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MULTICULTURALISM

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Multiculturalism is a word with meanings that often vary between countries or authors. Whatever it may mean in the U.S. today, it is likely to be quite different from its sense in Colombia, Canada, or France. For authors drawing from a liberal philosophical tradition, multiculturalism has connotations that imply recognition of rights around cultural, racial, or sexual diversity, while for others who are anchored in theoretical communitarian positions, what is at stake in multiculturalism is a substantial transformation of society as a whole.

Despite these differences, multiculturalism has usually been understood as a series of policies deployed by states (→ Nation State, II/38) to confront cultural differences in their territories. Although in a sense these policies are an important dimension of multiculturalism, it can also be usefully understood as a particular kind of governmentality. In order to do so, an analytical distinction between multicultural situations and forms of multiculturalism must be introduced that enables us to consider the existence of three styles of multiculturalism: ethnic multiculturalism, racial multiculturalism, and national multiculturalism. In Latin America, ethnic multiculturalism has been the dominant version (→ Ethnicity, I/25), while racial multiculturalism has had a stronger tradition in the United States (→ Race, I/39), and national multiculturalism which focuses on the figure of the immigrant has been central in European countries.

Analytical distinctions

According to Stuart Hall (2000), it is relevant to make a distinction between multicultural situations and multiculturalism. Multicultural situations refer to the fact that any social formation is culturally heterogeneous (→ Hybridity, I/30). There is no society, however small and isolated, without certain degrees of internal cultural difference and heterogeneity. This cultural difference and heterogeneity is obvious in industrial and postmodern social formations. Therefore, multicultural situations are a historical fact that characterizes any social formation. No social formation is culturally homogeneous; all social formations are more or less culturally heterogeneous. Now what appears as difference and cultural heterogeneity in a particular context is not outside of the cultural frameworks of meaning and experience. Thus, to a great extent, they are culturally produced.

In contrast, multiculturalism refers to policies produced in a given social formation to address cultural difference and heterogeneity. For example, multiculturalism involves the legal measures that are taken by a state in order to recognize its cultural diversity, but also the measures to address racial inequalities or to integrate immigrant populations or not (→ Transnational Migration, I/44), when these racialized or immigrant measures are framed as cultural differences. But beyond these policies, multiculturalism also involves a number of political assumptions and values about what difference is and how to deal with it. Multiculturalism does not operate just by making preexisting differences visible, but in many ways produces them through practices and discourses that performatively constitute the social and political realities. In this way, multiculturalism is a set of politics and assumptions around which emerges culturally framed difference.

If multiculturalism is understood as these policies and assumptions, then historically there is not a single multiculturalism but several (and sometimes contradictory) multiculturalisms. Liberal multiculturalisms take for granted the individual-citizen as the atom that constitutes the political body (→ Citizenship, II/27), as well as the distinction between public and private, within the liberal philosophy of universalism that views humans as freely choosing agents (Kymlicka 1995). Neoliberal multiculturalism implies a recognition of cultural differences within the framework of the structural adjustments that operate from the premises of the free market (Hale 2006) (→ Neoliberalism, II/16). In contrast, corporate or radical multiculturalisms assume certain collective entities, defined as peoples or nations, as their unit of political analysis and practice to redefine the very foundations and assumptions of what is the political community and the state (→ State Transformation, II/21). Therefore, these multiculturalisms challenge the notions of nation and state as Western cultural constructs that are not culturally neutral (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997; Walsh 2014).

For its part, conservative multiculturalism would seek to incorporate cultural difference into the established social order through its dissolution or its negation on behalf of an ideal cultural homogeneity of the nation. As can be seen, these multiculturalisms differ in the political-ideological frameworks in which they operate. These analytical distinctions between dissimilar policies and assumptions allow us to problematize the necessary equivalences between multiculturalism and neoliberalism, to name an example.

