a real migration strategy, even if the migration (apparently) involves a single individual. The family chooses the person who will migrate, and often gives them a kind of mandate. In addition, other people from the same group will often follow the first, and —above all— the relationship between the migrant and their family continues over time, often regardless of the concrete possibility of reunification.

This link goes through the realization of the migration project, the development of a very complex series of constraints including financial ones, the drafting of a refund system and mutual obligation between the individual and the family group⁶.

⁵ Precisely in this sense, see A. PORTES and J. BOROCZ (1989): «Contemporary Immigration: Theoretical Perspectives on Its Determinants and Modes of Incorporation», *International Migration Review*, vol. 23, n.º 3, p. 612: «Contrary to the assertion that international labor migration is basically an outcome of economic decisions governed by the laws of supply and demand, we will argue that the phenomenon is primarily social in nature. Networks constructed by the movement and contact of people across space are the core of the micro-structure that sustain migration over time. More than individualistic calculation of gain, it is the insertion of people into such networks which helps explain differential proclivities to move, and the enduring character of migrant flows».

⁶ See R. ADAMS and J. PAGE (2005): «Do International Migration and Remittances Reduce Poverty in Developing Countries?». *World Development*

In the vertical dimension, the experience of migration is part of a period covering several generations, and must be understood in relation to this background. Migration does not happen only in the short term (where the choice of the single migrant and their history take place), but also in the long term, with earlier and later phases. This time frame takes on a very strong importance, and influences every segment of the overall path. In other words, when considering migration, we shall refer to the entire period in which it takes place, and that period may extend to three or more generations⁷.

In fact, factors affecting the possibilities of integration for the individual migrants are their ability to build *horizontal links* and relations with host communities, choosing what to keep and what to leave behind of their original culture, but also the *vertical dimension* within which their experience fits: the bond of loyalty with previous generations, on the one hand, and the ability to build a solid and integrated network for the next generations, on the other hand.

Family, both in the vertical dimension and the horizontal one, is one of the main nodes of a network of relationships that links the individual migrant, its original community, and hosting community. Cultural and religious traditions, such as material and cognitive elements needed for integration, are filtered within this network⁸.

For these reasons, to focus on the problems and capabilities of a single generation of immigrants (just as our legislation seems to do), and to assess the success or failure of integration policies, is to

33/10, pp. 1,645-1,669, for an interesting analysis on international migration and poverty reduction, also owing to remittances. On remittances see also, in a philosophical perspective, C. BARRY (2011): «Immigration and Global Justice», *Global Justice: Theory Practice Rhetoric* 4, p. 32.

⁷ PORTES-BOROCZ, *cit.*, p. 613: «Contact across space, family-chain and the new information and interests which they promote become at least as important as calculations of economic gain in sustain the cyclical movement». See *Ibidem* also for empirical data on US and Germany immigration flows.

⁸ PORTES-BOROCZ, *cit.*, p. 614: «More than movement from one place to another in search to higher wages, labor migration should be conceptualized as a process of progressive network building. Networks connect individuals and groups distributed across different places..., for the migrants (migration) is a means of survival and a vehicle for social integration and economic mobility».

misunderstand the vertical horizon in which migration is placed. This horizon, at different stages and for different generations, may show different problems, stages of crisis, periods of relatively easy integration, and so on. This epistemological gap can be bridged only considering the family as the main character of the migration experience⁹.

Immigration has to be understood not only in relation to individual migrants and their talents, but also to the family and community relations they are in (the relational system moving with them). It is therefore possible to assess the inadequacy of policies based on a functionalist paradigm. In addition to the evaluation of available resources or to the labor requirement, and besides processing any minimum standards for housing and employment contracts, it is necessary to understand that recognition policies can and should be implemented.

In particular, a policy that takes the relational dimension of migration into account must be planned and implemented, focusing not on the position of the single individuals, but on the relational system they are involved in. Only such a policy can activate virtuous paths of recognition that can guarantee a real integration.

In contrast, current policies on immigration are dominated by an *Hobbesian* paradigm. In that paradigm, the two poles of the relationship are the state community, on the one hand, and the individual migrant, on the other¹⁰. Integration is interpreted

⁹ A good overview on origins, determinants and settlement of migration, is elaborated by A. PORTES and J. BOROCZ, *cit.*, pp. 606-630.

