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CULTURAL DIVERSITY AS A GLOBAL DISCOURSE

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SUMÁRIO

Título: Diversidade Cultural como Discurso Global

Resumo:

Neste trabalho concebo a "diversidade cultural" como um discurso global de elites envolvidas na cooperação internacional e na governança global. Primeiro, discuto as relações entre diversidade e globalização. Depois, exploro a tensão particular/universal para oferecer a noção de cosmopolítica como um tipo diferenciado de discurso global. Cosmopolítica permite ir além da tensão particular/universal. Antes de considerar os limites das pretensões à universalidade de discursos globais contemporâneos como direitos humanos e desenvolvimento, discuto "diversidade cultural" no contexto dos "discursos fraternos globais". Este exercício serve de ponte para explorar as relações entre diversidade cultural e outro discurso global, o do Patrimônio Cultural da Humanidade. A definição de Patrimônio Cultural da Humanidade depende do que se entenda por "valor universal excepcional". "Valor universal excepcional" define o quê (na verdade quem) é universal e merece ser parte do patrimônio mundial, isto é, o quê/quem transcende os confins de uma localidade e é capaz de ser admirado por outros em uma economia simbólica global. VUE mostra a força ilocucionária de alguns discursos. Cria reconhecimento em uma época na qual abundam demandas por reconhecimento. As discussões sobre VUE não podem ser reduzidas à luta para controlar uma definição abstrata, sem impacto, de universalidade. Ao contrário, VUE tornou-se uma questão a ser debatida graças à sua força ilocucionária. VUE é um artefato taxonômico e artefatos taxonômicos em geral provocam efeitos de poder que estruturam relações entre distintos atores coletivos. VUE é também um significante flutuante. Como não pode ser definido, sua força ilocucionária torna-se mais importante do que o seu significado. A noção de VUE congrega elites profissionais e políticas, nacionais e transnacionais, ao redor de discursos sobre que símbolos de identidades coletivas são mais legítimos para serem disseminados em fluxos simbólicos nacionais e globais nos quais abundam discursos globais sobre diversidade cultural.

Palavras-chave: universalismo e particularismo; poder global e ideologias.

Title: Cultural Diversity as a Global Discourse

Abstract:

In this paper I conceive "cultural diversity" as a global discourse of elites engaged in international cooperation and global governance. I first discuss the relationships between diversity and globalization. Then I explore the universal/particular tension to offer the notion of cosmopolitics as a distinct kind of global discourse. Cosmopolitics allows me to go beyond the particular/universal tension. Before considering the limits of the claims to universality of major contemporary global discourses (human rights and development) I discuss "cultural diversity" in the framework of "global fraternal discourses". This exercise is a bridge to explore the relationships between cultural diversity and another global discourse, that of World Heritage. The definition of World Heritage revolves around what is understood

by “outstanding universal value.” “Outstanding universal value” defines what (in reality, who) is universal and deserves to be part of the world heritage, i.e., what/who transcends the confinement of locality and is capable of being admired by others in a global symbolic economy. OUV shows how some discourses have illocutionary force. It creates recognition in a time when claims for recognition abound. In this sense, the discussions about OUV cannot be reduced to a struggle to control an abstract, unimpacting definition of universality. Rather, OUV has become an issue due to its illocutionary force. OUV is a taxonomic device and taxonomic devices often have power effects that structure relationships among different collective actors. OUV is also a floating signifier. Since it cannot be defined, its illocutionary force becomes more important than its meaning. The notion of OUV congregates national and transnational professional and political elites around discourses on what are the most legitimate collective identity symbols to be disseminated on global and national symbolic flows in which global discourses on cultural diversity abound.

Keywords: universalism and particularism; global power and ideologies.

Cultural Diversity as a Global Discourse

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Humankind always appears to face an extreme disjunction, as if it had to decide between conflictive or congenial forces, homogeneity or heterogeneity, competition or cooperation, war or peace. In an age of heightened globalization, these scenarios are often framed through discourses that portray clashes of civilizations or that, conversely, praise cultural diversity as the cornerstone of intercultural dialogue. Global governance is, today, a complex political field. But many of its agents and agencies are, to a lesser or greater extent, influenced by such discourses. There are thus global agencies and agents in whose visions prevail an understanding of globalization as a conflictive homogenizing process and others that envision it as an opportunity to enhance cooperation among heterogeneous entities. My main interest in this paper is to discuss "cultural diversity" as the global discourse of elites engaged in international cooperation and global governance. Indeed, the current capacity that "cultural diversity" has of building broad consensus vividly shows when social agents who believe in different global discourses and have different political positions, such as World Bank officials and anti-globalization movement activists, share the assessment that cultural diversity is a common heritage of humanity to be cherished and preserved. In order to achieve my goals, I will first discuss the relationships between diversity and globalization. Then I will explore the universal/particular tension to offer the notion of cosmopolitics as a distinct kind of global discourse. Before considering the limits of the claims to universality of major contemporary global discourses (such as human rights, development and World Heritage) I discuss "cultural diversity" in the framework of what I call global fraternal discourses.

I) Globalization and Diversity

The current acknowledgement of the importance of diversity as a central value is a result of the evolving consciousness on globalization and of the increased awareness of the interconnected nature of cultural, political, economic and social issues in a shrunken world. The development of this awareness is closely related to the growth in complexity of the flows of people, goods, capital and information. With more complex ethnic segmentations, repertoires of information and cultural differences fostered by time space-compression (Harvey, 1989), cultural diversity has become highly politicized both within nation-states and on the global level. The politics of difference has evolved rapidly turning cultural and ethnic claims of recognition into major arenas of contemporary political struggles. Consequently, many discourses, ideologies and

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utopias address the issue of cultural diversity. The culturalization of political conflicts, especially those involving claims of citizenship based on ethnic identities, has reinforced ideologies of pluralism and multiculturalism (see Kymlicka, 1996, and Sartori, 2000, for instance).

It is true that globalization increases exposure to difference and makes social differentiation more complex. But discourses on diversity, as well as on universalism and particularism, are related to tensions existing among the constitutive parts of any social system, especially those social systems inserted in dynamics of growth and expansion. Tensions between forces of centralization and decentralization are inherent to capitalist expansion, for instance. The contemporary triumphant global expansion of capitalism has maximized such tensions. The struggle for cultural diversity is increasingly part of a struggle against global capital centralizing tendencies in economic sectors such as telecommunications and the cultural industries. But the defense of cultural diversity may also reflect transnational corporations' awareness of the glocal nature of today's political-economy. Centralization processes are related to power accumulation, homogenization, to stereotyped production and to the making of taxonomies to control difference. Decentralization processes are related to power dissemination, heterogenization and to difference production, to the making of taxonomies that aim at benefiting from diversity. However, decentralization may occur in modes that also reinforce power accumulation; modes that imply more sophisticated and flexible organizational and control systems since they are located in fields traversed by paradoxical forces. In such scenarios, there is "decentralization with centralization", an oxymoron Saskia Sassen (1991) uses to explain some of the dynamics of contemporary globalization. In processes of decentralization with centralization, the management of diversity acquires greater, strategic importance while uniformization is relegated to second plan. Difference becomes an asset and a problem; as such, it needs to be known and tamed.

