A Companion to the Anthropology of Education

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CHAPTER **24**

Variations on Diversity and the Risks of Bureaucratic Complicity[1]

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This chapter presents two different research projects carried out by the authors in Spain over a period of 20 years. With two other essays available to give a detailed exposition of the short history of the anthropology of education in Spain (García Castaño and Pulido, 2008; Jociles, 2008), we will not provide an exhaustive historical review here. Rather, the purpose of the two projects that we are presenting here is to answer one question: how has the subject of diversity been addressed in the anthropology of education in Spain? With this question, we also mean to raise a broader theoretical point: as anthropologists of education, we are, ourselves, always embedded in social contexts and are at risk of being blinded by them. While we anthropologists of education often begin our projects using the obvious logics and categories of school and national bureaucracies, our job is to move past any simplistic thinking we encounter. We will focus on this problem, highlighting the formulation in Spanish schools and educational anthropology of an action domain that has been defined, politically, as "intercultural education," generated when "foreign students," particularly students from Africa, Latin America, and some non-EU European countries, began to arrive. This immigration process is quite recent and dramatic for Spain. In the 1991–1992 school year, there were 36 661 "foreign students" registered in the Spanish school system (CIDE, 2002); in the 2008–2009 school year, there were 742 470 (MECD, 2009).

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The two projects that we will briefly describe in this chapter are offered as pretexts for reflection; they constitute two specific windows through which we, as researchers, can contemplate the variations in the concept of *diversity* in Spanish school bureaucracies, as well as our struggle in Spanish anthropology to analyze that diversity fully.

BUREAUCRACY AND SCHOOLS

Since the concept of bureaucracy is essential throughout this chapter, it is worth devoting an initial few lines to it. Intuitively, any of us would agree that school is a bureaucratic institution. Its teaching contents are programmed in writing and standardized by the public authorities of the different national states. Their working hours are equally defined and standardized. Its purposes and social functions are included in the political agendas of the parties, in public deliberations of national parliaments, and finally in the regulations and laws that guide the actions of their agents in a relatively homogeneous way for large groups of citizens. In a deeper sense, the school is a bureaucracy to the extent that it shares with other modern institutions the following set of properties: A bureaucracy is a moral order in which the justification of human actions is based on the rational legitimacy of the ends (Weber, 1984), the supposed technoinstrumental effectiveness of its procedures (Habermas, 1984, 1988), and in the functional ordering of people and their tasks (Mayntz, 1985, 1987). With all these properties, any bureaucracy – including the school bureaucracy – is both a moral order, an expert system of representational and procedural knowledge, and a social organization made up of concrete human beings (Díaz de Rada, 2007: 207).

Historically – and taking into account *some* of these properties – the bureaucratic configuration of education systems is not exclusive to the institutional development of the matrix derived from Greco-Roman and later European civilization, which today we call "the West." For example, it is well known that the school system was compulsory and relatively standardized in the pre-Hispanic Aztec Empire (León-Portilla, 2009: 251). However, in no other known institutional environment has the bureaucratic design of schools been developed so vigorously as in the West, especially from the time of the European Enlightenment onwards. Founded on the institutional form of doctrinal schools of the Church (Lerena, 1983), the promotion of an ideal of equal citizenship in the emergence of modern nation states made "public instruction" into a national necessity and an obligation of governing elites (Condorcet, 2000). This text from Jovellanos, written in 1809, expresses in an exemplary way this *enlightenment discourse* which, in Spain, encouraged the institutional program of schooling (Díaz de Rada, 1996; cf. Dubet, 2008):

> The purpose of the Board of Public Instruction will be to supervise and promote all the ways to improve, promote, and extend the national education system. All reports, memoranda, or statements that pertain to this subject will pass through the *Comisión de Cortes.*
>
> Only based on the presence of these writings, on the commentaries made of them by the members of the Board, and on the results that are produced by such wise counsel, will any steps considered necessary for the achievement of this important subject be undertaken. Considering it the object of the Board's reflections in its fullest extension, all branches of instruction that belong to the national education system will be encompassed.

