



**CULTURAL POLICIES
IN CONTEXTS OF
DIVERSITY: THE CITY
AS A SETTING FOR
INNOVATION AND
OPPORTUNITIES**

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The Institute of culture (Barcelona City Council), on the occasion of the European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue - 2008, commissioned to Ricard Zapata-Barrero a report about the relation between diversity and cultural policies in Barcelona. The report was delivered in December 2008 and was the basis of the book published by Editorial Icaria in June 2010, in Spanish, with ISBN 978-84-9888-235-3, titled Diversity and Cultural Policy: The City as a Scenario of Innovation and Opportunities. This document is an English summary of the book.

Summary

Up to now cultural policies have been left aside in the debate on the management of diversity. This book proposes a framework of reflection on how cities can orientate their cultural policies in contexts of diversity, paying special attention to the social dimension of the policies.

The author defends a perspective that is a result of two basic reflections. Firstly, diversity, as an object of public policy, is a resource and a public good that should be managed so that it contributes to the development of a city and promotes innovation. Secondly, the author considers the role of democracy in the development of culture in the city and the importance of pursuing a structural approach based on opportunities that promotes the cultural capacities of the population.

Barcelona is taken as a case study. However, the author hopes that the results will serve as inspiration for other cities that take the dynamics of diversity seriously, or even for other public administrations responsible for cultural policy. Ricard Zapata-Barrero opens a necessary debate in this book.

Introduction: commitment to diversity through cultural policies

We find ourselves in cities with increasingly diverse societies due to the arrival of people from other regions of the world, especially in recent years. This has provoked new dynamics linked to new categories of diversity, such as, language, religion, nationality, customs and cultural practices. These add to the already existing categories of disability, gender, sexual orientation and age. The management of relations between these categories and the potential for innovation and cultural creation require political intervention, especially in order to contribute fostering a context of opportunities for all cultural capacities.

This book proposes a reflection on how cities can use *cultural policies* to turn their *commitment to diversity into actions*. Fundamentally, this commitment means making cultural policies responsible for managing the dynamics of diversity.

Surprisingly, up to now, cultural policies have been sidelined in the debate on the management of diversity, despite the fact that culture is directly linked to diversity. This book aims to contribute to this necessary debate about how cities can orientate their cultural policies in contexts of diversity. We propose a framework that reflects on the link between diversity and cultural policies, paying special attention to the social dimension of policies.

From the perspective of diversity, we will analyse the field of culture in general, focusing particularly on cultural policy frameworks. When the issue of the accommodation of diversity is introduced into cultural policies, new opportunities arise that boost public policies that distribute culture as a good. For example, a museum is transformed from a cultural facility into culture: the museum culture. It is at this level that we propose making these reflections. Similarly, we reflect on cultural programming and the agents that promote culture in the city. This does not only occur in the area of political management of culture, but the diversity that provokes it is also transformed and turned into culture itself: *the culture of diversity*, and becomes a political orientation: *the policy for accommodating diversity*.

In general, the question orienting this book is: faced with the growing dynamics of diversity in cities, “How can cultural policies respond to the challenges and how can a policy for accommodating diversity be defined for a city’s action plan?” In particular, we pose the following questions: “How can a city turn something that is initially viewed as a conflict into a public resource capable of contributing to the city’s improvement, and even consolidate it as a factor of cultural attraction? How can a city make the different forms of expression of culture feel culturally supported and even treated as cultural agents rather than consumers?”

To answer these questions we have tried to create a conceptual framework both for the cultural policies for accommodating diversity, as well as defining ways of putting policy into practice, through challenges and action lines. Barcelona is taken as a case study and as an illustration of how diversity becomes a distributive good and a resource for stimulating the cultural development of a city. Why is Barcelona a case study? Because we believe it is an example of how cultural policies incorporate the social dynamics of a city. It is nothing new; we could say that it is part of its tradition: knowing how to identify new social dynamics and turn them into resources for developing the city. This “feedback” between social dynamics and cultural policies is, perhaps, one of Barcelona’s distinctive features as an attractive city in Spain, Europe and the world.