Global governance agencies and networks need to manage difference. Their centralizing power relies, in part, on their abilities to accommodate both the different independent claims originating from within the global system they manage and the differentiated responses the global system gives to centralized regulations. Making local, regional, national and transnational interests compatible calls for sensitivity to information that flows in centralized and decentralized ways. There is thus a need to take into account a plurality of contexts of meaning production that are interconnected by institutional initiatives or by networking. Transnational agents and agencies are more inclined to organize diversity than to replicate uniformity (Hannerz, 1996). At the same time, "the couple unity/diversity is inherent to the imaginary and practice of the symbolic management of the world market" (Mattelart, 2005, 61). In sum, global governance institutions and networks are subject to the dynamics of decentralization/centralization and need to tackle the problems brought by diversity to their (re)production.

Cultural diversity has become a catch-all "ubiquitous term" that encompasses contradictory political positions held by nation-states, global governance agencies, communication holdings (Mattelart, 2005). In fact, the discourse on diversity is a field of contention. There are different kinds of "diversity" situated in two major fields defined by the greater presence of managerial or political interests. Thus diversity can become a great priority for policy makers interested in conflict resolution or in development initiatives (see The World Bank, 2001, 42, and Marc 2005) as well as for political activists interested in the struggles for survival of indigenous peoples or in the

strengthening of global civil society (see Gaventa, 2001, 280, and the Charter of Principles of the World Social Forum - www.forumsocialmundial.org.br, for instance).

Diversity is a mandatory subject especially for global governance agencies since cultural differences are always potentially or de facto part of their daily activities (see Ribeiro, 2003). It is also mandatory for all those who are politically sensitive to the role of difference in the construction of polities. In sum, diversity can be a tool for the reproduction or for the contestation of hegemony. There is nothing in "diversity" that necessarily makes it a challenge to power holders. Quite the contrary, diversity can be linked to a longstanding discussion on pluralism, a central debate in liberalism (Sartori, 2003). In this sense, it is not surprising that the issues raised by "diversity" are a main subject of the democratic debate, especially in the last few decades when respect for difference has become a major focus on civil society's agenda (Taylor, 1994; Kymlicka, 2001).

The entrance of multiple, differentiated voices in the global political and academic debates together with the constant growth in sensitivity towards difference have transformed "cultural diversity" into an object of desire that demands new creative modes of interpretation. Walter Mignolo (2000) coined the expression "diversality" to designate diversity as a universal project in lieu of the abstract universal provided by hegemonic perspectives. Diversality is understood as a giving up of classical notions of universality and seeing in diversity the main principle of creativity. Diversality should be "the relentless practice of critical and dialogical cosmopolitanism rather than a blueprint of a future and ideal society projected from a single point of view (that of the abstract universal) that will return us (again!) to the Greek paradigm and to European legacies" (Mignolo, 2000, 744). To consider diversity as a new universal is, nonetheless, not enough. The problem remains where it has always been: in the relationships between particulars and universals.

II) Particulars, Universals and Cosmopolitics

In a world full of diversity, traditional universalisms are no longer undisputed discourses. Criticism is directed especially towards Western and Eurocentric formulations that, given their hegemonic positions, have suffocated other perspectives. Enrique Dussel (1993), for instance, argues that it was Europe's centrality in the world system that allowed modern European ethnocentrism to pretend to be universal. Modernity's eurocentrism thus confounded abstract universality with concrete globality hegemonized by Europe as "center" (idem). A project such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2000) of "provincializing Europe" also has implications for the drive to decentralize universalisms and to criticize European modernity as the measuring stick. It questions the prominent role historicity plays in the construction of Western interpretations and opens up for a renewal of European thought from the margins. The explosion of totalities, the praise of fragments and of the multiplicity of times and places are indicative of new tensions between universalisms and particularisms.

Universals and particulars are a subject highly debated by philosophers. However, anthropologists also have a longstanding concern on these issues since they have been interested in the understanding of culture, as a general attribute of humankind, and of cultures, as the diverse existence of such an attribute. Both philosophers and anthropologists have contrasted universalism with particularism and relativism. The discussion on cultural relativism has been central, in one way or another, for anthropology since its inception and has been revisited for decades (see, for instance, Herskovits, 1958; Geertz, 1984; Abu-Lughod, 2002). At the same time,

anthropologists have also drawn attention to the exchanges and interconnections among human populations, to the "spurious," "hybrid" nature of cultures (see, for instance, Sapir, 1924; Wolf 1984; García Canclini, 1990, Werbner, 1997).

The multifaceted, sometimes paradoxical meanings of "cultural diversity" are heirs to the discussions on the notion of culture. They have long been present in anthropological debates about culture in the singular, and cultures, in plural. The anthropological notion "culture" means universal attributes shared by all human beings. The term "cultures" refers to the concrete variations of these attributes in countless historical and geographical contexts. Culture, in the singular, can also be used to describe a unique form of human experience such as in the expression "Yanomami culture." Therefore, the same noun can express a universal and its particulars, it can express commonalities of all human beings as well as experiences that only certain portions of humankind have. Under the umbrella of a single human attribute (culture), cultures need to be understood in their plurality and in their capacity to communicate with each other. Culture only exists through cultures. Culture(s), thus, can be associated with universal, particular or mixed entities. These properties of the concept create aporias such as the simultaneous praise of diversity and unity. It should be no surprise that Raymond Williams (1983), in his well known book, *Keywords*, deemed culture to be one of the two or three most complicated existing words.

The consideration of "cultural diversity" immediately brings to the fore issues of universalism and particularism. The very expression "cultural diversity" could lead to the belief that we are located within the cultural relativist camp. But the transformation of cultural diversity into a global discourse shows that the universalization of diversity is a real possibility. I need to make clear I am not so much concerned with abstract discussions on universals such as those that may be prompted by statements like "language is an attribute of humankind." My concern is with discussions on how some particularisms, Western notions of "human rights," "development" and "outstanding universal values," for instance, become or pretend to become "universals." In short, I am concerned with global discourses that pretend to be universal and need to be framed within particular power histories since they reflect unequal capabilities of defining what is common or desirable to every human being. The transformation of particulars into universals is more of a sociological and historical problem than a logical one. The monopoly of what is universal is a means of (re)production of global elites. Locals are not able to voice their conceptions of universals, let alone to impose them, unless they are articulated with powerful global networks, in which case they are no longer, strictly speaking, local actors.

Three Particularisms

For a better understanding of the wider universe in which my reasoning is situated, I will subdivide particularisms into three categories: local particularisms, translocal particularisms and cosmopolitan particularisms. They often coexist within a same cultural formation. They vary according to the different ways (a) the role of difference and sameness is represented by social actors in the construction of their identities; (b) the roles difference and sameness play in the construction of polities. In reality, given the complex relationships different cohorts of people keep over time, contrary to common belief, particularisms are products of histories of interconnections and exchanges. In this sense, all particularisms are hybrids. It should be clear there are no genuine cultures per se since they are always inscribed in larger processes and contexts. I agree with Eric Wolf for whom

> "… neither societies nor cultures should be seen as givens, integrated by some inner essence, organizational mainspring, or master plan. Rather, cultural sets, and sets of sets, are continuously in construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction, under the impact of multiple processes operative over wide fields of social and cultural connections" (Wolf, 2001: 313).

Notwithstanding this more complex, non-essentialist approach to culture, social actors often believe in the existence of genuine cultural forms that belong to or are exclusively created by a unique people. This kind of social representation is what sets the stage for the development of local particularisms.

