
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Identity and Belonging in Multicultural Contexts: Navigating Complex Dynamics

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ABSTRACT

Dealing with identity and belonging in multicultural societies means zooming out the entire relevant perspectives to understand how individuals in such contexts foresee themselves and their sense of belonging while struggling to fit into their geographical sphere's complicated structure. Accordingly, this study navigates the multifaceted and complex notion of multiculturalism by examining the way individuals feel about who they are while being personally triggered by living within the ambivalence of various linguistic mediums, traditions, and lifestyles. Hence, it delves in-depth into the feeling of divergence and the mix of the desire to melt in and the desire to preserve one's own authentic culture. Integrating quantitative and qualitative insights, it forges a clear vision of identity formation and belonging in pluralistic societies. Besides, relying on studies carried out in sociology and psychology, it underlines the nuanced interplay between individual identity and collective belonging, which unravels how social structures influence personal perceptions of the self and community integration within multicultural environments. Thus, it demonstrates that harmonizing different cultural affiliations to foster inclusive communities encounters complex challenges, promoting a reconsideration of identity frameworks. Ultimately, proving that hybrid identity construction and belonging have implications, especially in terms of social acceptance and collective flourishing. Thus, it concludes that approaching the issue of identity and belonging entails seeing it as not only a physical experience, but also a social and emotional struggle to identify the self.

KEYWORDS

Identity formation, multiculturalism, hybrid identity, social acceptance, ambivalence, pluralistic societies.

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1. Introduction

Throughout the last decades, multiculturalism has gradually become a must to bridge differences and bring people together into an in-between space of mutual understanding and respect wherein dialogue and collaboration come into play as effective tools to instill coexistence and inclusivity despite belonging to diverse cultural backgrounds. Addressing this issue brings to the surface various relevant elements that create diversity within a given society, such as religion, language, traditions, and lifestyles. These elements can be considered either opportunities or challenges for people to smoothly define who they are and establish a significant sense of belonging within a given geographical space. Navigating and understanding the complex intersection between these elements entails a profound study that could include multiple perspectives and disciplines. Accordingly, this paper aims principally to comprehend individuals' identity framing and sense of belonging as a complex struggle approached from various dimensions. In addition, it intends to understand the self as an integral part of a given multicultural group. The self, in this sense, can also be the researcher or observer of all the sociocultural phenomena that would probably occur within social groups similar to the one currently under study: multicultural settings. This makes social studies difficult as it is sometimes impossible to isolate the Self, "the observer," from the society being the subject of the research. Especially, since these previously mentioned phenomena include the issue of identity formation and the struggle to belong which are very sensitive human characteristics.

Pondering deeply about identity construction and sense of belonging within pluralistic social groups means exploring the most complicated aspects relevant to the human existential phenomenon. However, focusing only on geographical locations while tackling this issue may limit the study to examining the way individuals are seen physically and how they foresee themselves regarding who they are and where they belong. That is why comprehending this issue in light of considering other relevant elements is not an easy task at all. It is similar to solving a complicated equation with numerous different variables. This is because it is about the interplay between what is physical, social, and psychological, along with numerous other factors. Apart from these dynamics that need to be taken into consideration while investigating this issue, creating a clear vision necessitates dealing with some personal experiences as real-life examples to make the results more credible.

In addition, this paper relies on sociological and psychological studies conducted in this regard. For a more comprehensive understanding of the tackled issue based on the previously mentioned studies, critical discourse analysis has been used to analyze the excerpts quoted to support the perspectives formed about this topic. It aims to unravel both the connotative and the denotative meanings of the expressions and terms in order to correctly understand the intended messages behind each quote. Besides, a questionnaire has been shared online with people to understand how the feeling of being split between assimilation and cultural preservation shapes personal perceptions about the self. This survey targeted mainly those going through experiences of living in multicultural settings to comprehend some relevant issues to the hybrid identity construction and sense of belonging in the pluralistic society. In this sense, Ph.D. and MA English students have been the sole respondents in this concern as the aim is to obtain powerful insights regarding the issue under study. Accordingly, most of the insights that have been shared revealed that creating a clear vision regarding identity construction and sense of belonging is not an easy task at all. Statistics confirmed that various and unexpected factors can deeply shape people's understanding of who they are and how they feel about the social groups and places to which they belong.

To sum up, hybrid identity construction and sense of belonging is a complicated and multifaceted topic that requires a profound study of the pluralistic groups' social structure. Framing hybrid identities and understanding the sense of belonging is not a spontaneous and easy operation that takes place overnight, especially in light of all the challenges that some social categories face to fit in. Generally speaking, this process can encounter several stumbling blocks, such as power hierarchies, racism, and some social controversies that manifest mainly in the local narratives. These narratives are employed to empower particular groups over others by highlighting their experiences and participation in local positive change while neglecting those of others. This sort of empowerment of some social groups over others has certain implications regarding social cohesion and collaborative work. Not only that, but it also leads some socio-cultural groups to feel like they are being attributed to identities that are synonymous with the majority, which has psychological and sociological influence. Consequently, it reduces their active engagement in social and cultural activities within the multicultural places wherein they belong. That is to say, various social dynamics can largely affect how identities are framed and how people feel about who they are and where they belong. It seems that this is a controversial topic in which multiple elements intersect and directly affect individuals' perceptions of themselves and others around them.

2. Notion of Multiculturalism

Before dealing with the issue of multiculturalism, it is important to start by defining the notion of a multicultural society. So, what do people refer to as multicultural societies?

A multicultural society can simply be defined as a social group of diverse categorizations of people who live and socially interact together on a daily basis. It is a community made up of a mixture of various groups and individuals belonging to different ethnicities, languages, traditions, cultures, or even religions in some cases. Nowadays, the entire globe itself is gradually turning into something similar to a small village of different nationalities. This variation in terms of nationalities makes it a multicultural place due to globalization. Accordingly, the notion of multiculturalism emerged to describe the style of living collectively within the same settings despite differences. At first, it was used just like any other linguistic word. A simple linguistic term that describes the previously mentioned situation: the existence of multiple and different social groups within the same geographical place. However, later on, it has been used or connotatively prescribed to normalize, if the word fits here, the imbalanced collective life in diverse settings as a sort of coexistence, even when some out-cultural majority groups are most of the time engaged in an endless struggle and exert efforts to fit in. This struggle to be in harmony with others despite the possibility of being rejected or excluded in multiple situations becomes an uncomfortable sort of inclusion, especially when cultural differences are not wisely addressed and accepted. Accordingly, one needs to bear in mind that there is no freedom or coexistence with force or uncomfortable social existence within a particular group. Unfortunately, this is the situation of most of the out-cultural majority groups in some diverse communities throughout the globe.

