

## **Implementing Diversity: A USA-Israeli Study**

**Hana Bor, Ph.D.**

Towson University

MA Leadership in Jewish Education & Communal Service

8000 York Rd. Baltimore MD 21204, USA

**Tamar Ketko, Ph.D.**

Kibbutzim College of Education

The Teaching Humanities Department

Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences

149 Namir Rd, Tel Aviv – Jaffa, 6250769, Israel

### **Abstract**

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*The human history shows that whenever processes of multiculturalism raise up, the need to be unique and defined resumes too. This paper offers a few theoretical and practical observations about multicultural educational approaches based on pedagogical practices, which have been developed in two academic institutions: Towson University in Maryland, USA and the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv, Israel. Both institutions encourage humanistic agendas and approach multicultural perceptions in education and social studies. These are being cultivated within their specific Curriculum requirements, educational activities and cultural contexts. Several points will be presented demonstrating the alignment of multicultural and diversity pedagogy in parallel academic settings in the United States and Israel. The main idea is to develop educational models for implement diversity as an essential tool against racism and separatism in order to broaden the future teachers' sensitivity and acceptance of multiculturalism among students in academic campuses and schools.*

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**Keywords:** Diversity; Education; Democracy; Multiculturalism

### **Introduction**

The human history shows that whenever processes of multiculturalism raise up, the need to be unique and defined resumes too. This paper offers a few theoretical and practical observations about multicultural educational approaches based on pedagogical practices which have been developed in two academic institutions: The first one is Towson University in Maryland, USA and the second is the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv, Israel. Both institutions encourage humanistic agendas and approach multicultural perceptions in education and social studies. These are being cultivated within their specific Curriculum requirements, educational activities and cultural contexts. Several points will be presented demonstrating the alignment of multicultural and diversity pedagogy in parallel academic settings in the United States and Israel. First, we will outline the concept of multiculturalism in both states. Second, we will consider different cultural metaphors and describe how they usefully applied to both national contexts. Third, we will analyze the unique multicultural approaches of each institution. This researched connection between those two academic institutions is experimental and never done before. By taking this initiative, Kibbutzim College and Towson scholars and colleagues hope to spur cultural and political awareness as obligated citizens in democratic societies. The main idea is to develop educational models for implement diversity as an essential tool against racism and separatism in order to broaden the future teachers' sensitivity and acceptance of multiculturalism on college campus and in society.

### **Cultural Metaphors, Diversity and the seeds of the "Salad Ball" method**

In the current age of technological development, there has been an increase in globalization and theories about humanism, equal rights, and multiculturalism. It has also been a turning point for educators to transform pedagogical methods to embrace multiculturalism and to embed necessary conversations regarding cultural identities and relationships into programmatic and curricular considerations. This shift in awareness of multiculturalism in higher education is particularly important in countries where cultural shifts and homogenization have evolved rapidly in recent decades (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998; Ketko, 2017). Language, religion, beliefs, values, dress, food, and a myriad of other factors combine to create a culture's identity. At the same time, the larger society and the other surrounding ethnic and religious groups can easily affect these factors (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Gudykunst, 2003; Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004). Individual's inevitably cross-cultural boundaries to interact.

As a result, people are been exposed to other languages, ideas, practices, and fundamental belief systems. Historians and sociologists using many metaphors have described this commingling of cultures within a society. The terms "melting pot", "salad bowl" and "mosaic" are a few of the images/phrases scholars have used to explain assimilation and acculturation that results from the impact of one culture on another (Bertsch, 2013). While these metaphors all work to explain the overall effects of such melding, the intricacies of each phrase differ importantly.

Ideally, the "human mosaic" of multiculturalism in any College or university Campus can be a positive and empowering feature. However, concentrating on the mosaic as a whole may result in overlooking the ever-changing dynamic of the unique tiles that make up the society (Batrakina, 2016; Day, 2000). While clear at a particular moment in time, the image realistically does not stay the same because cultural shifts, emigrations, and the melting pot phenomenon, will always work to change the overall big picture image as the individual pieces refocus. Therefore, it is important to consider the human mosaic as a dynamically changing multicultural model. The mosaic metaphor differs distinctly from that of the melting pot, which implies that each individual piece combines with the others to form one whole. In a pot, one spoonful of soup is not distinct from the next. This idea demonstrates that all unique "ingredients", or cultures, have blended to form one nation that emphasizes universality rather than diversity. This metaphor robs each distinct group in the society of its unique cultural, religious, and ethnic identity and forces it into an American or Israeli "oneness".

