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Keyword: Cultural Diversity

A Guide Through the Debate

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1 Introduction

Diversity approaches encountered the European education systems in a rather late and recent stage of their contemporary development. As a strictly controlled and successfully defended core domain of the nation-state, even at the beginning of the 21st century, public education remains hierarchically and institutionally rooted in the disciplinary apparatus of 19th century “nationalizing nationalisms” (BRUBAKER 1996). Consequently, in a wide range of European nation-states and throughout rather different majority-minorities relations as well as autochthonous-allochthonous, native-migrant configurations, the diversification and “heterogenization” of education is not perceived as an institutional challenge to the continuity of the education systems as such, but often is still seen as a mere appendix, suitable for compensatory measures, and as an extra-ordinary situation.

In recent years, however, especially in the Anglo-Saxon debate on intercultural/multicultural education a pressing need for diversifying and “multiculturalizing” the education systems has been demanded through mechanisms of “affirmative action” and “positive discrimination” which would allow for an “empowerment” of certain ethnic minorities, both autochthonous and allochthonous, in the course of their process of self-identification, ethnogenesis and “emancipation” (GIROUX 1994; MCLAREN 1997). In the continental European arena of the debate, on the other hand, the need for interculturality in education generally is not demanded on the ground of the minorities’ identity necessities; here the struggle for intercultural education is justified by the apparent inability of the majority society of meeting the new challenges created by the increasing heterogeneity of the pupils, by the growing socio-cultural complexity of majority-minority relations and, in general, by diversity as a key feature of future European societies (GOGOLIN 2002a; KRÜGER-POTRATZ 2005).

In the following sections, after a brief conceptual introduction of the notion of cultural diversity, the theoretical discourses and educational programs which recognize the intrinsic value of cultural diversity in education will be traced back to their origins in relation to the paradigm of multiculturalism and its process of institutionalization and “academization”, in the course of which diversity approaches entered the field of education. Then, the different conceptual “solutions” for the challenge of ethno-cultural diversity will be presented and discussed – in relation to the necessary redefinition of diversity in terms of hybridity and intersectionality and as concrete programs of “anti-discrimination” and “diversity management”. In conclusion, consequences for prevalent applications of cultural diversity approaches will be discussed with regard to their potential for educational research, policy and practice, as illustrated in the case studies included below as contributions to this issue of the *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft*.

2 Defining Cultural Diversity

The term of diversity is still used rather ambiguously in debates on multiculturalism, identity politics, anti-discrimination policies and educational contexts (BREWSTER et al. 2002; VERTOVEC/WESSENDORF 2004). Sometimes it seems to refer to any approach which recognizes differences e.g. in education, such as PRENGEL’s (cf. 1995) distinction between feminist, intercultural and integrative education, each of which focuses on gender, immigration and disability respectively as sources of “difference”. This (over-) emphasis of difference, however, quickly faces the problem of how to include other, non gender, migration or disability related “sources of difference” and how to address possible intersections between these sources of difference (KRÜGER-POTRATZ/LUTZ 2002).

Therefore, the concept of difference, which suggests the possibility of neatly distinguishing between its respective traits or markers, is being gradually substituted by the notion of diversity, which in contrast emphasizes the multiplicity, overlapping and crossing between sources of human variation. In this sense, cultural diversity is increasingly employed and defined in relation to social and cultural variation in the same way as “biodiversity” is used when referring to biological and ecological variations, habitats and ecosystems. One attempt to explicitly define diversity through this lens conceives it as “a situation that includes representation of multiple (ideally all) groups within a prescribed environment, such as a university or a workplace. This word most commonly refers to differences between cultural groups, although it is also used to describe differences within cultural groups, e.g. diversity within the Asian-American culture includes Korean Americans and Japanese Americans. An emphasis on accepting and respecting cultural differences by recognizing that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another underlies the current usage of the term” (Diversity Dictionary [n.d.]).

As illustrated by this definition, “diversity” tends to be epitomized as “cultural diversity”, as the diversity of Lebenswelten (lifeworlds), lifestyles and identities, which in an increasingly “glocalized” world cannot be separated from each other and instead end up mixing and hybridizing (VAN LONDEN/DE RUIJTER 2003). Moreover, the discourse on diversity not only tends to include a descriptive dimension – how cultures, groups and societies are diversely structured and how they deal with heterogeneity –, but also a

strongly prescriptive dimension – that states how cultures, groups and societies should interact within themselves and among each other.

This normative aspect is even more visible in the still ongoing process of legally recognizing the international value and contribution of cultural diversity. Starting from a re-definition and broadening of the notion of “cultural heritage”, which now also includes non-material, intangible goods and elements, especially the UNESCO’s essentialist, static and elitist definition of culture has evolved to a more inclusive one, which redefines cultural heritage in terms of changes, mixtures and diversity of cultures and people (UNESCO 2003). Thus, in its “Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity”, approved in Paris in 2001 specifically as a reaction opposed to the expansion of U.S. cultural and media pre-dominance, cultural diversity is defined as “the common heritage of humanity”, according to which “culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for human kind as biodiversity is for nature” (UNESCO 2002, p. 4).

Reflecting this normative stance, some authors, particularly in the field of education, have transformed diversity from an analytic category to an “imperative”, which forces educational and political actors to react to the “growing ethnic heterogeneity occurring in contemporary states” (JOHNSON 2003, p. 18). Accordingly, the recognition of diversity becomes a political postulate, a demand articulated by minority organizations and movements struggle to enter the hegemonic, supposedly homogeneous public domain of Western societies. As both KOOPMANS et al. (2005) and SICAKKAN (2005) illustrate in their respective comparative studies, different European nation-state contexts trigger rather diverse forms of collective actions and ways of making demands, through which ethnic, cultural, national, religious and sexual minorities are entering the public sphere. The recognition of diversity in this sphere challenges conventional notions of citizenship, as new forms of political participation by these emerging actors will end up establishing different “types of belonging allowed in the public sphere” (SICAKKAN 2005, p. 7).

Whereas in the European Union this redefinition of the political and educational domains by new minority actors is still a rather new phenomenon (Council of Europe 2006), the Anglo-Saxon and especially the U.S. and Canadian contexts already demonstrate long traditions of “diversity management” as officialized reactions to minorities making demands. As WOOD’s (2003) critical assessment of the U.S. diversity debate proves, since 1978, different levels of court rulings establishing “affirmative action” and “equal employment opportunity” schemes in public institutions, organizations and businesses have forced both public and private actors to introduce “diversity” mechanisms into their particular organizational contexts. As a consequence, the whole discourse on diversity, diversity recognition and diversity management is turning into an ideology which politically and even legally promotes the perception of certain traits and features – gender, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, for gender – in detriment of others – such as, for instance, social class. As a quasi constitutional principle ratified even by the U.S. Supreme Court, cultural diversity becomes a “right”, which substitutes and – at the same time – merges with previous notions of racial essentialism (WOOD 2003).