To put it in its simplest definition, multiculturalism as a normative term implies cultural diversity in terms of the coexistence of heterogeneous cultures and the process of examining, understanding, accepting, and respecting differences among subcultures. It then refers to the acknowledgment of coexistence among multiple and different ethnic communities within a given geographical

space. The latter is wherein each one of these socio-cultural groups maintains its own distinct practices, convictions, languages, and traditions. Consequently, based on what has been previously mentioned, multiculturalism apparently aims to promote mutual respect, equality, and understanding among various existing groups within multicultural societies. This can certainly foster diversity as a core aspect of social unity and enrichment. In his book, *Multiculturalism of Fear* (2000), Jacob T. Levy points out the assistance rights promoted by multiculturalism as a cultural diversity theory. He made it clear that "certain rights are extended to rectify disadvantage experienced by a certain group in comparison to the majority, which includes positive discrimination or affirmative action to help the minorities." This statement shows how the tackled concept came to correct and normalize challenging historical experiences of marginalized people. However, relying on critical discourse to analyze this quote, it seems that there is some sort of contradiction regarding the way past discrimination is treated. For instance, the expression "certain right" means that not all rights are extended. This shows some kind of selectivity in terms of dealing with the disadvantages meant to be rectified. Even the usage of the term "majority" does reinforce power dynamics among the disadvantaged and privileged majority. An implicit othering process is obvious in this concern, which can promote more division instead of limiting its effect. In all cases, it critically seems that this quote does not mirror multiculturalism as a cultural theory that aims to lessen discrimination and oppression; rather, it zooms out the ideology behind its adoption.

Hence, it is obvious that multiculturalism has been used as a normative term or a cultural theory to correct past injustices to which cultural out-groups were exposed in diverse settings. This correction is supposed to occur by recompensing and favoring ethnicities that went through historical discrimination in the past. Based on this deduced idea, the term "multiculturalism" becomes a notion that is not only about describing individuals' physical existence within the context of diversity, but also a concept that is about how to empower these individuals and encourage their inclusivity and acceptance so they can coexist harmoniously. This coexistence would happen in the light of the maintenance of their personal and communal specificities, such as personal visions, languages, traditions, and values. Ultimately, this allows them to own a remarkable position within that environment where they can be heard and seen. Accordingly, one can say that multiculturalism is not about getting rid of cultural differences among people and adopting the hegemonic cultural specificities but rather it is about accepting and acknowledging them as what creates and versifies the melody of a human's existential experience within a particular pluralistic community.

Since the concept of multiculturalism is a polysemous term, it implies that it has more than one meaning as previously mentioned. It is true that the focus is on its normative sense as a cultural theory but it should also be mentioned as a descriptive term in order to see it from different angles and perspectives. In this sense, it refers to living within a geographical sphere wherein people belonging to different backgrounds reside collectively. According to Song (2010), it refers to the situations in which people who hold 'different' habits, customs, traditions, languages and/or religions live alongside each other in the same social space, willing to maintain relevant aspects of their own differences and to have them publicly recognized. Thus, multiculturalism has to be seen also as a social approach that reflects and deals with the issue of belonging to numerous and different cultural backgrounds within a particular community or nation. Analyzing this previous quote reveals that some of its terms have an opposite sense of the superficial meaning they intended to create. For instance, it is true that the word "different" implies a sense of diversity, but it also implicitly unmask the existence of binarism which can largely reinforce the idea of power dynamics.

3. Key Aspects of Multiculturalism

Within pluralistic societies, individuals live, interact, and work side by side together to contribute wittingly or unwittingly to the construction of those societies nourished by their perspectives, knowledge, and experiences. These individuals represent and voice the entire population collectively at both micro and macro levels. This is how diversity comes to be a source of strength and empowerment, rather than a cause of division or conflict. Tackling the notion of multiculturalism in the light of coexistence and mutual understanding entails highlighting many key elements to be considered. First of all, respecting each other's differences in terms of customs, languages, and religions has to be seen as the main aim of multiculturalism. In other words, multiculturalism has to advocate for the idea that there is more than one correct style of living and thinking, which encourages the acceptance of cultural differences among the diverse social components within a given community that celebrates diversity.

Equal treatment is also another element that has to be considered while talking about how to approach the concept of multiculturalism. In this sense, citizens of multicultural societies are supposed to be all equally treated not only in terms of their jobs and educational opportunities but also in terms of allowing access to business and financial resources. This would certainly facilitate their involvement in political procedures and allow them to take part in decision-making as a way to fulfill the diverse interests and needs of the entire population. Through this method, individuals belonging to such complex social spheres can feel fairly treated and dealt with, far from the discrimination and prejudice that mainly arise due to the differences in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, and so many other socio-cultural characteristics.

One may argue that it is a truism that when human beings are positively seen from an impartial, neutral, and fair lens, their belonging to a particular environment becomes meaningful at all levels. Not only that but even the way they themselves approach their sense of belonging and identities can somehow be easily articulated. Under this condition, humans can certainly frame themselves as parts of the places where they belong with great satisfaction. Then, these feelings will be translated into the

willingness to actively contribute to the flourishing and development of their local places. Once each and every person within that multicultural community is well treated, the sense of exclusion will be dismissed and everyone will feel urged to openly and equally engage in any sort of local work. In this sense, providing equal opportunity to everyone to take part in the entire activities their societies may hold is also an aspect that multiculturalism promotes. For instance, some of these activities include; taking part in events to help in the flourishing of cultural exchange and appreciation, working on projects of development alongside others from different groups, and contributing to the process of educational opportunities amelioration. This, of course, along with encouraging interaction, inclusivity, and dialogue between different cultural groups, would promote mutual understanding and acceptance.

In addition, social cohesion has to be adopted as a key cultural requirement and obligation within multicultural milieu. There is absolutely no way to treat people similarly in the context of diversity without being aware of the importance of social harmony. That is to say, there should always be a wise voice that proclaims a sense of unity and belonging among community members in these places. This sense is a useful means for individuals to perceive themselves as accepted, appreciated, and valued human beings. This helps them largely to motivate their positive contribution to the well-being of their local places, hence activating their self-awareness regarding not only their role generally but also their existence as integral parts that are free from bias and discrimination under any pretext. This is how individuals, in fact, come to integrate actively in the process of encouraging cohesion and solidarity whenever it is needed. This engagement would be seen not only as a social and cultural duty but also as an obligation to give back to their communities. This works well for them as long as those pluralistic settings represent for them a source of support, assistance, and benefits.

In relation to what has been mentioned above, unfortunately, some categories of people give back only when they feel valued and appreciated. However, to be fair, both exclusion and oppression might affect even the decisions of those who, by nature, give out of generosity and goodness without anything in exchange. Generally speaking, most human beings would not accept to be treated unfairly, excluded, or deprived of their fundamental rights and keep being entirely generous within their communities, especially when seeing themselves treated as neglected members of a social or cultural minority. That is to say, issues of identity construction and sense of belonging are not only a physical experience; they also take other dimensions, such as social and emotional ones, which may deeply affect the construction of a given community's structure, and then lead to tension and conflict at all levels. Each human being has to be appreciated and empowered within his or her community based on his or her values, ethics, and socio-cultural active contribution to the positive development and flourishing of the community to which s/he belongs. Overall, investigating the concept of multiculturalism has proved that it is all about accepting and advocating for the richness that cultural differences and variations might positively bring to societies. This would emphasize the importance of creating an inclusive milieu wherein people from different cultural backgrounds can succeed in contributing to the collective progression.