Critics of multiculturalism attempt to apply the melting pot metaphor and force all unique groups into the "soup" (Bosworth, 1988). In the 17th century, new social theories and ideas have been formed, offering some ways to overthrow the prevailing persecutory monarchies and religious regimes through the utopian idea of community (Cohen, 1985). These theories largely stemmed from the political-philosophical theory of Charles Montesquieu, who created the principle of separation between the authorities, and the operation of a tool of balance and control in each governmental system (Althusser, 1972). Jean-Jacque Rousseau's social treaty underscored the division of power between people, limiting the influence of one group on another by operating tools for justice and equal opportunity and promoting independent opinions. He believed that no matter the will of the majority, a government should work for equality and justice, with equal rights for all (Althusser, 1972; Bertram, 2003).

When considering the effect of assimilation on the rights of individuals, John Locke claimed that when people shift from a natural state to a sociopolitical one, they relinquish some of their natural rights for the benefit of the sovereign power (Cohen, 1985; Robinson & Groves, 2011). According to Locke, the role of the state is to protect these natural rights, no matter the beliefs of the group or individual. Like Rousseau, he called for establishing a social treaty to protect the right of life, freedom, and property, which would strictly control the development of the governmental system. John Stuart Mills focused on the commitment of human beings to the larger society while securing the non-impairment of the individual's rights and interests within the whole. His ideal demanded extra caution when defining the limitations of government and public life, specifically in matters concerning morality, conscience, religion, and society (Bertram, 2003). Similar to his predecessors, Mills regarded the formulation of a basic law as imperative for any governmental or social behavior. He emphasized the expression of freedom of the individual from the tyranny of the majority, any prejudices that would benefit the government, and limiting social standards (Garzon, 2002).

### **Cultural assimilation and the "Melting Pot" process in the USA and Israel**

In both American and Israeli societies, a melting pot exists because of the democratic forces and founding principles of each nation. How has American society, in particular, become the prototypical melting pot? Since its inception, this dynamic metaphor has become a common term among philosophers of cultural assimilation theories. It has proven an inseparable part of both the American and Israeli national identity, and remains a vision for politicians seeking to enable multiculturalism while, at the same time, upholding a constitution that protects ethnic uniqueness (Gorney, 2009). In other words, the melting pot came to symbolize the process of change by which heterogeneous societies composed of people from different cultural, social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds combined to form a new democratic society.

The various cultural groups within the geographical region shifted from existing as disparate entities into integrated communities in order to blend and form a more homogenous society. Throughout the history of these two nations, various ethnic groups have constantly interacted and influenced each other by forming partnerships, learning from one another, adopting practices, altering belief systems, and adapting ways of life as a consequence of living side by side. By reshaping their distinct cultural identities to blend over time, despite acknowledged ethnic clashes, various racial and ethnic groups have been able to enjoy fruitful reciprocal relationships. The melting pot expression was initially explored by Jean de Crevecoeur (1782), Emerson (1845) and Turner (1893, 1920) as a symbol of the real-world cultural assimilation they witnessed. It was first appearing in a play written in 1908 by Israel Zangwill entitled, 'The Melting Pot'. In the play, Zangwill described the amalgamation of nations, cultures, and ethnic groups in early 20th century as a melting pot (Werner, 1986). Zangwill, like Crevecoeur, Emerson, and Turner, described this melting pot as a white ethnic phenomenon. He focused on European races assimilating with one another but conspicuously ignored the non-white racial groups (Parrillo, 2009). As with society itself, however, the metaphor of a melting pot has come to symbolize more than just the blending of European cultures.