Local particularisms are the set of practices and discourses held by a certain people in a given place in such ways that they seem to be both socially and spatially bounded. In view of their strong sense of originality and authenticity, local particularisms seem to be idiosyncratic. This kind of particularism is especially relevant when associated with the belief that it refers to the unique expressions and ways of life of a given people. Therefore, it is immediately related to cultural differences and diversity. It provides a strong sense of cohesion, unity and identity, and is a powerful source of collectivity construction. Local particularisms are useful to contrast us, the "x" people, with them, the "y" people. As major forces of identity formation, they are critical in the defining of networks of alliance and cooperation among people viewed as insiders of a collectivity, as well as for the drawing of the lines that demarcate who are the outsiders. Multicultural ideologies of conviviality, especially those that stress limits and boundaries, play an important role in this universe. Although local particularisms are symbolic means at the disposal of local populations they may be disseminated to other people. This is especially true in an age of globalization characterized by the existence of diverse deterritorialized flows of goods, information and people. However, not all particularisms flow with the same intensity and visibility.

Local particularisms are among some of the most solid building blocks of ethnocentrism, the ambivalent ideational system that is simultaneously responsible for positive representations about social actors' own groups as well as for negative representations about outsiders. Politically active ethnocentrism may lead to essentialisms as well as to fundamentalisms. The emergence of these ideologies based on the exacerbation of cultural differences must be understood in social and political contexts where there are great power imbalances among different ethnic groups. Globalization has fostered contradictions between ethnic segments and nation-states at the same time that it has improved ethnic groups' ability to make international alliances. However, since most ethnic conflicts arise within nation-states (see Williams, 1989, for the relationship between racism and nation-building), these polities are the framework where ideologies of conviviality are (re)constructed, often as the outcome of confrontations among different ethnic segments and central governments. In the last four decades, notions of ethnic pluralism and multiculturalism have increasingly come to the fore, bringing new dynamics and pressures to political life (Taylor, 1993; Kymlicka, 1996, 2001; Glazer, 1998). The strategic role Anglo-Saxon countries play in the production of contemporary master discourses is the engine behind the worldwide dissemination of multicultural perspectives. This prominence has been associated with North-American "cultural imperialism" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002), i.e., with a local particularism that has been universalized through power effects.

The Americanization of "world culture" is an ambivalent subject, highly related to discussions on imperialism that often reflect an author's ideological position. I concur with Dezalay (2004, 12) that "Americanization" is a reductionist term because it hinders

the perception of the "long history of international strategies" that are produced by nation-states struggling, in global arenas, over the imposition of different modes of state knowledge. However, I think it is possible to agree that: a) on the one hand, there is no doubt local peoples indigenize global flows of information and culture and that sometimes they resist it; b) on the other hand, the prominence of North-American artifacts and discursive matrices is noticeable within such flows. Hunter and Yates (2002) illustrate well my statements. In their work on the "world of American globalizers", they pay attention to "the forces of indigenization and hybridization" but acknowledge that "at the end of the day", we are "still faced with the present reality of America's powerful if not dominant role in processes of globalization" (p. 325). Based on interviews with senior management and executives of major transnational organizations and corporations, they show how these monoglot English-speaking global elites export their moral and ideological agendas. They live in a sociocultural bubble of beliefs and practices that is characterized by a great exposure to time-space compression and homogenized global fragmented spaces, a blind faith in the inevitability of globalization and in the market, a positive assessment of their own work (never seen as destructive of local cultures), and the notion that "they are all responding in different ways to universal needs rooted in a conception of the individual as a rational, competitive and acquisitive social actor" (2002, 355). Their moral authority is "grounded in the language of universal individual rights and needs" (2002, 338). Universal needs are defined in tune with globalizers' own programs. In this context, multiculturalism plays a clearly instrumental and functional role. It is useful as a strategy for multinational corporations to "temper both the image and reality of their work as a soft imperialism. Balancing the moral appeal to universal rights and needs, then, is a tendency to indigenize their brands, organizational identities, and constituencies" (2002, 341). Local and cultural diversity is to be respected as a need for survival in a globalized world. Indigenization is seen as a glocal marketing strategy. This mindset is far from turning these globalizers into cosmopolitan elite. Hunter and Yates conclude that:

> "Paramount in this process is the belief that a larger humanitarian idea undergirds their work and the work of the organizations they represent. Whether commercial, entertainment, religious, or educational, the organizational mission of their work is to meet a fundamental and universal human need, even if they happen to be creating that need. Thus, in ways they are not always reflective about, they want to believe that they and their work contribute to a moral good. In these ways, globalization's vanguard maintains a sense of moral innocence about the world they are helping create. Cynicism is simply absent; instead guilelessness – about who they are and what they are bringing about – is the overwhelming sensibility" (2002, 355).

This kind of naiveté can only be afforded by those who exert hegemonic power. "Americanization" is a relevant issue in global processes and an example of how a local particularism may claim to be universal. The universalization of local particularisms is the best scenario to see how the definition of what is universal is subject to conflicts of interpretations grounded in different power and subject positions. It is worth repeating: there is a struggle to hold the monopoly on what is universal since this monopoly is a fundamental means of the symbolic reproduction of global elites. Once a universal is defined the more a group or a person matches the definition the more global they are. In view of the fact that universals are often taken as attributes of humankind, the closer a

group or a person are to universals the more humane they are. Idiosyncrasies are suitable to stereotyping and to discrimination.

Although few would dispute the dominant role of the United States in globalization, the discussion on whether globalization is a form of imperialism controlled by the United States and by transnational corporations is far from an end. The conflicting positions are but another indicator that the dissemination of local particularisms occurs within a universe where other discourses on how to best manage conflicts of cultural diversity abound. Some of these discourses are more concerned with forms of interaction and dialogue, than with diversity as a collection of discrete units that, nonetheless, are forced to live together since their lives unfold within the same political structure, that of the globalized world. These other discourses are related to what I call translocal particularisms.

Translocal particularisms clearly admit to being a product of several exchanges and borrowings. They openly refer to peoples and cultures located in multiple geographical situations. Diversity is not defined only by the existence of exotic others whose presence establishes clear us/them boundaries. Cultural diversity is lived as a reality that is not extraneous to ego's community, on the contrary diversity and hybridization are seen as an identitary hallmark. Translocal particularisms are a strong part of the identity ideologies of mestizo and diasporic peoples and, as such, they play roles homologous to the ones local particularisms play in identity formation (see, for instance, Sahlins, 1997). In this sense, translocal particularisms may also develop into essentialisms and fundamentalisms. But, social actors that sustain translocal particularisms are more aware of the loans and contributions from other cultural formations. In this sense, they are not much inclined to the production of ideologies of conviviality, such as some forms of multiculturalism, based on rigid differences and demarcating lines. The main ideology here is interculturality, a discourse that stresses mutuality more than exclusivity. Néstor García Canclini (2004, 15) makes the following difference between multiculturalism and interculturality:

> "Multicultural conceptions admit the *diversity* of cultures, underscore their differences and propose relativist policies of respect that often reinforce segregation. Differently, interculturality refers to confrontation and entanglement, to what happens when groups establish relationships and exchanges. Both terms suppose two modes of production of the social: *multiculturality* supposes acceptance of what is heterogeneous; *interculturality* implies that those who are different are what they are in relations of negotiations, conflicts and reciprocal loans."

Translocal particularisms tend to proliferate as a result of the increase in complexity of the flows of commodities, people and information fostered by intense time-space compression in the contemporary globalized world. Such disjunctive flows generate multi-faceted identities and an abundance of hybrids and in-betweeness. A heightened awareness of hybridity may generate pretensions of elevating hybridism to a new universal; but it does not necessarily lead to a generalized respect for difference as the source of human creativity and ingeniousness. On the contrary, hybridity may trigger a fear of a loss of purity and essence and, consequently, a heightening of fundamentalist perspectives, a backlash, a return to the notion that local particularisms are the exclusive source of identity formation and the springboards for the construction of universals.

