



## CULTURAL RELATIVISM, ETHNOCENTRISM AND INTERCULTURALITY IN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY IN GENERAL

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### ABSTRACT

Faced with the existence of a globalized society, three manifestations can appear that diminish a convenient interpersonal communication between human beings of different cultures, it is cultural relativism, ethnocentrism and interculturality, often shown as confronted and paradoxical. In the present article we try to prove that ethnocentrism and cultural relativism can be the effect of a radical cultural interculturality. Terms are exposed as to why both should be avoided and a non-radical sense of cultural relativism and interculturality that would promote adequate perception of other cultures, related aspects of morality and multiculturalism are exposed, so this manuscript aims to analyze the theoretical referents of cultural relativism, ethnocentrism and interculturality as a source and alternative to promote better education and society in general, orienting them towards a better relationship and cultural interpretation among people of different cultures, in such a way manifesting to the teacher of today and going to the interpersonal qualities of the society of non-exclusion to others.

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### INTRODUCTION

Ethnocentrism is based on an ideological doctrine or style of which the person observes the world according to the context of their own reality, is a definition conceptualized by anthropology to refer to the tendency of a being or social group to deduce reality from their own cultural knowledge. (Sumner, 1996).

Ethnocentrism tends to express the belief that one's ethnic group is the most important, or that most of its own culture features are predominant or superior to those of other ethnic groups. Within this doctrine, beings judge other social groups in correlation to their own culture or group, fundamentally in relation to language, traditions, religion, manifestations, beliefs, etc.

The differences are mostly those that determine cultural identity. Ethnocentrism is manifested in many cultures that believe themselves superior with respect to others, it is a well-detailed cognitive inclination in social psychology. Anthropologists such as Boas and

Malinowski project that all sciences correspond to manifesting themselves from the ethnocentrism proper to the scientist as an individual.

Ethnocentrism is the belief that our convenient patterns of behavior are always natural, correct, beautiful or important, and that others, by the way they act differently, live according to wild, inhuman or foolish standards. People intolerant of cultural dissimilarities usually ignore the following fact. If they had been enculturated in the shelter of another social group, all these apparently savage, inhuman or senseless manifestations of life were their own, the unmasking of the falsity of ethnocentrism leads to tolerance and acceptance for cultural dissimilarities. Once we understand the great power that enculturation plays over all human behavior, we could no longer rationally reject those who were enculturated according to guidelines and practices different from our own.

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Understanding cultural relativism we can say that it is the quality or point of view by which the representation of the world, the values, practices or beliefs of a social group is explained, in relation to the values of its own culture. This ideology protects the vigor and wealth of every cultural regime and rejects any absolutist, moral or ethical estimation of them. This confronts ethnocentrism and cultural universalism in a positivist way that affirms the presence of values, moral judgments and behaviors with absolute value adjustable to all humanity.

This understands that cultural relativism implies to think any aspect of another culture or group in correlation with the cultural patterns of that group, instead of conceiving it from a determined universal point of view, or in correspondence to the appreciation from other cultural environments. Determining this inclination of thought, all cultures should have equal value, and none would be above another because all values would be conceived relative.

According to Boas (1887), he established relativism as an axiom from his anthropological research in the first decades of the twentieth century, and was later disseminated by his students. He expressed: "civilization is not something absolute, but relative, and our ideas and conceptions are true only as far as our civilization is concerned."

The purpose of this work is to overcome this division. If the main activity of the philosopher is to support the improvement of the lives of citizens, what better way than to oppose the problem "of getting to overcome the tensions of opposite senses that today reside in the nucleus of many human activities". (Delors, 1996: 51).

A possible solution to a divisive problem is understood by following the path that leads us to a conclusion that these poles, apparently opposed, in a certain way interrelate. In daily living, the alternative between cultural relativism and ethnocentrism is manifested as a traction between opposite directives, but in the end, the one ends up converging on the other. The ethnocentrism in past times was the result of ignorance, at present it may well make its appearance as a logical consequence of cultural relativism. (Francisco and Moya, 2003).