David Ben Gurion, the first prime minister of the independent State of Israel, drew inspiration from the intercultural assimilation that characterized American society in its years of development and appropriated the melting pot term to his Zionist vision for the new nation (Ze'ev, 1999). His ideals led to the concretization of the Israeli experience and the creation of Jewish pioneers based on the ingathering of "the exiles", Jews living outside the land of Israel, back to Israel. Unlike the American melting pot, the ingathering of exiles, based on the intrinsic policy of the government of Israel, drew on Jewish-national ideas based on the Bible, thus shaping the "New Jew" the Israeli prototype, a product of that melting pot (Zameret, 2002). As a nation, the Israeli leaders' goal was to resuscitate the ancient Hebraic Nation as the antithesis of the Diaspora Jews, who chose to live outside Israel and disconnected from their promised land. The Diaspora Jews living throughout the globe eventually represented the reversal of the 'halutzim' (the pioneers), farmers and workers known as "exiles" who came to Israel from around the world to revive the settlement and independence of Israel (Aviv & Shneer, 2005). Nevertheless, not all ideas have been realistic. Some did not and a few did - above the expected.

Concurrent to the processes of internal assimilation, successful, and less successful, demographic, economic, and political changes also constantly occur within a society. These are part of the globalization process. With these changes, there has been a profound transformation in the universal meaning of most worlds' multicultural societies mainly because their diverse processes of unification. Different cultures acquire one another's characteristics in varied fields: adoption of language and symbolic representations, ethical and cultural codes, literary and artistic contents, fashion, food, rituals, media, and the thriving New Age spiritual, medical, and ecological theories (Hanegraaff, 1998). In the beginning of the 20th century, it seemed that Western culture was the dominant culture. It brought out the Americanization in all other world cultures. However, as time went by, people began to argue that this trend was not unidirectional. As proof, they specified the shift of cultural features, such as Buddhism and Islam, from East to West. This process commenced in the 1970's, and continues today with the involvement of the fundamentalist regimes that permeates the cultural mainstream in almost every field (Kumaravadivelu, 2008).

Alongside the traces of globalization, however, recent years have witnessed many cases of glocalization and the isolation of cultures and societies within themselves. Sociologist Benjamin Barber (1984, 1995, and 2012) attempted to explain these trends by adopting the concept of glocalization, that is, a joining of both the global and local concepts, while sharpening the ever-increasing problems related to these isolationist processes.

While many would claim that the ideal scenario is a melting pot society where no single culture, or taste, is dominant, the reality test of multiculturalism fails under regimes that are unsuccessful in preserving democratic principles, leaving individual freedoms in no-man's-land. If no taste, or culture, is indistinguishable from the next, then no culture has maintained its self-identity and cannot contribute its benefits to the whole. In Barber's view, America is the country that, above all others, leads us in the direction of globalization.

Supporters of the 'salad bowl' theory argue that the melting pot approach is an intolerant tool that forces people from minority populations to abandon their culture to integrate into the mainstream society. They encourage an embrace of multiculturalism, in which each distinct culture maintains its identity and sense of self in an authentic way.

Salad bowl critics, however, claim that immortalizing multiculturalism will destroy the making of a social fabric, due to ethnic and economic separation, which created the sociopolitical perception in the first place. This may lead to an intensification of separatism and animosity between ethnic groups, and propel the cultivation of xenophobia, exacerbating poverty political-ethnic tension, crime, and terrorism. Supporters of the melting pot policy encourage a controlled and gradual care of immigrants based on assimilation. They suggest that this approach will prevent most of the above-mentioned problems and enable minority populations to assimilate, leading to fuller integration rather than rejection (Horowitz, 1981). With a more complete blending of core beliefs, values, and ways of life among diverse cultures, some scholars and politicians believe it is easier for national leadership to remain committed to democratic fundamentals and concretize them in the best possible way (Siroky & Cuffe, 2015).

