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**Diversity:  
The Multiculturalist Response**

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## Introduction

A survey held by the Human Rights Campaign found that more than one in four LGBTQ+ people have experienced discrimination in their personal lives. The World Economic Forum found that nearly 60% of women around the world have experienced gender discrimination in the workplace. In a world built upon the misleading model of a population made up of heterosexual white males, all groups which deviate from this model of normalcy are subject to exclusion or assimilation. Although women, homosexuals, indigenous populations, and other forms of minorities can be granted the status of citizen within the state to which they belong, by being given social and political rights, they are simultaneously subject to increasingly different forms of discrimination. Modern-day discrimination is based on commonly diffused prejudices and biases, which manifest within contemporary societies leading to unequal treatment, restricted access, and denial of equal opportunities. Within this context, multiculturalism steps in; its relationship with minorities being the center of the analysis undertaken. This political theory, in fact, refers to the way in which political communities respond to and attempt to manage the problems of diversity typically connected to multicultural societies. This paper examines the concept of diversity in both its broader and narrower conceptions, respectively clarifying the idea of a world configured in a certain way, based on an understanding of a specific category of people with fixed characteristics. Within this system, people who do not identify with the cultural ideal of individuals, considering gender, race, social class, disabilities, or sexual orientation, constitute the broader concept of diversity. The narrower concept of diversity constitutes the scope of analysis of multiculturalism, being careful to challenge the cultural norms and biases that fuel discrimination. By recognizing and attributing value to different cultural minority groups, multiculturalism has the aim of celebrating all cultures with respect and esteem, and holds that regardless of their background, all people should have the same chances and be safeguarded against prejudice.

The first chapter of the research is going to be dedicated to the presentation and analysis of the normative political theory of multiculturalism. Within this section, I will provide information concerning not only what multiculturalism is, but also its history and main features, alongside its benefits and challenges. I will try to bring out the inherent conflicts and internal divisions of the multicultural political theory and set out some of the main political claims that are associated with those. I will additionally provide insights about multiculturalism's impact on diversity and its introduction of a *different way of dealing with each other*. Lastly, I will mention the role that multiculturalism has had in the influence of individuals, organizations, and governments in promoting a more inclusive and equitable society. The second chapter of the research is going to be centered on

the concept of '*minority*', providing an overview of their social role and importance within modern societies. I will start by generally defining the concept, alongside its typical characteristics and different typologies, and then refer to Kymlicka's categorization of cultural diversities as national minorities and immigrants. After having done so, I will highlight the importance of culture and diversity, and their role in defining single individuals and whole communities. In the second part of the chapter, I will examine the phenomenon of socio-cultural differences leading to marginalization, and the everyday challenges they face in terms of equal opportunities and access to resources. I will provide a definition of the concept of discrimination, its characteristics, and multiple different typologies. The purpose of the chapter is to provide readers with a deeper understanding and clear knowledge of how diversity, culture, and discrimination influence prejudice and shape our experiences and identities.

The third, and last chapter of the research is going to be devoted to the analysis of cultural pluralism and minority rights. In an increasingly diverse world, it is crucial to identify and respect different cultural traditions and identities existing within society. These diversities may include differences in language, religion, customs, and values, among other things. Citizenship is an important aspect that I am going to tackle within this chapter, which involves the recognition and protection of the rights of all members of society. The chapter is going to include an analysis of minority and collective rights, which shall be identified as critical components of cultural pluralism. These were designed and subsequently introduced with the aim of protecting the interests of minority communities from being ignored and marginalized. Examples of minority rights may be language rights, land claims, religious exemptions, and the right to participate in the political process as a group. The last section of the third chapter is going to be devoted to an analysis of the practical application of multicultural policies in countries such as Canada, Australia, and Germany. This will provide for an opportunity to test multiculturalism's effectiveness in today's increasingly interconnected world and its dependence on factors outside of its sphere of influence (e.g., a country's governmental structure and social practices).

The conclusion of the paper will eventually summarize the main findings and contribute to a deeper understanding of multiculturalism and its relationship with diversity and minorities. It will additionally provide some insights into how society can and should become more inclusive and equitable.

# Chapter 1: The concept of multiculturalism

## 1.1 What is multiculturalism?

The concept of multiculturalism, closely associated with the doctrines of ‘identity politics’, ‘politics of difference’, and ‘politics of recognition’, builds upon claims involving the notions of religion, language, culture, ethnicity, nationality, and race. It may be used descriptively as an adjective, to refer to ‘*the social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their original identity*’<sup>1</sup>. Otherwise, it may be used normatively as a noun, pointing out ‘*the strategies and policies adopted to manage and govern the problems of diversity which multicultural societies throw up*’<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, multiculturalism pertains to the challenge of integrating various minority groups into a nation-state that upholds fundamental liberal values and a distinct national identity, while ensuring equal treatment for all.

To such an extent, the theory calls for a deeper understanding of the principles of equality and self-determination, seeking to promote a more inclusive society by challenging the biased cultural norms that generally lead to discrimination. Multiculturalism acknowledges that cultural diversity can enhance a society by promoting a broad range of perspectives and experiences, and therefore seeks to foster communication and comprehension among various cultural groups. By endorsing diversity and confronting prejudice, multiculturalism strives to establish a fair and equitable society where everyone can flourish and realize their full capabilities, regardless of their background.

The approach of cultural pluralism, which set the basis for our modern conception of multiculturalism, had been developed by philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists such as Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Horace Kallen, John Dewey, and Alain Locke. The actual theory though originated as a systemic order only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in America and Australia and then established itself within Europe. As a philosophy, multiculturalism has a long history with countries such as the Ottoman Empire, although its modern conception is traceable back to the 1960s, after the spread of decolonization and the rise in migrant movements, when the concept of difference became a topic of conversation within the social environment.

At the beginning of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, the first countries embracing multicultural policies were the Canadian and American governments. In the first case, policies were adopted with

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<sup>1</sup> Hall, 2000, 209.

<sup>2</sup> Hall, 2000, 209.

the aim of promoting diversity and preserving the cultural heritage of minority groups, especially concerning immigrants and indigenous people. Canada was the first country in the world to implement an official multicultural policy in 1971, proving its devotion to the inclusion of cultural diversity as a fundamental characteristic of its society. In the United States, the movement of multiculturalism was born with the aim of settling disputes relating to the civil rights movements of the 1960s. As a consequence, it embraced a different set of prerogatives and principles, including social justice and equality, wishing to counter the notion of a dominant culture isolating minorities – especially concerning African Americans.

In European countries, the implementation of multiculturalism is much more recent and was prompted by large groups of immigrants from former colonies and neighboring countries. It was not until the 1980s and 1990s, that countries such as Britain, Germany, and France, officially recognized the importance of this approach as a means to address questions and problems related to the needs of different communities. In general, the evolution of multiculturalism has demonstrated an increasing acknowledgment of the significance of cultural variety and the necessity of building welcoming communities that honor and appreciate the involvement of every individual.

Of course, different political theorists have treated pluralism and cross-culturalism based on their values, principles, and assumptions. Liberal theorists have supported multiculturalism as a means of protecting individual rights and promoting diversity. Their strongest argument calls for individuals to be free to practice their own cultures and traditions, without infringing on the rights of others. They support states' neutrality towards different cultures and may resort to different approaches that may be simplified as '*hands-off*' or '*hands-on approaches*'<sup>3</sup>.

*Hands-off approaches*, as provided for by Kukathas, imply a vision of the state as tolerating different minority cultures and their respective practices without any sort of support or promotion of any in particular. Conversely, the *hands-on approaches* exemplified by Kymlicka, call for a more active role of the liberal state in the protection of cultural identities, alongside the promotion of liberal values within them. Dealing with an issue as delicate as that of cultural diversities, the central liberal values mostly discussed are those of freedom, tolerance, and neutrality. How different liberal theorists intend and give meaning to those values translates into their different views and accounts of how the liberal state shall deal with cultural differences.

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<sup>3</sup> Shorten, A. (2022). Multiculturalism.

The multicultural ideal society is one that recognizes and cherishes cultural diversity, promoting equal opportunities for all cultural groups, while encouraging the establishment of a peaceful dialogue among them and their moral visions. Minority members are protected from exclusion and granted the possibility of fully participating in social, political, and economic life. This ideal society is characterized by a commitment to cultural pluralism, and the promotion of minorities' powers of self-criticism and self-determination, alongside the development of their well-being.

The recognition of the existence of privilege ensures that a multicultural ideal society recognizes the importance of social justice and equity, attempting to eliminate structural barriers that prevent individuals from marginalized communities from accessing opportunities and resources.

The idea of the assimilation of minority groups within the dominant culture, suggests that the former should conform to the latter's values and norms to fit into mainstream society. However, the multiculturalist rejection of this notion argues that such assimilation could eventually lead to a process of cultural homogenization, that may result in an additional loss of diverse cultural practices and identities. Instead, the rejection of such assimilation emphasizes the importance of envisioning a society in which members of different communities have the possibility of maintaining their collective identities and practices. This approach calls for the retention of minorities' cultural provenance while participating in the country's national everyday life.

In his most famous work, *"The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom"*, Kukathas understands society as being devoid of a universal sense of morality and consensus and consequently highlights the state's need to refrain from imposing values and standards on people's lives that could influence actions against their conscience. His preferred society is portrayed as an archipelago, *'envisaging a political order made up of different communities operating in a sea of mutual toleration'*<sup>4</sup>. Within the liberal tradition though, we have previously accounted that the arguments in support of cultural minorities and ideal multicultural societies offer different accounts of the role of the state. In opposition to Kukathas in fact, Kymlicka and other liberal theorists including Joseph Raz and Alan Pattern, hold that *'liberal-democratic states should not only uphold the familiar set of common civil and political rights of citizenship which are protected in all liberal democracies; they must also adopt various group-specific rights and policies which are intended to recognize and accommodate the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups'*<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Chandran Kukathas (2003). *The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom*.

<sup>5</sup> Kymlicka, W. (2001). *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*.

The previously mentioned work on individual rights and freedoms, which was seen as broadly aligned with liberal political thought, has been questioned by political theorists standing outside of the former tradition. Liberalism has been often depicted as insufficient in addressing the experiences and needs of minority groups - a purely liberal approach to multiculturalism has been proved to possibly lead to cultural assimilation, with minority groups expected to conform to the dominant culture. Thus, having accused liberals of being unable to comprehend some of the crucial concerns faced by multicultural societies and criticizing their approaches as '*insufficiently egalitarian*'<sup>6</sup>, alternative theoretical frameworks have been proposed, relying on new conceptual resources. The politics of recognition, born from the work of political theorists such as Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth, and Nancy Fraser, emerged as an alternative theoretical framework to liberalism. Against the liberal emphasis posed on individual rights and freedoms, this theory was founded on the claim that '*meeting the vital human need for recognition*'<sup>7</sup> includes the support of collective identities alongside the state's public recognition of language, race, gender, religion, and disability differences. The politics of recognition is seen as being in opposition to liberalism, particularly when it comes to debates around identity politics and group rights. Furthermore, one of the main accusations brought up against liberalism is that it often ignores the ways in which cultural and social identities shape people's experiences and opportunities.

In the context of a multicultural society, the understanding between cultures can often be challenging and discouraging since each individual is deeply characterized by a particular system of meaning that makes it difficult to fully comprehend the importance of beliefs and practices that are rooted in different ways of life. However, despite these difficulties, engaging with other cultures and their ideas can bring about numerous benefits, since '*as individuals, it challenges us intellectually and morally, stretches our imagination, and compels us to recognize the limits of our categories of thought*'<sup>8</sup>. Within this context, the new theoretical approach of intercultural dialogue steps in. While liberalism and intercultural dialogue are not necessarily in opposition to each other, they do represent different ways of approaching multiculturalism that deal with relatively different aspects of the issue. In contrast to the former, which prioritizes the individual over the group, the latter emphasizes communication and mutual understanding between different cultural minorities, seeking to promote opportunities for cultural exchange and reflection.

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<sup>6</sup> Shorten, A. (2022). Multiculturalism.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor, C. and Kwame Anthony Appiah (1994). Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of Recognition.

