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Multiculturalism, globalization and the implications on education

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Abstract

The paper deals with the question for education for human relations in the teaching. The education for human relations is one of the priority tasks of the teaching as a social phenomenon. In fact, this task is closely connected and it is even included in the function of teaching which refers on the young person as a member of the society. On the other side, the teaching is based on certain didactical principles which are leading maxims in its preparation, organization and realization. In that context the paper is turned to the link of the system of didactical principles and the education of human relations. Here we try to point to the role and meaning of the didactical principles and their orientation towards the development of the humane relations, and the accomplishment of the function of teaching which refers on the encouragement of toleration and respect for others.

Keywords: didactical principles; education; humane relations; teaching.

1. Introduction

Most countries in the world are culturally heterogeneous. According to the recent estimates, in 184 independent countries in the world there are about 600 languages and 500 ethnic groups. Only a few countries in the world can say that their citizens share the same language and belong to the same ethno-national group.

This diversity poses a series of important questions that may be subject to dispute. Minorities and the majority are largely confronted in relation to the issues such as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, educational programs, national symbols, choice of anthem or national holidays. Finding a moral and political life-defensive responses to these questions is the biggest challenge that democracies are faced with today. The endeavor to create liberal-democratic institutions in Eastern Europe and the Third World are being undermined by nationalistic conflicts. In Western Europe numerous disputes regarding the rights of immigrants and other cultural minorities question the very assumptions on which decades of political life is based on. After the end of the Cold War, ethnocultural conflicts have become the largest source of political violence in the world that do not show a downward trend.

Modern societies are largely faced by minority groups seeking recognition of their own identity and adapting to their differences. This is commonly indicated as a challenge of the multiculturalism. But the term multicultural often covers various forms of cultural pluralism, each of which represents a challenge of its own. Minorities are incorporated into political communities in different ways, from conquest and colonization of previously autonomous societies to voluntary immigration of individuals and families. These differences in the way of incorporation influence the nature of minority groups and the type of relationship that they want to establish with the wider society.

Firstly, cultural diversity is created by incorporating previously autonomous and territorially concentrated cultures into a greater state. These incorporated cultures, which we call national minorities or some similar terms are used, tend to be maintained as specific societies despite the majority culture and they require different types of autonomy or self-government in order to provide their own survival as specific societies.

In another case, cultural diversity can happen because of individual or family immigration. These immigrants often form loose associations that are called ethnic groups. By rule, they want to integrate into wider society and be accepted as full members thereof. Although they seek greater recognition of their own ethnic identities, their purpose is not to become separate and autonomous nationalities within the wider society, but to modify the institutions and laws of parent society so as to adapt them to cultural differences.

Western political tradition, surprisingly, kept quiet through time about these problems. The biggest number of organized political communities through history was multi-ethnic, which is a testimony of the pervasive conquest and trade in broad scale when it comes to human activities. In order to realize the ideal of a homogeneous state community, throughout history governments have been the creators of different policies toward cultural minorities. Some minorities were even physically wiped out, either by mass persecutions or by genocide. Other minorities were forcibly assimilated, forcing them to adopt the language, religion and customs of the majority. Others are treated as foreigners and were subjected to physical segregation and economic discrimination by which their political rights were abolished.

In the course of history various efforts to protect cultural minorities and to regulate potential conflicts between minorities and the majority have been made. In the early period of the last century the treatment of members of their own nation in other countries was regulated with bilateral agreements. The contract system was expanded receiving a multilateral basis during the League of Nations.

After WW II, it became clear that there is need for a different approach to minority rights. Many liberals had hoped that the new emphasis on "human rights" will resolve minority conflicts. Instead of minority groups protecting themselves directly, with special rights that they have been given, cultural minorities are being protected indirectly, by guaranteeing basic civil and political rights of all individuals, regardless of their group affiliation. Basic human rights such as freedom of speech and association, despite having been attributed to individuals, were exerted in a community with others, which was intended to provide and protect the group life. Where these rights were firmly protected, it was claimed that there was no need for any other rights be provided to members of specific ethnic or national minorities. After the war there was a general tendency for the promotion of human rights to bring the problem of national minorities under a wider problem of ensuring basic individual rights to all human beings, without having in mind their belonging to a particular ethnic group. The main assumption was that the members of national minorities do not need rights of a special character, or that they should not get special powers or that that they could not be guaranteed to them. The doctrine of human rights is regarded as a substitute for the notion of minority rights, with strong insistence on the fact that minorities whose members enjoy equal individual rights can not legitimately seek guarantees to maintain their ethnic and group rights.

Guided by this philosophy, the UN has deleted all references to the rights of ethnic and national minorities in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In order to settle these questions fairly, it is necessary to supplement the traditional doctrine of human rights theory of minority rights. The need for such a theory has become painfully clear in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Clashes over local autonomy, determination of borders and other ethnic issues have caused violent conflicts in a great part of the region. There is little prospect of establishing a stable peace in these regions, or of respecting basic human rights, until the problems related to minority rights are resolved.