¹⁰ Several scholars have argued that freedom of association grounds a right for states and for majority to strictly limit or even eliminate immigration. Both Walzer and Wellman argue on that perspective, and compare states to other associations [see M. WALZER (1983): *Spheres of Justice, Basic Books*, New York, pp. 35-40; and C. H. WELLMAN (2008): *Immigration and Freedom of Association*, Ethics, p. 112]. If one compare a state to an association, it is consequent to assume that it may set the rules of admission to it. Walzer and Wellman do not think that a state should have unlimited discretion, but its freedom is significantly relevant: Walzer would even allow admission rules allowing for racial or ethnic discrimination, so long as enough land and resources were left for others. As Christopher Wellman puts it, «just as an individual has a right to determine whom (if anyone) he or she would like to marry, a group of fellow-citizens has a right to determine whom (if anyone) it would like to invite into its political community. And just as an individual's freedom of association entitles one to remain single, a state's freedom of

as a bond that links the migrant to the host community, or more precisely, to the state that welcomes them and gives them certain rights. The individual migrant, under certain conditions, binds to the State, and receives hospitality, support, services, and rights in general from this State¹¹. This pattern is identifiable with a Hobbesian paradigm, because Hobbes—in a completely symmetrical perspective—conceived the civil (and political) bond in an individualistic perspective, breaking it down into a multiplicity of micro-relationships that bind individuals to the sovereign, from which they get protection and security¹².

Such a view, it is known, is built on the idea that order and societal cohesion arise only from unity, and on the denial of the complex reality of inter-subjective relations. The political relation is

association entitles it to exclude all foreigners from its political community». From a classical liberal perspective, groups of individuals, such as clubs, do have such rights of association that entitle them to exclude others. Against this argument, but always in an Hobbesian perspective, focusing solely on individuals and not on relations, Lister argues that there is «some reason to hold that the right of individuals to form families across states lines (given that people will want to do so) is more important than the right of a majority in a state to make the state into a particular sort of association, one that does not include any “outsiders”» (LISTER, *cit.*, p. 732-733). However, says Walzer, if someone is included, he or she should be fully integrated: «every new immigrant, every refugee taken in, every resident and worker must be offered the opportunities of citizenship» (WALZER, *op. cit.*, p. 62).

¹¹ This perspective nearly coincides with the social contract theory: The state imposes certain burdens on people within its territory and has to give them something in return. In that perspective, see R. DWORKIN (2000): *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press; M. BLAKE (2001): *Distributive Justice, State Coercion and Autonomy*, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 30, 257-296; and T. NAGEL (2005): *The Problem of Global Justice*, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33, n.º 2, 113-147. For criticisms to this perspective, and social contract theory in general, see, for instance, M. NUSSBAUM (2007): *Frontiers of Justice*. Cambridge, Belknap.

¹² A. Favell, in his interesting book, analyzes the different policies of integration developed by France and Britain, and shows how both of these policies are two applied versions of Hobbesian problem of building communal bonds across the plurality of values and perspectives. Thus, they are two conceptualisations of citizenship, nationality, pluralism, autonomy, public order and tolerance, but both are grounded on the same horizon. See A. FAVELL (1998): *Philosophies of integration. Immigration and the idea of citizenship in France and Britain*, New York, Palgrave, Basingstoke.

not between the people (as a group) and the sovereign. For Hobbes, the covenant is between the individuals, who are nothing but a temporary and precarious multitude, and the sovereign, in order to ensure safety and security. It is, as rightly pointed out, a contract on behalf of a third party¹³.

Likewise, in countries with a high rate of immigration, societal inclusion is conceived in terms of a relationship between the individual migrant and the host country, as if everything is resolved in the allocation of certain rights to the individual protagonist of the migration experience, and in compliance with certain obligations¹⁴.

Even when the problem of integration is rightly perceived as a problem not reducible to its functional aspects (home, work, security and public order), and even when the importance of problems associated with the recognition of cultural identities is correctly understood, one tends to always stay in this Hobbesian sketch/mind map. Consequently, when one asks what practices are eligible, that problem is often reduced to which behaviors among those the individual considers essential to their cultural identity are consistent with our laws, or constitutional value, and tolerable. And it is usual to simplistically answer by saying that the immigrant shows some extrinsic fidelity to the Constitution, considering the problem of integration resolved in that way.

