

Social Integration in Culturally Differentiated Societies

—What Does Bauman Has in Common with Marquand? Plural and Pluralism-Interculturalism vs Multiculturalism in Western Complex Societies

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How to cite this paper: Condorelli, R. (2026). Social Integration in Culturally Differentiated Societies. *Sociology Mind*, 16, 43-60.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/sm.2026.162004>

Received: January 7, 2026
Accepted: February 27, 2026
Published: March 2, 2026

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Abstract

In complex Western modern polyethnic and democratic societies, the idea that integration, social cohesion, and civic equality require cultural homogeneity is difficult to sustain. And if in an era of super-diversity, the assimilationist idea of cultural homologation is unsustainable, the multiculturalist idea of separation among cultural groups that are in the same social space is problematic too. In other words, it is unrealistic to think that a new positive coexistence, social integration, and cohesion between *us* and *them* can derive from the salad bowl model or the procedural functionalist model of the multiculturalist project of making society. Indeed, Multiculturalism is a philosophical and not a sociological model. The solution to the fear of nihilist danger that frightens detractors of polytheism cannot reside in what can be considered an anachronistic leap back. In these conceptual terms, even Bauman understands Multiculturalism. In this regard, his reference to Odo Marquand is significant. Pluralism and, above all, Interculturalism are preferable.

Keywords

Bauman, Marquand, Multiculturalism, Pluralism, Interculturalism, Complex Social System

1. Introduction: Bauman's Reference to *In Defence of the Accidental*

Bauman refers to Marquand (Bauman, 1999). Why? It is not a coincidence. In Marquand's ideas, more than in anyone else, Bauman finds a point of reference with his integrative sociological ideas in our culturally differentiated societies.

In 1986, Marquand writes *Apologie des Zufälligen: Philosophische Studien* (*In Defence of the Accidental*, 1991; *Apologia del Caso*, 1991), a critique of deterministic visions of history and life, rejecting the unexpected and the chance. Marquand says:

The accident is not a lack, but it is our historical normality which is conditioned by mortality. We are our accidents and not our choice. Not only that. Our accidents prevail over our absolute choice and we must take note of it. We are finished. A philosophy that in a skeptical meaning considers this nature of chance is an apology of the accidental (Marquand, 1986, in *Apologia del Caso*, p. 155, *Our Trad.*).

For Marquand, and this is his philosophical characterization, it is the human finitude to prevent an absolute choice, absolute projects, and this is normal since we die before seeing the results of our choices. Therefore, accidental historical-natural events predominate in our lives, that is, events that happen. For example, the experience of birth is accidental—we could have been born elsewhere, or in another era, or in another civilization, or the experience of old age when we age before time. And the accident is reconciled with the idea. Accidental events determine our destiny since, once they have happened, they cannot be neglected or ignored. We cannot produce changes *ad libitum*.

The conclusion of this argumentation is twofold. First, for Marquand, since our destiny does not exclude accidents, the dignity of men is their ability to bear the accidental, to recognize it, and support an unpredictable future, which is made of accidents. And second, the polychromy of reality. For Marquand, the man cannot impose totally new rules on the unpredictability of the future (unpredictability is its fundamental character since accidents are always present); he cannot produce changes *ad libitum*, having to consider his past, his tradition, his customs in order to face the unpredictability of the future. It is the accidentality of cases of our life—man's reality is the accidental so much that man's reality can also be otherwise, and he can also be otherwise—to require our choices needs customs, our future needs traditions that, although they were accidental, constitute our past. This is the origin of the observed and observable social variety we observe: in this way, men create a society different from one another. In other terms, we can observe that the *chance* of human freedom is the chance of the *polychromy of reality*, a *reality* which is made of many different, cultural, social, and political forms, a social and cultural reality which is multiple, plural. For example, the multiple division of powers is a sign of political freedom. So, Marquand justifies the hermeneutic function. Since the world is demythologized and placed in a condition of historicity in which man is the protagonist, our life is a variety of actions and accidents that prevent a history from being singular, hermeneutics helps men understand their own past. This is the Marquand's *pluralizing* and not singularizing hermeneutics. It ensures respect for human dignity and tolerance of human freedom.

If—in reference to the sacred text—two interpreters, in dispute with each other, affirm: “I am right, my understanding of the text is the truth, the truth necessary of salvation”, it can lead to a violent clash (Bauman, 1999: p. 13, *Our Trad.*).

The plural cases are cases of freedom, of that plural freedom that leads to mutual plural tolerance.

This conceptualization goes against the communitarization. Bauman agrees with Marquand and reminds us that any atrocity can be committed and has been committed in the name of absolute truth and the ideal of good, which is guarded within community life (an absolute principle such as the one God, the one party, the one law of history). Moreover, we add, this atrocity is freed from any sense of individual and collective responsibility and guilt. The recognition and mutual respect of plural freedom protect us from this danger, and consequently lead us to Pluralism as an integrative strategy.

