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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AS A DOMAIN OF THE PUBLIC POLICIES IN VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

The present paper describes the background of the policy development of multicultural education in the Visegrad countries (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovak Republic). Since 1990s, due to the steady democratization processes of these societies, the social diversity has been reemerged again in this region, gaining special significance at the time of the EU joining and integration. It is stated that changes in society are undoubtedly linked with changes in education. The purpose of this article is to present a context in which the multicultural education has become a domain of the public policies in the V4 with special attention paid to the needs of contemporary societies which are becoming more and more diversified due to the arrival of economic migrants. The author strives to answer the question: should multicultural aspects remain only a theoretical approach to the education or should they be within the domain of the public social cohesion policy

Keywords*: multicultural education, the Visegrad countries, public policy, migrants, multicultural society.*

The Visegrad four countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Hungary) historically were the territory of coexistence of diverse ethnic groups, languages and religions. In the second half of the 20th century this tradition was abandoned for many years. Not too long ago, the Visegrad states were only a transit region for those who wanted to migrate to old member states, but recently it has become a target destination too. However since 1990s, due to the steady democratization processes of these societies, the social diversity has been re-emerging again in this part of the world, gaining special significance at the time of the EU enlargement and integration. Today here there is a co-existence of various societies, languages, lifestyles and cultures.

One of the most popular concepts of the interaction of different cultures is the concept of multiculturalism. The complexity of the phenomenon of multiculturalism is explained through diversity of approaches and is widely

discussed in philosophy, sociology, pedagogics, history, and political sciences and other fields of knowledge. Due to the limited scope of the article the author will not go deeper in analysis of it. Multiculturalism in its descriptive connotation means coexistence of several culturally identified groups within the common political society [Gordienko, 2012 p.17]. Multiculturalism is a response not only to the diversity itself, but to striking social, economic, and educational inequalities [Blum, 1997].

The particularity of modern multiculturalism underlines the possibility of being implemented in the policy of the Unitarian states with poly-cultural societies. The four Visegrad countries are good examples of such societies. The multicultural mosaic in the present V4 appears to be more complex when the attitude of the majority towards people from different cultural and ethnic groups is being considered. The ethno-cultural and language diversity portray the multicultural societies in the given region. However to be recognized as a doctrine there should be a concrete legislative aspect on multiculturalism declared in the state policy towards the civil rights, human dignity and well-being of all the citizens despite of their ethnicity, race, language. The education of citizens is of great help in this respect. Historically education has been used to promote dominant ideologies. Educational establishments are the grounds for development of the attitudes towards one's own and other groups, as well as towards civil society and public life in general.

The educational institutions of the V4 region have started introducing multicultural education as the borders were opened after 1990, and the consequences of which were the arrival of economic migrants and of some refugees mostly from Ukraine, Belorussia and Russia, but also from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Chechnya [Visegrad insight, 2012]. In general in Eastern Europe, intercultural education has emerged and developed since the 1990s, only after the collapse of the Soviet system, and has a particular connotation [Kozma, 2003; Genov, 2005]. Representations of ethnic groups in Central and Eastern European education are clearly influenced by the access to power and political self-representation of the groups themselves, and only the histories of the most powerful groups are represented in the curriculum [Kozma, 2003, p.38], mostly with the intention of protecting a canonized form of language and culture, and strengthening the ethnic identity of the majority

As it is known from international literature multicultural education is a multifaceted concept (Lynch, 1986; Banks& Banks, 1989; Hernandez, 1989, May, 1999) that plays a crucial role in a preparing young people for living in a society where they will meet people from different nations, ethnic groups, races, religions, as well as people with different lifestyles and value systems. It commits education institutions to providing opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes and participate successfully

in our culturally diverse society. On the political level education can be used as a vehicle for changing society or to prepare students to adjust to changing social and political ideas and relations [Goodson, 2005].

Multiple studies have shown that multicultural policies at the state level play a significant role in the success and effectiveness of multicultural programs in schools [Gewirtz&Cribb, 2008, pp.42–43]. However little attention has been given on the formation and implementation of multicultural policies on the national levels, and this goes far beyond the pedagogy. Surprisingly this important domain of the public policy is not widely introduced and fulfilled in the Visegrad countries. On the contrary, in spite of the attempts of the assimilation and integration policy, the problems persistently exist.

