The Role of Education in Fostering Social Cohesion

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Abstract: The process of education is an important phenomenon that affects both individuals and the society as a whole. As a result, there is a dialectic of unity and interdependence between individuals and the society. Thus, individuals with high social qualities are part of a developed democratic society. In this sense, strengthening the educational system remains the duty of every citizen and the governing bodies of the democratic system itself. Furthermore, free and fair elections determine the basis of a state and the democratic nature of a pluralistic community. Therefore, a cultured society requires a developed democracy. For this reason, the primary duty of a state is to educate its citizens on democratic principles and norms. The sphere of education and the acknowledgment of shared values are greatly reliant on educational institutions at all levels. The fruits expected to be obtained in the field of education cannot be enjoyed in a short period, but need to mature at their own time. The perspective of the educational processes of the new generation should include the period of life in kindergartens, the lower learning cycle, gaining a higher grade in secondary and professional schools, as well as their attendance in university auditoriums. The following research paper discusses a detailed theoretical analysis of the interdependence and reciprocity of education and democracy. It also explains some concepts and views of contemporary researchers and philosophers on the role of education in the process of social cohesion and integration.

Keywords: Process of education, citizens, democracy, society, and school institutions.

Introduction

When it comes to the role and importance of education in human society, we think of the air that we breathe every second of our lives. In particular, this issue is closely related to the values of cultural plurality. In this work, it is necessary to present the aspects of intercultural education and globalism in a democratic society. The reason is that the phenomenon of globalism is not only about the form and manifestation of multicultural education, but also the essence of its content. The premises and conditions of the development of a society in our era transform the phenomenon of globalism into a format on a world scale, especially in the fields of technology and sociology. However, in addressing these issues, the field of philosophy does not exclude or isolate itself in the ivory tower; rather, it always occupies the top position in the social development hierarchy.

In the circumstances of the phenomenon of global culture, which is promoted by most developed capitalist countries and with a solid democracy, the issue of multicultural education may not find ground and reach the levels of these countries. Every new phenomenon in human society is born and develops in the "sea" of dialectical affirmations and denials. It does not take place immediately, but gradually replaces old and traditional values with newer ones. Howevr, the phenomenon of globalism is bound to pass through this path. Moreover, the promotion of freedom, tolerance, and compromise in modern society continues to be crucial components of intercultural dialogue. Thus, the level of human rights and freedoms constitutes the essence of democracy in a pluralistic society. Citizens should be educated on how to deal with social problems through citizenship and tolerance, as well as on reaching compromises for the good of society.

In the cohesive essence of democracy, there is a misunderstanding and confusion over the concepts of rights of the majority to rule and the rights of the minority to resist and oppose towards the "dictatorship majority". However, the democratic form of government is a common asset for both the majority and the minority. Moreover, through their decisions both of them may contribute to the growth of the democratic social development.

Political rotation through free elections supports fair competition and the implementation of the will of the people. Therefore, in the first part, the paper focuses on the treatment of education for democracy and the problems that appear in the society. The second part focuses on the importance of intercultural education in the era of globalization. In the conclusion, the paper deals with personal views based on the above- theoretical and research problems.

The Methodology of the Research Paper

The methodology of this paper presents a research diagram of interpretation and argumentation of concepts on education for democracy as a process of social cohesion. Enriched literature and theoretical materials are used for the writing of this paper. With this methodology, the most essential problems related to the role of education in a pluralistic society are selected, relying on philosophical views.

The use of relevant literature served to highlight issues related to the concept of education for democracy in all of its dimensions. The essence of the study raises several important questions and hypotheses, which are addressed in the paper. The paper concludes with personal views based on judgments, analysis, and criticism, alternating between a literature review and personal experience.

Education for Democracy in a Pluralistic Society

History has shown that democracy is the best system for allowing people to live their lives in freedom and with equal rights under the law. However, its demands for even more rights in daily life, as well as for active and

involved participation, demonstrate the necessity of its constant development. The protection of freedom and fundamental human rights, as well as peaceful cooperation and tolerance among citizens, continues to be the core goals of education in a pluralistic society. The highest understanding of freedom is strongly tied to accepting responsibility for one's own destiny and that of the community, rather than being freed from such obligations. Even in a quick look at the early concepts on democracy that the regimes applied in the city-states of ancient Greece, it is easy to notice the essential changes that they have undergone in form and content.

The concept of democracy in our era has been enriched, revised, and elaborated in accordance with the requirements of the time and of the people themselves. The term "democracy" today is used not only to characterize the political relations of a certain society, but also to evaluate its governing form and the characteristics of the political system. The concept of democracy is based on the principle that people as a whole constitute the basis, the foundation on which the entire political life of a society is built. People are the only source of power, while their interests and well-being constitute the ultimate goal of governance. Power must be a product of the free will of the people, where they are free to make the political choice as they want. Thus, freedom is a necessary condition of the concept of democracy. From this point of view, democracy can be defined as a system of ideas, practices, and modes of action that lead to the institutionalization of freedom.