However, in our study we do not only want to focus on the city of Barcelona, but rather hope that our results serve as inspiration for other cities that take the dynamics of diversity seriously, or even other public administrations responsible for cultural policies. *The city as a setting for the different forms of expressions of diversity, the city as a laboratory for accommodating diversity.*

The perspective we defend is a result of two basic reflections. **Firstly**, diversity, as an object of public policy, is a resource that should be managed so that it contributes to the development of a city. If diversity is not managed, the forms of expression of diversity tend to divide up until they become institutionally delimited, or in the extreme case, until there is a lack of communication between different forms of diversity because of informal rules and regulations.

This assumes that diversity can reinforce the development and innovation of cultural policies. In this framework, we understand innovation to be the result of joining two elements that didn't exist initially and if they hadn't been connected politically there would surely be no relation between them and there probably would be any development. Thus, it is the result of strategic political action and political engineering. It is assumed, therefore, that innovation must be provoked. As a social dynamic, without political intervention, diversity is unlikely to lead to cultural development and innovation. So in this way the city is turned into a laboratory for the cultural management of diversity.

As a **second reflection** we consider the role of democracy in the development of a city's culture. In non-democratic states the role of culture is to maintain the *status quo* and indoctrination, in a democracy the role of culture is to foster a critical spirit and to develop the values of democracy, dialogue, deliberation, respect, pluralism, trust and tolerance, among others. By incorporating diversity in cultural policies, these values are activated and the link between society and culture is developed in both directions: the social development of culture and the cultural development of society. The role of diversity is not to maintain one or some supposedly immovable culture or cultures, and to recreate power relations expressed by the separation between elite and popular cultures. Consequently, this book defends a cultural structural approach based on opportunities. Basically, this means not only ensuring that cultural policies include all forms of diversity and administer the reproduction of social differentiation that exists in the city, but also means providing access to a diversity of cultural expressions and developing the cultural capacities of the whole population.

This book is divided into four chapters. The content of each chapter is summarised below.

1. ‘Diversity’: a debate-concept

Chapter One is dedicated to the diversity debate-concept. The semantics of diversity is introduced and a description of the state of the current debate on diversity and cultural policy. In this respect, it is explained how the term “cultural diversity” first appeared in the international debate on culture at the end of the 1990s, and how evidence today shows that this concept has not yet been adopted by the vast majority of cities. This chapter explains that while cities and local governments use the concepts “cultural development”, “cultural participation”, or “cultural democracy” (vocabulary that appeared during the 1960s and 70s), the passing of the UNESCO Declaration (2001) and Convention (2005) on Cultural Diversity and of the Agenda 21 for Culture in 2004, have led to a growing interest in cultural diversity. Therefore, more and more cities are showing interest in the issue, in particular cities that have pursued cultural planning processes that take diversity into account, as Barcelona has. Finally, in this chapter we analyse the institutional discourse on diversity, at both European and international level.

2. Theoretical framework: dynamics of diversity, accommodation and opportunity structure

Chapter Two presents the theoretical framework focused on the concept of *dynamics of diversity*, the public policy for accommodating diversity, and the structural approach based on opportunities applied to cultural policies. In addition, we make a link between the cultural policy related to diversity and the principle of equality, and analyse the anthropological background of cultural policies. The basic aim is to present the main dimensions of the study’s theoretical framework, very much oriented towards the link between diversity and cultural policy in general, taking Barcelona city as our case study.

In this respect, the **first part** explains how public policies should be reoriented within the new paradigm implied by the public management of diversity. Without this redefinition of the role of public policies there is a risk of losing legitimacy, as it dissociates itself from the conflicts linked to diversity. Nowadays, one of the main challenges of public policies is to rethink the way of defining its aims in terms of diversity management. To do so, we put forward four arguments that help to shape the direction that this new public policy paradigm is taking. Argument 1: Public policies as policies of identity: redistribution and recognition - Argument 2: From homogeneity to diversity - Argument 3: From pluralism of values to cultural pluralism and the principle of cultural difference - Argument 4: Deconstruction process; political, social and ethical sense.

