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## INTRODUCTION

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# Introduction – Diversity incorporation in the cultural policy mainstream: Exploring the main frameworks and approaches bridging cultural and migration studies

## **ABSTRACT**

*The point of departure of this special issue is that in spite of the existence of a large debate on cultural policies, on the one hand, and on migration-related diversity policies, on the other hand, there are still few studies that deal with the intersection between these two policy fields. All contributions of the special issue bridge this gap by analysing if and how cultural policies, cultural institutions and artistic activities have changed in response to migratory processes, contributing to the transformation of societies. Their results raise the additional question of whether the incorporation of culture as an artistic practice and a channel of communication could change the basic ways integration processes have been researched.*

## **KEYWORDS**

cultural policy  
diversity  
migration  
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migration studies  
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Research on immigrant art and culture has a long history, particularly in the field of literature (Sievers 2013). However, the focus has mostly been on the content and the aesthetics of artistic works, while economic, political and social dimensions have long been ignored (Sievers 2014; Zapata-Barrero 2010, 2014). One of the first books that took a more comprehensive approach to the importance of the arts in immigrants' lives in the United States was published as late as 2010 (DiMaggio and Fernandez-Kelly 2010). In Europe, three special issues dedicated to that question have appeared since 2008 (Martiniello and Lafleur 2008; Martiniello et al. 2009; Martiniello 2015). These approaches are the seminal works of a new interdisciplinary research field to be further explored in a joint effort from sociology, political science, literary studies, musicology and cultural studies. The driving force of this new research field is not that there was no interest in the topic before but that the interdisciplinary perspective of connecting cultural and migration studies brings new insights that do not arise from the work of any individual research agenda.

The point of departure of this special issue is then that in spite of the existence of a large debate on cultural policies, on the one hand, and on migration-related diversity policies, on the other hand, there are still few studies that deal with the intersection between these two policy fields. All contributions of this special issue bridge this gap by analysing if and how cultural policies, cultural institutions and artistic activities have changed in response to migratory processes, contributing to the transformation of societies. Their results raise the additional question of whether the incorporation of culture as an artistic practice and a channel of communication could change the basic ways integration processes have been researched.

The migration/culture nexus can be broadly viewed from two different disciplinary directions: from a cultural studies perspective and from a migration studies perspective. This renders the field highly differentiated and contested, because it is structured according to divergent research agendas. Indeed, the fields of cultural studies and migration studies are themselves complex and multifaceted. Cultural studies enrich the debate on the migration/culture nexus with in-depth knowledge on cultural production, dissemination, criticism and policy-making. They discuss the concrete aesthetics of cultural production, including techniques such as cultural mixing in music, film, literature, etc. (for film, see Naficy 2001). They grant insight into the structures of cultural production, dissemination and criticism in different cultural contexts (for literature, see Sievers and Vlasta 2017). Finally, they examine the contents and governance of cultural policy-making (Bennett 2001). These insights help us understand the specific potential linked to the incorporation of immigrants into culture and to identify factors preventing or facilitating the incorporation of immigrants into cultural production and consumption. Migration studies, on the other hand, bring to the debate the in-depth discussion of migration processes and of migration-related diversity, with all issues related to the process of accommodation of diversity being of particular interest for the discussion in this special issue (Vertovec 2014; Garcés-Mascreñas and Penninx 2015). This involves both identity recognition and redistribution of rights processes (Banting and Kymlicka 2006), which in turn are strongly linked to discrimination, social class stratification, socio-economic and political inequalities.

Culture is probably one of the most difficult concepts to capture in one meaning in both migration and cultural studies (Zapata-Barrero 2016). It is also in its very essence a multidisciplinary concept. Sociologists, anthropologists,

cultural theorists, political scientists and so on promote their own meaning from the point of view of each discipline. Even within cultural studies, the boundaries between popular/elitist culture and artistic expression are fleeting. All the contributions to this special issue consider 'culture' as artistic and creative practices where the immigrant is considered as an artist and having creative capacities, as a consumer, manager and maker of culture (Zapata-Barrero 2010). This register of culture comes from the ground-breaking essay of Williams (1976: 90), who rightly distinguished 'culture as an artistic activity' from 'culture as a way of life', whether of a group, of a people or of humanity in general. Within this line of differentiating several senses of culture, the analytical distinctions of the concept put forward by Stanley (2005) offer, in our view, a more appropriate distinction. This differentiation includes Culture H (Heritage), as the repository of past meanings, symbols and cultural traditions, Culture C (Creativity), as the making of new meanings and symbols through discovery and creative activity in the arts and, finally, Culture S (Symbols), as the set of symbolic tools from which individuals construct their ways of living.