Therefore, before analyzing specific policies and approaches with regard to diversity management and anti-discrimination, the close relation between discourses on diversity and the Anglo-Saxon debate on multiculturalism will be reviewed in the following sec-

tion. In the course of this debate, diversity has evolved from being perceived as a problem and later as a challenge to being seen as a resource and afterwards as a right. It is in the educational sphere and its step-by-step visibilization of diversity where this transition is best illustrated.

3 Multiculturalism, Essentialism and the Visibilization of Cultural Diversity

Discourses on diversity, which originally emerged as part of “multiculturalist” social movements in societies self-defined as “countries of immigration” located mostly in North America and Oceania (KYMLICKA 1995; DIETZ 2003), are currently entering intercultural education, and were originally conceived as a differential education approach for allochthonous, immigrated minorities (MECHERIL 2004; KRÜGER-POTRATZ 2005). As the long-standing tradition of *indigenism* illustrates, however, in the Latin American context and under nationalist, not multiculturalist ideological premises, very similar policies of differential education have been targeting autochthonous, indigenous minorities, and not allochthonous ones (DIETZ 2004a).

This paradoxical similarity between mutually opposing approaches reveals the necessity of analyzing the notions of diversity that are included in intercultural, multicultural, bilingual and/or *indigenist* educational responses from a larger, societal perspective. Cultural diversity emerges as a concept and an issue in a particular phase of the multiculturalism debates and specifically as an anti-essentialist claim against all too reified notions of culture and ethnicity. In the Anglo-Saxon context, multiculturalism is understood as a set of precariously and always provisionally integrated discourses which claim to assemble the wide range of dissident social movements under a common political and societal horizon. While the Canadian tradition of “multiculturalizing” society has successfully entered public welfare and educational institutions sooner in the context of francophone Quebecois making of regionalist/nationalist demands, the U.S. movements have dwelled upon demands made by a wide range of minorities. The confluence of programs of these “new” social movements – Afro-American, indigenous, Chicano, feminist, gay-lesbian, “third-world”, etc. – have since then made themselves known under the often ambiguous slogan of “multiculturalism”. Here, this term will be employed to signify this heterogeneous group of movements, associations, communities, and – afterwards – institutions that come together in vindicating the value of ethnic and/or cultural “difference”, as well as in the struggle to pluralize the societies that shelter these communities and movements (HABERMAS 1998; VERTOVEC 1998).

Through their emphasis on difference, far from being a simple expression of the common interests of a group, identity turns into identity politics, into the negotiation of multiple identities among diverse social competitors. The corresponding “politics of difference” is liberating and emancipating, as long as it unmasks the false reductionist essentialisms that reunite, under the term “assimilation strategy” (ZARLENGA KERCHIS/YOUNG 1995, p. 9), bourgeois nationalisms and classical Marxism. Since identities are no longer simple, reliable expressions of the positions that individuals occupy in the production process, these identities become diluted: they no longer correspond to identifiable subjects, but to mere “subject positions” (LACLAU/MOUFFE 1985). Throughout the subsequent conceptual and

political-social-educational processes, the “social subjects” are de-centered and de-essentialized.

Nevertheless, the resulting politics of identity start being sustained by explicit politics of difference. Until then, social movements’ identities had been binary and antagonistic; precisely because of the political consequences that the anti-essentialist relativization has in their ability to mobilize, the encounter with postmodernism will be a watershed for the whole set of movements of this kind. All of the “new” social movements resort to collective action in order to build new identities; the “project identities” (CASTELLS 1997) of these movements are not the starting point, but the aimed result of mobilization. This implies that in order to become consolidated as a social movement and have an impact on society as a whole multiculturalism will require a phase in which the identities of the new social actors, whose appearance and consolidation multiculturalism shelters, are built and stabilized. The permanently “recycled”, typically “postmodern” identities do not make identities discrete: social movements run the risk of becoming diluted by the gradual individualization of “personal lifestyles and a cosmopolitan consumerism” (MODOOD 1997, p. 21). Because of this, multiculturalist movements, just like the rest of the “new” social movements, bestow on culture a new function as an emancipatory resource (HABERMAS 1998). The new identities are constructed precisely at the “hinge between the system and the lifeworld” (HABERMAS 1989); a potential for protest arises from the confrontation between the two, converting culture, ways of life, and differential identity into its panacea: “The issue is not primarily one of compensations that the welfare state can provide, but of defending and restoring endangered ways of life. In short, the new conflicts are not ignited by distribution problems but by questions having to do with the grammar of forms of life” (HABERMAS 1989, p. 392).

For the multiculturalist movements struggling for recognition of diversity, the normative reinforcement of these new identities has gone through a phase in which the differences that were originally constructed are “re-essentialized”. Parallel to the beginning of the educational, academic, and later political institutionalization of diversity recognition schemes, “racial”, “ethnic”, and/or “cultural” differences are used as arguments in the struggle for access to the *de facto* powers: “Essentializing involves categorizing and stereotyping, and is a way of thinking and acting which treats individuals as if they were ‘essentially’ defined, that is their subjectivity is determined, by membership of a particular category, in this case their cultural/ethnic group. In multiculturalism, therefore culture plays the part of race and sex in other discourses” (GRILLO 1998, p. 196).

4 Discrimination, Recognition and the Pitfalls of Positive Discrimination

In this strategy, the prototype of feminism is the referent. Its notion of using “quotas” to facilitate access to power is again taken up by the multicultural struggle for the recognition of diversified, but delimited, discrete group identities in order to generate a highly complex system of differential treatment of minority groups. The objective of this “affirmative action” policy, applied first in the representative and decision-making bodies of the movements themselves and, afterwards, transferred to the academic and educational spheres, consists of palliating the persistent discriminations due to criteria of sex, skin

color, religion, ethnicity, etc., that the minorities suffer by means of a deliberate policy of “positive discrimination” (PINCUS 1994).

Faced with the criticism of this differential treatment and its distinction between “negative” *versus* “positive” discrimination formulated from the academic and educational spheres as well as from the political arena (GLAZER 1997; NIETO 1999), multiculturalism claims the normative difference between the discriminations that members of a stigmatized collectivity have historically suffered, on the one hand, and the discrimination that the “affirmative action” policy can generate on an individual level for specific members of the hegemonic group, on the other hand (MOSLEY/CAPALDI 1996).

In the course of applying affirmative action strategies to different minority groups, an implicit policy regime of “dealing with diversity” starts to emerge. In order for the policy of quotas – transferred from its initial feminist context and its analysis of gender differences to the new context of diversity recognition – to be effective, it requires a certain stability of the “frontiers” and delimitations established not only between the hegemonic majority and the subordinated minorities, but also between each one of these minority groups. So, paradoxically, the more successful a multiculturalist movement is in its struggle for recognition, the more deeply it adopts a static and essentialist notion of “culture” (VERTOVEC/WESSENDORF 2004).

