

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AS AN INTEGRATION FACTOR OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN ISRAELI SOCIETY

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Abstract: *The modern world, in this era, is progressing with giant strides in the direction of becoming a multicultural society. It is recognized in a profound examination of processes occurring in diverse societies over the past two decades, similarly to issues of multiculturalism are no longer as unequivocal as predicted at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century. From the start, the multicultural approach was formulated against a background of establishing cultural rights, recognizing the importance of cultural rights as part of individual rights and a core component of individuals' belonging to a group and their social and later, also national identity. This article will try to present the existing reality in the Israeli education system, and to examine the ways for dealing with the growing trend.*

Key words: *Globalization, Multicultural, Minorities, Integration & Segregation.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: J11; O38; O15

1. Introduction

The modern world, in this era, is progressing with giant strides in the direction of becoming a multicultural society. It is recognized in a profound examination of processes occurring in diverse societies over the past two decades, similarly to issues of multiculturalism are no longer as unequivocal as predicted at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century²². From the start, the multicultural approach was formulated against a background of establishing cultural rights, recognizing the importance of cultural rights as part of individual rights and a core component of individuals' belonging to a group and their social and later, also national identity. Davis²³ clarified the matter and argued that the multicultural approach was applied both in countries made up since their establishment from diverse cultural and national groups with clear examples in Belgium and Canada, and countries seeking to provide a place and expression to groups and cultures that joined them in recent generations. Gehrke²⁴ added that over the past two decades social and political processes clarifying questions in relation to tensions between multiculturalism, founded on liberal values and non-liberal minority group practices. In fact, Jagdish²⁵ argued, they undermined the validity of a seemingly neutral approach to diverse cultures. Kivirauma et al²⁶ [Kivirauma et al] maintained that this step produced a reality in which increased consideration has been given about how to maintain the identity of such a society, its definition, maintaining and encouraging its culture and cultural unity. All this was against a background demanding pluralism, multiculturalism, and globalization processes.

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²² BAZAN – MONASTERIO, V. GIL – LACRUZ, A.I. & GIL-LACRUZ, M. (2021). Life satisfaction in relation to attitudes towards immigrants among Europeans by generational cohorts. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol 80. Pp. 121-133, ISSN 0147-1767.

²³ DAVIS, N. (2005). Intercultural competence for future leaders of educational technology and its evaluation. *Interactive Educational Multimedia*, vol 10. Pp. 1–22.

²⁴ GEHRKE, N.J. (1998). A look at curriculum integration from the bridge. *The Curriculum Journal*, vol 9 (2). Pp. 247-260.

²⁵ JAGDISH, S. (2014). Global and civilizational knowledge: eurocentrism, intercultural education and civic engagements. *Intercultural Education*, vol 25 (2). Pp. 114-127.

²⁶ KIVIRAUMA, J., KLEMELA, K., & RINNE, R. (2006). Segregation, integration, inclusion—the ideology and reality in Finland. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, vol 21 (2). Pp. 117-133.

Pashby et al²⁷ added that these considerations and deliberations are expressed in many countries' cultural policies. Hence countries such as Denmark or Holland, formulated cultural policies seeking to reemphasize a local and national socio-cultural identity²⁸. Of course, it is possible that one could also explore these processes against a background of political changes and strengthened national factors, in some parts of the countries, when at the same time international bodies such as UNESCO or the EU promote cultural sharing processes, encouraging cultural and multicultural diversity, as part of an overall political doctrine. Firstly, the researcher proposes clarifying the contemporary meanings of cultural policy seeking to promote multiculturalism in societies with minority groups, against a background of the aforementioned processes. Generally, the concept arising in academic discourse integrate an arsenal of terms the researcher seeks to clarify as philosophical concepts, to be accurate at a later stage employing them.

