



SWEDISH  
COLLEGIUM  
for ADVANCED STUDY

## REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

**Session:** Beyond Assimilationism and Multiculturalism: Social Dynamics and Contemporary Cultural Identities I

**Session Convener(s):** Claudia Portioli, University of Ferrara

**Chair:** Claudia Portioli, University of Ferrara

**Comments:** -

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I) *Cultural Rights and the Construction of Multicultural Societies*

Felipe Arocena, University of the Republic, Montevideo

II) *Are the Nepalis Indian? Re-reading Migrancy, Citizenry and Nationality Questions in Post-Colonial India*

Swatahsiddha Sarkar, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling, West Bengal

III) *Ambivalent Character of Global Culture: Problems and Tendencies*

Olga Dmitrievna Pavlov, Nizhnevartovsk State University of Humanities

Lyubov Grigorievna Skulmovskaya, Nizhnevartovsk State University of Humanities

IV) *Anthropological Methods Proposed for the Best Understanding of the Immigration Impact on the Shifting Cultural Identity Formation of Both Migrant and Host Cultures*

Nikos Gousgounis, Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of National Education, Athens

## ABSTRACTS

### Session description

Which social processes allow us to explain the construction of contemporary cultural identities in the context of immigration? What are the main characteristics of these identities? Do the coexistence of members coming from different cultures query the traditional ways of analysing the formation of social identities? Is it sufficient to make reference to the process of socialisation in order to analyse the different attitudes developed for instance by the immigrants of the second and third generation, towards the values and lifestyle that characterize the majority of the people in the society in which they live? The recent critics against multiculturalism as an unsatisfactory integration model that would undermine the very cultural values and moral norms of the society of the host country, show us how this model has been mainly considered as a matter of political choice. In this sense, multiculturalism as well as assimilationism, could be seen as phenomena essentially regarding the macrosociological analysis. But what are the real processes that involve – on a micro sociological level – the specific attitudes developed by single individuals concerning their system of values? Can we outline a sort of phenomenology of the principal many-sided processes and attitudes on which the constructions of social and cultural identities in this kind of societies is based? Communitarianism, universalism, interculturalism or the claiming of a cultural identity separated from that of the host country's society, could also be seen as attitudes developed from the bottom, i.e. as outcomes of a constant process of negotiation and redefinition of the aspects that constitute the identities of the members of societies in which different cultural traditions and habits coexist – even if not necessarily in a conciliating way. Along with the importance of the crossing of social circles for the definition of social identity or with further classical social theories of the self, other theoretical approaches such as those elaborated by Post-colonial Studies, cultural psychology or anthropology may offer some significant contributes to the comprehension of the specific dynamics that affect the construction of cultural identities in contemporary societies

### Papers

#### I) *Cultural Rights and the Construction of Multicultural Societies*

Felipe Arocena, University of the Republic, Montevideo

Present multicultural societies differ significantly from other cultural diverse societies of the past. The characteristics of actual multicultural societies require new concepts and innovative solutions to unexpected problems that challenge us with a high level of novelty. I will focus basically on the shift from the construction of the modern nation state towards the postmodern plurinational state. While the first was based on the triad of one nation-one culture-one language, the last is being redesigned to include and recognize as part of the state different nations with their languages, cultures and identities, which historically were neglected, invisible or assimilated (for example indigenous peoples in Bolivia, Afros in Brazil, or immigrants as is the case with Latinos in the United States).

#### II) *Are the Nepalis Indian? Re-reading Migrancy, Citizenry and Nationality Questions in Post-Colonial India*

Swatahsiddha Sarkar, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling, West Bengal

The paper attempts to highlight the rather impossibility of the nation state's capacity to ignore the territorially based conception of citizenship as the one and only way of categorizing its subjects as legible and distinct from those who came and settled down in the mother nation leaving the country of their forefathers' origin in a distant past. The nation state at large willy-nilly accepts this latter group of population in a hyphenated manner either to represent metaphorically their recent origin or their inassimilable character to the so-called biography of the nation state. These hyphenated citizens are often being made subject to crucial acid tests needed to prove their true citizenry, a

predicament the non-hyphenated one ever experienced. The categorical expressions of 'nation state' are caught in such tropes, wherein the notions of nation, borders, boundaries, communities are often conflated against the backdrop of citizen-migrant site. The praxis of nation state in this way leads towards an exclusive categorization to determine its legitimate subject population. The present paper is a preliminary attempt to indulge in such a critique that qualifies the question raised in its title. The intention is thus to draw attention towards a process of signification that would unearth the incapacity of the conventional approaches to understand and thereby to adjudicate amicably the problem of migration/ immigration in a national context.

