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**SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF MULTICULTURALISM: THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL PLURALISM (MULTICULTURALISM) AND ITS DEVELOPMENT\***

The discussion about education in multicultural societies is based on the theoretical groundwork of inter-ethnic relations, of which multiculturalism - or cultural pluralism - is an important part.

The processes of differentiation in the modern world create scores of types of pluralism: political, ideological, cultural, structural, institutional, etc., pluralism. The processes of differentiation are undoubtedly associated with the development of democratism, decentralization of tolerance, with the attempts aiming to reduce the extent of various aspects of social inequality. It is also true that processes of cultural pluralism arise also in critical developmental stages. Refugees and migrant workers who, for instance, immigrate in critical periods, break down the traditional ethnic homogeneity of the autochthonous population that may in due course react against them for reasons of competition and their endangered status (problems of unemployment), by adopting various discriminatory measures, etc. Yet it is in this very manner that multi-ethnic social communities are in fact created. Sooner or later, such societies have to begin fighting xenophobia and discrimination, which - viewed from the long-term perspective - does not preclude the development of elements of the policy of multiculturalism associated with the reduction of centralization, emergence of social inequality, and alienation.

Pluralistic developments exercise an influence not only on diverse facets of social life but also on its diverse levels. These phenomena can be found on the local regional level, just as they can also concern the national and international levels. Phenomena relating to cultural pluralism are especially important on the level of various ethnic communities, countries, and of the international community.

If we equate cultural pluralism and multiculturalism, then we investigate the relations (processes) between different ethnic groups living in regional, national, or international communities (in social environment and geographical space). We are also interested in changes in these relations (processes).

Multiculturalism can be characterized as the universally acknowledged progressive theoretical basis of inter-ethnic relations, which represents a denial of controversial views concerning the withering away and the disappearance of nations,

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or their coercive assimilation. Multiculturalism means conceding the ethnic identity to ethnic groups, recognizing and fostering their specific culture, which is the groundwork for the participation and joining of ethnic groups. In other words, conjunctive processes between ethnic groups cannot develop without the presence of cultural pluralism.

Cultural pluralism stands for the maintenance and promotion of ethnic specificities. It calls for mutual tolerance between ethnic groups, their autonomous activities, and their equality. It leaves no room for the domination of ethnic groups over other ethnic groups, and opposes any kind of domination of one culture over other cultures. In other words, phenomena of cultural pluralism can only develop by transcending the ethnic stratification and the division of society into the privileged majority and underprivileged ethnic minorities. Cultural pluralism stimulates the cumulative union of identities and complementarities of differences, which means that society at large, which consists of the plurality of ethnic groups, attains to internal cohesion and integration. The existence of multifarious cultures breeds various - including conflicting - interests that clash and harmonize with each other. Since cultural ethnic phenomena are collective in nature, we must add that one should call for the development of such ethnic collectives as are not set above the individual or pitted against him. Only those ethnic groups which do not dominate their own members, but rather cultivate their values on the basis of dialectical interactions between concrete and more general interests, are in fact able to further inter-ethnic relations according to the principles of cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism in the relations between ethnic groups can be reached, provided that the ethnic culture unites its members to form a group according to the principles that have been referred to here as the principles of cultural pluralism in the relations between ethnic groups. It may not be superfluous to add that cultural pluralism as a phenomenon that can develop fully only in the context of non-hierarchical social relations or in the context of markedly restricted instances of social inequality, stimulates participation or even self-management of individuals and groups. Participation, establishment of friendly relations, and even dynamic confrontation of different cultures, can all be achieved on the level of the activities of free, informed, active, interested subjects that establish their interrelationships for reasons other than constraint, hierarchical subordination, and the like.

#### **Hindrances to the Development of Real Cultural Pluralism**

There is no ideal type of any existing cultural pluralism. The processes acting in opposition to the widespread establishment of cultural pluralism are diverse: a variety of phenomena originating in social inequality, among them ethnic stratification, deep-rooted differences and contrasts between cultures based on tradition, instances of prejudices and negative stereotypes, xenophobia, regressive nationalism, ethnocentrism, ethnic distance, numerous discriminatory and segregative activities, communication barriers, unitarian tendencies, and well-developed monisms.

