

# Introduction: framing the intercultural turn

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This edited volume is situated at the intersection of two trends in current European policy debate. First, there is the common tendency in Europe to move from a state-centred approach to a local-centred approach in diversity policies, where cities are increasingly recognized as not only implementers, but also as new player<sup>1</sup> in a multi-level framework (Hepburn and Zapata-Barrero, 2014). Second, and within this context, an increasing number of cities are opting for interculturalism as a new policy focus, given the crisis of state multiculturalism (among others, Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010). Interculturalism is therefore at the centre of debates on diversity and is becoming a new way for cities to deal with diversity dynamics. As an emerging public policy, the current debate has been generating strong, convincing arguments. Interculturalism is beginning to influence some governments, leading them to reconsider their policies and introduce this new paradigm – which is considered to be the most pragmatic answer to concrete concerns in cities and their plans for the future. Interculturalism is basically an urban phenomenon. There are many European institutional documents and initiatives along with some initial academic research, which is highlighted in this book, evincing this *intercultural turn*.

However, this wave is currently occurring at a largely rhetorical level. There is still no political theory of interculturalism that could potentially inform policy makers, nor is there an empirical theory to help articulate policy implementation. When we read about different cities' programmes and policies, we also note that there are many differences, although each policy focus is presented as intercultural.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that many city councils proceed in an intuitive manner, with good intentions, but without any clear theoretical framework to legitimate their new policy approach. This concern has served as motivation for the present volume: to frame conceptually, and distinguish analytically, what is referred to under a common name yet expresses its meaning differently through policies and practices. It is not accidental that most contributors to this volume begin

their chapters by mapping a typology of intercultural policies, by simply defining their own approach or even by proposing an interpretive framework before applying it to a comparison of specific cities. What all the contributors share is the understanding that interculturalism is essentially viewed as a set of diversity policies driven by one basic idea: that *the interaction among people from different backgrounds (including immigrants and citizens) matters* and that this has been overlooked in diversity policies, which have mainly concentrated on ensuring the cultural rights of immigrant groups. Currently, the strategy based on the promotion of interaction, community-building and prejudice reduction is one of the approaches most widely recognized by international institutions – especially European ones – as most chapters illustrate. Interculturalism therefore becomes a policy strategy aimed at responding to this common concern. From this point of view, summarizing the recent literature quoted in this volume, we can say that it focuses on three basic premises:

1. *Exchange and the promotion of (positive) interaction* – the concern is not only the promotion of interpersonal contact as such, but the resulting disconfirming of stereotypes and reduction in prejudice towards ‘others’. In this sense, it is a means to an end, through an ongoing process, intended to develop and maintain intercultural competences. In other words, it tries to ensure that the contact zones between people are areas of interaction rather than areas of conflict.
2. *Equality and access to citizenship* – this is a fundamental element of the governance of diversity, which cities are striving to implement. While the legal frameworks concerning local voting rights for foreigners and naturalization are not always favourable, cities are trying to find alternative ways of giving all residents a say, in some cases advocating and lobbying for more progressive national laws. This also includes tackling disadvantage, since it is hard to see how interculturalism can continue over time if one or more sectors of society are so unequal that it can lead to people believing they have no real stake in that society.
3. *Diversity advantage* – this means re-designing institutions and policies in all fields to treat immigrant-related diversity as a potential resource and not as a nuisance to be contained. The difference in practice is great in terms of equal opportunities for education, employment, entrepreneurship, holding civil office, etc.

This does not mean, of course, that without intercultural policy there is no interaction, but rather that, even in this case, intervention is justified to provide necessary institutional support to pre-existing ‘interactional spheres’.

We cannot deny that, at least at the institutional discursive level, interculturalism has already attracted many cities and local policy makers. From the point of view of governance, it has even reached a level of consensus that did not occur in most cities with other paradigms, such as assimilation and multiculturalism. This policy strategy agreement on what, for many years, had been a matter of social dispute and political cleavage is perhaps the first premise which supports the need to better articulate this intercultural expansion. The question of how to focus diversity policy becomes more easily accepted politically when the answer is interculturalism. It is also our view that this initial political support for the tasks of policy makers belongs to the first phase of implementing intercultural policy. Now, however, it most likely needs to enter into a second phase – one of consolidation. It is at this stage of the process that the contributions in this book come into play. Conceptual reflection and empirical studies dealing with policy definition and implementation are now a necessity, because without a theorization of the intercultural practices already in existence, followed by empirically-based and informed conceptual reflection, there can be no ‘attraction’. Moreover, without data to shape implementation, how can we convince citizens and politicians that interculturalism is not only attractive, but effective? An initial mapping of the concept of interculturalism is also necessary, since we have seen that, despite the clear consensus that this policy seeks to promote interaction, there is less agreement on how to shape the idea into a policy and which areas of the city should be priorities – that is, *how to transform the concept into a policy*. There is also a second group of chapters addressing these concerns, which propose some paths for analysing implementation, as well as addressing two basic areas of socialization on interculturalism since this policy strategy influences both social behaviour and public culture: media and education.