One issue often arises in discussions of multiculturalism and diversity. Humans tend to make decisions about racism and "otherism" based on morals. However, there is a fundamental dilemma for democracy. Democracy has serious issues with otherness and multiculturalism. These issues go directly to the heart of numerous problems, which are actual today in Europe (Penninx et al., 2016). The way America has dealt with these issues about comprising immigrants from all religious and ethnical global communities may suggest ideas to deal with multiculturalism in a democracy in Europe or elsewhere. Continuing this line of thought, there are those who regard the involuntary assimilation present in these cases as the source of potential peril. The price for each cultural, social, and political synthesis is the blurring of cultural distinctions and borders and a loss of cultural identity for individuals. Crossing cultural lines in forbidden places can threaten the cultural identity of individual groups at an existential level in a wholly negative manner, from a moral standpoint. In his book, *The Disuniting of America*, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote the following: "The cult of ethnicity has bad consequences and will turn the American Melting Pot into a Tower of Babel. The bonds of national cohesion are fragile enough already" (Schlesinger, 1992: 22). In his view, even in the melting pot of America, there are limits as to how far the compass of multiculturalism can extend. How much difference can we absorb and remain democratic? Even for a good liberal multiculturalist, there is an awareness that every democracy has limits somewhere (Schlesinger, 1992).

The idea of multiculturalism grew as an alternative response to the problem of the melting pot and total assimilation. The difference between a salad bowl and a melting pot may have more to do with perception than reality. The combination of tastes and the disassembly of materials carried out solely in the mouth of the taster. In other words, the overall effect depends solely on those experiencing the scenario, especially in Europe in the last decade. This change is based on a desire to exhibit tolerance toward millions of immigrants from Asia and Afrika, and by doing so, placing other countries in an embarrassing situation, bordering on the catastrophic as the two antithetical approaches often clash (Rawls, 1971; Huntington, 1996; Bawer, 2006;).

### **The Threat of Multiculturalism in the 21th Century**

Unresolved tension has always existed in diverse societies. The underlying question present throughout the history of the nation is whether diversity and multiculturalism are detrimental or beneficial to American society as a whole (Wattenberg, 1990; Railton, 2014). According to Vincent Parrillo (2012), multiculturalism is neither new, nor does it pose a threat to society; rather, it is the "core value of the American Dream." Multiculturalism allows people to live in America without having to hide or sacrifice their beliefs, religions, culture, or ideology, and proves enticing for immigrants from around the globe. Historian Ben Wattenberg (1990) sees the U.S. as the "first universal nation," but explains that this universality is ever changing.

It is obvious that in the Middle East and in the U.S., demographic changes, social and cultural mobility in recent decades, and cultural diversity have significantly exacerbated social tensions. Globalization is understood not only as a process of economic integration through trade, a direct foreign investment, or as the rise of financial instruments and multinational corporations. It is rather the worldwide dissemination of cultural values and social practices (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). However, the tension between the reality of diversity in these nations and an abstract ideal of universality may be interpreted in several ways. Some believe that varying cultural groups should share values that they may draw upon in order to avoid conflict. Others may question whether such common values are compatible with the reality of distinct ethnic, racial, and religious groups coexisting within the same geographical region (Reisch, 2008; Setiloane, 2016). The reality of whether racial groups within the same society hold fast to their unique identities or shape and change as a result of interactions with each other often comes down to a matter of perception (Parrillo, 2009). These layers of perception must be unraveled to learn how to harness both the positive and negative effects of cultures commingling over time and apply progressive and culturally sensitive programmatic and curricular strategies in educational institutions.

### **Multiculturalism in the USA and Israel: An experimental Study-Case**

College campuses often estimated as a microcosm of society as a whole. They are been presented as an optimal place for issues of diversity and multiculturalism to be addressed. Tatum (1997, 2017) posits that educational institutions provide the safe, productive, and open-minded atmosphere necessary to begin dialogue. Scholars and educators within these settings must discuss whether to embrace practices on campus that respect universal principles without taking cultural distinctions into account, or to relinquish the universal in the name of cultural diversity. A strong correlation exists between democratic communities and the need to develop multicultural approaches and open-minded attitudes toward cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. Thus, tolerance and empathy are important characteristics in a multicultural and ever-changing democratic society. In addition, these characteristics are significant for teachers and students in different educational institutions and academic campuses. These arguments exist in most Western countries and societies, and often prompt political and educational change with the objective of raising the racial and multicultural awareness of teachers and students alike. This is not limited to professional aspects of teaching or the organizational factors of the institution, but can include all aspects of campus life and pedagogy. First, and foremost, it is the obligation of educators, scholars, cultural mentors, and social leaders to create conditions in which individuals can maintain their own cultural identities and personal views within a diverse heterogeneous community. This matter evokes difficulties in developing appropriate curricula and academic and cultural training programs that include diverse viewpoints and teaching methodologies. The concern for cultural identity within diverse academic campuses prompts dialogue and opens discussions, ideally making room for all voices and social, ethical, theological, and political approaches (Johnson, 2002).

