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MULTICULTURALISM (TECHNOLOGY, VALUES AND SOCIETY)

Abstract: 1. Introduction; 2. Cultural universalism (monoculturalism, cultural integrationism or assimilationism); 2. a. Exogenous cultural universalism or universalism by colonization; 2. b. Endogenous cultural universalism; 3. Pluriculturalism, interculturalism or multiculturalism at the broad sense; 3. a. Cultural relativism; 3. b. Multiculturalism (strict sense); 4. The crisis of multiculturalism; 5. Conclusion: Multiculturalism and mankind.

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INTRODUCTION

Migrations and communications produce contacts between different civilizations and cultures, values, languages, customs, phenotypes, economy systems and various levels of human development.

Migration implies that contact between different cultures are given in the same physical environment, while communications (trade and all technological means of transmitting information such as television, movies, books, radio, internet etc) do not necessarily require physical contact.

These two phenomena have been increasing every day in the contemporary world.

As for migration, there has been an increase in forced or voluntary displacement of individuals and populations, caused by the search of a better way of life and work, by the facilities brought about by open markets (including eventual formation of free trade zones or common markets), by the availability of more affordable means of transportation (faster and cheaper), by the incentives that some countries with low vegetative growth or low population density afford, seeking to avoid

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the negative impacts of an aging resident population, by economic globalization, by climatic changes, by wars etc. Many are the causes, and a study about them is not the object of this work.

As for communication, it must be said that the technological means of information transmission have today a reach and an immediacy never before checked. Communication technology does not find spatial barriers, penetrating the most remote places of the state and reaching each person.

It is a fact that these contacts bring huge problems, since they require a definition of how to relate to local culture with foreign culture, caused by the migrant or technologically transmitted from one to another country.

Then, we have three ways of relationship between cultures: the cultural universalism, the cultural relativism and the multiculturalism.

CULTURAL UNIVERSALISM (MONOCULTURALISM, CULTURAL INTEGRATIONISM OR ASSIMILATIONISM)

Cultural universalism means, briefly, the solution of cultural conflict by the overall submission of some cultural values of an individual or group of individuals to the cultural standards of another group.

The cultural universalism is also called monoculturalism, cultural integrationism or cultural assimilationism, inasmuch there is the domination (sway) of one culture over another. That one becomes universal (cultural universalism), single (monoculturalism), integrated with other (cultural integrationism) or by this assimilated (cultural assimilationism).

a) EXOGENOUS CULTURAL UNIVERSALISM OR UNIVERSALISM BY COLONIZATION

The first situation is when the migrant culture (or even the transferor of information from the outside) is imposed on the local culture.

The consequence of this sort of domain is the destruction of local culture, a process that can be explained because the new culture was imposed by force, conquering the armed resistance that the locals could hold. Sometimes this domination or rule is not done only by force of arms, but by also voluntary acceptance of new technological solutions for everyday life and everyday solutions such that people contacted took as essential for themselves, embracing new customs and abandoning old habits.

An example of exogenous cultural universalism occurred with indigenous peoples who inhabited the coast of Brazil on the time of the European discovery in the sixteenth century. After the course of several decades, local people began to lose any traces of their primitive culture, and ended up to assimilate the way of life brought by Europeans to the New World, that is, the native disappearing culture took on the features of the colonizers. There is no doubt that the monoculturalism prevailed, aided also by the numerical decrease of indigenous populations due to disease and wars.

Only recently in Brazil, the indigenous policy evolved into an understanding that contact between cultures with a so distinct civilizational level (there are tribes that still live in the neolithic age) could hardly preserve the integrity of the indigenous as a cultural group, and it passed to promote the isolation of indigenous groups who were still not deeply reached. It will be seen more comprehensively about cultural isolation in the item 3. a.

What happened to the Brazilian indigenous ethnical groups, it also came about to some already missing Andean cultures, relative to other Andean peoples and especially to the peoples of Europe, keeping the missing cultures weak and a caricature of that once has been cultural identity. If features of the previous culture were significant, it has been not referred to as monoculturalism, but any of the following forms discussed in section 3: cultural relativism and multiculturalism in the strict sense.

b) ENDOGENOUS CULTURAL UNIVERSALISM

Returning to the Brazilian indigenous issues, which are also common to many other countries, the demographic situation has been reversed a couple of centuries later, when the Brazilian local culture held a domain on the remaining minority indigenous groups and even on new immigrants whose stream was accentuated from the seventeenth century on (as Africans) and from the nineteenth century on (as the Europeans of different nationalities). The state policy adopted by Brazil becomes the universalism or endogenous cultural assimilationism.