2. TWO NEGATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON RECOGNITION

It is necessary to abandon this perception/sketch/mind map and focus on the problem of recognition. It is thus possible to realize that integrating means «to recognize in a relational context», and this recognition is always —as a relational practice— an identification,

¹³ N. BOBBIO (1982): *Thomas Hobbes, in Storia delle idee politiche economiche e sociali*. Torino: Utet, IV, p. 297.

¹⁴ In that perspective see J. L. HUDSON (1986): «The Philosophy of Immigration». *The Journal of Libertarian Studies*, VIII, 1, pp. 51-62.

an opportunity to better understand oneself, while opening up to the knowledge of the other, by whom I let myself be known¹⁵.

For these reasons, one should abandon the perspective that conceives integration as a relationship between cultures, one proper to the country of destination and the other claimed by the migrant as a part of their identity. We can call this perspective the «culture-based» one. Even the perspective that reduces the integration to a purely individual problem must be abandoned, that is the recognition between individuals. This second perspective could be called the «individualistic» one.

A) In the «culture-based» perspective, the problem should be solved by policies determining the conditions to accept a different culture, whose presence in the area is due to migration. In this perspective we should ask what the conditions are so that, for example, our culture and our law can tolerate, recognize, or refuse the cultures shared by immigrants in our country, and that are claimed as a part of their identity. The answers can be different: Some will appeal to the defence of national cultural identity, while others will ask to let go of old traditions in the name of a greater acceptance of cultures represented by immigrants¹⁶. What is important to understand is that, in this

¹⁵ Several factors can determine integration: Conditions of exit, class origins, contexts of reception, and maybe others. On these factors, see PORTES-BOROCZ, *cit.*, pp. 614-620. In this paper I however discuss, what paradigm is behind recognition practices, and what should be implemented by public policies.

¹⁶ See W. KIMLICKA (1995): *Multicultural Citizenship. A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. He argues that certain «collective rights» of minority cultures are consistent with liberal democratic principles, and emphasizes that the needs of immigrants require language rights, group representation, religious education, and so on. See also C. TAYLOR (1994): «The Politics of Recognition». In C. TAYLOR and A. GUTMANN, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press. For a partial criticism of this perspective, also refusing contemporary scepticism on multiculturalism, see recently A. PHILLIPS (2007): *Multiculturalism without culture*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Oxford, who argues that critics and proponents of culture-based theories alike exaggerate the unity, distinctness, and intractability of cultures, thereby encouraging a perception of men and women as dupes constrained by cultural dictates.

case, recognition is seen as the work of a culture as a whole towards another cultural perspective¹⁷. The consequence is the development of both policies to strengthen or emphasize certain aspects of the host country culture, or strategies for accommodating cultures whose presence is due to migration flows.

- B) In the individualistic perspective, integration is reduced to a subjective problem related to the relationship that individuals establish with the context they are located in. In this perspective, the individual migrants must assess, from time to time and in different ways, what to keep and what to abandon of their culture to be recognized by the people they live with and to be integrated¹⁸. All settings are different, from this point of view, because the people composing them are different. Therefore, integration is an ever changing challenge that the people involved face, determining which behaviours they want to accept or tolerate, which aspects of the migrants' culture should be protected, and what of the local culture should be maintained. In this perspective, policies to manage integration should be limited to providing everyone with the tools to make these choices¹⁹. Specifically, especially for migrants, the ability to consciously and rationally choose their cultural orientations should be ensured. In other words an integration policy should maximize people's autonomy, providing them with the needs

¹⁷ A good model of this perspective, can be that of M. Walzer. In his book, he values the belonging a cohesive national group: the people share a common language and religion, and common traditions of all kinds. M. WALZER (1983): *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality*. New York: Basic Books. See also MICHAEL WALZER (1981): «The Distribution of Membership». In PETER G. BROWN and HENRY SHUE (eds.), *Boundaries: National Autonomy and Its Limits*. Totowa, N.J., Rowman and Littlefield.

