

# RE-CITY

INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM  
FOR SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

# 04/20

"FOR AN INTER-CULTURAL FUTURE" CYCLE

# "EQUALITY, EQUITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION"

SESSION WITH **LEILA HADJ-ABDOU**



# Equality, equity, and non-discrimination

**Guest Speaker: Leila Hadj Abdou, Researcher at the Migration Policy Centre (MPC), European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy**

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This document summarises a debate held with the researcher Leila Hadj Abdou in the Re-City project's "For an Inter-Cultural Future" cycle of lectures. Each one consists of a public lecture and a seminar with Catalan scholars. This is followed by a gala dinner attended by sundry figures from Catalonia's economic, social, political, and business circles.

The activities were held at Palau Macaya (a palace built in the Modernist style) in Barcelona in January 2020. The contents in this summary follow a thematic order rather than that taken by Prof. Hadj Abdou. Re-City is a project carried out by Fundació Catalunya Europa [Catalonia-Europe Foundation] in collaboration with the Catalan Government, Barcelona's Metropolitan Area, Barcelona City Council, "la Caixa" [bank] and The Club of Rome. "For an Inter-cultural Future" is the third challenge in the Re-City project. The two previous challenges were: "Fighting Inequality" and "Facing up to Climate Change".

## Biography

**Leila Hadj Abdou** is a Politologist and Social Scientist, specialising in subjects such as migration policies, governance of migration and asylum, Right-Wing radicalism, the politics of belonging, and in particular Islam and Muslims in Europe. She is currently **Professor and Researcher at the Migration Policy Centre (MPC), of the European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy**, where she was awarded a PhD in Philosophy, Politics, and Social Sciences. Since 2017, she has worked in the research field and as a trainer in trans-national governance of international migration, asylum, and mobility<sup>1</sup>.

Throughout her career, she has combined teaching with academic research posts and practical activities in the asylum and migration fields. She has taught courses on Global Migration, Migration Policies, Gender Relations, and Racism at universities around the world. Hadj Abdou was Visiting Researcher from 2003 to 2009 at Universität Wien; in 2007 at Centre de Recherches Sociologiques et Politiques de Paris; and in 2011 at University College Dublin (UCD). From 2013 to 2014 she was Visiting Researcher at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at the School for Advanced Studies, in Washington D.C; and from 2014 to 2015 Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield (UK). More recently, she worked on a European Research Council project, exploring key actors' knowledge of and approaches to migration management in four regions: Europe, North America, South America, and Asia-Pacific. With regard to her practical experience, she gives public lectures to women's organisations, anti-racist entities, and education institutions. Furthermore, she is also co-ordinator of an NGO that works with unaccompanied minors and asylum applicants at an education centre for adult refugees<sup>2</sup>.

Her publications include books, book chapters, journal articles, research reports, policy reports, and contributions to blogs and newspapers. Noteworthy among her more recent works are: *Immigration integration: the governance of ethno-cultural differences* (2019a), in which she argues that the integration of migrants needs to be analysed and understood as a governance technique that exploits differences to achieve specific goals; *The Dynamics of Regional Migration Governance* (2019b), in which she analyses why States co-operate and how this affects the way issues such as international migration, displacement, and mobility are dealt with.

<sup>1</sup> Hadj Abdou, L. (2019). Leila Hadj Abdou - Migration Policy Centre - MPC. Accessed 20th December 2019 at: <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/team/leila-hadj-abdou>

<sup>2</sup> Hadj Abdou, L. (2017). Leila Hadj Abdou. Accessed 20th December 2019 at: <https://eui.academia.edu/LeilaHadjAbdou>

## Equality, equity, and non-discrimination

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### Summary

“Equality, Equity, and Non-discrimination” is the title of the fourth session of the “For an Inter-cultural Future” lecture cycle and was led by Leila Hadj Abdou, an expert in migration policies and a researcher at the Migration Policy Centre (MPC) at the European University Institute. The moderator was Margarita León, an expert and a researcher at the Institut de Govern i Polítiques Públiques [Institute for Government and Public Policy] (IGOP) at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). The main aim was to identify the key goals for and opportunities arising from the management of integration and migration, and how inter-culturalism may ensure equality when it comes to citizens’ rights and duties. Hadj Abdou focused the discussion on the local setting, arguing that while immigration is a global phenomenon, cities can positively shape events regardless of State policies.

