

**INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN CHILE:  
COLONIAL SUBJECTIVITY AND ETHNO-GOVERNMENTAL RATIONALITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article is the product of research conducted in the frame of FONDECYT Research Initiation project n° 11140804, entitled “Education and Cultural Racism: Evidence and Discursivities in Agents Who Implement the Bilingual Intercultural Education Program (PEIB)”, jointly conducted by the University of Chile’s Department of Pedagogical Studies and the University of Sao Paulo’s Faculty of Education Postdoctoral Program. The text explores the problem of “cultural racism” in intercultural education programs developed for Mapuche indigenous children in Chile. In order to do so, we first examine the production of subjectivity during the colonial era and later the emergence of ethnic issues in the current government agenda. Our evidence and analysis display how the degradation of indigenous peoples is objectified in the Chilean State’s discursive practices, perpetuating social and economic inequality through the production and administration of identities, as well as efficiently controlling ethnic conflicts.

**KEY WORDS**

Racism; Governmentality; Intercultural education; Mapuche people; Chile.



**SISYPHUS**

**JOURNAL OF EDUCATION**

**VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3,**

**2015, PP. 60-87**

# Intercultural Education in Chile: Colonial Subjectivity and Ethno-Governmental Rationality

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## INTRODUCTION

Opposed to European countries, where educational efforts concentrate on integrating immigrants into Western culture, in Chile and the rest of Latin America, intercultural education poses more complex issues, given its focus on the experience of domination and exploitation of indigenous peoples during the conquest and later during the eras of colonization and the development of Nation-States. This inferiority complex, or the “colonial wound” (Mignolo, 2003, 2007), upheld by racism (Quijano, 2000) and its consequential processes of subjugation, such as sixteenth- and seventeenth-century evangelization campaigns (Lepe-Carrión, 2012d), followed by the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Bourbon “utilitarian” education (Lepe-Carrión, 2012a), provided the foundation for constructing all future social representations surrounding “indigenous” peoples (specifically the Mapuche), as well as the modes of relating to the system of symbols, rituals, and institutions imagined and created by the creole class: that is, the “Chilean nation” (Anderson, 1993; Lepe-Carrión, 2012c; Valenzuela M., 2008).

This article is organized into two parts: in the first part, we attempt to illustrate a history of the processes of subjectification, enabled by the manipulation of “indigenous” people (the Mapuche), both as an object of civilization and fertile breeding ground for the manual labor force.

In the second part, we contextualize the Bilingual Intercultural Education Program (PEIB), which, over the last two decades, has developed into an essential part of the Chilean multicultural paradigm or ethno-governmental rationality (Boccaro, 2007; Boccaro & Bolados, 2010; Foucault, 1999a, 1999b). This program has become part of a unique historical process in which the State acts as an agent of particular external forces, appearing to act in the best interest of the indigenous population's quality of life.

Far from elaborating a history of ideas, we attempt to address the rise of the colonial matrix of power and identify a model of evangelization and education which influence the institutional racism<sup>1</sup> currently operating in education policies and lead to alarming social inequality in regards to indigenous affairs (CASEN, 2015; Nahuelpan, 2012).

The State's agency organizes the praxis that articulates this set of practices and discourses on indigenous "inferiorization" (in this case, of Mapuche culture and life). However, inferiorization practices are also prevalent in other governmentality schooling initiatives that render public education a tool for reproducing social and economic inequality by capitalizing on the manual and unskilled labor force.

Therefore, new tactics disguised by the idea of "cultural and linguistic fundamentalism" are used in the attempt to administer Mapuche and non-Mapuche identities, while also efficiently controlling the complex panorama of ethnic conflict in southern Chile. Evidently, this proves a violent and radical method to depoliticize the "field of education" in regards to social and economic demands of a historically discriminated group of people.

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the concepts of "race" and "racism", we must clarify three issues. First of all, the idea of "race" exists long before its biological connotation appeared in the nineteenth century (scientific racism). Its use became popular in the practices of differentiation and hierarchal structuring of the work force, along with unequal accumulation and distribution of recompenses; in other words, it served as an ideological justification for colonial domination that arose in the fifteenth century during the "invention" of America (Quijano, 2000; Wallerstein, 1989). Second of all, more than a biological reality, the concept of "race" is an intellectual and social construct impregnated with diverse cultural meanings and consolidated on the basis of different historical processes (Hering Torres, 2003a, 2003b, 2007). Finally, this very concept of race came to create new definitions of inclusion-exclusion during the construction of the Nation-State; social relations were "racialized", establishing a very subtle continuance between "race struggle" and "class struggle".

## CONSTRUCTING THE COLONIAL SUBJECT: THE JESUIT MISSION

Fifty years after the debate of Valladolid over the nature of the “Indian” and his place in Western civilization (Lepe-Carrión, 2012b), in Chile another debate arose that would transform the authoritarian and bloody strategies implemented by the Spanish against the indigenous population. This debate led to a new mode of articulating imperial interests of domination based on a particular kind of “disciplining”, implemented or mediated by religious congregations, primarily the Jesuits. This strategy is not only considered a key precedent in the formation of Emancipation thought during the nineteenth century (“national subject” or “economic subject”), but also—and primarily—as a fundamental element in defining the differences between “barbarism and civilization” or in the construction of the colonial subject in seventeenth-century Chile.