4. Understanding Identity and Sense of Belonging

4.1. What is Identity?

Identity is a broad term that might be open to multiple interpretations depending on many variables. It is a complex notion that may seem easy to explain or describe; however, it encompasses components that may mix what is material, spiritual, and others. For instance, in the social sciences, identity is seen as a concept that has several meanings and is defined according to the subject to be identified regardless of whether it is individual or collective. In this sense, this notion of identity is an interdisciplinary term that mixes not solely sociology and psychology but also biology, philosophy, geography, and other factors. Accordingly, people are categorized into social groups, and identity is defined as a social category such as "ethnic identity," "national identity," "cultural identity," "linguistic identity," etcetera. For instance, a person may be referred to as a Moroccan for living in Morocco, an Arab in the sense that his or her native language is Arabic, or even an AmaZulu due to belonging to the Zulu tribes or entities, and so on. By the way, Zulu is one of the famous tribes in South Africa.

Therefore, identity is an interdisciplinary notion that is open to multiple interpretations that may go beyond its traditional meaning that any ordinary person might understand. It becomes a multifaceted and dynamic concept that covers the entire angles surrounding the human being who is supposed to be identified while focusing deeply on how individuals perceive themselves and how their identity is reflected in the perceptions of those around them. In this context, "the identity of the individual is essentially that which refers to the individual's clear and certain knowledge about himself or herself: what he or she thinks, feels, and believes, and how he or she perceives others as viewing him or her." (Erikson, 1959, p. 252). Accordingly, pondering deeply about what Erikson mentioned in the above quote, it seems that an individual's identity entails a profound understanding and certainty about the self. This emphasizes the idea that identity is not a static concept and it necessitates a long journey of self-discovery. In this sense, one's thoughts, feelings, and convictions along with others' perceptions, come into play to extend the idea of limiting the concept within geographical, biological, or linguistic scope. This is how identity becomes a notion that includes an intersection of self-awareness and self-concept, which determines people's thoughts, reflections, and interactions with those around them. Thus, in psychology, the notion becomes more complicated in the sense that it is framed based mainly on how an individual inwardly

perceives himself or herself then on how others might identify him or her. It reflects personal convictions, orientations, thoughts, experiences and then others' social perceptions.

On the other hand, the notion of "identity" may not only be used to define who people are but can also serve to determine their position, orientation, and future representation in a particular social group or community. This makes it not only a flexible word that admits multiple meanings but also a socio-political indicator in many contexts. That is why in comparative politics, "identity" plays a central role in work on nationalism and ethnic conflict (Horowitz 1985; Smith 1991; Deng 1995; Laitin 1999). That is to say, deciphering identities would help in understanding the reasons behind conflicts. Besides, it can also promote more understanding and collaboration among citizens within a particular social unity. Accordingly, identity can largely be symbolized by the role a human being plays within his or her community. Then, it becomes central to comprehending the issue of nationalism and ethnic conflict since it is commonly known as having an influence on social groups' solidarity, sense of belonging, and relationships. This is because identities might encourage disagreements sometimes but they can also urge collective action to advocate for the recognition of rights in different ways, and this ranges from the right to maintain the native language to having political representation. Here, one can conclude that addressing the concept of identity should be tackled by linking it to two relevant elements: identity in relation to its categories and identity in relation to the role that the identified person plays within his/her community. Accordingly, talking about the identity of a human being in relation to his or her role means articulating just his or her mission which can be similar to various other individuals. For instance, a person may be identified as a supporter of a particular ideology/group or even a social influencer due to having some impact on people which might affect their perceptions and way of thinking. Thus, it is all about zooming out the role that a particular person is playing and which represents an intersection between his or her personal and social identity.

As for the first element which is identity based on its categories, it can be referred to just as previously mentioned in the first and second paragraphs of this section. It is about focusing either on an individual's personal identity or his/her social one. Social identity is largely based on the individuals' social, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic connection to the geographical locations wherein they belong. In addition, apart from the social belonging into a particular community which mirrors our native identity determinants and ultimately gives us that sense of social identity under which multiple sub-identities fall, personal identity is also, as previously mentioned, another category of identities that should be profoundly investigated here. It is about delving in-depth into understanding the inner perceptions of individuals regarding themselves. It is about how people foresee themselves and evaluate their position within a particular space. It is a very complicated notion for it encompasses what is social, racial, epistemic, geographical, linguistic, biological, and other numerous complicated inner psychological characteristics of the human being, which makes it an interdisciplinary concept. This sort of identity, although others' perceptions contribute into its framing, nevertheless the person himself or herself is the only one who is capable of deciphering what is his or her personal identity as it is related to the inner being of an individual person more than anything else. It reflects the individual's past experiences, faith, interests, knowledge, goals, needs, weaknesses, strengths.... etcetera. It is more about the "I" in relation to how the person foresees himself or herself with less focus on the others' perceptions. A person's identity is not only about answering the question, "Who are you?" Rather, it is more about revealing the information behind the question, "What makes you the one you are?"

4.2. What is a Sense of Belonging?

A sense of belonging is the feeling of being part of a given group, entity, or the world at large. It is the inner connection that each human being may have to her or his place wherein s/he lives. Drawing an example from mathematics, belongingness is portrayed as a relationship between a variable and a set. For instance, $y \in R$ is an expression that means that the element "y" belongs to the set of real numbers R. That is to say, "y" has similar characteristics to the entire set of numbers in "R." Consequently, $y \in R$ indicates that the variable "y" is a real number, and "R" represents their set, which includes all rational and irrational numbers. Philosophically, it is quite simple to draw a metaphorical linkage between the mathematical notion of belonging to a set of real numbers and the human experience of belonging to a particular group. Similarly to the idea that "y" is part of the set "R," a person could say that humans struggle to create or find their places or social groups within the scope of existence. This quest for belongingness is not only about physical location but also about feeling psychologically connected and sharing a similar purpose, right, and identity with others around oneself. According to the rule, each variable "y" is supposed to be any given real number and can take all the characteristics of other variables within the set "R." Every individual in a pluralistic society, therefore, must likely be treated equally to everyone else, regardless of whether s/he belongs to the majority or the minority. Once this condition is fulfilled, this individual becomes not only physically but also emotionally connected to his/her society as an integral part and an in-group member of this community.

