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AUTHOR   Belhachmi, Zakia
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ABSTRACT
        This paper discusses procedural liberalism as the main
obstacle to democratic, pluralist cultural and educational practice in
Quebec, Canada, arguing that institutional-level procedural liberalism
promotes the status quo and precludes the democratic practice of
intercultural education. It attributes this status quo to: (1) the Quebec
government's definition of and policy on pluralism and its much-contested
cultural orientations of "la culture de concergence"; and (2) the Ministry of
Education's lack of an explicit intercultural education policy. This has led
to a cultural pluralist model of a "no man's land" that manifested itself in
the mid-1980s into a de facto multiculturalism in reality focused on
integration combined with a politicized rhetoric of interculturalism in
educational milieux. To illustrate this inherent ambiguity in Quebec's model
of pluralism and its policy of occulation in intercultural education, the
paper describes the replication of Quebec's institutional pluralism in the
educational system and enforcement of the essentialist ideology of "la
culture publique commune" in university-level research practices since the
late 1980s. It highlights research on multicultural and intercultural studies
at the University of Montreal as a sample of the transfer of the essentialist
ideology of "la culture publique commune" in scientific research. (Contains
28 references.) (SM)

Multiculturalism and Interculturalism In Quebec
Between myth and Reality.

Dr. Zakia Belhachmi Université de Montréal

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1

Introduction

This paper is focused on **procedural liberalism** as the main obstacle to a democratic pluralist cultural and educational practices in Quebec[1]. It argues that procedural liberalism at the institutional level actually promotes the status-quo, and even precludes the democratic practice of intercultural education in Quebec. It attributes this status quo to two inter-related trends: on the one hand to the Quebec's government definition and policy on pluralism and its much contested cultural orientations of "la culture de concergence" of the 1980s (Gouvernement du Quebec, 1978; Juteau, 1986) and "L'Integration pluraliste" of the 1990s alike (MCCI. 1990a, 1990b). On the other hand, to the Quebec's Ministry's of education lack of an explicit policy of intercultural education. Both trends have led to a cultural pluralist model of a "no man's land" in Quebec that has manifested itself in the mid 1980s in a facto multicuralism in reality focused on **Integration** combined with a **politicized rhetoric of interculturalism** in educational milieux.[2] To illustrate this inherent ambiguity in Quebec's society's model of pluralism, and its policy of occultation[3] in intercultural education this paper describes the replication of institutional pluralism of Quebec in the educational system and the enfocement of the essentialist ideology of "la culture publique commune" in the practices of "institutional research" at the university level in Quebec since the end of the 1980s. The focus is on research studies[4] on multicultural and intercultural studies at the Universite de Montreal as a sample of the transfer of the essentialist ideology of la "culture publique commune" in scientific research.

Part I. Problematizing Multicultural and Intercultural Research in Quebec

Despite the differing interpretations in terms of policy and practice of multicultural education in Quebec, researchers tend to to assert the existence of a "shared assumption" about the nature and meaning of self, culture and identity that inform their research practices and analyses. (Juteau, 1993a; 1993b; Mc Andrew, 1993) It is precisely this "shared assumption" about culture, that I question. Not only does this assumption peretuate **the myth of cultural unity** among the diverse ethno-cultural groups that constitute the population of Quebec since the end of the 1970s, but it also legitimizes the cultural and scientific hegemony of the majority group involved in the field of "intercultural" education.