Today, cultural pluralism, conceived of as a matter-of-fact inter-ethnic relationship, can be seen only in its initial forms of appearance, or exists but in the stage of a conceptual nucleus. The fact remains that social practice is nearer to the actual relations of social stratification - ethnic stratification, in our case - and it is this stratification which brings about the domination and subordination of cultures, when the policy of ethnic stratification is brought face to face with the surviving assimilative measures. Such a policy, of course, cannot be expected to have a beneficial effect on the development of pluralism of cultures.

The activities of subordinated ethnic groups or of ethnic minorities have likewise been too slight. We encounter the passivity of numerically inferior ethnic minorities that are not aggressive enough and that consequently isolate themselves inactively within the confines of their living space, thus opting for segregation of their own accord. We also encounter the tendency to secessionism. In this way, a number of ethnic minorities fail even to make a concerted effort to alter the existing inequalities in inter-ethnic relations. Also, one should not ignore the assimilationist segments of the ethnic minorities that were subjected to forced assimilation; nor should one overlook the minorities which passively acknowledge their minority status and remain conformable to the majority rule in order to get the possibility of getting rid of their underprivileged ethnicity and thereby to join the dominant ethnic majority, hoping that this would also improve their overall social status. There exist also such ethnic groups as engage themselves in trying to get rid of their minority status, but whose efforts fail to result in ethnic pluralism.

The efforts of ethnic minorities at shedding their minority status by effecting no revolutionary alteration of the relations of social inequality, indicate that in such cases these very minorities assume the role of the dominant majority, and that the relations of ethnic stratification are hence prolonged indefinitely.

Lower and middle classes and strata making up the majority of contemporary refugees and other migrants, encounter in their new social environment existential problems as well as a variety of forms of discrimination and xenophobia, particularly in present-day recession circumstances. Quite often, they settle down temporarily and are thus geographically dispersed. The situation being such, it is easy to understand why they do not insist on the appreciation of their culture. They are quick to understand that their culture, representing as it does the origin of their dissimilarity, is the stumbling block preventing their integration with the new social environment. Depression or similar conditions reduce the possibility of free expression of culture even on the part of contemporary migrant workers. Emigrants receive less help and scant attention from their original emigrant societies, immigrant societies become indisposed to associate with immigrant cultures, while the native majority population grows more and more xenophobic. Permanently settled immigrants feel that they can alter their status by becoming assimilated. Declarations of multiculturalism and integration of immigrants on this basis, quite widespread in

immigrant societies, represent attempts at securing social peace and hushing up the economic and social discrimination of immigrants. It is therefore hardly surprising that contemporary migrants advocate a number of conflicting views. Being equal to the majority native population spells assimilation, whereas remaining different means keeping a lower social status and living in considerable isolation, viz. within one's immigrant ethnic community. We may conclude that ways to factual cultural pluralism can be traced via mitigating the minority status of ethnic minorities, improving their social status, and bettering their social security. Since, however, in the case of immigrants this is frequently only a second-generation development, it is crucial for them to preserve their culture and not to submit to assimilative forces.

### **Simultaneous and Successive Socialization Processes in Diverse Cultures**

Cultural pluralism is the basic element of inter-ethnic relations. Linguistic pluralism in turn represents a salient component of cultural pluralism. The problem of multilingualism is connected with the processes of socialization, with the simultaneous learning of the mother tongue and of the second language or other languages as well as with the simultaneous integration into two or more cultures, or with successive learning: the learning of the mother tongue and of the corresponding culture is followed by acculturative processes, the learning of another language and culture.