Therefore, explaining a sense of belonging means thinking first about how people are seen and treated within their places. Based on understanding if they are valued or not, a person can expect their feelings toward their locations wherein they belong. In all cases, a sense of belonging is then a particular feeling that can assail individuals whenever they feel fairly treated and fully satisfied within their communities. It is that emotion of having a strong linkage to a particular geographical space or milieu due to being

valued and appreciated there. It is normally symbolized in thoughts and ideas of seeing oneself fitting in and being understood by those around. This feeling, whenever it is achieved, encourages individuals to actively and generously engage in their places. Hence, creating significant relationships with those around them even without having any cultural or linguistic specificities in common with them. That is why, a person may go through this emotional experience even in geographical locations that are different from their native places because of being supported and accepted for who they are. Being treated fairly, accepted, and supported plays a pivotal role in emphasizing the sense of belonging which is one of the strongest emotions that lead people to see their groups or communities to which they are attached as something that empowers them. Something that ensures their identity representation and provides them with psychological stability. For instance, while supporting a Moroccan national football team, a person might feel fully overwhelmed by the inexplicable mixed emotions of citizenship and victory desire. At a certain moment, a person may feel emotionally displaced into the stadium and all s/he thinks about is that the national team will defeat the opponent at any cost. These emotions represent the feeling of being an integral part of the group—a common sense of belonging, just to simplify it. It is the feeling of being included and concerned. This is why Hagerty and Pautusky (1995), defined the sense of belonging as the “experience of a personal involvement in a system or environment, which makes people feel that they are an integral part of this system or environment” (Hagerty et al., 1995. p. 173).

This previously mentioned statement indicates that individuals’ psychological and emotional integration within their geographical locations is necessary for developing a sense of belonging. Besides, being accepted and connected to a particular social group are two elements that reciprocally influence each other, with acceptance being a prerequisite for a powerful connection. This certainly means that when people are accepted for who they are, even within other communities that are not their native spheres, they always create that tightened connection to the places wherein they live. Indeed, this can largely explain why some immigrants may develop a strong emotional connection and sense of belonging to their new places because they are supported, accepted, and valued for who they are while also being allowed to keep their native cultural identity determinant visible. Hence, a sense of belonging is always preceded by appreciation, support, and acceptance, which make people feel they matter to those around them and that their lives are meaningful in the places where they exist.

Consequently, losing the sense of belonging makes people feel left out and emotionally displaced as though there is nowhere to belong. They sense a deep feeling of emptiness, which affects them psychologically and physically in terms of safety, support, and the ability to overcome any sort of bias or marginalization they may face. This proves that strength comes from the sensation of being part of something that values humans. That is why people, in their collective existence and belonging, have the power to speak out and stand for their rights and dignity. This task can become a difficult endeavor for some out-group individuals who have no support and who are, in most cases, treated as outsiders of their groups or communities. However, it is extremely important to mention here that a sense of belonging has to do more with emotions and psychology, probably even more than being located within a particular geographical place. This is because a person alone can still feel like an entity when he or she possesses the authority of good morals and feels satisfied by himself or herself, and that sense of belonging to places or social groups does not matter significantly for him or her. Values and ethics put individuals in positions of power and give them the social immunity needed to overcome several problems alone, without any need for any sort of support from any person or entity. Certainly, this self-satisfaction would never be fulfilled without personal development in terms of engaging profoundly in constant self-reflection to be able to advocate for social justice whenever it is possible. This would certainly help to repel negative individuals and attract those who seek alliance and belonging based on human values, ethics, and constructive cooperation without any sort of personal gain. This sort of belonging is the strongest ever since it stems from choosing to stand for what is right against what is wrong, which symbolizes one of the noblest reasons behind human creation.

Accordingly, one has to look beyond the common and traditional vision regarding the sense of belonging to understand its meaning considering other factors. These factors are based on looking at each part of a whole as an entity in the sense that without it the whole becomes incomplete and a mere part as well; each human is important in a given social group, and without his or her existence and positive contribution, this community becomes incomplete. Once a human being is seen that way, s/he develops a strong connection to the place or social group s/he belongs to. It is all about the feeling of being treated fairly, valued, and supported within a given place which manifests deeply and particularly during hardship and sickness. This is how an individual recognizes that s/he matters within his/her social sphere. However, there is another feeling that could render people more comfortable and protected in any situation. It is the feeling of being attached to the spiritual reason behind one’s existence. That is to say, even when individuals do not have any sort of strong sense of belonging to their places of existence, they can feel satisfied with themselves and their relatives. Religion would largely provide humans with the feeling of security and belonging even without necessarily being part of a social group or community. That is why Al-Zahid¹ is always on a non-stop quest to be alone while clinging to safe and quiet spaces wherein to keep that spiritually strong linkage with Allah far away from any sort of distraction. A person may not give any importance to that sense of belonging to a group or community as the thing s/he needs is already within

¹ Refers to the Muslim person who is fully submissive to Allah. His or her entire focus is on religious practice, worshiping most of the time in a complete isolation from others while adopting life of modesty in terms of clothes and food.

him/her or, in other words, is beyond that horizontal relationship with his/her entourage which remains superficial as compared to the vertical one that relates this person with his or her creator. It may seem like a sort of philosophical perception for some people, but in fact, a person with strong faith can stand alone as an entity. It is highly proved in the Holy script when Allah described Ibrahim as a nation² while his opponents saw him as a mere child. Everything depends on the values and beliefs which allow people to reach the feeling of self-satisfaction and then have another sense of eternal belongingness that trespasses the temporary material one. However, just to make it clear, religion is not against social interaction at all, but it gives humans self-satisfaction and security even without constantly engaging with others. It also considers the believer who mixes with others and endures their harm better than the one who does not. This is because his or her goodness can be a lesson that teaches them to correct their behaviors; it is pedagogically similar to the so-called teaching by example. Thus, it depends on the situation, social and geographical conditions within the environment to which a person belongs, and his/her capacity to endure others' wrong behaviors.

5. Intersection of Identity and Sense of Belonging

Identity and sense of belonging are closely related to each other in the sense that they both contribute to the way people understand themselves and their places in the world. They both shape how people perceive themselves in relation to others and the world around them. Whenever they feel that their identity is accepted, valued, and supported within a given community, their sense of belonging becomes stronger. Hence, their inner emotions can largely strengthen their identities through reinforcing certain of their personal aspects. In fact, there is a reciprocal relation between a sense of belonging and identity construction or definition. That is to say, because of being supported and understood for who they are despite their different beliefs and cultural backgrounds, individuals can feel they are part of a particular social group, even though it is not their native linguistic and geographical location. For instance, some immigrants may construct a strong sense of belonging to their new places for being valued, appreciated, and allowed to maintain their native cultural identity. In other words, valuing people's cultural identities helps to strengthen their sense of belonging. This means that identity construction and belonging are very complex notions that influence each other as previously mentioned.

