

Interculturality as a Space of Convergence Between the Global and the Local: Identity, Dialogue, and Diversity

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Abstract

Interculturality constitutes one of the most fertile themes of reflection in the contemporary world, situated at the intersection between globalization and the affirmation of local identities.

The phenomenon of globalization has produced a profound reconfiguration of cultural spaces, generating both tendencies toward homogenization and reactions aimed at reaffirming difference. In this context, identity becomes a fluid construct, engaged in a continuous process of negotiation between the personal and collective dimensions of existence. The present analysis explores the ways in which intercultural dialogue can function as a means of balancing local belonging and universal openness, between cultural specificity and the shared values of humanity. Interculturality is understood here not as the mere coexistence of differences, but as an active space of reflexive interaction and mutual recognition. From this perspective, cultural diversity ceases to be an obstacle and becomes a resource for knowledge and solidarity. At the normative and educational level, the discussion evokes principles that uphold equality, non-discrimination, and the protection of minority identities, with particular emphasis on the specific realities of the Romanian context. The text thus proposes a reading of interculturality as a civic and moral attitude, a foundation of social cohesion in a plural world marked by global transformations.

Keywords: *interculturality, globalization, cultural identity, diversity, intercultural dialogue, social cohesion.*

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Globalization has profoundly reshaped the cultural field of the contemporary world, generating a complex network of economic, technological, and symbolic interdependencies. In this context, the relationship between the global and the local becomes a fundamental theme for understanding the ways in which identities are constituted, transformed, and redefined. Arjun Appadurai (1996) regards globalization as a process that multiplies the flows of ideas, people, and images, producing hybrid cultural spaces. Beyond its economic dimension, the global becomes an imaginative force that reconfigures the way in which individuals relate to the world and to themselves. Anthony Giddens (1991) argues that late modernity introduces a rupture in the relationship between space and time, making possible the simultaneity of experiences and a redefinition of the relationship between locality and universality.

At the same time, Zygmunt Bauman (2011) speaks of a “liquid modernity,” in which values, structures, and identity markers become fluid, subject to continuous renegotiation. This instability generates not only uncertainty but also the possibility of rediscovering diversity as a resource of meaning. In such a world, interculturality is no longer reduced to the mere coexistence of differences but entails an active dialogue between identities, constructed on the basis of recognition and reciprocity. Gerard Delanty (2011) advances the concept of democratic cosmopolitanism as a space of encounter between cultures, where difference is no longer perceived as an impediment but as a potential for learning and transformation.

At the educational level, the intercultural perspective is manifested in formative models that valorize plurality and promote empathetic understanding. Constantin Cucoş (2000) and Anca Nedelcu (2008) underscore that intercultural education must transcend the rhetoric of tolerance by offering instruments for genuine interaction among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the same vein, James A. Banks (2015) indicates that diversity becomes a constitutive component of the educational process and a prerequisite for the development of global citizenship.

Interculturality may thus be conceptualized as a space of convergence between the global and the local, a modality of articulating difference within an interconnected world. It conveys not only a theory of diversity but also a practice of dialogue, an ethics of relationality, and a mode of constructing solidarity in a context defined by continuous transformation and social complexity.

Globalization and the Reconfiguration of Cultural Boundaries

Globalization can no longer be analyzed through the restrictive lens of the global economy but must be understood as a profound process of reconfiguring cultural, symbolic, and intersubjective spaces. In the current era, geographical distances no longer constitute real barriers; rather, they are transformed into distances of meaning, within a context in which contact between cultures is not only more frequent but also more complex (Appadurai, 1996). This transformation entails a shift in the interpretative framework: we no longer speak of encounters between isolated cultures but of interactions among fluid, overlapping, and unstable networks of meaning.