Today the view that it is legitimate to ask for supplementation of the traditional theory of human rights with the doctrine of minority rights is increasingly accepted. A comprehensive traditional theory of justice in multicultural countries should include these as universal rights which belong to individuals regardless of their group affiliation and certain rights differentiated by their group or special status of the minority culture.

The end of the twentieth century is described as a time of migration. Huge masses of people crossing borders which makes almost every country become multiethnic by its structure. That period is increasingly being called a period of nationalism, because more and more national groups are mobilized and confirming their identity. As a consequence, the established rules of political life in many countries were questioned by the new policy of differences. The end of the Cold War, the demands of ethnic and national groups have become a center of political attention in many countries, on domestic as well as on international level.

However, in many parts of the world, groups led by motives of hatred and intolerance and not of justice have no interest to behave toward others with goodwill. In these circumstances, the potential of ethnic and national groups to abuse their rights and entitlements is very large. Yugoslavia and Rwanda are just some of the recent warnings about what injustices can be made on behalf of ethnic and national differences, from racial segregation and religious persecution to ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Because of such and other possible abuses, a particular solution is needed for the minority rights. But it is important to emphasize the limits of those rights. They especially need to recognize two limitations: minority rights shall neither permit any group to dominate over other groups, nor they may allow one group to strive to ensure equality between groups and freedom and equality within groups by imposing pressure on its own members.

The theory of globalization examines the genesis of the global cultural system. Globalization today is understood as a process of creating a single economic, political and cultural space on planet Earth.

It suggests the fact that global culture is brought by different trends of social and cultural development, emergence of global patterns of consumption and consumerism, nurturing cosmopolitan lifestyles, emergence of global sport such as the Olympics, world championships and other sporting events, global spread of tourism, spread of education on global scale, and decline in sovereignty of nation states; furthermore, growth of global military systems, recognizing the world's ecological crisis, emergence of world health problems such as AIDS, organization of world political systems such as the United Nations, creating global social movements, and extending the concept of human rights as a complex exchange between world religions. More important is the fact that globalization involves a new awareness of the world as a single space. Based on all this, globalization has been described as a specific structuring of the world as a whole, and this means increased awareness in a global sense that the world is an environment that is continuously being constructed. Probably the most concise definition suggests that globalization is a social process in which geographical constraints on social and cultural arrangements cease to exist and in which people are becoming more aware that such restrictions disappear.

Today in the analysis of contemporary society and its changes and future, two themes are becoming more prevalent: globalization and its reflections on education. They pose as extremely important, because the knowledge that humanity is becoming a more unique political, economic and cultural space is more widespread, and the knowledge that is acquired by education becomes the most important developmental resource.

Along with the acceptance and spread of the awareness that knowledge is becoming one of the most important, if not the most important developmental resource, and that the development of this resource depends on the development of the educational system. In fact, along with the globalization of society, with the creation of a "world society" and of a planet in terms of a single economic and political space with many contradictions, there also comes the globalization of education.

The problems of education are subject to the review and analysis of many international meetings - scientific, political and other. At those gatherings the existing systems of education are critically reviewed, pointing out their weaknesses and the basic directions of development of education in the future, in the "civilization of knowledge" as the future of education is often referred to. In striving to dispel the shortcomings in the educational system, to adjust its system and content to the social needs, and to move ahead to meet the social changes in 21st century, a lot of scientific research on national and international level was realized, and on this basis several documents were adopted for the direction of development of education, from primary school to university.

In the UNESCO report on education it was pointed at the importance and the role of education in overcoming the contradictions that the 21st century brings. As basic opposites that are brought by 21st century, and in which learning should contribute to education, three opposites are listed: *contradiction between global and local* which is seen in the need to simultaneously be citizens of the world and preserve their own identity; *contradiction between universal and individual*, manifested in the acceptance of the world globalization and in the preservation of personal autonomy and cultural identity of its people, and *contradictions between tradition and modernity*, manifested in the necessity of adapting to new times, new relationships in the global society by preserving the roots of their own historical development.

Starting from the knowledge that rapid changes in contemporary society, especially in the world of labor, cause a relatively rapid limitation of the knowledge gained in schools, and the indications that man needs to study

throughout his life if he wants to learn to be successful in the world of work and active in the socio-political and cultural life of the community in which he lives. Continuous learning throughout life is expressed as learning for knowledge, learning for work, learning for life and learning for sustainability. Learning for knowledge means learning not only scientific information, but primarily mastering weapons of knowledge which, becomes the essence of a meaningful life. For contemporary and future reality the most proper definition is the changing reality which means that the well understood reality of today gives no guarantee that anyone will understand the future. That is why man, in order to understand the changing reality, would have to conquer the means of cognition. Because of it a person can promote his/her expertise and successfully communicate with the environment.

To that end, education should help young people to accept the European identity, but when doing this, they should not be deprived neither of their belonging to the world, nor of their own national, regional and local roots.

Education for the 21st century is a document adopted by the representatives of the European round table and by the rectors of European universities Association. This document - report exposes the vision for the development of education based on responses received from questionnaires sent to various industrial and other business organizations and from the experiences of the representatives of a lot of universities. It starts by pointing out that European society is faced with social and economic problems that are complex and so intertwined that they cannot be easily solved. In the light of such understanding of current social problems and ways of their solving, education has a special significance and education and training of each individual represent a powerful and the only important weapon that is available today.