<sup>8</sup> Parekh, B.C. (2002). Rethinking multiculturalism: cultural diversity and political theory.



## 1.2 Moral relativism vs. moral universalism

The social fabric of a society is shaped by its cultural and moral standards, which represent the ideals of conduct that guide peoples' and societies' actions, measures by reference to which diverse actions are judged. Moral evaluations and conducts are extremely culture-sensitive, meaning that people coming from diverse cultural backgrounds may have different understandings and constructions of the same moral dilemmas. Within this context of an understanding of ethics, especially concerning the question of moral principles' relativism, two antagonistic approaches may be collocated, namely moral relativism and moral universalism. Moral relativism is the belief that moral values and ethical principles are not universal, but rather relative to particular groups or traditions. Moral universalism, on the other hand, calls for the identification of a set of principles and standards recognizable as applicable to all individuals and societies, regardless of their cultural and historical context.

The concept of moral relativism can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophy, where philosophers like Protagoras and Heraclitus emphasized the subjectivity of knowledge and morality. Throughout the years, other philosophers including Friedrich Nietzsche, David Hume, and Jean-Paul Sartre, also contributed to the development of moral relativism as a philosophical concept. However, moral relativism as is intended today is often associated with the philosopher Franz Boas, who developed the idea that moral values and cultural practices are shaped by specific cultural and historical contexts. The original concept was developed at the beginning of the twentieth century, consisting of the idea that *'civilization is not something absolute, but ... is relative, and ... our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes'*<sup>9</sup>. This view maintains that social and ethical standards shared among individuals are a reflection of the cultural contexts in which they are born. Consequently, being that there are fundamental differences among cultures, the moral frameworks shaping relationships within each society differ from one another. One possible way of intending moral relativism is in comparison to motion relativism. *'Morality is relative in a similar way to the way in which motion is relative'*<sup>10</sup>, suggests philosopher Harman, justifying that neither absolute motion nor absolute rest exist. An object's motion or immobility is dependent on its spatiotemporal frame of reference, likewise, it is only possible to judge whether something is morally right or morally wrong relative to some moral framework.

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<sup>9</sup> Dall, Wm.H. (1887). Museums of ethnology and their classification. *Science*, ns-9(228), pp.587–587.

<sup>10</sup> 著者： Gilbert Harman and Judith Jarvis Thomson (1996). *Moral relativism and moral objectivity*. 出版商： Oxford: Blackwell.

Proponents of moral universalism believe in the existence of a universal ethic that applies to all people at all times, regardless of their personal features such as culture, race, sex, religion, nationality, and sexuality. They argue that certain moral values underpin human life and must be respected by all individuals in all circumstances, despite the fact that there may be considerable variations in how these values are articulated and preserved in other cultures. The concept of moral universalism has been developed and refined by many philosophers and thinkers throughout history, leading us to the idea that no single individual is universally considered to be the ‘father’ of this school of thought. Some of the most influential Greek philosophers including Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, and Aristotle, have contributed to the development of the approach. For instance, Kant claimed that moral standards are grounded in reason and are applicable to all rational human beings, independent of their unique conditions or cultural setting. On the other hand, Aristotle too highlighted the importance of universal moral principles, suggesting that living an ethical life is about pursuing the ‘good life’<sup>11</sup>, which is an idea shared by all people. This system’s justification rests on different perspectives that can be traced to a range of different sources, including human nature, our shared vulnerability to suffering, appeals to universal reason, the overlap between existing moral codes, or religious mandates.

Among discussing the approaches of moral universalism and moral relativism, it is possible to outline a relationship between the former and cultural assimilation and the latter with multiculturalism. Cultural assimilation is the process by which individuals or groups adopt the customs, beliefs, and cultural values of another culture. Moral universalism instead, believes in the existence of certain moral principles considered to be objective and binding, which should be upheld by all individuals and societies. In some cases, proponents of moral universalism may see cultural assimilation as a potential threat to individual autonomy and freedom, since it may involve the imposition of cultural norms and practices on individuals who may not agree with them. That being so, in some contexts there may be a correlation between the two concepts, such as when different cultures need to interact and seek out ethical principles and values in common. The connection between cultural assimilation and moral universalism though is more psychological and depends on the combination ‘*with a sense of certainty on the part of dominant groups about the correctness of their worldview, and a belief in their right to impose it unilaterally*’<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Aristotle discussed the concept of pursuing the good life in his famous work, "Nicomachean Ethics", where he explored the nature of human happiness and the ethical principles that are necessary to achieve it. He argues that the ultimate goal of human life is to achieve a state of eudaimonia, or flourishing, which can be achieved through the cultivation of virtues such as courage, wisdom, and justice.

<sup>12</sup> Shorten, A. (2022). Multiculturalism.

Having defined moral relativism as the belief that moral principles and values are not universally fixed, but rather culturally and individually determined, it relates to multiculturalism in its emphasis on the importance of recognizing and respecting cultural diversity. The connection between the two is identifiable in the rejection of the idea of a single and universal set of values or norms that should be imposed on all individuals and societies. Both approaches share the idea that an individual's beliefs and practices are strongly influenced by the cultural setting in which they are developed, and that this diversity should be valued and acknowledged rather than repressed. They equally emphasize the value of acknowledging and respecting the diversity of cultural practices and values. So, while moral relativism does take religious and cultural practices seriously enough to demonstrate respect for other ethnic groups and traditions, multiculturalism does not necessarily endorse it. Among the many reasons clarifying the debate, a crucial one lies in the relativist exclusion of the possibility of '*mutual learning across cultural differences and intercultural dialogue about morality and values*'<sup>13</sup>. While it is possible to identify a shared approach between the two philosophical perspectives, it is important to underscore that this association should not be considered universally applicable, but instead interpreted in light of the particular context and subject matter under consideration.

Drawing back to multiculturalism, as a philosophy believing in the existence of multiplicities of incommensurable values, it can be paralleled with value pluralism. According to Isaiah Berlin's philosophy, human values are multiple and often conflicting, and cannot be reduced to a single hierarchy or system. Specifically, values may be equally authentic, and cannot be compared or ranked in a straightforward way. This approach emphasizes the variety of life's outcomes. It is a type of anti-rationalism that maintains that there is no single, universally accepted response to the question of the best way to live.

### **1.3 Multiculturalism today**

Today, the development of a shared sense of belonging among individuals that are part of a multicultural society is a complex and ongoing process that entails developing a shared identity and sense of community that embraces people from different ethnic backgrounds. In recent years, many Western democracies have been devoted to the introduction of new standards and norms in favor of cultural minorities and multiculturalism. According to Kymlicka, as he claims in his article "*Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: West and East*", '*countries in post-communist Europe have*

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<sup>13</sup> Shorten, A. (2022). Multiculturalism.

*been pressured to adopt Western standards or models of multiculturalism and minority rights. Indeed, respect for minority rights is one of the accession criteria that candidate countries must meet to enter the European Union (EU) and NATO. Candidate countries are evaluated and ranked in terms of how well they are living up to these standards (see EU Accession Monitoring Program OSI 2001)'. The philosopher introduces two processes that are at work here: the 'internationalizing of minority rights issues'<sup>14</sup>, illustrating the modern-day international consideration dedicated to countries' treatment of minorities; and the growing tendency to export the Western model to newly democratizing countries in Eastern Europe.*

Furthermore, concerning the recent spread of multiculturalist policies and trends, Kymlicka has recognized three principles commonly regulating them. First is the advancement related to the idea that *'the State must be considered as belonging to all citizens equally'*<sup>15</sup>, thus no longer intended as a property of the *'dominant culture group'*<sup>16</sup>. The second and third principles mostly relate to the importance of the role of minorities. On one hand, is the realization and concession of minorities' right to participate within a society's public sphere without discrimination based on ethnic identities; and on the other hand, is the awareness of past injustices perpetrated by dominant groups against marginalized communities and acknowledgment of the validity of remedial measures.

Accordingly, in many countries, today multiculturalism has become a defining feature of national identity. This is particularly true in societies where immigration has played a significant role in shaping the demographic landscape. In such contexts, the integration of diverse cultural backgrounds is not only necessary but also desirable, as it enriches the social fabric of the country. Of course, countries adopt different approaches to multiculturalism, but there are some depictable features that political communities seem to share, which are a result of different multicultural theories being *'united in resisting the wider society's homogenizing or assimilationist thrust based on the belief that there is only one correct, true or normal way to understand or structure the relevant areas of life'*<sup>17</sup>. Those common features are illustrated by Andrew Shorten within his work *"Multiculturalism"*, and are respectively *'the common sense of trepidation about the homogenizing tendencies of democratic societies; the anxiety about the propensity of majorities to disregard the fears of minorities about the supposed neutrality and fairness of their shared institutions and procedures; the concern to guard*

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<sup>14</sup> Kymlicka, W. (2002). *Multiculturalism and Minority' Rights: West and East*

<sup>15</sup> Kymlicka (2007c:65). See also Kymlicka (2007<sup>o</sup>: 18-19).

<sup>16</sup> Domenico Melidoro (2019). *Dealing with Diversity*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>17</sup> Bhikhu Parekh (2000). *The future of multi-ethnic Britain*. London: Profile.

*against the marginalization, exclusion, and oppression of minority cultural communities; and lastly the desire to enable members of minority groups to maintain their distinctive identities and practices’.*

In the last decade, Western democracies have witnessed dramatic changes in the way they deal with this diversity. Social thinker Bhikhu Parekh's argument is that a range of intellectual and political movements led by diverse groups such as ‘*indigenous peoples, national minorities, ethnocultural nations, old and new immigrants, feminists, gay men, and lesbians*’, have brought attention to the issue of ethnocultural diversity. Within this context, multiculturalism places its focus on differences in language, nationality, and religion, leaving out differences in lifestyle, sexual orientation, gender identity, social class, and those related to disability. Today, this deficiency has been proven to be costly and eventually led to the formation of objections and critiques. In this respect, it is possible to collocate the essentialist objection to multiculturalism, criticizing the theory for exaggerating ‘*the internal unity of cultures, and solidifying differences that are currently more fluid*’<sup>18</sup>, alongside providing an implausible and naïve conception of culture as a fixed and essential entity.

As clearly seen, while some view multiculturalism as a positive force for diversity and inclusion, criticism of multiculturalism has emerged from various political and social perspectives. Those critiques reflect a series of broader debates about the nature of identity, diversity, and social justice in contemporary societies. The best-known modern philosophical criticisms of multiculturalism are identifiable as the egalitarian objection, the feminist objection, the previously mentioned essentialist objection, and the cosmopolitan objection.

The egalitarian critique of multiculturalism was articulated by Brian Barry in his famous work “*Culture and Equality*”, which argued that multicultural policies can undermine the principles of equality and social justice. Egalitarians hold that all members of society should be treated equally, regardless of their cultural or ethnic heritage, and that any policy that favors one group over another based on their cultural identity is intrinsically unfair. With this being said, egalitarian objections to multiculturalism focus on several key issues, all pertaining to the worry that while multicultural policies may aim to promote diversity and inclusion, they must be balanced with a commitment to the equal treatment of all individuals and the preservation of shared values and traditions. The matter may be exemplified by presenting a parallel between Bhikhu Parekh and Brian Barry on the topic of equality. Parekh, as a multiculturalist, condemns the principle of uniform treatment due to its risk of

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<sup>18</sup> Phillips (2007, 14)

becoming *‘an instrument of injustice and oppression’*<sup>19</sup>. He insists that *‘equal rights do not mean identical rights ... since human beings are at once both similar and different’* and *‘people with different cultural backgrounds and needs might require different rights to enjoy equality’*<sup>20</sup>. On the contrary, for Barry, *‘uniformity of treatment is the enemy of privilege’*<sup>21</sup>, and insists that *‘human beings are virtually identical as they come from the hands of nature’*<sup>22</sup>. So, while Parekh considers the uniformity of treatment as *‘morally problematic’* and potentially *‘an ideological device to mold humankind in a certain direction’*, Barry holds that the only effective mean to guarantee equality is the attribution of equal rights and freedoms to individuals.