This state policy aimed to establish the total assimilation of individuals and income groups into the local culture of the majority, as a way to promote national development and public and social security. In other words, the assimilationist or assimilation policy believes in the idea that the presence of different cultural groups within the country arises difficulties to military recruitment activities, generates resistance to various state actions, hampers social cohesion and population control, disrupts the project and consolidation of the National State, encourages separatism, brings always disputed the policy related to promote specific demands of minority groups, and even removes the solidarity between the people of the country.

Indeed, contemporary studies and researches show that solidarity between people has a direct relationship on the inversion of roles and availability of state means to provide for common needs claimed. If individuals lose confidence in what they can get, relatively to the other who can stay in advantage, it can bring about extinction of solidarity and empathy. The other will be harassed because it overuses others scarce public resources, blots out common benefits such as job offer and social benefits, meanwhile the other (minority, foreigner etc) becomes a factor of disturbance of social harmony.

The endogenous cultural assimilationism as policy, corresponded to the era of formation of national States, which afforded the central government the capability of meeting all the country's resources to act on behalf of the entire community, allowing a significant economic leap and a better position in international concert, increasing the outer defense. Patriotism accompanied the idea of „one state,

one nation”, where common values, shared among its citizens, imposed collective defense of the equals in the nation.

In Brazil, the myth of the formation of unified nation led to the creation of a common and convergent historiography for the construction of the Brazilian universal character. The Portuguese tongue was established as the compulsory official language taught in all indigenous communities, even prohibited the teaching of other languages of some European communities who installed themselves mainly in the South region of the country (in the municipalities of Italian or German majority, only the Portuguese language were allowed).

Endogenous cultural universalist politics have never sounded very acceptable in the face of minority communities, who saw themselves forced to integrate into the local culture. Hence theories have been arisen that sought to explain that the integration is disassociated of the state policy, but inherent to the circumstances.

Among the theories that speak assimilation as a natural and voluntary result of coexistence in a larger cultural environment, there is the „Melting Pot Theory”, disseminated in the US academies. It is been said to exist an amalgam in society that receives foreigners, that works without State interference. Such amalgam preserves the national identity, which — in the words of the „founding Fathers” — is a design of providence. Of course, the United States monitors this integration and the „freedom” is only apparent. Even when it is said that each migrant brings with them new values that are absorbed into the American society, never it is ceased to say that the foreigners always absorb the core values of the American society, although naturally (the „American way of life”).

The US, like Brazil, in order to promote further cultural assimilationism, established a policy of granting of nationality by local birth (*ius soli*), principle indeed prevalent in countries receiving migration.

The extreme of cultural universalism is the total intolerance of divergent, as witnessed in some moments in History that ethnic cleansing has become the homogenizing policy practiced by the state.

PLURICULTURALISM, INTERCULTURALISM OR MULTICULTURALISM AT THE BROAD SENSE

The idea of forming a unique culture no longer exists in many States, and for several reasons.

There are countries where the National State is already understood by consolidated, and the presence within it of various cultures (long-time arrived or not) inspires ways of coexistence and tolerance, even with appreciation of cultural expression as a human right. Some of these States are, even from its origin, polinational.

The first way to deal with cultural diversity (pluriculturalism, interculturalism and multiculturalism in the broad sense) is through cultural relativism. The second way is through the multiculturalism strict sense.

a) CULTURAL RELATIVISM

According to cultural relativism, the state policy becomes the total tolerance for minority cultural expressions.

In some situations, this tolerance takes aspects of indifference and isolationism. The cultural isolationism can produce the creation of ghettos or the isolation of communities, situations in which the State even doesn't attempt to impose hegemonic cultural patterns or a culture defended to other segments of the population.

Examples of cultural isolationism were the laws of the US or South African apartheid, or the spatial isolation of indigenous groups which were not reached in Brazil (in the deep Amazon). In this case, the cultural isolation is so sharp, that no rule of Brazilian Criminal Law it is applied there, being allowed — according to indigenous customs — infanticide and death penalty by decision of the village chiefs or councils. This isolation, is even seen by the National Indian Foundation in Brazil (in Portuguese FUNAI, Fundação Nacional do Índio) as an essential policy for the preservation of the cultural identity of these people, it would be easily lost if they were to have contact with the „white man”. Today, there are a few hundred still uncontacted tribes living in the Amazon.