It is proposed that the ultimate aim of the Board's work shall be to achieve the fullness of instruction that can empower all citizens of the State, *regardless of class or profession*, to acquire their personal happiness, and to concur in the well-being and prosperity of the nation to the greatest extent possible. (Jovellanos, 1985: 351, emphasis added)

As Louis Dumont has shown in a general reflection on the genesis of modern individualism, the European and American Enlightenment translated the Christian idea of the equality of all individuals before God into the civil idea of equality of all individuals before the state (Dumont, 1987). The institution responsible for training these individual and supposedly equal agents would be the modern school. In each nation-state, schooling becomes a bureaucratic form, because the bureaucracy is the best organization we know for ensuring the standardization and equalization of knowledge and subjectivities. However, especially in recent decades, the egalitarian ideology of nation-states has been complicated by increasing attention to issues of diversity (Dietz, 2009; Schiffauer *et al.*, 2004). And so, never before have schools had to strive so much to resolve a paradox that is now constitutive: the bureaucratic production of equality from the premise of recognizing diversity. This chapter addresses this issue by examining the development of some basic transitions in the anthropology of education in Spain. In reflecting on ways to approach diversity from the anthropology of education in Spain, our argument opens up a problem of great importance: how can we build an anthropology of education able to overcome the risks of bureaucratic complicity?

In their endeavor to rationally manage diverse societies, a basic operation of bureaucracies consists of *creating stereotypes and categorizing populations*, which, once registered in policies of standardized design, may be administered with only minor technical problems (cf. Herzfeld, 1993: 71ff., 2005: 201ff.). This rhetorical production of stereotypes connects precisely with the establishment and reproduction of "national character," and embodies "the tendency of all official discourse to treat meanings as absolute and unchanging" (Herzfeld, 1993: 73).

This practice of creating stereotypes is contrary to the ideal mode of constructing ethnographic knowledge (cf. Díaz de Rada, 2007: 209). But, as noted by Michael Herzfeld, such bureaucratic rhetoric is no stranger to the concrete practices of stereotyping that abound in the anthropological discipline (Herzfeld, 2005). Only through careful and thoughtful examination of our own practices of knowledge construction *about* human institutions, including schools, can we come to an understanding of the extent to which our anthropological knowledge becomes complicit with bureaucratic knowledge, as well as how we can minimize that complicity.

First Variation: Beyond Bureaucratic Homogeneity, 1986–1990

Our first discussion concerns fieldwork that extended from 1986 to 1990, under the direction of Professor Honorio Velasco. This study was Ángel's doctoral thesis, published in 1996 (Díaz de Rada, 1996).

The way this project was first formulated in 1986, was with the title: "Strategies for Using Educational Resources in Middle School Education: A Field Study." This title, faithfully reflecting the school technocracy that took shape in Spain in the 1970s,

before the death of General Franco, incorporated an incipient ethnographic impulse by mentioning the concept of "use": it would be ethnography because the researcher would pay attention to specific social practices.

Ángel focused his field research on two high schools. One of these schools, the *Instituto*, was a public school. The students' parents were mainly employees at medium–low positions in terms of income and occupational status. The *Instituto* was located in a characteristically "working-class" Madrid neighborhood. The other school, the *Colegio*, was a private school, managed by a religious order, and it was located at the heart of the business center of Madrid. The students' parents were mainly business managers and liberal professionals.

Influenced by the picture of the school from Pierre Bourdieu's theory in France (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) – disseminated by Carlos Lerena (1985) in Spain and criticized by Paul Willis (1978) in Great Britain – the study paid attention to the diversity produced with regard to occupational groups. Influenced, likewise, by classic contributions to the anthropology of education in the United States, which Ángel helped disseminate in Spain in a volume published in 1993 (Ogbu, 1974; Velasco, García Castaño, and Díaz de Rada, 1993; Wolcott, 1989), the study analyzed these schools by looking at their cultural logics in a holistic perspective, not just according to their pedagogical principles and practices as these were technically defined in the school curricula and institutional plans. That is, Angel attempted to move past simplistic bureaucratic thinking by examining how different institutional agents (teachers, parents, students, and staff), who had to work with different relations between school and occupational experience, appropriated in diverse cultural ways a school that had been ideally designed as a technical pedagogical device, supposedly equally valid and pertinent for everybody.

The resulting ethnography formulated and illustrated a fundamental thesis. Beneath the apparent normalization and homogenization that the school attempts to impose through its technobureaucratic configuration (Díaz de Rada, 2007), an attentive ethnographer finds cultural principles of diversity that the school's agents effectively incorporate. The school, promoted by the state as an *instrumental* or technical mechanism that is homogeneous for everyone (i.e., a machine for transmitting universal knowledge that is objectified in curricula, and for evaluating this knowledge technically), is actually experienced in diverse institutional versions by specific agents. Beneath the ideal homogenization designed by state educational authorities (MEC, 1989a, 1989b, 1990), Ángel observed that different school–occupational relations produced diverse scholastic experiences. These experiences, far from being generated as a direct consequence of a mechanical or technical design, were generated through diverse practical conceptions of what a student should actively be in the full context of domestic group and labor relationships (cf. Everhart, 1983).

