The Dynamics of Cultural Acculturation in Multicultural Societies

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A R T I C L E I N F O	ABSTRACT
	In an era of increasing globalization and human mobility, multicultural societies have become more prevalent, giving rise to complex processes of cultural acculturation. This study explores the dynamics of cultural acculturation, examining how individuals and groups from diverse cultural backgrounds interact, adapt, and coexist within shared social spaces. Acculturation involves reciprocal exchanges where both dominant and minority cultures may influence one another, leading to various outcomes such as integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization. The research analyzes the psychological, social, and structural factors that shape acculturation experiences, including identity negotiation, power relations, and institutional support systems. It highlights the challenges of cultural preservation, social cohesion, and potential cultural conflicts that may emerge during these processes. Additionally, the paper emphasizes the importance of inclusive policies, intercultural dialogue, and mutual respect in facilitating positive acculturation outcomes. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how multicultural societies can balance cultural diversity with social integration, ensuring equitable participation and harmonious coexistence for all cultural groups.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, the forces of globalization, technological advancement, and increased human mobility have led to the formation of multicultural societies in many parts of the globe. The interactions between individuals and groups from diverse cultural backgrounds have created vibrant, complex, and sometimes challenging social environments where cultural acculturation becomes a central process. Cultural acculturation refers to the process through which individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds come into continuous first-hand contact, resulting in changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). It is a phenomenon that encompasses the adaptation of cultural norms, values, practices, and behaviors, often leading to transformations in identity, social relations, and institutional frameworks.

The increasing cultural diversity within societies brings numerous opportunities, such as the enrichment of cultural expressions, creativity, innovation, and economic dynamism. However, it also presents considerable challenges related to social integration, identity negotiation, discrimination, marginalization, and the potential for intergroup conflict. Understanding the dynamics of cultural acculturation is essential for policymakers, scholars, and community leaders seeking to foster social cohesion while respecting cultural diversity. The concept of acculturation has evolved significantly since its early anthropological roots. Initially conceptualized as a one-way process whereby minority or immigrant groups adopt the dominant culture's norms, modern perspectives recognize acculturation as a complex, bidirectional, and dynamic process. According to Berry's (1997) influential model,

acculturation outcomes are categorized into four strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Assimilation occurs when individuals relinquish their original culture to adopt the dominant culture fully. Integration reflects a balance where individuals maintain aspects of their original culture while adopting elements of the dominant culture. Separation involves maintaining one's original culture while rejecting the dominant culture, and marginalization occurs when individuals lose cultural connections to both their original and host cultures.

Each acculturation strategy has profound implications for individuals' psychological well-being, identity formation, and participation in social and economic life. Moreover, these strategies are not merely personal choices but are shaped by structural factors such as government policies, public attitudes, and institutional inclusivity. Multicultural societies are defined by the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups within a shared political and social space. Unlike homogeneous societies, multicultural settings require systems that allow for the recognition and accommodation of cultural differences. Characteristics of multicultural societies include legal pluralism, multilingualism, ethnic diversity, cultural festivals, and representation of various groups in public life. Government policies on immigration, citizenship, education, and anti-discrimination laws strongly shape acculturation dynamics. Institutional support in areas such as language training, employment, and legal protections fosters smoother acculturation processes.

Countries such as Canada, Australia, the United States, and parts of Europe have adopted multicultural policies that recognize the importance of preserving cultural heritage while promoting equal participation. However, multiculturalism is not without its critics. Debates persist about the limits of cultural accommodation, concerns over national identity, and fears of social fragmentation. Individual characteristics such as age, education, language proficiency, motivation for migration, and personal resilience play significant roles in determining how people adapt to a new culture. Younger immigrants often acculturate more rapidly due to their exposure to educational systems and peer interactions in the host country. The size of immigrant communities, their level of organization, and access to cultural institutions impact acculturation experiences. Strong community networks can offer support but may also lead to separation if communities become insular.