Of course, isolationism is justified only within a few extreme situations, and it is not fitting where communities settle entails with economic or social nature. In this case, the isolation will produce a serious exclusion in disfavor of some national communities, depriving certain groups of the access to goods and services, which were so reserved for the non-isolated population. Just remember the Jewish ghettos and restrictions on its inhabitants, or of modern laws in Europe that keeps excluded local citizenship to children born on European soil, but whose parents are from other countries and cultures.

The outcome of this segregation, is the failure of social solidarity, social exclusion disturbing public order and insurrection in relation to the dominant values by those who feel themselves excluded.

b) MULTICULTURALISM (STRICT SENSE)

If isolationism is not the solution, it can only be admitted a strict-sensu multiculturalist policy.

Here, tolerance is relative, because there is no complete indifference to the cultural groups present in the state.

The reason is that community life requires that the rights of any group are not absolute. The total permissiveness to strange customs creates many problems because lower social cohesion removes the possibility of living together in the same spaces and reduces the solidarity that must permeate life in society.

In a study on multiculturalism that has been held for ten years, the Harvard Professor Robert Putnan, using data collected from 26,200 people in 40 communities, found that the more racially diverse is a community, it exists less solidarity, there is less confidence in institutions and politicians, and lower social altruism.

On the other hand, the more homogeneous is a social group, more public spending will be made for the community in general.

This research, rather than to take a hasty and erroneous conclusion that racial homogeneity corresponds to the basis for progress, should be used to the understanding that only by building common national values it will be possible to remove any idea of relativism and segregation in order to meet the goal of a solidary community.

The strict-sense multiculturalism is a kind of cultural universalism mitigated because it preserves the idea of basic or national common values that can unite all members of the community, while respecting certain diversity, if and while differing values do not compromise what is essential to the life in the society.

It is seeking diversity in equality, or equality in diversity, in a necessary balance, because it can be tolerated only a part of what is different, and another part will be not. There are no absolute rights or total cultural expression, and each cultural group, including the foreign community and the minorities, and even the majority, must give up what is required for the sake of integration to common core values.

An example can shed light upon this idea: in Brazil, the African religions practiced public sacrifice of animals. Now, the practitioners living in common areas with no-practitioners, especially in urban environments, share the common understanding that animal sacrifices harmed health and common values on public hygiene and the protection of animals. It arose because, as a model for coexistence, it was required the abstinence from the practice of animal sacrifices, and the rite was replaced by other kinds of offerings in a solution that preserved superior common values to the whole community.

Someone may refuse to allow the military service because of cultural reasons. However, many countries admit that this objection can always be replaced by an alternative provision of public character, which reconciles the opposition with the idea of proportional social charges and re-creates interpersonal solidarity.

Today, the great world problem is that the degree of tolerance is variable in time and place, depending on circumstantial wealth of the country. The tolerance depends on how the available social resources will be shared, and on the consensus on what is essential to share. That is, what are the common, basic and essential values to choose.

THE CRISIS OF MULTICULTURALISM

The presence of a growing contingent of Muslims in Europe and other Western countries raises the question of conceptualizing and the possibility of construction of basic and common values, which are necessary to a strict-sense multiculturalist perspective and tolerable coexistence between all members of the population. Even for maintenance of the essential solidarity and social altruism.

Between Western and Muslim, it seems there to be a major point of divergence: equality between genders. While French Muslims require segregated public pools, doctors of both sexes in all specialties, permission to unrestricted use of the veil in schools or absence of female physical activities in public spaces, at the same

time France (the State) responds with the impossibility of give solution for these demands, because there are huge economic costs involved and especially because there is the unacceptability of the assumption that the sexes can — in health and education aspects — enjoy the desired differentiation. This segregation-oriented policy is referred by Sarah Song, of the University of Berkley, in her article *Multiculturalism*, in which she points out that „some group-differentiated rights are held by individual members of minority groups, as in the case of individuals who are granted exemptions from generally applicable laws in virtue of their religious beliefs or individuals who seek language accommodations in schools or in voting. Other group-differentiated rights are held by the group qua group rather by its members severally; such rights are properly called group rights, as in the case of indigenous groups and minority nations, who claim the right of self-determination.” Further on, it will be said that these integration policy of minorities into the larger civilian and cultural framework of a nation, will bring about critics, one of them is certain privileges afforded to the minorities members or even stimulus of raising conflicts of minorities within other minorities.