The *Instituto* was a public school inspired by the state ideology of a school that is the same for everybody. This led to a characteristic format of action that tended to highlight the homogenizing emphasis of the institution. For example, ethnographic evidence and interpretation showed that being staff, a teacher, a student, or a parent there meant giving priority to the narrowly defined teaching and pedagogic evaluation functions of the institution. Simultaneously, the specific *local*, community-based processes of organization and socialization were conceived of as secondary aims, marginal activities in the work time of the *Instituto*. The *Instituto* incorporated no specific

local rituals. Of course, teaching and assessment were ritualized in classes, exams, and so forth. These practices responded to the social organization of the universal program of instruction. The emotional atmosphere promoted by these practices was that of a working environment, purely technical. Readers of this chapter socialized in other national traditions can perhaps get a concrete idea of the emotional tone of the *Instituto* if they imagine that in schools in Spain we do not sing hymns or render tributes to the flag. Teachers and students simply came to school at 9 am, and began to work on their assigned subjects. Teachers and students were not expected to be in the building during times outside the instruction and evaluation practices, and parents were invited to participate in the institution's life only within the strict limits of pedagogic information settings. And, what is more important, when some individual agents *wanted* to change this situation by promoting local socialization activity, they soon became burned out by the meager support that they found among the staff.

A case contrary to Ángel's interpretation took place in February 1989, when a very active group of teachers and students promoted a big carnival festival celebrating the second centennial of the French Revolution. The festival, full of color and symbolic apparatus, was astonishing, especially to an ethnographer who had been used to an institutional life without rituals. A deeper interpretation and a more cogent grasp of the agents' intentions revealed that this big festival was no more than an extended lesson on universal history. This lesson was not narrated in the local time of the *Instituto*, but in the universal time of Western history. In 1990 and after, the carnival could not be performed as any kind of universal commemoration; there was no kind of universal scholastic pretext for the performance, so the mode and rhythm of celebration became colorless and fragile, once again. To be a scholastic agent at the *Instituto* was not understood as being engaged in the *local* organization of the school, but as being responsible for technical work and pedagogical accomplishment in a *universalistic* framework of means and ends.

The *Colegio* was a private Catholic school in which the state ideology of a school that is the same for everybody was strongly mediated by the religious order's ideology. Moreover, the parents' occupational standing, oriented toward self-control through professional employment or to the control of others through managerial responsibilities, made it explicitly clear that the students should not be instructed only in math or history. In their workplaces, those parents led other personnel, established business policies, and otherwise socially controlled their own independent work. They sent their children to the *Colegio* in order to get *something more* than mere technical knowledge (Everhart, 1983). If they fulfilled their expectations for employment, these children would eventually work to organize and control human action, not to control the operations of a commercial vehicle, catalog the books in a library, or make deposits in a bank. Fully aware of this specific demand of the families, the school's administration edited an annual insert for the School Program Book, which explicitly stated the organizing meaning of the school's institutional action – to produce agents oriented to organizing and creating society:

> The school is organized as a service to the individual learner for him to learn about, interpret, and transform the world around him, in order to build a society that facilitates the personal realization of all. (School Program Book, 1986–1987 school year)

The *Colegio* was the concrete local place for this organizational learning. The everyday life of the *Colegio* was full of local religious celebrations, extrascholastic activities, and socialization events that were understood to be as relevant for the definition of institutional life as the tasks that took place within the limits of the classrooms. To be a scholastic agent at the *Colegio* meant to be engaged both in universal instruction *and* local organization. Throughout their school trajectory, the students at the *Colegio* learned to make the institution with their own hands.

While the evaluation committees at the *Instituto* reduced their function to hearing without comment the grades dictated by each teacher, the evaluation committees at the *Colegio* were expected to comment on each student's performance in the context of the classroom, and even to frequently take the decision of *modifying* the grades of entire groups, following a politics of motivation or a marketing standard related to the demanding expectations of the families. "Raise the hand" is an expression we teachers in Spain use to indicate that we have lowered our expectations for knowledge outcomes in order to help our students achieve better grades. This is a political operation, insofar as it places the commitment to an image of the institution, or to the motivations of the students (and parents), ahead of calculating academic performance in strictly pedagogical terms. In the *Colegio*, this political operation did not depend on the decisions of each individual teacher, but rather was done corporately in the meetings of the evaluation committees and with reference to the overarching goals of the institution. During 1985–1986, evaluation committees of the *Colegio* agreed to "raise the hand" in 9.4% of the assessment decisions. This figure becomes even more eloquent when one notes how it was distributed across the academic years: in the first year 6.8%, in the second by 10.1%, and in the third and final year of high school 12.5% (Díaz de Rada, 1996: 372). The relevance of this political operation on the technical processing of grades thus grew as students came closer to becoming emblems of the institution upon graduation. Notwithstanding this political work on grades, the students coming from the *Colegio* got excellent grades on the national tests for access to university. Indeed, a political process of constructing a concrete human institution was articulated, at the *Colegio*, with the technical task of making universal students.