Scopes of multiculturalism

In addition to this classification of multiculturalisms depending on their political-ideological differences, multiculturalisms could be identified by the types of populations that constitute their specific government practices. Following Foucault's governmentality (1978), diverse multiculturalisms might be understood as a historically specific art of government based on expert knowledge, which produce given populations as culturally differentiated inside the frame of a postcolonial state to be administrated on behalf of their ethnic, racial, or national particularities (→ Postcolonialism, I/38; Biopolitics, I/22). The diverse assemblies in which prevails the production of these cultural differences as mainly ethnic, racial, or national result in three different styles of multiculturalism: ethnic multiculturalism, racial multiculturalism, and national multiculturalism.

Of course, these are not the only existing styles of multiculturalism, although they are the most visible in the Latin American, the United States, and Western European contexts, respectively. Although they rarely are presented purely, it is important to be able to analyze their specificities when in a suitable theoretical position to understand the different empirical and concrete amalgams in which they are manifested.

From a methodological perspective, both historical and ethnographical approaches are required to study these different styles of multiculturalism. On the one hand, as suggested by Inda (2005), historical research of governmentality involves three closely related levels. (1) *Rationalities*, the multiplicity of statements from expert knowledge that within a certain regime of truth make possible the production of objects, subject positions, concepts, and tactics that justify the deployment of certain regulations for the established populations. (2) *Technologies*, the ways of doing that are articulated as an attempted response to the problems constituted by those rationalities. (3) *Subjectivities*, which emerged and are deployed in the interplay of the aforementioned rationalities and technologies. As a kind of governmentality, multiculturalisms require to be studied historically taking into consideration their specific entanglement of rationalities, technologies, and subjectivities.

On the other hand, Murray Li (2007) proposes that governmentality must be examined ethnographically taking into account: (1) *Designs*, that is, the ideas, programs, and conceptualizations that allow the conception of something as an emergent problem to be addressed by a governmental practice. (2) *Practices*, understood as the set of actions mobilized for those designs. (3) *Effects*, or the diverse and heterogeneous transformations to specific people and places derived from the particular ways in which those practices have been deployed, assumed, and contested. Ethnographically, thus, multiculturalisms as governability must be approached in the concrete overlaps of designs, practices, and effects.

In order to understand a particular style of multiculturalism, then, one must be able to trace in a specific social formation the historical interplays of its rationalities, technologies, and subjectivities as well as the inscriptions of its designs, practices, and effects. Therefore, it is not enough to identify the legal initiatives and disputes on behalf of a population produced as a cultural difference, nor is it sufficient to reduce it to the study of the political mobilizations of subaltern sectors marked by this difference (→ Social Movements, I/41).

Ethnic multiculturalism

Since multiculturalism can revolve around multiple cultural differences, it is analytically relevant to refer to ethnic multiculturalism as one that operates within a particular anchorage: the ethnic other of the nation. Indigenous communities are often produced as the ethnic other of the nation (→ Indigenous Peoples, I/11; Indigeneity, I/31), although not only these communities but also others groups that could be placed in this location.

In any given national formation, not every sector of the population can occupy the position of the ethnic other, but only those already historically marked as radical others could embody this position. The ethnic other is a particular subject position in a system of differences built on the basis of a historical formation of otherness (Ramos 1998; Rita Laura 2007; Briones 2008, 2015). Traditional indigenous groups are the most usual referents of this position, although in some contexts, blacks communities may also be used.

This style of multiculturalism was legally expressed around a radical cultural difference, following a narrative of demands for recognition of cultural diversity within the nation. Hence, the legal subjects are referred to in state entities as ethnic groups or ethnic minorities. The ethnic other of the nation shaped by this form of multiculturalism has had as a paradigm a certain imaginary of an Indianness marked by traditionalism, authenticity, and communality that is located in certain geographical areas (rural, jungles, and mountains) and temporalities (not modern and non-Western) (Ulloa 2005; Bocarejo 2016). It is precisely these arrangements of ethnic multiculturalism that have enabled connections with environmentalist subjects, producing what Cárdenas (2012) has called green multiculturalism

(→ Environmental Justice, II/8; Nature, II/39). As already indicated, this style of multiculturalism is operating predominantly in Latin America.