Following Homi Bhabha, we believe the idea of a “colonial subject” suggests both the colonizer and the colonized, and that it is impossible to conceive the colonized process of subjectification without the presence—minimal as it may be—of the dominating subject (Bhabha, 2002). Therefore, in said construction of the “colonial subject”, there must always be a “relation of power” sewn between both subjects who recognize and identify each other as such. Rolena Adorno (1988) reminds us that in “recognizing” the Other, the colonial subject recognizes himself. In this case, the limits that defined specific identities were constructed when the Spanish colonizer established a hierarchy of his position over the colonized and, simultaneously, the latter imagined and resisted colonization in constant tension with relations of power (between European superiority against the indigenous and later against the *mestizo*).

During the prolonged Arauco War (1550-1656), and after the so-called “Battle of Curalaba”, which demoralized the Spanish with enormous death tolls—including Governor García Oñez de Loyola—and the destruction of several cities in southern Chile, debates arose around “indigenous slavery”, already in illegal practice for many years prior. Although inspired by terror and the desire for revenge, the Spanish in Chile requested that the Crown legalize said practice as an excuse for military auxiliary against the natives. The Crown responded in favor: “[...] declaro y mando: Que todos los indios [...] sean avidos y tenidos por esclavos suyos, y como tales se



puedan servir de ellos y venderlos, darlos y disponer de ellos a su voluntad"<sup>2</sup> (España, 1608).

Before mandating this dire resolution, around the year 1599, the first justifications regarding the problem of slavery began to be voiced, albeit of a practical nature. After fighting ceased in Curalaba, *encomenderos*, clergy, and soldiers all found themselves in a similar state of devastation, and slavery posed a definitive solution to the Conquest's downfalls: "the war would end and prosperity would come, the land would be settled and the mines would be worked, and the barbarians would receive the punishment they so deserved" (Jara, 1971). A notable record that represents the general opinion on slavery during this period is a text by the Licenciado Melchor Calderón, entitled *Tratado de la importancia y utilidad que hay en dar por esclavos a los indios rebeldes de Chile* [Treatise on the Importance and Utility of Enslaving the Rebelled Indians of Chile] (Calderón, 1607).

Melchor Calderon's treatise had an enormous impact, not only due to the title's lack of subtlety but also because the content represented the feelings of a large portion of the Spanish and emerging creole community.

The public launching of the work took place in a solemn cathedral in Santiago, attended by distinguished members of the era's different elitist classes. On this occasion, Melchor Calderón delivered a heartfelt and eloquent speech in which, shedding several tears, he recalled the death of Governor García Oñez de Loyola. Then, with his "Treatise" in hand, he asked none other than the Rector of the Society of Jesus College to read it for all present—after all, the same rector had previously spoken out in favor of capturing "Indians", enslaving them, and even burning them at the stake for heretics (Hanisch, 1974).

Melchor Calderon's Treatise never intended to reflect on the problem of slavery, as one may suspect from its title. Rather, it meant to express the sentiments of an era in order to illustrate a form of sovereign thought: the "*ego conquiro*" ("I conquer"), which had been evolving since the first days of the conquest. This mode of thinking was founded on articulating the colonial economy with that of the metropolis, as well as subjugating Indians, considered barbarians (not even subjects capable of improvement through illicit slavery) and an impediment in the sovereign process of domination near the

2 "[...] I declare and mandate: That all Indians [...] be taken as slaves, and as such they shall serve, be sold, given away, or used as seen fit."

end of the sixteenth century. Hence, Melchor Calderon's Treatise appeared as a consensual voice under the sovereign power formula of "make die and let live", meaning the indomitable and irremediable Indian could be eliminated without a guilty conscious—the King decided whether subordinates had the right to life or death (Foucault, 2000).

The conquering enterprise seriously questioned the real "utility" of indigenous peoples, given the fact that they had no labor disciplining, were unable to produce surplus, and completely unfamiliar with the modes of capitalist production, depriving them of the necessary conditions to enter the modern colonial economic system (Pinto Rodríguez, 1996).

The exploitation of indigenous peoples implied posing a serious ontological question or, more accurately, said exploitation constituted the raw material (epistemic, moral, and politically considered) for future reflections on the issue of the "subject" ("ego cogito"), or if those half-naked bodies constituted or not a real existence. Here underlies the first methodical doubt: since the "Indian" lacks reason and thought, he does not exist as "humanity" (European imaginary) and therefore, the *encomienda* system, personal service, sexual exploitation, and even the death of Indians are all justified. On one side is the conqueror (subject-culture) and on the other very distant side the indigenous peoples (object-nature) (Castro-Gómez, 2005; Dussel, 2000, 2008; Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

The seventeenth century is characterized by an emerging subjugation, where the "indigenous" is constructed as a (colonial) "subject", his identity invented or represented by the European through exclusion, omission, and silencing. His place in the world arises from the position taken at the moment of encounter with that "other", with his "constitutive outside" which he questions and which questions him; since it is in the distancing, in the "suture", where the construction of identity happens (Hall, 1996). Such a construction determines the role one can occupy within the capitalist economy. This role is clearly conditioned as a fixed value based on "human qualities", evidenced through lineage, through blood.