2. The education system in Israel, a historical, political, and political perspectives

The education system in Israel is in many ways a mystery²⁹. On one hand, in Israel there are some of the universities that were, until the 1990, some of the best in the world. Its population is among the leading countries in average study years per capita and in academic degrees rate. On the other hand, elementary and high school students in Israel achieve very low achievements in international tests in core subjects as reading, mathematics and science. This mystery is also expressed in the labor market. Reiter & Cohen³⁰ presents an additional aspect. They claim that Israel is among the most advanced countries in the world in high-tech and many Israeli experts work in leading high-tech centers all over the world, as the Silicon Valley, but it is also correct that many Israelis in labor age lack the required skills to compete in the modern labor market. The findings of a research performed in May 2021 for the Minister of Finance shows that the average labor productivity in Israel is not only lower than most advanced countries but also relatively retreating from labor productivity in the index leading countries for decades. One of the public education system main roles is providing equal opportunity to success also for students whose parents are not educated and therefore increase their chances to upgrade their economic mobility when they are older. The Chetty et al research findings indicate that differences in education quality perpetuate economic inequality. Chetty, Rockoff & Friedman³¹, who have researched the American system, estimate that erasing quality differences between schools will reduce intergenerational income correlation in about a 1/3. Therefore, the researcher concludes that there is direct correlation between economy and education, and it may be presented statistically. The Israeli education world had "transformations" since the state establishment. Each period had historical characteristics that influenced the policy, decision making, priorities and obviously budgeting. In order to understand the research problem nature, the researcher presents the historical and perceptual development of the educational system in Israel.

The first period: the state establishment education system – "all for the nation" (1948 - 1960). According to Bekerman³², the education goal in the first years of the country reflected Israel's core

²⁷ PASHBY, K., DA COSTA, M., STEIN, M., & ANDREOTTI, V. (2020). Meta-review of typologies of global citizenship education. *Comparative Education*, vol 6 (2). Pp. 144-164.

²⁸ OURS, J., VEENMAN, J. (2003). The educational attainment of second-generation immigrants in The Netherland. *Journal of Population Economics*, vol 16. Pp. 739-753.

²⁹ AYALON, H., & SHAVIT, Y. (2004). Educational reforms and inequalities in Israel: The MMI hypothesis revisited. *Sociology of Education*, 77(2). Pp. 103-120.

³⁰ REITER, Y., COHEN, A. (2012). Information Booklet: Arab Society in Israel- Second Edition. Neve Elan: Abraham Fund Initiatives.

³¹ CHETTY, R., FRIEDMAN, J.N., & ROCKOFF, J.E. (2011). The Long-Term Impact of Teachers: Teacher Value Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood. Massachusetts: NBER Working Paper 17699.

³² BEKERMAN, Z. (2008). Shaping reconciliatory memory: Towards Palestinian Jewish Co-existence through Bilingual Education. In Yotam Benziman (Ed.), *Memory Games: Concepts of Time and Memory in Jewish culture*, Van Leer Institute & Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, pp. 231-249

challenges as a state under construction that integrate unprecedented scale of immigration waves and strives for the modernization of various life areas. The education system at the first period believed it is the Zionist enterprise arrowhead, which aspired to transfer the immigrants arriving from all over the world into "new Jew". Three main compasses have directed the State of Israel in these years – the melting pot, the pioneering and the modernization.

The Second period: the institutionalization era - "excellence above all" (1961-1980). In the 1960s and early 1970s the education system led an important change - the toning reform. Its main landmark is adopting the "Rimalt committee" conclusions by the Knesset in 1968 and raising the compulsory education age to 15. Harpaz³³ share the opinion that the main aspects of this change were a significant development of secondary education, strengthening the status and importance of matriculation exams, promoting integration, pluralism in learning frameworks and learning courses while adjusting it to the weak population needs, deepening the academic foundation in the education system and also great strengthening of theoretic education. The state of Israel has matured and so has its education system.