This reconceptualization of globalization is supported by the transnational perspective on identity and culture, in which mobility, migration, and digitalization contribute to the dilution of rigid boundaries between the “here” and the “beyond” (Featherstone, 1990). Instead of a binary approach - global versus local - a dynamic interdependence is asserted, in which the local is redefined within the global, and the global is articulated through a multiplicity of local expressions (Robertson, 2013). Within this logic, cultural space is no longer a territorial entity but a field of relational forces, where meanings are continuously negotiated and hybridized (Bhabha, 2012).

An essential aspect of this dynamic is the manner in which globalization produces a “compression of time and space” (Giddens, 1991), generating a symbolic proximity between individuals and cultures that were previously situated in peripheral relations. In this context, intercultural contact is no longer limited to tourism or commerce but involves a profound interaction between systems of values, norms, and practices that mutually influence one another. However, this interaction is not symmetrical: global power relations continue to shape the hierarchies of cultural visibility and legitimacy (Delanty, 2011).

The transformations produced by globalization are visible in the field of education, where new imperatives arise regarding intercultural training and the cultivation of dialogical competences in contexts marked by diversity (Banks, 2015). Cultural interactions can no longer be reduced to mere ethnic contacts but must be understood as processes of meaning negotiation, in which identities are asserted, adapted, and redefined (Nedelcu, 2008). This complexity requires a critical pedagogy of interculturality, capable of articulating difference

without exoticizing it and of encouraging convergences without imposing uniformity (Dasen, Perregaux & Rey, 1999).

At the same time, globalization creates the conditions for the emergence of new types of social spaces: hyper-diverse environments in which cultural difference is simultaneously a norm and a challenge (Duyvendak, Foner & Kasinitz, 2020). In these spaces, “traditional cultural distinctions” become increasingly inapplicable, being replaced by fluid, transitory, and interconnected configurations (Welsch, 1999). It is precisely this fluidity that renders the process of globalization difficult to control and to regulate in classical normative terms.

Therefore, globalization must be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that operates through a series of profound transformations of symbolic space and cultural interaction. It is no longer solely about the flows of goods and capital, but about a network of connections in which meanings circulate, collide, and are reconfigured (Bauman, 2011). Within this framework, distance becomes a matter of understanding and recognition, not of kilometers – and the fundamental challenge of our age is not physical displacement, but the negotiation of meanings in a world that is becoming simultaneously more proximate and more fragmented (Todorov, 2010).

The globalization process has often been described as a homogenizing force capable of dissolving cultural differences into a standardized symbolic universe. However, the reality is far more complex. In parallel with this tendency toward uniformization, processes of reaffirmation of local and regional identities also emerge and intensify. These phenomena are not mutually exclusive, but coexist in a tense and dynamic relationship, outlining a fragile balance between global integration and cultural differentiation (Hall, 1990).

The phenomenon can be more clearly understood through the lens of the notion of “glocalization,” which designates the adaptation of global elements to local specificities, as well as the resistance of the local to the dynamics imposed by the symbolic centers of global power (Robertson, 2013). Within this framework, communities not only reaffirm their belonging to their own cultural traditions, but in many cases reactivate symbols, rituals, and identity narratives precisely in response to the perception of a globalizing invasion (Cucuş, 2000). Thus, the local becomes a space of cultural resilience, as well as of identity reconfiguration.

These forms of reaffirmation are, however, not always traditionalist or regressive. Many of them adopt hybrid and innovative forms, in which local cultural codes undergo a semantic reinterpretation

in accordance with the new conditions of global communication (Welsch, 1999). Therefore, cultural identity is not a retreat into the past, but an active process of negotiating difference in the face of pressure toward homogenization (Delanty, 2011). Precisely for this reason, we speak of a precarious balance, which involves both affirmation and adaptation.

At the same time, it cannot be ignored that certain forms of cultural reaffirmation are politically instrumentalized and can degenerate into exclusion, xenophobia, or ethnic nationalism (Duyvendak, Foner & Kasinitz, 2020). The appeal to “roots” sometimes becomes a strategy for legitimizing closed identity discourses that are incompatible with democratic pluralism. Thus, in the context of globalization, cultural difference is simultaneously a resource and a risk – and the challenge lies in maintaining a space of symbolic cohabitation in which diversity does not degenerate into fragmentation (Bauman, 2011).