Cosmopolitan particularisms are capable of dealing with the tensions between particularism and universalism, between hybridism and fundamentalism in a more productive vein. Differently from the previous forms of particularisms mentioned before, cosmopolitan particularisms are discourses that intrinsically address global issues and pretend to be taken into consideration, if not incorporated, by other people. They feed on cosmopolitanism as an ideology of tolerance, understanding, inclusion and conviviality. Cosmopolitanism is a western notion that epitomizes the need social agents have to conceive of a political and cultural entity, larger than their homeland, that would encompass all human beings on a global scale. Cosmopolitanism presupposes a positive attitude towards difference, a desire to construct broad allegiances and equal and peaceful global communities of citizens who should be able to communicate across cultural and social boundaries forming a universalist solidarity. Its inclusive drive is most evident in moments of crisis of other modes of representing and ascribing membership to existing sociopolitical and cultural unities. Much of the malaise and misunderstanding cosmopolitanism may provoke are related to its ambiguity, that is, its unique way of uniting difference and equality, an apparent paradox of wishing to reconcile universal values with a diversity of culturally and historically constructed subject positions. The composition of the Greek term, *cosmopolis*, already indicates this unsolved tension: *cosmos*, a natural universal order, is related to *polis*, society's variable order. As a result, from the Greek democratic city-state to the global village, the idea of a cosmopolite has been haunted by questions such as *whose* world this is.

Since its inception cosmopolitanism has been a category marked by a need to negotiate with "others" and has reflected tensions between local and supralocal realities, ethnocentric and relativist perspectives, and particularism and universalism. Cosmopolitan particularisms are the easiest particularisms to universalize since they are already based on global conceptions of solidarity, inclusion and respect for cultural diversity. Currently, cosmopolitanism is a most powerful ideology of conviviality among globalizers independent of their political differences regarding globalization's characteristics and goals. In the anti-globalization movement or in the World Bank, being a citizen of the world is a necessity. It could rarely be otherwise, global political elites, highly exposed to time-space compression and to ethnic diversity, do develop a more complex identity, since the (re)structuring powers of different levels of integration (local, regional, national, international and transnational levels) work differently for those exposed to global and transnational forces (Ribeiro, 2000). Cultural diversity is thus a central ideology that cosmopolitans try to universalize.

Cosmopolitics

Cosmopolitan particularisms greatly coincide with what I have called elsewhere (Ribeiro, 2003) cosmopolitics[2]. This notion allows me to explore cosmopolitan particularisms as a form of global political discourse and to go beyond the particular/universal tension that, in one way or another, is a grid framing this discussion. In fact, cosmopolitics are global discourses that are aware of their political nature. Cosmopolitics are discursive matrices intrinsically related to political interpretations and actions of global reach. This is why global governance agencies are centers of cosmopolitics production.

There are two fields of interpretation and promotion of cosmopolitics. The first one is hegemonized by transnational capitalists and their associated elites who praise a

[2] On cosmopolitics see the book edited by Cheah and Robbins (1998), especially the chapters by Robbins (1998, 1998a), Cheah (1998, 1998a), Wilson (1998) and Clifford (1998).

neoliberal borderless world, i.e., open access to markets and to domestic social and natural resources anywhere. They also postulate the strengthening of such global governance agencies as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. Cultural diversity and respect for difference is seen as a means to obtain compliance and governance, or as a marketing strategy. Hegemonic cosmopolitics promote the (re)production of the global establishment. The second field is made up of agencies and intellectuals, in the Gramscian sense (Gramsci, 1978), interested in other kinds of globalizations, in the dissemination of critical cosmopolitics. These intellectuals are typically found in the university milieu (especially in areas such as anthropology, political science, economy, cultural studies, philosophy, geography, literature, international relations, sociology), others are in non-governmental organizations and social movements. They defend and disseminate visions of heterogeneity, heteroglossia, cultural diversity and strengthening of local actors. They postulate the need for a global civil society to regulate the power of transnational and deterritorialized hegemonic elites. The articulations internal to this second trend are the basis of counter-hegemonic cosmopolitics of the transnational activists.

Both fields, in different manners, feed on global discourses such as, for instance, development (with its promises of unlimited welfare and technological transcendence), republicanism, liberalism, socialism, environmentalism and the defense of human rights. They are also invigorated by the new mind frames of political and cultural activity engendered by the technologies of communication of the late 20th century. Communication technologies have become a focus of explorations on global culture, as well as on the emergence of new fragmented and flexible identities, electronic interactions and public space, cultural hybridism and cosmopolitan political communities. The internet has led to the existence of a transnational imagined and virtual community, synchronized by cyberspace, interacting in real time and involved in global economic, cultural and political exchanges (Ribeiro, 1998). However, the internet does not substitute real copresence which remains fundamental to the existence of rituals that foster the construction of complex solidarity chains among political actors. See, for instance, the importance, in the last two decades, of the mega global rituals of integration of transnational elites such as the United Nations conferences and the World Social Forum.

The notion of cosmopolitics is useful to debate the possibilities of supra and transnational articulations in the current era characterized by intense networking of global actors. Differently from the notion of universal, cosmopolitics does not conceal its political nature and the need to form wider political compositions. Articulation thus becomes a key-word since the efficacy of cosmopolitics on the transnational level depends on its dissemination in networks. In this connection, the notion of cosmopolitics also implies the acknowledgement that there is not a sole cosmopolitics capable of accounting for the complexity and diversity of the contents of global discourses and cultures. Indeed, it would be a contradiction with the very idea of cosmopolitics to believe that there might be just one correct one for all glocalized subjects. There can only be hybrid and plural cosmopolitics, by definition. However, cosmopolitics are products of different power fields. Cosmopolitics which are fostered by hegemonic agents tend to be framed in discourses that hardly disguise their claims to ontological superiority vis-à-vis others. While such formulations formally respect diversity and difference, they border on the idea of a moral and teleological destiny that amounts to the construction of quasi-universals.

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In a globalized world, there is a growing awareness that the definition of universalisms are subject to different forces and contradictions. This awareness has further developed in view of the pragmatic uses of universalisms, such as human rights, in global governance. In global political arenas that are made up by a host of actors and agencies representing nation-states, forms of establishing consensus and common goals should avoid the pitfalls embedded within the universalism/particularism tension. The idea of a "universal" tends to obliterate differences, the power variation and struggles which shape the processes leading to the definition of a common interest. Furthermore, it supposes that agreements are based on the same kind of cultural ground and understanding of what a good life is. Universals are often presented as naturalized and eternal transcendent entities which are beyond culture, society and power. They tend to become a fetish both in the hands of those who believe and who do not believe in them. Universalisms, thus, hide more than reveal.

This is why I advocate the adequacy of the notion of cosmopolitics for global political actors. It starts with the assumption that politics is always practiced within a field of action where there is a great diversity of cultural and political positions. The notion of "field" is central here. Bourdieu (1986) defines a field as a set of relations and interrelations based on specific values and practices that operate in given contexts. A field is heterogeneous by definition; it is made up of different actors, institutions, discourses and forces in tension. Within a field, everything makes sense in relational terms by means of oppositions and distinctions. Strategies of cooperation or conflict among actors determine whether a particular doctrine is hegemonic, regardless of its successes or failures (Perrot et al, 1992, 202-4). As results of political and argumentative fields, cosmopolitics are discursive matrices capable of being more transparent since social agents know they are the products of political articulations that may change overtime. Cosmopolitics admit criticisms and revisions, and respect dissension caused by local or cultural variance. To criticize or to oppose a cosmopolitics is part of the democratic rules in the global scenario. To criticize or to oppose a universal, or to be located out of its orbit of influence, amounts to issuing a certificate of misunderstanding, of disrespect for a fundamental civilizational value or of blind faith in a particular that represents minority interests on a collision route against humankind's greatest qualities and destiny.