We are mainly interested in finding out how the creativity of immigrants and their descendants (Culture C) affects the heritage of their country of settlement (Culture H). How far have cultural policies been able to incorporate immigrants and their descendants not as a separate group but as part of the cultural mainstream? How far have mainstream cultural institutions, such as museums and theatres, put this idea into practice? Diversity in this context has two meanings. It describes the fact that Western societies have become more diverse through immigration. This raises the question of how to incorporate the increasing national, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity into a cultural heritage assembled to present the alleged homogeneity of these societies. However, diversity may also be the outcome of this process in the sense of a new approach to defining the resulting societies as diverse with all the effects this may have on different policy levels, including cultural policies, and on mainstream cultural institutions.

The shared perspective of all articles in this special issue is that they are public policy oriented and analyse changes from this specific perspective. The core is to combine both dimensions: the incorporation of diversity into the mainstream culture policy and the incorporation of culture into the mainstream diversity policies. All contributions are also particularly interested in showing how far such inclusionary programmes modify the understanding of art and culture in the respective context and how current traditional views of culture can facilitate or restrain processes of structural and policy changes. The individual contributions principally adopt two different perspectives to discuss these issues: on the one hand, they concentrate on cultural policies as such in different territorial settings; on the other hand, they analyse how cultural institutions translate the new political approach into practice. Three articles focus on municipal, regional, state and supra-national policies facilitating inclusion of immigrants and their descendants. The first article contributes to the debate on how notions of diversity in European politics serve to consolidate socio-economic inequality and ethno-nationalism (Lopez). The second discusses the concept of interculturalism (versus multiculturalism) as a facilitator of the inclusion of immigrants and their descendants in the cultural policy mainstream (Zapata-Barrero). The third concentrates on the different approaches and outcomes of Canadian cultural policies aimed at diversifying the arts and Spanish foreign policies furthering artists of immigrant origin in a programme designed to promote mutual respect between different cultures

(Dupont). Two further articles focus on how cultural institutions historically contributing to the representation of nations as homogeneous have tried to translate these new policies into practice. They compare different approaches adopted in Swedish museum exhibitions (Johansson) and in mainstream theatres in Berlin and Vienna (Sievers) regarding how and to what extent they manage to incorporate diversity in their daily practice. The individual empirical case studies discuss the incorporation of diversity in the cultural policy mainstream on different political levels from the subnational level in districts (Kreuzberg in Berlin and Rosengård in Malmö), cities (Berlin, Malmö, Montreal and Vienna) and federal states (Berlin, Vienna and Quebec) via the national level in Austria, Canada, Germany, Spain and Sweden to the supranational level of the European Union. They also use different methods, from top down to bottom up, most of them combining meso (actors and communities) and macro (structures and institutions) levels of analysis.

The research outcomes contribute to a deeper understanding of the immigration-related diversity policy and cultural policy nexus. The set of different articles incorporates normative debates, decision-making processes and implementations, key actors, public and private sectors and alliances that influence such processes, together with the multiple levels of territory, from neighbourhoods, cities and regions to state and the European Union. Basic issues belonging to both cultural and migration studies are also discussed through concrete empirical analysis, such as those linked to nationality, belonging, residence, public identity, and generally integrating the whole population into a society. This covers building cohesion, loyalty and stability in diverse societies. Likewise, all contributors give priority to identifying the main factors favouring/restricting the inter-connexion between culture and diversity. Basic frameworks of this analysis are nation state, citizenship, diversity recognition, representation, management, governance, inclusion and diversity narratives. The overall aim is to see how far the interplay between cultural policies and diversity policies changes the understanding of culture and migration policies, enhances new forms of governance and citizenship, contributes to dynamics of change in society and politics and influences new forms of integration processes. One additional added value of this special issue is that it illustrates how the culture and immigration nexus invites multidisciplinary analysis of the main factors favouring/restricting the inter-connexion. The overall aim is to gauge the extent of the interplay between cultural policies and diversity policies, change the understanding of culture and integration, enhance new forms of governance and citizenship and contribute to dynamics of change in society and politics.