Intercultural education plays an essential role in this equation. By promoting dialogue, critical reflection on identity, and the valorization of the other, education can contribute to the consolidation of a framework in which cultural reaffirmation does not entail exclusion or superiority (Dasen, Perregaux & Rey, 1999). Educational programs that integrate these principles enable the formation of subjectivities capable of articulating local belonging with global openness (Banks, 2015).

In addition, increased mobility – whether physical, digital, or symbolic – accentuates the need for flexible forms of identity that allow individuals to navigate multiple cultural spaces without losing the coherence of the self (Nedelcu, 2008). Thus, the defense of identity no longer implies rigidity, but rather the capacity to transform tradition into an instrument of adaptation (Todorov, 2010). In this logic, difference becomes a constructive dimension of globalization, not an impediment.

The constant contact between cultures, accelerated by new technologies and global networks, does not necessarily lead to the dilution of differences but can produce new forms of solidarity and symbolic coexistence (Giddens, 1991). However, for this potential to be realized, it is necessary to develop an awareness of the mechanisms of cultural hegemony that often accompany globalization, even in its apparently benign forms (Appadurai, 1996). Only a critical approach to these dynamics can prevent a slide into a superficial cosmopolitanism, incapable of recognizing the right to authentic difference (Bhabha, 2012).

Globalization does not signify the disappearance of the local, but its metamorphosis into an active node within the global network of meaning. Identity reaffirmation should not be perceived as an obstacle, but as a natural and even necessary response to a process that otherwise risks becoming leveling. In this framework, the fragile balance between integration and difference is not a problem to be solved, but a tension to be managed (Featherstone, 1990).

The concept of the “global village,” established in media studies and cultural sociology, initially referred to a world in which new communication technologies eliminate distances and enable quasi-immediate interaction between individuals, regardless of geographical location. This metaphor, however, has proven to be an excessive simplification, as it presupposes a homogenization of the global social and cultural space, ignoring the complexity of cross-border interactions and the persistence of symbolic differences (Giddens, 1991). In reality, globalization does not produce a uniform cultural space, but a dense and contradictory network of relations in which the universal and the particular not only coexist but also mutually shape one another (Hall, 1990).

The current global context reveals a configuration much closer to a mosaic: fragments of identity, cultural histories, and regimes of meaning encounter one another, enter into tension, or collaborate within a transnational framework that can no longer be understood from the perspective of traditional epistemological boundaries (Delanty, 2011). These interactions generate hybrid cultural forms, symbolic border zones in which meanings are continuously negotiated and rethought (Bhabha, 2012). Thus, globalization does not annul the particular, but places it in a permanent process of semantic reinterpretation.

The concept of “cosmopolitanism” becomes relevant in this regard, though not in the sense of an abstract universalism, but rather as a reflexive openness to alterity and an acknowledgment of cultural complexity (Robertson, 2013). This vision entails a repositioning of the globalized subject: not as a citizen of a world without differences, but as an actor within networks of meaning in which pluralism constitutes a foundational condition (Featherstone, 1990). Therefore, the universal is not imposed upon the particular, but is constituted through dialogue with it.

Intercultural education, for instance, reflects this logic through its attempt to build competences that do not impose a dominant culture, but rather stimulate the capacity to navigate among differences without hierarchizing them (Dasen, Perregaux & Rey, 1999). In this regard, the

educational process becomes a practice of recognizing and valuing alterity, contributing to the formation of fluid and open identities (Banks, 2015).

Global digital networks also contribute to this reconfiguration. They do not merely facilitate the transmission of information but create new spaces of cultural production in which individuals from diverse backgrounds can collaborate, engage in polemics, or construct shared meanings. At the same time, these networks can accentuate polarizations and intensify the phenomenon of the “cultural bubble,” in which the universal is instrumentalized according to particular interests (Appadurai, 1996). For this reason, symbolic globalization is not a linear process, but one marked by tensions and conflict.