The colonial project implied a process of construction that would transform "indomitable Indians" into "productive Indians". Logically, slavery and death were too costly compared to "evangelical (and hence, civil) fabrication" of the natives, who, in the long run, turned into "humans" with an enormous potential for production within local markets in favor of the Spanish Crown.



From this point of reference, we can acknowledge the Rate of Santillán in 1558 as the first labor legislation that transformed illegal manual labor into a key element within the world capitalist order, which began to enforce imperial interests. Enacted by García Hurtado de Mendoza, the legislation introduced a set of regulations meant to regulate labor relations between the Spanish and indigenous people. Though it apparently consisted of consenting a more humane sense to the *encomienda* system, the decree was in reality a mechanism of production that the colonial economy offered in order to accelerate the transition from the “savage Indian” to the “domestic worker”.

Thus, during the beginning of the seventeenth century, a new project was introduced, determined not only to conquer indigenous territories but also to subsume the culture of the “Indians of Chile” (*Reche*) into the archetypical Spanish culture. More precisely, the project aimed to “civilize”—by evangelism—the barbarous native, converting him into an inhabitant of the nation, into a worker domesticated by culture. The following quote illustrates the basis of this project:

[...] it was imperative to continue colonization: sowing the land, raising churches and houses, exploiting the mines. All this required the manual labor of submissive Indians. Indoctrinate them, conquer them with the faith and teach them Spanish (because ‘language is an instrument of indoctrination,’ and the Indians needed to speak Spanish to understand the instructions of their new masters) was the second purpose that the missions in particular set out to accomplish (Labarca, 1939, p. 8)

The administration of this evangelical strategy reveals many parallels with the events discussed at Valladolid. Called the “defensive war”, this project was led by the Spanish Jesuit priest Luis de Valdivia (1560-1642), paradoxically the same rector of the Jesuit College who publically read Melchor Calderon’s text in the cathedral of Santiago to encourage the legalization of enslaving indigenous peoples. This priest was—undoubtedly—inspired by the ideas of Bartolomé de Las Casas and a known promoter of the first reforms that began to take place in Chile upon the arrival of the Society of Jesus (1593), and which also reproduce to some extent the discussion of “natural” people; that is, whether or not evangelization should use force, whether or not Indians were apostates, and, of course, whether or not Indians should be captured for use as “personal service”. Though Father Valdivia first sup-

ported the enslavement of Indians, he later defended their rights, according to historiographical accounts (Jara, 1971). However, it is not for us to judge his double standards.

In order to fully comprehend the project employed by the “defensive war”, it is necessary to take into account the earlier work of the Jesuit priest José de Acosta in Peru, considered a precursor to Valdivia (Pinto Rodríguez, 1988). In 1588, Acosta had published his *De Procuranda Indorum Salute*, not only the first work written by a Jesuit priest in America but also the basis for systematic reflection on the role of the “missions”. In *De Procuranda*, we can identify five issues that constitute what may be the pillars of ensuing misology: 1) Indians can be true Christians; 2) evangelization cannot neglect the conquest; 3) evangelization must begin with the indigenous culture; 4) knowledge of indigenous religions; and 5) a different model of indoctrination (Marzal, 1998).

How long the judicial procedure of the “defensive war” lasted and the details of its accomplishments are of little consequence now. If failure can be found in this entire procedure, clearly it was not the Hispanic-Mapuche peace “treaty”. On the contrary, failure can be attributed entirely to the outdated sovereign apparatus that violently devised against native culture and was confronted by the persistent resistance of people who permanently wanted to destroy that “colonial difference”.

However, it is important to emphasize that in the Kingdom of Chile the “defensive war” was introduced as an emerging historic process that symbolizes, firstly, an imaginary border differentiating between the barbarians and the civilized; and, secondly, the rise of a new modality in power relations: discipline.

The colonial power, or the diagram of power we are describing, constitutes a matrix that operates along a double meaning: it is simultaneously macro-political and micro-political. In other words, it constitutes both a macro structure of domination on a global scale while a series of technologies operate on a subjective level. These two levels cannot be separated as if they belonged to two independent powers: it is impossible to understand indigenous slavery or evangelization without comprehending the political grid within the Spanish empire, or the latter’s intimate relationship with other emerging empires (such as the English, Dutch, or French).