Reasonably speaking, identity is a flexible concept that transcends traditional meaning. It should be seen as something that distinguishes each individual from others even when sharing a particular place, language, race.... etcetera. The idea revolves around balancing what is spiritual, psychological, social, and material. This makes the description of identity and sense of belonging a complicated puzzle that only the identified person himself or herself is capable of deciphering; the only one who can decipher its code depending on the way s/he sees it from her/his own personal experiences and knowledge to certain extents. Accordingly, Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) states that: "Identity is a categorical concept while belonging combines categorization with social relating" (p. 6). This means that identity has static norms and it can be defined based on certain classifications, while belonging mixes categorizing and social connections, which means it can be influenced by social relations. This previous quote reveals the flexible nature of the community's membership, as the belonging might go beyond categorization.

Based on what has been previously mentioned, when individuals are underestimated, oppressed, and marginalized even within their communities, their sense of belonging becomes weak and fragile. They perhaps feel like outsiders, and their sense of identity becomes blurred and inexplicable. In most cases, their cultural elements are rendered invisible, and they are described as a part of the majority in multicultural contexts, which makes them neglected personalities, groups, or entities. This is how the issue of identity and belonging represents one of the challenges that might constantly come into the surface within diverse communities. Accordingly, people belonging to some cultural subgroups may feel attributed into identities that are synonymous with the majority, which has some social and psychological negative influence. Lack of sense of belonging leads to the need for belonging to cope with the stress aroused due to social exclusion and psychological isolation felt by a person whose identity is melted in that of others. That is why, a sense of belonging may even be health-promoting in communities that offer social support (Berkman, 1995; Place et al., 2002). The need to engage in interpersonal collaboration and relationships based on mutual respect and acceptance is one of the core elements of identity formation, and when it is destabilized, human beings feel socially and psychologically threatened and unwanted in their groups. This situation pushes them to seek places wherein they can be seen, heard, and valued; wherein they would feel a sense of being part of something important. This need for belonging is most of the time justified behaviorally in emigration to the places those entities think would offer them a stabilized sense of emotional connection, acceptance, and hence a distinguished identity. This means that the need for belonging may be perceived as an antecedent of the sense of belonging (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). This quote shows that the desire to belong is a fundamental

² Prophet Ibrahim, peace and prayer be upon him, is described as a nation. This description refers to three meanings according to Nabulsi. The most common one is that his faith and values are comparable to those of the entire members of a nation, which made him the way he is depicted. In fact, history remembers neither the names nor any sort of achievement of Ibrahim's opponents, while he has been always recognized as the prophet and the father of many other prophets; The inspired teacher and leader of his people. Here, Goodness lives forever while badness disappears; moral identity is what truly matters.

human need that pushes people to build connections with others around them. Once this need is met and people find acceptance, they do truly feel a sense of belonging. That is why the intersection between identity and sense of belonging is all about finding a particular community or social group that appreciates people the way they are while allowing them to keep their cultural or subcultural identity determinants alive. It is not only about geographical locations but it is also about emotions and feelings. Hence, the term "intersection" here is not a scientific word that refers to finding the coordinates of a particular point wherein two lines intersect but it is a philosophical word that metaphorically implies wherein identity and belonging come to interplay and make sense via rendering individuals' life meaningful and emotionally stable.

6. Dynamics that Affect the Identity Formation and Sense of Belonging

Talking about what might affect people's identities and sense of belonging, especially in pluralistic locations, entails dealing with various components. That is to say, one needs to acknowledge that several factors can frame people's perceptions about who they are and where they belong. This makes identity construction and a sense of belonging a complicated endeavor. Identity becomes something that is not simply about who a particular human being is but also a reflection of an accumulation of experiences, knowledge, and perspectives that this human has been exposed to throughout the entire journey of her or his life. This leads to the idea that, from an early age, individuals can be constantly influenced by those around them in their entourage.

In this sense, the basic phase of identity construction is consequently framed by recognizing places of belonging and the connection to those around to whom a human being matters. This can be proved easily based on our life experiences as humans belonging to particular locations with specific characteristics. For instance, we were all born somewhere, and at the beginning, we did not have any idea about neither who we were nor the places wherein we belonged. However, as we were growing up, we started building that emotional connection with those around us to whom we used to matter: our parents first, family, close entourage, community, and so on. This is how we gradually started recognizing our identities as the sons or daughters of particular parents who gave us a name and a number of inherited genetic characteristics, mainly physical ones such as skin color, color of eyes and hair... etcetera. This is how parents become not only the reason behind our existence but also the inescapable determinant that forges an individual's identity by giving him or her the basic identification. This identification includes faith, language, geographical location, culture, and other elements, apart from the previously mentioned biological characteristics related to the material bodies of humans.

Other than focusing only on the material side of humans, identity definition has to extend that to include other elements. In this sense, each individual is a point wherein two lines intersect; one is horizontal and the other is vertical. The vertical one represents that linkage between humans and their creator, the more a person focuses on it, the more other superficial elements become neglected and senseless. In contrast, the horizontal line encompasses all other elements relative to social interactions, some sides of personal experiences, social norms... etcetera. This intersection can largely seem like an illusion to some people who are not aware of it. Because it can only be perceived and understood internally by the self, which is the inner being of each one of us, especially when it is pure. This inner being serves as the center from which the entirety of the external world can be evaluated clearly and truthfully from various possible angles. This is why when talking about identities, a human being is the only one who can define and unravel his or her true personal identity. In other words, individuals existing around a particular person can only obviously perceive the material aspect of who s/he is, and social science is incapable of deciphering humans beyond their social belonging and physical bodies because of treating them as mere objects within multiple contexts. Humans are something much more complicated than mere bodies and/or even moods affected by emotions, and certainly, these unseen elements make the concept of identity a multifaceted and blurred notion. This is why psychological and social experiences humans may go through can largely affect their perceptions about themselves, others, and the world around them, as they put both what is personal and what is social at play.