Susan Okin’s feminist objection to the multicultural theory criticizes the extensive and exaggerated attention devoted to relationships established between different cultural groups, rather than within them. In her opinion, this has eventually led to the extension of patriarchal cultures and the elusion of outnumbered groups within minorities. Despite being attentive to inequalities and differences existing between cultural groups, multiculturalism disregarded those existing within cultural groups, especially – according to Susan Okin’s article *“Feminism and Multiculturalism: Some Tensions”* – those between the sexes. Greater attention should have been devoted to power relations within groups, specifically to the pressures exercised on women.

The essentialist critique is mostly concerned with the notion of culture adopted by multiculturalism, alongside the tendency of its exponents to *‘essentialize the identities and practices of minority cultures by emphasizing the differences between cultures at the expense of those within them, treating cultures as bounded and relatively homogenous entities, and consequently neglecting cultural fluidity and hybridity’*<sup>23</sup>. This objection fits well within the modern-day world configuration and criticizes multiculturalism for *‘putting moral pressure on individual members to conform to group culture ... imposing a single drastically simplified group identity, which denies the complexity of people’s lives, the multiplicity of their identifications and the cross-pulls of their various affiliations’*<sup>24</sup>. Essentialists argue that multiculturalism fails to recognize the diversity and complexity within cultural groups and that it ultimately reduces individuals to a set of predefined characteristics. This jeopardizes the

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<sup>19</sup> Parekh (2000,285)

<sup>20</sup> Parekh (2000,240)

<sup>21</sup> Barry (2000a, 10)

<sup>22</sup> Barry (2001a, 262)

<sup>23</sup> Shorten, A. (2022). Multiculturalism.

<sup>24</sup> Fraser, N. (2001, 24)

reputation of the political theory, making it a *'reductionist sociology of culture'*, which refers to cultures as *'clearly delineable wholes congruent with population groups'*<sup>25</sup>.

Robert Goodin developed the theory of polyglot multiculturalism, celebrating a specific type of multicultural society that expands its member's possibilities and options available. In this sense, multiculturalism seems to *'provide a broad smorgasbord of mix-and-match options from which to choose'*<sup>26</sup>, in line with Jeremy Waldron's cosmopolitan idea of a life lived in a *'kaleidoscope of cultures'*<sup>27</sup>. Yet, modern conceptions of multiculturalism, such as Taylor's and Kymlicka's, are different and in opposition to Waldron's argument, since they highlight people's fundamental interest in conserving their cultures of origin. The cosmopolitan critique originates from the belief that *'human beings can flourish by drawing on, and experimenting with, ideas from many different cultures'*<sup>28</sup>, thus recurring to an endless number of cultural sources to construct and depict our personal lives. According to Waldron in fact, *'a freewheeling cosmopolitan life, lived in a kaleidoscope of cultures, is both possible and fulfilling ... rich and creative, and with no more unhappiness than one expects to find anywhere in human existence'*<sup>29</sup>. As a matter of fact, he believes that while we do *'need cultural meanings'*, we do not necessarily need *'homogenous cultural frameworks'*.

Currently, in much of the Western world, multiculturalism is being associated with a logic of separation, seen as fostering *'communal segregation and mutual incomprehension'*<sup>30</sup>. Some commentators believe multiculturalism to have retreated, others that it has failed, and others more that it remains fully in place, hidden by the changing multipolar scenario. This has eventually pushed governments to replace their traditional multicultural approaches with policies of civic integration and interculturalism, although their effectiveness has still not been properly tested. Civic integration programs are defined as *'dominant policies of immigrant integration in the new millennium'*<sup>31</sup> which focus on familiarizing immigrants with the culture of their new society. Some scholars recognize them as conflicting with multiculturalism, while others argue that they might *'empower individuals to act independently in their host society'*, identifying them as procedures of *'nation-building in the*

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<sup>25</sup> Benhabib (2002, 4)

<sup>26</sup> Goodin (2006, 295)

<sup>27</sup> Waldron (1995, 99)

<sup>28</sup> Scheffler (2001); Caney (2010)

<sup>29</sup> Waldron (1995, 99-100)

<sup>30</sup> Council of Europe (2008, 19)

<sup>31</sup> Joppke 2017, 60)

*least national way imaginable*<sup>32</sup>. Goodman additionally views them as *'attempts to establish common values and knowledge that can support cultural diversity, not to subsume multiculturalism'*, especially because of their possibility to be outlined in diversity-sensitive ways.

Interculturalism is a philosophy and approach that emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and understanding between people from different cultures, embracing ideas that belong to general multicultural policies. According to the Council of Europe and numerous other exponents, the theory is concentrated on *'building social cohesion and trust by promoting intercultural contact'*. Some proponents of multiculturalism acknowledge the potential benefits of interculturalism, while others hold the view that it does not offer significant value to multiculturalism.

In conclusion, today, the development of a shared sense of belonging among individuals that are part of a multicultural society is a complex and ongoing process that entails developing a common identity and sense of community that embraces people from different ethnic backgrounds. In many countries, multiculturalism has become a defining feature of national identity, however, its adoption has also been subject to criticism, with debates about the nature of identity, diversity, and social justice. Although it may seem that European countries have neglected multiculturalism, Banting and Kymlicka (2013, 579) have argued that *'the larger picture in Europe is one of stability and expansion of multicultural policies'*. Overall, although multiculturalism may aim to promote diversity and inclusion, its criticisms reflect a series of broader debates that will continue as societies strive to find ways to embrace diversity while promoting unity and social cohesion.

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<sup>32</sup> Goodman (2014, 16-35)



## Chapter 2: Minorities

### 2.1 What is a minority?

According to the United Nations, *'an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority is any group of persons which constitutes less than half of the population in the entire territory of a State whose members share common characteristics of culture, religion or language, or a combination of any of these'*. The term 'minority' is thus used to refer to groups of individuals that are ethnically, culturally, or racially distinct from the so-called dominant group, to which they are generally subordinated. The notion of 'dominant group' is generally used – in its classic sociological definition – to refer to a group of people that detains powers, privilege, and social status. It typically applies to members of the mainstream culture, who can exert influence and impose their values and beliefs on the rest of society. In doing so, those individuals use their position of advantage within society to introduce norms and policies that benefit their interests, reducing their possibility of being subject to discrimination, prejudice, or stereotyping.

The scapegoat theory, originating from John Dollard's Frustration-Aggression theory of 1939, analyses the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups, highlighting and suggesting the former's tendency to focus aggression on the latter. In doing so, the dominant group develops a feeling of superiority and control over the subordinate group, which is made the scapegoat for the former's issues. Throughout history, subordinate communities have frequently been made the scapegoats of injustices. Adolf Hitler's accusation of the Jewish community as the cause of Germany's social and economic problems is one well-known example from the previous century. But more recently, similar to this, immigrants to the United States have been victims of scapegoating, in which they are held responsible for complications within the country.

The implications of being part of a minority group vary from one society to another depending on the structure and organization of the social system, and manifest in various forms such as systemic discrimination, and exclusion from opportunities and resources. Members typically experience social separation or segregation from the dominant forces of the society, which result in limited participation in the society's operations and unequal access to its benefits. According to Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris (1958), minority groups share five common characteristics:

1. Unequal treatment and less power over their lives
2. Distinguishing physical or cultural traits like skin color or language
3. Involuntary membership in the group

4. Awareness of subordination
5. High rate of in-group marriage

Owing to those, we can categorize minority groups into four broad types identifiable as racial and ethnic minorities, gender and sexuality minorities, religious minorities, and people with disabilities. Ethnic and racial minorities are present in mostly all nation-states throughout the world and typically include indigenous groups, recently immigrated communities, or nomadic populations. It is the category of minority groups taken into consideration by multiculturalism in its development, where the two concepts of race and ethnicity are often erroneously used interchangeably, even though they refer to two distinct notions. The term race designates a classification of people based on shared physical or social characteristics, which can differ from society to society (e.g., skin color or facial features). On the other hand, the term 'ethnicity' is used to point out a shared culture, referring to the customs, rules, values, and beliefs of a group, which may include a common language, religion, or tradition. In the United States, examples of ethnic and racial minorities may be African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans. In China, the Uyghurs, Tibetans, and Mongolians have faced cultural and religious suppression from the Han Chinese government, while in Australia, Indigenous Australians are an ethnic and racial minority who have experienced forced assimilation, and other forms of injustice.

Gender and sexual minorities include individuals who identify with a different gender or sexual orientation than what is typically considered the societal norm. Those groups typically include members of the LGBTQ+ community, which comprehends those who identify as transgender, gender non-binary, homosexual, bisexual, etc. Gender and sexual minorities do not evolve as homogeneous groups and are usually characterized by different experiences and needs based on their individual identities and the intersection with other forms of marginalization. Gender minorities include individuals who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth, and may identify as transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, or gender non-conforming. Sexual minorities instead include individuals whose sexual orientation differs from heterosexuality and may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, or asexual. In both cases, individuals' expression of their identity may be subject to instances of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Throughout history, individuals with non-normative gender and sexual identities have been deprived of equal rights and legal protections. Over the past century, Western societies have been working towards an increment in inclusivity, while Eastern cultures are only now starting conversations that acknowledge non-normative identities. In addition, despite their numerical dominance, in some societies, women are often regarded as a

minority group due to their history of oppression and abuse. This is because being a numerical minority is not a necessary characteristic to designate a minority group; in many cases, larger groups are viewed as minorities due to their lack of influence. Thus, whether a group qualifies as a subordinate or not can depend on its lack of influence and strength.

The term "religious minorities" refers to a wide range of communities whose religion differs from that of the majority of the population, and therefore seek the protection of their rights. During the past years, tensions related to religious practices and violations of their moralities have led to the breakout of a significant number of conflicts. Because of this, nowadays most countries around the world recognize their citizen's right to freedom of religious practice, condemning any episode of discrimination or hate. In countries like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran though – which have the greatest overall levels of limitations – governments still place restrictions on people's ability to practice their religion.

Lastly, is the category of people with disabilities – both physical and psychological – who make up the greatest minority group in the world, with over one billion people. In this case, individuals are affected by pathologies recognizable as sensory impairment, physical immobility, neuropsychiatric diseases, and other factors. People belonging to this group, alongside being disadvantaged by their limitations, are also harmed by society, since they are more likely to experience violence, tragedy, and poverty. Because of this, numerous nations have enacted laws and policies to safeguard the rights of their citizens, ensuring their proper respect before the law. In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive law that aims at prohibiting and limiting discrimination against people with disabilities in many areas, including employment, education, and public accommodations. Similar to this act, are the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in the United Kingdom, The Disability Rights Law in Japan, and the National Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Mexico.

The different minority categories analyzed relate to the concept of diversity intended in its broader conception encompassing race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and ability. In this respect, multiculturalism only treats and examines the first category: ethnic and racial minorities. In its famous work "*Multicultural citizenship*", Kymlicka presents and explains two different types of cultural diversities, namely '*national minorities*' and '*immigrants*'. The former concept is used to refer to the rise in cultural diversities due to '*the incorporation of previously self-governing,*

*territorially concentrated cultures into a larger state*<sup>33</sup>. The entities incorporated may consist of indigenous people or groups who continue to perceive themselves as authentic nations within a larger state<sup>34</sup>, and assume the title of ‘*cultural minorities*’, located in a multinational state. Immigrants, on the other hand, are identified as the second form of cultural diversity and consist in individuals who have – either voluntarily or by force – migrated to a country different from their own for permanent residence. According to Kymlicka, in cases of voluntary migration, individuals are overall willing to ‘*integrate within the new society, without the desire to reconstruct their societal culture within the host country*’. The author repeatedly tends to generalize on the voluntariness of the phenomenon of immigration, leading to a considerable number of objections carried out by intellectuals such as Tariq Modood, who concentrates on the relation between immigration movements after the Second World War and the dissolution of colonies. In general, the attitude of immigrants is recognized as available for integration as far as possible within the host country.