III) Global Fraternal Discourses

Universals and cosmopolitics dispute for legitimacy within a field that is traversed by what I call "global fraternal discourses." This is a complex field composed of churches, diplomats, global governance and international cooperation agencies, foundations and NGOs, politicians, scholars. Do these global fraternal discourses always have positive impacts? No. History is full of examples of violence and oppression in the name of religion, freedom and democracy. One of the problems is the means powerful agencies use to disseminate and implement global fraternal discourses. In a world where many cosmopolitics compete with each other, cultural diversity has become highly valued in the global symbolic economy of fraternal discourses.

For a formal definition of cultural diversity as a global discourse, there is no better document than the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by its 31st Session of the General Conference, in Paris, on November 2nd, 2001. It is an example of a statement of an agency that views globalization as an opportunity to enhance cooperation and the promotion of peace (see http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf). My focus on UNESCO

is also justified for it has been, in the last six decades, the agency specialized in global cultural issues.

A UNESCO (2004) study based on official documents shows how the trajectory of the discussion on cultural diversity has changed within the institution overtime, reflecting different junctures in the world system. In a first moment, during the post World War Two reconstruction period, the Orient-Occident divide was seen as a major conflictive division. Nation-states were pictured in a unitary vein, diversity was an international matter. In a second period, characterized by the emergence of postcolonial nations, culture encompassed identity. Cultural resistance to homogenizing political and technological forces was an issue too. It is during a third period that culture as political power gained greater strength since it became clearly linked to development by means of notions such as endogenous development. The fourth and last period is marked by a connection between culture and democracy not only regarding inter-national relations but also subnational ones. The changes in UNESCO's definitions and priorities indicate an increased politicization of the cultural diversity debate.

The Universal Declaration of a global governance body is perforce a hybrid. The political processes involved in the elaboration of such a document are traversed by the struggles of state elites based on different kinds of nation-state knowledge (Dezalay, 2004). Processes of hybridization do not occur in historical and sociological vacuums. They are structured by power relations. This is especially true for those discourses that are the outcome of long political negotiations within a multilateral agency. In a word, there is a cultural dominant (to make use of a notion developed by Jameson, 1984). What peoples of the whole planet hybridize are Western worldviews. The political consequences of such a reality are strong enough to be noticed not only on the floor of diplomatic negotiations, but also in conflicts on the streets and in different battle grounds.

The preamble of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity relates it to another major cosmopolitics, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, thus aligning the Declaration on Cultural Diversity with a family of global discourses in the United Nations system. It further affirms that "respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding are among the best guarantees of international peace and security." By aspiring to "greater solidarity on the basis of recognition of cultural diversity, of the development of the unity of humankind, and of the development of intercultural exchanges" the preamble of the Declaration covers the extension of the political uses of culture. It recognizes the importance of cultural variation, at the same time as it asserts the unity of humankind, and the need for intercultural exchanges. The preamble of the Declaration pictures globalization in a positive fashion. It expresses the belief that although the fostering of globalization by the "rapid development of new information and communication technologies" represents a "challenge for cultural diversity," globalization "creates the conditions for renewed dialogue among cultures and civilizations." The "challenge for cultural diversity" is not qualified, but it can presumably be related to the interpretations of globalization that emphasize its homogenizing power, a rather serious subject since there is evidence -- the diminishing of linguistic diversity, for instance -- that such processes are also occurring.

The document is a series of 12 articles on which I will comment briefly. The first article refers to cultural diversity as the common heritage of humankind. This time a strategic analogy with the concept of biodiversity is invoked, linking the Declaration to another global discourse, sustainable development, the new ideology/utopia of development of late 20th century (Ribeiro, 2002) which was coined during the 1992

United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED). The evocation of biodiversity is a strategic step because it represents a (green) sign for other global agents about the importance of cultural diversity for human kind. The symbolic value of the consensus generated around the importance of biodiversity is transferred to cultural diversity[3]. Such a move also evokes the political symbolism of the Rio-92 Conference – an extraordinary mega global ritual of integration of transnational elites (172 governments participated - 108 at heads of State or Government level – as well as representatives from almost 2,400 NGOs). This impressive gathering was capable of producing a most influential contemporary global discourse. The dissemination and efficacy of "sustainable development" created a powerful symbolic umbrella useful in the articulation of other discourses "for the benefit of present and future generations." In this connection, cultural diversity is explicitly related to development in article 3 of the Universal Declaration, as a factor that "widens the range of options open to everyone" and as "one of the roots of development." In tune with a longstanding anthropological tradition (see, for instance, Lévi-Strauss, 1987 [1952]), diversity is linked to creativity and innovation. At the same time, provisions against ethnic violence and fundamentalisms are clear in article 4 that affirm human rights as guarantees of cultural diversity and state the following: "no one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope." In article 5, cultural rights are defined as part of human rights. "Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge" as well as to "the means of expression and dissemination" are seen, in article 6, as the "guarantees of cultural diversity."

Some of the key words and expressions of the Declaration include: common heritage, uniqueness, plurality, exchange, innovation, creativity, harmonious interaction, inclusion, development, participation, peace, human rights, respect, freedom, dialogue, cooperation, solidarity, partnership. These are all positive terms that can be grouped in three kinds of semantic fields associated with the need for 1) commonality, i.e. the need to consider a collectivity larger than one's own (in a globalized world this means humankind); 2) diversity, i.e. the need to recognize the importance of difference for human life and for the construction of more complex polities; and 3) cooperation, the need for articulation and non-isolationism in an integrated world. The Declaration is thus clearly located within the universe of global fraternal discourses.

The semantic and programmatic universe where such a broad agenda is located resonates with ideological and utopian formulations. The latter are especially relevant components of global fraternal discourses. Utopias are here understood in accordance with Paul Ricoeur's (1986) vision: utopias are the struggle in the present over the meaning of the future. These formulations are never innocuous since the ways social actors interpret the future are of great consequence for social action. In reality, utopias most often exist within a contradictory and conflictive universe where different social and political actors strive to make their interpretations the most valid ones. The fact that a given utopian discourse, development for instance, becomes almost a universal consensus does not mean it reigns peacefully without contestation. Ideologies and

[3] A World Bank publication clearly makes a connection between environmental economics and cultural economics: "Many of the economic analytical techniques needed for intervention in the cultural heritage area are being adapted from environmental economics, which a decade ago faced the same new demand to apply economic analysis to investment in environmental protection. There is broad agreement to date on several economic propositions: cultural assets, like environmental goods, have economic value; these economic values and potentials can increasingly be assessed through improved methodologies…; most important, their economic value can be captured, and even maximized, through adequate policies and efficient pricing" (The World Bank, 2001, 43)

utopias are intimately related to the exercise of power. They express conflicts of interpretation over the past (ideology) or over the future (utopia) and struggle to institute hegemonies by means of the establishment of certain retrospective or prospective visions as truths, as the natural order and destiny of the world. The question is thus how a given utopia acquires greater visibility and legitimacy? The answer is not a simple one, it requires attention to the efficacy of discourses and to the relations between discourses and power.