2. Bauman and Marquand: Plural vs Community, Pluralism vs Normative Multiculturalism

Today, the delineation of strategies for living together with cultural differences proceeds from the substantive response to integration and social cohesion problems, which are produced by globalization processes.

Normative Multiculturalism strategy asserts the need for cultural differences’ recognition (e.g., Rattansi, 2011). Although it is shareable, and I emphasize this, nevertheless, the way in which Multiculturalism conceives this recognition constitutes a problem for its sociological implications. Indeed, it is articulated within the conceptual framework of a *cultural relativism* which is founded on the primacy of community as source of identity over individual, in opposition to the Rawls’s individualistic neo-contractualism and individualistic principles governing modern-liberal societies (moral individualism or pluralism of value and interests that are considered as responsible for weakening social bonds and social identities and the universalism of individual rights and State neutrality). From this angle, all cultures should be recognized in their indivisible and intangible totality of meaning, in order to protect community integrity and the identity integrity of individuals who recognize themselves in the community. Hence, the legitimacy of *struggles for the public recognition of cultural group differences* and the proposal of a *differentiated citizenship*, that is, the recognition of collective or special cultural rights and sectional institutions (law courts, schools, etc.) that are self-governed by individual cultural groups. This is an *externalized integration*, which allows groups to survive without cultural integration. Indeed, the foundation of social integration is a *procedural-functional* foundation, and it is not a moral foundation. It considers sufficient compliance with common norms and does not require any moral adherence to the spirit of values underlying norms, to a platform of shared common values. This position is shared by every multiculturalist, such as Taylor, Walzer, Young, Kymlicka, Honneth... (see Condorelli, 2020).

For example, Young writes in her articulate theoretical formulation of ideological Multiculturalism that the *good society* “does not eliminate or transcends group differences” (Young, 1990: p. 163). Justice, given the qualities of inevitability and, above all, desirability of the group differences in modern social processes, “does not require fusion (the melting away) of differences, but rather institutions that promote the reproduction and respect of group differences without oppression” (p. 47, *Our Italics*).

Taylor justifies the primacy of community over the individual in reference to the Meadian Theory of self-formation as a *social product* emerging from relationship with significant other and generalized others (Taylor, 1992). Mead provides him with more appropriate sociological and psychological categories to theoretically support the recognition of everyone’s right to form their own identity. So, Taylor rejects the ethical neutrality of the State and identifies its dangers in assimilating the non-recognition into an oppression that damages the psychological integrity of the individual. For Taylor, it prevents him from realizing his own identity and imprisons him in a false, distorted, and reduced way of being (however, see Sartori’s critical details on oppression, Sartori, 2000: pp. 67-68).

According to Taylor, the authenticity concept, that same concept which modern sensibility advocates, requires Western contemporary democracies to have an active commitment towards identity policies. It is a framework in which Walzer’s proposal for type 2 liberalism can be placed. Walzer (1999) challenges liberalism on issues connected with social democracy and related to the community membership concept, management of social conflict, and passionate engagement in politics. The 2 types of liberalism are the response to the fact that inherited communal identities continue to survive in spite of territorial and social separation due to the four mobilities—geographic, social, marital, and political mobility—which are produced from the economic globalization process and favored by technological progress. This explains why the 2-type liberalism proposal, which recognizes the individual as holder not only of individual rights to freedom and life but also of other rights that do not derive from our humanity but from collective goods with a local and particular character, is a necessary corrective of the 1-type liberalism. This correction avoids moral individualism’s social disruptive effects—from institutionalization of weak social ties to inconsistency of identity, to social isolation and political disengagement—and is the only condition for fully realizing the promises of liberalism’s freedom, justice, and equality.

For his part, Honneth’s recognition theory (1992) proposes the identification of three degrees in the recognition process corresponding to three moments of the identity formation process—that of primary relations, that of juridical relations and that of ethical community—realizes the conceptual union between self-determination and self-esteem which cannot be preserved regardless the possibility of putting shared group values into practice.

The request for recognition of differentiated public institutions returns in the pluralist version of normative Multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 1995). On the one hand,

Pluralist Multiculturalism sets a threshold to the recognition by admitting the non-recognition of traditions opposing liberal principles (for example, in the case of Islamic culture groups: polygamy, infibulation, talaq divorces, arranged marriages, and so on). On the other hand, it supports the implementation of interventions able to make liberal institutions as actually accessible and usable by immigrants (for example, school curriculum adjustments, adapting standards for job selection to curriculum, modifying times and workplaces, dress code adjustments). The recognition of institutions conforms to specific traditions of immigrant communities, in particular schools, hospitals, houses, and cemeteries. The request of a differentiated citizenship, of including “pieces” of minority group culture in our institutions, seems to remain in the social-democratic domain (Zamagni, 2002).