By subsuming complex “racial”, “ethnic”, “gender”, “cultural”, “subcultural”, and “lifestyle” differences, overlappings and intersectionalities, the new multiculturalist core concept of “culture” becomes more and more similar to the static notion that anthropology generated in the 19th century and which it has attempted to overcome definitively at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century: “‘Culture’ in this sense, is presumed to be something virtually burnt into the genes of people, forever distinguishing and separating them. A ‘multicultural’ society, in this reasoning, is therefore a pool of bounded uni-cultures, forever divided into we’s and they’s” (VERTOVEC 1998, p. 37).

The evident culturalization that can be detected in any public statements issued in the eighties on social and educational problems constitutes, at the same time, the main achievement and the greatest danger of the multiculturalist movements (GIROUX 1994). By treating minorities as “species on their way to extinction” (VERTOVEC 1998, p. 36) and by designing policies oriented exclusively towards their “conservation”, this kind of diversity recognition strategy applied to educational intervention runs the risk of “ethnifying” the cultural diversity of its original target groups.

As GIROUX (1994) and STOLCKE (1995) warn, the appropriation of this kind of essentialist discourse of difference by the hegemonic groups generates new ideologies of group supremacy that ground their privileges on a culturalism that is hard to distinguish from the “new cultural racism”. Authors, such as DARDER/TORRES (2004), criticize the indirect confluence of the segregationist tendency of the diversity treatment that has recently been institutionalized in the United States and the increase in xenophobia and racism; both coincide in relativizing the universal validity of human rights beyond cultural differences, whether they are assumed or real.

5 The Shift Towards “Anti-Discrimination” and “Diversity Management” Policies

Despite this criticism and these warnings, it is this cultural and collective labelling of individuals and their identities with dimensions of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or sexual orientation, which ultimately is used to make possible the relative “success” of multiculturalism in different Anglo-Saxon countries. By discretely delimitating group belongings, the access to and exclusion from certain public goods and services can now be perceived, measured and targeted. The institutional and legal recognition of multiculturalism has therefore been achieved through its concomitant legal framework of anti-discrimination and particularly – in the case of the U.S. – through highly polemical, but still influential – state and federal laws such as the affirmative action acts and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (WOOD 2003).

The necessity of identifying yourself along a set of officially recognized diversity categories has indirectly, but often intentionally promoted an essentialist identity discourse, which homogenizes group members and thus contradicts the very basic assumptions of diversity. In order to avoid this “groupism” bias which characterizes Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism (VERTOVEC/WESSENDORF 2004: 22), in the European context the legal framework combines the multicultural tradition of recognizing certain features as identity markers of under-privileged groups with a strong emphasis on the concerned individual’s multiple and heterogeneous identity layers, levels and strategies.

Therefore, reacting to long lasting pressure due to the demands and the legal struggles of minority organizations and their supra-national umbrella federations – such as the European Network Against Racism (ENAR 2002) and the European Racism and Xenophobia Information Network (RAXEN) –, the legislation recently introduced by the European Union on anti-discrimination – particularly the so-called “Race Directive” (EC Directive 2000/43) and the “Employment Directive” (EC Directive 2000/78) – differs from the U.S. prototype in the sense that multiple forms of identification and/or discrimination are explicitly stated and considered. In general, the Amsterdam Treaty in article 13 targets discrimination in the spheres of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, age and disability. In order to implement this article, the mentioned directives emphasize different spheres: on the one hand, the Race Directive focuses only on ethnicity and race as possible sources of discrimination, but does so by extending its range to all public and private contexts in which minority discrimination may occur; on the other hand, the Employment Directive, which only applies to work related contexts, extends its definition of discrimination far beyond race and ethnicity by also including age, disability and religion as sources of discrimination and as domains of anti-discrimination measures. Both directives are framed by an action program to combat discrimination and a political campaign to force the member states to adopt their legal provisions accordingly and to create independent anti-discrimination bodies (NIESSEN 2001; ECRI 2002; ENAR 2002).

As studies such as PLS Ramboll Management (2002) prove, the degree of legal implementation differs substantially from one member state to another; those nation-states which already have begun to directly adapt to multiculturalism and minority demands, such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium, have already included the content and procedures of the EU into national laws and policies, while France and the French influenced Mediterranean EU member countries in particular still resist

the introduction of “diversity markers” as prerequisites for active anti-discrimination policies and programs. Nevertheless, it seems that in the long run most European countries will end up adopting a certain number of “diversity-sensitive” measures, which will force public administrations and civil society organizations and private businesses as well to prevent discrimination against minority clients, beneficiaries, customers or employees (STUBER 2004; European Commission 2005).

6 Cultural Diversity as a Resource

The so-called “management of diversity” is the institutional response several administrations, organizations and enterprises are currently adopting in order to “prepare” their institutional actors for the new legal claims and requirements. Originally, “diversity management”, coined – again – in the Anglo-Saxon context in the sphere of management studies, was meant to symbolize a shift away from single-issue programs of anti-discrimination – particularly gender-related empowerment programs – towards a broader approach of developing inner-organizational measures sensitive of and promoting minorities in order to prevent risky and costly collective claims and class action lawsuits against administrations and companies. From this original, rather defensive concept, diversity management has evolved towards recognition, or appreciation of internal diversity as an asset and a resource which administrations and companies should consciously exploit in order to increase the motivation, productivity and corporate identification of their “human resources”, expand to new market segments and niches and, in general, develop more complex and heterogeneous administrative and/or entrepreneurial solutions for an increasingly post-Fordist, tertiary and highly differentiated economic, social and political environment (KOHNNEN 2003; STUBER 2004).

Since this “positive turn”, diversity management refers to all those measures aimed at recognizing and appreciating differences inside organizations in order to value them as contributions to the resources of an organization. By reflecting on the above mentioned shift towards multiple, non-essentialized identities, it becomes clear that the current “recipes” for diversity management not only include “visible” markers of an individual’s identity – supposedly race, ethnicity, religion, gender or disability –, but also non-perceivable sources of diversity such as lifestyles, value orientations, autobiographical features and personal or professional perspectives, all of which are to be promoted in terms of creating not equality, but an “inclusive environment”. Therefore, diversity management does not target specific sources of diversity, instead encompasses the whole set of “diversity of diversity” (WALLMAN 2003). By implementing diversity screening in hiring practices, training, mentoring, awareness-raising or skill-building measures (LODEN 1995; VEDDER 2002), the underlying aim is to “create a workplace that truly values diversity, which means recognizing and acknowledging individual differences and accommodating differing needs and expectations” (KOHNNEN 2003, p. 4).