From this perspective, the myth of "cultural unity" is a powerful political tool of disempowernment that actually pepetuates the misperception of intercultural education as "the magic solution" to pluralism in Quebec (read: integration in the Farancophone language and culture). Coupled with this initial flawed theoretical premise, is the fact that the practice of pluralist education in Quebec has been been historically a communitarian inititiative[5] changed into a government area of "intervention" (Belhachmi, 1995; 1986). Two implications ensue for educational reserarch. On the one hand the enforcement of an informal; yet **a dirigiste government policy** of multiculturalism and a government-monitored intercultural education outside the socio-political deliberative process required in any pluralist democracy to sustain equality between citizens.[6] On the other hand, the imposition and construction of "a symbolic order" of **hegemonic pluralism** and intercultural education at the institutional level; especially since the 1980s. Both tendencies are clearly evident in the policies, and educational modalities practiced in educational institutions which closely follow the government policies on multiculturalism.[7]

How does the symbolic order of multicultural and intercultural education manifest itself in the practice of research at the universite de Montreal ? In other words, how does the government rhetoric on multiculturalism and intercultural education gets tranferred into " a social practice" in research within academia ? Before answering this question one needs to find out about the cultural strategy deployed in Quebec.

Part I. The Cultural Strategy in Quebec (1970-90)

Rather than applying the notion of the cultural mosaic promoted in the 1970s by the government of Elliot Trudeau, Quebec invented a whole **"mythology of integration"** whereby the notion of **"cultural convergence," and its communication** in the French language are at the center of its policy of Multiculturalism in the 1980s. Berthelot (1990) summarizes Quebec's the Quebecois' position on cultural integration quite explicitly:

> It seemed inacceptable for the great majority of Quebecois that the Francophones
> be reduced to the same rank as that of other ethnic groups." (p,30).

This hierarchical view of culture by Quebec resembles in an uncanny way the vertical mosaic of cultural pluralism that maintained inequity between citizens in the 1960s (Porter, 1965). Soon implemented as **a cultural strategy,** this hierarchical view of culture became evident in the mushrooing number of training centres for immigrants (COFI), and the orientation classes in

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schools that promote the "cultural convergence" principle in the late 1980s. And finally this strategy reached a climax in the the early 1990s with the 101 Bill that obliges the children of immigrants' to pursue their education in French schools.

By the 1990s the cultural arena in Quebec reached a turning point especially in its debate on the "culture publique commune"; whereby the government acknowledges its moral contract towards its immigrants based on 4 principles: "Quebec is an open society; a democratic society, a society of French language; and a pluralist society. **Yet, no explicit statement has been made as to the limits of this form of pluralism.**[8] As a result Quebec's institutional pluralism today remains heavily permeated **by an ideology of double standards** which, under the guise of "civic nationalism" obscures not only the ethnic nationalism at the root of institutional pluralism, but also **institutionalizes the domestication of other communities.**

1. Implications for Education

In this hegemonic cultural context, the Quebec educational system at large not only reflects "a culture blindness", but it also engendered two fundamental trends of paramount importance to educational practice. First, the pre-dominance of **the technocratic view of the world in the conceptualization of education at large** which ignores some of the deep spiritual, ideological and cultural forces that shape the history of contemporary society. (Belhachmi, 1996a). And second, the absence of a clear and coherent policy of intercultural education. Both trends, in my view, **signal a lack reflexivity** on the part of officials and educators regarding their own conceptualizations of intercultural relations; and the effect of the underlying theoretical assumptions they make about culture, self, and identity on their practices of intercultural education.

While the debate continues on the merits of de facto multiculturalism and recently on intercultural education and the need "to expand" the curriculum, **no** educator so far, has come to terms with the way the Quebec's worldview actually contributes to the ambiguity currently existing within intercultural education; nor offered alternative ways to build a national identity founded on a Quebecan culture "constructed in common" by pluralist population that constitutes Quebec society. For this reason, both multicultural and intercultural education today in Quebec not only lack "an integrative concept" of national culture, but it also abounds with flawed assumptions regarding its goals, strategies and outcomes.

Moreover, these assumptions remain untested in practice; creating **a gap between theory and practice.** Despite the present debate concerning the nature, and objectives of intercultural education in Quebec, the recent promotion of citizenship and education, and the growing interest in inter-cultural education and curricula, critical inquiry and research into the delivery and implementation of multicultural/intercultural education are severely lacking. Instead, Quebec witnessed the emergence of symbolic order founded on a monolithic universalistic concept of culture, Self and identity that constructs, and constraints agency and choice in education; especially since the 1980s. This symbolic order, I contend, draws its strength from a particular rhetoric about multiculturalism constructed on the myth of accultration unity/diversity. More importantly, the symbolic order has become intitutionalized. Even educators with the best intentions seem unable to escape its hegemony; or able to provide an alternative view, or an autonomous approach.

