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Inclusion: The Principle of Responsibility and Relational Reciprocity

Rosanna Memoli * and *Alessandra Sannella* **

Abstract: The aim of this essay is to discuss the social inclusion in an epistemological perspective, identifying the concepts of responsibility and reciprocity a-priori for the formulation of policies and means for social economic and cultural inclusion. The migration policies characterized by mere assistance often do not guarantee inclusion understood as participation. When forms of exclusion are combined with cultural and ethnic marginalization the reaction instead of having the integration characters assumes those of apathy and of conflict. This is why it is considered necessary to go back to the concepts of responsibility and reciprocity focusing on person and relationship. Furthermore, these concepts having a solid theoretical background in various disciplines allow to propose a multi-faceted picture of the pre-conditions to build up a culture of inclusion. They are then presented statistical stock on international and national migration flows. The role of the relational reciprocity is fundamental to create the inclusive society. The paper concludes with the presentation of some operational proposals to the knowledge of the 'other', the deconstruction of social fears - that slow social innovation and sustainable development.

Keywords: responsibility, reciprocity, inclusion, education

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Inclusion

The term inclusion - *the act, the fact of including, of insertion, to be part of a series within a whole* - is part of the language of science from biology to medicine. Social sciences applies it when referring to policies designed to counteract the lack of participation of individuals or groups in society. Inclusion encompasses its opposite, exclusion, and embraces a wide range of issues which have the potential to pose a threat to the equilibrium of countries, states and nations. Goths fleeing from the Huns at the end of the fourth century CE created a humanitarian crisis for the Romans. A series of mistakes made in handling this emergency contributed to the decline of the Roman civilisation (Barbera, 2007).

The subject of social inclusion is of interest to many disciplines, law, economy and political science for example. The Italian Constitution enshrines the right to equal dignity and the removal of barriers restricting personal freedom, equality, participation and development¹. A society which considers the principle of participation to be fundamental must therefore do everything possible to provide a foundation for inclusion. The question of exclusion/inclusion is at the centre of a current crisis involving the globalised world and the processes of change it is undergoing². New forms of solidarity and inclusion must be developed in order to overcome conflicts and divisions in changing societies. "A glance at the global context makes it clear that we are at the dawning of a "Statu Nascenti", the type which germinates in mature society whenever the development of economic, social and cultural conditions create an ambivalence, a rift between individuals and the order in force. Statu Nascenti is a hope, a revelation, a conversion. It is not the desire to return to the past, rather an awakening from a slumber, a longing to move forward. It originates from a discomfort and the need to overcome divisions, to develop new forms of solidarity and inclusion"³.

¹ Italian Constitution artt. 2, 3 www.governo.it/costituzione-italiana/principi-fondamentali/2839.

² A series of concurrent events, including the massive introduction of modern technologies in the production of goods and services, resulted in reversals within the workings of the economic and social system, generating imbalances and conflicts. Keynes J. M. (1936) (Reprint 2007). *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. London: Macmillan; Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton University Press.

³It was not possible to attribute the term to the text Statu nascenti, Alberoni, F. (1968). *Statu nascenti. Studi sui processi collettivi*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Ceri also effectively locates the main source of social conflict in social exclusion: “Exclusion and marginalisation generate apathy and a lack of interest or a level of radicalism, depending on the degree of atomisation or aggregation surrounding the fractures and divisions present in society. Manifestations of extremism occur when groups or communities with particular interests or cultural traits do not see their civil or political rights recognised. (Lipset, 1983). Exclusion implies a defensive attitude on the part of the subject, more prisoner of a contradiction than a conflict. In this case the participation is only apparent” (Ceri, 1996).

Among the myriad of forms taken by social exclusion today, one of the most urgent is that linked to massive migratory flows. The globalisation of the economy, which has already caused the transfer of production and manpower from one nation state to another, now includes migrating populations seeking refuge from conflict, hunger and a lack of resources. The problems of multiculturalism are a reality common to many states, including European, and when forms of exclusion are combined with cultural and ethnic marginalisation processes the ensuing reactions involve a closure of ranks, a defence of identity and of forms of fundamentalism. A defence of identity does not necessarily mean mutual opposition nor demonstrations of superiority; it may also be an opportunity for a reciprocal acquaintanceship, to appreciate and to be appreciated. Reacting to phenomena such as migration requires the identification of policies and instruments of social and economic inclusion capable of managing the confrontation between the various cultures, and aiding in co-existence.