This public respect for community life is, for multiculturalists, the condition for promoting peaceful relationships among communities (Thompson, 2002).

However, the communitarian multiculturalist perspective is a political-philosophical and not a sociological perspective. Even pluralistic Multiculturalism is a philosophical position that doesn't sufficiently consider that socialization is made at school. Thus, these perspectives do not eliminate the integration problems. Sociologically, the procedural integration is problematic. From this point of view, the multiculturalist emphasis on ethnic roots, on the construction of a wrapped identity in the secure mesh of traditions and community ties, against an individualized modernity that weakened the interweaving of community ties and the self-formation process, raises serious doubts about its ability to create social integration and consequently social cohesion. Terms such as social balkanization, tribalization, parallel societies can be used to indicate that indifference towards reciprocity and culture as relational fact, that is, towards a platform, albeit the least, of common values and norms or common meanings among groups, risks producing a segmented society, a society that does not find points of unity and union because it has closed, unrelated, uncommunicating social groups having strong intra-group bonds and weak inter-group bonds. As mentioned, this is an externalized integration that allows groups to survive without culturally integrating. Indeed, since groups share norms but do not share those meaning values on which also the integration and the cohesion, social ties, communication, and relationality among groups depend, they are increasingly strangers to each other and potentially in conflict on the level of important relational orientation values (e.g., gender equality). The procedural functional foundation of social order offers no mediation or solution to cultural conflicts and leaves intact the cohesion problem. Sociologically, it risks exacerbating differences, producing mutual separation rather than social integration. In conclusion, the externalized integration and communitarization risks reifying cultures by producing an isolationist drift or pluralism of monocultures for which, Sen says, normative Multiculturalism is a fallacious reasoning (Sen, 2006a).

Moreover, Multiculturalism risks not only amplifying the potential for social conflict but also establishing forms of social injustice by maintaining those intra-

group cultural discriminatory practices through group rights.

Reflections of this kind have opened up different scenarios and oriented us towards alternative solutions.

Can we, Bauman asks, refer to the community after the exile to which modernity has confined it, and forget the lesson of history? Can the virtues of the community serve to forgive everything, to forget everything, that is, the overbearing force of internal pressures, the propensity to ethnocentrism, to collective narcissism (Bauman, 1999)? It is precisely the lesson of history, for Bauman, that shows the inherent risks in Multiculturalism and leads us towards a pluralist model of difference management.

Bauman does not invoke other reasons than those that convey the most widespread sociological consensus. By a significant reference to Odo Marquand, Bauman reminds us that the absolute ideal of good, which is safeguarded within the community life as its foundation, knots its members into a single and stable whole (an absolute principle such as race superiority, one God, one party, one law of history). It is a device of cohesion and integration intra-group, but also many massacres inter-groups which are committed in the name of truth, and, as we said, sheltered from any sense of responsibility and risk of being condemned by one's own conscience. Instead, one should recognize that the openness to dialogue which is encouraged by the Pluralism and Marquand's pluralizing hermeneutics—the agreement by all contenders that a text can lend itself to different, new and original, interpretations (Bauman, 1999: p. 13)—induces to lay down arms and to transform the intransigence of “being for kill” (*ibidem*) of a singularizing hermeneutics in the art of mutually negotiating meanings that is “being for the text” (*ibidem*). As Marquand says by pluralizing hermeneutics, Bauman refers to pluralism, and challenges communitarians to find in history, at the first cry of the human individual, even a single example of conflicts, inter and intra-group cruelty acts which are perpetrated in plural tolerance and pluralism. In other words, according to the Polish sociologist, the solution to the fear of nihilist danger that frightens detractors of polytheism cannot reside in what ultimately is an anachronistic leap backwards. We need to overcome that gap of relationality between cultural groups, which the multiculturalist indifference towards traits of common symbolic language institutes. A shared symbolic code among groups, even a minimum shared belief (a way of representing and meaning the world, that is, values, norms, and behavior expectations), is the condition for the constitution of the social, communicative interaction systems. A minimum common ground makes possible both dialogue and interaction among groups and provides anchorage to social integration and cohesion. Even for Bauman, this means that the social integration strategy is a pluralistic strategy.