The purpose of this article is to analyze multicultural education as a domain of the public policies in the V4 with a special attention paid to the future shape of multiculturalism much more adjusted to the needs of contemporary societies which are becoming more and more diversified. From the author's point of view the questions are still open: should multicultural aspects remain only a theoretical approach to the education or should they be within the domain of the public integration policy? Are societies gaining social cohesion being multiculturally educated? What role the public policies on multicultural education play in the national debate?

To understand the ways of how the multicultural education is approached in each of the V4 through public policy as well as to learn the mechanisms of bridging the gaps between policy-makers, educators and societies there is a need to give a short description of the migration flows in these countries.

After the Second World War and almost 40 years after the Central European countries were rather isolated. There were several uprising against the communist regimes but they did not resulted in the gaining the freedom for labor migration with the possibility of returning back home [Kozakewich, 1992, p.208]. After 1989 citizens of Central European region started to look for better job opportunities beyond their homelands. Usually their destination places were the USA and as a rule people leave their homelands forever. Since early 1990s the governments of these countries started to promote the idea of "open society" and to open the boundaries in many different ways including the formation of the environment for incoming and outgoing migrant flows. On the territories of the V4 countries there were several emigration waves but mostly they occurred due to economic reasons. Since joining EU, the countries of V4 gave continued tradition of generating the work migration based on the necessity to find a higher-paid job in the developed EU countries. There are big minorities of Polish migrants in the UK, Ireland and Germany. Thousands of Slovaks have sought work in the Czech Republic over the last few decades. A lot of mainly young and well-educated Hungarians seek job in Austria, Germany, the UK,

and other EU member countries [Koucky,1996, p.18]. This has been widely described in the English-speaking press and evokes similarities with all the Visegrad countries, where young specialists in particular are moving westward. The reasons are still obvious — economic reasons. People emigrate in search for higher-paid job and for more abundant social systems. Along with that there is a rise of incoming migrants from the former Soviet Union Republics and not only. There are Ukrainian and Belorussian minorities in Czech Republic and Poland. The Vietnamese and Chinese minorities in these countries add a new culture into diversity mosaic. According to the migrant Labor departments' surveys newcomers such as Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians Chinese, Vietnamese, are not filling the specialized ranks, but are mainly amplifying the already existent cohort of cheap labor, which to a great extent forms the Central European Countries [Portas, 2005]. Speaking about the incoming migrants the situation is similar — people from a low-income and instable economic and social-political situations look for better life and job opportunities.

The situation like this has amplified the cultural diversity in last decades of the V4 countries and has called for definite political measures towards reducing social tension and increasing social cohesion. In this regards the well elaborated multicultural education policy can have an overall positive effect, and by this can contribute to the strengthening of social inclusion. The education reforms in each V4 countries starting from l990s have envisioned the introduction of new solutions that should, in the institutional dimensions, facilitate the development of such policies. These initiatives were benchmarked with the Western European countries education policies, however without cautious reference to national context. As L. Gorbunova states: "…in the context of creative application of the multicultural education policy in different countries there is a need to ground it on the philosophy, which separates and unites all the diversities and specificities of traditions and cultural practices which are based on the fundamental humanity as well on the horizons of its desired global transnational perspectives" [Gorbunova,2013, p.199]. In general the governments of all the V4 countries have undertaken certain attempts in introducing changes in public policy in sphere of education with deviations in each particular country. The principal guideline is grounded on the fact that the division of Europe's labor markets along the dominant ethnic groups and minorities results in poverty, social exclusion, and lower labor market status for the latter. In the V4 countries the educational inequality is a key factor behind labor market gaps between the homegrown and minority populations. Thus, a vital policy imperative here is to prevent the residential and social segregation that provokes educational and other inequalities. Intergenerational distributions of human capital indicate that all-inclusive policies need to address the poverty and educational disadvantages not only of children but also adults. Equal distribution and management in the

labor market has been confirmed which directed at cultivation the trust between indigenous and minority populations. Certain initiatives on introduction of multicultural education policies in the V4 countries demonstrate that this is possible.