The first case is simpler, and both cultures get firmly anchored in a uniform socialization process. The important point here is that acculturative processes are not required, since bilingual and multicultural socialization occurs at the same time as the process of primary socialization or enculturation, which goes on and intensifies the process of school education. It is during this process that fundamental multicultural values and specificities of various cultures are acquired that become deep-rooted, which allows for a more integrated identification on the multicultural level. The parallel enculturation in two languages creates the dynamic possibilities of a simultaneous incorporation into several cultures; socialized in such a manner and thus enriched, the personality in question must draw on competitive comparison and cooperative rivalry between the two cultures in order to ferret out the positive, progressive characteristics of each culture. This in turn stimulates creativity, wider communication and open-mindedness to diversity. In this manner, one acquires a sense of pluralistic thinking and behavior. However, given the present reality of ethnic stratification, the individuals who undergo such a parallel socialization in two cultures, cannot avoid a number of conflicts arising from conflicting values, disparate valuation of cultures, conflicts between ethnic minorities and majority populations. Multiculturally enculturated individuals do face and experience phenomena of marginality; they are affected by the ambivalence of values and suffer from a double identification of some kind, or no identification at all, vacillation, all of which can be counteracted by the phenomena of social pathology. Under the present conditions of ethnic inequality and ethnocentrism it is

quite possible that a multiculturally enculturated personality is affected by prominent cases of the emergence of social disorganization.

Multiculturalism developing on a parallel with enculturation in two or more cultures is a complex phenomenon. It has without doubt yet to develop on a large scale because of the numerous hindrances mentioned above; moreover, it necessitates a certain intellectual level of the population, whereby its positive effects may be asserted. Peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups in the context of multiculturalism acquired abreast means, of course, that individuals enculturated in such a way accept their ethnic identity according to the principles of inborn status, which in many ways depends on the primary socialization carried out within the original family. However, this ethnic identity does not stand for their ethnic superiority to another culture or other cultures in the sense of the relations of ethnic stratification. Additionally, such a social disposition can in particular mean that the ethnic groups that can use their own language in public are few in number, which is to be understood as eradication of diglossia. Diglossia used to enable ethnic minorities to use their languages in primary family and friendly relations, while in secondary relations of public life, in their jobs, etc., they were forced to employ the language of the dominant ethnic minority.

The preceding proposal can be implemented in culturally and linguistically mixed areas, where various ethnic groups live having the status of autochthonous populations. An open problem, nevertheless, can be observed with respect to multiculturalism of the societies into which different ethnic groups have been penetrating and in which parallel multicultural enculturation of second- and third-generation immigrants takes place.

The processes of successive socialization in two or more cultures occur together with double processes of enculturation. Processes of enculturation in the original parents' culture are joined by such processes of enculturation in the culture of the immigrant society as occur in corresponding peer groups. Along with the processes of single or double enculturation, processes of acculturation are started at the same time - these are processes of secondary socialization in the new culture of the immigrant society. Acculturative processes occurring in one's early youth are of paramount importance, because they restrict the processes of enculturation in the original culture. In this respect, one must be aware that acculturative processes take place in the context of the immigrant-culture domination, which is not conducive to the assertion of cultural pluralism. We can safely state that the categories of second-generation immigrants that are enculturated in two cultures or which are enculturated in one culture and acculturated in the other, often waver between two cultures, the prevailing culture being either that of the parents or that of the immigrant society. The culture of the immigrant society can prevail because of the parallel occurrence of the processes of enculturation in the culture of the immigrant society and of the processes of acculturation that kept modifying the original parents' culture. Such a development transforms the beginnings of cultural pluralism into the assimilation of second-generation immigrants. The intermediate phase, during which mem-

bers of the second generation find themselves poised between the two cultures, is especially complicated. In such a case, marginality occurs as well as insufficient, semi-literate knowledge of one's native language and of the language of the immigrant society; conflicts arise between the two cultures and their values, split personalities are brought into being, instances of social disorganization and pathology can be observed.

In order that second-generation immigrants might avoid the intermediate cultural situation that may be labeled semicultural, so that chances might materialize of favoring the growth of cultural pluralism, it is exceedingly important for them to have supplementary schooling in the language and culture of their parents.

The processes of enculturation in the mother tongue and the processes of acculturation in the second language, as well as the processes of double enculturation and acculturation, can be observed also in autonomous ethnic minorities.