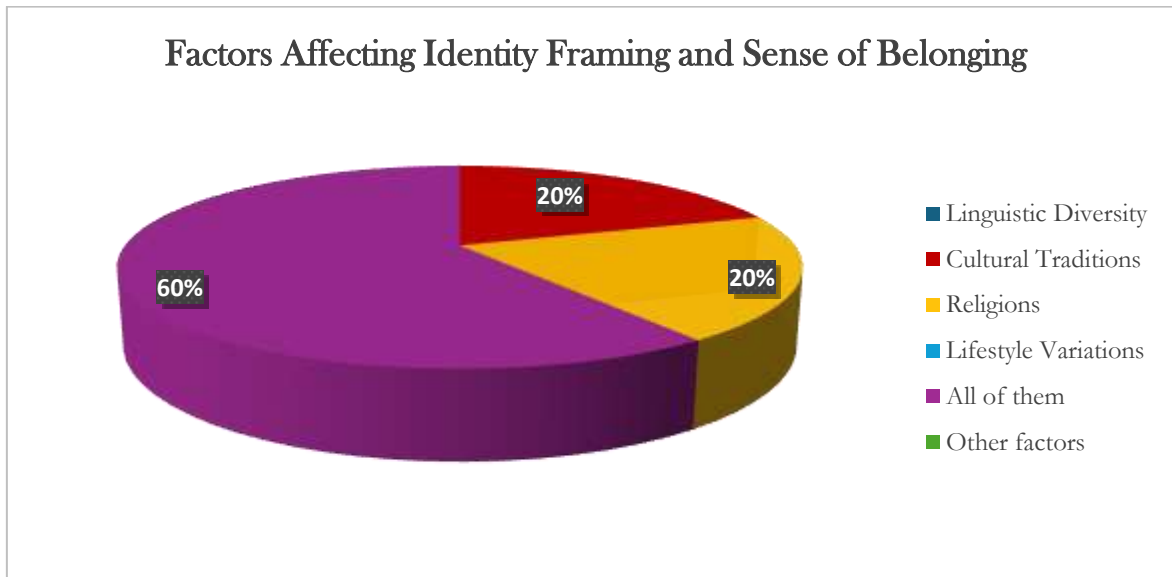
Identity formation should stem from something special and internal that makes a person unique and incomparable to others. If a person is incapable of creating something that would distinguish her or him from others, she or he will keep clinging to things such as culture, language, skin color, and race, yet those are just stimuli that urge individuals to question their position within a framework that is predetermined, while they have no choice to be outside of it. That is why humans are not going to be held accountable for such things on the day of judgment. That is to say, goodness, values, ethics, evidence-based knowledge shared generously with others, and so many other noble traits should be some of the characteristics that define an individual's identity and hence distinguish humans from one another. Identity should be an endless struggle with the lower self³ to achieve something special and noble that makes a particular human unique and distinct. As is the case for the outcome of any social comparison process, the feelings of distinctness that give rise to personal identity must, to some degree, be rooted in a contrast between self and comparable others (Onorato & Turner, 2004). This statement emphasizes that personal identity is to a certain extent forged

³ The lower self is the opposite of the self-reproaching soul, which pushes humans to blame themselves for committing sins and missing good acts regarding others and their religious duty. While the lower self is the one that seeks revenge and pushes people to build their lives on lust and material benefits even at the expense of others' rights.

separately; comparing oneself to others in a social context should not only be used to assess similarities and differences but it has to be conducted to prove the distinctiveness of each human being. Unfortunately, social environment is one of the factors that affect people's perceptions about themselves and their belongings, as it focuses mainly on the physical appearances, which push the individuals to engage in social comparison with others. However, society would never have any sort of power to profoundly shape who people are when their sense of individuality is conceived appropriately. In any identity construction, individuality needs to play a key role since there is nothing such as eternal collective destiny and each human is entirely responsible for her or his actions. This is another reason why one has to set aside the idea of focusing only on the physical sides of individuals while defining their identities. This ultimately needs to take into consideration that these material aspects of individuals make them entities framed by the limited lifetime experiences that all humans share. That is why they should not be taken as the only thing that defines people. Although social norms can largely affect the way individuals may externally seem to those around them, personal knowledge, ethics, and various other spiritual and psychological aspects are the main determinants that create one's identity. Unfortunately, because of their natural response to fit in while struggling to share the sense of belonging with a particular social group, most people think that only social norms matter without giving any importance to the previously mentioned elements.

To understand the dynamics that affect identity formation and sense of belonging based on real-life examples, data has been collected from a questionnaire shared online with MA and Ph.D. students, as Moroccans belonging into a community known for its diversity, to get powerful insights into this concern. Certainly, their responses used to support the credibility of the results as each of them has contributed from his or her own experience as a multicultural citizen and a person who not only has enough knowledge about the topic under study but also has experiences regarding the issues of multiculturalism. Accordingly, data shows some disparities regarding the number of males and females who responded to the survey. For instance, answering the question "What is your gender?", their answers revealed that 80% are males while only 20% are females. This is very significant, and it indicates that identity issues and a sense of belonging resonate more with males. Besides, these statistics CAN also be the result of some factors that dictate who is more comfortable answering sensitive questions relevant to the topic of identity construction and sense of belonging. That is to say, biological belonging or differences can probably have an effect on the comfortable articulation of how to perceive a sense of belonging and identity framing.

In this regard, participants reflected on the question, "In multicultural settings, what shapes people's sense of belonging and identity construction?" revealed the following pie chart:



Based on the above-illustrated statistics, it seems that cultural traditions and religion are two factors that have the same effect on shaping how people perceive who they are and where they belong. With an equal percentage of 20%, according to the results above in the chart, respondents prove that both of these two previously mentioned elements can significantly be important factors that forge identities and also either foster or decrease the feeling of being connected to a particular geographical space. While 60% of the participants responded that linguistic diversity, cultural traditions, religions, and lifestyle variations can all have an impact on the way individuals understand themselves and their positions in pluralistic communities. These elements can reinforce what is shared by foregrounding similarities and backgrounding differences, which contribute to creating a sense of unity, encouraging collaborative work, and flourishing within the same social group. That is to say, these cultural identity determinants

play a crucial role within pluralistic locations to ensure co-existence, mutual understanding, and respect when they are wisely approached.

Regarding the option "other factors," none of the participants mentioned any personal suggestions in this regard. In fact, this option can include multiple other dynamics that have an influence on individuals in a multicultural context. For instance, media, personal experiences, and cultural norms can certainly shape people's lives in many ways. In this regard, unaware of the issue of patronage and the agency behind it, the media can engage some individuals in social comparison with others when they have wrong perceptions about themselves. Cultural norms keep showing what is acceptable and what is not, and they frame people's lives according to that, even if sometimes these norms are not rationally evidence-based. Besides, personal experiences are another important factor in the sense that each experience people go through is a lesson that teaches them numerous things and shapes their personal agency and thought. These aforementioned factors can tremendously forge who people are and how they feel about the places wherein they belong.

On the other hand, generally speaking and based on pondering deeply about historical texts from different multicultural societies, one has to acknowledge that the problem of identity framing and inclusivity can always be related to some narratives that favor particular social experiences of some individuals over others. These stories spotlight some positive social contributions of particular groups in light of a full ignorance of the role of others. This issue can easily be concluded from the distinction articulated and emphasized by many writers or storytellers. These narratives are inherited from generation to generation to give an upper hand to a particular social group over another. These stories have become part of history as they are documented either in written books or in media such as films and video documentaries. These written books, oral narratives, and stories are commonly shared, and this makes it difficult to figure out the exact information regarding who or which group has really contributed to the flourishing of the local places. Indeed, this can decrease the sense of belonging of particular social groups when their historical contribution to the construction and flourishing of a pluralistic society is denied or ignored. Thus, identity in relation to the sense of belonging can always be faced with multiple contrastive issues or narratives that impede the process of its construction appropriately. Assimilation, integration, and inclusivity become complicated issues related to the position and identity representation of some social groups within multicultural settings.