In offering a theoretical definition of social inclusion, Ardigò clarifies its meaning relative to the issues of marginalisation and inequality. During the economic crisis of the 70s, he was a protagonist in the redesign of a welfare system based on a process of cultural growth, one which would facilitate the recognition of problems and develop actions to increase solidarity and inclusion. Ardigò’s model involves theory, empirical research and intervention policies. The model as a whole encourages us to search for identity criteria and values for the formation of an ambient of equality, creating a space for direct action with the potential to unite, because common and shared⁴.

The model could be applied in order to identify instruments of inclusion to cope with migration flows in Europe. Social inclusion should allow civil

⁴ For a synthesis of Ardigò’s most important theories see, among others, Cipolla, C. Cipriani, R. Colasanto, M. D’Alessandro, L. (2010). *Ardigò e la Sociologia*. (Ed.). Milano: FrancoAngeli.

society to connect effectively with institutions, the political system, and the State. The creation of this connection, which cannot be taken for granted, tends to involve conflictual processes expressed in mobilisation profiles prone to favour/deny participation.

Social exclusion related to the cultural differences of immigrants of various ethnic groups, as with other forms of exclusion such as poverty, age and disability, requires the design of an education programme which aims to transmit the capacity to manage the coexistence of individual cultures. The creation of a cultural space motivated by the sense of responsibility of individuals and interpersonal reciprocity is considered fundamental for the success of any programme conceived. Responsibility and reciprocity are understood as compulsory epistemological categories for the design of policies aimed at overcoming conflicts, the promotion of social cohesion and the creation of social inclusion.

Responsibility

In the past, nature and the elements were considered to be absolutes to which man was relative. Hans Jonas points out that technology has now changed the possibilities of human action on the environment, and we have moved to an ethic of responsibility linked to the binomial man-nature (Jonas, 1979). A connection exists between the two, an inevitable linking, an appeal to the human conscience, the acknowledgement that man and his habitat cannot be divided. Nature's vulnerability when subjected to human interference imposes a cognitive responsibility that goes well beyond a precautionary principle limited to a general environmental protection⁵.

Contemporary emergencies, which include climate change, the battle over genetically modified organisms, the desertification of Africa, the humanitarian disaster resulting from people fleeing countries torn apart by war and famine, massive migration flows, are all largely attributable to the irresponsible use of resources and economic/technological tools. In

⁵The UN Conference on Environment held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 called on the Member States to use informed prudence "[i]n order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." Within this view, it would be reductionist to limit the precautionary principle to the protection of the environment through the prevention of damage caused by nature disasters. Retrieved from www.glob-tek.it/index.php?option=com_content (December 18, 2016).

generating exclusion conditions of every type, these emergencies have initiated an unstoppable global crisis, one which will also negatively impact future generations. Pope Francis, on being awarded the Charlemagne Prize in 2016, appealed to the sense of responsibility. Quoting K. Adenauer, he said: “ (...) the future of the Western countries is not threatened as much by political tensions as by the danger of conformism, uniformity of thoughts and feelings: in a word, by the whole system of life, by flight from responsibility, with concern only for oneself”⁶.

Adenauer’s words, noted Pope Francis, were addressed to a Europe devastated by World War II, and they resonate today as a prophecy. He declared that a culture of inclusion is possible if we all work together on its development and construction. One cannot remain inactive in the face of conflicts between others. Instead, an urgent call for personal and social responsibility is needed. This invitation to participate as an agent of change is aimed primarily at young people, protagonists of any future transformations.⁷

Social inclusion is therefore the responsibility of each of us and in particular of those in whose hands lies the power to implement it through the appropriate policies. Reference is made here to both individual or personal responsibility and that of society *sui generis*, the Durkheimian society with an identity possessing its own characteristics, not the sum of the people of which it is composed but rather the complex reality imposed upon it through the institutional fabric and which transcends the individual members. The view of relational society theorized by Donati (1991) is founded on the concept of society *sui generis*. It traces the passage from the individual to the society, highlighting the concept of social relationships or of a society composed of relationships established at different levels.