The existence of diversity and multiculturalism in a society creates the synergy necessary for innovation. This is also true in the context of interregional and international cooperation and intellectual communities. Similarly, diversity is essentially in schools, universities, academic teams, organizations, and society if we seek to affect major sociological change (Banks & McGee, 2006). Here are two unique case studies that illustrate these processes at two academic campuses, one in the USA and the other in Israel. Despite the distance, both physically and culturally, between these two academic institutions, they each mirror the other's reality of multiculturalism on two sides of the globe and represent the needs and opportunities presented by multiculturalism in the higher education setting.

### **Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv, Israel**

The perspective of multiculturalism as an asset underlines the most important principle of the educational and social vision of the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv, Israel. The college was established eighty years ago, and from its first step was dedicated to humanistic values. Its ideals cultivate, not only excellent teachers in the arts, humanities, and sciences, but also educators and educational leaders. Considering this worldview, the Kibbutzim College has set up the Social Involvement Unit, an organizational framework serving its activist educational vision. All students at the college are committed to working within social, cultural, and non-formal educational organizations that integrate theoretical diversity studies into their academic courses for both the Bachelors of Arts and Masters of Arts degree programs. This helps to support the practical work needed to become a proficient educator. This diversity experience reinforces in various ways, through involvement both within the college and out in the broader community.

The combination of hands-on exposure to the diverse Israeli society, as well as to theoretical studies related to multiculturalism, accords students with a conceptual language that equips them with a profound awareness of issues related to diversity in higher education. The importance attributed to this essential social obligation, that is, recognizing and understanding diversity, coordinates with the academic and extracurricular activities that are an integral part of each student's education and embedded in the widely recognized curriculum. These important aspects of each student's educational career help to familiarize each gifted future teacher at the college with various populations of students, teachers, and different kinds of schools where they may teach someday, all with distinct pedagogical agendas. In a unique way, Kibbutzim College of Education conducts conferences with participants, including Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, as well as representatives from ethnic minorities such as Ethiopian, Druze, and Bedouin communities, and migrants from Africa and East Asia. In addition, every student at the college is required to participate in seminars on social issues related to the productive cooperation between varying ethnic and religious groups. These projects include online Internet courses that comprise all religions and ethnic groups, courses in spoken Arabic that include the study and research of the Palestinian narrative, as well as Israeli Arab and Muslim culture and its connection to Jewish-Hebrew culture (Arar & Haj-Yehia, 2016).

Since the students at Kibbutzim College of Education belong to a wide variety of ethnic groups and religions, including Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, there is a natural exposure to different social strata: The complex problems that Israel faces as a Jewish, as well as a democratic, state (Katzin, 2015). The country is, officially a state for Jewish people. It grants room, of course, for the different minorities which is crucial for its democratic foundation. Nevertheless, creates clashes from the point of view of Jewish national, political, and military identity, considering the tension and animosity between and among minority groups within the country's borders. The educational programs developed at the college were designed to reduce the all-too-common expressions of racism and hatred among differing ethnic groups in Israel and more specifically and within the microcosm of the college (Adwan et al., 2012). At the same time, however, the college is determined to involve all students in multicultural awareness and internationally studies and programs to empower pluralism and mutual respect among students now and in the future, as they embark upon their careers as educational professionals.