Let us go back to the title of Ángel's first project in order to summarize how this ethnographic process illustrates moving past simplistic bureaucratic ideas: "Strategies for Using Educational Resources in Middle School Education. A Field Study." This title implies a position for the researcher consonant with the general state ideology in the 1970s and 1980s that there may be *diverse* individual strategies within a *unitary* "Middle School Education" system. This ethnographer position, or better, this not-yet-an-ethnographer position, is perfectly reasonable. After all, Ángel was, at that time, in relation to his field, a product of the same bureaucratic school he was bound to interpret; he had been taught and socialized in that very ethnocentrism of bureaucratic simplifications. Throughout his ethnographic adventure, he learned that beneath and beyond that simplistic version of diversity that claimed bureaucratic homogeneity, there were diverse forms of understanding and practicing bureaucracy, diverse cultures of schooling that were relevant for comprehending social structuration. The students at the *Instituto* were socialized for a future in which they would pass through an institutional world made by others; while the students at the *Colegio* were socialized for a future in which they themselves would be the makers of their institutional world.

More importantly, Ángel learned that diversity is not a one-dimensional concept. There is never a unique form of diversity in a sociocultural process, but instead there are *diverse relationships to diversity*. This means that the concept of diversity itself depends on the construction that each concrete institution produces in order to make its agents competent to cope with difference. While the students at the *Instituto* learned to accept the tenet that all relevant diversity regarding bureaucratic institutions consists of individually different "strategies" in a system in which unity is taken as a factum, the students at the *Colegio* learned that the bureaucratic version of diversity is malleable through the concrete organized action of those who make the institutions.

SECOND VARIATION: BEYOND ETHNIC AND ETHNONATIONAL DIVERSITY, 2009

In 2001, under the direction of Ángel, Livia initiated the project of her doctoral thesis, which she is presently writing. At that time, the existing bibliography, the graduate courses offered at the universities, and the discourse of school actors, particularly teachers, shaped a new common feeling about what the main educational "problem" was in Spain: "immigrants'" and "gypsies'" adaptation to school. This same common feeling proclaimed that the ideal framework of analysis was "intercultural education." And Livia initially went along with the majority opinion among the teachers she encountered: the root of the problem was not in the schools, but in the families. Today, Livia can put quotation marks around the concept of "immigrant child," aware that this label, produced by school bureaucracy, essentializes in successive generations the condition of foreignness with respect to the host country (Garcia Borrego, 2003). But when she began her fieldwork, her object of study implied a naturalization of this category that was very hard to question.

Following advice from Ángel, who by then had begun a study on ethnopolitics in Sápmi, in northern Norway (Díaz de Rada, 2007), Livia tried to re-approach her field of research more holistically, questioning the typical school labels. Ángel, as a more experienced ethnographer and anthropologist, was able to advise Livia in order to get her to track the complex relationships between the agents of her field (including bureaucrats), and in order to not take for granted, as an analytical tool, any discursive product of any particular agent. "Tracking relationships" means here "holism" (Dumont, 1987). The practical recommendation, which Livia was unable to accomplish fully, was to leave the study of the school for the end, first concentrating her attention on these people's daily educational environments. In this way, the families would not be viewed solely through the school bureaucracy. It would be the school that would appear in perspective, seen through the eyes of the children and their families (cf. Ogbu, 1974).

After establishing contact with an immigrant family from the Dominican Republic, Livia decided to enter the social networks of people of this nationality. Judging by the ethnographic literature produced in other theses, in the twenty-first century an anthropologist working in the area of education in Spain had to write about "gypsies," "Ecuadorians," or "Dominicans" – groups defined in each case according to an ethnic or ethnonational category, automatically identified with a *culture of origin* (cf. Franzé,

2008). All these ethnic and ethnonational words (ethnonyms) are in quotation marks here. They are linguistic labels in the native (both bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic) world, which, as we shall see below, the anthropologist should not take as analytic tools. Between 2001 and 2003, Livia became socialized into two "Dominican" networks of residents in Madrid: in three neighborhoods identified as "working class," and in a "well-to-do" area. She accompanied mothers when they took their children to the park, she visited their homes, she went to bars and discotheques, and she talked to people in the "Dominican" beauty shops. She was also invited to first communions and celebrations, and she spent several weeks living with two of the families.