Pope Francis underlined that a lack of sense of responsibility results in the breakdown of our relationships with each other and with ourselves.⁸ It is clear therefore that for the concept of sense of responsibility to become relevant to the practice of inclusion, it must be linked to a concept of relationships. The responsibility is in fact not only for oneself but also for others, and a social relationship is defined as the relationship of two or more individuals who tend to reciprocal action.

⁶ Charlemagne Prize, Address of Pope Francis. May 6th 2016. Retrieved December 18, 2016. www.archenet.org

⁷ On these issues see also the encyclicals of Pope Francis “*Laudato si*”. Ed. San Paolo. Rome. 2015; “*Evangelii gaudium*”. Ed. San Paolo. Rome. 2013.

⁸ Pope Francis, *Laudato si*. Rome: Ed. San Paolo.

Relational reciprocity

When reciprocity (from Lat. late *reciprocitas* - *atis*, derived from *reciprocus* mutual) is understood as being a mutuality, a correspondence of characters or values, it refers to the cultural trait of constructing relationships with others⁹. This encompasses the modes and norms which influence behaviours of giving, receiving, and of exchange. The term reciprocity is a cultural universal, one common to all cultures and included in the concept of culture. Culture as a finite domain is itself produced through the process of attributing sense and meaning upon which the structure of relationships is formed. These are in turn based on experience, predictability and mutual expectations and are based on a shared identity and rules¹⁰. Individuals within a particular historical-social context, in framing their actions within cultural norms, must be able to expect that others will act in a similar manner. In addition, culture, with its capacity to change and its diversity over time and in space, determines the identity, membership and recognition of persons and groups.

As a cultural trait underpinning the relationship between individuals and groups belonging to the same context of identity, reciprocity does not promote inclusion. The open, multicultural, inclusive society is conflicted by the difficulties of managing the implementation of integration policies and projects aimed at creating a cultural background which would allow reciprocal relationships. The emphasis is therefore on the culture, or rather on the way in which it designs social policies and implements tools able to activate the relevant cultural mechanisms of, for example, mutual respect, tolerance and the exchange of experience. Reciprocity within an anthropological and sociological environment is understood above all as an implied norm capable of influencing giving and receiving behaviours. It has meant and remains an exchange of resources, forming a network fundamental for human survival¹¹. Reciprocity has not only been essential to the evolution and endurance of man from primitive times. It has also

⁹ Dictionary definition Treccani. Retrieved December 18, 2016, from <http://www.treccani.it>

¹⁰ On the cultural integration issue see, among others, Marchetti, M. C. (2007). *La contraddizione multiculturale. Identità e identificazione*. In F. Pompeo (Ed), *La Società di tutti: multiculturalismo e politiche dell'identità*. Roma: Meltemi.

¹¹ Anthropology understands the social ties built up through the exchange of products, tools, resources as expressions of the merging of individual identities to form the collective, of the possibility of future mutual influence, and that the direct and indirect result of these links is a tendency to construct social networks. See: Freeman, L.C. (2004). *The Development of Social Network Analysis: A Study in the Sociology of Science*. Vancouver. Empirical Press. Preface and translation of the Italian edition by Memoli R. (2007). Milano: FrancoAngeli.

been a driver of social cohesion. The complex theories proposed by Simmel, focussing on the concept of mutual, reciprocal relationships, allow us to deduce that even though a relationship may be considered conflictual, it might also possess latent positive elements. If the mutual social action is seen as a contact aimed at the strengthening of existing links or the formation of new ties, then it may be considered a constructive force (Simmel, 1908).

Social inclusion as education to responsibility and reciprocity

Social inclusion is more than simply a statement of intent related to the protection of human rights, citizenship and participation. Essential is an acceptance of the priority of responsibility, the conviction that inclusion is not created by simply imposing the pertinent laws and measures from above. It must be additionally considered that responsibility goes hand in hand with reciprocity. Social action is a corollary of the mutual responsibilities towards ourselves and towards others, and therefore relevant for our present and our future. In view of this, no social policy should limit its considerations to the short-term. It is imperative that a long-term analysis also be made.

