

## **FORMING RELATIONSHIPS IN A MULTICULTURALISM ISRAELI SYSTEM IN ORDER TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS**

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**Abstract:** Israeli education system is not a homogeneous one, there is a great variety of ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups. Of course, the education system suffers from differentiation, inequality issues and conflicts, especially within the minorities. Multiculturalism tools could resolve existing problems.

**Key words:** Multiculturalism; education system, differentiation, Israel.

### **Introduction**

The global environment is not balanced and monotonous, its structure changes over time and space, and different factors and phenomena are expressed in an unexpected way. In this world of globalization a danger of conflicts, contradiction of interests, inability to solve problems, is very high. Differences in mentality, level of life, culture, tradition and religious views transformations, understanding of "human rights" and values – all these lead to egocentric tendencies, which sometimes influence political and economic relationships [1,9]. There is a severe problem of making contacts, which demands a multicultural integrative approach, taking into consideration logics, conflicts management, ethics, and culture and so on [1].

Multicultural system is perceived by scientists as relations within a country or in the world which are directed to saving and developing cultural differences without contradictions.

### **Multiculturalism**

In sociology, multiculturalism describes the manner in which a given society deals with cultural diversity. Based on the underlying assumption that members of often very different cultures can coexist peacefully, multiculturalism expresses the view that society is enriched by preserving, respecting, and even encouraging cultural diversity [5,6]. In the area of political philosophy, multiculturalism refers to the ways in which societies choose to formulate and implement official policies dealing with the equitable treatment of different cultures [5]. Multiculturalism assumes politics, ideology and theory which unite complicated relations in a common logics and dynamics. Since civilization cannot develop without global and real transformations of the modern world, the scientific-technological progress makes cultural differences and identities more serious. In political and economic theories, multiculturalism is sometimes described as a "melting pot", in which melting of different cultures takes place in a calm and non-painful form, however it is complete and does not allow coming back [1]. A culture of Canada is a good example, a tolerant approach to all the elements and cultures is realized as a part of the whole system [2]. Such a concept is also popular in USA. Australia and USA are based on immigrations, so they are both extremely tolerate

to different cultures and ethnic groups [4, 6]. However, it is extremely important that all the citizens possess a good level of English, which for many years influenced their immigration politics-English speaking immigrants were more welcome than others [6]. The local Aborigine population were taught to read and write in English, which was a beginning of resolving conflicts between them and the Anglo-Saxon immigrants.

The essence of the multiculturalism is melting of some too harsh characteristics, making changes be less prominent, taking an eye out from some peculiarities of cultures on the political level and in a social life. Some might decide that multiculturalism processes destruct a culture and to object to them, thus political conflicts are brought about [8].

Political conflicts may be treated as an open clash between different interests, points of view, values and priorities, which are a result of inevitable need of subjects to interact. There are political-economic, state-personal, value-cultural conflicts. Cultural, informational, communicational factors may cause and enlarge the existing conflicts and obstacles for development of relations [8, 9].

The problems multiculturalism solves consist of discrimination, nationalism issues, developing mechanisms fighting discrimination.

### **Multiculturalism in Israeli system of education**

The state of Israel did not manage to establish a uniform state education system accessible to all. The most prominent characteristic of the Israeli education is the differentiation - national, religious, ethnic, class. This differentiation is not a result of pluralist multi-cultural world view, but of political and economic arrangements of many years that some were achieved in agreements and some by force [2]. The differentiation, since it is anchored in political and economic power relations, is accompanied by great amount of inequality. The differentiation is also expressed in the administrative level: although all streams are formally subject to the ministry of education, but, in fact, the minister of education manages only the secular "state education", since the religious state education is managed by a separate department in the ministry of education, that is actually a kingdom within a kingdom. The orthodox education is also a kingdom within a kingdom and its management even sits outside the ministry of education. Today there are two kingdoms: the independent education, which is the heir of the stream of "Agudath Israel" and "Ma'ayan Hahinuh Ha'Torani" funded by "Shas" party [7].