With this approach, there was a surprise waiting for Livia in the field. Against all expectations, these social networks were not delineated ethnonationally. The "Dominican" mothers met with "Ecuadorian," "Colombian," and "Spanish" friends in the park. Nor did the children's social relations seem to be structured following an ethnonational criterion. Livia finally surrendered to the evidence. Because ethnonational identity could no longer be treated as an ascribed attribute of these people, an assumption about social structuring, the problem now was to try to understand what kinds of educational processes constructed the children's ethnonational identity within the family. This change of approach to the problem involved new difficulties. These people had the habit of ignoring this ethnicity that continued to seem obvious to Livia. They hardly ever made an issue of it, except when the researcher explicitly asked them to. How could she study the way such "unethnic" people constructed ethnicity?

In 2004, Livia obtained a scholarship for a project at the University of Granada, funded by the Council of Andalusia, one of Spain's "autonomous communities." Now, she was definitely working for the school bureaucracy, evaluating the "Plan of Educational Attention for Immigrant Students." Over the course of a school year, she visited schools with a high number of "immigrant" students in the regions of Granada, Málaga, and Almeria. In her research team, Livia carried out participant observation in the classroom and the schoolyard, interviews with teaching staff, and discussion groups with teachers, parents, and students in secondary school. She organized debates with primary school students and asked them for essays and drawings.

One of the neighborhoods in Almeria attracted her attention. Labeled an "area needing social transformation" by the Council of Andalusia, nearly 50% of the students in these schools were "immigrants" and nearly 30% were "gypsies." "Moor" and "gypsy" were ethnonyms that the children used conspicuously. Very soon, the teachers pointed out to Livia that the big problem was racism: "the gypsies don't want to mix with the Moors." Livia decided to compare the material that she had obtained in Madrid with the material from this Andalusian neighborhood. In this case – since the Council of Andalusia was in charge – she began with the schools, she socialized herself in the children's networks and, through them, met the families. She began by playing with the children in the schoolyard and offering to teach dance classes for children in two associations. For over two years, she accompanied families to their religious meetings, on their outings, and to their celebrations.

It soon became clear that, with their ethnic expressions, the children were making a complex childhood experience come alive. Although these expressions did exist in the field, the ways the children used them were, first of all, much, much more *diverse* than the contents of the bureaucratic theme of "social exclusion." For example, while

the bureaucratic use of these ethnic expressions implied a logic of semantic exclusions (being "gypsy" excludes being "Moor"), the children's everyday use implied a complex repertory of exclusions, inclusions, displacements, and other tropes. More importantly, while the bureaucrats tended to reduce the use of those expressions to the practice of mere *designation* (thus, implying that what is designated is a taken-for-granted object), the children tended to elaborate them in a rich repertory of pragmatic uses, one of which was irony. For example, a child might use the word "Moor" to address a child new to the neighborhood, indicating that he or she did not belong to his or her group of friends; but at the same time he or she would shout "You, Moor!" for calling a close friend, thus reversing all the hostility and transforming it into complicity (Jiménez Sedano, 2009). Second, these expressions occupied a partial place in an expressive repertory of strategies which pointed, unmistakably, to one basic issue: children's agency in a world designed by adults. When Livia spent most of her time with children, she began to abandon the adult-centered position that sees education as a unidirectional process of transmitting and acquiring culture (Prout and James, 1990). Diversity constructed ethnonationally was now only one part (and not always the most meaningful part) of a panorama of diversity, and of diverse relations to difference, that had many more nuances.

But the more Livia advanced in this theoretical interpretation, the harder it was for her to make the school actors understand the purpose and meaning of her research.

DIVERSITIES

Ángel's and Livia's ethnographic experiences involve a learning process. Both experiences started out with the same assumptions that school bureaucracy had forged historically, and both progressed toward different assumptions. Ángel's first impression of the school was one of a unitary bureaucratic machine that, at the beginning of the 1970s, had translated Franco's idea of the unity of Spain into the design of a unitary school technocracy. Livia's first impression was one of a school which, during the 1990s, had translated the demographic characteristics of its students and parents, a heterogeneous composition as far as their ethnic and ethnonational diversity went, into an "intercultural school." By paying attention to the specific social experiences and practices of the educational actors, both researchers were able to examine more completely the full *cultural diversity* that characterizes the ethnographic view. This is a fine-grained diversity that becomes evident when we approach the concreteness of social life, and which does not unfold solely, or basically, as a consequence of the distant classificatory system promoted by bureaucracy. Just like when we look at an Impressionist painting, as ethnographers we draw near to the fine lines of the varied forms of human action and experience, forms of action and experience that nourish anthropologists' concept of culture (Díaz de Rada, 2010). That is, we often proceed with a limiting concept of "culture" until our research forces us to adopt a more complex one. This is the transformation that is required of us, long before we become capable of trying to transform others (Rockwell, 2008).

