Ricard Zapata-Barrero (ricard.zapata@upf.edu) is professor of political science at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona) and director of the research group on immigration (GRITIM-UPF) has elaborated a proposal based on ten parameters for measuring interculturality in cities and evaluating their commitment to diversity.

A Commitment to Diversity

Diversity causes a qualitative change in the relations between people and between people and institutions. It is at the root of a complex process of change in accommodation, where all dimensions of the basic structure of society are affected. A city that recognizes its dynamics of diversity, the traditional ones such as gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability, but especially the new ones, related to cultural practices, religion, language or nationality, is implicitly expressing a political commitment to diversity.

The next step is to define a strategy for managing diversity. Currently, the strategy based on the promotion of interaction is the one most widely recognized by international institutions. The European Commission proclaimed 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO has just published an excellent report entitled "Investing in cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue", and the Council of Europe is already working in this direction, having carried out a preparatory meeting with the City Council of Barcelona (16-17 October) entitled "The interaction between migrants and host societies: Learning from policy and practice".

Therefore, the concept of interculturality is beginning to be viewed as a category that defines a global approach to accommodating diversity, especially useful for municipal management. However, this category can be highly semantic in nature and if it is not delimited, could prove to be useless. Within this framework, I would like to propose an accreditation system that could help us to decide whether or not a city meets the minimum standards in order to be considered a city committed to interculturality. This system seeks to identify practices and actions, and not discourses or statements. Thus, we can identify ten dimensions under which interculturality is to be assessed and later pose some questions relating to them. If we designate a point to each dimension, we have a scale of 1 to 10. Half a point can be given to any of the two questions that are included within a dimension. If a city does not score at least 5 out of 10, it will not be labelled as intercultural.

1. Political dimension: Has the city's recognition of diversity and its commitment to interculturality been adopted by political consensus?
2. Planning dimension: Has an explicit program of intercultural strategic actions been adopted? Is this program provided with an annual budget, including items related to specific actions?
3. Interdepartmental dimension: Is there an intercultural strategy for most departments and agencies of the city council? Is it explicitly mentioned that an intercultural strategy should be followed in all the principle programs at its departments?
4. Dimension of leadership: Is there a cross-sectorial institutional network to address issues related to diversity? Is there a coordinator of interculturality at the mayor's office?

5. Human rights dimension: Is there an office or service available for addressing reports of discrimination? Are there explicit mechanisms for implementing the European directive against discrimination?
6. Social dimension: Is there a public declaration of principles for interculturality between the political and social spheres recognising the city's diversity, and its commitment to interculturality?
7. Information, training and knowledge transfer dimension: Is there a structure for observing interculturality, identifying good practices, collecting information and promoting research?
8. Ethics dimension: Is there an internal code of conduct in all departments of the municipality to enable the incorporation of interculturality as a principle of action? Is there a system of training in interculturality for all the policy makers in the council?
9. Participation dimension: Is there a channel for consultation or an intercultural participation council that allows for debate around basic issues on the municipal agenda, helping to guide the policy strategy?
10. Reception dimension: Is there a network of linguistic reception and local knowledge (cultural, city services, city history, etc.)?

This accreditation system does not set priorities, nor rank, but is intended to be a tool to help us to identify intercultural cities and also to exclude those that, despite promoting a discourse of interculturality, are found to use mere rhetoric, and are not accompanied by explicit actions or practices. With this system, we will probably keep advancing within the practical philosophy that characterizes the governance of diversity in Spain.

The interest shown by the Council of Europe in the municipal practices at Barcelona City Council demonstrates how these practices can contribute to the incipient European debate, adding a much-needed dose of pragmatism to a very theoretical matter. That is, of course, if we really want to take the management of diversity seriously.

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