Accordingly, since this study is meant to target multicultural societies and Morocco is one, it is a good opportunity to shed light on the local situation related to the issue of identity and sense of belonging within this Mediterranean country. Moroccan society is one of the communities whose citizens celebrate diversity and continue to coexist in peace and mutual respect despite numerous challenges. It is true that just like everywhere else, differences can present an obstacle preventing full homogeneity and social interactivity when it comes to the issue of language usage within some diverse social contexts but Moroccan society will always continue to provide a good example of co-existence, social cohesion, and mutual understanding among different social groups. Moroccans' unity stems mainly from our mutual spiritual belonging as Muslims, along with many historical and social shared experiences that bring us together as one nation. This creates a mixture of multiple cultures, traditions, and language varieties that represent the cultural richness of the country constantly attract tourists rather than creating division. Tolerance, acceptance, and understanding are common characteristics that Moroccans share, which makes Morocco a geographical intersection of multiple foreign visitors from diverse countries across the world.

7. Strategies for Fostering Inclusion

It is a common observation that in some pluralistic societies, certain individuals' roles are limited to a few or marginal tasks. This sort of exclusion is about preventing people from fully participating in social and cultural activities within their communities due to certain factors. These factors are mostly related to belonging to social out-groups, unrecognized ethnic entities, or denied cultural identities. Addressing this issue in the context of multiculturalism, as a normative concept that describes people's state of coexisting together in peace despite cultural differences, means ensuring that humans are treated and seen equally without any distinction based on their skin color, language, ethnicity, or anything similar. That is to say, it is about allowing everyone to maintain and articulate his/her cultural identity openly while engaging in the various available opportunities provided within their places, wherein they are supposed to feel a sense of belonging. Hence, they would then perceive themselves positively as belonging to their multicultural places. In fact, this would not be fulfilled without encouraging the inclusivity of those people seen as being on the margin. To achieve this purpose, multiple strategies would be adopted to enable individuals to be proud of their heritage and distinguished specificities while participating in broader cultural and social frameworks.

Reinforcing inclusivity involves using multiple strategies to cultivate a sense of acceptance and estimation within the targeted community. In this context, encouraging diversity by creating initiatives that raise awareness about relevant topics to coexistence, such as unconscious bias and others, is one of the main strategies that help people engage in self-reflection and then gain the self-awareness they need. Besides, arranging dialogues that ensure a safe space for every speaker to be heard and seen can also promote further understanding, respect, and acceptance. This encourages collaborative work among groups of different ethnicities

and cultural orientations. These sorts of discussions can be largely evaluated in terms of language usage, including the selection of terminology. For instance, examining the way expressions like “we and the other” are used to either bring people together into an in-between space of respect or to encourage division and disagreements. In this sense, specialized people in the field of discourse studies are invited to play their role in teaching and training ordinary people how to avoid rhetorical speeches that convey ideological messages. Both educational systems and media can serve as tools to guide and frame local perceptions regarding the effect of language in either refuting or advocating racism and social exclusion.

In addition, people living in multicultural communities are entitled to adopt other strategies to increase the sense of citizenship among people belonging to some ethnic outgroups. For example, they can exert efforts to cultivate inclusivity more and more within their local spheres. This would be achieved by allowing access to equal opportunities and resources and constantly regulating inclusive efforts in this concern. Besides, encouraging cultural understanding and dialogue using media can profoundly help in bringing people from different cultural backgrounds together. This can play an integral role in guaranteeing access to diverse opinions and visions. It can also be employed to shed light on the successful people known for their remarkable roles in guiding by example to learn from their inclusive behaviors. Moreover, political speeches are also another issue that should be dealt with carefully before being delivered to the public. It has to be treated wisely to avoid misunderstandings regarding the topics addressed to the audience as this can negatively affect some social groups. This is because some expressions may seem innocent; however, ideology, social imbalance, and power structures can be largely inherited in delivered discourses.

Therefore, applying these techniques would not only lessen the conflict among the members of a given community but they can also ensure inclusivity and co-existence. This can also assist individuals to equally have the chance to take part in the entire activities within their places in an effective manner. Thus, they would be able to see themselves as respected individuals who are encouraged and supported to excel in their cultural and social roles within their communities. Since they should all be equally seen as citizens of one community, their sense of citizenship can be largely strengthened. They would benefit from having a voice and being positioned as central identities, just like the other members of the majorities. In this regard, communication ought to be viewed as an outstanding tool for voicing individuals' issues and interests as well as bridging divisions. As a result, this implementation turns into a core requirement to set the ground rules for a community wherein everyone is appreciated for who s/he is, with a focus on ethics, competencies, faith, and positive engagement rather than ethnicity, skin color, and other characteristics that individuals generally do not choose.

Overall, dialogue should be seen and considered as the medium through which people may forge the social structure of their settings, allowing voices to be heard. However, this dialogue can also be used to serve certain different purposes when it is turned into debate, for example. This can foreground the imbalances and promote division within diverse communities. Besides, language is also an ingredient of power, and it should not always be viewed as innocent or neutral. That is why navigating communication issues means targeting the discursive effect of the linguistic tongue employed as a channel to let the message get across to the audience. This language itself may be systematically used to achieve a particular imbalance, as previously mentioned. This is done by allowing certain power structures to be reinforced over and over in diverse social gatherings. That is to say, participants representing the linguistic out-groups in a discussion or dialogue have to be aware of this issue. This sort of self-awareness leads them to be in the position of the powerful, who knows what to say, when to say it, and also what others do mean exactly when they speak, along with the extent to which their discourse can be taken for granted. Linguistic dynamics are also discursive in the sense that they emphasize the supremacy of the language of the majority (hegemonic language), as it is, in most cases, the only channel of communication that is adopted for dialogue and then via which any sort of voice can be spoken out. This would certainly provide a more comfortable and safe space for the native speakers while putting further pressure on the non-native ones in terms of both understanding and being selective regarding the accurate terminology that has to be used while replying or generally taking part in that discussion.

8. Conclusion:

This paper is a brief introduction to the topic under study regarding identity and belonging. It focuses on the way people, in multicultural settings, see themselves while struggling to fit in. While doing so, it takes into consideration some common perspectives previously framed in this concern. In this context, it proves that identity is a complex notion that necessitates being approached from various angles depending on whether it is portrayed as a personal categorization or a social one related to the role a particular human being might play and how people see him or her. Accordingly, this role makes the existence of individuals meaningful and helps largely to reframe who they are and how they see their places. In other words, it shows that each person can be a unique version of himself or herself rather than a similar one to others. It underscores that understanding personal identities remains a complicated task as it is related to each individual's interpretation. In this case, each person is the only one who can decipher profoundly who she or he is, apart from the common obvious criteria mainly linked to biology, linguistic, social, and cultural aspects of human belonging.