The techniques of individuation, for example, only acquire meaning when they are observed in the light of change (primarily economic change)



occurring within the colonial world order. However, the referenced macro structure, or the idea of totality in a specified sense, cannot be seen as a mere abstraction or entelechy; much to the contrary, we believe the power expressed in the practices and techniques of the seventeenth century are very concrete and visible (Castro-Gómez, 2007; Deleuze & Guattari, 2002).

Jesuit priests used a variety of political strategies to silently influence the processes of subjectification during the colonial era, including “evangelization” (or rather “disciplinary power”), the Missions, Parliaments, commerce, Indian schools, the establishment of chiefs and ambassadors, and elitist pedagogical techniques. Inferiorization of the Indian, and later the *mestizo*, was not an immediate outcome that derived from a macro structure, rather the result of inconspicuous work of micro agencies operating on the level of individual conduct, which “straightened”, “civilized”, and “integrated” them into the implicit and explicit norms of the empire (Bocara, 1996).

Jesuit missionary expansion was primarily connected to disciplinary mechanisms, the foundation of educational institutions (or those of confinement) aiming to transmit routine conduct to natives, or to the “government of their souls”, through surveillance, inquisition, and constant and systematic examination.

Over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a series of educational institutions emerged in Chile that would, on the one hand, extend or reverberate evangelization techniques introduced during the “defensive war” and, on the other, perpetuate a model of education already in course in Europe.

Although schools and universities during that period were administered by different religious congregations (Mercedarians, Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, and Jesuits), we must recognize that Jesuits gained respect and admiration from their peers for their efficient (and ambitious) pedagogical methods and contents (Aedo-Richmond, 2000; Labarca, 1939).

Members of the Society of Jesus implemented the *Ratio Studiorum* (s/a, 1599) as a way of organizing and practicing their teachings into a homogeneous body. As an official study plan, this document does not necessarily reflect on pedagogy but rather outlines a group of methodologies, curricular advice, and extremely strict regulations ultimately meant to discipline both students and teachers. Discipline—let us recall—does not only refer to theoretical knowledge, but also to certain molding techniques carried out through regulation and surveillance of routine activities (Foucault, 2006).

Emile Durkheim (1983) indicates that “discipline” constituted the most original, superior, and efficient factor of Jesuit pedagogy, which could be distinguished by two fundamental principles. The first principle is characterized by the permanent and close contact the educator maintained with the student, not only meant to hinder any sort of “deviant conduct”, but also to closely study and transform the student’s “character and habits”. To achieve this goal, the educator developed strategies to reach the students’ minds and persuade them love him; that is, to generate a bond of friendship and dependency so strong as to extend beyond merely scholastic contexts, in many cases to the extreme of death.

The second fundamental principle is characterized by emulation or competition, in which students were forced to endure strict regimens of competitive quarrels and segmentation within the classroom. Students were divided into two groups or armies, the “Romans” and the “Carthaginians”, who lived in constant imperial rivalry. Once a month, each army of students was required to form a strict hierarchy of dignitary positions: an *emperor* (dictator or consul), a praetor, a tribune, and several senators. Furthermore, each army was divided into “decuries”, or subgroups of ten students led by a decurion elected by the aforementioned high dignitaries. Each decury, ranked from best to worst, depending on student performance, competed with its equivalent counterpart in the opposing camp (Durkheim, 1983; Foucault, 2002). In Chile, these divisions of positions and dignitaries were neither specific nor strict, and the number of students was considerably lower.

What we seek to underscore in this perverse competitive system is the relevance of such hierarchy. Not only did the dignitary positions become a clear reference and object of desire in that they endowed students with power and considerable superiority over their classmates; the model used to construct a citizen-subject—other times called “subordinate”—also became the perfect representation of the Chilean society Chile the colony was attempting to form at that moment in history. This model can be understood as the classroom itself, both in its spatial and temporal structures, as well as in the practices the educators exercised over students or select students over other students.

As Durkheim most cogently points out, Jesuit schools turned into small cities where each student acted as an official. There, awards and punishment—or honorific distinctions—gave cause to reinforce and maintain a world in which differences were naturalized on the basis of a life struggle

according to aptitude. This system also inculcated the unrestricted recognition or respect for noble dignitaries. The incidental aspects of what we have illustrated here reside in that the aforementioned abilities and conditions of nobility were intimately related to a blood line or lineage, which very rapidly began justifying, through the instruction of National History as a scientific argument, that in Europe the (ontological) distance between Europeans and non-Europeans was fully on the rise, and that lineage would “rationally” legitimize such differences. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century creoles, with less contaminated or less stained blood than *mestizos*, appropriated this discourse as a perverse mechanism to dominate and exploit during the first years of the construction of the Nation-State.

Jesuit education was always directed at different, very segregated social groups: Spaniards and creoles, *mestizos*, and Indians. There were schools for the future leaders of colonial society and exclusive schools for the children of leaders. Such is the case of the San Francisco Javier boarding school, founded in 1611, where conditions for admittance were closely related to bloodline: applicants were required to be the legitimate children of a marriage between decent people. Likewise, children of indigenous parents were denied admission under all circumstances, even if they came from a legitimate marriage (Silva Santa Cruz, 2010).