¹⁸ A. SEN (2007): *Identity and Violence*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., p. 29: «It is not so much that a person has to deny one identity to give priority to another, but rather that a person with plural identities has to decide, in case of conflict, on a relative importance of the different identities for the particular decision in question».

¹⁹ M. BARRY (2001): *Culture Equality. An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. Harvard University Press (March 15): he argues that multiculturalism undermines politics of redistributive equality, proposing equal rights for all individuals and a normative standard of fairness.

(economic, social, cognitive...) to make an informed choice, assuming the risk of such choices from the perspective of the societal integration, and tolerating as much as possible the consequences of them²⁰.

This second possibility is internal to the libertarian and individualistic perspective²¹: Rights are a defence of subjective autonomy, a bulwark against undue intrusion by third parties in self determination, something allowing anyone to design their own existence. If I want to choose myself, I want to be the author of my life because this is essential to consider it fully worthy. Recognition of a catalogue of rights allows me to live with other people without fearing any interference with my choices. Autonomy is thus essentially a recognition of my dignity, as I understand it²².

After all, this is precisely the argument usually used to justify the demands for recognition of cultural identity and related practices: for example, for an Islamic woman asking to wear the chador (if it is really a voluntary choice) means to see the image of herself she has chosen publicly to be recognized. It means asking to describe oneself as one has chosen, not accepting that others impose images that one does not recognize and, as such, not providing a decent life²³. For example, an Islamic woman could not recognize herself

²⁰ See J. KREPELKA (2010): «A Pure Libertarian Theory of Immigration». *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 22, pp. 35-52. See also W. BLOCK and G. CALLAHAN (2003): «Is There a Right to Immigration?: A Libertarian Perspective». *Human Rights Review* 5. In the same individualistic paradigm, but in a different perspective, see H. HOPPE (2002), «Natural Order, the State, and the Immigration Problem». *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 1, p. 16.

²¹ For a critic to this individualistic paradigm, and particularly for a critic of Rawls and Dworkin thoughts, see W. KYMLICKA (1989): *Liberalism, Community and Culture*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 61 and passim.

²² Immigration is interpreted in that perspective also by those who adopt a family-based model. «I will argue that this right to bring in non-citizen family members is based on the fundamental right to form intimate relationships of one's choosing. This right is an essential one for personal autonomy and in the development and exercise of what Rawls calls the "moral power"»: LISTER, *cit.*, p. 721. In the same sense, see S. MOREAU (2010): «What is Discrimination?». *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 38 (issue 2), p. 147: «In a liberal society, each person is entitled to decide for herself what she values and how she is going to live in light of these values».

²³ J. WALDRON (1981): «A right to do wrong». In *Ethics*, vol. 92, n.º 1, pp. 21-39. Waldron's argument can be summarized as such: To seriously

in the image of the Western woman, and she may ask, in the name of her cultural identity, to wear the full veil.

Rights, and specifically the liberty rights, are intended as a resource to minimize the suffering caused by the discrepancy between what you choose to be and what others ask you to be. They are, in other words, a protection of the autonomy and subjective control on everyone's own life²⁴. In this perspective the best guarantee of human dignity is precisely the maximization of life choices. The greater the number of choices offered to people to describe themselves as close to their sensitivity (their culture, or religion, or whatever), the greater the chance to live a decent life will be.

Consider the case of the Sikh turban or dagger. In perspective A, one should address the issue by asking: Is this practice compatible with the culture and contemporary English (or French, or Italian) law? What can be done to resolve the conflicts that, abstractly, may arise because of this tradition and promote tolerance among cultures? In perspective B, one might ask: What rights do we have to guarantee, in order to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live their life as they wish? What conditions are required so that everyone can decide what to do, knowing that their choices will depend on the societal integration?

However both of these paradigms are wandering either upwards or downwards compared to the fundamental characteristic of migration and integration, which is to be neither exclusively an individual phenomenon, nor only a collective one, but relational. Migration and integration are phenomena that involve individuals, certainly, but as participants in a more or less extensive relational networks and, above all, as families.

consider and protect rights means taking subjective autonomy seriously, and primarily the ability to choose what is right or wrong. A liberal theory should therefore, not to banalize rights, but to defend the agent in his particular choice of what is important in his life, not only if it chooses to do the right thing. In other words, rights are guaranteed not only to choose between allowed options, but to choose between options that the agent considers significant for its existence, which implies a general right to do wrong.