The migratory events which have almost overwhelmed Europe in recent years have coincided with strained relations internal to the European Union. In order to understand the tensions provoked by the current influx of migrants towards Europe, we must bear in mind the complex path followed by the European states, even if marked since post-war years by divergence and contradictions, which led to the drafting in 2000 and proclamation in 2007 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and to the enlargement from 15 to 28 Member States.

The contrasting levels of national economic and political development have made the maintenance of the requirements of common policies difficult. The management of these differences within the EU has been problematic, and the construction of a concrete area of solidarity and participation between the individual states has therefore been arduous.

The conflicts generating today both internally and externally to national realities are reflected clearly in the burdens on and challenges to the various organs of the European institutions, such that these conflicts now represent a serious threat to coherence of the EU.

“(…) I dream of a Europe that promotes and protects the rights of everyone, without neglecting its duties towards all. I dream of a Europe of

which it will not be said that its commitment to human rights was its last utopia”¹².

Pope Francis’ words remind us once more of the need for a sense of responsibility and of reciprocity. But how do we begin to cultivate these qualities at a time when walls are being built, possibilities narrowed and in the face of the result of Brexit? Decisions regarding the reception of refugees, asylum seekers, and measures contrary to international terrorism must above all take past events into account. Referring to our historical memory, it becomes clear that current humanitarian disasters are largely the result of a lack of responsibility, of errors committed in the past. It is important that we recognise these lapses in order to avoid them in the future. It must be acknowledged that a welcome is being denied to populations arriving from those countries where the greatest environmental damage has been caused, where the greatest lack of resources is being experienced. The performance of development policies implemented by the Western countries to bring aid to the “less developed” states of the Global South has not been inconsequential in this context. We realise now, in the third millennium, that the sophisticated development theories proposed in the 50s and 80s and the policies based on them did not yield the results expected. There exists an extensive and perhaps not sufficiently reviewed literature from the past which analysed today could yield information on the gap between the guiding illusions, the errors made and the current situation¹³. Their content could aid in understanding our radically deteriorated present situation. As noted above, the continual inward flow of migrants means that we cannot turn away from our responsibilities. Instead, in view of the uncertain nature of our understanding of the situation, a pertinent analysis through examination and verification is called for (Morin, 2001).

Education and responsibility

The theme of relational reciprocity as referred to earlier, with values which remain nebulous due to a general lack of clarity, is one that has difficulty in becoming relevant in contemporary society. If reciprocity is recognised as being autopoiesic, reciprocal responsibility may become a

¹² Charlemagne Prize, Address of Pope Francis. May 6th 2016. Retrieved www.archenet.org (December 18, 2016)

¹³ Among the many texts consultable see: Agarwala, A. N., & Singh, S. P. (1958). *The Economics of Underdevelopment*. Oxford University Press.

model for learning to act out and of implementing feelings of good intention. *This telos* is difficult to carry out in the epoch characterised by the instantaneous, a scarcity of spirituality and an inability to allocate the time necessary to process the information received and transform this into knowledge (Giovannini, 2014). The concept of teaching responsibility might then seem in harsh contrast with a process of value transmission which stretches from the pre-industrial era to the current digital society. It was Durkheim in *L'éducation morale* (1903) who emphasised the importance of socialisation as the driving force between generations in the production of a sense of institution. This reveals the opportunity to expand the concept of teaching to include difference and of introducing the concept of the acceptance of diversity. It opens up the possibility of learning about differences in order not to fear them, of acceptance as an enrichment process, and of understanding elements of cross-cultural change as an incentive towards inclusion and innovation (Sannella, 2010). The importance of this is confirmed when we turn our attention to welfare policies past and present affecting the formation of our future, and which may be concretely able to create policy strategies capable of inclusion rather than exclusion. This involves active and conscious participation as well as the ability to understand and assign significance to facts. The problem lies therefore in understanding how responsibility and relational reciprocity may be read as factors functional for social inclusion. An empathetic or participative sociology would be capable of interpreting these needs and be able to leave behind the aporia of meanings where acts of inclusion have a value, as well as being better able to define the semantics of teaching inclusion. The phenomenon of migration is considered by many to be the subject *par excellence* for an application of the strongest forms of exclusion. Its dimensions have become the evidence of an 'emergency' involving changes affecting society in its complexity. In fact, the latest statistics on international migration reveal a stabilisation in human mobility over time common to all historical periods. However, current movements tend to involve people seeking to flee atrocious wars, famines, desertification and persecution, resulting in the more recent phenomena whereby immigrants request protection from the international community, asylum and refugee status. According to the International Migrants Worldwide Study, there were 244 million migrants globally in 2015, the equivalent of 3.3 percent of the world's population¹⁴. Within this