All students of Kibbutzim College who awarded a diploma certifying their becoming a teacher in Israel are obligated to have received this pedagogical message of multicultural respect and awareness (Greninger, 2010; Muskat-Barkan, 2015). They are prepared to carry that message out into society as teachers and educational leaders. In addition to courses and multicultural conferences, numerous efforts made by the college to create international partnerships, encourage joint research, and conduct courses and meetings online and face-to-face that delve into topics related to cultural relationships. All diversity trainings at the college are being conformed for Jewish and Arab students and students from other minority groups as well, like the Jewish-religious students (from Orthodox and Reformed schools). They practice religious lessons and their prayers along the day (each school has a Synagogue or Prayer's room). This generates a joint learning platform, such as the Tec 4 School, which creates an online-shared learning platform on diverse subjects for secular and religious Jews and Arabs to discuss the pressing cultural issues relevant to students and future educators. The Center for Technology, Education and cultural diversity began its activities in January 2005, as a joint venture between three teaching colleges in Israel. (Arab, Jewish, religious and secular). Since 2012, the center has gone international and has high school courses together with other countries. These were some operative examples of the Kibbutzim College of Education regarding multiculturalism, and its democratic values for the next generation.

### **Towson University, College of Liberal Arts in Baltimore Maryland**

Towson University (TU) was established one hundred fifty years ago as a teacher's college. Founded to provide education to students hoping to enter the teaching profession in the state of Maryland, TU still produces the most teachers of any university in the state. TU is part of the University of Maryland system and houses students from diverse cultural, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds. The university emphasizes humanistic and democratic values and requires that every student take courses in the field of diversity, inclusion, globalization, and humanities as core requirements to graduate. On campus, one of the eight main presidential priorities are to encourage inclusion, diversity, respect and understanding of other cultures. Thus, diversity and multiculturalism are not just curricular or classroom concerns. Rather, the pursuit of multicultural perspectives has institutionalized; this is evident in the administrative structure (with diversity positions in both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs) and strategic plan (the university has five strategic goals related to diversity). TU has also established numerous organizations, councils, workgroups, and committees to implement its mission of diversity.

Culturally-focused student groups allow members of one ethnic or cultural minority to bond with students who are similar to themselves, while also providing the time and space for multicultural meetings to occur. Connections between the various cultural student groups are encouraged to allow a safe space in which cultural conversations can be held.

TU has also hired Assistant Directors of Outreach to interact with diverse student organizations, such as the Black Student Union and Hillel. Within these organizations, the students lead programs and activities to establish better connections between different cultural clubs and groups. An example of this interfaith communication is JAM, a student group dedicated to bringing together students of Jewish and Muslim backgrounds to provide a safe space for dialogue and to explore the similarities and differences between the two faiths. This student-led group encourages students and staff to have open minds toward different traditions and cultures and learn about one another to promote positive interactions. In a further attempt to increase the awareness and positive outcomes of multiculturalism on campus, the Student Government Association (SGA) at TU has created a Diversity Chair position in order to represent all minority students. Thus, while diversity initiatives are being discussed broadly, policies in higher education often framed around race, class, and gender equity because of the legal precedence established in the USA and the social movements that have exerted pressure for educational reform (Berdahl, et al, 2011; Chambers, 2017).

The common multicultural and diversity goals and ongoing partnership between the Kibbutzim College and TU will eventually lead to the establishment of parallel studies at the two universities. These mirrored programs will work together to complete and publish research in a joint effort to scientifically examine the similar ways each institution incorporates multiculturalism sensitivity and awareness into campus life and academic programming. In view of a dynamic social and political reality, Kibbutzim College is investing a great deal of effort to create a discourse that includes wide circles of diverse groups, hopefully bringing together all relevant cultural and ethnic strata to reexamine the assimilation processes of non-majority groups and the implications of such assimilations. It is through these conversations that each university will be able to fully understand the positive and negative effects of the melting pot and salad bowl concepts on ethnic identity of college students, and determine which model truly exemplifies the reality and which represents the ideal in a university setting. The assimilation of cultural groups and the effect this has on individuals and groups within the university will allow diversity leaders to plan for improved programming to promote multicultural discourse in the future. In Israel, like in the U.S., the values of democracy and civil rights for all are basic principles in our declarations of independence.