7 Cultural Diversity as a Right

Diversity, however, is not only designed as a resource for increasing economic or administrative opportunities; it also implies recognition of certain rights, rights pertaining not merely to the individual, but to the individual as a member of a certain, stigmatized or marginalized minority group. Therefore, the heterogenization of individual and collective identity markers, as sketched in the discourse of diversity management, is not translatable into a political strategy to promote the recognition of these specific rights, which have to be fought for on a collective and not an individual basis, against a deeply rooted, still overwhelming tradition of universalism.

Starting from the shared – postmodern as well as multiculturalist – acknowledgement that universalism, as a specific way of conceptualizing rights and obligations, is the product of a particular Western tradition, an anti-universalist stance has often to be taken in order to demand the recognition of particular rights of minority groups (cf. KYMLICKA 1995; 2000). This – often simplifying – dichotomization between hegemonic Western universalism and potentially counter-hegemonic ethnic and cultural singularities is even more accentuated in the related field of international relations. HUNTINGTON's polemic theory about the inevitable “clash of civilizations” (1996) between the “Western-Christian block” and above all “Islam” deepens and takes advantage of the stereotypical vision of “the Orient” as an otherness that is incommensurable with “the West” (HUNTER 1998). At the same time, it has unleashed – long before the September 11th events – a whole series of speculations about the impact that the “Islamic threat” will have on a world that is more and more globalized and pluri-centric (BARBER 1995; HUMPHREY 1998).

In this debate about universalism and particularism, which also permeates the pedagogical discussion about intercultural education, both sides coincide in identifying “the West” with the project of modernity and a universalist and individualist conception of human rights, on the one hand, and non-Western cultures with traditionalism, collectivism, and the rejection of human rights, on the other. In order to oppose to this Manichean tendency, it should be remembered that historically universalism is nothing more than a “globalized localism” (DE SOUSA SANTOS 1995), with a notion of human rights that has arisen in a specific cultural context. From this perspective, “the hidden imperialism and implicit monoculturalism” (PINXTEN 1997, p. 155) in the traditional conception of human rights must be de-contextualized and separated from human rights as such, in order to rescue the – incidentally “Western”, but in principle universalizable – contribution that the original Declaration of Human Rights makes to the formulation of a new inclusive concept of citizenship.

The subsequent task, in which both liberals and less dogmatic communitarianists coincide, is comprised of acknowledging the cultural pluralism that exists in contemporary societies and of formulating new mechanisms of negotiation and “trans-cultural procedural criteria” (DE SOUSA SANTOS 1997, p. 9). In this sense, “managing” cultural diversity thus means recognizing a particular and contextually defined mix of individual and group rights: a “multicultural citizenship” should be based, on the one hand, on individual rights *qua* citizens, and, on the other hand, on the mutual recognition of “differential group rights” by all the components of society. The specific concretion of these rights is only feasible if universal rights are translated into the particular rights of specific groups in each multicultural context (KYMLICKA 1995).

The starting point for this process of managing diversity within society is the recognition of collective rights and the negotiation with a state that is based on the concession of individual rights. The participants in this negotiation must necessarily include the “communities” that consider themselves to be the bearers of these differential rights. However, the proposed liberal-multicultural “compromise”, put into practice, would again spark an “invention”, an institutionalization, and a “reification” of the culturally “different” communities: “this implies an institutionalization of cultures in the public sphere, a freezing of cultural differences and a reifying of cultural ‘communities’” (CAGLAR 1997, p. 179).

For eminently strategic and practical reasons, the first steps towards implanting measures destined to recognize and publicly manage cultural diversity as a right are focused on two areas of action – public school and university. In the United States, the academic sphere tends to absorb a great deal not only of the discussion about multiculturalism (SCHLESINGER 1998), but also of the above mentioned experiments and pilot projects for applying the multicultural program through concrete measures of diversity management. At universities, the rise of Ethnic Studies and its subdivisions – Afro-American Studies, Latino/a Studies, Native American Studies etc. – constitutes one of the major “success stories” of institutionalized diversity recognition. The transformations that took place simultaneously inside of the higher education system – above all, a renewed emphasis on establishing inter- or transdisciplinary programs and the prior opening up of academia to activist approaches by feminist gender studies – favored the rapid academic integration of multiculturalism and diversity treatment.

Together with the establishment of Ethnic Studies, active programs to diversify the ethnic and cultural composition of university students and the teaching staff have been applied through affirmative action schemes and policies. Throughout the last decades, however, the resulting “success” of both Ethnic Studies and affirmative action strategies at the same time demonstrates their “failure”. Instead of achieving a “transversal” diversification and interculturalization of the academic disciplines, each of the recognized ethnic groups obtains its own “niche” from which it may theorize about identity politics and difference, often deploying a strongly particularist “ethnic absolutism” (GILROY 1992). This structural borderline character is reinforced by the affirmative action policy, whose preferential treatment quotas frequently are based on a rigid and artificial combination of demographic characteristics – sex, age, place of origin – with identity attributions – ethnicity, “race”, sexual orientation – “minoritize”, individualize, and, ultimately demobilize the teaching staff as well as the student body involved in multiculturalist and diversity promoting movements (REYES 1997).

As a result, the “culture wars” unleashed by the appearance of Ethnic Studies, by the policy of positive discrimination, and by the attempts to “manage diversity” not only academia, but all public institutions have often centered around reduced “campus wars” (ARTHUR/SHAPIRO 1994), lacking any generalized impact on contemporary society. However, apart from the academic power niches that have been won, their main contribution consists of having awoken a new cultural and ethnic “sensitivity” in public opinion.

8 Cultural Diversity at School

Parallel to the academic debate about Ethnic Studies and academia-based empowerment approaches, in both the United States and the United Kingdom, the two pioneer countries in the field of multiculturalism, as well as in other countries that have initiated policies at an early point in time that are more or less overly “multicultural” – explicitly in Canada, Australia, the Netherlands and Belgium, for example, and implicitly in Germany, France, the Scandinavian countries, and some Latin American countries with regard to *indigenismo* (CUSHNER 1998) – multiculturalism chooses public school as its starting point and strategic “ally” for impacting other institutions. This turn toward schools and the resulting “pedagogization” of the discourse and practice of diversity treatment are reflected in a gradual movement from a transformationist ideology to reformist politics – since the nineties the educational sphere has become the preferred arena of action, as public school transmits “moral values” that do not necessarily coincide with those prevailing in family or community socialization (REX 1997).