The first and most significant Jesuit school was the Colegio Máximo de San Miguel, founded in 1594, which began by teaching Grammar, and later Theology and Philosophy, establishing since then a “racially” differentiated educational program:

the five priest-teachers who worked at the school divided their educational work in the following manner: in teaching Spanish, one dedicated his time to the Indians of Arauco; another to Black slaves and two to the Spanish population; and the last one taught introductory writing (Aedo-Richmond, 2000, p. 16).

The indigenous population was only taught basic elements of agriculture, artisan work, and manual trades, such as carpentry, ceramics, shoemaking, weaving, tanning, boat building, ironwork, tailoring, furniture, jewelry, painting, and construction (primarily of churches and cathedrals); and very rarely rudimentary reading and writing skills. Although the first Jesuits advocated for abolishing slavery, they nonetheless reaped the benefits of the

*encomienda* system. However, following the First Provincial Congress, they abandoned the *encomiendas*, replacing them with a system of labor service tenancy (*inquilinaje*).

The Society of Jesus was the first promoter of “*inquilinaje*” in Chile, an institution that would eventually transform its many and large estates into renowned agricultural and artisan schools (Aedo-Richmond, 2000). In fact, in 1740, with the arrival of German Jesuits who taught manual and industrial trades, the Society already had huge estates in Calera de Tango, Santiago, Andalién, Mendoza, Concepción, La Serena, and Valparaíso.

Far into the eighteenth century, “service and manual trades” continued to be attributed to *mestizos*, Indians, Blacks and mulattos. Nobility rejected such activities as “scantly noble” and under no circumstance could public offices or high reputation positions be filled by people “stained” with native blood. Even the Jesuits required their school teachers and professors to provide a statute of blood cleanliness with proof of European ancestry and, as a separate requirement, demonstrate they had never undertaken a “servile” activity or trade (Frontaura Arana, 1892; Labarca, 1939). Regardless, this method of selection was self-regulated through education, which, racialized or segmented according to indigenous origin, fostered manual or “servile” labor at Jesuit estates and schools as a means to maintain self-sufficiency. This system introduced a *sui generis* mode of compassionate domination, where indigenous people went from being slaves to tenant laborers.

This does not only mean—as this historian emphasizes—“that Jesuits substantially contributed to the economic development of Chile” (Aedo-Richmond, 2000, p. 18). It also, more importantly means that they contributed to installing a system of organizing the work force, “racialized” through “education”, which guaranteed its permanent reproduction. Mario Góngora describes this system as continuing to “provide in the future laborers, tenants, and other servants” (Góngora, 1960, p. 95). If this implies contributing to a country’s economic development, we cannot ignore that this system holds one of the central social practices of work differentiation in the formation process of Nation-States during the nineteenth century.

The paradox of the entire colonial education system in Chile is that “educating” (or “civilizing”) the Indian turns into a violent process of “inferiorization”. As a last resort, religion, understood as we have outlined it above, acquired a fundamental role as a power apparatus within the



modern/colonial world system of fixing and constructing colonial mentalities and manners that positioned natives below the ethnic superiority of Europeans.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the arrival of the Bourbons and later with the Independence process, education would no longer be the church's exclusive responsibility, transformed into a State apparatus to eradicate poverty and idleness (Lepe-Carrión, 2012a). As such, education would slowly become an institution that, although endorsed by a progressive and urban discourse, maintained intact the system of differentiation and hierarchy of the labor force based on the idea of "race".

#### EMERGENCE OF ETHNO-GOVERNMENTAL RATIONALITY AND DEPOLITICIZATION OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

The racism grounded in our colonial past has not disappeared. On the contrary, it has been reinvented under different systems, primarily as "cultural fundamentalism" (Stolcke, 1999; Taguieff, 1991; Wallerstein & Balibar, 1991). Currently, in this neoliberal, modern, and commercialized vortex, racism is restored through the means of a complex cultural dissimulation (Lepe-Carrión, 2012b), which embraces diversity as a strategy to legitimize a single space of discussion and control over ethnic issues. "Neoliberal multiculturalism" (Hale, 2007), also referred to as "new multicultural logic of world capitalism" (Zizek, 1998), is the principal characteristic of the world's most sophisticated democracies, even when it adopts names as complex as "interculturality" (Cruz Rodríguez, 2013).

As a government strategy, interculturality has lost its "critical" vision regarding the racial structures that sustain social inequality, ever since it became associated with world multiculturalism. This explains why there is such a profound discordance between government discourse and that of indigenous communities, who interpret interculturality as a paradigm and project undergoing constant development. Such development is seen to cover ethical, political, and epistemic dimensions that reach beyond mere encounters, or dialogues and coexistence, since interculturality requires profound revisions and restructuring of all the social and political institutions and activities involved in the processes of subordination (Tubino, 2005a, 2005b; Viaña, 2010; Walsh, 2002a, 2010).