Opening a parenthesis, today there is in the West the recognition of a more individual freedom of meaning rather than in the previous historical-social period where communitarization prevails over individualization. Today, the individual is no longer what the community is, and there is less symbolic integration and more

functional integration. This means the social system has ensured a symbolic differentiation of individual consciousness, which produces meaning and is never totally flattened by structural, institutionalized restraints, and a lesser symbolic connection in a rapport between communitarization or connection and individualization or differentiation, that is, respect for individual personality-identity or individual difference, who is freedom to give meaning to the world. This recognition of a more individual freedom of meaning, which can disorganize social systems, indicates that the resulting social system is unpredictable in its structure and meaning and is emergent. From actual perspectives, this proves that the social system is a complex system. According to Prigogine and Stengers, complexity as a scientific category is *essential unpredictability*, referring to systemic changes that are deterministic, but not predetermined, and unpredictable changes (Prigogine & Stengers, 1979; 1984). Indeed, in the new *Sistemic Thinking*, the social system—macro—unpredictably changes meaning of its structures—as mentioned, values, norms, behavior expectations—who is triggered by individual consciousness—micro—by selecting and stabilizing that best meaning fittings to perturbations or input due to individual consciousness in a rapport between connection and differentiation, determinism and unpredictability, that is, *sociologically* social communitarism and individualism. Unpredictability is a system structural property or micro-macro-micro fact (Luhmann, 1984; Condorelli, 2020; 2025). From this new theoretical perspective, ‘having meaning’ means that *emergently* the social system organizes and orders, that is, actualizes the meaning of its own structures when what has already been actualized is prevented. Staticity and predictability, which are implied by linear determinism, are not properties of social systems and society as a sum of all social relationships. Social systems do not have asymptotic stability due to negative feedback that dampens inputs and returns the system to its previous state. Instead, unpredictably, unexpectedly, and in consequence emergently or by the burden of uncertainty due to the fact that whole is more of its parts, social systems change the meaning of their social structures due to positive feedback and a micro-macro-micro relation or circular, reciprocal, relation between structure-action or system-environment (as mentioned, individual consciousness which is never completely flattened on institutionalized constraints and always is a potential producer of meaning). *Change* means to improve actual opportunities and even return to a previous system organization, for example, return to a dictatorship or totalitarianism after the freedom politics by values and norms of social freedom (Luhmann, 1984; Condorelli, 2025). The progressive semantic shift or communicative-relational meaning changes of the social system proves its *temporalized complexity*, that is, the property of the meaning and communication instability as momentary elements in their duration—meaning of structures and actions in relationships—and the resulting *emergent* capacity for innovation of social systems, and social system society, in ongoing process of interdependence between system disintegration and reproduction, or in a continuum between connection and differentiation, system disorganization and new self-organization due

to the relation between system and environment. This new system organization reflects on micro individual consciousness, allows individuals to act and interact, and the micro-macro-micro process restarts. Since the relationship organization can change, it is a clear sign of the social system's restlessness (Luhmann, 1984). As mentioned, 'having meaning' means that emergently the social system actualizes the meaning of its own structures when what has already been actualized "disappears, becomes thinner, abandons its actuality due to its intrinsic instability" (Luhmann, 1984: p. 154). The social system changes, and "determinism and emergence" means system complexity. This means that social integration with other cultural groups excludes Multiculturalism, which symbolically separates cultural groups. Instead, today in the West, Pluralism, recognizing individual freedom or differentiation from the environment with a minimum of shared values, such as freedom and gender equality, is preferable—as we will also deal with Interculturalism. In this framework, the Bauman perspective can be inserted.

Bauman doesn't say it but in his perspective the interdependence between system disintegration and reproduction, between connection and differentiation, system disorganization and new self-organization expresses that normal, permanent, human condition of individual ambivalence (micro) which is selected, stabilized and recognized to level of norms and values by social system society—macro—and clashes with classical reductionism (Bauman, 1991). Today, ambivalence means individual meaning freedom and is recognized by the social system, animating processes of symbolic differentiation and democratization of traditional order for a new structural organization (macro), which in turn is reflected in action, expanding the choice uncertainty and undecidability. Therefore, as mentioned, also with regard to a multiplicity of cultural groups, the social system forges a macro basis, even if minimal, of shared values between *us* and *them*, reducing symbolic complexity, that is, different ways to give meaning to the world. This is the sociological response to the problem of social integration in globalized societies, as well as a general criterion for evaluating proposed models of cultural difference management. For many sociologists, including Bauman, the best integration strategy is Pluralism (Baubock, 1996) because it considers the individual as meaning freedom and at the same time makes society possible.