Here it is presented the brief outlook of their good practices. Multicultural education is a relatively new approach in the Czech school system according to the publication of general guidelines by the Research Institute of Education in Prague**.** In September 2007 the implementation of multicultural education officially started in schools. One of the implications of the School Act was the introduction of multicultural education as an obligatory part of new curricula in primary and secondary schools. The process of education change of which the School Act was a part of is undoubtedly very complex with many key players and many factors influencing its results. Although 'foreigners' still only represent approximately 3% of the Czech population, their integration has been problematic, arguably due especially to administrative obstacles that effectively generate segregation [Gabal, 2004]. The Ministry of Education pushes educators to implement the school reform, which is supposed to enhance the training of skills and students' preparation for life in a democratic multicultural society. The success of the implementation of multicultural education is very influenced by what teachers think about the subject. Today they are uncertain about how to define multicultural education, about their own professional identity and their professionalism and about what society expects from them [Moree D., Klaassen C., Veugelers W.,2008, p.66]

In Slovakia, there is a high degree of separation of the education of minorities from the education system as a whole, although these systems are under review. There has traditionally been a range of provisions, especially at the primary level, for minority language instruction in either separate schools or optional classes — particularly for the minorities' communities. In 1995, the Slovak language law introduced regulations on the use of the Slovak language that reduced the use of minorities' languages in public, including in education. The government also introduced measures for 'alternative instruction' that promote bilingual instruction over minority languages as the medium of instruction. The government's intention appears to be to reduce the degree of separation between minorities' education and mainstream education in Slovakia [Mitter, 2003].

How did Poland do it? Poland adopted a new constitution in 1992 creating better conditions for the self-identification of minorities. This resulted in changes to provisions for minorities' education. Decisions about the type of provisions offered to pupils from different ethnic communities were largely dependent on the group's size and concentration, as well as its history in Poland. However, because minorities must demand special provisions, usually only the best organized groups were able to secure their own schools or classes in their own

language. Curriculum development and review, selection of textbook writers, syllabus design, staffing and in-service teacher training are the areas where minority associations have participated, working together with the Ministry of National Education. They have also taken part in the preparation of regulatory national minority education-related documents and papers. Legal regulations concerning the educational rights of minorities are not disputed. The Polish law in this respect complies with the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) document, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other international regulations [UNESCO: International Bureau of Education,1995]. Implementation of minority educational rights and the operation of minority language teaching institutions are supervised by heads of regional educational boards and their plenipotentiaries.

In Hungary, the decentralized structure has been utilized to adapt provisions for separate minorities' education and language of instruction, especially where the minority is geographically concentrated. In addition, the national core curriculum

recognizes five main types of programs for teaching minorities: bilingual education, instruction in the minority language, intercultural education programs, Hungarian as the language of instruction with the minority language taught as a foreign language, and segregated 'catch-up'/remedial programs for Roma children [Forray,2002, p.75–76].

The languages of minorities are taught in some schools, and the main focus is to provide pupils from ethnic minorities with an education. In many cases, minorities are taught in special schools, which is a form of segregation. Teacher education is being reformed within the scope of the Bologna process and consistently with the policy of inclusiveness. The Hungarian school system has education tracks (similar to the German one) and a well-developed system of early childhood education. Inclusiveness is therefore played out in a system of highly selective structures, which appears to be a contradiction. The Hungarian Government strives to implement inclusive schools throughout Hungary by financing projects dealing with inclusive education in order to give all children in Hungary the same chances. The challenge is to compensate economical differences, especially differences in the financial resources of schools all over Hungary, due to the fact that schools are partly financed by the local administration, and there is a huge economic gap between the different regions [Forray, 2007, p.121].

The main challenge in Hungary is the integration of the Gypsies/Roma. They are overrepresented in schools for children with special needs because they are often judged as mentally retarded and in schools whose certificates do not give access to university. Hungary appears as an exception in this respect because teaching minority languages is part of the policy [Lisko, 2001, p.37].