Within this framework, this book seeks to address these two concerns by formulating two key issues: *how to conceptualize interculturalism* and *how to implement interculturalism*. An account of each of these dimensions entails a *research framework*, which we propose to open with particular foci and approaches, and then to invite comparative case studies. Each contributor is aware that he or she is entering into a particular research line in an exploratory way. But it is at this phase that the book seeks to contribute and to inspire policy practices and further studies.

Figure 1, opposite page, presents the framework of the book. A and B each represent one part of the book, and there are five chapters or lines of research in each part.

Part I (From Concept to Policy) invites readers to centre their unit of analysis on the concept/policy nexus. Five chapters perform the task of mapping policy comparatively, supported by empirical analysis. They



*Figure 1 Two research frameworks*

demonstrate the urgency and express the difficulties of completing this task if we are to move beyond the rhetoric of interculturalism. Chapter 1, written by Ricard Zapata-Barrero, provides an overview of the main hypotheses and arguments on interculturalism as the first step toward shaping a foundational debate. He proposes a comprehensive view of intercultural practices based on the interplay of three strands (the contractual, cohesion and constructivist strands). Chapter 2 is by Tiziana Caponio and Roberta Ricucci, who apply a suggestive interpretative framework which seeks to distinguish intercultural policy foci analytically, following the premise that interculturalism is mainly an inclusive policy, while rightly stressing from the beginning that this nexus must not be assumed. Their overview on how the debate was introduced by European Union (EU) institutions deserves a careful reading as well. In Chapter 3, François Rocher offers us an interesting comparative study of two cities – Barcelona and Montréal – which are far apart geographically but similar in terms of city projects, while both cities are also the centres of their own nationality projects in their respective countries (Catalonia and Québec). His interpretative framework for the analysis of intercultural programmes, based on the Québécois scholar D. Salée’s three approaches (instrumentalist, humanistic and state-oriented approaches), offers us an opportunity to distinguish between different intercultural discourses within the same policy programme and to evaluate cities’ priorities. Next comes Chapter 4 by Phil Wood, one of the most prominent promoters of interculturalism since the beginning of this ‘policy wave’. Combining, as is customary in his work, an urban and policy approach, Wood draws convincing arguments, highlighting the importance of conceptualizing public space in diverse settings – an area of the implementation of intercultural policies which has still not received in-depth research analysis, although it is foundational for the intercultural project of any city. Chapter 5 by Ted Cantle, another British scholar who is central to the intercultural debate, concludes Part I. He offers us the opportunity to include the main features of this policy in the agenda, along with a description of the main policy areas of implementation. With Cantle’s contribution, we are also provided particular details as to why interculturalism needs to be considered a paradigm and not simply a policy.

To different degrees, all the chapters in the first part of the book show us how to conceptualize interculturalism, how to define it as a policy (or more aptly, how to recognize when a policy is intercultural) and how it can frame both a city project and different practices within a city's strategic actions.

We can clearly see, if I may say so, that interculturalism is both a city project and an overall urban philosophy than can be expressed through different areas of action, and that can have different policy narratives in its expressions through specific practices.

Part II (From Policy to Implementation) introduces us to a different framework of analysis. Taking the chapters all together, the reader is introduced to different ways of dealing with policy implementation. In order to defend interculturalism politically, we need to strengthen theoretical arguments with empirical support. It is within this second dimension that the five chapters explore different paths of research. We begin with Chapter 6 by Anna Ludwinek, who reviews EU-wide empirical results regarding the perceptions and attitudes of European citizens on issues of intercultural relations, integration, discrimination and related policies. She then links this data with the European Quality of Life Survey, highlighting a trend regarding the perceived tensions between majority populations and migrants, and offering valuable insight into the attitudes towards migrants in the post-crisis environment. Her analysis is also an opportunity to assess the importance of taking into account how people view diversity and interculturalism, and to attempt to identify what they have in mind when we ask them about intercultural dialogue. The importance of connecting policy makers with citizens' views is addressed directly. Next, we move on to Chapter 7, written by Andrea Wagner, who introduces us to a complex reflection on how to detect certain causal correlations using the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Index (ICC-Index). She also tests different hypotheses concerning the relationship between intercultural policy implementation and specific policy outcomes. Her first exploration offers evidence on how intercultural practices might produce secondary effects, which are much more interesting to identify than the primary intentional outcomes. The following chapter, Chapter 8, written by the coordinator of the Intercultural Cities Programme, Irena Guidikova, defends interculturalism as the main paradigm of integration policies and uses data and evidence to discuss the key elements of the intercultural integration approach. Needless to say, the arguments put forward by Guidikova are well informed, based on an empirical comparison of more than 20 pilot cities. She conducts her arguments towards a nexus that we sometimes take for granted: that intercultural policy is mainly, and firstly, an integration policy. The final two chapters are premised on the idea that no intercultural city project can be successful without the help

of two main drivers ('allies') of socialization: the media and the school systems. That is why I think the debate on how to measure the impact on media discourse concerning diversity (Chapter 9, Anna Triandafyllidou and Iryna Ulasiuk) and diversity at schools (Chapter 10, A. Harell) is a determining factor both for knowledge formation and prejudice reduction. The concluding remarks (Chapter 11), written by the editor of the volume, Zapata-Barrero, provide an overview of the chief findings from all of the contributions, conceptualizing the policy implications of interculturalism and identifying some avenues for further research, which are nonetheless always connected to policy concerns.