Part II. Transferring the Rhetoric into Social practice: Intercultural Research in Quebec (1970-1990)

A scrutiny of the literature of multicultural and Intercultural education, **reveals the institutionalization of cultural of hierarchy that promote hegemony in university studies**. I have divided these studies into three major groups: 1) Multicultural studies, 2) Intercultural studies. 3. Studies that promote "the montrealization of ethnicity"

1. Multicultural Studies

Although a few studies about the implementation of multicultural education in Quebec do exist, they tend to be atomized. Such atomistic criticisms are found in the work of Page (1983,85), Proulx (1983), and most projects of the CETUUM. (Centre d'Etudes Ethniques de l'Universite de Montreal.) In variably, these studies tend to be locked into the flawed binary theoretical modernist framework of secularism vs religion on the one hand. And on the other hand, they tend to be uncritical about their own assumptions on culture, and cultural integration. For instance, the research projects of l'Universite de Montreal on Multicultural education such as those of GREAPE (GROUPE Interdisciplinaire sur l'Ethnicite et l'adaptation au Pluralism en education), whether on policy, pedagogy, or practices in classroom are almost invariably, geared to locate the "niches" of resistance to integration (assimilation to the French culture and language).

Another example is the research project sponsored by FCAR entitled "Construction Des Rapports Ethniques Et Education: Problematique et Theme Unificateur" (1993), despite its well

intentioned search to limit the disparities between minority and majority groups, still views the solution to inequality :"in the promotion of the common language and the support of equal opportunity to live in a pluralist society" (p,3). What is misleading in this formulation is the assertion that the use of French as a "common language" is in itself a means for the cultural integrity and social cohesion of Quebec. Such an assertion conceals the cultural hegemony of the French and the Francophone group over the other multi-ethnic and multilingual social groups living in Quebec society.

Moreover, what is looked for in these projects are ways to domesticate various other groups to the dominant Francophone culture rather than accomodate their particular needs. For instance, in terms of policy, though the GEAPPE project insists on interdisciplinarity and the comparative approach, the studies reduce **cultural identity to dominant rhethorical themes**. These are: "ethnic relation, analysis of school failure, and the construction of knowledge through interaction in view of providing an equality of opportunity" (pp.5-6).

Similarly, the project called "Construction des rapports ethniques et education" is presented in the same reductionist view of culture that conceives culture in terms of ethnic relations rather than cultural relations. By neglecting students as "culture carriers" this study inevitably leads to the view and labeling of minorities "disadvantaged", and somehow lacking culturally vis a vis the majority. It also justifies the minorities "improvement" (read: assimilation).

Thus, rather than viewing the Quebec society as a pluralist society to which each social group can **culturally contribute,** the predominant view in the university literature in intercultural education stems from the fragmentation of the Quebec society into various ethnic groups, and the attempt to find ways to faciliate the integration of those groups identified as "disadvantaged" in order to adapt them to the Quebecois ethnic cultural group. This way the so called "allophones" are singled out as a social group and studied. An example of this isolation of ethnic groups from the rest of Quebec society is Page's project :" Identification d'integration des jeunes adolescents du secondaire d'origine italienne et Grecque" (1992). Finally, another research within the GREAPPE project is entitled " la gestion des conflit de valeurs et la recherche d'accomodements et strategies de cheminement dans les institutions publiques: le cas de l'ecole Quebecoise" (Bourgeaut, Hohl, Mc Andrew). This research studies "the impact of the multi-ethnic clientele on the evolution of institutional norms (p, 12). **The operative word here is the evolution of institutional norms;**

rather than evolution of the public school as a multiethnic institution in need for adjustment to the new socio-cultural context of Quebec.[9]