The reflection on the relationship between the universal and the particular also entails an analysis of the mechanisms of cultural power. Not all forms of universalism are neutral; many are expressions of centers of influence that impose norms, values, and symbols as global standards (Bauman, 2011). Thus, the particular may become a form of critical resistance, a claim to diversity and autonomy in the face of symbolic homogenization (Cucuş, 2000).

In essence, the contemporary world can no longer be understood as an integrated cultural entity, but rather as a network of interconnected differences. The universal and the particular are not opposing poles, but terms defined through their relational dynamic. Each cultural contact generates the possibility of a reconfiguration of meaning, and this dynamic renders globalization not an end of difference, but a context in which difference becomes a source of innovation and critical reflection (Welsch, 1999).

Identity as a Dynamic Process in a Plural World

The socio-cultural transformations generated by globalization and intensified mobility have led to a profound reassessment of the concept of identity. Within classical paradigms, identity was often viewed as an essential given, a stable feature that conferred coherence upon the individual and situated them within a fixed social system. Today, however, this essentialist perspective is increasingly replaced by a processual approach, in which identity is understood as a continuous construction shaped by the interaction between the individual actor and their socio-cultural context (Hall, 1990).

Identity is not an immutable “inner core,” but a network of successive positionings, permanently negotiated in relation to alterity and to the dominant discourses of the time. This process of identity construction is influenced by multiple factors, such as ethnicity, gender,

social class, as well as by experiences of migration, globalization, or intercultural contact (Nedelcu, 2008). Thus, the individual does not possess a fixed identity, but navigates among multiple partial identities, each activated and redefined according to context (Giddens, 1991).

Global mobility amplifies these processes of identity negotiation. Contact with different values, norms, and life models compels the individual to reconsider their relation to the self and to others. In such a framework, identity becomes an open work, a temporary equilibrium between multiple belongings and symbolic tensions (Bhabha, 2012). To be "identical to oneself" no longer means to preserve an original tradition, but rather to be capable of coherently articulating one's own trajectory within a fragmented and fluid social space.

The structural changes in contemporary societies also demand a reconceptualization of identity education. It no longer concerns a univocal socialization into the values of a dominant culture, but the development of a competence for critical reflection and intercultural dialogue. The individual must be capable not only of understanding who they are, but also of grasping how this identity is perceived by others and what tensions may arise in this process of reciprocal mirroring (Banks, 2015). Education thus becomes a space for training in plurality and symbolic negotiation (Dasen, Perregaux & Rey, 1999).

At the theoretical level, this identity-related dynamic is supported by the constructivist perspective on culture. Identity is the result of discursive processes, being constituted through language, representation, and interaction (Cucoş, 2000). Therefore, it cannot be separated from the historical and symbolic context in which it is articulated. Any identity statement is, fundamentally, a positioning choice within a field of preexisting meanings (Todorov, 2010).

This perspective does not exclude identity stability but redefines it. Stability is not determined by essence, but by the narrative coherence that the individual constructs over time. Identity thus becomes a personal and collective project, realized through a permanent process of negotiation between aspirations, constraints, and possibilities for expression (Delanty, 2011). In a plural world, identity is not a definitive answer, but a continuous inquiry.

The constant exposure to alterity, characteristic of the contemporary world marked by globalization, migration, and transnational networks, leads to an intensification of the processes of identity pluralization. The individual no longer operates within a homogeneous framework of socialization, but navigates among multiple and often contradictory contexts, each requiring different forms

of belonging and self-expression. Identity thus becomes a composite territory, resulting from repeated contact with alterity and from the need for symbolic adaptation to multiple environments of existence (Appadurai, 1996).