### III) *Ambivalent Character of Global Culture: Problems and Tendencies*

Olga Dmitrievna Pavlov, Nizhnevartovsk State University of Humanities

Lyubov Grigorievna Skulmovskaya, Nizhnevartovsk State University of Humanities

In XX – XXI centuries globalization has become one of the most actual phenomenon. Interest towards global problems takes place. Theorists define globalization in different ways and it makes its analysis more complicated. Disregard of particular regions' and local societies' interests leads to their strong wish to preserve their unique identities. Globalization increases interdependence in the world and it reflects in forming of global economics, politics and culture. Generally globalization is looked upon as the state of the world economics when the processes of economic, political and socio-cultural development of many states become similar. Culture globalization denotes intensive integration of nations into the World system by means of modern transport and economic connections, mass media development, forming of transnational companies. According to the model of "Global culture" culture reflects new state of human being. World tourism, appearance of cultural hybrids, new forms of reconstruction of particular nations' experience are the key signs which demonstrate global changes. Culture globalization has positive and negative sides. V. Dobrenykov [1] underlines, that real threat of extreme active borrowing is the disappearance of the unique cultural identity. Homogeneous influence of global culture recalls intense of contradictory trends - increase of interest towards local identities: national cultures, ethnic and religious peculiarities which let some nation groups protect their unique cultural identity. In cultures of most countries ideology of multiculturalism plays a very important part. In Russia both cultural diversification and assimilation take place. They have different forms and contribute to nation building. Assimilation means absorption of weak cultures by strong one, dissolution of cultural peculiarities of national minorities in the culture of national majorities. Problems of national cultural interactions in global epoch are closely connected with acculturation which has its own specific features. Some theorists studied acculturation as the process of cultural changes in contacts and interrelation of various social cultural systems. Cultural contacts regularly take place in modern period of civilization development. Penetration of cultural values from one state to other sometimes can be looked upon as expansion which lets dominant (national) culture extend the sphere of its influence and have such forms as westernization or Americanization. In XXI century cultural expansion threatens national culture. Cross-cultural communication may have different forms: cultural asymmetry or cultural dialogue.

### IV) *Anthropological Methods Proposed for the Best Understanding of the Immigration Impact on the Shifting Cultural Identity Formation of Both Migrant and Host Cultures*

Nikos Gousgounis, Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of National Education, Athens

The anthropological method seems to be the most appropriate for the study of the complex phenomenon of immigration impact on the shift of cultural identities for both host and migrant communities in the new globalised world. By anthropological method we mean the ethnographic plus participatory research for case studies in micro level. The analysis of values system consists an important part of the overall anthropological method because this

system is directly connected to the cultural attitudes and habits of populations concerned. In the contrary, the effort of approach of the immigration phenomenon by multiculturalist methods targeting to an ideal integration, proved to be not satisfactory in the past 20 years. Multiculturalism's phenomenal opposition with assimilative policies concluded to nothing since all theory opposing the two schemes, finally comes to the same applications. A long research concerning five European countries plus Israel regarding the immigration problem and the so called multicultural education to be applied to the migrants' children, aiming on the ideal integration, in the beginning of Millenium, accepted at the end that in reality all six host countries scoped finally to a " mild assimilation model" and the gradual absorption of the migrant cultural system and values by the dominant host one. Multiculturalism has been proved that operated as a tool of political discourse for national parliaments and for " big words" in the media, using the term integration as an ideal alibi, but scientifically speaking all this political opportunism has minimal value and usefulness when coming to the moment of taking important and innovative policy measures. The long process of identity formation is an outcome of a constant negotiation because of the continuous and rapid sociocultural changes in the new era of globalization. The notion of allophobia is proposed as a new analytical and epistemological tool for the better understanding of what characterises two opposed cultural worlds and yet obliged to cohabitate in the same institutional system of the host state and also in the same market of labour.