The third period: looking out - international comparison as a key to success (1981 - 2000). Weininger & Weisblai [Weininger & Weisblai] explains that the third period is characterized by global aspects. It is the heyday of international institutions - the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the International Trade Organization. In the educational context this is the period the reform No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of the USA president George W. Bush is applied and focuses on evaluation and measurement by using rigid standards. At the same time, and not without regard, PISA tests, which grade education systems in the world according to universal standards, were formed and spread. The Israeli education system look, like other education systems' look, was turned outward, for comparison. Gruber³⁴ [Gruber] describes that at the same time there was a fast growth of over 50% in secondary education learners, and in 1990 was opened a decade in which about a million immigrants from the former Soviet Union arrived and increased the population by more than 20%.

The fourth period: The National Education Effort in Israel - "Striving for the Future" (2001 up to now). According to the reports of the Ministry of education, the seventy plus years old Israeli education system treat more than two million students and employs almost two hundred thousand teachers. The students and the teachers have mutual cultural – Israeli base, but it also has many different elements. Svirsky & Dagan- Buzaglo [Svirsky & Dagan- Buzaglo] claim that "navigating this loaded and varied ship" is complicated. For "educated navigation" the system need clear and agreed principles. The most important are the Israelism principle, the excellence principle and the principle of seeing every student.

The writer of the article, who is a pedagogic guide in teacher training college in Southern Israel – Kaye college, seeks to summarize this sub-section in information analysis and personal insight, which were also expressed in her article "*Barriers to equality in the Arab education system*"³⁵. She believes that one of the acceptable indices of modernization level and human society development is education level. Education and schooling are significant milestones in an individual's life, which allows him to fulfil his abilities, shape a worldview, build social awareness and assist in personal and professional decision making. Providing education and training to the population allows the country to improve its human capital and maximize the inherent human potential. The education policy in Israel declares it aspires to provide knowledge and skills, widen the learner circle in all education levels, reduce student dropout and increase the population education level.

³³ HARPAZ, Y. (2011). A country does not make peace with its citizens. *Echo of Education*, vol 4(5). Pp. 38–43.

³⁴ GRUBER, N. (2017). Factors of the low achievement of Israeli students: between the seeming and the reality in the PISA test. Tel Aviv: Root Institute for Socio-Economic Research, Tel Aviv University. Pp. 16-27

³⁵ALVAKILI, N. (2019). Barriers to equality in the Arab education system. Ялта. Проблемы современного педагогического образования. Выпуск 65(2). Pp.18-19

3. The education system in Arab society and minority populations.

Along with the positive developments and trends the Arab education system and minority populations in Israel have undergone, there are still some challenges, as well as gaps to be reduced - both compared to the Jewish education system and to the growing population – to have optimal integration of non-Jew, Arab and minority populations in Israeli society and economy. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics data [CBS], updated in 2021, the Arab population is about 1.94 million people, of which about 584 thousand children and teenagers ages 5-18 (from kindergarten to 12th grade). The rate of children and teenagers in Arab population (31%) is higher than the rate in Jewish population (23%). The percentage of Arab children and teenagers in all 5-18 age group (27%) is higher than the Arab population percentage in the country population (21%). The fact it is a large population part makes the education issue in Arab society more important. Ben Porat, Yona & Bashir [Ben Porat, Yona & Bashir] describes in their book "*Public policy and multicultural societies*", that teaching language in the Arab education system in Israel is Arabic and it is divided into four sectors: Arab, Druze, Cherkess and Bedouin. Each sector has its unique curriculum.