In more detail, the central core of Pluralism is the reciprocity of difference recognition, that is, the sharing, albeit minimal, of common values in order to activate peaceful relationships and cooperation. Pluralism expresses a social vision that implies living together and not alongside others. Reciprocity, which is understood as a reciprocal disposition to openness and acceptance, implies the recognition of coexistence rules of host society—our values of liberty and equality—that underline norms and role expectations by those who are hosted and the recognition of traditional values of those who are hosted by host society, provided that these values are not contrary to freedom and equality values. On the one hand, reciprocity tempers the sharing as is conceived in the assimilationist model. On the other hand, reciprocity avoids the isolationist drift of the normative Multicul-

turalism. Indeed, the pluralist integrative strategy can avoid the mono-culturalism risks and the social balkanization and *illiberal confusion* risks (Sen, 2006b), legitimizing oppressive cultural traditions in the name of an absolute truth. In this regard, Boudon ends the matter by saying that “cultural rights of groups and sub-groups must be recognized is one thing, that this should imply the acceptance of axiological relativism is another” (Boudon, 1999: p. 45, *Our Trad.*).

For his part, as we said, Bauman defends Pluralism against communitarization of Normative Multiculturalism, without referring to Marquand’s human finitude.

Pluralist position is sociologically correct. Social integration and cohesion cannot do without sharing and reciprocity between groups. We should theoretically stop at Pluralism. However, if we consider individuals who are already socialized to different values and legal rights of freedom and gender equality and intend to remain rooted in their ethnic roots, Pluralism is a difficult empirical position. Facing these perplexities, how can we reduce the social complexity in its dimension of symbolic differentiation and avoid an unrelated and conflicting sociality among cultural groups?

In this regard, Interculturalism is a possible solution. As we will argue, Interculturalism overcomes Pluralism by getting to the true meaning of reciprocity. Interculturalism “expands” the pluralistic reciprocity in a bi-directional adaptation process, in a dialogue process for mutual learning, a mutual fertilization among cultures for an enriched identity.

3. Interculturalism

Sociologically, in poly-ethnic democracies, there is an increasing consensus that policies which are capable of creating greater integration and social cohesion are those that employ a different management strategy based on Interculturalism, that is, on a bidirectional process or mutual adaptation and learning. Compared to Pluralism, the intercultural mutual learning recognizes that minority groups can propose changes to the host society, provided that these changes are in the best interest of the proposing cultural groups and do not violate the rights of freedom of any other group (Cantle, 2016). If some proposals are accepted (the acceptance criterion will be discussed later), they are valid for all groups, including the host society. This intercultural reciprocity is the foundation of social life. Reciprocity and dialogue meaning are expanded rather than Pluralism, which implies a non-extended reciprocity.

Interculturalism is configured as an interactive project of coexistence in and with cultural differences, promoting the integration process. Indeed, there is a *fertilization* among cultures for a new identity concept, collective and individual identity, that regards changes in every involved parties: on the one hand, Interculturalism implies the valorization of one’s own cultural identity, and, on the other hand, it accepts what can enrich the cultural identity in the logic of a mutual encounter, dialogue and learning among different cultural identities. This is the perspective by which Interculturalism establishes a group coexistence in the public

space, enabling the promotion of civic engagement of actors that are involved in socio-political processes, that is, in a public debate where semantic negotiation favors the reciprocal learning between cultural groups. In this framework, Donati's difference management proposal defines societal reflexivity as the way to produce those "goods" that deserve to be recognized and pursued as citizenship rights by the entire political community (Donati, 2005: p. 44). A central element in the intercultural model is a reformulation of the citizenship process as an up-down process. It does not require the disappearance of differences, but their equality at a structural level, which implies the universal equality of rights and obligations of citizenship. So, on the one hand, an enriched common basis capable of forging bonds between groups and peaceful social cooperation is built. On the other hand, the intercultural solution responds to the social equity principle by being able to avoid that confusion between cultural freedom and defense of every form of cultural heritage, orienting choices (Sen, 2006b, *ibidem*).

For the above-mentioned reasons, today Interculturalism is proposed as a new policy of governance of cultural differences (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2010; Bouchard, 2011; Cattle, 2012; Antonsich, 2015; Guidikova, 2014; 2015).

Resuming the thread of our discussion, sociologically Interculturalism constitutes a leap in quality with regard to Pluralism as well as to Multiculturalism, which risks closing groups into themselves and reifying cultures.

On the one hand, as we mentioned, conceptual differences between Interculturalism and Multiculturalism can be grasped. Interculturalism means building a *modus vivendi* which is based on a sharing that derives from encounter and new dialogue, meaning between identities. As we said, it is not a matter of crystallizing them, separating them, and ultimately opposing them to each other (multiculturalist isolationism or solution by addition), but of encouraging all groups, including the cultural majority of host society, to engage in a meaningful dialogue, that is, in a mutual learning process or culture fertilization process of cultures for the formation of an enriched identity which is capable of leading differences to unity, to a world of common meanings which is rooted in a solid ground of mutual understanding (Donati, 2005: p. 60). We can also say that there is a fusion of cognitive horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*), which is the necessary condition for mutual understanding (Gadamer, 1960).