## **2.2 The importance of culture and diversity – Kymlickas’ and Taylors’ accounts**

The set of our traditions, values, and beliefs, are shaped by culture, which is a fundamental insight into the process of conditioning our sociocultural identity. Especially in relation to a study about minorities and their degree of inclusion within a host country, it’s important to investigate the importance attributed to the concepts of culture and diversity. Kymlicka personally finds culture to have a twofold function, namely that of conferring identity to its members, and giving them context to find the conditions necessary to live autonomously. By conferring identity, ‘*membership gives a sense of belonging – in other words, a safe and stable context that provides emotional and psychological steadiness and helps reduce the chaos and disorientation caused by having too many possible life choices in the modern world*’<sup>35</sup>. This implies that culture provides individuals with a sense of community and a common understanding of history, values, and behaviors that contribute to their understanding of themselves and their cultural origins. This interpretative function enables us to make decisions and select options amongst the many available. Then again, the second function of culture recognized by Kymlicka is to provide individuals with the context they need to live autonomously. Living in autonomy implies individual freedom and self-determination, holding the ability to take decisions based on one’s own values and preferences. In this sense, culture should help individuals in the process of developing their standards and values, by providing them with a standard

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<sup>33</sup> Kymlicka (1995:10)

<sup>34</sup> Melidoro (2019), Kymlicka (2007c:68)

<sup>35</sup> Deveaux (2000:132)

framework and with alternatives to choose from. Taken together, these two functions of culture are seen by Kymlicka as essential for individuals to live fulfilling lives as members of cultural communities.

Being that Kymlicka considers cultures as *'option generators'*<sup>36</sup>, capable of providing us with a *'context of choice that gives us options about how to lead our lives'*<sup>37</sup>, he believes freedom to be linked and dependent on culture, and supports that it *'involves making choices amongst various options, and our societal culture not only provides these options but also makes them meaningful to us'*<sup>38</sup>. The notion of culture referred to, amounts to a specific understanding of the concept, identifiable with the idea of a 'societal culture'. According to Kymlicka, central to a societal culture is the intention of nourishing the freedom of its respective members, as linguistically distinct minorities and indigenous populations do, by *'providing them with meaningful ways of life across the range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres'*<sup>39</sup>. An individual shall be able to form part and belong to one culture or another, not to any culture in general<sup>40</sup>. The relationship between individuals and their societal cultures is then further analyzed by Kymlicka and depicted as a bond that shall be considered a basic social or psychological fact, whose causes *'lie deep in the human condition, tied up with the way that humans as cultural creatures need to make sense of the world'*<sup>41</sup>.

According to Kymlicka however, having a context of choice is not enough, the latter in fact shall be stable and secure in order to ensure effective individual autonomy. Sudden changes to this context might be disorienting and make meaningful choices difficult or impossible<sup>42</sup>. Moreover, in some cases, minority cultures may need protection from the decisions and rules adopted by the dominant ones, since those may prevent them from providing a valid context of choice to their members<sup>43</sup>. In contrast to this strict view concerning the context of choice provided by culture, the philosophers' conception of changes to the *character* of culture is different. In his first major work "*Liberalism, Community and Culture*", he suggests that changes in a community's norms, values, and institutions do not constitute cultural loss as long as the cultural *structure* that provides a background for decisions

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<sup>36</sup> Patten (2014, 93–5)

<sup>37</sup> Kymlicka (1989a, 166)

<sup>38</sup> Kymlicka (1995, 83)

<sup>39</sup> Kymlicka (1995, 75)

<sup>40</sup> Buchanan (1991, 54)

<sup>41</sup> Kymlicka (1995, 90)

<sup>42</sup> Kymlicka (1989a, 167, 169, 170)

<sup>43</sup> Kymlicka (2009)

remains. This claim is to be seen as a way of promoting and protecting members' freedom to modify the character of their own culture.

As for today, numerous thinkers have agreed on the importance of '*human struggles for recognition and a public affirmation of their identity*' arising in response to the pressure on minorities to conform to dominant overwhelming norms. Within this framework, philosopher Charles Taylor elaborated an influential account of the concept of recognition in his famous essay "*Politics of Recognition*", where he combines the recognition of one's individual identity with the aim of encouraging a greater sense of national solidarity. At first, Taylor's argument develops in opposition to the liberalist misleading conception of an independent and self-sufficient individual, and proceeds to build on the idea of specific 'authoritative horizons' – interpersonal relationships, history, and culture – that affect individuals' self-awareness and their ability to interpret the circumstances they are in. A person's feelings, alongside his goals and life plans, shall not be intended as entirely self-generated, but rather seen as an inheritance coming from his social, historical, and cultural background. According to Taylor's analysis, the liberal rejection of said authoritative horizons, jeopardizes their account of freedom, rendering it a '*void in which nothing would be worth doing, and nothing would deserve to count for anything*'<sup>44</sup>.

The concept of human identity, considerably linked to and dependent on culture, refers to the exclusive qualities, features, beliefs, and values that make up an individual's personality. Gender, color, ethnicity, country, religion, and sexual orientation are just a few examples of the many different dimensions that identity encompasses. This notion is often taken into account when analyzing the terms that oversee how individuals perceive each other and construct their understanding of reality. Taylor's thesis is that '*our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non-recognition can inflict harm and can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being*'<sup>45</sup>. The statement suggests that people's sense of self is not only influenced by their own perceptions but also by the way in which others see them. According to this view, how individuals or groups are accepted by the majority society, whether recognized or misrecognized by it, can result in significant harm. Cases where communities are confined and their abilities limited, can lead to a distorted sense of self, a feeling of being reduced or

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<sup>44</sup> Taylor (1979, 157)

<sup>45</sup> Taylor (1994, 25)

belittled, or even oppressed. Recognition of the importance of culture and identity shall not be reduced to a matter of personal validation, but rather as a necessary condition having significant social and political implications, allowing groups of individuals to develop a healthy, positive sense of identity and to fully realize their potential.

The appeal to greater levels of recognition of communities has long been a goal for numerous countries throughout the world, and has been addressed within two theories known as the *politics of equal dignity* and the *politics of difference* – two distinctive forms of recognition politics. The *politics of equal dignity* is based on ‘*universal, difference-blind principles*’<sup>46</sup>, having the aim of ignoring existing differences among communities and assigning ‘*identical baskets of rights and immunities*’<sup>47</sup> to all members of society. Its aim is that of ensuring equal access to everyone to the same rights, opportunities, and resources, with a commitment to promoting social justice and combating discrimination, inequality, and oppression. Despite the valid aspirations, Taylor recognizes some flaws in the mentioned approach, especially concerning the lack of attention to cultural differences. First, intellectuals tend to question the theory’s practical granting of recognition, since it appears to acknowledge individuals’ capacities to form commitments, but not the latter in particular. Furthermore, taking from scholar Iris Marion Young, Taylor questions difference-blind liberalism and its ability to ‘*offer a neutral ground on which people of all cultures can meet and coexist*’<sup>48</sup>. His main concern regards the possibility of this ‘*supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity*’ to be a ‘*reflection of one hegemonic culture*’, having the aim of forcing the members of minorities ‘*into a homogenous mold that is untrue to them*’<sup>49</sup>. Another criticism carried out, regards Taylor’s concern about the inability of the practice to ‘*accommodate what the members of distinct societies really aspire to, which is survival*’. His claim presupposes the theory to be ‘*inhospitable to difference*’, and is based on the observance of practical cases where measures restricting individual autonomy were adopted by governments to pursue non-neutral collective goals (e.g., the language politics in Canada working to ensure a regular identification of individuals as French speakers through a number of restrictive laws including limited access to English-language schools).

As an alternative to the difference-blind liberalism approach, Taylor provides the politics of difference, a universalist and egalitarian doctrine that concentrates on the recognition and celebration

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<sup>46</sup> Taylor (1994, 43)

<sup>47</sup> Taylor (1994, 38)

<sup>48</sup> Taylor (1994, 62)

<sup>49</sup> Taylor (1994, 43)

of people's individuality, uniqueness, and distinctiveness. According to the previous theory, recognition had to do with the population's shared autonomy, suggesting that the choice of one's life path was the basis for a good life. According to the politics of difference instead, recognition is associated with the ideal of authenticity, which relates to individuals' unique identity, and the complex and multifaceted ways of being. Moreover, in this case, an individual's pursuit of the good life is all about listening to personal inner voices and finding it on his own. This modern theory, influenced by nineteenth-century Romanticism and the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, relies and depends on the provision of forms of *differential treatment* aiming at the support of minority groups in the struggle to recognize their exclusive individuality. It refers to the recognition of *group-based differences* and identifies language and culture as fundamental tools in the process of identity construction, which supply the practices necessary to understand who we are.

Charles Taylor's influential account of the concept of recognition represents a good starting point in the general framework of discussion about the importance of culture in multicultural societies. Despite this, the model encounters a number of criticisms held by mostly Indigenous scholars who argue that achieving equality will need far-greater significant transformations and the elaboration of politics for economic redistribution to aid the one for recognition<sup>50</sup>. In addition, while Taylor concentrated his inquiry on the proper social acknowledgment of a person's individuality and freedom, the denial of formal political recognition – as questioned by Dene Nation – has been proven disastrous and endangering for the existence of Indigenous communities.

Once Taylor has made the point about the importance of the adoption of a differential treatment over a difference-blind one, and the need for states to support minority groups in their efforts to avoid discrimination and bias; he goes on to tackle the issue of equal worth. The demand in question concerns the recognition of an equal worth among all the different cultures and identities, alongside the achievement of a society '*that not only lets them survive, but acknowledges their worth*'<sup>51</sup>. As long as a limited number of communities is going to be considered superior when compared to others, mere affirmations about the inferior's value will not ensure their self-respect.

Assuming that a culture different from one's own lacks value, is a demonstration of '*supreme arrogance*'<sup>52</sup>, and '*important consequences flow for people's identity from the absence of*

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<sup>50</sup> Fraser, Honneth (2003)

<sup>51</sup> Taylor (1994, 50)

<sup>52</sup> Taylor (1994, 72-3)



*recognition*'. As a consequence, due to the possible harm that undervaluing may cause, each individual should '*enjoy the presumption that their traditional culture has value*'<sup>53</sup>.

James Tully's (1995, 190) argument in support of the topic is that '*since what a person says and does and the plans he or she formulates and revises are partly characterized by his or her cultural identity, the condition of self-respect is met only in a society in which the cultures of all members are recognized and affirmed by others, both by those who do and those who do not share these cultures*'. The implication of this statement is that a person's words, deeds, and plans are shaped by their cultural identity, which is, in turn, formed by the values, beliefs, and customs of the group they belong to. A person must believe that other people in society cherish and acknowledge their cultural identity to develop a feeling of self-respect. The recognition and affirmation should not only come from those sharing the same cultural identity as the group in question, but rather from those who don't – thus extending respect to all different cultural backgrounds. For a society to be inclusive and respectful of all of its members, unique cultural identities must be acknowledged and affirmed.

Overall, in the discussion about a "regime of reciprocal recognition among equals", Taylor argues that simply affirming the equal worth of different cultures is not enough, and continues suggesting that individuals shall personally engage in open-minded attempts to identify the worth within different traditions, by approaching different cultures with a presumption that they are of value. Generally speaking, the author does acknowledge that recognizing and judging the value of cultural traditions is not straightforward and highlights the need to avoid ethnocentrism in doing so. The goal is to create a society where all cultures are recognized and affirmed, without being patronized or dismissed.

### **2.3 Different types of marginalization due to sociocultural identity**

The oppression and marginalization of minority groups is a multifaceted phenomenon that has affected a large number of different communities throughout history, and still today continues to jeopardize the stability and coexistence among peoples. In his definition of a minority group, sociologist Louis Wirth mentions the existence of such one-sided conditions, stating that '*because of their physical or cultural characteristics, they are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination*'. Attempts to ensure a greater observance of cultural pluralism and defeat discrimination have been arranged in the form of practices differentiating citizens by sociocultural

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<sup>53</sup> Taylor (1994, 68)

identity, making modern Western societies more acceptable and accommodating. Truth is that in most cases, despite the possession of citizenship rights, *‘many groups feel marginalized and stigmatized, not (or not only) because of their socio-economic status, but also and especially because of their socio-cultural identity - their difference’*<sup>54</sup>. Of course, different ethnic groups are characterized by diverse socio-cultural identities, which refer to a range of distinct characteristics and traits concerning language, customs and traditions, social norms, and values. This feeling of identity, as an expression of adherence - cultural, ideological, or affective in nature - to the contents distinctive and foundational of a community, refers to the process of identification of individuals with the collectivity to which they feel they belong.