At the state establishment the infrastructure level in the Arab education system was very low. Haddad & Verodnitzky³⁶ describes that until the mid-1950s there was only one state Arab high school in Israel, in Nazareth. Apart from this there were some private Christian high schools which were operated by the church even before the state establishment and continued to operate. These schools were defined "acknowledged but not formal", namely the state acknowledged their existence for keeping compulsory education, but they were not part of the state education. In addition, the very high cost of studying in private high schools caused many students, who completed eight elementary study years (according to the law at this time), to give up high school studies and stayed in their settlement to help providing their family. Most of the students who were interested to continue their studies in state high school, had to study in Jewish cities near their living place. Krakara³⁷ notes that since the first study year, 1948-49, until 2018 there was significant quantitative growth in infrastructures (schools and classrooms) and in the number of students in the Arab education system. The growth in the elementary education in the Arab education system was dramatic and at a several times higher rate than the growth in the Hebrew education system, but the real revolution in the Arab education system was in the high school education: from almost non at the first years of the state to an obvious issue that expresses the accepted average in Arab society.

Despite the consistent improvement trend, the achievement level in the Arab education system is much lower than in the Hebrew system, and for many years there is consistent large gap in the eligibility rate for matriculation diploma between the two systems. The dropout phenomenon is still very severe among Arab high school students, in much higher rate than in Jewish schools. Data from a report published in July 2020 by the Prime Minister office, the Ministry of Finance and the Economic Development Authority of Minorities in the Ministry of Social Equality, show that among Arab students the participation rates from junior high stage (7th grade) to high school graduation (12th grade) significantly decline comparing to Jew student rate – from 98% to 86% compared to 99% and 92% in Hebrew education in accordance. Justman³⁸ adds that the covert dropout phenomenon imposes a heavy burden on the Arab education system. Despite the

³⁶ HADDAD HAJ YAHYA, N., VERODNITZKY, A. (2018). Informal education in Arab society: vision and action. Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, policy research. Pp.86 – 112

³⁷ KRAKARA, I. A. (2018). Open and covert dropout in the Arab education system. In A. Reches and A. Rudnitzky (Eds.), Arab youth in Israel: Between Chance and Risk, Pp. 55–59. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Conrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation.

³⁸ JUSTMAN, M. (2014). Affirmative budgeting for the education system Prepared for the Eli Horowitz Conference for Economics and Society of the Israel Democracy Institute. Jerusalem: The Van Leer Institute and the Israel Democracy Institute. Pp. 122 – 139.

compulsory education law up to 12th grade, quite a few students in the Arab education system are registered as students, but in practice they are often absent and in fact do not study. According to various resources data, the overt and covert dropout rate in the Arab education system is about 20%. The dropout phenomenon usually occurs in the ages of transition from junior high to high school and most of the dropping out students are boys.

An additional opinion heard in the last years by Abu Asba et al³⁹ who claimed the gaps between the Arab education system and the Hebrew education system, and the Arab education discrimination expressed not only in budgets and learning hours. An additional main issue reflecting these gaps is the infrastructure state and physical conditions in education institutes. Unlike the budget distribution, which was revised in 2015, the information about physical infrastructures is not orderly collected and analysed in the Ministry of Education, therefore the public presentation of this information is sporadic and partial. Although infrastructures and physical facilities do influence student achievements, violence level and safety level, especially among weak populations, it seems that the Ministry of Education does not have any orderly and clear procedures to establish sports halls and courts, computer labs, libraries and yards. Even when there are standards, they are often not implemented in practice. Argov⁴⁰ notes that the relatively weak student achievements in the minority education system are parallel to the relative inferiority of education services, in terms of availability and quality.

The minority population education institutes in general still suffer of shortage of schools and classrooms, especially in the elementary education system. The lack of laboratories, workshops and sports facilities is still the common situation in Arab schools. In fact, the relative shortage is even larger in the Arab education system in extracurricular activities and extracurricular services. For example, in 86% of Jewish schools operates a psychological service, but this service is only available for less than 10% of Arab students. Up to 2020, there is a similar gap in other educational inputs availability – as libraries, support programs for weak students, computer courses, cultural activities and other services.