2 Intercultural Studies

Despite the numerous studies in intercultural education most of these studies are also framed within the hegemonic mode. For example, Ouellett (1988a) argues that intercultural education is not to facilitate school achievement; but rather to decrease the prejudice that teachers and students from the majority group might have vis a vis minority groups. Not only is this vision of intercultural education locked in the monolithic binary category majority/minority; but it also leaves unquestioned the education and training of the majority and its cultural assumptions as a problem in the establishment of a pluralist democracy. Moreover, this view of intercultural education reduces the whole dynammic of intercultural education to a mere intellectual excercise "out there" to be aquired by the majority group. This purely punctual and technical approach to inter-cultural education views intercultural education as mainly an endeavour that seeks to a aquire "a cultural competency".

A similar technical appproach is found in Page's work (1988), though to a lesser degree. After he makes a whole survey of intercultural education in Quebec, Page argues that evaluation system and pedagogies are homogenous; and calls for change in teacher training in adaptation to a multiethnic environment. Moreover, he, acknowledges that most multicultural studies emphasize the differences instead of the similarities between students. However, Page takes for granted the monolithic foundation of Quebec's culture and its system of education; thus leaving obscure the adequacy of both to the new multi-cultural reality of Quebec. As a result, his alternative proposal to cultural diversity remains in the mould of integration of "the allophones" at school and to mainstream francophone culture.

In contrast, Ollivier (1988) who has made an assessment of intercultural education in Quebec argues that despite the important literature on the subject, it failed to master the notion of interculturality, and to grasp the concept of intercultural education. To capture the notion interculturality and its applications to interultural education, he proposes the application of the notion of field (le champ) in the meaning of Bourdieu, both in conceptualization and practice. This way, Ollivier rightly explains, one can determine: "the power- struggles, tensions at the root of this dynamic and its space (p, 104).

3. Studies that propmote "The Monrealization of Ethnicity"

The Metropolitan area of Montreal is known for the maintenance by various communities of their cultural specificity. This situation has given rise to an interesting reaction by the so called "communaute culturelles." While many leaders of these communities denounce the marked ethnic differences established by the Quebec's government policy of pluralism, they still identify themselves by their ethnic origins and religious affiliations. This is not surprising given the nature and definition of cultural integration in Quebec; which combines the Canadian vision of pluralism with the confessional/religious specificity of Quebec. Such a stance is paradoxical in that it promotes cultural unity, yet enforces cultural fragmentation through ethnic and religious differentiations. This way the majority/minority binary view is legitimized as a social policy. Also, this way the attitude of various cultural groups can be **rationalized in ethnic and religious terms.** Such a stance in my view reflecs the conditionning proccess of institutional pluralism as a social practice which legimizes the corroloray disempowerement process contained in the cultural policies as well as domestication of citizens by institutional pluralism.

Nowhere is this disempowernment process more evident than in the systemic ethnicization of multicultural studies. A typical example of this systemization is the focus of ethnic studies on cultural differnces. This ethnic strategy enables the university studies to focus on specific geographic areas at the expense of other regions in the province. Thus, a significant literature focuses on the Montreal Area as though the ethnic concentration could be objectively studied as a phenomenon pertaining to particular groups outside the global socio-political economy of the whole area of Quebec. In the process, however, the notion of ethnic concentration is **a discriminating notion** since it excludes the French Canadians as a "concentrated ethnic group" and arbitrarily refers the "allophones" as a "concentrated ethnic group". Again the classification of social groups by "ethnic concentration" in itself contributes to the legitimation of cultural hiararchy on the basis of ethnicity. This way, the cultural assimilation is facilitated, and ethnic studies are selectively made with the view of groups' integration in the dominant "unconcentrated" French Canadian ethnic group. Studies like these are found again in the GREAPPE group such as "le phenomene de la concentration ethnique dans les ecoles Francaises de l'ile de Montreal" a FCAR sponsored project under the direction of Pr.Mc Andrew. In this study the interest as stated by the

study is in "the retroactive impact of this phenomenon on French usage by the students from minority groups, their academic performance, and their psycho-social integration." (p,14).