Secondly, the concept of “dynamics of diversity” and the political response to this reality, namely policies for accommodating diversity, are presented, and later the epistemological turn that this new political orientation supposes is highlighted. Taking into account the four arguments that justify the need to reorient public policies, the approach proposed is based on the idea that it is more interesting what it expresses than the content. That is to say, it is not so much the management of immigration that is of interest, but rather the fact that immigrants are bearers of expressions of diversity, such as, language, religion, and other customs and traditional practices. Therefore, the dynamics of diversity increase with the arrival of immigrants from both the EU and outside the EU, added to those that already exist.

We also assume that diversity does not have a universal way of expressing itself, but is rather activated or becomes visible according to the homogeneous native context it occurs in, and according to how this traditional context reacts to the new dynamics and expressions of diversity. For example, the fact that an Ecuadorian or Argentinean speaks Spanish is not a dynamic of diversity in Madrid, but it is more clearly so in Paris or London. The fact that a Moroccan or Algerian practises a religion is not a dynamic of diversity in Cairo, but in Amsterdam or Rome, it is. The dynamic of diversity becomes visible according to the context in which it is expressed.

Therefore, the determination of the criteria of diversity depends heavily on context, although there is always a repetition of categories that is worth highlighting. These are the categories that make diversity visible, that connect diversity with the difference it implies, as they are categories directly linked to a person's identity and are what make them different to other people.

Thirdly, we explain how the study's basic approach is a result of the link between the perspective of the *opportunity structure* with cultural policies. The idea is that society offers an institutional structure that provides opportunities. If this has been designed before the arrival of the new dynamics of diversity, it should also be able to change in order to respond to these new realities, especially because otherwise it becomes evident that some dynamics have more opportunities than others for expressing themselves or enjoying the city's cultural offer. In this framework, conflicts are interpreted as the result of this inconsistency between opportunity structure and the reality of a diverse society.

The accommodation of people with different cultures, religions, languages, origins, or customs is a reality that is slowly penetrating into all our ways of thinking about social sciences in general, and public policies, in particular. Therefore, by linking opportunity structure and culture we can introduce the concept of "cultural opportunity" as one of the key elements of the approach we propose for guiding municipal cultural policies. Hence, we can say that the aim of policies for the accommodation of diversity is to promote the cultural opportunities of different cultural expressions in the municipality. That is to say, the different dynamics of diversity of a municipality have the same opportunities for expressing themselves without having to create parallel structures. Furthermore, we always take into account the two preconditions of accommodation: acceptance of the context of diversity and pluralism of points of view.

Fourthly, we take a deeper look at the link between public policies and the principle of equality applied to cultural policies, presenting the main elements of the theoretical framework. We are interested in highlighting the theoretical implications of the link between cultural policy, diversity and the principle of equality that guides all public policy.

The main issue at the centre of the contemporary debate is whether or not the form of expression of diversity is considered subject to the principle of equality. "How do we apply the principle of equality to difference as well as values?" In other words, "How do we include difference in the category of equality?" Currently, reality shows that not all cultures receive the same treatment from political powers and that some have more advantages than others. State neutrality is a myth. Diversity requires a change in the way cultural identity is treated and demands, in order for the principle of equality to be applied, respect for the dignity of all cultures. Thus, the criterion of impartiality is defended as the response to the question of how equal treatment should be applied to the different dynamics of diversity.

Furthermore, the indications are that diversity should be used as policy itself rather than a political *criterion*. Diversity as a political criterion means that actions carried out are reactive in nature, that is, they are understood as a consequence of a certain change in context, a change from homogeneity to diversity. In order for diversity to be accommodated, diversity itself must move from being a criterion to become policy. Understood as policy, diversity becomes political culture, a way of behaving, a philosophy, an orientation, a mentality. Diversity becomes a collective good that should be guaranteed and become permanently widespread and accessible to all sectors of the city. This policy assumes long-term management in order to create a context where a new space for cohesion in diversity is achieved, which no longer understands diversity as an obstacle, but rather as a defining element of cohesion.

Finally, and once the main dimensions of the theoretical framework have been introduced, we propose, in a *fifth* section, highlighting the importance of the anthropological dimension that characterises cultural policies in contexts of diversity.