Cultures are not static realities, they are dynamic ones<sup>55</sup>, and this involves the possibility of horizons of expectation to undermine their stability by introducing diverging tendencies on the social scene. Starting from this, existing sociocultural differences may lead to cases of marginalization, regarded as a component or function, if not an outcome, of a larger historical-cultural environment that shapes it in the scheme of decision-making processes. Some theories contend that the political system, the economic structure, the systems of cultural symbolization, and codification are the primary determinants of marginalization. When referring to the types of attitudes individuals may adopt toward immigrants, discrimination may be the case when people engage in stereotyping, prejudice, or bias. Stereotyping occurs whenever individuals develop assumptions about what someone is like based on their socio-cultural identities, such as their ethnicity or religion. In most cases, the assumptions are based on incomplete or inaccurate information and lead to discrimination. Prejudice is usually developed on the basis of stereotypes, and may be intended as *‘an antipathy accompanied by a faulty generalization’*<sup>56</sup>. It consists of attitudes or feelings (usually negative) directed toward individuals coming from a certain social group. Also in these cases, people may be brought to treat others unfairly or unjustly. Bias instead occurs whenever people deliberately favor specific groups over others. In other cases, discriminatory practices and policies may be embedded within a state’s institutions, and cause individuals or groups unfair and unjust treatment.

Discrimination may develop in different forms and may unfold as direct or indirect, systemic or intersectional, as harassment or retaliation. Direct discrimination consists of unfair treatment exercised directly on individuals due to their background or certain personal characteristics. In

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<sup>54</sup> Kymlicka (2002, 239)

<sup>55</sup> Claval (1995)

<sup>56</sup> Pettigrew (1980: 21)

opposition to this, indirect discrimination occurs whenever policies, rules, or practices are adopted within a state, and have disproportionately negative effects on a particular group of people (e.g., if the only way to enter a public building is by a set of stairs people with disabilities who use wheelchairs would be discriminated and unable to enter the building). Another type of discrimination is the systemic one, which is not identifiable as a matter of deliberate action, but rather rooted and built into the economic and social structures (e.g., unequal access to education, employment, or health care). Intersectional discrimination is connected to Kimberlé W. Crenshaw's work on the critical race theory and the concept of "intersectionality," a term she coined to describe the double bind of prejudice toward people belonging to two or more disadvantaged social groups<sup>57</sup>. This type of discrimination consists of specific forms of bias which result from the interaction of a number of personal characteristics, such as race and gender, etc. Harassment and retaliation are two different practices connected to discrimination. The first refers to the adoption of hostile behaviors that lead to unpleasant environments for individuals based on their personal characteristics (sexual harassment or racial harassment). Retaliation instead is a consequence for people who complain and oppose discriminatory behavior, which end up being unfzairly punished.

Each of these attitudes has a confrontation mechanism at its core that brings together members of the ingroup and the outgroup, while the triggers for each differ. Hence, in order to comprehend why some individuals or collectivities are flawed by prejudice, others are xenophobic, and yet others are racist, it is vital to define the specific process that causes that type of attitude to be activated in the person or group. There are several explanations for why these individual and group mechanisms are activated, and almost all of them can be traced to processes of categorization. These are based on group membership and will push the individual subject to situate the self and the other within specific collectives.

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<sup>57</sup> In particular, Kimberlé W. Crenshaw concentrates on gender prejudice, and the way gender interacts with other differences such as the social class, ethnicity, race, age, religion, physical or mental disability, etc.

## Chapter 3: Cultural pluralism and Minority Rights

### 3.1 Citizenship

Citizenship discourse is all *'about the subject, and to challenge citizenship is to challenge a society's picture of the subject and its relationship to the political community'*<sup>58</sup>. The legal topic of citizenship is inextricably linked to concerns about immigrant populations and their integration, including discussions about the rights as *foreigners*, which, due to their significance and value, should not be regarded as rights of *others*, but as fundamental components of our law. Citizenship has traditionally been regarded as a means of inclusion, claiming that it has the power to give meaning to people's identities. It should represent cultural diversity amongst the public in order to do so, but in some cases, it has been used to disguise those differences by assuming a model of the individual (typically a male, white, heterosexual individual) that is far from universal. In doing so, citizenship has been regarded as *'an idea of inclusion that relentlessly produces exclusion'*<sup>59</sup>. In terms of multiculturalism, the topic of citizenship is mostly explored with an emphasis on who is regarded worthy or not, as well as the benefits that this status entails. Consequently, it is the valorization of citizenship as *'the most desired of conditions, and the highest fulfilment of democratic and egalitarian aspiration.. that leads us to focus on questions about who it is that rightfully constitutes the subjects of the citizenship that we champion'*<sup>60</sup>. Non-citizens are disadvantaged by their status and are classified on the basis of their *otherness* conveyed by their lack of citizenship. This might lead to the emergence of a group of individuals within the general population which is not legally allowed to contestation, and even when it is, it may struggle to articulate cultural claims because of fear of repercussion or a lack of access to resources and knowledge. In fact, as stated by Weissbrodt, *'it is usually the case that non-citizens cannot assert their rights for fear of retribution'*<sup>61</sup>.

To assess how much, in practice, granting citizenship to foreigners acts as a tool to promote adequate inclusion, it is essential to investigate the role and outcomes following the introduction of multicultural practices. Citizenship, understood as a practice of inclusion, is regarded to be fundamental to the fair treatment and dignity of individual citizens thanks to its attribution of cultural rights. On the other hand, non-citizen inclusion is facilitated by a broader range of multicultural policy frameworks, such as language and anti-discrimination rules that function in tandem with redistribution policies. Notwithstanding this, a number of studies demonstrate that opportunities for

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<sup>58</sup> Costa (2004) "From National to European Citizenship: A Historical Comparison"

<sup>59</sup> Isin (2005:381)

<sup>60</sup> Bosniak (2006:1)

<sup>61</sup> Weissbrodt (2008:3)

integration through multicultural policies are more likely to materialize for migrant populations that have access to and seek citizenship. In most cases appeals to greater levels of acceptance, acknowledgment, and accommodation have been made by excluded or oppressed groups as a whole, rather than single excluded individuals on their own. As a consequence, the process aimed at developing a more sensitive understanding of citizenship to the variety represented by minorities has resulted in the birth of contentious ideas such as *collective rights* or *group rights*. According to Kymlicka and a number of other multiculturalists in fact, it is common for liberal democracies that have adopted some kind of multiculturalism to make changes or readjustments to cultural plurality through the mechanism of what he defines *differentiated rights based on group membership*. This is because migration, and, more broadly, the process of globalization itself, introduces a variety of additional complexities within systems, whose restoration to unity cannot be adequately addressed using traditional instruments, especially national sovereignty and citizenship. So, it is precisely the fact of complexity that requires the search for features to develop an entirely novel concept of citizenship able to reaggregate the fragmentations, asymmetries, and inhomogeneities caused by global developments. From this viewpoint, the idea of *traditional citizenship* is regarded as inadequate by certain researchers. Cultural recognition of differences represents a weak theory of social integration, and it is important to point out that the ethics of recognition can function only if we are able to fully recognize the cultural demands of others, particularly minority groups.

### **3.2 Minority and collective rights**

In multicultural societies comprising of a large number of different communities living together, some individuals may be in a position of disadvantage compared to others, lacking the possibility of engagement in the mainstream society. Fostering the common sense of belonging and identification may be done with equal citizenship, although this amounts to rights and status, which are not enough. In the case of African Americans in the United States, or Arabs in France, despite enjoying citizenship status, sub-state minorities lack a sense of community and acceptance. In the past, sovereign nations perceived the mobilization and establishment of nationalist political parties attempting to attain nationhood by sub-state/minority nationalisms (e.g., Catalan and Basque in Spain, Quebecois in Canada, Scots and Welsh in England, etc.) as a possible threat. Efforts were carried out to suppress these types of nationalism, believing that '*indigenous peoples would eventually disappear as distinct communities, by dying out, intermarriage or assimilation*'<sup>62</sup>. Restrictions on minority language rights, traditional cultural expression, and self-government organizations were among the measures put in

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<sup>62</sup> Kymlicka (2002)

place, assuming that minority cultures would eventually disappear in the process of modernization. From the 1960s and 1970s, countries started embracing the prospect of multicultural approaches committed to greater inclusion and tolerance of diversity, leading to a shift away from traditional policies of assimilation and exclusion.

Initially, when the term *multiculturalism* was introduced, it was used in reference to a situation where a single territory was inhabited by multiple linguistic-cultural groups, alongside the dominant one. So, the defining feature of the approach consisted of the coexistence of several discrete linguistic-cultural entities, lacking any type of dialogue or contamination between them. The main goal was the recognition of equal political dignity and the coexistence of several groups, considered side by side but without interrelationships leading to mutual contamination. Since then, the matter of mutual living and peaceful coexistence amongst populations has been revised and improved, so as to also include possible intersections among cultures. In her most famous work, Gloria Anzaldúa has investigated the multilingual and pluricultural universe based on exchange and contamination, as an alternative to the standard policy of Anglo-American multiculturalism, based on the recognition of several distinct and separate languages and cultures not communicating with each other. When facing the changes that occurred to the models of immigrant integration, in “*Politics in the Vernacular*”, Kymlicka analyses the shift from the original model of Anglo-conformity to more tolerant and progressive attitudes. The assimilation of national minorities and immigrants shall be acknowledged in its differences, mostly relating to their geographical concentration. National minorities’ concentration is usually in a territory different from that of the majority, which calls for a rather attenuated and limited presence within the public sphere. The case for immigrants is another, and due to their coexistence with the majority, their diversity, practices, and values are much more perceivable within the society. This second type of diversity is the one prioritized by multicultural societies in their attempt to cherish the liberal principles of inclusion and equality. The former model of Anglo-conformity had the aim of making immigrant groups culturally indistinguishable from the natives, by pushing them to assimilate the cultural customs and identity of the nation they relocated to in every way. On the other hand, more tolerant multicultural policies adopted, had the aim of integrating immigrants with a caring attitude toward the preservation of their cultural specificity. This was done as a means to ensure immigrants’ equal consideration and participation in the country’s public domain, with rights as full members of society. The process of integration was seen as a *two-way street*<sup>63</sup>, implying not only immigrants to become part of the society in question, but also the society itself to change and be

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<sup>63</sup> Kymlicka (2001a: 153)

enriched. This was particularly valid for liberal states adopting immigrant policies aiming at the pluralistic integration of individuals and their inherent diversities.

The liberal ideal of a *neutral society* has been strongly criticized as *misguided*<sup>64</sup>, since most societies have developed their nation-building process on policies favoring and advantaging the majority's culture and integration within the latter. As a consequence, *difference-blind* societies and institutions have been questioned about their aim of addressing neutrality towards the population's interests and needs, especially in light of the still-existing disadvantages suffered by minority groups. Owing to those circumstances, theories calling for the establishment of minority rights should not be viewed as *deviations from ethnocultural neutrality*, but rather as a response to the problem of promotion of fairness. A number of liberal culturalist thinkers, including Will Kymlicka, Yael Tamir, Joseph Raz, Joseph Carens, and Alan Patten, believe that '*liberal democratic states should not only uphold the familiar set of common civil and political rights of citizenship which are protected in all liberal democracies; they must also adopt various group-specific rights and policies which are intended to recognize and accommodate the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups*'<sup>65</sup>. This category of rights includes exemptions, financial subsidies, and guaranteed political representation, which should be referred to as cultural rights, since they serve all human beings' interests by looking out for minorities' cultural identity and possible cultural loss. They are a largely *heterogeneous category*, although they share two important features<sup>66</sup>:

1. They go beyond the familiar set of common civil and political rights of individual citizenship which are protected in all liberal democracies.
2. They are embraced with the goal of understanding and addressing the unique identities and demands of ethnocultural communities.