Clearly the montrealization of ethnicity is inscribed in the overall policy of ethnic fragmentation and is divided into two distinct groups: the French Quebecois and the allophones. **In so doing, such studies contribute to the hierchization in ethnicity.** The consequences of the monrealization of ethnicity and its underlying policy of ethnic fragmentation is yet to be researched. However, some pre-liminary findings exist. For instance, Labelle (1993) notes the hierchization of languages within certain commuities. She observed that various social groups in Quebec often give primacy to the English language due to its socio/economic status in international communication, followed by the language of origin, and then the French language. In addition, she notes the multi-referential register of the Monrealais metaphorized in statements such as "I am Italian, Candian, and Quebcoi".

Part III.Opposional Research to The Rhethoric: An Answer to Pluralism in Quebec?

1. Reseach in Inter-culturality

Opposed to the government "cultural convergence" discourse within Francofony, and the dominant studies within the university system, there is alternative discourse emanating from the research of a pluralist intellectual elite (Francophone and other). This alternative discourse calls for inter-cultural and trans-cultural approaches to multicultural education from a different approach than in the mainstream one. Here, the emphasis is on the significance of the **cultural exchange**, and the development of the student from the social interraction in the classroom and in the school. This emphasis represents **an explicit socio-political statement** that seeks to start research from the social setting itself rather than from a political dogma. Some of these studies are (Laferriere 1985, Laferriere et al 1985b. Micone, 1989, Stoiciu 1995, Belhachmi 1995, 1996). Here also, the common denominator is the rejection of the inadequate view of minority education as a shield for the French language and the cultural identity of Quebec as a distinct society. Rather than hijacking minority groups in the sovereign project of the majority, these researchers redefine interculturallity as the transmission of several cultures while avoiding the supremacy of one culture over another. **This alternative view regards interculturality both as a social process, and as a social strategy.** Micone (1989) captures this process when she argued that "instrculturality is a means of survival in a situation of a real intercultural exchange".

2. Research in Trans-culturality

Others advocate transculturality. Stoicu (1994) points out, that transculturality is a synthesis of the culture of origin and of that the host culture; resulting in a "bricolage des cultures". In her view, that the magazine Vice-Versa represents this type of bricolage. Some have argued that the existence of such research in itself is a manifestation of a real democratic deliberative process on culutrual identity in Quebec. (Page, 1993). While this may be true at the intellectual level, it is indicative of a lack of recognition of various groups **other than Quebecois** at the political level. In fact, I contend that the emergence of oppositional research to the predominent symbolic order and its rhetoric of mulutralism in Quebec is indicative of the persistence of both a cultural and political malaise in Quebec society. (Belhachmi, 1995).

What is needed is a substantial increase in oppositional research to mainstream multicultural and intercultural research in education in the province. With time this would lead to the recognition of cultural multiplicity and its full integration in the political economy of Quebec's society, and its established symbolic order both at the macro level of society, and the micro level of schools (Belhachmi, 1996b). In the absence of this recognition, the literature on multicultural education is likely to continue to be tentative; reflecting the political uncertainty of the province, as well as the epistemological poverty of its multicultural and inter-cultural studies alike. The urgent need therefore, is not "to multiculuralize" the educational system and curriculum, as in applying the technique of the " add and stir" of a coocking recipee. **Rather, the immediate need is for a multicultural literacy**[10] about the various worldviews that compose the social fabric of the Quebecois society in order to establish a **new intercultural order**. This cultural literacy is possible if we integrate the so called "border knowledge" into mainstream Multicultural education.