3. Case study: The city of Barcelona in perspective

Barcelona's cultural policy shapes [Chapter three](#). The cultural policies made by Barcelona City Council from 1995 up to now are reviewed, specifically by the *Institut de Cultura de Barcelona* (*Institute of Culture of Barcelona*, ICUB, city's culture department).

Since the creation of the ICUB in 1995, diversity has gradually been incorporated in the perspective of cultural policies. When it was created, the ICUB did not cite the "promotion of cultural diversity" as an aim in its statutes. We can interpret this initial evident absence as a result of the stage that Barcelona City Council was at, a time when it was defining the phenomenon of immigration and creating the initial political and administrative structures needed for ensuring the suitable reception of the new immigrants. Consequently, although it is true that the category of diversity was very scarce during the initial years of the ICUB, year after year, it has become more present in the Institute's documents. From 2004 on, Barcelona City Council and the ICUB took a major step forward by including cultural diversity as one of the main principles of its framework document, the *Agenda 21 for Culture*.

However, it was not until 2006 that the concept of diversity was reflected more intensely and clearly in the policies adopted by the ICUB, with the Strategic Plan of 2006, which was without a doubt, an outcome of the two previous documents. Nevertheless, although this Plan widely recognises cultural diversity, both in terms of the diversity of agents (diversity in the size of agents and cultural subsectors), and the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups, it does not explicitly recognise cultural diversity as a guiding principle of cultural policies.

The programme that was aimed most towards cultural diversity up until now has been the *Programme for Intercultural Dialogue 2008*. Its main aims are intercultural dialogue and the promotion and distribution of cultural diversity as a distributive good. That is to say, the essence of this initiative, apart from promoting intercultural dialogue, is to promote and guarantee the right of different cultural collectives of the community to offer and carry out their cultural practices in municipal public spaces.

Finally, it should also be highlighted that although diversity is incorporated in the agenda of festivals, it is not incorporated in all of the city's cultural activities. For example, the events that have become important in the last 2 to 3 years, (and have perhaps been the first ones to promote cultural diversity), are festivals that promote the connection between different cultures, such as, the Three Kings Parade, the Mercé Festivities and the Grec Festival, among others (see ICUB website, [www. www.bcn.cat/cultural/](http://www.bcn.cat/cultural/)). The next step is the one that goes from promoting diversity in the agenda of festivals to making it a catalyst for cultural policies, to the extent that it structures the ICUB cultural agenda itself, in all its action plans and cultural facilities.

Therefore, in this chapter it is argued that only when diversity becomes policy can the accommodation of the city's different expressions of culture be achieved. This is the only way of achieving cohesion in the city of Barcelona, so that any person, of any origin or culture feels that the City Council gives them the opportunity to express themselves culturally when programming its cultural policy. Other countries see Barcelona as a practical model for managing diversity, but only as a tendency. Now is the moment to consolidate this tendency and incorporate cultural diversity in the city's structure of opportunities.

4. Proposals for Barcelona and for cities committed to diversity

Chapter Four focuses on proposals. Accommodation policy is applied to a framework that links culture and society, taking into account the two directions it implies, that is, “socially understanding culture” and “culturally understanding society”. Firstly, “*socially understanding culture*” means promoting culture so that it becomes accessible to all members of society, ensuring that everyone can participate in Barcelona’s cultural offerings, both as audiences and as agents in the process of elaboration. In turn, this implies that culture can be an instrument for interaction, inclusion and social cohesion and enrichment. Secondly, “*culturally understanding society*” implies promoting society as the main producer, source and origin of all cultural expression. Politically speaking, this production is promoted and its different forms of expression are managed. In this respect, the cultural understanding of society is based on the premise that each of the different practices of the different cultural communities in Barcelona’s society contributes to understanding Barcelona as a diverse society.

The definition of policy for the accommodation of diversity consists of five challenges, which provide cultural policy itself with all the aspects of innovation required for this new stage of the ICUB. We comment on the theoretical meaning of each Challenge below.