²⁴ For a description of personal autonomy, see J. RAZ (1988): *The morality of Freedom*, Clarendon. Oxford, p. 369: «The ruling idea behind the ideal of personal autonomy is that people should make their own lives. The autonomous person is a (part) author of is own life. The ideal of personal autonomy is the vision of people controlling, to some degree, their own destiny, fashioning it through successive decisions throughout their lives».

In spite of the cultural-based perspective A, it is not possible to only consider the relationship between macro-groups and to evaluate migration and integration as related to the cultures as a whole. A culture as a monolithic whole does not exist unless in theory, something is recognized or asks to be recognized by another. Relationships of integration are always variables, and if on a purely theoretical level one can speak (with too much emphasis) of a clash of cultures or civilizations, cultures are rather reflected in always changing subjective practices. Individuals bind the relationships giving sense to practices and giving them value.

In spite of the individualistic perspective B, if the main character of migration is the relational system involving the migrant (and first of all, their family), it is not plausible to consider the individual as a totally independent subject, totally free, perfectly able to make rational choices, and able to set their life in the new context in a personal and absolutely free way. Similarly, it is not possible to evaluate the integration by only considering the individual migrant and their choices or those of the inter-subjective context that welcomes it, since integration is a process that covers at least three generations of individuals.

In a relational perspective, this problem is addressed in a completely different way.

3. THE RELATIONAL MODEL

In a relational perspective, the main players of integration and recognitional practices are neither cultures as wholes, nor individuals, but the relational systems²⁵. Those systems are where individuals live and where cultures are given life. As a result, it is necessary to distinguish the tasks of politics, law, and society (understood as the present context of relationships).

²⁵ Interesting, on that point is the possibility to rebuild the «local» notion just not in a spatial perspective, but in a relational one. In such a perspective, local is the place of a concrete interaction and where existentially relevant relationships can be created. Local is where concrete relationships that constitute the real personal and social life take place, where people live in. In this sense, see A. APPADURAI (1996): *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press.

In fact, recognition and integration refer to three basic profiles: That of identification, that of assessment, and that of discipline and protection. Politics, law and society can play distinct and complementary roles.

First level: *The identification of otherness*

The first profile is more directly anthropological, and is what helps to cognitively identify the otherness represented by migrants. At this level, it is possible to acquire awareness of the diversity (cultural, religious, practical) and to place it in a context from which it takes its specific characteristics.

In other words, one must identify diversity and (in some way) classify it so that its characteristics are clearly perceived. For example, with regard to the practice of wearing the headscarf and about wearing veils of different shapes and sizes, an essential cognition and identification should be reached, by answering questions such as: is it a religious practice or does it have an ethnic origin? Is it merely recommended or mandatory, legally or only religiously or traditionally binding? In this way it is also possible to compare a practice with other similar practices, evaluating the effective similarity or proximity: one can think of the Sikh turban, or Kippah, the monastic veil, and other various aesthetic rules observed by many communities. Do all these practices share a similar meaning?

The identification is therefore the first dimension of this approach for recognition of otherness, allowing one to differentiate practices and accurately perceive their structure and meanings. Identification—in that sense—is what allows one to distinguish some use between similar practices, belonging to different contexts. It is, in short, the elementary dimension of knowledge of other.

Second level: *The evaluation of practices.*

The second dimension is that of appreciation and evaluation. On that level, practices are not judged in relation to a specific axiological horizon, but regarding the specific impact on their relational context.

Each practice, in fact, has external effects. These effects can be evaluated and appreciated in the specific horizon within which the practice is located. In this way, a religious practice, or what is identified as such, produces effects within its relational context (e.g. the religious community). Therefore, those effects could be evaluated as positive or negative if they comply or not with the sense that the practice wishes to express.

Take for example the practice of *sati*, or *suttee*. It can be identified within an ethnic-religious horizon, and expresses a meaning related to the eternity of marriage and fidelity. Now, in relation to such effect and in relation to the internal sense of marital practice, the *suttee* produces a series of relational effects: It affects relations and shapes them in a specific way. Facing these effects, one must ask: What is the meaning of that practice? It is adequate to express certain values (loyalty, eternity, etc.)? Is it welcomed by those who consider it binding? Is it likely to produce positive effects in the relational context in which we deal with this question (e.g., Italy, or France)? Is it —above all— able to convey such meaning at its best, or at least better than alternative practices?