Both committed to multicultural education, Kibbutzim College and TU have piloted a partnership focused on preparing students for multicultural learning and working environments. For several years, the first author has led research groups and student study-abroad programs, including several student trips to Israel, to meet with and learn from the Kibbutzim College students and lecturers. Given the success of this program, a more formalized collaboration is underway that extends to faculty, allowing for a more institutionalized multicultural approach where exchange of ideas can occur across the two cultural contexts. An integrated research collaboration will explore how to encourage and foster positive attitudes towards diversity in two growing multicultural societies. Twelve professors from each university will work in pairs on a common topic (e.g. Ethics and Diversity, Gender and Education, Minorities and Social-Cultural Interactions, Militarism, Patriotism and Ultra-Nationalism and its impact on Education). By developing a common academic attitude and building a collaborative research venue for students in Towson and Tel Aviv, these two schools will create a template for diversity programs in higher education, with wide-ranging implications for Jewish Education. The program will also involve the establishment of working faculty groups at each of the institutions, and allow for faculty exchange and travel.

Multiculturalism must encourage new communities to maintain their identities while leaders foster relationships based on mutual respect and acceptance, despite all the differences and difficulties that may exist. This means challenging racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and so on. It does not mean we should deny their existence on a campus or in society. We should develop positive group identities and adopt customs and institutions that enable positive change and inclusive thinking to emerge. Equally important, students on a university campus must find what they have in common with other students, just like we, as members of the larger society, do the same if we are to take advantage of the distinct benefits multiculturalism can offer.

Today, more than ever, both American and Israeli societies need citizens who are willing to work for democracy and tolerance of all groups.

Fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar has bred hatred and racism in both nations, as the numbers of migrants from elsewhere in the world continue to increase, leading to a concerning trend of violence and prejudice. Despite the racial tensions, violent confrontations, and frustrations in each society that are displayed so commonly in the media, Towson University and Kibbutzim College are making great strides in embracing opportunities to find ways to create intercultural dialogues on campus. The solution is to train campus faculty and students to work, as caring citizens who are sensitive to the issues at hand, possess the tools to act for change, and be confident enough in their own identities to uphold and support those who are different. It is increasingly important, in today's world, for the education system to recruit and train future educators who will understand their roles as actors of social and multicultural tolerance (Phillips, 2014).

### Conclusions and Implications

As democratic citizens and scholars of education, trying to learn from human history and the results of political, social, and cultural changes, we must shoulder the responsibility of training the next generation of educators to respect and appreciate the multicultural societies in which they work. Academic institutions that embrace their diversity must work to highlight basic human values and natural rights and freedoms in order to preserve and empower democracy. It is our duty to understand and demonstrate to our students that the significance of multiculturalism is not in deleting racial, ethnic, and religious identity in favor of commonalities, but rather widening the circle of acceptance and making room for diverse belief systems and ways of life to coexist and benefit from one another.

College campuses can play a major role in incorporating and enabling the existence multicultural advantages, despite the common conflicts and tensions that often exist among those with varying religious, political, and ideological backgrounds. We must recognize and impart to future educational leaders that diversity is a source of empowerment in creating a different humanistic ecology for a better environment, for a more enlightened and moral world. Contending with fundamentalism, racism, and violence demands the courage to work harder so that we may overpower the negative aspects human nature and encourage cooperation and tolerance. For this reason, it is so interesting and important to create a focused learning community that brings together faculty and students as in-situ researchers at both Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv, Israel and Towson University in Maryland, USA.

This joint learning community will develop linked courses and coordinated studies between the two institutions of higher learning that address issues of multiculturalism and diversity on campus and in the world, share educational programs and practices, and encourage its scholarly participants to research and publish on topics most relevant to their immediate cultural circumstance and education. The expected research produced through the joint venture between Kibbutzim College and Towson University will offer suggestions and insights related to the experiences of students at each institution, outline the effectiveness of diversity programs present for students and faculty, and propose ways diversity programs may be enhanced. Given the similarities between both schools, as well as the parallels between America and Israel as it relates to their cultural and social diversity, this cooperative endeavor should prove beneficial to schools and universities in each country and help to further pedagogical efforts in multiculturalism and may be – for a better human existence.

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