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# **CONDITIONED RESPONSIBILITY, DEMOCRACY, AND BELONGING**

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*In* Proceedings of The Third International Scientific Conference “**Happiness and Contemporary Society**”, March, 20, 2022. Lviv: SPOLOM, 2022. P. 226-227. <https://doi.org/10.31108/7.2022.44>

**ISBN 978-966-919-826-6**

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### **CONDITIONED RESPONSIBILITY, DEMOCRACY, AND BELONGING**

In my talk, I examined some of the themes explored in recent publications (notably, Tejedor 2020, and Tejedor Forthcoming). I argued that there is a form of ethical responsibility, which I call *Individual Conditioned Responsibility*, which arises directly from the (normative and structural) conditions in which one finds oneself operating as an individual, irrespective of one's intentions or of the consequences of one's actions. I motivate this view by looking at situations in which there is a strong case for ascribing ethical responsibility to an individual, but where such responsibility cannot be cashed out in terms either of her intentions or of the consequences of her actions. The situations in question typically satisfy four criteria: firstly, the combined actions of a sufficiently large number of individuals cause significant cumulative harm; secondly, the actions of any one individual, in and of themselves, do not cause this cumulative harm; thirdly, individuals do not intend the resulting cumulative harm, even though they expect it to result from the combination of the actions of numerous individuals, including their own; fourthly, refraining from performing such actions involves a cost for the individual. There are numerous real life examples of situations meeting these conditions, notably some concerning human generated climate change and other concerning democratic voting (cf. Broome 2012; Kagan 2011).

Individual Conditioned Responsibility is sometimes unpacked in the literature in terms of *belonging*: an individual is morally responsible for the harm produced by the aggregated, combined actions of her community or group by virtue of the fact that she *belongs* (in some sense or other) to this community or group. This notion of belonging is, however, problematic and has shown itself wanting in various respects (Arendt 1987, Arendt and Kohn 2005, Young 2010). I argue that this notion of belonging obscures the inherently normative and relational dimension of the conditions in which we find ourselves operating as individuals (Fricker 2007, Medina 2012). I use a central strand in Wittgenstein's early philosophy – his earlier notion of honesty in one's position in the world (Tejedor2015) – to motivate the thought that this normative and relational dimension is, in fact, crucial to shedding light on the problem of Individual Conditioned Responsibility. For it is constitutive of the individual's ethical position within those very practices, communities and groups. And this position, in turn, is internally related to – indeed, it constitutes – her individual conditioned responsibility.

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