The concrete “entryway” for multicultural diversity treatment to gain access to the public education system chosen in different countries has been the long ongoing discussion on the performance and success in school of “minority pupils”, whether they are ethnic, cultural, religious, or other types of minorities. According to the way many of the educators, pedagogues, and politicians in charge of school institutions see it, the failure of these students in school reflects a distinctive “impediment” or “deficit” (GUNDARA 1982) that they often tend to identify with ethnic membership or the children’s immigrant or “immigrant background” situation. In this type of evaluation, what strikingly stands out is the indiscriminate use of monocausal explanations that only resort to demographic variables such as “minority” or “immigrant”, and are not contrasted or inter-related with other kinds of influences, such as social background, labor and residential contexts, or the composition of the family unit. Empirical studies carried out in different European countries – cf. JUNGBLUTH (1994) for the case of the Netherlands, NAUCK/KOHLMANN/DIEFENBACH (1997), NAUCK/DIEFENBACH/PETRI (1998), and NAUCK (2001) for Germany, FASE (1994) with a contrastive study for the Belgian, British, German, French, and Dutch cases as well as SCHIFFAUER et al. (2004) with a comparison of the Dutch, British, German and French cases – have shown the simplifying and reductionist character of this type of monocausal reasoning.

However, an all too essentialist diversity approach inspired by multiculturalism has taken advantage of the tendency to identify the presence of children from certain minorities in public school with a specific pedagogical “problem” and the corresponding tendency towards an “ethnicization of social conflicts” (DITTRICH/RADTKE 1990, p. 28), using school as a platform to gain access to the debate about necessary educational reforms. As a consequence, currently a great part of the – particularly pedagogical – literature continues to identify the “school integration” of minority groups in a specific society as a “challenge” that requires compensatory adaptations in the prevailing educational system (RADTKE 1996). Due to this essentialist variant of multiculturalism, “pedagogical intervention” indirectly and unintentionally tends to recover its historical mission of stigmatizing “what is different” in order to integrate and nationalize “what is our own”. “Multicultural” or “intercultural” education refers to this pedagogical legacy in its implicit but frequent distinction between “what can be civilized” and “what is intrinsically

bad” within the intercultural relationship: “ ‘intercultural learning’ is thus the latest variant in this strategy of pedagogically channelling the ‘evil’ inherent in any human being and immunizing it from early ages against any possible political temptations” (RADTKE 1995, p. 855).

Right from the first attempts to institutionalize a specific pedagogy for facing these “problems” that supposedly reflect any society’s inherent diversity and heterogeneity. The very different and often antagonistic conceptual, theoretical, and programmatic “solutions” coincide in a series of shared characteristics, which are product of the early pedagogization of the debate on cultural differences and diversities:

- A shared definition of “multicultural” or “intercultural” education and its institution, as part of a global strategy to diversify society, is lacking. From the initial expression “multiethnic education”, used above all in the United States during the first phase, when the traditional assimilationist approaches turned problematical (BANKS 1981), the majority of Anglo-Saxon countries have switched over to the term “multicultural education”, connoting a close link to the original objectives of the multiculturalist movements (KINCHELOE/STEINBERG 1997). In continental Europe, on the other hand, the use of the term “intercultural education” is favored (GOGOLIN 2002b; KRÜGER-POTRATZ 2005). In Latin America, both the criticism of the homogenizing legacy of *indigenismo* and the influence of European international cooperation agencies contribute to the gradual, but often only nominal movement from “indigenous bilingual bicultural education” to “intercultural education” (DIETZ 2000).
- The debate tends to restrict itself merely to the educational or even just the school sphere, generating successive discourses developed “by educators for educators”, which are often disconnected from the societal context in which this debate originated. In several European countries, for example, pedagogy generates discourses about what is “diverse” and/or “intercultural”, while other social sciences discuss “multiculturalism” and the “heterogenization” of society (RADTKE 1996). This debate frequently and systematically mixes the analytical level with the normative level, because on the one hand, the task is to analyze the processes and problems related to cultural and/or ethnic diversity at school, while on the other hand the solution to the “problem” is already supposed to be in hand (DIETZ 2003).
- Therefore, in all of the countries whose education systems have adopted at least nominally “multicultural” or “intercultural” strategies, propositional and programmatic texts strongly predominate over empirical analyses and specific case studies on the real impact that the proposed transformations have (KRÜGER-POTRATZ 2005). The predominant hypothesis that is implicitly handled in these proposals, which lack an empirical foundation, seems to postulate that, in order to “diversify” education, the only thing necessary is to prepare the teaching staff or help them improve certain “intercultural tools” and to promote “good will” among all by pedagogically influencing the student’s “attitudinal nuclei”.

9 Diversity Problematized: the Culturalization of Difference

This normative load has characterized pedagogical multiculturalism ever since it became an explicit program through so-called “intercultural pedagogy” (BORRELLI 1986). In the context of its emergence as a new subdiscipline, a predominantly auxiliary interpretation of anthropological knowledge has generated a terminological-conceptual reductionism which is having a negative impact on the very strategy of diversifying the educational sphere (DIETZ 2003). Without taking into account the above analyzed conceptual origins and debates as well as their close link to minority movements that make demands, intercultural pedagogy risks, in the best case, to reproduce the above mentioned tendency to implicitly “problematize” the existence of cultural diversity in the classroom by uncritically “importing” basic concepts from anthropology such as “culture”, “ethnic group”, and “ethnicity” in their already outdated, 19th century definitions, in the best of cases.

Thus, apart from the recurring use of racializations, which tend to equate supposed ethnic, cultural and racial distinctions, cultural differences are often ethnified by reifying their bearers. Not only is intergroup difference essentialized, but at the same time individual and group diversity phenomena are fused and thus confused. Furthermore, the very basic distinction between *emic* vs. *etic* – actor vs. observer-centered – perspectives of analysis are indiscriminately mixed as if the ethnicized identity discourse of a given minority group would always coincide with its members’ actual cultural practice. Accordingly, such dissimilar notions as culture, ethnicity, phenotypic differences, and demographic minority/majority constellations are confused, and finally, the historical stereotypes of the Western other, the *topoi* of the “gypsy”, “the Muslim” etc. are resorted to. In these kinds of terminological “short circuits”, the practical consequences of the strategy of problematizing cultural diversity, promoted both by the classic tasks of pedagogy and by differential, essentializing multiculturalism, become evident. When the politics of difference are transferred to the classroom, “otherness” becomes a problem, and its solution is “culturalized” by reinterpreting the socio-economic, legal, and/or political inequalities as supposed cultural differences (DIETZ 2003).

The resulting task consists of “de-coding” this kind of culturalist pedagogical discourse and “de-culturalizing” the culturalist-biased interpretations (KALPAKA/WILKENING 1997; WULF 2002). One example is the aforementioned analysis of “school performance” by students from migration and/or minority contexts. Equating “migration” and/or “cultural diversity” in the classroom with school problems is erroneous: “there is no direct link between cultural and linguistic maintenance, or the degree of ethnic group investments, and successful and unsuccessful intellectual investments” (FASE 1994, p. 156). Not even those factors that cannot be reduced to social stratification, but that may possibly be more directly related to the students’ “culture of origin” can be placed in the strictly cultural or migration context. They are, rather, the consequences of characteristically intercultural phenomena. Thus, the exogenous ethnicization to which the students of Turkish and Moroccan origin are exposed in Dutch primary schools reinforces the perception of cultural distance, especially between the students of immigrant origin and the teaching staff, which is already distanced from its students thanks to public school’s persistent “stratified character” (JUNGBLUTH 1994, p. 122).