### **Development**

Currently, the development of Communication and Transport Technologies has led society to move towards a scenario in which the coexistence of people from different cultures in one place and cultural exchange even from a distance, overcoming barriers of time and space, be a daily situation. It is one of the conclusive results of the phenomenon usually referred to as globalization. This phenomenon manifests, among other magnitudes, that in the educational situation with which we are confronted today, it is very unequal to the one we encountered a few years ago. Teachers and other education professionals can not persist outside of this situation, and should be provided with the correct means to deal with this problem, assuming that the purpose of education is to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills that allow them to perform in society and make the most of their growth as future professionals in the sociocultural

environment that is within their reach. (Francisco and Moya, 2003).

In this area, two fundamental limitations are manifested, which are the most adjacent and affordable responses to that rigidity between the local and the global. (Delors, 1996:49). Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are presented, alternatives that at an insignificant scale are presented as the opposite ends of the same line. According to Aristotle (1993), the first observation is considered to be that virtue would consist in achieving a relative intermediate point between the two, which would be interpreted in a combined posture of distrust and indifference in variable distributions, depending on the case.

However Polo (1999), says that the mixture of unethical attitudes will never be the solution, but must originate to overcome both. The cultural pluralism in the phase of the anthropological evolutionism of Federico Engels considered similar in many occasions with the premise of a possible confluence of the varied cultural spheres in a Universal Civilization. Premise that was considered as concealing a cultural monism, and even an ethnocentrism of European character, which manifested in this ideology the justification of colonialism. (Bueno, 2002).

For what these authors consider for all the above exposed that the fact that a person corresponds to one or another culture does not harm at all his position as a social being in society, nor does it stop belonging to humanity because it is composed of the same nature as the other entities, contextualized moral judgments can be constituted, and all errors in the exchange of concepts will be prevented.

Interposing cultural relativism and ethnocentrism, we can not leave aside the issue of morality that is a fundamental pillar in this conception, although it is not independent of culture, it does not submit to it. According to Levi-Strauss (1985), he began with a morality of values, which at the same time were reduced to simple cultural manifestations. In this way, the danger of moral pyrrhonist waits with every step we take. However, morality, or rather, ethics, cannot be reduced to issues of values. "The ethics of values leads to a dead end, which is the axiology, that is, the foundation of the hierarchy in the estimated preference that constitutes value". (Altarejos, 1999: 114).

In addition, this ideology is considered fruitless at the time of giving reason for moral manifestations in certain contexts. So it is not possible to conceive the moral action in a scenario of affective negativity, only a moral that resorts to human honesty, and its continuation can free us from moral confusion. Considering the author Scheller (1941), the morality of values has its beginning as a serene critical response to the Kantian formalism, in conclusion that what is morally good or bad, are sensible links existing between the belonging ends.

However, these authors consider that although it is true that human honesty does not inhabit human nature in nature, but as human, when exposed to the human person. For what a difference between the person and its nature is determined, this difference does not mean distancing, it is removing the ends and goods of the moral because it does not have as purpose the correction of human nature, or

that the being can be improved without Realize your human nature.

After mentioning the two perspectives that exist (cultural relativism and ethnocentrism), interculturality is the most appropriate thought to establish in today's education, and in society in general, since it is based on making everyone aware that dissimilarities they foster social relationships and not all the opposite. However, ethnocentrism is not the thought that should be introduced in school, since it would manifest the dominant ambition of one culture over another, which is not correct, since we all have the same possibilities as human beings that we are.

The cultural relativism is a course that coexists in the permutation of ethnocentrism mentality of the person to interculturality, this happens because this panorama accepts in the vast majority of situations diversity but in others not because the differences that they divide some cultures of others. Therefore, interculturality is the most appropriate point of view to take into account since all beings are equal but at the same time distinct, individually from the society or culture in which they live. The best way to bring diversity is from the respect and this circumstance does, you must be instructed to observe that which unites us and not what separates us.

