

Promoting Intercultural Dialogue in the European Higher Education Area



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

SEMINAR ON 'INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE ON THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS'

4- 5 March 2008

**ROOM 9 / SALLE 9
PALAIS DE L'EUROPE**

Synopses and Biographical Data of Speakers

Dr Fatou Sarr

Biographical Data

Dr Fatou SARR is a scientist at the Ifan, Cheik Anta Diop University since 1999 and leads the Gender and Scientific Research Laboratory which she founded in 2004. She previously lectured at the university faculty of Notre Dame de la Paix in Namur, Belgium from 1985 to 1991. She has a multidisciplinary education: She holds a PhD in anthropology and political sociology from the University of Paris VIII, a PhD in social services (option in social politics) at the Laval University in Quebec, Canada, a DEA (Diploma of in depth studies in environmental sciences) of the Dakar University and a master's degree in development economics from the University of Aix-Marseille II in France.

She is not only the author of several publications and articles on female entrepreneurship, gender questions and social movements, but also an international expert on United Nations institutions with more than ten years of experience. Furthermore she has supported fifteen African countries in gender education and the elaboration of national gender strategies including the formation and evaluation of programs.

Former member of the Audiovisual Council of Senegal, she is also very active in organizations of civil society. For further information on her research missions and the formation of her laboratory please check the website: www.senggenre-ucad.org.

Synopsis

Defining the Sources of Intercultural Conflict and Their Effects

‘A dialectic of cosmopolitanism and anti-cosmopolitanism has begun’, (Beck 2005:136).

Intercultural conflict has been defined as the perceived or actual incompatibility of values, norms, processes, or goals between a minimum of two cultural parties over content, identity, relational, and procedural issues (Ting-Toomey 1999). This presentation will seek to identify some of the key causes of intercultural conflict which can be broadly categorised into three types:

- highly durable historical forms of hostility, hatred and grievance,
- newly articulated forms of hostility, hatred and grievance,
- everyday cultural ignorance, miscommunication and misrecognition of difference.

In 2003 the Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention (Conference of the European Ministers of Culture 2003) confirmed that new forms of conflict, increase the difficulties of dialogue between cultures and that this may be used by certain groups with the avowed or unstated aim of fuelling hatred, xenophobia and confrontation between different communities. It was argued that cultural ‘impoverishment’ and marginalisation, on the one hand, and prejudice and ignorance, on the other, are among the prime causes of increasing violence and stereotypes of others. Here, conflict refers to -real or masked-disagreement giving rise to resentment and violent behaviour or even injustice which may culminate, at their most exacerbated stage, in destructive and uncontrolled violence. Cultural conflict is seen as resulting from discrimination due to the non-recognition of cultural diversity and democratic openness. The causes of intercultural conflict are identified as complex and multiple, with political, economic and social drivers being identified.

This presentation is bound by the twin intellectual and ethical goals of, firstly, seeking to promote a better understanding of the deep cultural roots of racial, ethnic and cultural hostility and its ideological, cultural and psychological foundations, processes and mechanisms within the European context; and secondly, offering hope through the interrogation and shaping of narratives and strategies of opposition, celebration and humanity in order to provide signposts to alternative European futures. The construction of racial, ethnic, national and cultural hostility and its expression through racism, xenophobia, intolerance, discrimination, conflict and violence across Europe is highly dynamic and takes many different forms. Similarly, the growth of hyper-diversity (Vertovec 2005) in European states, cities and higher education institutions (HEIs) provides a rapidly changing cultural environment, resulting from increasingly complex migration flows, claims for recognition of ethnic and cultural identities and expanding international networks of production and consumption. Globalisation and Europeanisation ‘thrive on the business of difference’ (Bhattacharya, Gabriel and Small 2002: 164), commodifying ethnicities and specificities, constructing and mobilising hierarchies of peoples, nations and regions, and remaking cultural, racial and ethnic divisions, inequalities and stratifications. Reactions and responses to this ‘macro’ context shape the environment in which intercultural relations in HEIs take place. This presentation will identify the macro, meso and micro causes of intercultural conflict and examine their impact on this specific field of human relations. In addition, examples of recent work to address racism in the UK HEI sector will be presented (Law, Turney and Phillips 2002, 2004, Law 2007).

Biographical Information

Dr Ian Law, (BA, PhD University of Liverpool), Founding Director of the Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies (CERS) and Reader in the School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds. Key works include *Racism Ethnicity and Social Policy* (Harvester 1996), *Race in the British News* (Palgrave 2002), *Institutional Racism in Higher Education* (Trentham Press 2004, ed. with Turney and Phillips), *Racist Futures*, (Ethnic and Racial Studies 2007, ed. with Sayyid), *Racism, Postcolonialism, Europe*, (Liverpool University Press 2008, ed. with Huggan) and *Racism and Ethnicity, a global analysis* (Pearson 2009). Also see the output from a HEFCE Innovation Project, *Building the Anti-Racist HEI: a toolkit*, www.leeds/cers/toolkit/toolkit.htm, (2002 with Turney and Phillips).