Another important related issue is why, in the face of the many contradictions between the programmatic aspects of fraternal global discourses and the crude reality of daily life, agents and agencies that incorporate these discourses keep on reproducing them? I do not think that this can be explained solely in terms of utopian struggles among different global agencies. Nor would it suffice a pragmatic approach whereby the existence of these agencies is seen in function of their own selfish reproduction as global discourse producers. In fact, it is common that global governance agencies are aware of their discourses' limits and may even criticize their own modes of operation. This is not necessarily a contradiction. It can be understood in light of Michael Herzfeld's study on bureaucracy. It is inherent to the rationale of bureaucracies to produce their own criticism, as a way of disseminating and naturalizing the very bureaucratic structure they seem to criticize and, sometimes, oppose (Herzfeld, 1992). In fact, the capacity to produce excuses for failures, to recycle formulations and to create new formulations is part of the "idioms of self-exoneration" (ibid., 46) in many institutions. Herzfeld also coined another interesting notion, I find useful to understand why global fraternal discourses can coexist with the crude reality of a conflictive world. Building on Weber's concept of theodicy, a concept related to the various ways in which religious systems seek to interpret the apparent contradiction of evil persistence in a divinely ordered world, Herzfeld (1992, 7) proposes that "secular theodicy … provides people with social means of coping with disappointment. The fact that others do not always challenge even the most absurd attempts at explaining failure … (may be) the evidence of a very practical orientation, one that refuses to undermine the conventions of self-justification because virtually everyone … may need to draw on them in the course of a lifetime." Global fraternal discourses are thus utopias traversed by secular theodicy, as such they have a most important sociological role in the (re)production of social and political cohesion, and of coherence in collective bodies of transnational agents. These discourses are increasingly more important in the globalized world.

IV) Cultural Diversity and the Limits of the Universal Pretension of Global Discourses

Global discourses often are framed as if they were universals admired and desired by everyone irrespectively of class and cultural differences. Some of these globalizing discourses are similar to what Arjun Appadurai calls ideascapes - "elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a concatenation of ideas, terms and images, including 'freedom,' 'welfare,' 'rights,' 'sovereignty,' 'representation' and the master term 'democracy'" (1990, 9-10). Given the European and North-American hegemony in the formation of the world system, the dissemination of global discourses bears the marks of the West. In this section, I will briefly consider two of the most well-known and influential global discourses, human rights and development, in order to indicate their fragility regarding cultural variability. This initial exercise is a bridge to explore in the next section the relationships between cultural diversity and another

important global discourse, that of World Heritage. It is always good to clarify that in acknowledging notions such as liberty, democracy and human rights as discursive matrices marked by Western hegemony does not mean that I do not value them. It means, though, that I am aware of the semantic slippages that make them useful to achieve goals distinct from their own premises. How many times in the name of democracy, human rights and liberty, authoritarian regimes have been implanted or violent imperialist interventions perpetrated? The ambivalence of such formulations needs to be considered if we are to understand them better (see, for instance, Ribeiro 2002, 2004).

Human rights

Human rights are a fundamental global fraternal discourse responsible for advancements in the regulation of abuses of powerful and violent social agents and agencies. The worldwide dissemination of human rights as a discourse has been so effective that they can be considered as key elements in the ideological and utopian conditions of the contemporary transnational world. Human rights are based on a universal conception of rights people are entitled to regardless of their particular citizenships. Since the legitimate use of violence always relates to cultural, religious and political values, the universality of human rights supposes the existence of universal values, a highly problematic notion. Serge Latouche (2002, 85), for instance, states that: "we should start to acknowledge the inexistence of values that transcend the majority of cultures for the simple reason that a value only exists within a given cultural context."

Indeed, the universality of human rights was never a consensual matter. To this day, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most important international document on the subject. After its approval, in 1948, a long and difficult negotiation occurred regarding the commitments each nation-state was willing to make to implement the declaration:

> "The difficulties that arose in the negotiations coincide with those found, in general, by international action for the promotion of Human Rights. They derive from the fact that to assume precise juridical commitments on the subject calls for reaching an understanding of formulae capable of expressing common ideals of different states, regarding their juridical traditions, political systems and religious faiths. Furthermore, it would also be necessary to take into account different economic and social standards of these states and to require a prevision of a special control system able to promote, not to say to guarantee, the observation or the norms, object of the negotiations" (Mengozzi, 2000, 356).

The greater the cultural variation, the greater is the contestation of the universality of human rights. See, for instance, the strains among different Western nation-states, China and Muslim countries created by divergence over definitions of human rights. For Muslims, human rights are of divine origin and thus inextricably entangled with God's Law. In 1981 (Salah, 2003, 42), a Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights was issued by the London-based Islamic Council of Europe differing from the spirit of the UN's declaration highly inspired in the Enlightenment worldview. In the 'whereases' of the preamble, for instance, it is said that "Allah (God) has given mankind through His revelations in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of His Blessed Prophet Muhammad an abiding legal and moral framework within which to establish and regulate human institutions and relationships"; and that "the human rights decreed by the Divine Law aim at conferring dignity and honor on mankind and are designed to eliminate oppression and injustice" (www.alhewar.com/ISLAMDECL.html, access on 11.4.06).

Human rights are thus often caught in tugs of war typical of the universal/particular tension. They can either be seen as "indispensable tools of democratic political struggles and as an especially significant moment of the civilizing process" or as "the ethnocentric expressions of the hegemonic pretensions of specific cultural formations, supported by institutions, states and some power apparatuses" (Soares, 2001, 23). The relationship between human rights and cultural diversity is prone to generate contradictions. Consider, for instance, that human rights are also useful to the protection of ethnic minorities. In fact, in spite of their Western origins human rights have become an instrumental category of indigenous struggles in Latin America. The appropriation of human rights as a global fraternal discourse prompts absolute values such as the radical repudiation of genocide, ethnocide, xenophobia, racism and the disappearing of state oppositionists.

The global discourse on human rights is thus both a translocal particularism (the result of several international negotiations) and a cosmopolitan particularism. It can also play the role of a local particularism when hegemonic agents and agencies and imperial projects try to essentialize and universalize it in spite of cultural diversity. It is a cosmopolitan particularism when hegemonic and non-hegemonic agents and agencies are open to the variations of human rights according to social, political and cultural contexts.

Development

Development is a modern Western ideology and utopia. Since World War II, it has been one of the most inclusive discourses in common sense and within specialized literature. Its importance for the organization of social, political and economic relations has led anthropologists to consider it as "one of the basic ideas in modern West European culture" (Dahl and Hjort, 1984, 166), and "something of a secular religion," unquestioned, since "to oppose it is a heresy almost always severely punished" (Maybury-Lewis, 1990, 1). The scope and multiple facets of development are what allow its many appropriations and frequently divergent readings. The plasticity of development is central for the assurance of its continued viability; it is "always in the process of transforming itself, of fulfilling promises" (DSA, n.d., 4-5). The variations in the appropriations of the idea of development, as well as the attempts to reform it, are expressed in the numerous adjectives that are part of its history: industrial, capitalist, socialist, inward, outward, community, unequal, dependent, sustainable, human. These variations and tensions reflect not only the historical experiences accumulated by different power groups in their struggles for hegemony within the development field, but also diverse moments of integration in the world capitalist system.

Development operates as a system of classification by establishing taxonomies of peoples, societies and regions. Edward Said (1994) and Arturo Escobar (1995) have shown the relationship between creating a geography, a world order and power. It may be said with Herzfeld (1992, 110) that "creating and maintaining a system of classification has always...characterized the exercise of power in human societies." Classifications often produce stereotypes useful to subject people through simplifications that justify indifference to heterogeneity. Stereotypes can hardly hide their power functions under the surface of the idiom of development and cooperation, the lexicon of which is full of dualisms that refer, in static or dynamic ways, to transient states or relationships of subordination (developed/underdeveloped; developing countries; emergent markets; see Perrot et al., 1992, 189). Stereotypes may also become keywords – such as, aid, help, donors/recipients, donors/beneficiaries -- that clearly indicate, in not so subtle ways, the power imbalance between two sets of actors and legitimate the transformation of one set of them into objects of development initiatives.