As one can see, problems to be faced at this level are very different from those faced at the first one. In fact, after identifying the otherness and after understanding its meaning, it is necessary to consider whether that meaning is fully expressed by the practice evaluated, primarily within the relational context it is placed in (for example, the country where the migrant community lives).

Third level: *The legal validation*

Finally, to recognize diversity means officially validating its contents. In a relational perspective, recognition is a recursive activity between people who recognize themselves, determining their attitude towards each other during this activity. Even more clearly, at this third level it is necessary to ask what should be the attitude to take towards a particular practice carried out by those «others» who ask to be recognized²⁶. There are therefore three possibilities.

²⁶ On the distinction between an hard recognition and a soft one, see S. LUKES (1997): *Toleration and Recognition*, in *Ratio Juris*, 10, 2, pp. 213-222.

First, it may be that the «relational good» produced by a certain practice is positively appreciable, because it produces positive effects at a societal level within the relational system of a community. In this case, that practice must be recognized and protected, and will lead to rights and guarantees for the people. For example, one may think of many religious practices, such as the celebration of some traditional holidays and rites: In these cases, the effects are highly positive on relationships, because these practices strengthen the sense of belonging and contribute to education, training and spiritual well-being of the community.

Secondly, it is possible that the relational good connected to a certain practice is socially unimportant (a practice can produce only, or mainly, private effects: you may think of hygienic traditions, and rituals related to the personal care). In this case, a practice will be recognized as free but without obtaining any special protection from the law. In fact, everyone is free to follow such practices, but can not claim a right to do so.

Finally, it may be that the relational good related to a certain practice is evaluated in a negative way, because such practice encourages violent behaviors or discriminatory attitudes. In such cases, it will be hindered and qualified as illegal. This is the case of *suttee*, which triggers violence and abuse, and expresses meanings that could be adequately expressed by alternative practices: mourning, chastity, veneration of the dead, and so on. This practice, conclusively, produces a negative relational good and must be therefore considered illicit.

A similar argument can be proposed for female genital mutilation, at least in their most invasive forms (female circumcision and clitoridectomy). They should be considered illegal not because they are contrary to *our* values, or *our* culture, but because they produce a negative relational good. Moreover, female genital mutilation can be replaced with more human practices able to express the same meaning (purity, chastity, virginity, and so on) in an equally strong way, without violating the woman's physical integrity and freedom.

See also, for a distinction between people recognition and values recognition, F. VIOLA (1999): *Identità e comunità. Il senso morale della politica*. Milano, Vita e Pensiero, p. 117.

4. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RECOGNITION?

At this stage the question is: who are the subjects responsible for recognition? Who needs to concretely implement this recognition? The approach proposed in this paper is that different subjects shall be responsible for each level, but only the interaction between all these subjects can ensure integration and recognition.

More precisely, the level of identification (first level) is purely societal. The societal networks (families, communities, associations) are responsible for perceiving and identifying a practice, and they give it a precise form and place it in a hermeneutic horizon that makes it understandable. A practice is formed, and thus is identified, in a specific societal context. Family relationships, community and the wider societal context are the place where a practice is identified, interpreted, structured. So the society, at different levels, is responsible for carrying out this first phase of recognition and integration paths.

That does not mean, however, that politics and law have no tasks at this level. They should encourage the construction of relational networks that are, in fact, the primary context of recognition. Concretely, for example, politics should hinder, through ad hoc legislation, the creation of closed relational systems, ghettos, not communicating communities. In fact these kinds of groups interfere and hinder the process of mutual identification. For example, it could be a good strategy to promote the harmonious and widespread penetration of migrants into the school system (avoiding schools showing a huge disproportion between natives and migrants), and developing programs for mutual understanding. Similarly, it could be opportune to plan housing and labor policies that can promote mutual understanding and osmosis between communities. However, the society is the subject who has the task to identify and characterize the otherness, not the law.