#### **The Social Status of Class and of Ethnicity**

Cultural pluralism cannot be generated in the context of ethnic stratification that is based upon deep-set phenomena of social inequality, in particular class inequality. Since ethnic minorities and immigrants have a lower social status and for the most part represent lower social classes and strata than members of the dominant ethnic minority or native population, their cultures do not stand a chance of achieving the status on a par with the culture of the autochthonous majority population. If a large number of the members of ethnic minorities and immigrants have to concern themselves with questions of survival, they certainly have fewer possibilities of asserting their ethnicity and their deeper ethnic identification, and of furthering successfully cultural pluralism. In this case, class and ethnic lines overlap. The preponderant segment of the underprivileged ethnic minority forms part of lower social classes and strata. On the other hand, the prospects for the development of cultural pluralism are more favorable when ethnic and class lines do not overlap, meaning that within underprivileged ethnic minorities there emerge members of middle and higher classes and strata, which is to say that their social structure approaches that of the dominant ethnic majority. In this case, one has to concentrate on the task of limiting discriminatory measures whereby the dominant majority wants to lower the social status of all the members of the given ethnic minority, irrespective of their class or stratal membership, because of their very ethnic affiliation. In this manner, the dominant majority tries to preserve its privileged ethnic status, that is, the relations of ethnic stratification. In a society that sanctions various forms of social inequality in general and various types of ethnic inequality in particular, it is on these foundations that the exploitation arises, which prevents cultural pluralism from developing. Nevertheless, a well-developed ethnic community that is open to outside activities and that encourages the growth of its internal mobility, is able to enter the fight for the assertion of its culture in dealings with others, on a par with the other competitors including even numerically superior ethnic groups.

Under the existing conditions, it is quite inappropriate to hold a discussion about the existence of the phenomena of social and ethnic inequality without referring to the principal hindrances to the growth of cultural pluralism, namely global conflicts between the developed and the developing societies and ethnic communities. In times of crisis, the gap between the underdeveloped emigrant societies and their developed immigrant counterparts only grows larger.

The technological development and the development of social structure in underdeveloped areas lag behind. The social status of immigrants and underprivileged ethnic minorities is emphatically low and can be designated sub-proletarian; large percentages of unemployment among them represent a commonplace reality. In this manner, assimilation as a prerequisite for attaining social promotion is even more prominent. These, then, are to be regarded as major clear-cut hindrances to the implementation of multiculturalism.

#### **Processes of Adaptation**

There are several basic social processes that are related to cultural pluralism, adaptation being the one that must be mentioned first. The theoretical essence of adaptation is that when different cultures come into contact with one another, one's own original culture is being preserved and fostered, while at the same time the new culture is being absorbed as well. Essentially, this process involves the preservation of what is original and the acceptance of what is new in the processes of mutual adaptation. In short, the content inherent in cultural pluralism can be labeled the process of fuller adaptation. Fuller adaptation can be defined also as that mutual adaptation of ethnic groups which is to be understood as the voluntary adoption of what is both common and new, and the preservation of what is particular (ethnic).

The social development that has taken place up to now and the social crisis of today testify to the existence of an undeveloped, incomplete adaptation. One can observe instances of a one-sided adaptation to the dominant culture or to majority cultures. We encounter cases of diglossia (which we have already explained). Ethnic minorities succeed in transmitting to the broader social environment only fragments of their original culture-bound features, while at the same time they themselves also find it difficult to maintain their original culture. The processes of incomplete adaptation are limited to secondary social relations; their nature is essentially involuntary because of the imposition of the elements of the dominant culture. It is not at all difficult to ascertain that the processes of incomplete adaptation do not ensure the chance of the existence of cultural pluralism.

#### **Processes of Acculturation**

In surveying the processes bearing on cultural pluralism, one must not overlook the processes of acculturation. During such processes elements of the new culture are adopted, which,

however, entails no deeper changes. Processes of acculturation can be conveniently related to those of adaptation that, as we have seen, also signify the adoption of the elements of the new culture. Acculturative processes are normally equated with the processes of secondary socialization.