Adapting BOURDIEU’s (1986) distinction of the types of capital that exist in heterogeneous social spaces, another “intercultural” type of factor can be analyzed according to

the unequal composition of the “social capital” that is available to immigrant families or families from minority groups in contexts of social and ethnic stigmatization (NAUCK 2001). In this sense, the difficulty of transforming this reduced social capital into cultural capital limits the capacity of children stigmatized as “different” to take advantage of the cultural capital that the school institutions offer: “Above all when the processes of ethnic exclusion dominate the actors’ context it is essential to start from the assumption that for international migrants it is difficult to generate and maintain a social capital which is linked to the host context and which is effective in its institutions. Even if they succeed in generating this social capital, it will take time to display its effectiveness and usefulness for the migrant children’s educational attainment” (NAUCK/DIEFENBACH/PETRI 1998, p. 718).

10 Diversity as Hybridity: the Post-Colonial Dissidence

Reacting to these trends towards culturalizing and essentializing diversity, so-called post-colonial theory questions two of institutional multiculturalism’s main postulates: on the one hand, its choice of the Anglo-Saxon educational and academic sphere as the preferred field of action and legitimization, and, on the other hand, its insistence on the need to build communities with clearly defined boundaries that bear discernible identities. Authors such as PRAKASH (1994) hold that, despite all the attempts to diversify Anglo-Saxon academic spheres, the viewpoint from which the external and faraway “other” is observed is hardly distinguishable from the classic colonial perception of cultural diversity. “Orientalism”, already analyzed by SAID as structuring Western perception of the other, persists even in multicultural and anticolonialist theorization about North-South relations (DIRLIK 1997). Through multiculturalism and its recognition of diversity, this Eurocentric viewpoint attempts to re-substantialize the post-colonial identities that are emerging in the former colonies of the West. The task consists, therefore, of “provincializing” the Western viewpoint, while at the same time re-dimensioning and “re-territorializing” the non-Western world (GANDHI 1998).

The resulting “post-colonial” discourse problematizes the binary logic of the colonizers *versus* the colonized, still present in the analysis of SAID (SARUP 1996). Instead of submissively reproducing the Western postulates – multicultural, intercultural or assimilationist – about contemporary society, a reconceptualization of the dialectic relationship between the colonizers and those colonized and its persistence in post-colonial countries will question the Western notions of “identity”, “culture”, and “nation”, as well. The identities that are generated in the post-colonial period do not correspond to territorial limits or cultural boundaries. The new subjects participate simultaneously in various cultural traditions – Western, autochthonous, and/or *métis*, hybrid traditions. It is therefore not possible to postulate, as multicultural “diversity management” does, a tendency of congruence among subjects, identities, cultures, and communities (GUTIÉRREZ RODRÍGUEZ 1999). Identities become “borderline”, liminal and partial; they are constituted as “suture lines” (HALL 1996, p. 5) between cultures and communities, as “part’ culture” or “partial culture [...] the contaminated yet connective tissue between cultures” (BHABHA 1996, p. 54).

The post-colonial subject is simultaneously “inside and outside” of his/her cultural context of origin, thus creates a “third space” between hegemonic culture and subordinate culture. As a collective subject, an identity community that is necessarily hybrid and self-

reflexive will arise, refusing the external demands of antagonistically opposed loyalties (BHABHA 1994). Its facets of identity will be the product of a process of cultural “hybridization” or “creolization”. Cultural hybridity is not a privileged product of the southern countries, as the persistent post-colonial condition ties the destiny of the West very tightly to that of its old spaces of colonial imagination; the resulting hybridization of the identities articulated in the metropolises of the former colonial empires challenges the multicultural creed of diversity recognition, because its actors often resist any type of classification (GARCÍA CANCLINI 1995). Not even so-called *hyphenated identities* used to express the “Afro-Caribbean”, “Pakistani-British”, or “Franco-Algerian” bearers’ ambiguous loyalty and identity manage to reflect the possible range of identifications, since they once again link identity to culture and nationality (CAGLAR 1997).

The main contribution of the post-colonial discourse to the debate on multiculturalism and its institutionalization of diversity resides in the matter of essentialism. The emphasis that BHABHA puts on the ambivalent, fluid, and hybrid character of cultural differences and the resulting identity politics challenges the possibility of generating alternative political subjects. Just like its postmodern predecessor, the post-colonial de-construction of discrete identities runs the risk of de-mobilizing the social and pedagogical movement and/or of de-legitimizing the diversified educational institution through affirmative action policies. The political conclusion formulated from the position of post-colonialism is not very encouraging:

“We have entered an anxious age of identity, in which the attempt to memorialize lost time, and to reclaim lost territories, creates a culture of disparate ‘interest groups’ or social movements. Here affiliation may be antagonistic and ambivalent; solidarity may be only situational and strategic: commonality is often negotiated through the ‘contingency’ of social interests and political claims” (BHABHA 1996, p. 59).

In contrast to this sensation of an “identity vacuum”, HALL (1996) and SPIVAK (1998) have highlighted the new social actors’ capacity of recurring to a kind of “strategic essentialism” that temporarily and transitorily allows the new culturally hybrid communities to “incubate” their multiple identity facets. This is the only way that it will be possible for them to survive as a collectivity in the whole of multicultural society. This concept brings post-colonial criticism closer to institutionalized diversity management in the educational context. Despite the evident risks implied by affirmative action policy, mentioned earlier, during certain phases ethnic and/or cultural communities require empowerment, an explicit and strategic empowerment that will necessarily promote the essentialization of identity, but that will simultaneously create the conditions that will enable the members of these communities to have access to the educational institutions of majority society.

11 Redefining Diversity: Culture, Ethnicity, Interculturality and Intersectionality

Through this criticism of the essentialized anthropological notions of culture and ethnicity and their redefined constructivist and postcolonial perspective, a new conceptual basis is provided for re-formulating the educational treatment of diversity and intercultural-

ity. As argued elsewhere (DIETZ 2003), in order to achieve this aim of re-conceptualizing and re-directing educational tasks in terms of cultural diversity, a contrastive, non-substantivist, but mutually inter-related definition of culture and ethnicity is required for conceptually and empirically distinguishing between “intra-cultural”, “inter-cultural” and “trans-cultural” phenomena related to cultural diversity. Habitualized cultural praxis and interaction patterns (BOURDIEU 1990), on the one hand, and often ethnicized collective identity discourses (GINGRICH 2004), on the other, have to be both synchronically delimited from each other and diachronically de-constructed as culturally hybrid products of ongoing and closely-knit processes of intracultural communication, identification and ethnogenesis as well as internalized patterns of routinized intracultural behaviour and interaction (GIDDENS 1984).