The interculturality that appears in official discourse has turned into a useful tool for methods of domination, given it conceals a new form of ethnic discrimination and segregation through the recognition and respect of the other, as long as he/she continues being the other (Žižek, 1998). That is to say, a new way to culturally differentiate citizens between normal and “internal others” (Briones, 1998a; González Casanova, 2006) who must integrally preserve their customs and traditions. As such, their exoticization or folklorization will lead to cultural “recognition” and paradoxically “distance” them from the homogenization of the national spirit.

In the years following the dictatorship (1973-1990), the successive governments of the Concertación<sup>3</sup> began introducing a series of debates concerning the country’s historic debt with “indigenous ethnicities”. These debates resulted in several agreements outlining a set of demands regarding territory, recognition, self-government, and cultural and linguistic rights.

The first debates over indigenous issues, during the government of Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994), instituted the Indigenous Law N°19.253 (Chile, 1993), which recognizes and promotes cultural diversity, introduces mechanisms of interaction between the State and indigenous peoples (Bocacara & Bolados, 2010). For example, the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI) is a product of this law, currently constituting one of the most relevant establishments for the promotion, coordination, and execution of policies referring to indigenous peoples.

Since then, a vast government initiative was launched to seek the “inclusion” of indigenous peoples through their participation in community, health, and intercultural education. The first manifestation of this new wave of interest in indigenous affairs appeared in 2001 through the “Integral Development of Indigenous Communities Program” (Orígenes), financed with loans from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). As time passed, it became clear that the government sought to turn Chile into a pluricultural and multiethnic country. Institutionalization of an intercultural discourse became evermore apparent in the rhetoric of State and parastatal agents. Even President Michelle Bachelet, during her first term beginning in 2008, spoke of a “Social pact for multiculturalism”,

3 Center-left political coalition that has governed since the end of the dictatorship to date (currently under the name of the New Majority) with only one interruption from 2010-2014, when a center-right government took office.

which consisted of recognizing obsolete aspects of the pacts signed by previous governments with indigenous peoples, and announced a new plan of action for revising the “political system, rights, and institutionalism”. Even more recently, during her second term, Bachelet, in her State of the Union speech on May 21, 2014, declared her aim to establish quality public education in which “all students are educated to be intercultural citizens” (Chile, 2014). This State interest in multicultural issues, where the indigenous appear as a population subject to needs and aspirations, and where their lives are the object of intervention through imperceptible techniques to shape conduct, is what we call here “ethno-governmental rationality” (Boccaro, 2007; Boccaro & Bolados, 2010; Foucault, 1999a, 1999b).

Intercultural education came about through the Bilingual Intercultural Education Program (PEIB), introduced within the framework of Education Reform (García-Huidobro & Cox, 1999) as a way to fill deep gaps in the current education plans, since school curriculum had not been adapted to indigenous contexts.

Though the old education model had undergone multiple transformations, it remained untouched as a homogenizing State strategy to address cultural diversity. It must be noted, however, that the idea of “contextualizing” education in schools for indigenous girls and boys is not the latest product of multicultural ecstasy, rather it comes from a long list of disputes, complaints, and demands by a significant number of leaders of indigenous communities, professors, and intellectuals that date back to 1920 (Cañulef M., 1998).

Regardless of the flaws regarding methodologies and cultural appropriateness (Rother, 2005; Williamson, 2006), the PEIB has had an unpredictable territorial impact, which undoubtedly, for multiculturalism’s proponents, reinforces and institutionally strengthens its continued presence in government strategies. The PEIB has turned into the fundamental operating hand of social policies (Educación, 2011; Williamson, 2012). However, this has not only occurred in connection with Chile’s problems of segregation, but also—primarily—in harmony with “transnational cultural flows” of recognition of diversity and ethno-development (Appadurai, 2001; Hannerz, 1998).

On the basis of the above, if the concept of “interculturality” used in Chile is “functional” to the State’s absolute control of ethnic conflict, we should pose the following questions: under what apparatuses of knowledge/power, or expert knowledge, does the government intervene, organize, establish hierarchies, and legitimize intercultural discourse? Furthermore,

how does interculturality in Chile also become functional for neoliberal multicultural interests? Or even, what idea of “culture” is shuffled into the rhetoric of governmentality, specifically through the PEIB, and to what extent can this idea become an instrument of ethnic differentiation? What are the social representations of the “indigenous”, “traditional”, “patrimonial”, and “authentic” that ethno-governmental apparatuses are producing and reproducing through the discursive practices of PEIB agents?

All these questions, which deserve extensive analysis, can be gathered under the prism of a single problem: the presence of racism in schools has not completely disappeared, and although enormous efforts have attempted to diminish discriminatory processes and practices, racism persists through “cultural” resignation and linguistic fundamentalism, spawning segregation effects. As long as the agents that implement the PEIB, as a normalizing apparatus to shape the population’s conducts, do not adopt a “critical” perspective of interculturality, void of this type of fundamentalism, schools will continue to be sources of social inequality and exclusion.

However, what exactly does “critical interculturality” mean in an inter-ethnic context, and how does it relate to the idea of multiculturalism?