The processes of acculturation relate to the categories by which cultural pluralism starts with the successive second-language learning, i.e. subsequently to the mother-tongue acquisition. This occurs in migration situations as well as in certain ethnic-minority situations.

A more developed type of acculturation is the process of voluntary acculturation; it occurs under democratic social conditions and is bidirectional (transculturation), which means that the minority's culture or the culture of the immigrant ethnic communities radiates its features in the direction of the cultural environment of the majority (numerically superior) ethnic culture or of the environment of the culture of the immigrant society concerned. In short, a more developed type of acculturation relates to the processes of adaptation, the latter being comprehended as phenomena of cultural pluralism.

Contemporary social conditions that display the features typical of crisis situations bring into being particularly the less developed, one-sided acculturation. This kind of acculturation is involuntary and one-sided on account of the domination of the culture of the privileged ethnic group, which also implies that the processes of transculturation hardly ever appear.

Processes of acculturation remain for the most part embryonic, since no intensified linkage of them and of processes of adaptation - i.e. of cultural pluralism - can be perceived. Embryonic acculturation means insufficient acculturating, which together with the insufficient enculturation in the original culture leads to semicultural situations to to semiliteracy in the mother tongue and in the foreign (second) language.

Parallel processes of enculturation in the original and in the foreign (the other/the second) cultures, supported by acculturation, shift the overall development to assimilation and thus preclude the emergence of the phenomena of cultural pluralism.

#### **Processes of Integrative Oppositions and Conflicts**

When different cultures meet in the processes of multiculturalism, the encounter only rarely, if ever, takes place without oppositions and conflicts. These processes are present in both parallel and successive socialization in the other culture. They are evident as concomitants of undeveloped, one-sided processes of adaptation and acculturation, when we witness the transformation of adaptation into accommodation and of acculturation into assimilation at higher levels. At the same time, the contemporary inter-ethnic and hence also intercultural relations are built on elements of ethnic stratification, discrimination, segregation, ethnic aloofness, xenophobia, cases of negative nationalism, unitarianism, etc., which testifies to



the existence of manifold disjunctive relations among ethnic groups. Even the more developed relations of cultural pluralism do not provide the necessary grounds for us to be able to expect realistically the withering away - even in such relations - of inter-ethnic and intercultural oppositions and conflicts, because in that case our conception of inter-ethnic relations would be one-sided, viewing them merely as processes of mutual adaptation whereby the foreign is acquired and the original preserved. Such conceptions could be criticized for their one-sided outlook, for their harmonization of internal - particularly inter-ethnic - structures. They might also be castigated for playing up the unity and ignoring the dialectics, the principle of development. That is why any theoretical substantiation of the mutual encounter and mutual participation of ethnic groups, as well as furtherance of multiculturalism, must take due account of the processes of integrative conflicts and oppositions. These conflicts and oppositions in essence stand for the struggle between cultures, values, norms, etc. of a dissimilar ethnic background, whereby inter-ethnic intensities are let loose and the possibilities are created of transforming latent conflicts into full-blown conflicts, whereby the ideas engage the opposing ideas in battle, which brings about the alteration and development of the inter-ethnic relations as well as the growth of multiculturalism. The immediate action taken in solving each problem of multiculturalism, which is ensured by integrative conflicts, is - naturally enough - kept within its limits which from the viewpoint of the broader global society reside in the requirement that such conflicts must not destroy the basic values of the global society and that they must at the same time solidify the internal cohesion of ethnic groups. Integrative conflicts can be attained when they occur under the conditions of horizontal, non-hierarchical differences between the ethnic groups and their cultures. On the contrary, integrative conflicts and multiculturalism cannot develop in the context of social inequality and ethnic stratification.