#### **The education streams in Israel**

Today there are six sub-systems of schools:

1. The Jewish secular state education system.
2. The Jewish religious state education system that is identified with the "Ha'Bait Hayehudy" party.

The Jewish orthodox education system that is divided into two:

3. The independent education that is identified with the parities of "Agudath Israel" and "Degel Ha'Tora".
4. The education system of the "Ma'ayan Hahinuh Ha'Torani" that is identified with the "Shas" party.
5. The Arab education system in which we may observe several sub-systems. For example: the Druze schools that have a different curriculum of the Christian or Muslim schools.

In July 2008 was approved new stream called "the combining state education" that want to mediate between the secular state education and the religious state education [7].

The Palestinians, which until 1948 were most of population, studied in separate education system managed by the government of the British mandate. The national differentiation was kept

also after 1948, mainly because the Arab settlements that were in Israeli territory were put under martial law until 1966. The differentiation was kept even after the cancel of the martial law: except for a few exceptions, almost all Arab students study with Arab teachers in separate schools that its primary teaching language is Arabic and some subjects are unique to Arabs. Formally Arab schools belong to the "state education", but in fact they are managed by a separate department in the ministry of education. Unlike the Jewish religious-state and the orthodox streams, which are managed by representatives of the streams, the Arab education department does not have independent Arab management and along most of the years was headed by Jews. It should be added that Arab school are also divide into some sub-streams, like the Druze schools that have a little different curriculum of other Arab schools. There are also, besides the state Arab schools, schools that are not state schools that are under the title of "known education that is not formal" and include the Christian churches schools [7]. Swirski & Dagan Buzaglo [7] claim that reducing the inequality was never in the middle of a state reform plan. The opposite: the big reform plans, those that were implied and those that was not, focused on organizational changes that empowered the advantage of students from strong populations. The Dovrat committee as an example – public committee that was appointed in 2003 by the Israeli government in order to perform comprehensive examination of the education system in Israel and recommend a plan to change. The committee acknowledged the depth of inequality in the education system and among its recommendations we may even find at least one important suggestion to cope with the problem – granting differential school budget, by which schools in cities that are not well – established will get higher budget of the one that schools in well - established cities get. Yet, the committee did not see a main mission in coping inequality. Instead, its most important recommendation was in the organizational level: to decentralize the system's administration, from the ministry of education to the regional and local authorities. This recommendation matches the macro-economic policy in Israel since 1985: maximizing the reduction of the state budget and at the same time transforming the responsibility from the central governing to other functions – business, civilian or local authorities.

### **Inequality in achievements**

The clearest expression of national, class, ethnic and religious differentiation and inequality is the big differences in achievements level of students in Israel.

The achievements may be measured in two forms: the one, the students' success level in completing the formal study course: perseverance in studies (not dropping out), transition from class to class in elementary school, transition from elementary to junior high school, transition from junior high to high school (while transition to academic high school is perceived as higher achievement than transition to vocational high school), studying to the matriculation exams (when student are divided to levels by the number of units in each subject), the success rate in matriculation exams (the exam level of difficulty, number of units and the exam grade); coping the admission requirements of higher education institutes; and continue studying in higher education institute (here there is also a distinction based on level and / or prestige between the institutes).

A second form of achievements' measurement is putting the students in comparing exams – national and international. We will present here the achievements of Israeli students from the different streams in several indices: the success rate in matriculation exams and success in School Efficiency and Growth indices (MEIZAV) exams in Israel and in the international exams PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA.

## Conclusions

To summarize, we should point out that the world outside the academy has already decided that multidisciplinary and multicultural tools and mechanisms are the need of the hour; the Israeli world of education is still trying to adjust to the changing reality. Education in Israel's multicultural society began with state supported curricula, created as a "branch of Zionist politics". The State Education Law sought to neutralize the existing politically oriented tracks and create uniform curricula. These curricula reflected the spirit of the times – the wish for cultural homogenization and to create a cohesive cultural platform based on Judaism and Zionism [2]. The schools were perceived as the strongest means of creating a national Israeli ethos and of structuring a collectivist conception and Jewish-national solidarity. No attention was given to ethnic differences and to the Arab minority.

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