The importance of studying the inter-cultural approach in managing diversity largely stems from the context of economic globalisation and the deliberate politicisation of migration by some political parties and media. The great changes being wrought in a more open, more connected, interdependent world are largely defined by growing international migration — hence the need to seize this as an opportunity. Unfortunately, global migration management is an increasingly politicised subject that commands ever less public support. It is against this background that various actors have engaged in a fiery but facile discourse on migration. By stressing only the positive or the negative aspects, as the case may be, they have created a highly biased view of migration and of diversity in general. This in turn threatens social cohesion, the common good and even democracy itself. The first reason for this threat is that partisan political use of migration as an issue makes it that much harder to promote migrants’ rights. The second is because it spawns polarisation, rifts in society, and the danger of social conflict between the so-called ‘liberal metropolitan elites’ and the major beneficiaries of this migration on the one hand, and citizens’ groups opposing migration and/or those who end up bearing most of the costs.

Hadj Abdou proposes clear solutions to meet these challenges: the building of an inclusive narrative and the implementation of redistributive and inter-cultural policies to forge and boost social cohesion and meaningful interaction. This policy shift must be transformative and go beyond a superficial analysis of issues and best practices that only take the economy and GDP growth into account. This explains why the

approach covers education and the media in order to foster: democratic values; critical thinking; open, holistic visions friendly towards both migration and diversity. With regard to politics, Hadj Abdou said it was vital to foster constant inter-ethnic interaction by sharing spaces, drawing up joint projects, and so on. At the same time, she stressed the need to accompany such initiatives with policies fostering an equitable redistribution of the wealth created by society as a whole, and to reduce social inequalities. Hadj Abdou argued that this goal should focus on the local sphere, given cities' ability to respond quickly in a more local setting and in ways that better fit in with citizens' lives and needs. In this respect, she highlighted Barcelona's leadership in seeing migration as an opportunity and not as a problem, and in committing itself to inter-culturalism and policies addressing the whole population. This vision was nuanced by others attending the session, who stressed the underlying problems that still need to be overcome, such as high levels of geographical and educational segregation.

Going beyond Barcelona City Council's pioneering efforts, the session also highlighted the best practices of other actors. These included: (1) Comissions Obreres' [trade union] leadership and commitment to incorporating people from all backgrounds in its local branches and decision-making, and in raising awareness and training of its workers; (2) AMB's (Barcelona Metropolitan Area) setting up of conflict mediation and resolution strategies in the Besòs area, involving various agents; (3) pro-active initiatives by Fundació AGBAR [foundation] with sixty-five AMB social entities to carry out inter-cultural projects.

## EQUALITY, EQUITY, AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

### The globalised economy and decentralised governance: The world of cities

Today's globalised setting brings endless, complex changes, and greater links and interdependence among all spheres (economic, social, political, and cultural) and at all levels (local, national, supra-national, and international). The role played by local government stands out in leading and adapting to these changes. Cities take an active part in the new globalised economy, competing with one another at the world level. Furthermore, they are also the main actors in creating the conditions nurturing social cohesion and co-existence among citizens. At the same time, there is also a decentralisation of governance in which many powers are being transferred from national governments to local ones. NGOs and private agents also have a role to play in this process.

Cities therefore find themselves on the front line when it comes to receiving and integrating immigrants (which includes refugees and asylum seekers). Going beyond duties to provide Social Welfare services, the city's public authorities can also create opportunities by coming up with a common agenda that mobilises and inspires citizens and all other Civil Society actors. Even though cities are taking a pro-active role, their

powers and resources are not enough to manage diversity and integration by themselves. That is why there is an urgent need for **co-operation and dialogue among all tiers of government** to overcome the limitations each would suffer were it to act on its own.

## Challenges and opportunities: integration and migration management at the local level

### A setting plagued by politicisation and polarisation

In a setting marked by a globalised economy and decentralised government, Leila Hadj Abdou stressed the change in the political and social focus of many subjects of interest, such as the management of integration and migration. In the 1980s, States' economic and political policies were liberalised, thus making migration easier and less of a political issue than it is now. From the standpoint of national management, migrants were seen as workers who were needed by the labour market and to boost economic growth. At the same time, in the highly de-politicised setting back then, migrants were individually responsible for integrating in the host society. There was thus a concerted interest and a consensus by the various actors in society (such as firms, charities, and churches) on the benefits immigration could bring to the economy (for instance, a larger workforce) and the regulations that should govern it.

In today's globalised economy, borders dissolve, allowing more trade and tourism but also leading to diverse, unequal geographic impacts. This means that alongside globalisation, we have also created new conflicts in society among those who benefit from immigration and those who bear the costs, causing **strong social and political polarisation**. On the one hand, there are the political elites (often termed 'cosmopolitans') who are the main beneficiaries of this migration and are keen to open borders to drive migration, diversity, and international trade. On the other, there is the citizenry, which bears the costs of migration and watches these transformations with scepticism and worry. The result is that citizens' trust in the political class has gone into free-fall.