At present, the topic of interculturality is much discussed and how this conception could be fostered so that everyone can create a comprehensive and respectful society. But the pure reality is that this thought is very difficult to infuse as many paradoxical cultures coexist, which is very unlikely to happen, they will be able to instill in their beliefs and values, for this reason it is difficult to promote multiculturalism.

On the other hand, teachers must instill the values of respect and coexistence to students, being ideal to achieve an environment in the classroom of equality and familiarity, that students are able to appreciate the dissimilarities between them but not for that reason. it must set aside or repudiate others, but must be formed in order to carry out activities together and learn from each other.

The vast majority of students tend to be ethnocentric, think that their culture is appropriate and the others are not worth, what should be done is to teach them to value, know, consider and see the positive and good within the same culture and not confront it with his own. However, culture is often disoriented with religion and in reality it is not the same, as it is also true that there is no culture without religion.

Certainly ethnocentrism, "in the academic environment can be observed as the problem of thinking about dissimilarities, but in the emotional environment, with feelings of amazement, fear, discord, among others." (Guimaraes, 1984: 7). Ethnocentrism involves on many occasions and apprehension of others quite violent; it also involves in most of the occasions that we make of others a twisted and manipulated profile. As Pureza (2002) points out: "Ethnocentrism is the inability to see the world through the eyes of others."

For what these authors consider, that in the current situation, in great majority, is exposed in the society the

cultural relativism, although there are determined ethnocentric points, to arrive at the interculturality, the first goal that should be realized is to know ourselves (know our own lights and shadows) to get to know and understand the lights and shadows of others, initiating the tolerance of having empathy and being able to bond with others, that is, to get down from our mountain or culture and go up to the mountain or culture of others in order to understand and understand their bases.

In society in general many negative manifestations are generated, and one of the fundamental disadvantages that exists is the validity of the due process that involves a claim right in certain specific cases of exclusion, if this right of claim is not fully insured, if not It is clearly explained in the legislation, it would be giving space to the violation of a guarantee in society so that everyone feels included. Every citizen is a man, a woman, a boy or a girl, an elder, he always has the right to complain to a competent authority to judge something that he considers that in the minor instance was not resolved to its full legal status. (Ayala, 2002).

In contrast to the perception of ethnocentrism as a cultural constant in current education, the anthropologist Geertz (2000: 56) states that cultural diversity is vanishing in such a way that: "we live increasingly in the middle of a huge collage [...]. The world is beginning to look more like each of its local points to a Kuwaiti bazaar than to an English gentleman's club. "So too Todorov (1991: 95) reveals that: "a humanity that has discovered universal communication will be more homogeneous than a humanity that did not know about it, this does not mean that all differences will be suppressed. That societies are simply the fruit of mutual ignorance. "

In this way, the aforementioned multicultural coexistence and intercultural competences are two different spaces. In this way, Malgesini and Giménez (2000) show the difference between multiculturalism and interculturality, for which they point out, mentioning Moreno (1991:15), that multiculturalism "covers a characteristic reality of certain societies in which national groups coexist or ethnic groups differentiated in the same territory, "however interculturality" means interaction, exchange, openness and effective solidarity: recognition of values, of ways of life, of symbolic representations, either within the records of the same culture or well between different cultures".

However Froufe (1994: 164) disagrees with the aforementioned authors, he defines multiculturalism as: "the concurrence of two or more ethnic groups and their coexistence in the same society and in the same territory", and interculturality manifests as the exploration of "exchange, reciprocity, interaction, mutual relationship and solidarity between different ways of understanding life, values, history, social behavior, etc., under conditions of equal influence". In this same way of conception, there are authors such as Guichot (2002), Dietz (2003) or Calvo (2002).

In this way, analyzing the foregoing, these authors conclude that the empirical study of the existing correlation between ethnocentrism and intercultural processes and the manifestations of multicultural societies introduced in cultural relativism in society in general and

education are objectives of constant study fundamentally relevant, especially taking into account the near future, both in processes of probable social crises and to avoid conflicts. The culture of other peoples allows us to conceive and interpret many cultural qualities that may negatively impact at first sight, so interculturality is transformed into a dialogue that achieves understanding and harmonious coexistence by excluding ethnocentrism, prejudice and discrimination.