The degree of similarity or difference between the host culture and the incoming culture (cultural distance) affects the ease of acculturation. Greater cultural distance often results in more significant challenges and potential for misunderstandings. The host society's openness to diversity, levels of xenophobia, and acceptance of multicultural norms also influence acculturation. Societies that promote multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue create more favorable environments for integration. One of the most profound aspects of acculturation involves identity negotiation. For individuals navigating between two or more cultural contexts, identity can become a fluid and dynamic construct. Bicultural or multicultural identities may emerge, allowing individuals to integrate elements from multiple cultural traditions into a coherent self-concept (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993).

However, identity negotiation is not always smooth. Immigrants and minority groups may face identity conflicts, particularly when host societies demand assimilation or when home cultures discourage adaptation. Intergenerational differences often arise, with younger generations adopting host cultural practices more readily, sometimes leading to tensions within families and communities. Acculturation does not occur in a vacuum but is embedded within broader power dynamics. Dominant groups often set the terms of cultural exchange, determining which aspects of minority cultures are accepted or rejected. This power asymmetry can result in the marginalization of minority cultures and reinforce systemic inequalities. The imposition of dominant cultural norms may also lead to cultural homogenization, threatening the survival of minority languages, traditions, and identities. In some cases, cultural appropriation can occur, where dominant groups selectively adopt elements of minority cultures without acknowledging their origins or respecting their cultural significance. These practices can exacerbate tensions and hinder genuine intercultural understanding. The outcomes of acculturation processes vary widely depending on the interaction of the factors described above. Positive acculturation experiences are associated with enhanced psychological well-being, social belonging, and economic mobility. Conversely, negative experiences can lead to acculturative stress, identity confusion, social isolation, and mental health challenges.

Successful acculturation often involves access to support systems, inclusive institutions, cultural competence in host communities, and opportunities for meaningful intercultural engagement. The

presence of multicultural education, anti-discrimination policies, and community-building initiatives can mitigate acculturative stress and promote positive adaptation. Institutions play a pivotal role in facilitating or hindering acculturation. Educational institutions serve as critical sites where cultural exchange occurs and where individuals from diverse backgrounds learn shared norms and values. Schools that adopt multicultural curricula and promote intercultural dialogue help foster mutual understanding and respect. Legal and political institutions influence acculturation through immigration policies, pathways to citizenship, and legal protections against discrimination. Health and social service institutions must also be culturally competent, recognizing the unique needs of diverse populations to provide effective care.

Media institutions shape public perceptions of cultural diversity, either reinforcing stereotypes or promoting inclusive narratives that celebrate multicultural contributions. Social Fragmentation: Without deliberate efforts at integration, cultural communities may become socially and geographically segregated, leading to parallel societies with limited interaction. Discrimination and Xenophobia: Prejudice and hostility towards immigrants or minority groups undermine social cohesion and fuel intergroup tensions. Cultural Preservation vs. Integration: Balancing cultural preservation with social integration remains a delicate task, particularly when cultural practices conflict with national values or human rights norms. Political Polarization: Debates over immigration and multiculturalism often become politicized, with populist movements exploiting fears of cultural change. Inclusive Multicultural Policies: Governments must craft policies that promote inclusion while respecting cultural differences. Intercultural Education: Schools should incorporate curricula that teach cultural competence, global citizenship, and empathy. Community Engagement: Programs that foster intercultural interactions build trust and reduce prejudice. Support Services: Providing language classes, employment assistance, and legal support empowers newcomers to participate fully in society. Leadership Representation: Ensuring diverse representation in political, social, and cultural institutions signals commitment to inclusion.