Thus, Interculturalism distances itself from the essentialist or reified culture conception. In so doing, Interculturalism overcomes Multiculturalism's sociological paradox concerning cultural identities as static and monolithic. As mentioned, Multiculturalism conceives both a reified culture, which is considered rooted in territory, and a fixed identity according to which differences must be interpreted only in terms of origin and culture. It doesn't resolve social cohesion and integration problems. Instead, an intercultural society as a network of crossed cultural identities dissolves the multiculturalist sociological paradox by two principles: the prevalence of the individual and his freedom of choice over the group, and a conception of the culture as a dynamic process of meaning construction

with others and through others, and not a fixed entity. As Baumann (1999) says, we move from a discourse of dominant culture to a discourse of demiotic culture which affirms the cultural and spiritual identity distinguishing the West and enriches this identity with other cultures of which the group minorities are bearers, and vice versa. So, saying, the conception of the multiculturalist society as a mosaic of fixed cultural identities and an impasse in which Multiculturalism stops.

On the other hand, the social vision proposed by the intercultural model overcomes the limits of Pluralism by forging a shared basis of values through a concept of reciprocity that incorporates that of Pluralism (reciprocity oriented by the liberal and democratic ethos that characterizes the culture of modern Western societies) and “expands” it. So, there is a difference between Interculturalism and Pluralism, which is a difference in method in order to achieve unity.

The relationship between Interculturalism and Multiculturalism constitutes the core of a debate that is still very controversial. On the whole, Interculturalists consider Interculturalism as “a step forward with regard to Multiculturalism” (Maxwell et al., 2012: p. 429), and as ‘an opportunity to replace Multiculturalism as a conceptual and political framework’ (Cantle, 2012: p. 2). For the reasons mentioned above, the idea of a culture that is fixed in space and time is denied in favour of the intrinsic dynamism of culture, its fluid nature, or capacity for change through dialogue. For example, Cantle has no doubts that Multiculturalism erodes the foundations of social integration and cohesion, the universality of human rights and equal human dignity (see also Guidikova, 2014: pp. 4-5), and promotes the formation of parallel societies, social balkanization by its emphasis on group identity politics. In turn, supporters of Multiculturalism reject these criticisms (for example, Taylor, 2012). Meer and Modood (2012; 2016) argue that Interculturalism, by its capacity to advance proposals from cultural groups of minorities who emigrated to the West, is even just a variant, a particular version, and a *critical friend* of Multiculturalism itself. The same is true for Zapata-Barrero (2016; 2018) and Kymlicka (2016). And, although the need to refine the conceptual framework towards a clearer balance between unity and diversity, majority and minority, is recognized, Modood states Interculturalism is implicit in Multiculturalism and considers still valid Multiculturalism as a theoretical and effective political proposal (Modood, 2017; 2018a; 2018b).

Also, from my point of view, there is a clear difference between Interculturalism and Multiculturalism.

In more analytical terms, it is necessary to underline three qualifying aspects of the intercultural proposal that make it capable of making society by reconciling the cultural difference with the need for social integration and cohesion.

The first aspect concerns the criterion capable of orienting dialogue, which makes it possible and brings it to a peaceful conclusion, and social unity and union between *us* and *them*. In this perspective, since dialogue is not a colloquy at the end of which everyone goes with intact his own convictions but intends to build a common world, an enriched identity, common meanings capable of ensuring re-

lationality among groups, and a more secure basis for cohesion and integration, Interculturalism glimpsed the need for a reflection on conditions capable of making its practicability effective. How to build this common world? What dialogue, given that cultural differences often appear insurmountable? On what basis is it possible to build a mutual understanding on which to anchor the dialogue between cultures? To answer these questions and engage in dialogue on values, a cultural criterion has been recognized that guides the dialogue itself. If cultural specificities have the right to preserve their own identity, Interculturalism institutionalizes this recognition within the principle of human dignity respect, that is, the Western human freedom and equality respect (or *Leitkultur*, Tibi, 2002). It is codified in European Constitutions and is affirmed as a meta-cultural or superordinate criterion, as it is valid for all cultural groups. In this way, regardless of any dogmatics of faith, Interculturalism distinguishes between cultural differences that can be accepted and confirmed because they do not violate the principle of respect for human dignity, and those that cannot be accepted in a common world of symbolic meanings. As we already said, these proposals are evaluated by both minority and majority groups and, if accepted, are valid for all groups, not just those who presented them. This acceptance is independent of hegemonic national connotations and able to ensure the possibility of intercultural dialogue and the resolution of cultural conflicts.