The example shows how the French society as a whole does not enjoy yet a balance on an essential point „non-negotiable” for most of the French, but absolutely „certain” to the Muslims under penalty of mischaracterization of their cultural expression and social life.

But after all, what society we are talking about? An entirely-indifferent society to others’ cultural values, segregationist and isolationist? Or a multiculturalist society, in which basic and common social values must be constructed and accepted as a basis for social coexistence in a single inclusive space? Is there chance of acceptance of common values by both sides?

This seems to be a matter of great importance in the nowadays world, which is plagued by intolerance, fundamentalism, radicalism and terrorism. And the difficulty in achieving the necessary balance and setting up a common-core values seems to be generating a critique of the concept of strict-sense multiculturalism as State policy. For some, there would be no chance of success in this policy, because it will always remain the radicalism and intransigence of certain minorities.

Criticism of multiculturalism earned academic forum in 1992, with the release of the article — converted in 1997 in the book *The clash of civilizations and the re-making of the world order*, by Samuel Huntington, for whom multiculturalism is an anti-Western ideology. However, the Islam will continue to maintain contact with the Western civilization. Globalization, trade, communications, migration, internet etc., insist on opening the doors to a world of values from the other world.

In *The Contemporary Arab Reader on Political Islam*, a collective book organized by Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, It is possible to draw out a general conception that western capitalism and liberalism created a segregation model, becoming Islam an alternative to capitalism and to the West. It is known that many western advertising, books, music or cinema can destroy much of the traditional values and way of life in Islamic society; and that economic and social segregation reinforced this religious identity, because it grouped together those common conditions of segregation and relative poverty. Despite the Muslim fundamentalism is able to gather

only 50,000 of the 1.5 billion Muslims in the world, a significant percentage of Europeans see it as a threat to national identity. Nationalist and xenophobic movements abound in politics in several European countries.

Undoubtedly, multiculturalism as state policy in the West, goes through a widespread crisis, because many do not know how to overcome the difficulty of respecting such as intended by migrant communities (with demands that occur in the name of the affirmation of national and cultural identities).

Countries considered multiculturalists such as Canada, support the need to build common values, according to the implemented policy in 1971, under the title „Just Society”, or under the Canadian Multiculturalist Act. But the Netherlands has been criticized for having abandoned multiculturalism and returned to the cultural universalism, after the declaration in 2011 of its first minister that „culture, norms and Dutch values should be dominant”. The „National Front” in France, the „One Nation Party” in Australia and many other examples mean for many a crisis of multiculturalism.

CONCLUSION: MULTICULTURALISM AND MANKIND

It's necessary to make a self-criticism to certain models of multiculturalism.

First of all, the group identities are not natural categories. They are not innate but learned, so it implies that they may be abandoned or changed. As to nationalism, these identities are useful, but only under certain circumstances, for certain purposes, for a certain time.

When you think of a new international context where the interactions between communities is a reality, and identities are destroyed and rebuilt incessantly before the inevitable technological, spatial and commercial contacts, it must now be searched another sort of identity with new essential common values. These new common core values will therefore be universal and based on respect for coexistence and at the belief that this is desirable and inevitable, and that there are no absolute rights. Just in what is not essential for the coexistence, differences may exist. The community of common interests and values requires a common culture in some basic aspects for the social coexistence, precisely formed by common interests and values. Then, it's necessary to cease irreconcilable values at the same society. This is in the words of Albert Einstein a true disease: „Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind”.

On the other hand, any relativist, isolationist or segregationist politics deeply destroys the social tissue. The problem of European Muslim youth is not to have two cultures, but properly not to experience any of them, because there is social exclusion. They cannot follow exactly the Islam in France, and they do not feel themselves well welcomed by the West, that often keeps far from them the benefits owed by others.

The strict-sense multiculturalism is only able to take further steps when there is a possibility to identify or to perceive common-core values, as values that can bring to the community a better life, and promote solidarity and altruism. After all, as identified Paul Zak in his book *The Moral Molecule*, human development re-

quires unselfishness. And altruism necessarily arises from the identity of individuals. This identity can only come from common values, which exceed in importance details of race, color, origin, geography. It is necessary to identify the essential traits of common mankind in each of us. After all, as Montesquieu said, „I am a citizen of humanity first and by necessity, and a citizen of France second, and only by accident”. Also the Algerian Albert Camus noted: „I love my country too much to be a nationalist”. Or, as predicted the British Herbert G. Wells, „our true nationality is mankind”.

I would say that our true culture must be our mankind.