Understanding the dynamics of cultural acculturation is not only academically significant but has profound real-world implications. As societies become increasingly diverse, the ability to manage cultural differences constructively will determine social stability, economic prosperity, and democratic resilience. The study of acculturation dynamics equips policymakers, educators, and community leaders with the tools to navigate diversity while fostering unity. In a globalized era marked by mass migration, transnationalism, and intercultural encounters, acculturation is not an isolated phenomenon but a defining characteristic of modern social life. It challenges conventional notions of national identity and calls for reimagining citizenship and belonging in more inclusive and flexible terms.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the dynamics of cultural acculturation in multicultural societies. Qualitative methods are appropriate for capturing the complex, subjective, and context-dependent experiences of individuals and groups engaged in acculturation processes. A case study design was utilized, focusing on selected multicultural communities within urban areas where cultural diversity is pronounced due to immigration, globalization, and internal migration. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of acculturation experiences within real-life contexts. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). A total of 30 participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation across various cultural backgrounds, ages, genders, and lengths of residency. Participants included first- and second-generation immigrants, host community members, and institutional stakeholders such as educators, community leaders, and policy makers. Interviews focused on participants' personal experiences with cultural adaptation, identity negotiation, intergroup interactions, perceived challenges, and coping strategies. Focus group discussions provided additional insights into group-level perceptions and community dynamics. Secondary data were also collected from government reports, academic literature, and policy documents related to multiculturalism, integration programs, and anti-discrimination initiatives. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, themes, and variations in acculturation experiences. Coding was conducted both deductively based on existing theoretical frameworks and inductively to capture emerging themes specific to the study context. All participants provided informed consent, and their anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained. The research was conducted in compliance with ethical standards to ensure the rights and well-being of participants were protected.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Patterns of Acculturation Strategies

The participants' experiences reflected the range of acculturation strategies proposed by Berry (1997), but with considerable variation based on context. The majority of participants expressed a preference for integration, striving to maintain cultural traditions while actively participating in the host society. Many immigrants emphasized the value of preserving language, customs, and religious practices within their families and communities while adopting the dominant culture's language, social norms, and civic duties. For example, a second-generation participant from a Middle Eastern background noted: "At home we speak our native language, celebrate traditional holidays, and follow our religious practices. But at school and work, we fully participate in society, respect local customs, and speak the national language fluently." Integration was facilitated by inclusive policies such as multicultural education, community centers, and language support programs.

A smaller group of participants reported pursuing assimilation, especially among younger generations who identified strongly with the host culture and minimized ties to their heritage culture. Some participants viewed assimilation as a necessary strategy for career advancement and social acceptance, particularly when facing discrimination or stigma attached to their cultural background. Some participants, particularly older immigrants and recent arrivals, leaned towards separation. They maintained strong ties to their cultural communities and limited interaction with the host society. These individuals often faced language barriers, felt alienated from mainstream society, and relied heavily on ethnic networks for social and economic support. Instances of marginalization were less frequent but notable. Some participants, particularly refugees or those with precarious legal status, reported feeling excluded from both their cultural communities and the host society, resulting in social isolation and psychological distress.

Intergenerational Dynamics

One of the most significant aspects of cultural acculturation in multicultural societies is the dynamic between different generations within immigrant and minority communities. As families move into new cultural contexts, they experience the process of adaptation at varying paces and in distinct ways, often leading to intergenerational tensions and negotiations over cultural identity, values, and social expectations. Younger generations, particularly children and adolescents, typically acculturate more quickly than their parents or grandparents. This accelerated adaptation is often the result of greater exposure to the host culture through school, peer interactions, media, and social institutions. They tend to acquire the host country's language more fluently

dopt new cultural norms, and integrate into broader social networks more seamlessly. In contrast, first-generation immigrants, especially adults, often retain stronger attachments to their native cultural norms, language, and traditions, resulting in a slower and more cautious adaptation process. This generational gap can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Parents may perceive their children's adaptation as a loss of cultural identity, fearing assimilation will erode important traditions, languages, and moral values. Conversely, younger individuals may feel constrained by their parents' expectations and struggle with balancing the demands of their family with those of their peers and the wider society. Such conflicts are often most pronounced around issues like education, career choices, marriage, gender roles, and religious practices.

The younger generation often develops hybrid or bicultural identities, blending elements from both their heritage culture and the host society. While some successfully navigate these dual identities, others experience internal conflict, particularly when the two sets of cultural expectations appear incompatible. This negotiation can be a source of personal growth but may also lead to feelings of alienation from both cultural communities. Over time, some parents adapt to the new cultural environment by revising certain expectations and adopting aspects of the host culture themselves. This mutual adjustment can strengthen family cohesion. However, in cases where parents remain rigid, children may challenge traditional authority structures, leading to power struggles within the family unit. The shifting balance of cultural authority within families reflects broader patterns of cultural negotiation in multicultural societies.