4. The integration process of minority populations in education systems

The writer was interested to academically review the integration relations between the two education systems, and the required attempt to integrate the education systems of the minority groups with the Jewish society majority groups but found almost no academic sources or social initiatives that indicate social intention and direction. As analysed earlier, the education streams work in parallel, but in fact with no substantial experience and / or structured and significant interfaces that see the integration process as an "engine" that promotes Israeli society.

The integration in education program is probably the largest program in Israel for gap reduction. Ben -Porat et al⁴¹ claims that the basic idea was different division of high school population. The use of the term "integration" in Israel is usually connected to integration between Ashkenazi Jew students and Jewish Sephardi students, but does not refer to minority students from Arab society. Bekerman⁴² adds and explains that whether the integration was successful or not, it never meant integration between Jews and Arabs. Therefore, the question is if an integration between Jews and Arabs can exist. Besides independent initiatives as bilingual schools, which may

³⁹ ABU – ASBA, H., FRESCO, B. & ABU – NASRA, M. (2013). Dropout of students in Arab, Bedouin and Druze education: Summary report. Jerusalem: Published by the Ministry of Education in Israel. Pp. 71- 122

⁴⁰ ARGOV, A. (2016). The Development of Education in Israel and Its Contribution to Long-Term Growth. Jerusalem: Bank of Israel, Series of Discussions, Research Department. Pp.12 – 31.

⁴¹ BEN – PORAT, C., YONA, Y., & BASHIR, B. (2016). Public policy and multicultural societies. Jerusalem: van Leer Institute. Pp. 118 – 139.

⁴² BEKERMAN, Z. (2008). Shaping reconciliatory memory: Towards Palestinian Jewish Co-existence through Bilingual Education. In Yotam Benziman (Ed.), Memory Games: Concepts of Time and Memory in Jewish culture, Van Leer Institute & Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, pp. 231-249.

have value motives, there will probably be no educational integration in Israel, and it is probably not at the top of social, national and political priorities.

Haddad Haj Yahya & Verodnitzky⁴³ even exaggerates this issue and tries to convince that what exists in Israel is "segregation in education" process. According to Reches [Reches] this term describes separation between social groups that are excluded on ethnic, racial, national, cultural or status basis. For 80 years the United States has had a "separate but equal" policy separating blacks and whites in schools. In 1954 the court ruled that "separate education is discriminating by nature" and claimed that racial separation is against the American constitution and called for its immediate abolition. The "contact theory" perspective assumes the chance for inter-ethnic connection (including inter-racial connection) increases the more the ethnic integration in school increases.

Rudnitzky⁴⁴ describes the segregation reality in Israeli education. He says there is no uniform policy in state-religious education and there are different models of gender separation, especially in elementary education: separate schools, mixed schools with separate classes and schools with mixed classes. In addition, in some institutes the gender separation is only in upper classes, and in some institutes, separation is an option, some classes are separate while other classes are mixed, because this thought integrates with the Israeli political - policy perception, and therefore expressed also in the education system. Svirsky & Dagan – Buzaglo⁴⁵ expands and claims that Israel has never succeeded to form a state uniform and equal education system. The most prominent characteristic of Israeli education is the differentiation - national, religious, ethnic, class. This differentiation is not a result of multicultural pluralist perception, but of long term political and economic arrangements, that some achieved by agreement and some by force. Differentiation, since it is anchored in political and economic power relations, is accompanied by a very large degree of inequality. As mentioned, there is a significant separation in the education system in Israel: Arabs are separated from Jews, religious from ultra-orthodox, the two last groups are separated from secular and traditional, classes have some separation from each other, and as mentioned, - Ethiopian are often separated from other students.