This dynamic generates what the specialized literature refers to as “hybrid identities” or “layered identities” – identity configurations that combine ethnic, cultural, professional, religious, or gender-based affiliations, depending on the individual’s social and historical circumstances (Bhabha, 2012). Consequently, we can no longer speak of a singular identity, but of a set of positionings that vary according to context. Individuals may simultaneously belong to a traditional community, a globalized professional network, and a transnational digital group, each with its own norms and expectations (Featherstone, 1990).

The plurality of affiliations does not imply a dissolution of identity, but rather a capacity for continuous negotiation between these registers. The subject becomes a reflexive agent, capable of integrating external influences without losing internal coherence (Giddens, 1991). Identity reconfiguration occurs continuously through interaction – with others, with institutions, with cultural symbols, and with the technologies that mediate these relations (Welsch, 1999). Identity is no longer a fixed label, but a relational matrix, emergent in every situation of contact with alterity.

Intercultural education particularly highlights this identity multiplicity, emphasizing the need for competencies that allow navigation between diverse cultural frameworks. The formation of a reflexive identity consciousness precisely entails the recognition that affiliation is multiply encoded and contextually negotiable (Dasen, Perregaux & Rey, 1999). Pupils and students, especially those from multicultural environments, develop strategies of “identity translation,” oscillating between the values of family, school, and the broader social sphere (Banks, 2015).

In globalized urban environments, this logic of identity oscillation is intensified by spatial mobility and continuous exposure to diversity. Daily contact with alterity leads to an internalization of pluralism, in which difference is no longer perceived as an exception but as a norm (Duyvendak, Foner & Kasinitz, 2020). This condition of “normalization of diversity” imposes a redefinition of social cohesion and a permanent reconstruction of the meaning of one’s own positioning in the world (Delanty, 2011).

At the same time, this identity plurality may also generate dissonances, tensions, or ambiguities. The individual is often

compelled to manage incongruent demands originating from different spheres of belonging – for instance, professional norms may come into conflict with traditional cultural values, or religious affiliation may contrast with the expectations of the secular Western environment (Robertson, 2013). In such situations, the capacity for critical reflection and symbolic mediation becomes essential for maintaining a functional and adaptive identity (Cucoş, 2000).

Identity, under these conditions, can no longer be conceived in terms of original coherence or cultural purity. It is the product of ongoing negotiations between the symbolic instances of diversity and personal aspirations for unity and meaning. In a world marked by mobility, fluidity, and transnational networks, identity becomes an open process, subject to continuous redefinition through interaction and differentiation (Bauman, 2011).

The interaction between cultures, intensified by the processes of globalization and transnational mobility, generates a diversity of identity and behavioral responses, subsumed in the specialized literature under the concept of adaptation strategies. These strategies are situated along a continuum, ranging from attitudes aimed at preserving the original cultural specificity to complex forms of intercultural synthesis that involve selection, reinterpretation, and integration of difference (Banks, 2015).

The preservation of traditions constitutes a frequent reaction to the feeling of uprootedness produced by contact with alterity and by the normative pressure of the dominant culture. Migrant or minority communities, in particular, may develop mechanisms of symbolic closure intended to safeguard their linguistic, religious, or value-based heritage in the face of assimilation (Nedelcu, 2008). This reflex of cultural self-protection is not, however, equivalent to isolationism; in many cases, it is manifested through institutions of cultural reproduction – such as community schools, confessional organizations, or solidarity networks – that mediate integration without implying the loss of the original identity (Dasen, Perregaux & Rey, 1999).

At the opposite pole, intercultural strategies aim at developing the capacity to operate between cultures, not only within a single one. Rather than opposing differences, these strategies cultivate abilities for symbolic translation, value negotiation, and contextual decoding. This model transcends static multiculturalism and presupposes genuine interaction, in which identities influence one another without dissolving (Welsch, 1999). Diversity is not perceived as an obstacle, but as a resource for innovation and coexistence.