The assessment by Abraham Lincoln about democracy as "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people" marks the formulation of a concept and practice of democracy in our modern era. This formulation turns into a "radioscope" of the standards of demands for freedom and democracy in the society. The theories and practices of the mastery of freedom and democracy have eternal "enemies"; the desire for rule, social inequalities, cultural and economic differences, and other inequalities which Rousseau also pointed out in his book "The Origin of Inequality among People": "Such was the beginning of society and laws, which gave new constraints to the weak and new powers to the rich, permanently embedded the law of property and inequality, by a violent appropriation and brave, took an irrevocable right, and, for the sake of the gain of some ambition, finally subjected the whole human race to toil, slavery, and misery" (Rousseau, 2008, p. 109-110).

The level and existence of freedom and democracy are the active participation of citizens who play an indispensable role in the construction and protection of its fundamental values. Democracy remains the implementation and embodiment of freedom in the lives of people. On the basis of the existence of freedom and democracy, the political systems of power are established such as the executive, legislature, and judiciary. The term "citizen" includes a broader representation of rights and duties in a democratic society. The exercise of rights by anindividual means the responsibility that he has to protect and strengthen these rights, for himself and for others. The dialectical unity of rights and duties in a democratic society is expressed in the fact that, on the one hand, individuals enjoy the rights to freedom of speech, assembly, and freedom of religious belief, which testify to the level of a democratic society. On the other hand, rights are not the personal property of individuals, tools, or "expressions of freedom" to oppose the majority.

In a democratic system, citizens take their own governance into their own hands. Their education with the

highest human values is closely related to the acute social problems they face. Achieving a high level of their ideology and world understanding also ensures a society at the height of time. In almost every historical period, several viewpoints have appeared on the concept of freedom, about the role and relationships that individuals and society have with freedom, as well as how they gain from its power in daily life. Therefore, freedom, as a natural right, is the essence of thinking according to individual beliefs and free will. The Declaration of Independence of the American Revolution of 1776 emphasizes: "All men are created equal...they are endowed by their Creator (God) with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." (Taipllari, 206 P.53).

In the context of the constraints that all three branches of government, such as the legislative, executive, and judicial face, the concept of freedom serves as a crucial barometer of the development of a society and its people. Nietzsche, a German philosopher, enriches, deepens, and broadens our understanding of freedom. "The will to be responsible for oneself, to distance and separate oneself from the influences of others in order to achieve a unique independence of thinking on existence is defined as freedom" (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 28). In a more practical sense, freedom is nothing more than the desire to fulfill and realize one's needs and desires in relation to the possibilities and realities of one's life. Rousseau believed that a good government should have as its fundamental aim the freedom of its citizens. According to him, the best form of government in modern society is the one that affirms the individual freedom of all citizens within the limitations inherent in civil society. Rousseau concluded that: "As long as property rights and laws exist, people can never be completely free in a modern society" (Rousseau, 2008, p. 95).

He strongly believed in the existence of certain principles of government that, if put into practice, could secure for the members of society a level of freedom that at least approximated the freedom enjoyed in the state of nature. In his philosophical works, Rousseau describes the necessary principles that must apply to social institutions, at the top of which he defines the preservation of "natural" freedom. Therefore, he emphasized: "To give up personal freedom means to give up one's own quality as a human being, from the rights of human nature, even from one's duties" *(Rousseau, 2008, p. 195)*. Thus, in the meantime, he inextricably linked his concepts of freedom and democracy with the establishment of a legal state, i.e. the law, which, above all, is the result of the general will, where the general will is also the desire of the sovereign, of the people. Showing a special appreciation for the law as a sacred value, Rousseau would extend it as a whole to all the power of laws, the prohibition of whose action he justifies only when it comes to saving the homeland. In this case, public security is supplemented by a special act. The politicians of early times, said Rousseau, always talked about morality and virtues, while the one in modern era talk only about trade and money.

Democracy is fueled by the love of knowledge and debates about the social problems of society. Obscurantist and dictatorial attitudes towards the voice of the people and the stages of the working masses are inappropriate and deadly for a democratic system. In his book "Two Treatises on Civil Government", John Locke presents the need to implement and protect the law of nature, which derives from the logic of God, according to which this law provides people with the most basic rights, such as: " the right to live, the right to property, and the right to

education". But without being able to avoid its dualistic nature, where, on the one hand, it embodies a philosophy dear to humanity, according to which many wounds of human society would be healed, on the other hand, it remains vulnerable and uncertain. Although the concept of democracy is imagined as a philosophy and mentality between a "heavenly" dream of a just and humane society, if it is not fought every day for its construction, it can remain hypothetical and only "a beautiful dream on paper."