¹⁴ Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/international-migration-statistics> (December 15, 2016).

framework, “[a] total of 3.8 million people immigrated to one of the EU-28 Member States during 2014, while at least 2.8 million emigrants were reported to have left an EU Member State [...]. There were an estimated 1.6 million citizens of non-member countries, 1.3 million people with citizenship of a different EU Member State from the one to which they immigrated, around 870 thousand people who migrated to an EU Member State of which they had the citizenship (for example, returning nationals or nationals born abroad [...]). A total of 15 of the EU Member States reported more immigration than emigration in 2014, but in Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and the three Baltic Member States, the number of emigrants outnumbered the number of immigrants”¹⁵. In 2015, over a million people crossed the Mediterranean, with 850,000 arriving in Greece and 150,000 in Italy. Forced migration in the same year involved 65.3 million people worldwide, of which 3.2 million applied for international protection (Ricci, 2016, pp. 17-18). 2016 has also been characterised by the heart-wrenching phenomenon of what the media have hastily termed ‘the disembarkations’. The reception to these landings has not been noted for feelings of reciprocity, although the aversion to reception has been less consistent than that observed in the previous year. 3.740 people died in the attempt to cross the Mediterranean in the first 10 months of 2016, according to UNHCR data.¹⁶ The lack of enthusiasm displayed by reception policies has been in stark contrast to the unprecedented aggressiveness with which the sea has welcomed the bodies. In addition, there is the violence of non-acceptance. An example of this is the media attention given to the revolt against migrants in transit at Ventimiglia in Italy or the Ukrainian project in May 2016 to build a wall on the border with Russia near Luhansk.

Returning to the data, the recent *Immigration Statistic Dossier 2016* has revealed a more marked growth in arrival numbers in Italy compared to the other European countries. There were 5.026.153 foreign citizens resident in Italy on 1 January 2016 (Italian National Statistics Bureau data). It is important to note that at the same time, 5.202.000 Italians were resident outside of Italy (Consulate data) (Melchionda & Paravati, 2016, p. 7). Western countries are an attractive destination for many migrants from war zones, states under migratory pressure and those defined as ‘emerging’ or

¹⁵ Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration and migrant population statistics#Migration flows](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migration_flows) (December 15, 2016).

¹⁶ Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.it/news/aggiornamenti/sale-bilancio-delle-vittime-nel-mediterraneo-2016-lanno-piu-letale.html> (December 15, 2016).

“developing”. Migration as a phenomenon is consequently interpreted within a matrix which is predominately economic in nature. However, this does not take into account those migrants who have attained higher levels of education in their State of origin and who are not fleeing from poverty but from the risk of death or persecution and degrading treatment. Any balance sheet must take into account the diversity, the multiple and complex variables of current migratory flows when considering a revitalisation of the concept of reciprocity. We have addressed the issue of economic migrants, of those who are seeking international protection, but we must also take into account the skilled or qualified migration, people who possess competencies recognized ex-ante or who wish to improve their professional skills in another State. Recent research (June, 2016), realised by the Study Centre IDOS and San Pio V (both in Rome), highlights the qualified migration to Italy with relationship to specific topics such the history of the phenomenon and their causes like the level of research, education, development and labour market. The report shows that in the academic year 2014/2015, 70.339 foreign students were enrolled in Italian universities at degree level. In addition, 10.290 attending in tertiary level art courses and 11.101 in post-degree courses. There were also 4.262 foreign doctorate candidates and 6.840 students enrolled in Masters, specialisation or other post-graduate courses. If the 22.152 Erasmus students are included, the total number of foreign students in Italy in 2014/15 was over 100.000. As regards het Italy internationalisation has to be considered also that 30.875 Italian students have moved to other European countries under the Erasmus programme, and 82.450 students moved abroad in 2013, the most the United Kingdom, France, Germany and other European Countries (but also in the USA). According the above research the number of Italian graduates who emigrated abroad in the past war is of about 500.000 (the foreign graduates in Italy are estimated 50.000 more): their number has only especially increased in recent years. The Italians, ‘expats’¹⁷, also appear to be considerable, both quantitatively and qualitatively, according to a specific research conducted by the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (Italian National Research Council CNR), 25.000