In contemporary pluralistic societies, individuals often navigate between the two models, configuring hybrid strategies. They may maintain traditional cultural rituals in the family sphere, while adopting behavioral codes and values of the majority public space (Hall, 1990). The tension between conservation and openness is thus permanently present in the experience of everyday life, and adaptation is not a linear process, but a continuous negotiation between multiple frames of reference.

The process of cultural adaptation is often influenced by structural dynamics, such as the integration policies of the host state, dominant public discourses, or access to educational and economic resources (Duyvendak, Foner & Kasinitz, 2020). Thus, the possibility of an authentic intercultural synthesis depends not only on individual attitudes, but also on the social and institutional context that makes it possible. In its absence, cultural syncretism risks being superficial, marked more by mimicry than by real participation (Delanty, 2011).

On the other hand, cultural contact often also produces transformations at the level of the dominant culture, which is forced to redefine itself in relation to the presence of others. This reconfiguration of dominant norms can lead to what Giddens (1991) calls “cultural reflexivity” – the capacity of a society to self-interrogate and adapt its own landmarks in the light of diversity. The result is a form of post-national cohesion, based not on homogeneity, but on the acceptance of difference as a constitutive element of social reality (Robertson, 2013).

This dynamic is evident in the educational space, where intercultural adaptation strategies are expressed through diversity-sensitive curricula, inclusive pedagogical methods and the valorization of pluriperspectivism (Cucos, 2000). Intercultural education thus becomes a laboratory of identity synthesis, contributing to the formation of subjects capable of managing the cultural complexity of the global world without giving up the core of their own identity.

Interculturality – from theory to coexistence practices

Interculturality is emerging today as a paradigm of coexistence and collaboration in pluralistic societies, replacing the passive or tolerant perspectives of multiculturalism with an active, relational and transformation-oriented approach. If multiculturalism involves the recognition of the coexistence of several cultures in a common space, without demanding interaction or exchange, interculturality implies a logic of dialogue, mutual reflection and symbolic co-creation (Welsch,

1999). It is not just about the simultaneous presence of difference, but about building functional bridges between distinct cultural frameworks.

Interculturality requires a dynamic framework in which the interaction between cultures is mediated by values such as respect, equity and mutual recognition. This implies not only contact, but also the willingness to listen, negotiate and integrate different perspectives into a new common horizon (Todorov, 2010). Culture is no longer seen as a closed territory or an immutable heritage, but as a living process of signification, constantly changing through the relationship with otherness (Bhabha, 2012). Therefore, interculturality is not only an ethical norm, but also a cognitive and affective process that involves revising one's own positioning in the world.

Institutionally, this concept translates into public policies that promote the inclusion and active participation of minorities, not just the formal recognition of their rights. Such policies target education, justice, health, but also the symbolic sphere of social representation and legitimacy (Banks, 2015). Unlike the multicultural model, where differences are tolerated within the limits imposed by the majority, interculturality involves the reconfiguration of public space by the real integration of different voices in decision-making processes (Duyvendak, Foner & Kasinitz, 2020).

On an individual level, interculturality involves the development of specific skills – cultural empathy, cognitive flexibility, critical thinking about one's own landmarks – that can be cultivated through formal and non-formal learning experiences (Cucoş, 2000). These skills facilitate the management of value conflicts, navigation between contradictory norms and the articulation of personal meaning in a heterogeneous environment. A simple knowledge of differences is not enough; a reflexive positioning towards them and a capacity to mediate the tensions that arise at the intersection of divergent norms is necessary (Hall, 1990).

The development of interculturality is inseparable from global processes that have intensified contacts between groups and individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. However, this intensification does not guarantee, in itself, the emergence of dialogue. On the contrary, physical proximity can lead to identity withdrawal or conflicts, if it is not accompanied by mechanisms of mediation and mutual learning (Featherstone, 1990). Therefore, the promotion of interculturality also presupposes the existence of institutional structures that facilitate authentic encounters, not just passive cohabitation (Delanty, 2011).