Development's claim to inevitability is but another facet of its claim to universalism. The fact that development is part of a wider belief system marked by Western cultural matrices poses great limitations to its universalist claims, and is another reason why, in many non-Western contexts, local people are reluctant to become development subjects. It is hard to disagree that there is no universal method for achieving a "good life" (Rist, 1997, 241). Development's prehistory reflects such Western discursive matrices as the belief in progress (which is often traced back to ancient Greece: see Delvaille, 1969; Dodds, 1973) and others related to important turning points as the Enlightenment—a crucial moment for the unfolding of the economic, political and social pacts of modernity and its associated ideologies and utopias (industrialism, secularism, rationalization and individualism, for instance). Leonard Binder (1986, 10-12) recognizes, in certain development theories, an even narrower matrix: the image of the United States, "as some liberals would like us to be." More recently, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sustainable development reverberated with notions of proper relationships between humankind and nature that were typical of Protestant, urban middle classes in countries such as Germany, England and the United States (Ribeiro, 1992).

I will briefly mention a few anthropological issues that make development's pretension to universalism problematic. The first one is the existence of notions of time that are radically different (Lévi-Strauss, 1987). Development relies on a conception that envisages time as a linear sequence of stages endlessly advancing towards better moments. One implication of such a Western construct is that growth, transformation and accumulation become guiding principles of polities. But in many non-Western societies, time is understood as cycles of eternal recommencements, favoring the flourishing and consolidating of contemplation, adaptation and homeostasis as pillars of their cosmologies. Along the same line, we cannot underestimate the role of the control of time—particularly of the clock, the mother of mechanical complexity—in economic development in the past centuries (Landes, 1983). Synchronicity and predictability are the basis of capitalist and industrial labor relations. Another major divide is the transformation of nature into a commodity, a historical process related to the unfolding of capitalism and modernity (Jameson, 1984). Many of the impasses between developers and indigenous peoples have been based on this cosmological difference. What for some are mere resources, for others may be sacred places and elements.

Development is thus a local particularism the universalization of which rides on the expansion of political and economic power systems. With the cultural turn of the 1990's, development has culturalized itself and the recognition of cultural diversity has turned into an important issue for planners (see, for instance, Marc, 2005). However, development relies on an instrumental notion of culture. In its hands, culture becomes a "managerial technology of intervention in reality" (Barbosa, 2001, 135). Such a functional notion conceives culture as a set of interrelated, adjusted, coherent behaviors and meanings that can be identified and valued in terms of their positive or negative impact on the attainment of goals. This notion of culture fits well within the development field, because it adjusts perfectly to the terminology and rationale of planners. But it misrepresents at least two major considerations about culture: (a) contradiction and incoherence are part of human experience; and (b) culture is embedded in and traversed by historically defined power relations (therefore, cultural change always relates to power change). In sum, the impoverished and unproblematic version of "culture diversity" is the one that flourishes within the development field.

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The consideration of "human rights" and "development" showed how major global discourses are subject to conflicts of interpretations related to the characteristics of the sociopolitical fields in which they are located. Human rights are a *global regulatory discourse* directed towards the control of violence anywhere, regardless of jurisdiction. It is based on alleged universal conceptions of justice and rights. As such, it is anchored in a political field where judicial and juridical debates and policies prevail. Development is a *global economic discourse* directed towards the expansion of market production anywhere in the planet. It is based on alleged universal conceptions of collective growth and welfare and anchored in a political field dominated by planning, economic debates and policies. Both "human rights" and "development" are subject to resistance to their universalist claims. Reductionist conceptions of cultural diversity are favored within their political fields.

V) World Heritage and Outstanding Universal Value

World Heritage is another global discourse of great contemporary dissemination and shares several of the characteristics of both human rights and development. But its particularity is to address issues of recognition. This is why I will call it a *global recognition discourse* directed towards the definition of a family of extraordinary identitary markers that are meaningful both in national and international circuits. If human rights and development suppose, reinforce and create geographies of political and economic power, world heritage supposes, reinforces and creates a cultural geography of prestige. The 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage is the international treaty that affirms the need to identify, protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage around the world. The definition of World Heritage revolves around what is understood by "outstanding universal value" and is anchored in a political field permeated by cultural debates and policies. The "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention" thus defines "outstanding universal value":

> "Outstanding universal value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity" (World Heritage Centre, 2005, 14)

"Outstanding universal value" defines what (in reality, who) is universal, what/who deserves to be part of the world heritage, i.e., what/who transcends the confinement of locality (in spatial and temporal terms), and is capable of being admired by others in a global symbolic economy central not only to the accumulation of political prestige but also to the dynamics of economically important forces such as tourism. Joining the world heritage map is the acknowledgement of being among the best examples of humankind achievement or of natural wonders. The ten criteria for the assessment of outstanding universal value are also the selection criteria for inclusion on the list of World Heritage Sites. They bear witness to the expectation generated by these regulations. To be on this list a site should, for instance, "represent a masterpiece of human creative genius," "exhibit an important interchange of human values," "bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization," be "an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history," "contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic

importance," "contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity" (World Heritage Centre, 2005, 19-20).

OUV is not innocuous. OUV clearly shows how some discourses – or their fragments – have illocutionary force, they impact upon the world. It creates recognition in a time when claims for recognition abound. In this sense, the discussions about OUV cannot be reduced to a struggle to control an abstract, unimpacting definition of universality. Rather, OUV has become an issue due to its illocutionary force. OUV is a taxonomic device and taxonomic devices, as I have said before, often have power effects that structure relationships among different collective actors. OUV is a central component of a global discourse to which nation-states need to conform if they want to have access to cultural recognition on the global level. As part of a cosmopolitics engendered by a global governance agency, the meaning of OUV is subject to debate and changes.

Agencies of global governance reflect junctures in the world system and their different ideologies and utopias. The phrase "outstanding universal value" provides a most interesting example of how a formulation may evolve over time. What may have been in the beginning a self-explanatory phrase, the expression of a circumstantial agreement, has become the object of multiple, dense and sophisticated debates. OUV has become a *dispositif* which creates new spaces for power struggles involving different kinds of elites located in nation-states and global governance agencies. OUV also (re)creates new power relations around it that are destined to change the status quo that it has come to represent.

I want to explore the idea that OUV is a floating signifier, i.e., an expression that is highly variable and may be filled with different contents according to different (a) historical junctures, (b) relationships to the other expressions around it, (c) interest groups striving to control its meaning[4]. Floating signifiers can be understood in multiple ways by multiple agents. It is the flexibility and polysemy of a floating signifier that account for its efficacy while, at the same time, transform it in a point of contention.

In the beginning, the World Heritage reflected a wonders of the world approach, monuments were the main focus of interest. But the 1990's politicization of culture and identity has opened new avenues and perspectives. The concept of cultural heritage has broadened to include factors other than monumental expressions. The need to go beyond a Eurocentric understanding of authenticity was the object of a conference in Nara, Japan, in 1994, organized by the Japanese government, UNESCO, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). The resulting document (see Larsen, 1995, xxiii) clearly admits, in a relativist vein, the inadequacy of fixed criteria:

> "All judgements about values attributed to heritage as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgements of value and authenticity on fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that cultural heritage must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which it belongs."