Ángel's thesis exemplifies a research scenario that still existed in Spain in the early 1990s, when it was possible to give a 45-minute dissertation speech to a board of

specialists without even once mentioning ethnicity as an axis of diversity. And it was not that anthropologists had ignored the issue. In the 1980s, studies by Knipmeyer, González Bueno, and San Román (1980) and Juliano (1993) paid attention to educational and school dynamics in interethnic fields; and in 1993, the year that Ángel defended his doctoral thesis, Juan Luis Alegret defended his thesis on the racialist presentation of ethnic diversity in textbooks used in Catalonia (Alegret, 1993). However, in the mid-1990s, school bureaucracy was just beginning to digest the immigration boom in a Spain which still, even then, saw itself as an indisputable political unit, at least from the watchtower of the schools located in the country's capital. This immigration boom, which multiplied the number of foreign students by twenty between 1991 and 2009, led school bureaucracy to make immigration an issue, a "social problem," and consequently, to orient the research agenda. In the 15 years following 1993, 14 of the 16 doctoral theses defended in the field of anthropology of education in Spain studied the field of ethnic minorities (Jociles, 2008: 126). Today, this is virtually the only existing research subject (García Castaño and Pulido, 2008).

In 1998, the ministerial agency in charge of documenting and researching the Spanish school system, the Center for Educational Research and Documentation, published the following:

> The consolidated tendency throughout the decades previous to the 1980s in Spain, as a country producing emigrants, has reversed to the point that, in recent years, as in the rest of Europe, significant levels of immigration are being reached ...
>
> Thus, the progressive interest in intercultural education in Spain has been shaping a clear awareness of the need to analyze the implications derived from the incorporation of the new ethnic minorities into the educational system and to rethink the situation of the most numerous ethnic and cultural minority in Spain: the gypsies. (CIDE, 1998: 113–114)

In fact, the way this political document shapes the issue of "intercultural education" derives from an international trend (see Dietz and Mateos, Chapter 29, below). The label "intercultural education," already in use in the anthropological tradition, nevertheless also clearly arrived in our country by means of a wider bureaucracy. In 1992, the European Commission made each member country responsible for preparing a report on the "Intercultural Education" situation. The consolidation and expansion of this issue has been reflected in Spain, as in other European Union countries, in the creation of specific agencies, such as the Resource Center for Attention to Cultural Diversity in Education, created by the CIDE in 2004. The reduction of the concept of "interculturality" to the category of "immigration," as in the words previously quoted, is a constant in these bureaucratic developments. A review of the catalogs of publications from these agencies leads to the simple conclusion that researchers are often studying the same old school problems that have always existed but are now, with the arrival of "immigrant" children, framing them as "intercultural" problems.

Thus, the view of bureaucratic school agencies on cultural "diversity" flagrantly confuses "culture" and "immigrant's country of origin," thus requiring anthropologists to push ourselves past simplistic definitions of "culture" to more complex versions of actual cultural experience. Adela Franzé attributes this simplification to a unitary concept of these agents and their forms of action in terms of a unitary national culture (Franzé, 2008). This simplification is also, doubtless, the consequence of a

fundamental operation carried out by all bureaucracies: the census-taking, and, with it, an *individualistic* framing of school actors (starting, naturally, with the school's students and parents). This census view of the bureaucratic agencies, obsessed with counting students "according to their country of origin," is individualistic because it considers solitary individuals, apart from any concrete social relations, to be the only relevant subjects; such individuals are taken to represent, one by one, the undivided ethnopolitical unit formed by each nation-state (Dumont, 1987).

At different moments in time, ethnographers encounter different bureaucratic oversimplifications. In Ángel's research scenario, where ethnonational diversity was not yet an issue, the instrumental dimension of teaching, with the technically homogeneous view of the subjects and of the school processes involved, was at the forefront of schools' discourses of institutional legitimization. In this scenario, the ethnographer discovered the subtleties of cultural diversity by examining the way this homogenizing institutional mechanism turned it into a *political* issue: the subtle ways in which the diverse local organization of action and experience in each institution leads to a differentiated structuring of social relations among actors and to the legitimized hierarchical order. Thus, while bureaucratic discourse legitimizes the school system as an agency of "equality" through its unitary and monocultural machinery, ethnographers find that concrete institutions elaborate diverse kinds of agents who are hierarchically unequal in terms of political agency: the ones who are eager to *accept* the idea that the institutional world is made by others, like the *Instituto*, and the ones who are eager to *make* the institutional world, like the *Colegio*. To be sure, this statement could be perfected through closer ethnographic attention to the specific forms of agency in each case (Kockelman, 2007). For the purpose of this text, however, it is sufficient to indicate that the *Instituto* and the *Colegio* offered to Ángel two different images of the supposedly universal factory school: two different ways to educate students for effective participation in the construction of their social world.