Finally, I would like to talk briefly about the sources of information, methodologies and profiles of the contributors. Given the specific character of this focus and the three dimensions of the intercultural policy debate we are trying to connect (concept, policy and implementation), different methodological frameworks are applied – mainly conceptual and interpretive in Part I, and causal and explanatory in Part II. All of the chapters, however, carry out policy-making and institutional analyses and strengthen their arguments based on comparisons among cities. As you will see, we have opted to put together researchers who had previously carried out their own data collection through their own research networks, or who used secondary sources of information. In either case, I am grateful that they agreed to disseminate their findings in this volume, articulating the outcomes in a coherent way according to the purposes of the book. This is really a unique opportunity to bring together the most prominent findings of the main theoretical and empirical research done in Europe in recent years in one book.

Even if most of the contributors draw their arguments from various surveys and empirical research, we cannot disregard the influence of the Intercultural Cities Programme – where I began this reflection, joining the team of experts at its beginning in 2008. Intercultural Cities is beyond a doubt the epicentre of this explosion of interest within Europe. We are now witnessing how this 'intercultural wave' is moving beyond the Council of Europe's geographical area of influence to Montréal, Mexico and Tokyo. However, the book maintains its geographical area of focus in Europe and, as such, it can also serve to enrich the shaping of the European approach to interculturalism. As you will see, we have invited authors from Québec and Canada to compare their own data with some of the European case studies, so each Part has what I might call a 'special guest'. F. Rocher from the University of Ottawa compares Montréal (Québec) with Barcelona (Catalonia), drawing on our own suggestion; along the same lines A. Harell, from the Université du Québec à Montréal, accepted the challenge of comparing her own findings on diversity in schools with

the same ICC-Index by the Council of Europe. Hence, these 'external' contributions provide a rich transatlantic dimension to the debate we seek to promote. Contrast with other geographical areas helps us to strengthen the European approach. The fact that both scholars come from Canada and Québec is not coincidental. It also responds to one of my personal challenges, since we know that Canada and Québec are, at least on the level of institutional discourse, the original location of the multicultural/intercultural debate (see Bouchard, 2012 and Gagnon, 2009. See also the next edited book by Meer, Modood, Zapata-Barrero 2016).

It is needless to add that most contributors have an influence on policy makers and on governments. They also have lengthy experience in dealing with these policy issues and most of them have been, and remain, at the forefront of studying initiatives in the implementation of this policy discourse. Their contributions will assist us in bringing together the research and policy nexus, and in driving the analysis towards policy implications, which will be the main purpose of the conclusions. Due to this commitment to the research/policy nexus, I have requested that all of the authors allow for a more direct reading by avoiding too many footnotes and quotations, and to channel their arguments towards a final section that summarizes policy implications.

For all these reasons, I hope this book will fulfil its potential of becoming a reference, for both academics and practitioners working on all fronts. In other words, we seek to show, with concepts and practices, combining interpretation and explanatory methodologies, how interculturalism is becoming a policy that is both attractive and efficient for a variety of actors: politicians, policy makers, citizens and immigrants. For its final effort, this edited volume seeks to develop arguments to strengthen interculturalism's condition as a new policy paradigm for diversity management. Lastly, we hope this edited volume will further promote the interest of interculturalism in attending to at least three main needs in diverse settings which, if gone unchecked, can be weakened by diversity in our already fragile societies: community-building, knowledge formation and prejudice reduction.

I spent my sabbatical year 2012/13 in Québec. Most of the editorial work on this book was completed at the *Chaire de Recherche du Canada en Études Québécoises et Canadiennes (CRÉQC)* (Département de Science Politique, Université du Québec à Montréal), under the direction of A. Gagnon. We organized a group meeting on 12 April 2013 with funding from *Obra Social 'la Caixa'*, complemented by a contribution from the Canada Research Chair on Québec and Canadian Studies (CREQC, UQAM) in collaboration with the Ville de Montréal (many thanks to

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## NOTES

1. See, among others, K. Crane (2003); R. Penninx, K. Kraal, M. Martiniello and S. Vertovec (2004); D. Lüken-Klaßen and F. Heckmann (2010); T. Caponio and M. Borkert (eds) (2010).
2. See, for instance, two intercultural city networks: the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe ([http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Default_en.asp)), in existence since 2008. In 2009, the Eurofound likewise conducted a wide-ranging study examining intercultural policies and practices, the ‘European network of cities for local integration policies for migrants (CLIP)’. See Borkert et al. (2007), and the previously cited D. Lüken-Klaßen and F. Heckmann (2010). <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/clip.htm>. More recently, focusing specifically on intercultural policies, the European Ministerial Conference on Integration (Zaragoza, 15–16 April 2010), held under the Spanish Presidency, underlined once again the central role of local authorities when facing the challenges of applying intercultural and integration programmes. [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl\\_13055\\_519941744.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_13055_519941744.pdf).

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