Summarizing the above said it should be emphasized that cultural and religious diversity in V4 countries remains a challenge, even if multicultural education is not a new issue in their education policy agenda. However it remains vital to describe and publicize the current state of social, linguistic and religious heterogeneity in these countries and the way it has been managed by the state authorities, policy-makers, minority representatives and civil societies. It is clear that the current movement of 'multicultural education' in V4 is a response to modern social and political and economic circumstances. The success or failure of this endeavor mostly depends on appropriate application of the Western European multicultural education policies with the regards on the cultural characteristics of modern V4 societies and their historical traditions.

Overall similarities and differences of the Visegrad countries' public policies towards the multicultural education are more similar to one another than to other Western European countries on a number of dimensions important to understanding the patterns of introducing the multicultural education policy. The common problems in all four countries are: insufficient devices for quality assessment and control; insufficient teacher education, especially in-service training and little engagement in implementing European policies on multicultural education. A general tendency appears in the four countries: encouraging assimilation (which is not the same as integration) and exclusively teaching the language of the host country. These tendencies

Finally, the V4 public policy in introducing and maintaining the multicultural education needs to be thoroughly studied and compared to the existing EU diversity policies and procedures and further advocacy issues should be identified, looking for a better multicultural acceptance and integration of diversity within the present region. The success of the implementation of multicultural education is highly influenced by what public opinion was elaborated about the subject. There is still a lot of uncertainty in terminology, definitions and attitudes towards multicultural education in V4. And what is more important — what society expects from it.

On a general note it should be said that multicultural education is designed to help the majority to live with immigrants and minority groups who are culturally different, and to support their integration. Another idea is that multicultural education is associated more with the general situation in a globalized world and the countries V4 can not stay outside these processes. Implementation of multicultural education does not obligatory depend upon the presence of foreign students but it rather aims at training students in plural thinking, helping them see issues from different perspectives in a dynamic process of looking for answers. This aligns more to the multiple-identities approach and also to 'transcultural' developments in the international multicultural debate.

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Ірина Сікорська. **Мультикультурна освіта у сфері державної політики в країнах Вишеградської четвірки.**

В даній статті презентовано огляд розвитку мультикультурної освітньої політики в країнах Вишеградської групи (Польща, Угорщина, Чехія та Словацька Республіка), де, починаючи з 1990-х років спостерігається неухильна готовність суспільств цих країн до демократичних перетворень, відродження соціальної та культурної різноманітності, яка набула особливого значення під час розширення та інтеграції цих країн в ЄС. Сучасна культурна різноманітність у даному регіоні є наслідком трудової міграції та біженців. У статті наголошуються, що зміни у суспільстві, безсумнівно, впливають на зміни в освіті, яка віддзеркалює та відповідає на соціальні трансформації. Метою статті є опис контексту для становлення мультикультурної освіти як прерогативи державної політики у країнах Вишеградської четвірки з урахуванням потреб сучасних суспільств країн Вишеграду. Автор намагається відповісти на питання: чи залишаються мультикультурні аспекти освіти тільки в рамках теорії освіти в даних країнах, або вони стають актуальним питанням державної політики суспільної єдності.

Ключові слова: *мультикультурна освіта, країни Вишеградської четвірки, державна політика, мігранти, мультикультурне суспільство.*

Ирина Сикорская. **Мультикультурное образование в сфере государственной политики в странах Вышеградской четверки.**

В данной статье представлен обзор развития мультикультурной образовательной политики в странах Вышеградской группы (Польша, Венгрия, Чехия и Словацкая Республика), где, начиная с 1990-х годов, наблюдается неуклонная готовность обществ этих стран к демократическим преобразованиям, возрождение социального и культурного разнообразия, которое приобрело особое значение во время интеграции этих стран в ЕС. Современное культурное разнообразие в данном регионе является следствием трудовой миграции и наличия беженцев. В статье отмечаются, что изменения в обществе, несомненно, влияют на изменения в образовании, которое отражает и отвечает на социальные трансформации. Целью статьи является описание контекста для становления мультикультурного образования как прерогативы государственной политики в странах Вышеградской четверки с учетом потребностей современных обществ стран Вышеграда. Автор пытается ответить на вопрос: остаются ли мультикультурные аспекты образования только в рамках теории образования в этих странах, или они становятся актуальными вопросами государственной политики социального единства.

Ключевые слова: *мультикультурное образование, страны Вышеградской четверки, государственная политика, мигранты, мультикультурное общество.*