Present-day social conditions are such that we can conclude that the integrative conflicts existing in inter-ethnic relations have yet to attain to a satisfactory level of development. More developed are destructive conflicts and such oppositions as are supported by the processes of ethnic stratification, discrimination, segregation of prejudices and stereotypes, xenophobia of negative nationalisms, domination of cultures on the basis of ethnocentrism, and the like. The contemporary social crisis in particular expands and deepens diverse disjunctive processes emerging in the relations among ethnic groups, its ultimate offshoot being the protective discriminatory measures applied by the dominant ethnic majority to the detriment of the underprivileged ethnic minority. We witness a variety of phenomena related to social disorganization (anomie, alienation) and to pathology as well as the conditions of being imperiled and of social insecurity that are mirrored in the inter-ethnic relations. In this way ethnic distances intensify too. Such an overall state of affairs represents a formidable hindrance to the growth of multiculturalism. One must not ignore the fact that mere regression of the processes of adaptation and acculturation, resulting in the involuntary one-sided lower levels of adaptation and acculturation, together with the presence of assimilation, already stimulates in itself processes of conflicts and

oppositions. The intensities created between any two cultures are transformed into conflicts to an insufficient extent only; likewise, latent conflicts are too slow in becoming full-blown conflicts. Too few inter-ethnic and intercultural conflicts are actually resolved, as many are merely swept under the carpet, while marginal conflicts are brought to the foreground or artificial conflicts are fabricated in order that the basic conflicts might be kept aside. The expedients and procedures for easing and effectively solving inter-ethnic/intercultural conflicts have not reached an adequate level of development. The criteria for differentiating between disintegrative and integrative conflicts are not clear enough. The linkage of inter-ethnic/intercultural conflicts and the basic antagonistic social conflicts represents and inadequately developed type of research.

Disintegrative and inter-ethnic/intercultural conflicts are not infrequently abused by being employed as a means of attacking the basic values of the global society and destroying its cohesion.

#### **Concluding Remarks on the Social Processes and on Multiculturalism**

In closing this discussion about the social processes that concern the development of multiculturalism, we can say that the processes listed above are strongly interrelated, while their development depends on the degree of restricting ethnic stratification and other key phenomena of social inequality. It is only by way of greater social equality that we can ensure more developed processes of adaptation, processes of acculturation linked with the adaptation, and processes of integrative conflicts and oppositions. The existence of horizontal social and ethnic differences is related to the development of cultural pluralism. Processes of cultural pluralism are identical with the more developed processes of adaptation that are in turn associated with processes of acculturation, whenever the elements of the new culture are being adopted in the context of horizontal ethnic differences. Under the conditions of a greater extent of social equality, processes of integrative conflicts and oppositions can evolve along with the processes of an advanced-level adaptation and of the acculturation interconnected with the adaptation; in this case, we witness the confrontation between the relatively autonomous elements of culture, the values used in resolving the existing opposition, just as we also witness actual social progress. Thanks to these factors, the presence of the phenomena of cultural pluralism is assured. Furthermore, what we witness in this case is also the interlinkage of the processes of the more developed adaptation as well as of acculturation and the processes of integrative conflicts. The acceptance of the common and of the novel and the preservation and furtherance of the particular resulting from the interaction between different cultures, hardly ever take place without the emergence of oppositions and conflicts. Mutual adaptation and cooperation is a process associated with a number of oppositions and conflicts that can be resolved by taking on integrative effects through our efforts. A more developed type of adaptation is generated if the tensions are lessened and their thrust moderated, and if latent conflicts turn into manifest conflicts. Those basic values of the global society which persist and develop through confrontation

and struggle are more firm and hence ensure the cohesion within the global society.

The concluding thought may be formulated as follows: under the conditions of social inequality demonstrated by ethnic stratification, undeveloped processes of adaptation, processes of acculturation dissociated from the adaptation, discrepancies between enculturation and acculturation, numerous disjunctive processes (disintegrative conflicts, discrimination, regressive nationalism, coercive assimilation, and the like), we cannot realistically hope for the factual development of multiculturalism. Factual multiculturalism can flourish under the conditions of a greater social equality, when the ethnic stratification transcends its own limits and begins to represent social differences on the horizontal level, when processes of a fuller adaptation emerge, when processes of acculturation tie in with the more developed processes of adaptation, when processes of transculturation are brought in, when processes of enculturation are coordinated with processes of acculturation, or when two enculturative processes in two cultures run parallel with each other and when processes of integrative conflicts and oppositions are in full swing.

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