¹⁷ The term expats derives from the Latin ex and patria. It is often used in a professional context to describe skilled workers who are sent to foreign states by multinationals or large companies. However, the term also covers persons of other professions. The internet abounds with sites catering to expat communities. See: Castree N., Kitchin R., & Rogers, A. (2016). *A Dictionary of Human Geography* (I ed. 2013), Oxford University Press.

Italians, including 3.500 academics, follow high-profile professions in the United States alone¹⁸.

The above reveals the need to transmit an understanding of *the Other* and of diversity, of the need to accept and to nourish the roots of recognition and reciprocity. Related to this challenge is a call for an interpretive reading of writers such as Hobhouse (1906) and his *Morals in Evolution*, Thurnwald (1932), and Marcel Mauss whose essay is a reminder of reciprocity when he writes of the idea of a gift as a symbolic exchange creating networks of mutual obligations (Conti, 2015). The American sociologist Alvin Gouldner's analysis of reciprocity in terms of universal norms is also of specific interest. His work expresses a fundamental reflection on the theme. "...I suggest that a norm of reciprocity in its universal form, makes two interrelated, minimal demands: (1) people should help those who have helped them, and (2) people should not injure those who have helped them. Generically, the norm of reciprocity may be conceived of as a dimension to be found in all value systems and, in particular, as one among a *number* of "Principal Components" universally present in moral codes [...] To suggest a norm of reciprocity is universal is not, of course, to assert that it is unconditional. Unconditionally would, indeed, be at variance with the basic character of the reciprocity norm which imposes obligations only contingently, that is, in response to the benefits conferred by others" (Gouldner, 1960). The reference is to the need to note the universal and variable nature of the asset received in connection with the sense of reciprocity. The need to educate and transmit, therefore, would seem to be a categorical assumption of contemporary society with the purpose of responding to the nature of the variance of a group. The French sociologist, Edgar Morin provides an interesting response in his book *Enseigner a vivre* (Morin, 2015) where he focuses on the educational role which must be fulfilled by primary institutions such as schools. They should not only teach reading and writing, but also direct a person to their aspirations, cultivate attitudes, and encourage reciprocity as a value capable of cementing the bonds of community.

¹⁸All the data relative to skilled migration quoted here was sourced from the research conducted by IDOS and the San Pio V Istituto di Studi Politici and supported by the Fondazione Formit. The research results were published in Coccia, B., & Pittau, F. (Eds). (2016). *Le migrazioni qualificate in Italia. Ricerche, statistiche, prospettive*. IDOS. Rome.

The dialogue between cultures

This work has highlighted the importance of reciprocity, a value which in itself is not categorical nor an obligation to be observed. Reciprocity takes on its sense of continuity in the actions of individuals, in the need to be able to the ‘discorso sopra le cose’ [talk about things] and to do so within a well-structured epistemological framework where sociology may act as an interpreter. We want to focus attention on making contacts with others inclusive, to imagine reciprocity as a social action whereby pathos aligns with the principle of accountability in order to deconstruct the conflict generated by a lack of understanding.