In education, for example, interculturality implies abandoning unidirectional teaching models in favor of participatory methods, centered on dialogue and on the valorization of the cultural experiences of all actors involved. The curriculum must reflect not only the dominant culture, but also the contributions and perspectives of minorities, avoiding both exoticization and forced assimilation (Dasen, Perregaux & Rey, 1999). Thus, the school becomes a space of encounter and mutual transformation, in which difference is a resource, not a threat.

Interculturality is therefore not a magic solution to the complexity of the global world, but a difficult but necessary practice through which coexistence can become real coexistence. It involves risks and tensions, but also opportunities for social renewal and the rediscovery of the human in its plurality.

In Romania, the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination are enshrined in the constitutional and legislative framework, in line with international commitments undertaken. The Romanian Constitution, the Civil Code, the educational and anti-discrimination legislation provide a robust formal framework for protecting the rights of persons belonging to different ethnic, religious or cultural groups. However, legal recognition of diversity does not automatically imply its integration into deep social structures. Implementation of the principles often remains fragmentary, dependent on political will, institutional resources and the level of public awareness (Nedelcu, 2008).

The central problem lies not in the lack of regulations, but in the capacity of institutions to translate them into effective practices, adapted to local contexts. Schools, for example, play a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards otherness, but they frequently perpetuate monocultural models, ignoring the multiple identity dimensions of students from minority or migrant backgrounds (Banks, 2015). The lack of an intercultural approach in teacher training, as well as the absence of coherent mechanisms for monitoring real inclusion, maintain gaps between declared norms and everyday school reality (Dasen, Perregaux & Rey, 1999).

In the public administration, the application of equality is often formal, unaccompanied by active measures to compensate for structural inequalities. Thus, vulnerable groups - such as ethnic minorities, migrants or those with religious orientations different from the majority - face persistent obstacles in accessing services, representation and civic participation (Delanty, 2011). Diversity is tolerated within rigid limits, without being valued as a resource for

social cohesion or for the enrichment of public space (Featherstone, 1990).

Intercultural education, as an essential tool in managing difference, remains insufficiently developed in Romania. Although the national curriculum refers to diversity, the application of these concepts in practice is rarely accompanied by reflective or dialogic methods that encourage learning through contact with otherness (Cucuș, 2000). In the absence of a structural reform of the educational system, which would include not only diversity themes, but also participatory pedagogies, interculturality risks remaining a theoretical desideratum.

Furthermore, transforming diversity into a resource requires moving beyond a compensatory or corrective model in favor of an integrative perspective, in which differences become sources of innovation, creativity, and democratic renewal (Appadurai, 1996). Romanian society, although in the process of pluralizing, is still dominated by homogeneous identity narratives, in which otherness is often viewed with suspicion or exoticized (Hall, 1990). For this reason, promoting interculturality requires not only coherent public policies, but also a paradigm shift in civic culture.

Finally, the existence of a democratic normative framework must be complemented by a symbolic and educational infrastructure capable of generating trust, solidarity and practices of real coexistence. Without such an infrastructure, the principles of equality and non-discrimination remain formal norms, incapable of producing transformative effects in society. Therefore, valorizing diversity as a social resource requires concerted, long-term efforts from all institutional actors involved in public life.

Interculturality is not reduced to a simple contact between cultures, but implies an ethical and civic commitment to managing differences in a reflective and responsible manner. It involves recognizing the other as a subject of law and a dialogue partner, beyond stereotypes or cultural hierarchies (Todorov, 2010). In this sense, interculturality acquires a normative dimension: it not only provides a framework for coexistence, but also becomes a form of social ethics, articulated around the values of respect, equity and active participation in common life (Welsch, 1999).

This reconceptualization of the relationship with otherness involves overcoming the logic of passive tolerance, in favor of an active openness, which allows the revision of one's own identity by confronting different perspectives. In a global context characterized by increased mobility, transnational networks and structural interdependence, the capacity to interact ethically and empathetically

with diversity becomes a fundamental competence of the contemporary citizen (Banks, 2015). Thus, interculturality is configured not only as a politics of difference, but as a formative practice of global consciousness (Appadurai, 1996).