Critical interculturality is an ethical, political and epistemic project that aims to construct a society where dialogue sustains the relationships between cultures (Fornet-Betancourt, 2001; Tubino, 2005a, 2005b; Walsh, 2002a, 2010). However, in order for dialogue to exist, a mutual recognition must already exist, difficult to achieve in a world where inequality or social, economic, political, and power asymmetries are so abysmal, and have for centuries maintained a system of domination and subjugation of one people over another. Thus, only in a critical sense, interculturality “clears horizons and opens paths that confront the still-persistent colonialism” and offers “social and political transformation, transformation of the structures of thought, action, dreams, being, loving, and living” (Walsh, 2009).

Both the micro and macro dimensions of interculturality—meaning the levels of interpersonal and structural relations, such as those with the State (Albó C., 2008)—must combine or complement each other in a permanent exercise towards accepting the “other” so that “he will be accepted as a subject with identity, difference, and agency” (Walsh, 2002b). Understood in this “critical” light, interculturality lies far from the politics of recognition, which often seek to “include”, to “be together” or even “let be”. Rather, it adopts a subversive, counter-hegemonic position, capable of transforming



structures that have historically enabled the asymmetries of power. Therefore, the “multicultural” alternatives posed by the “university”, as a global project of homogenization, are not sufficient or satisfactory for the decolonization thought offered by interculturality. The objective of such thinking rests in “pluriversality” in its widest sense, both of knowledge and of modes of existing.

Multiculturalism, on the other hand, refers to a set of politics of recognition, positioning itself as a (legal) doctrine of identification and “tolerance” in the face of cultural diversity. And if interculturality began “from” below (structural inequality), multiculturalism becomes problematic considering that it begins “from” a supposed universal citizenship. In other words, multiculturalism originates in an abstract space of relations that, on a secondary plane, erases or installs fundamental inequalities, destroying them to benefit cultural demarcation and the inclusion or aperture towards “difference”. This way, multiculturalism is completely “functional” to neoliberal politics that are sustained on this principle of control and domination of national and transnational hegemony (Muyolema, 2001; Walsh, 2009), facilitating the task of pejorative classification or segregation around a “cultural differentialism”.

Multiculturalism’s affirmative actions, although necessary, are in most cases merely a tool of judgement used by those who generate public policies in education, allowing them to distinguish and define those cultural rights concurrent with the ideal of a plural and liberal democracy, as well as other reclamation rights outside that ideal of democracy or simply oppositional to it. Hence, those who protest against inequalities, injustice, or for historical demands to improve the quality of life, can be considered subversives, radicals, intolerants, or even extremists in the name of universal ethics (Hale, 2007).

Such is the case of the current PEIB in Chile, whose objective is “to contribute to the development of the language and culture of the indigenous peoples and to the education of intercultural citizens in the education system”. In other words—and partially following the guidelines established by Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (ILO)—the program adheres exclusively to cultural and linguistic aspects.

The cultural differentiation operating here, as a kind of “internal coloniality” (González Casanova, 2006) imposed on indigenous peoples, results in powerful effects of “ethnicization”. Ethnicization implies the formation of



subjectivities or political subjects based on pairing certain “ethnic groups” with their respective representations or images drawn from criteria, expert discourses, or regimes of truth (Restrepo, 2011; Wade, 2000). In this case, ethnicization is built from those discourses introduced by multicultural policies in Chile since the 1990’s, as we briefly described earlier—those policies that also operate along the dynamics of neoliberal multiculturalism.

Cultural and linguistic fundamentalism has led to the widespread idea that interculturality is a last resort for the failures of education programs that excessively concentrate curriculum on folkloric aspects (festivities, dress, stories, dances, food, etc.), or from thinking that reclaiming language, or permanently using that language in textbooks, constructs an intercultural vision of education. This only achieves a sort of inverted racism, or distant racism, where instead of resisting diametrically opposed values, the specific and clearly identifiable differences of the “other” surface and are interpreted from a privileged position of homogeneous national discourse. That is, difference is not only confirmed but also becomes a kind of exoticism, distant from the intrinsic superiority of sameness (Žižek, 1998).

The depletion of indigenous culture and language in education contexts, achieved by excluding worldviews and philosophies, results in newly depriving complete meaning of the most engrained conceptions of indigenous historical demands. These worldviews and philosophies are precisely the nucleus of resistance and creativity that indigenous people have maintained for centuries, in spite of colonialism. This constitutes a dispossession of cultural rights that do not necessarily coincide with the ideals of neoliberal democracy where they are forced to participate, since, as we must clarify, governmental interculturality has never been reciprocal. For instance, if a Chilean chooses to be an intercultural citizen by learning of or ignoring the Mapuche world (the language and culture), the Mapuche, regardless, is compelled to integrate into Western culture and, in doing so, compelled once again to reassess his ancestors’ culture. Therefore, reciprocity or symmetry of dialogue and exchange do not exist; rather, this example would fall under a kind of unilateral interculturality that attacks the principle of non-contradiction in its definition.