Identity formation and a sense of belonging are two inseparable elements that reciprocally influence each other. In this sense, multiple variables contribute to the self-identity definition and sense of belonging that makes human beings complicated social creatures. In fact, identity framing is always preceded by the need to belong first—the desire to be a part of places wherein the self can be visible and heard regardless of the cultural differences. Unfortunately, in various multicultural settings, this sense is reduced to the physical existence of a human being without guaranteeing any minimum attention or value to the inner self-representation. Unfortunately, the focus is always related to mirroring individuals' external appearances, regarding skin color, ethnicity, and other aspects, in a complete disregard for spiritual belonging that forges the psychological balance of humans. Culture, language, ethnicity, and geographical belonging would never be sufficient elements to frame identity. When reducing the unstable and complex nature of humans into such factors, these individuals become objects of experiments and fragile enough to be totally affected by the social circumstances around them. Overlooking individuals' experiences, thoughts, knowledge, and many other noble inner elements of oneself, identity becomes an empty and senseless notion. However, identity formation and a sense of belonging can indeed be directly impacted by some determinants related to the environment, such as discrimination and unfair treatment, which lead to exclusion and rejection.

Therefore, approaching identity formation and a sense of belonging in light of the previously mentioned norms makes the whole process a set of controversies. Owing to these norms, individuals are socially categorized culturally and ethnically as either minorities or majorities which raises the issue of racism, marginalization, and exclusions, especially within pluralistic communities. In most cases, individuals belonging to ethnic outgroups are subdued and prevented from maintaining their native culture, language, and other distinctive determinants in public. This act is systematically followed in some pluralistic societies to keep some social groups' concerns in the obliviousness. Another contradiction that should be tackled here is related to the social endeavor undertaken within these diverse communities to ensure the inclusivity of marginalized people according to the standards of the majority. This renders the previous process a sort of assimilation rather than integrity which is normally necessary to create social harmony within these places. Inclusivity has to ensure that each person of the outgroup has equal rights as if s/he is a member of the majority without any distinction. In this sense, many strategies ought to be adopted to lessen people's exclusion and create a unified and homogenous community.

Due to the importance of feeling safe, protected, and accepted for who people are in the community, society representatives in multicultural contexts have to arrange dialogue and intercultural communication in an attempt to promote people's self-awareness regarding diversity issues, acceptance, and appreciation of differences. In multicultural contexts, inclusivity is highly needed to internalize coexistence and peace based on mutual respect and understanding. In this sense, to increase inclusivity, dialogue should be the first approach via which other elements such as celebrating diversity, supporting marginalized minorities, and addressing bias, would definitely be preached and educated. Accordingly, it is totally an obligation to guarantee the safe space and fair representation of everyone in media platforms and diverse social and cultural contexts wherein discussions normally take place. In addition, collaboration and cultural exchange can also be arranged between individuals belonging to different groups to eliminate misunderstandings and enhance inclusivity and cohesion among the entire population within the community.

To sum up, based on the results of this study, diverse countries will continue to encounter complex challenges that deeply impede the process of coexistence and collaborative flourishing in many settings and contexts, despite being denied in most cases. This certainly is the result of making distinctions among people based on unmeaningful reasons to empower certain social groups over others. Bias and favoritism should be denied and eliminated to see people from an equal and fair lens. Consequently, raising awareness of the need for reevaluation of traditional identity frameworks should gradually be an important civic initiative to emphasize the shared core elements of cohesion, such as faith, values, and history, whose effects outnumber other reasons for division. Generally speaking, several elements can lead to division within any community, including social, cultural, and economic disparities. Based on this, people have to refrain from focusing solely on the issues of ethnicity, language, and race while addressing identity and belonging to ensure the creation of an inclusive and flourishing community. In fact, if a person fails to make of himself/herself a special version—develops unique qualities that make him/her distinguished from others—she or he may end up focusing on things like skin color, ethnicity, culture, or language to define who he/she is just like numerous other individuals within or even beyond his/her society. To be more precise, it is important to refrain from focusing only on our material appearance to define who we are. A person needs to privilege the inner self over the material body as long as the latter will ultimately decay in the end when we die, while who we are will pertain via our good deeds, including useful achievements, that are going to endure, if any are indeed produced. This is what matters, and this is what should be the core element of our identity. Hence, both physical and moral aspects of identity should be dealt with simultaneously while addressing the topic under study. The moral aspect should be considered the main component of who we are, in the sense that it lasts longer than the physical one. The latter arises mainly from the cultural, racial, and ethnic characteristics of a particular human being, which can be shared with others within or beyond the local social sphere and disappears once a person passes away. Indeed, these characteristics are certainly important but beliefs, knowledge, thought, ethics should be seen as the essence of our human nature that forges the uniqueness of each and every human being. This uniqueness of each and every human being is his/her moral identity just like his/her fingerprint, tongue print,

or eye print which frames the core of his/her physical identity. Both identities are reciprocally affecting each other in the sense that how people perceive things both literally with their eyes and metaphorically along with how they express these things can fully or partially display their moral identity. To put it differently, an individual's physical organs such as eyes, tongue, and hands are the windows to his/her inner self via which his/her thought, values, perspectives can be disclosed. That is to say, these organs do not only represent the physical print of a human's identity but they can also frame his/her moral one. Therefore, identity and sense of belonging are complex concepts that need to be examined from scientific and ethical perspectives for an appropriate and reasonable description.

9. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Throughout my journey of writing, I have discovered that each conclusion is in fact an inspiration to further study and more exploration. Each investigation of a particular cultural subject is a challenging endeavor as there is always something to elaborate on over and over in order to frame a clear and objective vision, though it is not easy, if not impossible, to provide one hundred percent objective results in the human sciences. Thus, subjectivity can always be an issue when tackling certain topics, including identity and sense of belonging, just like several other themes where it is difficult to separate the self from the object of study. Even when efforts are exerted to achieve particular objective and impartial viewpoints, subjectivity is always present in the data, which is an integral part of the methods of research. Participants' emotions, perspectives, and personal bias are some elements that are impossible to avoid while dealing with the collected data, especially in relation to sensitive topics like the one under study. However, understanding the topic broadly and from different perspectives necessitates extending the study to cover a large range of participants from diverse multicultural societies similar to the Moroccan one. This can reveal how people from various backgrounds see the issue and the extent to which their visions harmonize with the one developed in this study.

On the other hand, for being a multifaceted and broad topic, profound comprehension of identity and sense of belonging in multicultural context necessitates further efforts to approach it from diverse perspectives as an interdisciplinary and sensitive subject. To put it differently, scrutinizing it appropriately to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the relevant issues means paying more attention to how it is addressed by other scholars in different fields. Besides, it is also important to elaborate more on the moral and physical aspects of identity from a scientific perspective along with concentrating primarily on how intellectual, psychological and social personal characteristics and experiences shape individuals' identity while discussing this topic. This should pave the way to understand that when dealing with identity and belonging, the individual is at the center of the issue rather than his/her social and cultural entourage regardless of the nature of this society. That is to say, whether the community is pluralistic or not, each human should always be the reference to understand his or her identity accurately and independently from others.

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