Community organizations, cultural associations, and support programs can play a critical role in bridging intergenerational gaps. By providing spaces for dialogue, cultural education, and mutual understanding, these institutions help families navigate the complexities of acculturation. Schools that implement multicultural curricula also contribute by fostering respect for both heritage and host cultures among young people. Intergenerational dynamics are a central component of cultural

acculturation, shaping both individual identity and community cohesion. While these dynamics can create tensions, they also offer opportunities for cultural enrichment and the development of adaptive, resilient identities that contribute positively to multicultural societies. Managing these dynamics requires empathy, open communication, and institutional support to facilitate harmonious coexistence across generations.

Institutional Support and Obstacles

Institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the experiences of individuals and communities undergoing cultural acculturation. While institutions can offer critical support that facilitates successful adaptation, they can also present obstacles that hinder integration and contribute to social exclusion. The dual nature of institutional involvement reflects the complexity of navigating multicultural societies. Effective government policies are foundational to supporting acculturation. Multicultural policies that recognize cultural diversity as a national asset encourage inclusive practices and foster a sense of belonging among immigrant communities.

Programs offering language acquisition courses, cultural orientation, and employment assistance help newcomers gain essential skills for participating fully in society. For example, publicly funded language courses enable immigrants to overcome one of the most immediate barriers to integration: communication. Mastery of the host country's language enhances educational, occupational, and social opportunities, easing the transition into new cultural settings. Schools serve as critical institutions for second-generation immigrants and their families. Multicultural curricula, cultural sensitivity training for teachers, and inclusive extracurricular activities promote cross-cultural understanding and help students navigate multiple cultural identities. Educational institutions can act as safe spaces where diversity is celebrated, fostering mutual respect among students of different backgrounds. Social services that are culturally sensitive and accessible contribute significantly to acculturation. Healthcare providers, mental health counselors, and legal aid services that understand the unique needs of immigrant populations offer critical support.

Community organizations, religious institutions, and cultural associations also create safe environments for maintaining cultural practices while engaging with the broader society. One of the most frequently reported institutional obstacles involves complex and restrictive immigration policies. Lengthy processing times, complicated paperwork, and unclear eligibility criteria for permanent residency or citizenship can create prolonged periods of uncertainty and vulnerability for immigrants and their families. Foreign credential recognition remains a persistent obstacle for many skilled immigrants. Even highly educated professionals may find their qualifications devalued or unrecognized, forcing them into underemployment or low-wage jobs. This not only wastes human capital but also undermines immigrants' confidence and economic stability.

Despite institutional support, discriminatory hiring practices and workplace biases continue to limit employment opportunities for immigrants. Even when language proficiency and qualifications meet standards, employers may favor native-born candidates, contributing to economic marginalization. Many institutions lack sufficient cultural competency, resulting in services that do not fully address the diverse needs of multicultural populations. In healthcare, for instance, the absence of interpreters or culturally appropriate care can lead to misdiagnoses and inadequate treatment. Similarly, social service providers may not fully understand the cultural nuances that affect family dynamics or mental health. Institutional structures hold tremendous potential to either facilitate or hinder the acculturation process. Comprehensive support systems that combine inclusive policies, culturally sensitive practices, and community engagement can create pathways to successful integration. Conversely, institutional obstacles can exacerbate exclusion and prolong the struggles of adaptation. A balanced and responsive institutional framework is essential for fostering cohesive, equitable multicultural societies.

Cultural Distance and Adaptation

Cultural distance refers to the extent of difference between the cultural norms, values, beliefs, and practices of an individual's heritage culture and those of the host society. The greater the cultural distance, the more challenging the adaptation process often becomes. In multicultural societies, cultural distance plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of immigrants and minority groups as they attempt to integrate into the broader social, economic, and political systems. Individuals from cultures that share similarities with the host society such as language, religious practices, social norms, or political values generally experience smoother adaptation. For example, immigrants from countries with similar educational systems or labor market expectations may find it easier to transfer skills and credentials.