Such reassessment of culture can trigger a devaluation of world visions—most likely opposing—in regards to the earth, family, State, God, moral obligations, etc. and necessarily derives in essentialisms, folklorization of culture, exoticism, and museumization of icons that reduce and isolate the



most significant indigenous cultural expressions (Kymlicka, 2003; Trapnell & Neira, 2004; Tubino, 2005b).

These are visions that, ironically, strengthen the dismantlement of an institutional structure, hegemonically monocultural and ethnocidal in regards to the vital conditions outlined above, and that are essential for the survival and development of a specific ethnicity: a) vindication of the territorial area usurped through colonialist actions; b) full legitimacy as valid judicial representatives; c) political autonomy in the administrations of justice, health, education, tax systems, etc.; all goals that would come into effect gradually, but with a clear and pragmatic agenda, and with a real commitment to interculturality that transcends the Ministry of Education and must interact with other State organizations. Of course, we must add to this list d) the acquisition of cultural and linguistic rights that articulate and grant identity coherence to these demands (Varese, 1982).

The most interesting aspects of this process of ethnicization is that, firstly, it tends to depoliticize the education process so that interculturality is thought of as exclusively “for” indigenous peoples and not for the society as a whole—that is, an intercultural citizen is seen as a (homogenized) “national subject”. Second of all, the categories of “race” and “racism” operating as indicators of differentiation at the beginning of the twentieth century—or even many centuries beforehand through proto-racism installed in our country during the conquest, the colonial era, and later, during the formation of the Nation-State (Lepe-Carrión, 2012a, 2012c, 2012d)—underwent a transformation from a rhetoric of exclusion based on “natural” attributes to a rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion based on “the difference of cultural identity, traditions, and inheritance” (Stolcke, 1999). Currently, what has emerged is a series of indicators or criteria of judgement (always new and changeable) between “difference” and “sameness” (them and us) that places the accent on “cultural” characteristics. Thus, some authors choose to speak of “neo-racism” (Barker, 1981; Wallerstein & Balibar, 1991), “differential racism” (Taguieff, 1991), or simply “cultural fundamentalism” (Stolcke, 1999). Culture, in this case, is manipulated as an apparatus of naturalization (Wallerstein & Balibar, 1991), in the sense that it can be used to segregate and exclude in the same way that the concept of “race” did for centuries in our country and throughout the Americas in general.

## CONCLUSIONS

The ideas discussed in this article are organized around the fact that in Chile, issues of ethnicity denote a closer relation to “multiculturalism” than to critical “interculturalism”. With that said, official discourse does not value the words used to discuss these issues, meaning that on a conceptual level, we have witnessed over the last several decades the installment of a new ethno-governmental diagram of knowledge/power used to administer identities and control ethnic conflict.

To display this, we outlined a brief description of the modes of subjectification during the colonial era, where the idea of “inferiorization” emerged and was used to elaborate different religious and State apparatuses of domination. This also resulted in differentiating work and establishing a hierarchal work force based on ideas of race, which inserted the indigenous population into the national community as deprived citizens.

Accordingly, it is clear that interculturality studies require not only descriptive, but rather analytical investigations of the concept of culture (Restrepo, 2014). We must discover how culture operates in ethno-governmental discourses on intercultural education because that is where parastatal agents (teachers and traditional educators) “reproduce” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1996) structures of ethnicity. In other words, pedagogical practices can be thought of as governmental practices and, as such, the reproduction of ethnicization in an education context cannot be explained by the idea of a “hidden curriculum”, since that only conceals disputing relations of power.

Discursive practices of teachers and traditional educators are similarly anchored in the matrix of relations of knowledge/power (ethno-governmentality). This matrix’s historic threshold is the emergence of an intercultural education apparatus (PEIB) as a response to the country’s debt with indigenous peoples, whom this apparatus attempts to identify, differentiate, and maintain far from vindication conflict. It is from this threshold that discursive practices must become legible and visible.

This last point is of utmost importance, since “culture” is understood here from a “metacultural” perspective (Briones, 1998b), meaning from beyond what is commonly interpreted as the set of actions of a particular group of humans, or how they carry out such actions. A “metacultural” perspective also considers culture as the properties that intensely influence the construction of ethnicity [hegemony], meaning in its own historical condition of



mediation and production. Social representations, or even “cultural difference”, are made possible by this double sided “culture”, both as a social process of meaning and concurrently as a producer of “regimes of truth” that grant the faculty to determine what is and is not “cultural” (Briones, 1998b); or to determine how culture itself permanently formulates a series of indicators or categories of differentiation that engrain fundamentalism. These indicators determine borders or “imaginary boundaries” (Said, 1990) of cultural discontinuity, of “contact zones” (Pratt, 2009), where such flows of production of difference interact; and, finally, of schooling scenarios where social inequality is produced and reproduced.

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**Received:** September 4, 2015

**Final version received:** December 15, 2015

**Published online:** December 30, 2015