These distinctions enable us to analyze the striking coincidences and similarities which are perceivable on the structural level between hegemonic nationalisms and counter-hegemonic, multiculturalist ethnicities. As illustrated in DIETZ (2003) for nationalist as well as multicultural pedagogy, both discourses sustain identity politics which rely on the same discursive strategies of temporalization, territorialization and substantialization (SMITH 1991; ALONSO 1994) in order to install, maintain and legitimate the boundaries between “them” and “us”. Throughout their struggles for making demands, these structural coincidences are shared by state-sponsored nationalizing nationalisms and by “bottom-up” contentious ethnicities. Considering this “identity pitfall”, in order to avoid reproducing essentialized notions of diversity or interculturality which *de facto* reproduce ancient racial and/or ethnic “us/them” classifications and hierarchies, diversity as an analytic tool as well as a propositional program must first recognize the substantialized, temporalized and territorialized bias of different collective identities and their claims making expressions and discourses. Secondly, however, these identities have to be contextualized with regard to broader societal power relations and contrasted in their mutual inter-relations, interactions and interferences. The resulting tensions and contradictions – e.g. between gendered vs. ethnicized identity markers – are a source for the analysis of currently ongoing processes of collective identification and heterogenization (KRÜGER-POTRATZ 2005).

Accordingly, diversity must not be conceived as a mechanical summing up of differences, but as a multi-dimensional and multi-perspectivist approach to the study of “lines of differences” (KRÜGER-POTRATZ 2005), i.e. of identities, identity markers and discriminatory practices. Not the essence of given identity discourses, but the intersections between diverse and contradictory discourses and practices constitute the main “object” of the diversity approach (TOLLEY 2003). The notion of intersectionality, which originally stems from the feminist and multiculturalist debates on the racialization of women from African American, Latino/a or other minority backgrounds, urges us to focus on the often cross-cutting reinforcements of discriminatory attitudes and activities and their impact on the identity formation and transformation processes (AGNEW 2003).

Intersectionality may thus be viewed both from the perspective of identity formation and from the perception of discrimination. Combining both views, it is the situational aspect of an actor’s identity choices, according to different levels and types of identities he/she has access to, but also the particular visibility a given source of identity has with regard to its stigmatized or non-stigmatized connotations which are analyzed by discerning and reconstructing the intersections between multiple, high vs. low salient as well as between positively vs. negatively connotated dimensions of identity (FRIDERES 2003).

Complementary to these distinctions, power differentials inherent in each of the often dichotomous identity dimensions have to be considered throughout the analysis. "Lines of differences" systematically substantialize identities with regard to homonymous alterities (GINGRICH 2004) by juxtaposing bipolar and asymmetrical, dominant vs. dominated identity dimensions such as "male" vs. "female", "white" vs. "black", "Christian" vs. "Muslim" etc. This bipolarity tends to be visualized in public discourse in such a way that the dominant pole is perceived as the "normal" or "default" type, while the dominated pole is seen as the "abnormal" or "deviant" or "exceptional" one (KRÜGER-POTRATZ/LUTZ 2002; LEIPRECHT/LUTZ 2003, 2005). The result is a socially constructed and communicated image of normality as homogeneity, which is discursively transmitted by over-emphasizing and over-visualizing the "heterogeneous" as "problematic" and as "impure" (MECHERIL 2003).

Against this *emic*, implicit, Lebenswelt (lifeworld) theory of normality and abnormality in the identity discourse, educational analysis has to deconstruct and reconstruct the multiple belongings and affiliations, the "hybrid belongings" (MECHERIL 2003) against a prevailing recognition which essentializes and fixes identities. Accordingly, the diversity perspective in education urges us to start from the recognition of heterogeneity as normality (LEIPRECHT/LUTZ 2003) and to visualize the invisibilized interstitial, intersectional identities existing and cohabiting in the "normal" class room.

12 A Praxeological Approach to Diversity: Habitus, Competence and Interaction

Thus to conceive thus the potential of diversity as providing a microscopic perspective on intersectionalities between identity layers, a comprehensive "diversity education" (BREWSTER et al. 2002) will be required in order to, firstly, analyze identities, discriminations and power asymmetries critically co-existing at a given school and, secondly, promote changes which "normalize" heterogeneities and hybridities among and between pupils, parents and teachers. From an empirical research perspective, therefore, a corresponding ethnography of diversity in education will have to oscillate permanently between the *emic* perspective, centered on the discourses of these different and culturally diverse actors who interact in the school context, and the *etic* perspective, that observes and registers the praxis of the interaction established among these actors, in order to adequately reflect the reciprocally articulated relations among the structuring structures and the processes of intercultural inter-relation and hybridization (DIETZ 2003, 2004b).

This "pragmatic" turn (VERLOT/SIERENS 1997) in the empirical study of school diversity and interculturality is compatible with another, praxeologically inspired approach, which analyzes school praxis as a place of interaction and confrontation among diverse routinized and habitualized Lebenswelten (lifeworlds) and "lifestyles" (GOGOLIN 1994): "By taking the concept of habitus as a frame of reference, it is possible to understand the diversities and superficially even the contradictions which appear in the teachers' practices and between the practices and the discourses not as incongruities, but as a range of possibilities, as the display of an individual style under changing conditions" (GOGOLIN 1994, p. 262). Conflicts and misunderstandings in school are analyzed as results of the growing gap that separates the pluralization and multilingualization of the pupils' Lebens-

welten (lifeworlds), on the one hand, and the persistence of a monocultural and “monolingual habitus” on the part of the teaching staff and the institution of school as a whole, on the other (GOGOLIN 1994). This “monolingual habitus” transcends the merely linguistic sphere in order to become the sign and refuge of the teaching staff’s identity under conditions of increasing professional complexity and student diversity (GOGOLIN 1997a, 2002a).

This approach is attractive because of its capacity to empirically pinpoint the “naturalized” and “normalized” exceptionality of – nationalizing and nationalized – monolingualism. In her longitudinal ethnographic study of a primary school in a culturally diverse, urban-migration context, GOGOLIN (1997a) shows how this monolingual and monocultural habitus practiced by the teaching staff and institutionally backed by the educational system coexists with the obvious diversification of the school, family, and residential environments. This diversity, resulting from “lifeworld bilingualism/multilingualism” (GOGOLIN 1998), often becomes a “cultural resource” and a future source of cultural capital (FÜRSTENAU 2004), a trend which grows from the “bottom up”, but which is not being recognized until now by monoculturally and monolingually socialized educational actors. Institutional monoculturalism and lifeworld multiculturalism thus coexist (GOGOLIN 1997b).