Synopsis

The role of universities in conflict situations Intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region

An understanding for diversity first takes hold during university life. This diversity, however, hinges on a steadfast rule: democratic culture as an indispensable value for intercultural dialogue.

Interrupted dialogue – adds Jahanbegloo – that can decide the future of the world: the passing from a world of certainties, but closed in itself to a world of infinite uncertainties. It is these uncertainties which help knowledge to evolve, the main goal of academic life.

It is intercultural dialogue itself that makes these uncertainties grow by developing knowledge and constructing a world, not on the base of the homogeneity of an accomplished and uniform fabric but on the basis of some kind of patchwork.

1. The concept of intercultural dialogue and the universities. Globalisation and cultural and social mobility.
2. Some intercultural conflicts concerning the Mediterranean universities.
 - 2.1. Women and university: the Islamic veil in Turkey.
 - 2.2. The Israel-Palestinian conflict: The situation of the universities.
 - 2.3. Religious dialogue and radicalism.
3. The ERASMUS-effect. Universities in a network.
4. MEDITERRANEAN ERASMUS and intercultural cooperation.
 - 4.1. Difficulties
 - 4.2. Positive points
5. – The example of the Euromed Permanent University Forum

Biographical Data

Professor Enric Olivé-Serret holds a doctorate in History and Doctorate Prize, awarded by the Autonomous University of Barcelona (1977). He is currently Professor of Contemporary History, at the University of Tarragona, Catalonia, Spain and Director of the official European Masters in Mediterranean Cultural Studies and Management of International Conflict.

Professor Olivé-Serret is also Director of the UNESCO Chair in Intercultural Dialogue for the Mediterranean and executive Secretary of the Euromed Permanent University Forum, comprising over 90 universities and institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Professor Olivé-Serret was director of Tarragona Museum of History, UNESCO World Heritage (1990-1993).

Dr Gundula Gwenn Hiller

Synopsis

ENHANCING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AT AN INTERNATIONAL CROSS-BORDER UNIVERSITY

The European University Viadrina located on the German-Polish border, with a high proportion of international students, was founded with a view to promoting the growing-together of Europe. In this international academic environment the acquisition of intercultural competence is taken for granted. But as research shows it is insufficient to put students together in lectures to motivate them to get to know each other. Instead, they form big national groups, distant from one another, and therefore communicative interaction is very limited. Actually, it turns out more and more that international institutions have to develop strategies to sensitize the participants on an intercultural level and to motivate them to intercultural communication. By using the example of the Viadrina University, it can be highlighted how a course programme for promoting intercultural competence could be created. One of the main aims of the programme is that the students experience the diversity of values and worldviews which they can discover and discuss during the workshops as a source of wealth. Up until now the training programme, which at first was not considered to be necessary by many members of the university staff, has turned into a success story, with a know-how which can be transferred to other international academic institutions.

In March 2008 the programme will receive an Award for Intercultural Learning from the BMW Group München because it is considered as an innovative contribution in the areas of intercultural understanding. The Jury's rationale therefore is that the conception of the programme, based on empirical-data research has "a fundamental significance for international academic institutions."

Biographical Data

Dr Gundula Gwenn Hiller works as an Intercultural Communication Researcher, Mediator, Cross Cultural Consultant, Coach and Lecturer in intercultural communication and mediation topics (Commerce, NGOs, Universities) Her research focuses mainly on: Intercultural Competence in the Higher Education Area; German-Polish relationship.

PhD, Graduate School "Intercultural mediation in the German-Polish border area" at the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder);

Master Studies: French and Italian language and literature; Contemporary German Literature; Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg; Università degli Studi di Urbino/Italy; Université de la Sorbonne, Paris.

Professor Edo Poglia

Synopsis

The presentation is divided into five sections. The definitions of the main concepts used are given in the first, while the second analyses the internationalisation of universities and cultural diversity in higher education. The following two sections analyse the current situation and the prospects for development of intercultural dialogue in relation to universities' two fundamental tasks of teaching and research. The last section deals with the tasks of university management and university policies in relation to intercultural dialogue.

Structure of the presentation:

- I. Definitions**
 - Intercultural dialogue
 - Some concepts related to that of intercultural dialogue
- II. Cultural diversity in higher education**
 - Internationality and internationalisation of universities
 - Data on students
- III. Intercultural dialogue in university teaching**
 - Preliminary issues
 - What already exists relatively frequently in universities
 - What exists less frequently and needs to be implemented
 - What should be initiated / further developed (3 types of training)
- IV. University research on intercultural communication and dialogue**
 - "Culture" (and cultural diversity) as a research topic
 - "Cultural Dialogue" as a future research topic?
 - "Intercultural communication" as a fundamental academic field for intercultural dialogue
 - Two key topics of applied research on IC: IC ethics and IC skills
 - Applied research on intercultural dialogue as part of universities' "service to the community"
- V. The tasks of university management and university policies**
 - The five (+ 1) necessary strategic choices
 - A checklist for assessing the level and quality of intercultural dialogue

Biographical Data

Prof Dr Edo Poglia is an Ordinary Professor at the USI/Faculty of Communication Sciences where he was dean from 2002 to 2004 and he has been director of the I'ICleF (Istituto di Comunicazione Istituzionale e Formativa).