[4] Claude Lévi-Strauss (1973) explored the notion of a floating signifier in his well-known introduction to the work of Marcel Mauss. For a related discussion on "empty signifier" see Laclau (1994).

The Nara Document represented an effort to restate what universal principles were, it meant a "growing desire to re-clarify universal principles operating in the field" (Stovel, 1995, xxxiv). In tune with trends that increasingly valued local actors in the face of globalizing processes, another conference was organized in 2003, by the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, in Amsterdam. It was entitled "Linking Universal and Local Values: Managing a Sustainable Future for World Heritage." OUV was clearly challenged as a parameter for inclusion:

> "the outstanding universal value which justifies the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List does not necessarily coincide with the values attached by local groups that traditionally inhabit or use a site and its surroundings. In this light, for an optimal application of the World Heritage Convention and sustainable economic and social development of the local communities, it appears imperative that their values and practices – together with traditional management systems – are fully understood, respected, encouraged and accommodated in management and development strategies" (World Heritage Centre, 2004, 9).

The conclusions and recommendations of the conference openly emphasized the need to see universal and local values in a continuum, not a hierarchy, as well as stressed that local values should be taken into consideration in the identification and sustainable management of World Heritage (see World Heritage Centre, 2004, 166-167). It is as if global cosmopolitan sensitivity to cultural diversity fully entered the scene. There were calls to local participation and to "recognize that the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List should benefit the international and the local community as a whole, and not just some intermediaries." Furthermore, according to the document, the "voices of local communities, including indigenous peoples" needed to be heard "particularly in international fora on heritage conservation and management." Management system diversity was praised in lieu of rigid concepts, the use of "traditional management systems" was particularly highlighted, "wherever they prove to be most effective for conservation and most advantageous for sustainable social and economic development of the local populations". In sum, the agenda seemed to lean towards positions similar to those found in the sustainable development field, in which local populations often are pictured as the main developmental goal and their culture as a rich source of resources, in another demonstration of the interconnections among the cosmopolitics of global elites.

In the current globalized world, the indigenization of the notion of outstanding universal value has become an issue that experts cope with to try to solve the many aporias generated by changes in the role and uses of culture and identity in global politics. Now heritage is inextricably entangled with local people, local culture and history. Globalization has turned the definition of universal into a problem. This is even more delicate when "universals" are confused with imperial forces and desiderata or when they are crucial normative categories. In a global environment where culture has been democratized as a factor of distinction (in the double sense of the word) "universal" needs to be relativized. The same is true for 'outstanding'. The definition of universal outstanding values is an impossible task to accomplish when all cultures are perceived as immanently equal in their achievements and none keeps the desired canon or transcendent model. These moves make it increasingly complicated, if not impossible, to have a single definition of the notion of OUV. If the solution is the

acceptance of several definitions of the notion, can the adjective universal still be used? Who can define outstanding universal values? OUV thus openly reveals its condition of a floating signifier. Since it cannot be defined, its illocutionary force becomes more important than its meaning. The notion of OUV congregates national and transnational professional and political elites around discourses on what are the most legitimate collective identity symbols to be disseminated on global and national symbolic flows.

OUV is a translocal particularism, in the sense that it has always reflected multiple stakeholder perspectives, which is in the process of becoming a cosmopolitan particularism or, better yet, a cosmopolitics, that is, a political field of globalized debates conscious of its own political limits and possibilities. But to be in fine tune with the full value of cultural diversity, social agents and agencies involved in this semantic field still need to recognize that claims to universality in a globalized world are rapidly being transformed into points of contention. The idea of "outstanding **universal** value" is no longer tenable if behind it is a search for a "technical" definition that will please all stake holders involved. Any new definition is doomed to become another field of contention. Since it is a characteristic of the fields generated by global discourses and cosmopolitics to produce endless struggles over the definition of key terms, indeed for the maintenance of a definition's monopoly, I advocate that OUV should be treated as what it is: a floating signifier, the definition of which will depend on different struggles of groups interested in the management of the global symbolic economy.

VI) Some Remarks and Issues

- The universal/particular tension is akin to the relationships between the global and the local. Glocalization (Robertson, 1994) was the neologism created to address the tensions between the local and the global and to dissolve, albeit partially, a supposed superiority of the global over the local. Is it possible to find an analogous notion to consider the universal/particular tension? The construction of any "universal" needs to be historicized, culturalized and sociologized if we wish to be able to perceive how a given particular has become a universal by means of specific trajectories through different systems of power.
- Since global discourses and cosmopolitics generate conflicts of interpretation it is common to find associated to them copious debates on the definitions of key terms. For instance, the very expression "human rights" is subject to divergence, as well as "development" (and terms like sustainability), and "outstanding universal values." Such conflicts are an indication of the floating signifier character of these discourses. They also indicate how important it is to keep the canon of a global taxonomic system, a role mostly played by global governance agencies.
- In spite of the current dissemination of cosmopolitics – related to new cosmopolitan particularisms - there is also a strong dissemination of essentialist discourses, claiming authenticity, and that identify with local particularisms. The tensions between these types of particularisms will remain as an element of global cultural politics. Consequently, cosmopolitics, i.e. global discourses that are aware of their inclusion in political and often conflictive fields, tend to replace universals. From (re)producers of "universals" global governance agencies should consciously turn into (re)producers of cosmopolitics. If we want to enhance the efficacy of fraternal global discourses and aspire to diversality, the methodology of cosmopolitics production needs to change.

- Documents written in the spirit of the fraternal global discourse try to generate other ideological and utopian framings but they cannot evade the crude reality of conflicts. For a global fraternal discourse to be effective in the contemporary world, it needs (a) to renounce any pretension to be the unique and universal valid solution, (b) to announce and denounce its own pre-concepts, (c) to enter into complex dialogues with several cosmopolitics that are formulated within the same semantic global field in order to (d) find the existing equivalences among the many formulations, make them explicit and keep them in conscious relations so that no one formulation will be elected to represent all humankind. In a global world, we enter a post-universal declaration era. In a global world, any universal declaration is doomed to be immediately contested. The only possible universal is the democratic negotiation process and the maintenance of equivalents in tension.
- Institutions and networks involved in this universe need to embrace or deepen democratic practices that allow for diversity to flourish and to acquire a real weight in decision-making processes. There are no easy solutions for the conflicts of power inherent to any political field. Most often changes depend on the nature of the power distribution within specific fields formed by particular agencies and networks. This implies that all actors and institutions within such fields have to "do" politics consciously and constantly to keep their interests alive. The socialization of knowledge on the complexity of issues involved is important to improve the quality of the information that actors handle in these political arenas. Thus, networks need to be democratic assemblages of institutions and actors with the real capacity to decide and intervene, especially if the outcome of such decision-making processes does not please the most powerful interests involved in a given scenario. To achieve these goals, public spheres need to be fostered, multiplied and made ever more inclusive. The diffusion of a democratic pedagogy should traverse the whole field and its networks, from upper-level managers and state officials to grassroots leadership. Inter-related processes should be opened to participants in such ways as to equalize the power of actors operating at all levels of integration (local, regional, national, international and transnational). These are major tasks for all interested in transparency, accountability and the strengthening of civil society. They will encounter much resistance among powerful actors interested in the status quo and among those for whom democracy is not a value. To move forward in a globalized world, where multiculturalism is increasingly a transnational political issue, we must admit that political visions based on the universalization of "local particularisms" are outmoded and doomed to failure. Rather, much more open perspectives should be fostered, visions that are sensitive to different cultural and political contexts, and ultimately to diversality.

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