- **Challenge 1. Opportunity structure and democratisation of culture.** Cultural opportunity structure can be defined as the possibility that members of a community have to access cultural goods, activities and services, as well as the possibility they have to create, develop and disseminate their own culture. In other words, the principle of equal cultural opportunities is one that allows any person or community to be a creator (subject) or receiver (object) of culture.
- **Challenge 2. Diversity as a context that promotes creative activity.** Social fracture, disunity and mutual distrust are not a result of diversity, but rather of the cultural “laissez-faire”, that is, scenarios where there is no political intervention for the management of the city’s cultural diversity. On the contrary, in a scenario that seeks to intervene, and therefore manage existing diversity, the context of diversity itself is transformed into a scenario promoting inspiration, innovation and the creative production of culture. Thus, new cultural products can be achieved that better publicise the city as a diverse, innovative and creative society.

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- **Challenge 3. Diversity as a collective distributive good.** An individual good gradually loses value as its shared use increases; meanwhile a collective good does not lose value with an increase in use. Diversity is a collective good. The good that is managed and distributed by accommodation policy is not so much culture, as a closed unit previously established and defined, but rather its different forms of expression and practices: the diversity it implies.
 - **Challenge 4. Diversity as a practical principle.** Diversity is not only a value, neither is it just a collective good, it is also a practical principle, which can only be defined by the practices it provokes. The theoretical definition of diversity, without the definition of examples and specific practices, loses all meaning and proves meaningless for accommodation policies.
 - **Challenge 5. Context and territorial planning policies.** Accommodation policy always has territory as a frame of reference. Accommodation policies should prevent “contact zones” between cultures from becoming “conflict zones”. Accommodation policies are also prevention policies. Logically, not all neighbourhoods have the same level of diversity; therefore, actions will be different depending on whether a greater volume of the population of new arrivals is Chinese or Latin American. Each public library, for example, should respond in a different way, depending on the context. However, this fact should not prevent all public cultural programmes from having the socialisation of diversity as a basic principle.

On the basis of our analysis, **an action** plan is finally proposed in two large sections.

PRINCIPLES FOR ELABORATING A PLAN. Here, we make a list of the institutional recognitions assumed by the ICUB and that make up the justificatory basis for the strategic policy actions for the accommodation of diversity. In addition, these act as guidelines for specific actions, and as proposals for general programmes and activities in different cultural facilities.

1. Barcelona's society is diverse. Diversity is a visible fact in the city. This visibility has always been expressed according to different categories: age, socio-economic background, gender, personal physical capacity, etc. Now, there are new criteria provoking new dynamics of diversity: language, religion, origin, customs and cultural practice, and even visible factors such as skin colour, ways of dressing, accent, etc.

2. New dynamics of diversity have a differentiated cultural production. This new diversity has a differentiating cultural component that distinguishes it from other forms of diversity. This explains the public willingness and desire to promote and manage this cultural dimension of diversity, especially the cultural production this type of diversity can produce.

3. The advantages of diversity. Diversity is interpreted as opportunity and any unfounded links made between diversity and social conflict, disunity, social distrust, separation and other negative dimensions are rejected. Diversity is the main source of inspiration and basis for innovation and creativity. Hence, we identify what we want to promote and what we want to avoid. For example, we want to avoid difference being promoted as exotic, and the folkloric presentation of cultural communities. We also want to avoid cultural communities from becoming separated, or even “cultural autism”. However, we want to demonstrate that all cultural communities are internally diverse.

4. The culture of diversity is civic. It is not so much the management of cultural diversity that should be the aim of cultural policy, but rather the promotion of the culture of diversity, which we interpret as civic culture. That is, it should be assumed that diversity itself is a culture that should be promoted within all forms of cultural expression. Diversity itself is a civic culture that should be managed, promoting interaction and crossing over, coexistence and cohesion, recognition and pluralism between different cultural communities.

5. Standardise diversity in all public spaces. Diversity can be promoted without making it explicit, but in an indirect manner, by incorporating members of different cultures in the workforce of museums, libraries or media. Diversity must be so visible and normal that it no longer appears in the social or political debate. Diversity should form part of our social fabric.