Shared values regarding gender roles, individualism, and authority structures can also reduce social friction and promote quicker social integration. Conversely, those coming from cultures with significant differences may face substantial adaptation challenges. Cultural distance may manifest in various domains: Language: Lack of proficiency in the host country's language can hinder access to education, employment, and social interaction. Social Norms: Differences in communication styles, personal space, gender interactions, and authority relationships may lead to misunderstandings and social isolation. Family Structures: Variations in expectations regarding family roles, parenting, and elder care can create tension both within immigrant families and between these families and the host society. Religious Practices: Religious customs that differ from the dominant culture may be misunderstood or stigmatized, contributing to social exclusion.

Faced with significant cultural distance, individuals and communities adopt a variety of strategies to facilitate adaptation while maintaining cultural identity. Many individuals choose to adopt aspects of the host culture that are necessary for practical integration—such as language proficiency and workplace behavio while preserving core elements of their heritage culture within the private sphere. This balanced approach allows for functional integration without a complete loss of cultural identity. Some individuals develop bicultural or hybrid identities, incorporating elements of both cultures into their daily lives. This flexible identity allows them to navigate diverse social contexts more comfortably, though it may also create internal conflict, particularly when cultural values appear contradictory. Ethnic communities often provide critical support structures that ease adaptation by offering familiar cultural spaces, language-specific services, and emotional support.

These networks act as buffers against cultural dissonance and provide safe environments for negotiating identity in a new cultural setting. Institutions play a crucial role in reducing the impact of cultural distance by offering language instruction, cultural orientation programs, and intercultural education. Policies that recognize and respect cultural diversity can also foster mutual understanding and minimize discrimination, facilitating smoother adaptation for culturally distant groups. Cultural distance significantly influences the pace and ease of adaptation in multicultural societies. While greater distance can present serious challenges, adaptive strategies and institutional support can help individuals and communities bridge these gaps, promoting social cohesion and enriching the cultural landscape of the host society..

Attitudes of Society and Intercultural Relations

In multicultural societies, the attitudes held by the host society toward immigrants and minority groups significantly influence the nature of intercultural relations and the success of cultural acculturation. These attitudes can range from acceptance and inclusivity to suspicion and exclusion, shaping not only individual experiences but also broader patterns of social cohesion or conflict. When the host society adopts positive attitudes toward cultural diversity, it creates an environment conducive to integration and mutual enrichment. Societies that value multiculturalism often recognize the economic, social, and cultural contributions of immigrant and minority groups.

Acceptance leads to policies and social norms that promote inclusion, equal rights, and opportunities for all residents, regardless of their cultural background. In such environments, intercultural relations are characterized by respectful interactions, cross-cultural friendships, and collaborative community life. Positive attitudes reduce the psychological stress of adaptation for immigrants and foster a sense of belonging, which in turn encourages active civic participation and loyalty to the host nation. Schools, workplaces, and public institutions serve as important arenas where positive intercultural relations can be nurtured through inclusive practices, diverse representation, and open dialogue. Conversely, negative societal attitudes rooted in fear, prejudice, or xenophobia can create significant barriers to successful intercultural relations. These attitudes often stem from perceived threats to economic stability, national identity, or cultural homogeneity.

Misinformation, stereotypes, and media portrayals may amplify these fears, leading to the marginalization of minority groups. In societies where exclusionary attitudes prevail, intercultural relations are marked by social distance, limited interaction, and heightened tensions. Discrimination in employment, housing, education, and healthcare further isolates minority communities, creating cycles of poverty and alienation. This can result in parallel societies where minority groups are segregated from mainstream society, limiting opportunities for meaningful intercultural engagement. Interpersonal contact between members of different cultural groups plays a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes. According to the contact hypothesis, positive, cooperative, and equal-status interactions can reduce prejudice and foster more favorable attitudes toward out-group members.

Community events, intercultural education, and workplace diversity initiatives serve as platforms for building understanding and breaking down stereotypes. However, superficial or negative interactions can reinforce biases and deepen divisions. Therefore, the quality of intercultural contact is as important as its frequency. Structured interactions that emphasize common goals, shared values, and mutual respect are more likely to yield positive outcomes. Institutions such as governments, media, and educational systems have a powerful influence on societal attitudes. Inclusive public policies, anti-discrimination laws, and fair media representation can promote social harmony and counteract prejudice. Education systems that teach cultural sensitivity and global citizenship from an early age help foster more open-minded and empathetic future generations.