So, although both Multiculturalism and Interculturalism give importance to dialogue, the purpose theoretically assigned to dialogue is different. On the one hand, Multiculturalism consistently emphasizes the “multi”, on the other hand, Interculturalism consistently emphasizes the “inter” by seeking a principle for dialogue that guarantees unity. On the one hand, Multiculturalism insists on separate difference recognition. On the other hand, Interculturalism places dialogue within the framework of interventions that are aimed at integration. From this point of view, the limits of Multiculturalism are overcome.

More specifically, according to Donati, overcoming Multiculturalism requires a revision of rationality theories. His conceptualization expands rationality beyond its classical dimensions, both from the restrictive Durkheimian functionalist conception and from the Weberian conception by overcoming the idea that values are not judgeable since they are the expression of a common feeling. In Donati’s perspective, given that each culture is different and based on the effects that its symbolic values produce in relationships they inform, the recognition of cultural differences (accepted, confirmed or rejected) comes from the exercise of a public reason which is applied to relationships, a reflexive capacity of symbolic rationality (good reasons) that evaluates the rationality not only to its content of instrumental rationality (means) or relational normativity but to its correspondence to what is worthy of the human, to what which is inalienable, non-negotiable, that is, to the human dignity value (Donati, 2005: p. 109). Therefore, what matters is whether certain symbolic values produce in relationships that they structure a growth of humanization of individuals who are involved in these relationships.

Following this argue, for example, it becomes possible to recognize the infibulation, polygamy, repudiation, arranged marriages, the man-woman relationship characterized by various forms of social and legal discrimination of women, and even the Islamic veil, as irrational no less than the Barbagia code that legitimises revenge, and this not because human rights are violated—a completely Western concept on which identity conflicts are triggered—but because these practices are unable to produce a growth of humanization of women, of their dignity as a proper character (property) of the human. In other terms, Donati specifies that the human dignity principle is a superordinate criterion that ensures a mutual dialogue by permitting a judgment of rationality on values that is independent of cultural and dogmatic justifications that are based on faith. In fact, the reflexive rationality can activate a reciprocal exchange of symbolic meanings capable of leading to a morphogenesis of cultural identities and to dialogue in order to the formation of a common world which is worthy of the human. This exchange solves possible cultural conflicts since it is independent of the culture in which the human dignity principle is embedded. In conclusion, it is the adoption of a *relational paradigm* that ensures the effective feasibility of the intercultural project for the foundation of that *constitutional societalism* capable of going beyond Multiculturalism's isolationist risks.

In the same way, Zamagni (2002) emphasizes the need for a society that establishes principles and norms of social living by assuming the dignity of the human person as an essential and universal criterion. Faced with the cultural multiplicity, this proposal is that of a project of transcultural coexistence which, regardless of particular cultural roots, is based not only on what is tolerable but also respectable and shareable, firmly anchoring each of these three levels to the protection of human dignity as a principle that cannot be valid only for Western societies.

The second aspect concerns the meaning by which the reciprocity concept should be understood. As mentioned, Intercultural reciprocity implies a fertilization of involved cultural identities as a result of a participatory dialogic process. It is not only a matter of correcting the relationship as a unilateral recognition from majority to minority groups, but also proposing education programs that are widely debated in political circles in various European contexts. It is a matter of proposing the bi-directionality principle. Interculturalism goes to the most specific meaning of the relationship and reciprocity, completing the recognition process in terms of a circular relational process which is open to a possible morphogenesis of every identity that is involved in a relational circuit (majority and minority). Circular reciprocity is oriented by the value of human dignity and is able to act as a catalyst for positive changes within cultures. So, the benefits of an intercultural approach reverberate on all parties. A mutual comparison can constitute an incentive to open up to liberal and democratic values for minority cultures and an incentive to review certain extremisms of individualization and secularization processes for post-modern Western societies (Marzano, 2002: p. 272).

From this point of view, in reference to most traditionalist Islamic communi-

ties, Sachar is convinced that dividing the jurisdictional authority between majority and minority cultural groups according to a sort of joint governance approach that prevents from having exclusive control over controversial social issues can favor a transformative accommodation which is oriented to greater responsibility of traditional Islamic groups towards their constituent members (Sachar, 2001: p. 117), and above all to a more equal protection of most vulnerable members (Muslim women are the subject of reference. They often pay with coercion or even with their life for free choice and self-realization which are not recognized by the Islamic tradition).

The third qualifying aspect of the intercultural integration model is a new secularism concept, known as open secularism. This is a condition of the public sphere that no longer excludes religious groups and expressions from a space of common discourse, which, however, remains a secular sphere. Indeed, the dialogue between different religious groups, which at the dawn of the third millennium occupy increasingly Western public space, is submitted to the principle of human dignity respect as a principle of mutual “moderation” between faith and reason. In this perspective, the intercultural model recognizes that different religious groups can dialogue in a public sphere and valorizes their relational resources for a common world, but secularization of State as a neutral State in respect to religious forms is not in question. The reciprocal function of “temperation” is the keystone of the intercultural discourse. In so doing, it is capable of achieving social integration, a new order with coherence, and defeating the limits of the assimilationist model as well as the social balkanization and cultural conflict problems of multiculturalist ideology.