6. Diversity is part of the Catalan tradition. Recognising diversity does not mean ignoring or playing down the Catalan tradition, but rather that we are contributing to a process of construction, by incorporating this new dynamic in Catalan history. New cultural communities need to know Catalan history so that they can learn about the city and its traditions, which are based on differentiated institutions and the Catalan language. In fact, diversity is already part of the Catalan tradition, recognising new diversity means accepting an inheritance that is rightly ours.

7. Diversity and cultural facilities. Diversity can become visible in the internal organisation of cultural facilities (for example, through the institutional structure, organisation chart and personnel), in the users (according to the profile of the people who use the facility), and in the type of contents they disseminate (for example, the types of activities, temporary programmes, and permanent collections). The need to work toward achieving coherency between the three dimensions is recognised (internal organisation, users and type of cultural knowledge).

STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY FOR ACCOMMODATING DIVERSITY:

we identify the strategic actions of the policies for accommodating diversity proposed by the ICUB. In this book, different actions are identified, with the aim of inspiring each city to specify their own strategic guidelines. Some of the actions proposed in this book are listed below: we contemplate 10 areas of action.

1. In the **area of Institutions**, the social extension of the commitment to diversity is proposed, and the promotion of an opportunity structure and equal cultural opportunities.
 - a. Create a social document committed to diversity in the city.
 - b. Incorporate the dimension of diversity in the constitution of the city's Council for Culture (or similar organ for cultural participation).
 - c. Incorporate expert consultants in the management structure of the city council ("diversity officers").
 - d. Create an international programme of cultural cooperation with third countries.

2. In the **area of Management**, it is considered necessary to promote networking between projects that promote a culture of diversity and to ensure that there is representation of diversity in the structure of personnel.
 - a. Promote networking in cultural production.
 - b. Ensure equal opportunities in public calls for tender in the area of culture.
 - c. Promote the incorporation of personnel from different cultural communities in public cultural projects.
 - d. Generate knowledge and research in this area.

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- 3.** In the **area of Programming**, the incorporation of diversity in the city's cultural programme is considered necessary.

 - a.** Promote the dissemination of popular traditions to new cultural communities.
 - b.** Promote and support diversity workshops or events, especially in contexts where diversity is not frequent.
 - c.** Incorporate an annual system of grants and economic assistance for projects that specifically support diversity.

 - 4.** In the **area of Festivals and Public Spaces**, it is considered positive to promote the incorporation of rituals shared with new cultural communities in the festivals' programme and the widening of the festival imaginary, on the basis of the incorporation of activities representative of the city's cultural diversity in the city's permanent programme.

 - 5.** In the **area of Heritage and Museums**, a culture of diversity will be promoted in museums in three areas: visitors, the product on offer and treatment of heritage information.

 - a.** Treatment and management of cultural heritage from a plural point of view.
 - b.** Promote interrelation with countries of origin.
 - c.** Organisation of programmes linking museums with local audiences.

 - 6.** In the **area of Cultural Creation and Production**, the promotion of innovation and creation that arises as a result of interaction between cultures is recommended. For example, by supporting and channelling enterprising initiatives that foster the creative capacities of mixed populations and diversity.

 - 7.** In the **area of Libraries and Proximity**, attempts will be made to bring libraries closer to all cultural communities and to define libraries as spaces for the reception of new immigrants.

 - a.** Promote libraries as information points, not management, of local reception policies.
 - b.** Foster joint activities with other libraries about different forms of expression of diversity.
 - c.** Introduce new items in library catalogues based on diversity.

8. In the **area of Communication**, the city's cultural offerings should be brought closer to users and audiences from all cultural communities, and the cultural knowledge and activities of all cultural communities to all of the city's citizens.

- a.** Facilitate the publication of some kind of resource for this purpose.
- b.** Carry out an information campaign using local media.
- c.** Innovate on information channels by incorporating new spaces for interaction.

9. In the **area of Managing Linguistic Pluralism**, the right of all city residents to communicate will be ensured, independent of nationality, especially in the first stages of reception, for example, by supporting the use of languages of the main cultural communities in the reception stage, as well as the use of the official language or languages.

10. In the **area of Education and Schools**, activities related to the culture of diversity will be promoted in schools, through the drawing up of a cultural programme with the aim of promoting a culture of diversity in schools.