Meanwhile, in Livia's research scenario, the ethnonational unity of the school system can no longer be taken for granted, and the school appears before our eyes, definitely, as a *political* agency, not just a *pedagogical* agency. And it can even dazzle us with the way it acknowledges its own "diversity," making us believe that the bureaucratic coding of "ethnic groups" offers the anthropologist a comfortable framework for putting its ethnically differentiated agents into play.

However, the school institution has never stopped being, above all, a political institution (either before or after the immigration boom). It has never stopped being a factory that constructs political conventions regarding the concept of citizenship. It has never stopped being, on the other hand, an individualistic bureaucratic system which, from its point of view, perceives the subjects of the school process as *individuals* aggregated in occupational classes, or as *individuals* aggregated in ethnic groups. This individualistic ideology is taken here as the opposite pole to the holistic approach of ethnography (Díaz de Rada, 2007; Dumont, 1987; Velasco and Díaz de Rada, 1997).

In Livia's scenario, the ethnographer must seek the subtleties of diversity by getting as close as possible to everyday action and de-centering, as much as possible, the school site. What she finds, then, are orders of diversity which, just like the ones produced by the children in the Almerian neighborhood, overflow or cross-cut the ethnic and ethnonational format of exclusive categories typical of school bureaucracy ("Moors,"

"gypsies"). She also finds that the orders of diversity encountered in scenarios such as Ángel's – the differences nested in the occupational stratification – continue to operate in the new immigration scenario; that is, ethnic difference overlaps with occupational difference (among other things), rather than supplanting it (cf. Williams, 1989). The researcher finds, finally, that ethnic diversity is not really an object with comfortable perceptual borders. Rather, ethnic diversity comprises a complex cultural discourse steeped in nuance, and it is a discourse that is partial regarding its contextual uses and overlaps with other forms of discourse (Eriksen, 1991). Indeed, the monocultural project of state bureaucracy must surrender to its evidence (Dietz, 2009), at least by acknowledging that being a citizen in a nation-state involves, today more than ever, important problems of definition and inescapable processes of legitimation (Schiffauer *et al.*, 2004).

CORE IDEAS AND PROSPECTS

Over the last two decades, social and cultural anthropology has been acknowledged as an area of knowledge in Spain. In the 1980s, the first official two-year degree in the discipline was approved. In 2009, the first full four-year degree in social and cultural anthropology has been implanted. This will probably help to establish anthropologists professionally in the work of researching and advising in the school context, with the ensuing competition for resources. In a school context in which "intercultural education" is widely discussed, the school bureaucracies may increasingly resort to anthropologists as a "source of legitimacy and of concepts" for designing their own institutions (Franzé, 2008: 62). Similarly, the risk of a research agenda set by bureaucratic requirements may become even more salient. This risk, which can lead to the marginalization of ethnography as an extensive format of interpretive, critical research, has been widely demonstrated (Erickson and Gutiérrez, 2002; Feuer *et al.*, 2002; Shulman, 2002). Yet in order to keep our research "critical," anthropologists will have to push past the simplistic notions of bureaucracies as well. The traditional problems of communication between anthropologists of education and the school's bureaucratic agents who specialize in "pedagogizing cultural diversity" (Franzé, 2008: 62) will continue into the foreseeable future.

Research experience in recent decades in our country inspires us in this context to reflect upon some core anthropological ideas that have, in fact, already been amply demonstrated, both in our country and in the research produced in other surroundings (see, particularly, García Castaño and Pulido, 2008). By way of conclusion, we will discuss these ideas.

School and education are not co-extensive concepts

Although it might seem obvious, we must remember that we anthropologists are interested, above all, in educational processes: processes of social action in which various agents co-shape culture from their different positions as agents. School, as a modern bureaucracy, produced historically in Euro-American urban societies, is for us no more than one version of education, which is a universal process in our species. As we have shown elsewhere (Díaz de Rada, 2007), this approach is fundamental to

knowing how to detect, in the interior of school bureaucracy, educational dimensions that do not fit its (normally) rigid procedures of social categorization, such as "ethnic groups" as aggregates of "immigrant" populations. This approach is also fundamental to being able to perceive the specifically *political* work of school bureaucracy, because it leads us to understand that the pedagogical purpose that school bureaucracy proclaims about itself and expresses in its formal curricula must coexist with diverse ways of understanding the educational relationship, social life, and, ultimately, the concept of person. Faced with the evidence that often "educational ethnography ends up being school ethnography" (Jociles, 2008: 124), and faced with the evidence that school anthropology often ends up responding to an immediate urgency for school reform (Velasco, García Castaño, and Díaz de Rada, 1993), we anthropologists must research education (rather than school) more and more, and we must research it more and more ethnographically (rather than devoting ourselves to the task of social engineering (Velasco and Díaz de Rada, 1997)).