Some successful Interculturalism attempts are exemplified by the Canadian debate on Sharia courts held in Ontario in 2005. The Islamic Institute of Civil Justice proposed the creation of Sharia courts, which are based on Islamic religious law, to resolve family law disputes. A public debate emerged between supporters of religious rights and supporters of women’s rights, that is, between members of a traditional Muslim community and other social parties such as non-Muslim women and men, and secular and liberal or progressive Muslims. This proposal was rejected because women’s rights are not respected, and this ban was extended to all forms of religious-based arbitration and to all religious groups. It is important to highlight this result. It was achieved through a public debate and a process of peaceful negotiation between all involved groups. The principle of respect for women’s dignity, for her freedom, prevailed over the criterion of equal respect for cultural groups.

The Canadian case shows that the reference to the superordinate principle of human dignity respect rather than the Secular State principle can be an appropriate solution to other problematic issues in the West, such as the use of the Islamic veil for Muslim women. Three Muslim female students were expelled from school because they wore the traditional veil on their heads. In 2004, this controversy concluded in France with the official prohibition of the veil in public places, but

it continues to persist and has spread to other European countries that are dealing with a growing Islamic presence in their territory. This controversy lies in the fact that the ban is usually justified by the secular State principle, favoring some systematic criticism from the traditional Muslim minority, which accused the majority of assimilationism and cultural discrimination. At this level, this issue is destined to constitute a perennial source of cultural and identity conflicts. Instead, a public debate that considers those women who undergo this practice and do not freely choose to wear the veil as a symbol of their religious and cultural identity is preferable. It refers to the secular, superordinate principle of human dignity respect, which is able to work better in order to solve identity conflicts through a more convincing reason for limitations of public tolerance on the use of the veil, similar to what happened in Canada for the Islamic courts' refusal. Today, many secular feminists invoke this principle and consider any manifestations of tolerance on the use of the veil by Islamic feminists as naive Multiculturalism (Tamzali, 2010).

In conclusion, the culture concept as a dynamic process and the multicultural society concept as a network of crossed identifications can avoid the normative Multiculturalism impasse by balancing cultural difference and social integration and cohesion. Interculturalism is capable of safeguarding the possibility of a shared symbolic code, which is an integrative, connective, relational meaning constraint reducing symbolic complexity, that is, producing social organization and avoiding socio-cultural conflicts.

4. Conclusion

How can we try to lay the foundations for a good praxis and a good multi-ethnic society? What is the best strategy for orienting dialogue between *us* and *them* and balancing our relationships?

In an era of super-diversity, the idea of cultural homologation, Lévi-Strauss (1952) says in his *Race et Histoire*, is unsustainable. Indeed, the idea of separation and estrangement of different cultural groups that are in the same social space cannot be supported. Separation, enclosure in communities of similar people, in islands of uniformity (Bauman, 2005), is not the right device to ensure cohesion and integration, a peaceful coexistence, and social cooperation. Fundamentalist tendencies, mixophobic and xenophobic tendencies, fear of cultural difference with its gated communities, mutual opposition between *us* and *them* with its cultural ghettos (it does not matter whether they are imposed or even wanted by individuals who intend to remain separated), are nourished whenever cultures are essentialized, reified and the impossibility of mutually engaging in meaningful communication, in an intimate and profound way, in a human way (Sennett, 1996), manifests. Therefore, as sociologists, we are convinced that it is unrealistic to think that a new positive coexistence can arise from the salad bowl model. We are convinced of perplexities on the sufficiency of the procedural functionalist foundation as a social integration constraint to make society between *us* and *them*, and, con-

sequently, on identity policies that normative Multiculturalism proposes.

In conclusion, the multiculturalist dream seems to shatter. Social separation and social cultural conflicts are fomented whenever cultures are reified. The solution is the pluralizing hermeneutics of Marquand and the de-reification of every cultural reification. And in particular, Interculturalism can do it, reconciling integration, cohesion, and difference recognition and repairing the relational gap among cultural groups instituted from normative Multiculturalism. And it can do so, not merely because it institutes a public, dialogic sphere, but above all because it anchors the possibility and resolution of dialogue to mutual sharing of the value of human dignity respect as an integrative constraint.

Funding

This essay was conducted as part of the research activities of the University of Catania—University Research Plan 2024-2026—Re.Com.Te. (Responsibility, Complexity, Technologies) Project.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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