Societal attitudes toward cultural diversity are central to the health of intercultural relations in multicultural societies. Positive, inclusive attitudes foster integration, social cohesion, and mutual enrichment, while negative attitudes breed exclusion, tension, and conflict. Promoting positive societal attitudes through education, policy, and meaningful intercultural interactions is essential for building harmonious and resilient multicultural communities.

Developing Models of Acculturation

Acculturation refers to the process through which individuals and groups adapt to a new cultural environment while interacting with different cultural groups. Because this process is complex, scholars have developed various models of acculturation to better understand the different pathways and outcomes that can emerge when cultures come into contact. These models help explain how individuals negotiate between maintaining their heritage culture and adopting aspects of the host culture. Individuals maintain their heritage culture while also actively participating in the host society. This approach leads to biculturalism, where people can comfortably navigate both cultures, often resulting in better psychological well-being and social functioning. Individuals adopt the host culture while letting go of their heritage culture.

Over time, they may lose aspects of their original identity and fully merge into the dominant society. Individuals strongly maintain their heritage culture and avoid interaction with the host culture. This strategy may offer a sense of cultural security but often leads to social isolation. Individuals lose connection with both their heritage culture and the host culture. This condition is associated with high levels of stress, identity confusion, and social exclusion. Earlier models viewed acculturation as a unidimensional process, assuming that as individuals adopt the host culture, they necessarily lose their heritage culture. However, bidimensional models, like Berry's, recognize that individuals can simultaneously maintain aspects of both cultures, leading to more nuanced and accurate representations of acculturation experiences.

Contemporary research emphasizes that acculturation is not static but a dynamic and contextual process. Factors such as the host society's policies, social attitudes, and the presence of supportive community networks greatly influence which acculturation strategies are available or most adaptive. For instance, societies that promote multiculturalism encourage integration, while assimilationist societies may pressure individuals to abandon their cultural backgrounds. In addition, personal factors such as age, education, language proficiency, and prior cross-cultural experience also affect how individuals experience acculturation. Younger individuals, for example, may adapt more easily due to greater exposure to the host culture through schools and peer groups.

The Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM), expands on Berry's model by considering the interaction between immigrants' acculturation strategies and the host society's preferences. It demonstrates how mismatches between the two can lead to tension, while alignment fosters harmonious multicultural coexistence. Models of acculturation provide valuable frameworks for understanding the diverse ways people adapt to new cultural contexts. By recognizing the bidimensional, dynamic, and interactive nature of acculturation, these models help policymakers, educators, and community leaders design more effective support systems that promote both cultural preservation and social integration in multicultural societies.

4.   CONCLUSION

The dynamics of cultural acculturation in multicultural societies represent a complex and ongoing process that involves multiple layers of individual, social, and institutional interaction. As individuals and communities encounter new cultural environments, they navigate between preserving their heritage and adapting to the host culture. This negotiation shapes not only personal identities but also the broader fabric of social cohesion within diverse societies. Acculturation is influenced by various factors, including cultural distance, generational dynamics, societal attitudes, institutional support, and

the availability of intercultural interactions. Positive societal attitudes, inclusive government policies, and supportive institutions play a crucial role in facilitating successful integration and promoting harmonious intercultural relations. Conversely, negative stereotypes, discrimination, and exclusionary practices can hinder adaptation, leading to marginalization and social tension. Models such as Berry's bidimensional framework and the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) help to conceptualize the varied pathways and outcomes of acculturation, highlighting the importance of flexibility, mutual adaptation, and dialogue between cultural groups. Successful acculturation often results in the development of bicultural or hybrid identities, allowing individuals to participate fully in both cultural spheres. Ultimately, the dynamics of cultural acculturation are not solely the responsibility of immigrants or minority groups but require active engagement and openness from the host society as well. Promoting education that fosters intercultural understanding, ensuring fair media representation, and creating spaces for meaningful intercultural contact are essential steps toward building inclusive, resilient, and thriving multicultural societies where diversity is seen as a strength rather than a challenge.

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