Being that '*everyone has an interest in preserving the rights that are seen as central by them and the members of their group*'<sup>67</sup>, supporters of minority rights believe that the prevention of minorities' cultural loss should be a central task for the state, since:

1. Everyone has a freedom-based interest in having access to an adequate context of choice.

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<sup>64</sup> Kymlicka (2000)

<sup>65</sup> Kymlicka (2001a, 41)

<sup>66</sup> Ray (2007)

<sup>67</sup> Margalit, Halbertal (1994, 502)

2. Continuing enjoyment of one's own culture is something that people can legitimately or reasonably expect.

The principle of positive equality underlines the need for equal rights and opportunities to be enjoyed by all citizens, supplemented by individual confidence to *express their identity, and interact with the wider society, pursuing their self-chosen goals effectively*<sup>68</sup>. To ensure the aforementioned conditions, the state *'must acknowledge the reality of diversity and take the necessary steps to create not only an economically – but also a culturally – just society'*<sup>69</sup>. This presupposes the need to eradicate existing unfair privileges and forms of discrimination, by providing minority rights that are consistent with the pursuit of justice. Minority rights are to be taken into consideration only insofar as *'they are consistent with respect for the freedom of autonomy of individuals'*, and provide measures for the protection of cultural structures.<sup>70</sup> Kymlicka highlights a connection between the provision of group-specific rights and human rights, in that he views multiculturalism as *'part of a larger human rights revolution involving ethnic and racial diversity'*<sup>71</sup>. In this sense, countries shall pursue a definition of justice that unifies the protection of individual rights within the majority and minority political communities (by conventional human rights) with fairness amongst various ethnocultural groups (via minority rights)<sup>72</sup>.

The centrality of the concept of autonomy in Kymlicka's argument though, amounts to major differences between his and Margalit and Halbertal's reasoning. If on one hand, Margalit and Halbertal's model supports illiberal cultures that serve their member's identity interests, Kymlicka on the other calls for a *liberalization of these*. So, despite the general rule advocating for the freedom of illiberal societies to maintain their societal culture – which may be designed on oppression and the restriction of individual liberties through the practice of strict rules and traditions – Kymlicka places greater emphasis on the idea of personal autonomy. This is further reflected in the philosophers' celebration of external protections – including quotas in electoral systems, subsidizing minorities, and funding cultural festivals – and denunciation of internal restrictions that may result repressive.

As a result of the expansion of the European Union's borders and increased external migrant flows, recent decades have seen a further fracturing of Europe's diversified landscape of minority groups.

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<sup>68</sup> Parekh (2000)

<sup>69</sup> Sahin (2010:89)

<sup>70</sup> Kymlicka (1995:75)

<sup>71</sup> Kymlicka (2021:5)

<sup>72</sup> Sousa Santos (1996)



Together with the usual national, religious, and linguistic minorities, new minority communities have emerged. Accepting that traditional rights are insufficient to secure ethnocultural justice, nations need to acknowledge the necessity to supplement them with particular minority rights that are suitable for each specific case. Nowadays, the recognition of those rights is contentious and lacks a clear definition in international law since countries tend to view it as a local matter. The development of international norms has been extremely slow and disjointed as a result, reliant on regional agreements and the judicial interpretation of more comprehensive human rights treaties. The Council of Europe recognized the importance of addressing said issue during the first working session of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, establishing the prohibition of discrimination (Article 14). It did not, however, assert an autonomous recognition of minority rights or positive protection of minorities. Since then, human rights and anti-racism conferences have challenged the overarching issue of minority rights protection through broad or context-specific actions and declarations, inspiring international organizations to adopt formal international standards. Because of this, international declarations of minority rights oscillate between basic principles like *the right to preserve one's culture* and vague generalizations like the *right to self-determination*. A number of institutions, including the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and the International Labor Organization (ILO), have made an effort to define basic criteria as to how nations should treat their minorities and to set up systems to check on those standards' observance.

### **3.3 Practical application of multicultural policies**

The following chapter is going to be entirely devoted to the presentation and analysis of practical case studies of countries that have implemented multicultural policies. Their effectiveness, advances, and interaction with citizenship are going to be evaluated, alongside their capacity to present an actual response to multicultural issues. Furthermore, I will address the promotion of multicultural policies as an alternative to the assimilationist objectives sought by liberal nations. For the purpose of this analysis, I am going to take into consideration the countries of Canada, Australia, and Germany. By doing so, I will present and compare both successful and ineffective instances of multicultural policy application. To begin, I am going to analyze the Canadian and Australian societies, which represent an excellent starting point in the analysis of the positive effects following the proper implementation of a multicultural regime.

The Canadian state is one of only three in the world considered officially multicultural – alongside Sweden and Australia. The country shall be defined as polyethnic and multinational, including minorities such as the citizens of Quebec, and disadvantaged ethnic groups such as American Indians.

Given their geographic position, the territories of North America have experienced numerous migrant flows and colonial possessions, and consequently have long sought to have their rights of self-government and self-determination recognized. Throughout the second half of the 20th century, the Canadian government made concerted attempts to promote and defend diversity, by introducing a number of declarations, starting with “*The Canadian Bill of Rights*” of 1960, officially banning discrimination based on race and origin. Actually, the multicultural policy of Canada is most famously associated with former prime minister Pierre Trudeau's efforts in this regard, who in 1971 declared that ‘*the government would support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life*’<sup>73</sup>. Trudeau's strategy focused on the adoption of a bilingual, multicultural society in place of their multilingual policy, and led to the appointment of a federal minister responsible for multiculturalism. The Multiculturalism Act was passed in 1988, fostering cultural diversity in Canada, acknowledging its ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, and enshrining the acceptance of multiculturalism at the state level. With the development of anti-racism campaigns, heritage language projects, and multicultural education programs, Canada has been capable of effectively assuring and sustaining cultural inclusivity amongst its people and recent immigrants. Remarkably, Canada has made progress at the federal level in terms of the promotion of cultural diversity: not only has it achieved coexistence amongst its people, but is now able to effectively assimilate immigrants into its mosaic society.

The Canadian population has discovered how the growth and enhancement of diverse cultural relationships can guarantee everyone the chance to participate in public life, leading to an eventual shift from the well-known American formula of the *melting pot*, to the contrasting formula of the *ethnic mosaic*<sup>74</sup>. The cultural and legal acknowledgment of a culturally divided society such as Canada's was developed by multiculturalism as a response to a traditional question concerning multiethnic societies. Building on this, social and cultural heterogeneity has become a strength for the country, upon which the recognition and guarantee of rights to all individuals subsequently rested.

Australia is considered one of the most flourishing multicultural nations in the world. In the preface of the Australian Multicultural statement, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has made the case that Australia is a country of immigration since roughly half of the current population was either born

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<sup>73</sup> Berry, J. W. (1984)

<sup>74</sup> The mix of ethnicities, languages, and cultures that coexist in a community is known as a cultural mosaic. The notion of a cultural mosaic is meant to imply a sort of multiculturalism, different from other systems such as the melting pot, understood as a blend of numerous cultures existing side-by-side that add to the richness of the society (Jeffery Scott Mio).

abroad or has at least one foreign-born parent. He further argues that citizens come from every culture, every race, every faith, and every nation. In fact, the common ideals of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and equal opportunity, are what define the nation, not ethnicity, religion, or culture. In reality, Australia's multicultural breakthrough occurred between 1972 and 1975, when anti-discrimination policies were first established and institutionalized inside the "*Racial Discrimination Act*" (1975). The Australian case must be examined specifically in relation to the state of Victoria, one of the best examples of a multicultural region, whose capital city comprises approximately 142 distinct cultures coexisting and blending together. Within the city, the minority groups under analysis should be identified as ethnic groups who do not assert any right to self-government and do not demand rights added to or different from those of the Australian population. The region has committed itself to address issues such as the improvement of equality, the encouragement of cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, and the strengthening of unity within a new multicultural policy statement known as "*All of Us: Victoria's multicultural policy*", published in 2009.

In general, the country's ultimate goal is to foster and develop as a nation, which motivates it to create policies that acknowledge ethnic variety and pinpoint cultural affinities. In addition, the country recognizes a series of benefits arising from the integration and freedom of its citizens to practice their culture and traditions within the limits of the law – being the reason why the nation places more emphasis on creating a communal future than an individual one through the efforts of democratic institutions. In this scenario, Australia's multicultural society is one that provides for the adaptation of individuals to the culture of others, the promotion of interpersonal relationships, and the freedom to exercise all those social and cultural customs unique and particular to each minority group.

In discussions related to Australian multiculturalism, an attitude of praise usually prevails toward the country, which for the most part appears to have devoted remarkable attention to diversity. However, it appears that in doing so, one has frequently overlooked the unequal circumstances under which Aboriginal people live. As a matter of fact, despite the development of multicultural policies, Australia's Aboriginal minority has continued, over the years, being considered inferior to the Australian population and, as a result, as not deserving of equality. The government has undertaken several programs and initiatives throughout the years to get closer to the aboriginal culture and its condition. Although acknowledging the advancements in cross-cultural connections in the present, adequate acknowledgment of Aboriginal culture is still a long way off.

While this was the case for Canada and Australia, it is not true for many other nations, who struggle with the implementation and adoption of proper multicultural policies that account for their governing structures.

A particular case to be seen is the German one, since within the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany “*Grundgesetz*”, alongside the universal principle of equality<sup>75</sup>, there is no reference to any kind of protection of national, ethnic, or linguistic minorities. In fact, the matter of immigration in Germany has historically been discussed in terms that are entirely unique and far from those of any other European nation. In certain circumstances, further guidance may be found in the constitutions of individual federal states, which may have specific sections devoted to the subject of minorities; this is especially true in states where there are national minorities. Despite this, little or even no mention is made of the coexistence of different cultures or the cultural pluralism of German society as a nation. Over the years, Germany seems to have adopted an attitude of total disengagement toward immigrants coming into the host society, to whom it refers by the term 'foreigners', emphasizing once more its *detached tolerance*. German multiculturalism develops in line with the belief that immigrants do not integrate or assimilate. As a result, the foundation of the German multicultural society is based on nothing more than a mere coexistence between Germans and individuals who having different roots, in a context of relative tolerance and respect for immigrants' cultural identities. The introduction of this type of multiculturalism within the country has not improved German tolerance. The reason behind this may be found in the nature of German society, which has always been focused on the public acknowledgment of one only community with a specific ethnocultural identity, the *German Kulturnation*<sup>76</sup>. The core question with this multiculturalism model is essentially political, and as such also historical. Indeed, it appears to be the consequence of the experience of bringing together two conflicting political approaches to the problem. On one hand, comes the right-wing perspective, which is aligned with the ideal of the centrality of the nation-state and ethnocultural homogeneity. On the other hand, comes the left-wing model, which seeks to counter the assimilation of minority cultures deemed inferior within a dominant and superior one. This is done in order to avoid evoking the Nazi regime's "Germanization" to the disadvantage of surrounding communities.

During the last decade, German policy has revised legislative measures and implemented specific legal regulations in favor of concrete integration, which do not account for unconditional integration, but are rather founded on the ideal of ‘*promote and expect*’. Nowadays Germany is one of the European nations with the highest number of incoming immigrants, and therefore has devised an integration process involving society as a whole, dependent on the participation of all citizens, both men and women. *Successful integration relies on both providing [services] to the population with a*

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<sup>75</sup> Art. 3 (3) states that ‘no person shall be favored or disfavored because of sex, parentage, race, language, homeland and origin, faith or religious or political opinions. No person shall be disfavored because of disability’.

<sup>76</sup> The idea of German nationalism exalts pride in Germans' sense of national identity, it encourages the unity of Germans and German speakers within one nation-state.