Although Israel is very small geographically, and although the members of the various groups and classes live in geographic proximity, they have quite a separation between them in the education system. The separation reflects political conflicts, differences of religion and religiosity, language differences, and in a certain amount also intent exclusion of some groups by others. Jabareen⁴⁶ notes that to some extent it may be claimed that in Israel, at least up to the university, there is segregation between Jewish and Arab students. In most of the country Jews and Arabs do not live in the same cities, except for some unusual mixed cities as Jafa and Ramla. About 25% of Israeli students are of minority groups, but their vast majority study in the Arab education system. From kindergarten and elementary school to high school the vast majority of Jew students and Arab students' study in separate schools. Reiter & Cohen notes again that there are exceptional cases as bilingual schools or a special school (as “Alliance israélite universelle” school), although it may not be considered equally if in Alliance school Jews and Arab study in separate classes. In addition, a less common phenomenon is Arab parents who chose to send their children to the Hebrew education system (as in the Druze villages near Haifa - 2021).

⁴³ HADDAD HAJ YAHYA, N., VERODNITZKY, A. (2018). Informal education in Arab society: vision and action. Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, policy research. Pp.86 – 112.

⁴⁴ RUDNITZKY, A. (2014). The Arab citizens of Israel at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, vol 139.

⁴⁵ SVIRSKY, S., DAGAN – BUZAGLO, N. (2017). Enough paving. Echo of Education, vol 53(2). Pp. 65 - 67.

⁴⁶ JABAREEN, T. Y. (2008). Constitution Building and Equality in Deeply Divided Societies: The Case of The Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel. Wisconsin International Law Journal. Pp. 345- 401

Madhala – Brick⁴⁷ seeks to expand the philosophical discussion and claim that Jew and Arab students have almost no social interactions, whether in the university where they study together, or in the segregation schools. Although the foregoing and despite the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there are some unique cases in Israel which Jewish and Arab students sit together in classroom. The writers claim that there are binational schools and cases of Hebrew schools where Arab minority study. The educational dilemma here is unusual. Who to allow Jew and Arab students to study in the same classroom in the state education system? And moreover, how to make them have social relationships?

The researcher of the thesis believes the question is “how” not “whether” integrate, because the field and the reality indicate that there is already mutual life. Jews and minorities live in separate cities in Israel, but the reality and everyday life bring them together in different social interactions - at the university, at work, in public institutions as hospitals etc. the present reality and the expected demographic changes will require more school principals and educators to face reality and this dilemma.

Conclusions

1. The social world forwards towards a multicultural environment. The researcher concludes that multiculturalism is an approach emphasizing the importance of accepting various cultural identities, especially in countries that integrate minorities or immigrants. The multicultural perception assumes that a person can be part of several identity circles and contexts and move freely between them, and he is expected to feel comfortable in every culture circle he belongs to. Many society and demography researchers as Angrist & Lavy Boyles and Black, did not rush to define clearly and decisively, therefore they have added doubts and dilemmas in their interpretation of the term as expressed in culture policy in the countries.

2. The Israeli education system is a result of the state development process since the 1950s up to now (2021). In each of the periods the administration mainly referred national interests that were about the desire to establish quality education system adjusted to the growing local population (680,000 in 1948 up to 9.25 million in 2021). It is true, and there are many evidences for it that although minority populations existence was taken in consideration, their actual integration as a culture in the Israeli texture and mosaic was not planned. This realistic datum is presented in pictorially shows the structure of the education system course (elementary – high school) with four main streams (state, state-religious, ultra-orthodox and Arab society, including minorities). The writer indicates after profound reading of many sources, that there is no connection between education streams, no unifying plan or attempt to create uniform national integration. the writer is sorry, and as expressed in her article "Arab minority and Jews majority in the Israeli education system", there is segregation model in Israel, namely a structured and managed process of separation and differentiation. Smuha⁴⁸ [Smuha] notes that besides few cases and initiatives, like the bilingual schools or “Alliance israélite universelle” school, there are no cases of educational integration in the Israeli system as part of structured program.

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⁴⁷ MADHALA- BRICK, S. (2015). Professions at risk: computer trends in the market Labor in Israel, State of the State Report - Society, Economy and Policy. Jerusalem: Taub center for the Study of Social Policy in Israel. Pp. 163 – 176.

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