Intercultural Education as a Process of Social Integration

Today's modern world is characterized by the speed of communication among people, state and private institutions, cultures, and economic relations of people and different countries. The development of science and technology remains a necessary and comprehensive prerequisite for social cooperation. Communication plays a special interactive and social role in today's modern world. According to Walton, "*Communication is a right for everyone, a kind of life service with two complementary dimensions: to communicate is to express... how I have something to say, and I have the right to say it. Everyone has something to say, and the right to express oneself*" (Wolton, 2009, p. 27).

The American thinker, Martha Nussbaum, inspired by the views of Socrates and Aristotle, emphasizes the importance of education for democracy in a society. One of the main questions raised by M. Nussbaum in her studies includes the formation of citizens with deep democratic knowledge. Nussbaum suggests some essential interventions related to a society's education. According to her, each individual must have the critical ability to see and deal with the problem of education for democracy from a personal point of view, which does not go against the interests of society. She underlines the need to encourage a sense of responsibility and enforce critical thinking through relevant pedagogical interventions. The formation of students' personal skills is necessary. This means a particularly attentive education in literature and the arts, which puts students in contact with gender, race, and ethnicity and directs them to intercultural experience and understanding.

Thus, according to Nussbaum's learning theory, there are three aspects of the educational formation of the society in today's world:

- The ability to think critically, which includes the development of one's own critical thinking in solutions and actions. Thus, it requires a deeper individual reflection on problems and reality.
- The ability to feel part of humanity, which is about the idea of a broad understanding of society, which tends to the needs of all human beings with common interests and needs, and which allows them to cooperate together.
- The capacity for narrative imagination, which takes into account a society's perspective through the lens of empathy and the ability to imagine through the "stories of others." This allows each individual to get to know and interact better with each other.

Rapid social development dynamics have an impact on social cohesion. This requires the creation of mechanisms that balance social interests through different forms of education. Another American thinker, John Dewey, emphasizes the importance of representative democracy, which realizes the participation of all individuals.

"Representative democracy is said to be realized when it ensures freedom of expression and the protection of universal rights" (Dewey, 2003, p. 11). To overcome social obstacles, which can turn into serious problems, Dewey recommends advanced forms of liberal education, linked theory and practice. Dewey's intention was to make education a priority and a desire for children, believing in quality education to make society more developed. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his book "On Education," emphasizes that people are educated not only on the basis of specific elements but in a set of ways such as: the arts of speaking, at school, college, and society, which make the difference among people, the human world itself, and the other living things that surround us.

Triumphing over everything in life remains the main goal of man. He is always in search of achieving his goals, despite the obstacles he faces. Man considers the world and nature to be his teachers, including the moon and sun, as well as plants and animals. When we see these phenomena and are surprised by them, we should not be in a panic because we will become slaves to nature. In these circumstances, school is considered the most important institution in which pupils and students, as future citizens, receive basic knowledge about society and coexistence among themselves through intercultural education. The word "intercultural" is composed of the Latin "inter", or "between," and "culture." This means that education takes place between two or more cultures. The term "culture" refers to language, customs, manners, holidays, morals, religion, music, medicine, clothing, food, etc.

Intercultural education enables people to understand the behavior of other people who belong to another culture even though it is different from their own. This is achieved through coexistence with other cultures, which are no longer "foreign" and unknown. People must meet each other with respect, appreciation and tolerance in order to develop an equal community. The coexistence of different cultures aims to lead to a common point and the creation of conditions for living side by side with each other.

The goal of intercultural education is to create a dialogue between different cultures as well as to develop an openness to another culture, which makes you willing to learn from the other culture and accept it in your life. It is not only important to discover and live the similarities of different cultures but also to observe the differences or contrasts as enrichment and expansion of personal and social horizons. This creates the possibility of a society composed of different cultures that can live together in peace and harmony with each other.

Intercultural education constitutes the healthy ground for the coexistence of many cultures of different people. In essence, with intercultural education, we will understand the recognition and acceptance of the cultural traditions of other people. For this reason, intercultural education remains the protection and development of the highest human values, as well as equality and the right to live with human dignity. Education includes the

worldview related to the way of thinking as well as the feelings and actions of individuals in a society. In addition to the tendency for intercultural coexistence, today's societies are also aware of the existence of worldview differences and the fact of being different. The educational system tends to focus on the multicultural character of the society towards which we are moving. Such a request effectively realizes intercultural education.

Intercultural education and multicultural education are inseparable from each other, which require the deepest knowledge of national historical-cultural traditions for the achievement of exchanges and quality relations. In this sense, both forms of education play the role of providing the basis for the magnificent edifice of coexistence among people. People can learn from each other only when they have mutual differences. The most efficient tools remain mutual respect, knowledge of each other's cultures, and coexistence in peace, understanding, and tolerance. Understanding and living in peace and harmony begins in the cell of the society, which remains the family. Stella Ting Toomey an American researcher underlines: "People in every culture are born into a network of family relationships" (Toomey, 1999, p.144).