*migratory background and their willingness to integrate.* Yet, the German government's integration policies, which are founded on the notion of *promote and expect*, seek a difficult balance between granting incentives at the expense of society and expecting individual benefits at the expense of migrants. On the one hand, this may contribute to foster integration, but hardly helps to govern it.

As can be seen, while the challenge of diversity is universal, the experience of implementing multicultural policies aimed at fostering it is not the same in all countries.

## Conclusion

In a world, which has ‘*increasingly become a place of multi-ethnic states, with up to 30% of the population coming from other societies*’<sup>77</sup>, the discussion about multiculturalism was born as a result of intensifying global migrations. Increasing refugee flows and immigration into Western capitalist states, have exacerbated the problem in recent decades, and caused most countries to develop problematic relationships with external groups. In this context, in addition to conventional ideals of justice, citizenship, and rights being challenged, new ideologies such as multiculturalism have emerged as a response to real or potential ethnic tensions and racial conflicts.

For long time, in Europe, ethnic and cultural diversity was thought as incompatible with a democratic political system since, on one hand, it strengthened particular identities to the point of eroding a sense of national identity; while on the other, it created *value conflicts* rather than just distributive ones, resulting in disagreements that were difficult to resolve through democratic processes. Yet, the distinctively American experience, implies the opposite, portraying diversity as favorably linked with democracy: it is not a means of generating conflict, but a way to manage it in peaceful forms. The American example thus highlights multiculturalist predisposition to promote core contemporary principles such as individualism and the separation of the public and private worlds. Here, then, is envisioned a public sphere in which individuals may express their identities and act in line with their distinctive convictions without damaging the public nature of communal institutions. In general, the present understanding of the multiculturalist theory is relatively articulated. Today's culturally varied and composite societies acknowledge the necessity of guaranteeing the respect and inclusion of all cultural groups, being the reason why the majority of nations recognize and encourage multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. However, as previously stated in this study, some countries maintain a more *assimilationist* perspective, according to which new groups must assimilate into the dominant culture – a vision that is mostly valid for states that have a strong national cultural identity, such as France.

Above all, we experience a number of globalizing thrusts toward multiculturalism aiming at the celebration of diversity within specific boundaries, such as the respect for democratic principles and societal core values; and on the other hand, the preservation of national identities. States seeking to find a difficult balance between the two trends. In theory, every nation may promote multiculturalism as long as there is political and social willingness to welcome and embrace other cultures. In practice,

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<sup>77</sup> Davidson (1997)

however, the application of multiculturalism may be more complicated and challenging, especially for nations with strong national identities, who regard diversity as a threat to social cohesion and the country's own character. Examples of this approach may be found in nations such as Japan, which have a homogeneous culture and language and tend to value the preservation of their own traditions over the admission of other cultures. Other nations may have difficulties with cultural compatibility, which may cause conflicts and make it difficult for various populations to coexist peacefully and integrate. Despite these obstacles, multiculturalism has proven to have numerous advantages, particularly in a context where the increasing interconnectedness of countries and cultures makes it difficult for any nation to remain completely isolated from outside influences.

This thesis investigated the notion of multiculturalism as a possible response to the challenge of diversity in modern cultures. It illustrated how multiculturalism may provide an inclusive and tolerant framework for addressing cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity by analyzing several current theories, case studies, and policy initiatives. The focus has also been oriented towards multiculturalist promotion of social integration, enrichment of national culture, and improvement of each individual's skills and expertise. However, as research progressed, it became clear that multiculturalism should not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all solution to the diversity problem, but rather understood as having its own challenges and difficulties. The potential development of parallel communities, loss of cultural identity, and uncertainty about change are just a few of the issues I have uncovered. The success of this approach is strongly dependent on institutions' ability to foster multicultural communities and mechanisms for dialogue and collaboration among various groups. Therefore, it must be supported by specialized policies and initiatives that foster integration and social cohesion, including intercultural education, the advancement of equality and social justice, and the eradication of prejudice and discrimination.

Finally, multiculturalism is a promising alternative to deal with diversity in a reality that is becoming increasingly interconnected and globalized. However, for multiculturalism to be successful, communities and institutions must work together to overcome cultural barriers and promote peaceful and harmonious coexistence among different groups. Only then will multiculturalism be able to fully confront the problems of difference and contribute to the development of more inclusive, tolerant, and equitable communities.

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## Summary

La tesi svolta si pone l'obiettivo di contribuire ad una più profonda comprensione della teoria politica del multiculturalismo e del rispettivo rapporto con i concetti di diversità e minoranza. Lo studio in questione esamina il concetto di diversità nella sua accezione più generale ed in quella più specifica, chiarendo rispettivamente l'idea di un mondo configurato basato su individui con caratteristiche fisse. Il documento è suddiviso in tre capitoli, corrispondenti ai principali macro-argomenti trattati. Il primo si concentra sulla teoria normativa del multiculturalismo, e ne fornisce una panoramica sulla sua evoluzione storica e caratteristiche principali. In particolare, discute il contrasto tra relativismo ed universalismo morale, e conclude con un'analisi del ruolo del multiculturalismo nella società odierna. Il secondo capitolo introduce i concetti di minoranza e identità socioculturale, fornendone le rispettive definizioni e soffermandosi sull'importanza ad essi attribuita dai filosofi Will Kymlicka e Charles Taylor. Nel capitolo sono inoltre discusse le differenti forme di emarginazione e discriminazione derivanti dall'identità socioculturale dei singoli. Il terzo ed ultimo capitolo della ricerca è dedicato all'analisi del pluralismo culturale e dei diritti delle minoranze, concepiti ed introdotti con l'obiettivo di proteggere gli interessi delle comunità minoritarie. In tale ambito, è presente anche un'analisi del concetto di cittadinanza, che comporta il riconoscimento e la tutela dei diritti di tutti i membri della società. L'ultima sezione del terzo capitolo è dedicata all'analisi di casi pratici di applicazione di politiche multiculturali in Paesi come il Canada, l'Australia e la Germania. Tale analisi permette di verificare l'efficacia del multiculturalismo in un contesto sempre più interconnesso, quale quello del mondo odierno.

Il concetto di multiculturalismo, associato alla politica dell'identità, della differenza e del riconoscimento, viene presentato come una teoria politica che mira a gestire le diversità esistenti all'interno della società. Esso riconosce e attribuisce valore ai diversi gruppi culturali e sfida le norme ed i pregiudizi che alimentano i principi di discriminazione. Analizza il modo in cui le comunità politiche tentano di rispondere a problemi riguardanti l'integrazione di minoranze in uno Stato nazionale, mantenendo la loro distinta identità nazionale e promuovendo i loro valori fondamentali. Da un punto di vista storico, la filosofia del multiculturalismo si basa sul concetto di pluralismo culturale, risalente alla fine del XIX secolo. Il Canada e gli Stati Uniti sono stati tra i primi Paesi ad implementare politiche multiculturali negli anni Sessanta, mentre nei paesi Europei, l'adozione del multiculturalismo come politica ufficiale è stata riconosciuta a partire dagli anni Ottanta. Basato sulla promozione della comunicazione, comprensione e parità di trattamento, i teorici liberali hanno sostenuto il multiculturalismo come mezzo per proteggere i diritti individuali e promuovere la diversità.

Partendo dall'analisi del tessuto sociale di una società, plasmato dalle proprie norme culturali e morali, si possono individuare due differenti approcci al relativismo dei principi morali: il relativismo e l'universalismo morale. Entrambe le teorie condividono il parere che le credenze e le pratiche proprie di un individuo siano fortemente influenzate dal contesto culturale in cui si sviluppano. Queste si differenziano, tuttavia, per l'universalità di tali principi e valori. Se da una parte, l'universalismo morale professa l'esistenza di principi e norme applicabili a tutti gli individui e a tutte le società, indipendentemente dal loro contesto culturale e storico; il relativismo morale al contrario, ritiene che valori e principi etici siano relativi a gruppi e tradizioni. In alcuni contesti è possibile individuare un parallelismo tra le prospettive filosofiche di assimilazione culturale ed universalismo morale da un lato, e multiculturalismo e relativismo morale, dall'altro. Queste associazioni, tuttavia, non essendo universalmente applicabili, andrebbero piuttosto interpretate alla luce del particolare contesto in esame. Nel caso di corrispondenza tra i concetti di assimilazione culturale ed universalismo morale, essa dipende dall'esistenza di una convinzione, da parte dei gruppi dominanti, circa la correttezza della loro visione del mondo e del loro diritto di imporla unilateralmente. In generale, lo sviluppo di un senso di appartenenza condiviso tra individui provenienti da contesti sociali differenti, è un processo complesso che comporta la creazione di un'identità condivisa e di un senso di comunità. Negli ultimi anni, le nuove norme adottate dalle democrazie occidentali a favore dell'inclusione di minoranze culturali sono state prese a modello da numerosi Paesi dell'Europa "post-comunista" al fine di ottenere accesso all'Unione Europea (UE) ed alla NATO. Il multiculturalismo è quindi emerso come componente fondamentale dell'identità nazionale di molti paesi moderni. Ciò è particolarmente vero nelle società in cui l'immigrazione ha influenzato in modo significativo l'ambiente demografico. Di fatto, in tali circostanze, l'integrazione di individui provenienti da contesti culturali diversi non è solo necessaria ma anche auspicabile, poiché arricchisce il tessuto sociale del Paese. In termini di attuazione pratica delle politiche multiculturali, Kymlicka, noto filosofo politico canadese, ha individuato tre principi fondamentali che le governano. Questi risultano essere rispettivamente, l'idea che *lo stato debba appartenere a tutti i cittadini allo stesso modo*<sup>78</sup>, il diritto proprio delle minoranze di partecipare alla sfera pubblica senza discriminazioni etniche o sociali, ed il riconoscimento delle ingiustizie passate perpetrate dai gruppi dominanti nei confronti delle comunità emarginate.

Nonostante il multiculturalismo venga considerato da molti come una forza positiva per la diversità e l'inclusione, nel corso degli anni sono emerse numerose critiche da parte di correnti politiche e sociali. Queste riflettono più ampi dibattiti sulla natura dell'identità, della diversità e della giustizia sociale nelle società contemporanee, e sono identificabili nell'obiezione egualitaria, femminista,

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<sup>78</sup> Kymlicka (2007c:65).

essenzialista e cosmopolita. La critica egualitaria al multiculturalismo è stata formulata da Brian Barry, il quale temeva che le politiche multiculturali potessero minacciare i principi di uguaglianza e giustizia sociale. Alla base del suo pensiero era l'idea che tutti i membri della società dovessero essere trattati allo stesso modo, indipendentemente dal loro patrimonio culturale o etnico, e che qualsiasi politica che favorisse un gruppo sociale rispetto ad un altro fosse intrinsecamente ingiusta. Su ciò si fonda la preoccupazione che le politiche multiculturali debbano essere bilanciate con un impegno volto alla parità di trattamento di tutti gli individui e alla conservazione di valori e tradizioni condivise. L'obiezione femminista di Susan Okin invece, critica l'esagerata attenzione riservata alle disuguaglianze presenti tra i diversi gruppi culturali, piuttosto che a quelle esistenti al loro interno. Secondo l'autrice, ciò ha portato a culture patriarcali e alla creazione di gruppi di minoranza all'interno delle minoranze stesse, soprattutto concernenti i sessi. L'obiezione essenzialista, in linea con la moderna configurazione del mondo, critica il multiculturalismo poiché "*esercita una pressione morale sui singoli membri affinché si conformino alla cultura del gruppo [...] imponendo un'unica identità di gruppo drasticamente semplificata, che nega la complessità della vita delle persone, la molteplicità delle loro identificazioni e le influenze incrociate delle loro varie affiliazioni*"<sup>79</sup>. Il multiculturalismo è quindi ritenuto incapace di riconoscere la diversità e la complessità all'interno dei gruppi culturali, ed accusato di ridurre gli individui ad un insieme di caratteristiche predefinite. Ciò rende la teoria in questione, una *sociologia riduzionista della cultura*. Infine, la critica cosmopolita nasce dal principio secondo cui "*gli esseri umani possono prosperare attingendo e sperimentando idee da culture diverse*"<sup>80</sup>, ricorrendo ad un numero infinito di fonti culturali per costruire e rappresentare la loro vita personale. Tale convinzione si colloca in opposizione alle moderne concezioni del multiculturalismo che sottolineano l'interesse fondamentale degli individui a conservare le proprie culture di origine. Secondo Waldron, principale esponente dell'obiezione in questione, pur avendo bisogno di *significati culturali*, gli esseri umani non hanno bisogno di *quadri culturali omogenei*.