In this way of perception, Altarejos and García (2003) maintain that ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are two positions that decrease the interpersonal communication between beings from different cultures. In many manifestations, the correlation between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism emerges in many authors with relationships to different spheres, such as the nursing Tarres (2001); the policy Cocarico (2005), Pla (2005), Carmona (2009); and in education Sánchez (2006), Quintero (2003), Iglesias (1998) and Moore (1995).

Looking from a sociological sense, this research focuses on the most characteristic features of the perspective of cultural ethnocentrism from the sociological perspective. Attending the author Giner (1998: 277), he states that "ethnocentrism is an attitude that considers the world and others from the perspective of their own ethnicity and culture. [...] By becoming a comparative category, ethnocentrism orders the social reality in a hierarchical way and establishes criteria of superiority and inferiority with respect to one's and others' lifestyles". (Alaminos, López and Santacreu, 2010). So we can determine that ethnocentrism lies in a vision of the world, in which our own circle of people is understood as the center of everything, and other social groups are looked at in a common way by our values, our paradigms and our own interpretation of life. This concept is based as much on a hierarchical arrangement of cultures and ways of life.

These authors summarizing the above can assume that the assumption of sociocultural change from interculturality that would alleviate the seriousness of ethnocentrism in collectivities is opposed by the inverse assumption of a probable attenuation of ethnocentrism, activating probable xenophobic aspects.

Taking the issue of cultural relativism in education and in society in general, it can be interpreted that it is created to face ethnocentrism and maintains that any cultural manifestation is a source of wealth understood in its environment. With ethnocentrism, you only get to understand a culture if you are inside it, since you have to understand the traditions within your unique cultural environment. There is no single sense or way of seeing and understanding the world, but they are all equally appropriate and valuable. This mode of respect considered the solidification of tolerance and promoted other visions of observing the world different from their own.

However, the situation arises that respect for other cultures can give way to unethical behavior. We can exemplify some cases such as machismo or the death penalty such as stoning. Even being part of some cultures for decades, it should not be approved. These situations can be corrected with pluralism, since it approves and

conceives cultures always restricting them with current legislation.

Through this inclination of relativism, it is contemplated that other cultures of the world are equally appropriate and valuable, so it is estimated that what is traditional should not be modified. These authors conclude that it must be maintained that any custom or habit of belonging to another culture must be respected by others, taking into account that human rights are always considered.

The relativism understood in the model of respect for diversity maintains its appeal to analyze intercultural relations in today's globalized society, the dialectic that was broken down by the contributions of cultural anthropology in this context allowing the repression of ethnocentrism and social evolutionism, they have created attitudes of action, in the sense of tolerant renunciation towards those who deviate from their own worldviews, or as arguments that maintain requests for recognition. In these situations, respect for variety is a fundamental indicator, so it has been used to increase the regulation of human rights in the social sphere, raising public awareness of the admission of new diversities. (Batallán and Campanini, 2008).

The pedagogical consequence that ethnography tried to cause in an audience tactically judged as ethnocentric or as skeptical to the life and traditions of other societies, is contemporary manifested in the first works of the creators of relativism. Equally, Malinowski (1986: 42) determines the distinguished introduction to the study of the *kula*, concentrating the double intention of the ethnographic society as a base of scientific knowledge and as a cultural criticism of society itself.

However, one should formulate central premises of relativism concerning the indelible consequences of socialization as an element of transmission of the cultural representation of each group and the limitation between cultures. But the expansion of the manifestation generated a paradoxical logic, given that it accepted the approval of inadmissible positions, such as the validity of racism, or the allegation of the ethnocentrism itself that is being questioned. In the anthropological field, different critics pondered relativism, delegitimizing the pretense of exposing a global criterion of behavior towards respect for diversity on the part of those who maintained the relativity of values throughout the world with their work. (Altan, 1973).