In essence, as the report highlights, the globalization of economy and politics direct all the European countries toward the economy of knowledge based on highly developed skills and high degree technologies. Based on the results of research based on interviews with prominent executives from European countries in relation to skills and knowledge, the report concludes that there is need to change the strategic direction of development of the educational system in Europe. And starting from the indications that essential attributes of democracy are not just human rights and freedoms, but also their right to quality education which helps the achieving of the development of personal abilities of each citizen.

This approach for an educated and learned society defines society as a society in which learning is accepted as a continuous activity throughout life, in which the evaluation of knowledge is in accordance with the progress in learning, where assessment is not identified as penalty for errors made, and personal competence and team spirit are recognized during the adoption of knowledge. That society is in essence teaching young people to think, not just to accumulate facts.

In modern society there are a lot of international, regional and national projects related to the purpose and directions of reforms in education and some countries have taken, or are taking, complete measures for the realization of these projects, i.e. they implement reforms in education, pointing out the goals they want to achieve with these reforms. Given the fact that the process of globalization of society, i.e. the creation of a single economic, political and cultural space with a respect for various existing contradictions, certain countries that accede to reforming their systems of education should use the experiences of other countries taking into account their own specificities, traditions, ways and possibilities of their own development. That is, the educational systems of certain countries should be open to using the experiences of other countries and to giving their contribution to the global processes of reforming of the educational system.

In finding and creating such a system of education we should start from the understanding that the most important factors which in the context of social change will affect education are: internationalization, development-oriented information age society, development of science and technology and environmental issues. That is, the end of the Cold War has expanded international cooperation in economy and in social activities and culture, so the question of international understanding, education and need for education to contribute to the achievement of the preconditions for such understanding. It will give a contribution in that regard if with its content it develops a sense of understanding of different cultures and understanding that we can live in harmony with people of different cultures. In order to develop such feelings and understanding, there is a need for attendees of various schools to learn to think about different lifestyles, traditions and value systems, not making conclusions and judging them as

right or wrong, but just accepting them as different, and to look for common characteristics, respecting historical traditions and multi-dimensional value systems.

The findings about environmental issues as global problems of modern society, scientifically based, pedagogically designed and articulated, should take an important place in the system of education which is internationally directed and whose concept is created with the globalization of society. The necessity to include these findings into the educational content of this concept of education stems from the fact that the only social space is created on the planet Earth that represents a unique natural space composed of separate systems tightly associated with multiple connections. Environmental education as a component of a internationally directed education should provide information that modern technology, which represents the technological basis of globalization, should allow preservation of the unique, natural system on Earth, and, above all, preserve the non-renewable natural resources without which there can be no life on it. It should be a kind of education that will contribute to the building of a concept of managing the development which will provide economic development not contrary to the laws in nature, i.e., that does not endanger the natural framework of life. In short, such education should provide acquiring of knowledge about the relationships in the global nature of environmental problems, globalization of society, universality of science and scientifically based technologies, and the necessity to solve the environmental problems in contemporary society which is increasingly becoming "a global society."

In the context of this approach, environmental education should be considered from the point of the need in modern society to unite the development of scientific knowledge with the requirement to humanize the position man as a civilizational imperative. That merging or, better put, interpenetration of science and humanism should serve to achieve the status of man as a builder and the one for whom it is built. This approach to knowledge of the laws of nature should serve to understand nature, and help not to make the overpowering of nature in conflict with the need to preserve it as a framework of human life. In this sense, environmental education should contribute not only to the reorientation of changing of science, but also to keeping account of planetary needs.

The relationship of globalization and education should be viewed from the point of the importance of education for the development of democratic relations in some societies as well as in united humanity – "global society." The role of education in the democratization of a society, in the developing and strengthening of a personality, in the development not only of his/her capabilities but also of the need for participation in political democratic relations; it should be considered in the context of social relations in which education is realized, as well as the political history and tradition of certain countries. This is so because some countries have very specific, sometimes just their specific political history, which affects not only the ways of political action of groups or individuals but also the needs for political engagement. Participation in political life, in deciding about public affairs, i.e. in democratic relations, gives positive results only if those who engage in democratic political relations feel it necessary. And this need in individuals and groups exists only if individuals perceive it as part of their conscious expression of their originality as free beings, and when their behavior is respected and appreciated. If this is not the case, then democratic relations and participation in them is just an expression of manipulation of people, and an attack on their dignity as citizens, as free and valuable beings.

However, the indication of the role and importance of education in the democratization of society should not be understood only as a call to educational institutions to take on the role of institutions for political education, especially not for one-sided political indoctrination, i.e. for directing their attendees to choose one of the political options in a pluralistic society. The role of education in the democratization of a society should be understood in the sense that there attendees of different kinds and levels of educational institutions form and develop as persons who are able, with their acquired education, to evaluate specific political options in a pluralistic society from the point of view of the opportunities offered to achieve a position as human as possible for any person.

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