As these and other studies suggest, for an ethnography of educational diversity it is of vital importance to distinguish between internalized “intercultural competences” and empirically observable patterns of interaction. The conventional pedagogical discourse about intercultural competences often reproduces culturalist fallacies, since the cultural “boundary”, as a challenge that must be met, is thematized in the desired and promoted interaction (VERLOT/SIERENS 1997). As opposed to this zeal to invigorate boundaries between “us” and “them”, experiments with complex learning modalities show that the patterns of interaction articulated by pupils from different cultures, subcultures, etc., reflects forms of relationship that are not literally “intercultural” nor merely “transcultural”. These relations illustrate an interaction that is characterized by a constant oscillation between different verbal and non-verbal codes that can come from one cultural context or another, but that are hybridized in the joint dramatization and interaction. Accordingly, interaction competences may not focus on competences of interaction between “two cultures”; intercultural competences are therefore to be conceived as “a potential and generic ability to use social or cognitive competences (and their respective attitudes) in the contact with diversity here and now; [...] competences which allow the management of society’s heterogeneity in a way which varies from context to context in order to allow for a creative and enriching style of management” (SOENEN/VERLOT/SUIJS 1999 pp. 66-67).

Such competences are therefore better conceivable as processual, gradual stages of code-switching, reflexivity, self-awareness and translatability between different habitualized cultural practices and identity discourses; these capacities increase in complexity as they gradually move upwards from perceptions of phenomena through implicit motives and historical processes towards reflexive self-perception and questioning (GOGOLIN 2003). This notion of intercultural competence as a relational and contextual disposition when dealing with diversity has two important implications: Firstly, it requires a distinction between intercultural “competence” and intercultural “performance” (BENDER-SZYMANSKI 2002), i.e. between the dimensions of *langue* and *parole*, internalized dispositions and actually externalized praxis of diversity and interculturality accordingly, against standardized and reified notions of “cultural diversity management”. In this sense intercultural competences cannot and may not be reduced to mere “recipes” of accurate behaviour in given intercultural contexts.

And, secondly, the competences identified as intercultural cannot be and may not be substantialized and delimited against intra-cultural competences; instead, these relationally and contextually articulated dispositions should be conceived as a particular kind of professional habitus to be acquired, trained and developed by teachers, social workers and other “intercultural mediators”. This specific professional habitus paradoxically presupposes not particular, *a priori* defined competences, but, on the contrary, “the competence to lack competences” (MECHERIL 2002, p. 25) – diversity-awareness and self-reflexivity instead of a professional monopoly on (mostly monoculturally defined) knowledge and expertise.

Accordingly, school and neighborhood ethnographies such as those carried out by SOENEN (1998, 1999), SOENEN/VERLOT/SUIJS (1999), and VERLOT/PINXTEN (2000), illustrate that these relational competences cannot be subsumed with the culturally specific “skills” that are exchanged later in intercultural contact. In this sense, intercultural competences are only displayed through performance, through the interaction developed in specific contexts. In the educational context of dealing with different kinds and sources of diversity, SOENEN (1998, 1999) identifies different “modes of interaction”, defined by specific logics that constantly overlap in school praxis and that do not stem from a specific culture, but are the result of the dynamic hierarchization that is part of the school institution: the “child mode of interaction” (*kind-interactiewijze*) articulates the patterns of behavior transmitted and acquired in the family framework of reference and as such differs according to the extra-school socialization processes, whereas the “pupil mode of interaction” (*leerling-interactiewijze*) is imposed by the explicit and implicit patterns of authority, discipline, and sanction that rule the school; and, finally, the “youth mode of interaction” (*jongeren-interactiewijze*) is generated by the shared interests of the adolescents as members of a specific peer group. In school praxis, both conflict and cooperation are the product of the situational and strategic concatenation of these modes of interaction by the actors involved.

One way of overcoming the teachers’ and the school’s diagnosed monocultural habitus would be to explicitly integrating the “subordinate” modes of interaction that are omnipresent in out-of-school, neighborhood lifeworld of the youth into school life itself (SOENEN 1998). Alternating and playing creatively with the roles of teacher, father/ mother, and “colleague”, respectively, would hybridize and make more dynamic the dominant educational practices. The corresponding ethnographic study of these modes of interaction, therefore, could neither be limited to the school sphere nor to the family and community sphere (WULF 2002). The “youth cultures – those cultural practices by which young people articulate their passage through biological and social time” (HEWITT 1998, p. 13) offer the chance to study *in situ* the processes of ethnogenesis and cultural hybridization that are reflected afterwards in conflictive and/or cooperative behaviors within the institution of school.

The “creolized uses” (HEWITT 1986) that frequently characterize these youth cultures that emerge from close, although not always harmonic, intercultural coexistence outside of school, show that cultural hybridization in asymmetric contexts of ethnogenesis can generate “cultural modalities” (HEWITT 1998) that can be exclusive or inclusive (DIETZ 2004b). If, apart from the omnipresent “modalities of what is ethnocentric” (product of intra-group ethnogenesis) and the “modalities of syncretism” and “cultural hybridity” (generated by intercultural hybridization) new “modalities of what is supra-cultural” (HEWITT 1998, p. 14) arise, youth cultures may emerge as new “imagined communities”, which are different from the conventional, enclosed identity ghettos: “according to social

class and gender, the family and also the peer group can also communicate a supracultural tendency, while their respective counterpart transmits and adopts traditional or syncretic forms” (HEWITT 1998, p. 18).

13 Conclusion

Seeking to deliberately and consciously include these syncretic and/or supra-cultural modalities of diversity that stem from contemporary youth cultures, in the modes of interaction acknowledged in the school sphere, however, would evidently mean to “revolutionize” not only the current conceptions of intercultural education, but the institution of school itself. Thus, finally, the true problem posed by the recognition, treatment and/or “management” of diversity becomes evident: the main obstacle that any strategy directed towards interculturalizing and/or diversifying education will have to face is the institution of school and how deeply rooted it is not only in nationalizing pedagogy, but in the nation-state itself.

The debate on cultural diversity, analyzed in this paper starting from its roots as social movement in multiculturalism and its process of institutionalization through academia and public education, through affirmative action and diversity management schemes, currently seems to face a prototypical watershed situation: either cultural diversity is superficially and periodically instrumentalized as a “fire brigade approach” in order to “solve” particular and punctual “problems” arising in specific and conflictive daily classroom interactions resulting from lifeworld diversity clashing with the school’s monocultural habitus, or it definitively leaves these supplementary and still compensatory niche activities by mainstreaming diversity and intersectionality throughout the school and its environment. Through this option, moving beyond its all too partial conceptualization and vindication as a “problem”, as a “resource” or as a “right”, cultural diversity will in the future have to be perceived, analyzed and applied as an empirical research tool as well as a cross-cutting, underlying key feature of daily educational and social processes. Situated neither on the surface of intercultural interaction patterns nor in the content of collective ethnic identity discourses, cultural diversity must be localized in the structure of contemporary society, as a contextual and case specific translation of a shared, underlying and maybe even universalizable “grammar of diversities”.

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