The individual articles highlight that incorporating immigrants and their descendants into the cultural policy mainstream necessitates change on all levels. These levels range from the norms governing cultural policy-making and cultural institutions via the staff putting these norms into practice to the concrete approaches adopted in individual policies, museum exhibitions and theatre plays. Ricard Zapata-Barrero analyses the complexity of this process for cultural policy-making in Montreal that has installed interculturalism as a norm and has changed the governing structures of cultural policy-making to guarantee that this norm governs all cultural policy areas. Incorporating immigrants and their descendants into mainstream cultural institutions is an equally complex project as Wiebke Sievers illustrates in her analysis of the diversification process that Shermin Langhoff and Jens Hillje initiated in 2013 at the Maxim-Gorki-Theater in Berlin. She makes particularly clear that

several levels have to be considered to understand processes of diversification in the cultural mainstream: cultural policy-making from the state level down to the district level, the institutional structures in the respective context and, last but not least, the agency of individuals striving for change. Of course, these are only examples of a process that may develop differently on all levels in other political entities and cultural institutions. Thus, Pier-Luc Dupont's article shows that the national level in Canada adopted both a different norm, i.e. multiculturalism, and a different governing structure to that of the city of Montreal, even when facing the same challenge of incorporating immigrants and their descendants into the cultural policy mainstream. How the particular adopted norm impacts the outcome becomes clear in Christina Johannson's contribution, in particular when the adopted norms move beyond a focus on cultural diversity to include socio-economic diversity. A further element she adds to the debate is the question of how far immigrants and their descendants are involved in deciding the norms and practices of their incorporation into the cultural mainstream. Last but not least, Siresa Lopez, in her contribution on EU cultural policies, shows that there is no alternative to debating norms in a context where diversity has traditionally meant promoting national and regional diversity rather than including immigrants and their descendants within these regions, nations and the European Union. The resulting policies otherwise will lead to cementing segregation, both in cultural and socio-economic terms.

On a further level, the articles hint at dimensions that may need more attention in the future discussion of diversification in culture. Pier-Luc Dupont's contribution shows that future researchers may have to move beyond looking at the traditional actors involved in cultural policy-making and practice. In Spain, it has not been cultural policy-making, but foreign policy-making and a network of cultural Houses that have contributed to the increasing visibility of immigrants and their descendants. Each of these Houses specialized in a specific continent or civilization: Africa House, America House, Arab House, Asia House and Sefarad-Israel House. Such new actors, who use cultural policies as an economic and geopolitical strategy, may change the way that the incorporation of artists of immigrant origin into the cultural policy mainstream is conceived. The most obvious difference between this approach and explicit cultural policy approaches, discussed by Dupont, Zapata-Barrero and Lopez, is that incorporating immigrants and their descendants into the cultural policy mainstream is not their main aim, but a side effect of promoting non-Western art in general. Such an approach may be discarded as deepening the ethnicization of non-Western art by differentiating between the West and the rest. However, it may also undermine such differentiations in concrete practice. If further research shows the latter to be true, then the Spanish foreign policy approach to incorporating immigrants and their descendants into the cultural policy mainstream may be in line with more international approaches that cultural institutions have recently adopted for the incorporation of immigrants and their descendants, as Johannson implies for selected Swedish museums and Sievers illustrates for mainstream theatres in Berlin and Vienna.

The links between these processes of internationalization and immigrant incorporation in mainstream culture are certainly an avenue to be further explored in future research on this topic. It may also be one of the areas where this new research field can contribute to rethinking the incorporation of immigrants and their descendants as a process that not only needs to take into account the transnational activities of the migrants, as has been highlighted

in the transnational turn in migration studies, but should also consider the continuous internationalization processes affecting all institutions in the countries receiving immigrants.

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