It is not the law, in fact, which may officially determine whether the headscarf is a religious practice or a cultural one, whether it is perceived as binding, and how it can be distinguished from similar practices but with an exclusive aesthetic value (wearing a Hermés

foulard)²⁷. The task of appreciation is instead highly political. Politics has to develop evaluations, but can only do that if it is conceived as the place of a rational public debate. Politics is responsible for the evaluation of the practices that immigration brings into the society, identifying the relational goods it produces and understanding its meaning. Also in this case politics can obviously not be understood as if it were a different level to the other two. Indeed, politics has to be understood as the place of a pivotal self-reflection work that society takes upon itself, through the rational public dialogue.

More explicitly, a society has, in its political dimension, to reflect on itself and on new instances that arise also because of migration. New family models, new forms of relationship between sexes, new paradigms of understanding the corporeality, the sacred, or more. Society has to continuously reflect those fields, and politics is where such reflection can take place. But politics can do that only if the participation of immigrants in public debates is effective: those debates should be a place of inclusion and not of exclusion, and politics should encourage participation of the representatives of relational networks (communities, associations, family networks) that can represent the otherness²⁸.

Finally, law has the task of protecting and regulating. Law certainly has a rigidity that politics and society do not, and in some way it is the place where the results and the activities of both are condensed. However, law is also a tool by which society and

²⁷ In a perspective not too far from that, Taylor focuses on the issue of accessibility: immigrant communities, according to Taylor, more than asking for a full and complete inclusion in the destination context, ask not to be excluded from having access to local contexts in which the regulatory, economic and legal structures affecting everyday life are determined. The lack of that recognition determines a real injury to personal dignity, much more than the denial of this or that specific practice, this or that particular right. CH. TAYLOR (1992): *Multiculturalism and «The Politics of Recognition»*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

²⁸ In that perspective models describing citizenship shall be understood as a denizenship, that is, a real experience of a moral connections between people much more than sharing a land and a tradition. To generate recognition a discursive sharing of societal rules is necessary, and the understanding of societal bonds, much more than national belonging. See J. HABERMAS, (1993): «Struggles for Recognition in Constitutional States», *European Journal of Philosophy* 1, pp. 128-155.

politics can effectively carry out their tasks of identification and appreciation.

Law can play a very valuable role in a relational perspective, giving importance not only to individuals but also to the relations within which they live: for example, law should seriously consider the family dimension of migration, facilitating the reunification of families and strengthening the protection of the migrant family. But beyond that, law has to shift its core from protection of individual rights to protection of relationships, and it has to do so by a consideration of their sense.

5. CONCLUSION

Let us conclude with an example and consider the case of polygamy. Should we recognize that practice? Which strategy do we have to choose to integrate people who ask to be recognized in their cultural identity if that identity includes polygamy?

One should not refer —as usual— to the rights of individuals involved to assess if their autonomy is adequately protected. If one adopts a relational perspective, it can not be enough to ask if the state should have to protect individual liberty, failing injury to others' rights.

Rather, one should assess: how can we perceive that practice? Is it a religious practice or a cultural one? Is it merely recommended or mandatory, legally binding or only religiously or traditionally? As we tried to demonstrate that task is proper to the society: the societal networks (families, communities, associations) are responsible for perceiving and identifying a practice because they are the place where that practice is identified and interpreted.

Secondly, one should verify what are the relational goods connected to that practice: is it able to produce positive public goods (it produces effects that the whole society can appreciate) or merely private goods (happiness of people involved)? As the analysis demonstrated, the task of appreciation is instead highly political. Politics, conceived as an ongoing public debate, is responsible for the evaluation of practices that immigration brings into society, identifying their consequences and their meaning.

Thirdly, it is necessary to ask what should be the attitude to take towards that particular practice. In that case, it is conceivable that no one can be prohibited to implement polygamy, but this practice may be only recognized as a simple realization of subjective practical freedom. In other words, no one can pretend to be legally recognized as a polygamist and to be protected by the law in its polygamist choices.

In fact, to be recognized by law, and not only to be de facto free, a practice has to produce publicly relevant relational goods, and such goods shall be appreciated by society. It is in that perspective that the law can identify: *a)* what is inadmissible, as incompatible with the internal values of any societal practices, such as perceived and determined by public debates; *b)* what is merely tolerable, but also *c)* what is respectable or acceptable, that is worthy to be promoted by a public engagement.