From an educational perspective, interculturality as civic ethics involves a continuous learning process, focused on the development of critical thinking, empathy and the ability to problematize one's own prejudices. Intercultural education must go beyond descriptive or superficial celebratory approaches, to become an exercise in unlearning internalized discrimination and building a pluralistic public space (Cucoş, 2000). This approach calls for a pedagogy of dialogue, in which differences are not neutralized, but actively valued, in order to form a citizenship capable of interhuman solidarity (Giddens, 1991).

On a social level, interculturality as an ethic presupposes open and reflective institutions, capable of integrating diverse cultural perspectives into decision-making processes. More than simply adapting services to the needs of minority groups, it is about rethinking the way in which public space is constituted and managed, so as to reflect the plurality of experiences and identities that compose it (Delanty, 2011). Thus, interculturality becomes an instrument of reconciliation between the particularism of local belonging and the universalist imperatives of human rights (Bauman, 2011).

In a world where globalization risks eroding cultural specificities in favor of symbolic homogenization, interculturality offers an axiological alternative: it does not impose uniformity, but proposes a form of coexistence based on mutual recognition and the continuous negotiation of meanings (Bhabha, 2012). This approach allows the articulation of a societal model in which multiple identities do not conflict, but converge in flexible forms of belonging, capable of integrating the complexity of current cultural realities (Robertson, 2013).

Therefore, interculturality, in its profound meaning, is not a simple theoretical device, but a way of experiencing difference in institutional, educational and community frameworks marked by symbolic justice and equal opportunities. It constitutes the foundation of a global consciousness that does not annul local roots, but opens them to dialogue and mutual transformation.

Conclusions

In a global context marked by the acceleration of cultural, social, and symbolic flows, interculturality asserts itself not only as a theme for reflection but as an existential and civic imperative. The

present article has aimed to demonstrate that the dynamics of globalization fundamentally reconfigure the way we relate to identity, to the Other, and to the idea of community. Far from being a unidirectional and homogenizing process, globalization proves to be a complex phenomenon in which the universal and the local do not cancel each other out, but are engaged in continuous negotiation and mutual reconstruction.

The analysis of cultural frontiers in the global age has shown that we can no longer speak of fixed boundaries between cultures, but rather of permeable interfaces that mediate contacts, clashes, as well as emerging forms of symbolic solidarity. The reweaving of meaning on a planetary scale brings to the fore relations of coexistence marked by ambivalence: on the one hand, a constant pressure toward cultural homogenization; on the other hand, an identity reaffirmation at the local and community level. This dual movement produces not only tensions but also opportunities for redefining the way we conceive of difference.

Furthermore, identity has been analyzed as a process, not as an immutable given. In a world characterized by plurality and interconnection, the subject is compelled to constantly (re)negotiate their affiliations. Contact with alterity generates not only cultural anxieties, but also the capacity to construct multiple, fluid identities that integrate diverse and contradictory experiences. These processes are essential for the development of a global consciousness, one that does not eliminate local specificity, but reinterprets it within broader registers of meaning.

Finally, it has been emphasized that interculturality must not be confused with passive or descriptive multiculturalism. It entails dialogue, reflexivity, and an ethics of recognizing the Other. Interculturality thus becomes a political and educational project that requires not only legal norms concerning equality and non-discrimination, but above all coherent institutional and pedagogical practices. Romania offers a relatively solid normative framework, but the challenge remains the effective implementation of these principles in everyday social reality.

It can be asserted that interculturality constitutes a fundamental interpretive key for understanding the contemporary world. It brings together macrosocial processes – such as globalization, migration, or symbolic democratization – with microsocial experiences of coexistence and alterity. In this interpretive framework, the articulation between identity, diversity, and dialogue becomes essential for shaping more just, more open societies, and societies more aware of the plurality that structures them.

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