In his book "Democracy and Education", John Dewey discusses two basic principles regarding education. The first principle includes the concept that: "General Education for all at a high level serves as a basis for Democracy as a way of life"; the second principle is: "Living together in modern society requires public exchanges, and this is not possible without educated citizens" (Dewey, 1966, p. 110-111). Through these two principles, Dewey advocated education that believed people should understand and shape creatively and humanely these unstoppable changes. Dewey believed that American democracy was a process of continuous development. The main components of this developing process of American democracy, according to him, were mainly the citizens, both in their public and private roles. This process is necessary if we want citizens to become part of democracy.

Dewey underlined as well the specific feature that democracy should embody, which, according to him, should be a form or way of life. Democracy should be a part of everyday life, even when people are unhappy with their government. Dewey was very realistic and a predictor of complicated situations that could appear in the system of democracy. According to Dewey, the theory of democracy refers to a form of life where different groups can live together peacefully, share public interests, make wise decisions, and be able to adapt intelligently to new situations. People live in a common community and share with each other a lot of values, and common life. In these circumstances, communication among them remains the most useful way. Communication not only promotes active participation in the strengthening of relations in a society but also cements them more and more. As an old popular proverb states: "Near the eye, near the heart, far from the eye, far from the heart". "Sometimes a book or a letter makes human ties closer among those who live far apart than they can be among people who live in the same house" (Dewey, 1964, p. 8)

An important place in intercultural education is occupied by the presentation of the phenomena of globalism and transition in post-communist societies, as it happened in Albanian society. Globalism cannot even exclude the

format of culture on a world scale, both in the technological and sociological fields, without excluding the field of philosophy, which can never be closed in the ivory tower but remains as always at the top of social-political developments. The imposition of global culture, especially from the most developed capitalist countries and with a consolidated democracy, may not find the right ground due to the interdependence of a number of developments in other fields of science, culture, and production. Every new phenomenon in human society immediately causes groups for and against it, because it does not immediately take place in their worldview but replaces their inherited values step by step.

The consequences of globalism in a pluralistic society may aim at flattening the values and features inherited from the culture of the people. In our era, it is an obvious reality to outline and formulate the theoretical-practical points of view towards the causes of the failure of the communist ideology and one of the most powerful philosophical currents of the last century, which brought great consequences and changes in today's human history. During this process, we cannot avoid the dangers that arise from solving problems and conflicts through the use of force and violence. The totality of the above problems suggests the conclusion that: "The mosaic of cultural plurality should be treated and nurtured as the greatest asset of human society, which does not endanger any people or nations but enriches them and raises the demands of democracy to a higher level."

Globalization continues to be one of the challenges for human society, but still, we tend to present it as a new spirit in world politics and a progressive phenomenon, with the expectation and belief that it will contribute to the improvement of people's lives. But, we also face arguments that appeal to opposing assessments. This is because small countries are being exploited by big countries for human resources, free labor, material resources, and the ruthless competition for developed technology that these countries possess. Efforts to establish democracy are efforts to organize societies in order to be able to restore new social values and the functioning of the legal state in full harmony with them.

Conclusion

The paradigms of philosophical thought from earlier centuries are transmitted to human civilization by the XXI century's philosophy. It carries a conservative and vulgar point of view, more as a means to an end than as a worldview that equips today's society to deal with the contentious issues of today's world and that no longer reacts to the emergence of new realities. In these circumstances, through progressive philosophical viewpoints, the conditions are created for the further progress of the "cultural evolution" of human society and thus also the philosophical one, for a development that does not follow a straight line. It is contradictory and complex; it preserves and guarantees the variability of views and concepts of different cultures, which feed the contemporary philosophical worldview.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger pointed out that "parties in dialogue would elevate each other." Besides the transition to an industrial society, today's era also creates conditions for the validation of the

philosophical concepts of today's developments in society. The sayings of the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that "Man is born free, but dies enslaved," serve as a guide, which shows the ships the dangers that human society must face. Thus, above all the sciences, philosophy has the greatest potential to unite the world's diverse cultures under the mission and purpose of paving the way for social peace and prosperity. Thus, philosophy as a great discipline can and should create a round table of debate and consultation to find ways of development and progress, not only for some countries and people, but for all people with different cultures, ideas, colors, and races.

Intercultural education will face the obstacles of globalization in the society due to the technological disparity among people and countries of the world, and financial conflicts as a result of the use of raw materials from developed countries. Today's world is changing at a rapid pace, paving the way for a "new" world system through globalization. This is the process of increasing interdependence among different societies, people, and countries.

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