Racial multiculturalism

In contrast with ethnic multiculturalism, in racial multiculturalism, the ontological difference that articulates this governmentality is the racial subaltern of the nation. Rather than the ethnic other of the nation, with racial multiculturalism governmentality involves a racial order and racialized populations. These distinctions need to be clarified in order to understand the specificities of racial multiculturalism and its contrasts with ethnic multiculturalism.

Race (→ I/39) implies a particular system of difference in which the interplay of the language of blood (assumed biological inheritance) and appearance (corporeal visibilities) constitutes sets of naturalized equivalences of given populations with certain behaviors, intellectual abilities, and moral positions (Wade 2015). Race does not necessarily appeal to an ontological exteriority of Modernity or Occident, although sometimes it does. Race is not just an attribute to frame the (inferiorized) others, but it is also a category to describe (the celebrated) selves.

Historically, race emerged with colonial domination (→ Conquest and Colonization, I/7; Colonial Rule, I/5). However, in postcolonial realms, it can also operate as a style of multiculturalism (→ Postcolonialism, I/38). The difference between them lies in the way in which racial difference operates: under colonial domination, race is openly mobilized as ideological justification to the naturalized hierarchy of the colonial order, while as style of multiculturalism, race appears as an ontological difference to govern racialized populations that belongs to the nation on behalf of justice and equality in the frame of postcolonial states. Racial multiculturalism as governmentality includes state policies regarding certain populations which are conceived as part of the nation on behalf of their racialized difference (→ Race, I/39). Therefore, racial multiculturalism partially overlaps with affirmative actions designed to reverse racial inequities.

Racism must be differentiated from racial multiculturalism. Although both assume race as the naturalized diacritic and principle of social intelligibility, there is a huge difference between racism as an open apparatus of oppression and racial multiculturalism as an art of governing others and selves in order to supposedly achieve justice and equality. So, it is very important to examine this racial multiculturalism not only by what it enunciates about itself, but from the historical and ethnographical perspectives described.

Racial multiculturalism is mostly found in the United States, although not exclusively. Australia and South Africa are two other countries in which this style of multiculturalism can be found. The racial grid of social and political intelligibilities has been a characteristic and a peculiar feature of the historical common sense of the United States, as well as Australia and South Africa. Therefore, multiculturalism here has been predominantly articulated racially rather than ethnically.

National multiculturalism

The specificity of national multiculturalism lies in the policies and political assumptions deployed to govern those populations that are produced as national exteriorities (→ Nation and State Building, I/16). In this style of multiculturalism, these populations are not the others of the nation as in ethnic multiculturalism, but they embody an ontological difference articulated as visible expressions of other countries that publicly disrupt the national self. Immigrants, particularly the so-called illegal ones, are the targets of this national multiculturalism.

This style of multiculturalism is mostly found in the countries of the global north, although it is also present in some countries of the global south. In contrast with racial multiculturalism, in national multiculturalism, the cultural difference is embodied by the figure of the immigrant who does not belong ("yet") to the nation (→ Transnational Migration, I/44). Surely, this figure of the immigrant is often racialized and targeted for the most bitter practices of racism. Nevertheless, in national multiculturalism, these populations are first and foremost symbolically articulated as aliens. This ontological gap, this constitutive alienation from the nation self, is what is at stake with this style of multiculturalism. There is a substantial difference with racial multiculturalism, which involves racialized populations, as they are not exteriorities of the nation.

Actually, an important part of this style of multiculturalism refers to the meaning and means of incorporating this exteriority to the national self (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdaul 2008). In Western Europe, this style of multiculturalism appears under the name of interculturality. In the United States, national multiculturalism has coexisted with racial multiculturalism.

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