Il secondo capitolo della tesi è dedicato/tratta il concetto di minoranza e la rispettiva esperienza all'interno del tessuto sociale della società. Per prima cosa viene fornita la definizione del concetto di minoranza delle Nazioni Unite, secondo cui, una minoranza etnica, religiosa o linguistica corrisponde ad *un gruppo di individui che differisce dalla maggior parte della popolazione di una nazione e che detiene una propria identità nazionale o etnica, culturale, religiosa e linguistica*. Tali gruppi sociali si distinguono quindi dal gruppo dominante, che detiene potere, privilegi e status

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<sup>79</sup> Fraser, N. (2001, 24)

<sup>80</sup> Scheffler (2001); Caney (2010)

sociale. Tra gruppi sociali, tuttavia, sembrano condividere alcune caratteristiche comuni quali la disparità di trattamento ed un minor potere decisionale, tratti fisici o culturali distintivi, l'appartenenza involontaria al gruppo e la consapevolezza della propria subordinazione. Sulla base di tali aspetti, è stato possibile classificare i gruppi di minoranza in quattro grandi tipologie: le minoranze razziali ed etniche, le minoranze di genere e sessuali, le minoranze religiose e le persone con disabilità. Le minoranze razziali ed etniche comprendono gruppi indigeni, immigrati recenti e popolazioni nomadi. Le minoranze di genere e sessuali comprendono individui che si identificano con generi o orientamenti sessuali diversi dalla norma sociale. Le minoranze religiose sono costituite da comunità la cui religione differisce da quella della maggioranza. Infine, la categoria di persone con disabilità è identificabile con tutti coloro costretti ad affrontare limitazioni e discriminazioni basate su menomazioni fisiche o psicologiche. Tra queste, il multiculturalismo si concentra principalmente sulle minoranze etniche e razziali, che distingue in minoranze nazionali, quali culture autogestite incorporate in uno Stato più grande, ed immigrati, provenienti da un paese straniero e trasferitisi per risiedere stabilmente in quello nuovo di destinazione. Le implicazioni dell'appartenenza ad uno di questi gruppi minoritari variano a seconda della struttura sociale e spesso comportano discriminazioni, esclusione da opportunità e risorse ed una partecipazione limitata alle attività pubbliche. Nel secondo capitolo vengono quindi messe in evidenza le diverse esperienze di riconoscimento sociale, inclusione e tutela dei diritti delle minoranze, che introducono una discussione sull'importanza della cultura e della diversità, esaminata tramite le prospettive dei filosofi Will Kymlicka e Charles Taylor. Entrambi si concentrano sul complesso rapporto tra cultura, diversità e benessere individuale nelle società multiculturali. Tuttavia, se da un lato Kymlicka sottolinea il ruolo della cultura nel conferire identità ed autonomia, dall'altro Taylor approfondisce il significato del riconoscimento e della politica della differenza.

Kymlicka individua nella cultura la funzione principale di conferire identità agli individui e fornire loro il contesto per vivere in modo autonomo. Essa sostiene gli individui nello sviluppo di un senso di comunità e di appartenenza, insieme ad una comprensione condivisa della storia e dei valori, che contribuiscono all'elaborazione di una percezione di sé e delle proprie origini culturali. Inoltre, è considerata dal filosofo come generatrice di opzioni, in quanto offre un contesto di scelta ed un quadro di riferimento, contribuendo quindi alla libertà individuale rendendo disponibili alternative per il processo decisionale. In tale contesto, fondato sulla percezione di una cultura sociale che fornisce opzioni e significato agli individui, quest'ultima e la libertà sono strettamente legate. Charles Taylor, nel suo lavoro sulla politica del riconoscimento, sottolinea l'importanza di affermare l'identità degli individui, promuovendo così lo sviluppo di un senso positivo di identità ed il raggiungimento del

proprio pieno potenziale. Nel fare ciò, egli evidenzia il ruolo delle relazioni interpersonali, della storia e della cultura nel plasmare la consapevolezza di sé e l'interpretazione delle circostanze. Il resoconto di Taylor sul riconoscimento, nonostante influente, ha subito critiche da parte di numerosi studiosi indigeni, i quali sottolineano la necessità di trasformazioni significative e di una redistribuzione economica. Malgrado le molteplici discussioni riguardo l'adozione di politiche di inclusione, al giorno d'oggi numerose minoranze sociali e culturali sono tutt'ora oggetto di emarginazione e stigmatizzazione dovute alla loro identità socioculturale. Gli atteggiamenti di pregiudizio, xenofobia e razzismo sono radicati in processi di categorizzazione in cui individui e gruppi collocano sé stessi e gli altri. La comprensione di tali atteggiamenti richiede un esame dei processi specifici e dei fattori scatenanti che contribuiscono al loro sviluppo.

Ciò premesso, l'ultima sezione del secondo capitolo è dedicata ad un'analisi dei diversi tipi di emarginazione e discriminazione collettiva. Il concetto di identità socioculturale si basa sulle norme sociali ed i valori che distinguono i diversi gruppi etnici, incluse caratteristiche quali la lingua, i costumi e le tradizioni. Nel caso in cui l'esistenza di differenze socioculturali determini una disparità di trattamento all'interno di un contesto storico-culturale più ampio, si può parlare di emarginazione. Essa può essere ricondotta al sistema politico, la struttura economica o i sistemi di simbolizzazione culturale del paese. Oltre ai casi di emarginazione, quando si fa riferimento alla messa in atto di stereotipi, pregiudizi o preconcetti, è possibile parlare di fenomeni di discriminazione. Questa si può manifestare in diverse forme, tra cui diretta o indiretta, sistemica o intersezionale, sottoforma di molestie o ritorsioni. Ciascuno di questi atteggiamenti ha alla base un meccanismo di confronto che mette insieme i membri di un gruppo e di un altro, contribuendo alla creazione di processi di categorizzazione.

L'ultimo capitolo dello studio si apre con l'analisi del concetto di cittadinanza, funzionale al discorso generale circa il pluralismo culturale e l'istituzione di diritti delle minoranze. Il diritto alla cittadinanza è un argomento delicato e complesso, che riguarda l'inclusione di individui all'interno di una comunità politica. Tradizionalmente intesa come uno strumento di accettazione e formazione dell'identità di un individuo, la cittadinanza può in alcuni casi assumere una valenza escludente, se basata su modelli di cittadini ideali privi di diversità culturali. Data la loro mancata cittadinanza, i 'non cittadini', ed in particolar modo gli immigrati, sono soggetti a numerosi svantaggi e casi di emarginazione. Un ridotto accesso alle risorse, e la possibilità di essere puniti, creano difficoltà nel far valere i propri diritti o avanzare le rivendicazioni culturali. L'introduzione di politiche multiculturali riguardanti la lingua, norme antidiscriminatorie e politiche di redistribuzione, mirano a

facilitare la loro inclusione. Alcuni ricercatori sostengono poi, che sia necessario rivedere o sviluppare un nuovo concetto di cittadinanza che promuova una maggiore integrazione sociale e che consideri le esigenze culturali dei gruppi minoritari. L'obiettivo dei diritti collettivi e di minoranza è per l'appunto quello di rispondere alla necessità di inclusione, equità e conservazione culturale all'interno delle società multiculturali. Tali diritti vanno oltre i comuni diritti civili e politici e mirano a soddisfare le esigenze uniche delle comunità etnoculturali, promuovendo al contempo l'uguaglianza e l'autonomia individuale. I loro sostenitori ritengono che sia responsabilità dello Stato prevenire la perdita culturale e garantire un accesso equo alle diverse opportunità. I diritti delle minoranze si sviluppano come parte di una più ampia rivoluzione dei diritti umani che coinvolge principalmente aspetti quali la diversità etnica e razziale. La tutela di questi diritti all'interno delle comunità maggioritarie e minoritarie, insieme all'equità tra i diversi gruppi etnoculturali, è fondamentale per raggiungere la giustizia sociale.

Nel contesto dell'attuale espansione dell'Unione Europea e dell'aumento delle migrazioni, il riconoscimento dei diritti delle minoranze è sempre più complesso. All'interno del diritto internazionale, non viene fornita alcuna definizione chiara del concetto, e diversi pensatori hanno opinioni contrastanti su come bilanciare autonomia e conservazione culturale. Questo è maggiormente evidente nell'attuazione ed adozione di politiche multiculturali, che differiscono da Paese a Paese. Sebbene la sfida della diversità sia universale, le esperienze ed i risultati di queste politiche variano. All'interno del capitolo vengono presentati tre casi studio al fine di valutare l'efficacia ed i progressi delle politiche multiculturali e la loro interazione con la cittadinanza. Il primo caso analizzato è quello del Canada, dove il multiculturalismo è stato ufficialmente riconosciuto e promosso a partire dagli anni Sessanta. L'ex primo ministro Pierre Trudeau ha svolto un ruolo significativo nello sviluppo di una società multiculturale, che ammette e promuove le diversità. Il Paese garantisce l'inclusione culturale attraverso campagne antirazziste, progetti linguistici e programmi di educazione multiculturale. In Canada si è raggiunta la coesistenza e l'effettiva assimilazione degli immigrati nella sua società, passando da un modello di *melting pot* ad un *mosaico etnico*. Nel corso degli anni, anche l'Australia è stata considerata come una delle nazioni multiculturali di maggior successo. Il paese ha adottato politiche antidiscriminatorie, istituzionalizzate con il Racial Discrimination Act del 1975, e lo Stato del Victoria si è a lungo distinto per la coesistenza di un elevato numero di culture diverse. La società australiana riconosce i vantaggi della varietà etnica e di conseguenza promuove l'integrazione e la libertà di praticare le proprie tradizioni culturali entro i limiti della legge. Ancora oggi, tuttavia, si osserva come gli aborigeni siano sottoposti a disuguaglianze ed un riconoscimento culturale carente. Diversamente, l'approccio della Germania al



multiculturalismo è sempre stato maggiormente problematico, in quanto basato su una Costituzione che non fornisce alcuna protezione delle minoranze nazionali, etniche o linguistiche. Il paese ha storicamente assunto un atteggiamento disimpegnato nei confronti degli immigrati, definendoli e trattandoli come *stranieri*. Il multiculturalismo adottato ruotava attorno alla mera coesistenza e alla relativa tolleranza, privo significativi sforzi per la loro integrazione; un modello influenzato da approcci politici contrastanti, volti ad evitare l'assimilazione e l'omogeneità etnoculturale. Solo recentemente, la Germania si è vista costretta a rivedere le proprie politiche di integrazione, concentrandosi su misure concrete.

Nell'analisi condotta, si evidenziano casi di successo ed altri di inefficacia nell'attuazione di politiche multiculturali. Trovare un equilibrio tra la celebrazione della diversità e la conservazione delle identità nazionali è la reale sfida per gli Stati. Nonostante il multiculturalismo offra numerose opportunità, esso si scontra con ostacoli quali lo sviluppo di comunità parallele e l'incertezza del cambiamento. Di fatto, se inizialmente il multiculturalismo si presentava come coesistenza di diversi gruppi linguistico-culturali privi di una particolare interazione tra loro, successivamente si è evoluto fino ad includere la possibilità di scambi ed intersezioni tra di essi. Il successo di tale dibattito, nato in risposta all'aumento delle migrazioni globali e alle sfide poste dalle tensioni etniche e razziali, richiede sforzi collettivi che aiutino a superare le barriere culturali e promuovere una coesistenza armoniosa tra le diverse comunità. È necessaria da parte delle istituzioni una costante promozione del dialogo, collaborazione ed integrazione sociale tra gruppi.