The provision of cultural space in the educational institution as "public cultural space" is advocated by many; but no one like Taylor has clearly advocated the inclusion of "the cultural heritage" of minorities in "the common national cultural heritage" Indeed, Taylor asserts that dispensing minority cultural heritage in the the curriculum of the public school is **a procedural practice of cultural democracy.** This procedural practice, in his view, needs to take place through the expansion of the political economy of power-structure of the educational system itself at the micro-level and its scientific practice to "minority'c cultural heritage". Thus, in the manner of Bourdieu (1992), Taylor advocates **the cultural validation** of "border knowledge" through the

curriculum as an issue of paramount importance in the cultural and religious recognition of minorities. In Taylor's terms:

> The background premise of these demands is that recognition forges identity, particularly in its Fanonist application: dominant groups tend to entrench their hegemony by inculcating an image of inferiority in the subjugated. The struggle for freedom and equality must therefore pass through a revision of these images. Multicultural curricula are meant to help in this process of revision. (p,66)

In turn, I argue, research in multicultural and intercultural education is another "cultural space" where socio-political struggle for political and intellectual recognition for the "border knowledge" is highly needed. This formulation is far away from the practice of intercultural education as an intellectual exercise aiming at the aquisition of cultural competency. On the one hand this new formulation calls for a dialogue and deliberation between various socio-political groups that constitute the 1990s Quebec society. On the other hand, this new formulation calls for the multi- ethnic representation of reserachers involved in multicultural and inter-cultural education[11]. In short, the new struggle in multicultural and intercultural education resides in the more from "cultural ideology" into the socio-political recognition of minority citizens and the legitimacy of their **scientific authority** as "carriers of the "border knowledge" and participants in the educational process of multicultural societies.

Conclusion

Contemporary practices of Multicultural and Inter-cultural education in Canada are increasingly developing and evolving in a complex field of forces where the provincial governments are morally and ethically compelled to respond to the various pressures of the different sections of their internal constituencies. Now that the field of Multicultural and inter-cultural education is reaching a turning point in its history, it is important that the multicultural constituencies of the Quebec educational system are represented and heared. In the final analysis, the questions of representation and voice in multicultural and inter-cultural education in Quebec is what really separates myth from reality. Within the complex politico-cultural terrain of Quebec where the power of the state, and that of communities interlap, it is the multicultural educational practices (and research is one of them) that reflect the degree of democracy and equity enjoyed by citizens.

Notes

1. I have dealt with this specific issue, with regards to the Government of Quebec's ideology and policy of plurralism, elsewhere (Belhachmi, 1996; 1997).

2. For a critique of Intercultural education in Quebec see (Laferriere 1981; 1983 and Page 1988).

3. For a detailed analysis of Quebec's policy of occultation and its implications for intercultural education see Laferrrière (1981)

4. I do not claim a comprehensive examination of the research studies at l'Université de Montréal on Multicultural and intercultural education, nor do I claim to have anlyzed in depth the studies cited in this paper. Nonetheless, I claim that these papers do reflect an institutionalized pattern of research in the field.

5. For an analysis of this shift from community to state see Laferrière (1983).

6. As of the mid 1980s the Quebec Ministry of education began to become more articulate in its binary cultural policy between the "Quebecers", and the so called communautés culturelles. See references on the ministry (1985, 1988). The latest of these policies are the CCCI 1993a and CCCI 1993b. For a critique of the Quebec's institutional pluralism, policy of multiculturalism and intercultural education see my work Belhachmi (1995; 1996a, 1996b).

7. See Juteau and Mc Andrew (1992).

8. For an analysis of the limits of Institutional pluralism see my work (Belhachmi, 1996a).

9. To consult each of the studies identified in the FCAR project "Construction Des Rapport's Ethniques et éducation: problématique et thème Unificateur" contact CETUUM, Montréal.

10. See my work (1997).

11. The reality of representation of "ethnic minorities" in Quebec's academia is clear in who is assigned to be the head of chairs of multicultural education in the universities in Quebec (except for Chicoutimi), and the composition of researcher that make up the research units.

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