Integration and exclusion

As anthropologists with a long school trajectory ourselves, we must know how to overcome the ideological ethnocentrism that characterizes school bureaucracy, by means of a critical exercise regarding all of its self-proclaimed functions or idealizations. In the present context, perhaps the most important of these exercises should consist of assuming, right from the start, that "the integrating function of the school institution not only is not in contradiction with the reproduction of exclusion, but is part of the process [itself]" (Carrasco, 2008: 184). And, just as no one would require an anthropologist who studied the bureaucratic institutions of Christianity to believe himself in the virtues of the churches to lead us to the kingdom of Heaven, it does not seem sensible to assume that an anthropologist who studies the bureaucratic institutions of education (schools) must believe – as bureaucratic agents generally *must* – that school is the only way to achieve the kingdom of equal opportunity or perfect human development and co-existence. If the anthropology of education applied to the school is to mean anything, it will be because of its ability to create a crisis in the conventional assumptions at the foundations of the bureaucratic institution – because it can allow perspectives on the world that are regularly excluded (including children's views, naturally) from actually participating in the bureaucratic institution's discourses.

Culture and diversity

The perception of ethnonational diversity in the census – characteristic of school bureaucracy – fits in perfectly with the concept of national culture that is promoted by appropriating the worst of the concepts of culture in our anthropological tradition: *one* culture is meant to be one people residing in a bounded territory. This is not by chance. The development of this concept of national culture, in its most reifying and homogenizing versions, was historically concurrent, specifically, with the formation of a national *ethnos* to which all contemporary states had to subscribe (Dumont, 1987). No bureaucratic state can survive without promoting a feeling of national belonging. And the role of the school in forming these monocultural "national spirits" was, and

continues to be, an evident, planned project (Dietz, 2009). We anthropologists who work in contemporary educational contexts – above all, if we work in schools – must be very aware of these historical developments, insisting on a concept of culture that is disassociated, once and for all, from demographically and territorially defined subjects. This does not mean that we have to dismantle the anthropological concept of culture altogether. Rather, we must work out the concept conscientiously, based upon the following premises. Culture is not itself an agent, but the framework of conventions, generated in situations of social learning, that agents use to shape their action and their social life. Culture is not an attribute of demographically or territorially defined agents, but an affirmable quality of their social action (Díaz de Rada, 2010, 2011). An adequate development of this concept of culture also leads to discarding, critically, the reifying concept of identity that state ethnonational policies so desire (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Jiménez Sedano, 2007). Finally, defining culture as the conventional form of action by a complex agent allows us to establish once and for all something that Ward Goodenough clearly stated over three decades ago: the multicultural experience is constant in each and every one of our species (Goodenough, 1976). By questioning any crude identification between multiculturality and immigrant populations defined ethnonationally, it is possible to develop a nuanced version of the concept of intercultural education.

With a concept of culture created on these bases, the anthropologist of education will immediately see that the idea of cultural diversity, incorporated with little problem into bureaucratic discourses, is not enough. The idea of cultural diversity is insufficient to perceive the concrete field of diversities (and of diverse relations with diversity) if the concept of culture itself has not previously been sufficiently developed.

Applied compromise and epistemological watchfulness

Most of us who are anthropologists and have worked in schools have had the same experiences as Livia. The more her theoretical interpretation advanced, the harder it was for her to communicate the object of her research to the school actors. The friction between a nuanced anthropology of education and the school, as characterized here, has been a constant. This is not surprising, because ethnographers and school agents often construct school reality in ways that are diametrically opposed to each other (Díaz de Rada, 2007).

The trap is obvious. If we anthropologists want to communicate fluently with school actors, we have to look at school reality through their eyes, and even through discourses that have been forged throughout centuries of political domination. However, as anthropologists of education, we must resolutely undertake a constant "conceptual, epistemological, and methodological watchfulness" (Jociles, 2008: 132) over our own discourse, in order to prevent it from turning into its own kind of bureaucratic discourse in the end.

NOTE

[1] The text has been translated into English by Nancy Konvalinka.

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