It is in the obvious concern of the current educational system to translate the guiding instructional conceptions and criteria into pedagogical practice, where it is feasible to highlight some critical points in correspondence to the subject that concerns us. The didactic-pedagogical link begins with the indicated political intentionality sustained in updated theoretical bases of social sciences and educational psychology until reaching the levels of conciseness corresponding to the different periods and horizons of teaching. In this chain, the definition of culture is constituted in a first phase for the analysis of the controversial situation of the personality and the discrepancy that are included in the respect to the diversity in the school.

The central culture class that has been imported from the functionalist model that gives it an explanatory relationship, while thinking about a localized entity. For this well-known theory, people must endoculture or socialize by obtaining language and identifying typical patterns of behavior, which in their transcription sustain the vigor of the culture. This circular reasoning applies to social permutation to internal causes such as invention, or external causes as the consequence of cultural propagation, preventing the role of beings whose action would be considered in the same entity.

In the current society in which we live, many cultures predominate but not all of them approve each other, in such a way, these concerns are transferred to others and the interculturality within the classroom or society in general becomes more complicated. There have been situations in which students within the school environment do not find physical discrepancies among them as their dress, color, ethnic group, etc., but when parents realize who their child is related to begin to emerge negative expressions and begin to be excluded by the culture from which they come. This manifests a negative atmosphere in the classroom, concurring to a complicated teaching-learning for all and thus playing a poor collegial coexistence.

We consider to take into account that in the classroom with a variety of cultures and without neglecting that the family context or society itself intervenes in school performance, it is possible to achieve a more efficient learning and the teaching of its different origins can make the environment of the class is more harmonious, since they acquire knowledge from each other and learn different ways of life. However, it is true that the family should not be completely separated from the evolution of the student in teaching-learning, since the family is the main reference and should be included.

Apart from the aforementioned, interculturality in the classroom depends on the teacher's performance using resources, methodology and group adequately, he must work based on citizenship and social competences, and cultural manifestations. It is necessary to gather principles in which qualities are indicated to benefit interculturality through class contents. This conception also depends on the students themselves, in everything that manifests the number of different cultures within the classroom, the age of the students, their perspectives and the academic productivity of each one of them.

Interculturality is a very complicated definition that when you finish talking about this process will be when in reality you achieve cultural coexistence, when you do not observe discrepancies is when you get to live in an intercultural society, which is a long process but that it must be put into practice on a day-to-day basis in the classroom to achieve a better society and a better future where all cultures are recognized and respected.

## CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, we must correct the ideology that society perceives in its human nature, guide them towards a better future based on harmony, friendship, reaching a sustainable interculturality, it is necessary to remove skills

in the classroom and in today's society, clearly determining the different cases that arise, in such a way that the application of fair justice for all can be made possible, of course, for this, the principle of homogeneity must be accepted, developing attitudes of values, ethics, commitment to the society.

First of all, one should think about the need that every great set of experience that other cultures contain is as important as one's own and can always be learned from others. It also implies the compatibility of the traditions of the other ethnic groups and to rescue values that nowadays are being lost, like the same ancestral medicine, because it is necessary to inculcate precisely the possibility that the equitable and customary law works.

Secondly, ethnocentrism is the appreciation of one's own culture and lifestyle as supreme beings to the other cultures that originate, which comes as one of the exogenous explanatory origins in relation to the opinions on the self-defense of lifestyle and restriction of the arrival of a new individual to the social group. In the same way there is a certain empirical relationship between the defense of the lifestyle and the opinion about restricting and verifying the arrival of the individual. Based on this, it could be determined that the ethnocentric structure persists active in many esteemed societies, and only the arrival of a new individual in society or in the class of relevant class in terms of their active social visibility is largely reflected in the attitudes xenophobic, submissive with the elemental structure of ethnocentric principle, that is to say to the attitudinal organ of ethnocentric principle, the general opinion on the appreciation of exclusion as the main problem is related.

To conclude, these authors conclude that they are in favor and against. In favor because they value and respect other cultures, and against because we must draw some conditions to the customs, as are the current legislation for bilateral respect between different societies and cultures, because each provides a valuable way to understand and understand The world, to understand others, must be involved and know their ways of life and conceive their style of undertaking life.

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