He is responsible for didactics in the Bachelor and Master programme in Institutional Communication and Communication in Education. Furthermore, he is scientific director for the Executive Masters in Intercultural Communication and Education Management.

Previously he was president of the Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana (University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland), director of the Center for Science and Technology Studies in Bern and secretary general of the Swiss Science and Technology Council. He lectured at the University of Geneva and Neuchâtel.

He holds a PhD in sociology (Neuchâtel) and an engineering diploma from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. His main fields of interest are intercultural communication and the politics and management of education.

Prof Vladimir Filippov

Synopsis

The Peoples' Friendship University of Russia every year for already 48 years is the Alma Mater for students from 130-140 countries of the world. At PFUR we proceed from the fact that all problems in the discussed field arise from the lack of knowledge, understanding of, and respect for cultures, customs and traditions of other peoples. Thus we have been planning University's life strategy, its infrastructure and regularly renewed Complex programs of University life internationalization events in class, as well as extracurricular teachers and students' activity.

This complex approach in classroom activity envisages in particular the following:

- Training literature, scientific journals and fiction books in many foreign languages (literature in dozens of foreign languages at PFUR);
- International study groups, avoiding forming groups of students from one country;
- Similar approaches to the tuition fee and cost of supplementary services for all students irrespective of the country;
- Published full texts of all lectures in Russian for students of first two years for better mastering the material;
- Compulsory foreign languages programs for students of all schools and specialties (5 times more academic hours than envisaged by state standards for other Russian HEIs);
- Expanding programs of academic exchanges with universities of other countries, including "joint diplomas" programs, mostly on the master's degree level;
- Specialized long-term practice-oriented scientific research done by University scholars in the field of intercultural dialogue (ethnic, confession, inter-ethnic problems etc.);
- Students' scientific works, diploma papers and dissertations on the problems of the countries of University students' origin.

Extracurricular events and activities include:

- Centre for social and medical adaptation for all new-coming foreign students and compulsory annual medical check-up of all University students;
- International student self-governing bodies at faculties and in hostels;
- Numerous foreign students' communities (more than 100 at PFUR), arranging extracurricular students' life, as well as promoting the culture of the country;
- International principle of students' accommodation in hostels;
- International students club (separate building) and numerous students' cafes (African, Arab, Chinese etc.).

Biographical Data

A doctor of Sciences (Physics and Mathematics) and professor of mathematics, Vladimir Filippov has been Rector of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia from 1993 to 1998 and again from 2005 until the present day. From September 1998 to March 2004 he was Minister of Education of the Russian Federation.

He is also an Academician of the Russian Academy of Education, Head of the Chair for Comparative Educational Politics (UNESCO Chair) at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (2000 – present), is a member of the UNESCO-CEPES Advisory Board; a member of the Governing Board of UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies, was a member of the Council of Europe-UNESCO Working group on Lisbon Convention from 1994 to 1997, Chairman of the UNESCO International WCHE (World Conference on Higher Education) Follow-up Committee.

He is also author of 185 scholarly works, among them – 8 monographs.

Mr Qatip Arifi, MSc

Synopsis

Cultural differences in community members are features that clearly define social groups.

In parallel to the new pluralism that came about in the post-communist society of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” after 1991, albeit with some great difficulties, multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue appeared. However, there is a basic question that can be asked here, that is whether the concept of recognition and treatment of diversities is present in public governmental policy and whether it is progressing in a positive way. Is this dialogue complete within cultures in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and what are the impacts upon and contacts with other cultures in a situation where globalization in the region has had much influence and has improved contact with other cultures?

If we observed people crossing for example the Stone Bridge in Skopje, we would notice that a considerable number of them can be identified from their outer physical appearance, which religion they belong to, which ethnicity and even which region they come from, or which profession they belong to. How is intercultural communication developed in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, in a country candidate for membership in the EU? What are the theoretical and empirical definitions for coexistence or cultural conflict within the communities? Today, is intercultural dialogue in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” a big challenge bearing in mind that even the political agenda is full of discussions about the name of the country, border demarcation, divergence with neighbours, and so forth?

Attempting to get quick answers and easy and fast solutions would result in failure. If we look at issues resulting from these relationships, we might ask ourselves the question how do we build our identity through a continual cultural dialogue both in the short and long term?

Biographical data

MSc Qatip Arifi holds a Master of Science in Language Education. He graduated from Indiana University, majoring in Language Education. He currently works as a Senior lecturer at the Language Center of the South East European University in Tetovo, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. His main interests are related to language teaching, Language Alternative Assessment and ELP. He is also interested in social issues and human rights. He has taken part in different domestic and international conferences and seminars in his fields of interest. He has published a number of reviews and scientific papers in the field of language teaching.