In the face of social, economic and geopolitical transformations, welfare becomes a varied landscape in which the request for articulated needs must be inserted. These needs range from innovation to the protection of vulnerabilities (Toniolo & Sannella, 2015). On one hand, actions may be managed or organised structurally. On the other, generations can be ‘socialised’ to inclusion and responsibility. A relevant contribution to the concepts of teaching responsibility and relational reciprocity was made by a pilot project for training and action research conducted during November 2016 at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio as part of the Alfa Project against Violence¹⁹. Of particular interest is how an appropriate focus on accountability may also assume the nature of a ‘education’ in reciprocity through a series of actions aimed at transforming contexts. The Alfa Project noted the nature of violence as a multi-factored phenomenon which includes elements related to encounters with the other, the stranger, the ‘strange’. Violent acts using digital tools and involving hate speech were also examined and clarified. The project foresaw a series of *steps* including training, action research with questionnaires, an international conference dialogue and disciplinary intersection (Memoli, 2015). The objective was to provide an opportunity to create an awareness process to deconstructing, prevent, combat and eradicate violence as a multifactorial phenomenon present in our society. The first phase provided for a free training course of 25 hours between classroom and individual study for students and graduate students of the University of Cassino. The course aimed to transmit the knowledge, tools, methods and skills necessary to

¹⁹The Alfa Project against Violence was promoted by the Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Health of the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio. The scientific coordinators Alessandra Sannella (sociologist), Micaela Latini (germanist) and Alfredo Morelli (philologist), in collaboration with university professors from different disciplines, conceived the project as a transdisciplinary design analysis model.

deconstruct the phenomenon of violence, in all its forms and manifestations. The in-house training was held within a ‘Lab-Oratory’ environment where lecturers from various disciplines presented for a strictly limited time of twenty minutes each. The topics were related to positive values in counteracting violence. Each lab session lasted three hours and was divided into two parts. In the first, the lecturers concentrated on values useful in deconstructing the concept of violence. The next half brought participants and co-design methodology trainers together in an attempt to pinpoint new indicators for the identification of violence both on-and offline. The results were then used to formulate a questionnaire which will be administered during the first quarter of 2017 through a web survey to students at the University of Cassino (and the University of Parma, the control group). A particular highlight was undoubtedly the presence of the project on social networking sites. From 8 November to 31 December, the Facebook profile of the Alpha Project against Violence²⁰ received an average of 647 hits per day, varying according to the proposed online debate. An institutional app was also developed for the project in order to strengthen functional synergies and support which may be needed in the eventuality of cases of violence. The subsequent international conference, *The Grammar of Violence*, provided an opportunity for discussion on the workings of the project. But not only the subject matter was of interest. The innovating principles which characterised the project represented a significant opportunity for students and lecturers to reflect on the ability to actualise policies of relational reciprocity functional to the awareness and responsibility of a desired change, one which includes all parties without differences.

Conclusions

Responsibility and reciprocity are understood as compulsory epistemological categories for the design of policies aimed at overcoming conflicts and the promotion of social cohesion. If the policies are successful, the realisation of social inclusion and the recovery of principles of sociality become an impregnable point of observation.

It is interesting to note the rational evidence of the link between goal and means. It recalls Rickert on ‘value relations’ and the ability to describe

²⁰ Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/progettoalfacontrolaviolenza/> (December 19, 2016).

human activity according to verified and verifiable rules of experience, and not on the basis of assumptions and absolute means of evaluation (Tessitore, 1998). The goal of the Alfa Project was to verify rules of experience and a transferable model of empirical research. Another proposal functional for the formulation of social policies has arrived from the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (AsviS). An agreement was recently confirmed, among other activities promoted, between Asvis and the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) which aims to foster the dissemination of a culture of sustainability with a view to implementing the sustainable development goals of 2030 Agenda (AsviS, 2016). With the agreement, the parties have undertaken to collaborate on the promotion and dissemination of information, training and support of the culture of sustainable development and the intensification of education on sustainability at all levels²¹. It will be of fundamental importance that the task is not limited to responding to the educational emergency but to allow for an examination of diversity and of the reciprocity principle as a value and opportunity for integration, in a process of trans-culturalism. All the while taking into account the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the new strategic approach for sustainable development in Italy and in Europe. An opportunity to recuperate the real meaning of linking the individual to the centre of the agora, fortifying the sense of relationship within the epistemic framework of responsible planning for contact with the *Other*.

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