At the same time, this general interest in immigration has become a big public issue and is thus strongly **politicised**. It is at this point that anti-immigration actors step on to the scene, mobilising discontent and tapping a widespread feeling that the political class are betraying the country. This gives rise to simplistic, populist discourses that blame immigration and the promotion of pro-migrant policies as the source of all society's ills. Based on her research, Hadj Abdou sees this politicisation of migration not as a response to either unemployment rates or the number of migrants entering the country but rather as the result of the processes unleashed by certain political actors and based upon partial and partisan narratives on the issue. This can be seen in Austria's case, when the Far-Right (FPÖ) won in 2017. The Freiheitliche Partei

Österreichs (FPÖ) stressed only the costs of migration and built strongly-politicised narratives that undermined migrants' rights and opportunities, creating conflict. As a result, there was ever less communication, dialogue, and social cohesion between the two sides, resulting in a big challenge in which there is a clash between democracy and the common interest.

Throughout this politicisation, polarisation, and loss of trust in government, the way in which information is presented is vital if one is to shape public opinion in a way that avoids the clash described above. **Responsibility for such communication therefore not only lies with politicians but also with the media and social networks.** In this respect, Hadj Abdou highlighted two conclusions. The first was that discrimination seems to be linked with a feeling of loss of control over the Nation State and the protection it affords. The second is that most of the population is sitting on the fence — halfway between the detractors of migration and its defenders. This segment is less polarised and more ambivalent, showing neither empathy nor hate when it comes to diversity. Given the worries of those who oppose immigration in today's highly-charged political context, Hadj Abdou argues that we must not miss the chance to make much more practical arguments for migration. Here, she stressed that public authorities need to find out what all the social groups sitting on the fence actually think, what their values are, and what worries them. Then and only then can one offer them a much more contextualised, nuanced, balanced, specific discourse on migration. The goal would be to delve deep into the costs and benefits of migration in different fields and to deal with conflicts. The purpose of understanding public opinion is not to shape it for given political ends but rather to discover how public administration and Civil Society in general can respond through effective policies and initiatives.

## The inter-cultural focus and redistributive policies as a solution

The politicisation and polarisation of migration and the way it is managed is a global phenomenon. Yet the real impacts are felt at the local scale. The challenge facing cities today is how to cope with both the new social diversity and ingrained socio-economic inequalities. That is why an inter-cultural focus is needed that picks up these internal differences in the quest for solutions fostering social cohesion and peaceful co-existence.

More specifically, the inter-cultural response must combine two key features. The first is a **holistic communication strategy delivering an inclusive, clarifying discourse on migration. It involves creating a narrative that talks about both the benefits and costs of migration**, of successes and failures, **and of the need to manage diversity.** This narrative must give a carefully-nuanced overview of migration in a non-controversial fashion. In other words, it needs to go beyond the consequences which, through their focus on figures and drawbacks, tend to give the impression of 'invasion' and of 'lack of control'. If most of the native population forms a 'middle group'<sup>3</sup>, one needs to appeal to all its values and sensibilities, ranging

<sup>3</sup> A term used by Hadj Abdou to refer to the lion's share of the population, which takes a fairly neutral view of migration and diversity management.



from the most conservative to the most progressive, to allay its fears on migration. If the media and the local political class work to grasp these worries and take them into account without pouring scorn on them, such values will foster an inclusive discourse that covers all the nuances and complexities involved in managing diversity and migration. This in turn will restore the middle group's trust in mainstream politicians and the media. **The new, more all-embracing discourse will also lessen social polarisation given that people will no longer be forced to choose a 'pro' or 'anti' immigration stance.** It would also force society to re-think the nature of immigration and its impact on the host society. If the aim is to foster equality, equity, and non-discrimination, one needs to give **immigrants a voice and agency.** This would allow them to talk about their daily problems in a less politicised, more humane debate in which the general public could identify, thereby forging links between immigrants and natives.

At the same time, a second strategy should be brought into play. It consists of drawing up and implementing **public policies that can forge meaningful inter-ethnic contact and interaction** in order to prevent the emergence and spread of anti-immigration attitudes. This means setting out what kinds of relations are desirable — something that avoid immigrants being treated like pariahs. Such relations need to be direct and intense in people's daily lives, and based upon shared projects throughout cities. To make this possible, Hadj Abdou noted that both **formal and informal education** is needed from an early age **to normalise diverse collective imaginaries and so foster an egalitarian, equitable culture.** This, she argued, would ensure a society with pro-immigrant, anti-discrimination attitudes. In this respect, Hadj Abdou criticised local elites, which often adopt a facile discourse and superficial practices to flog the idea of diversity in cities by focusing solely on the benefits of immigration and of inter-ethnic contact. Yet what is needed is not to laud diversity in general but rather to assess: (a) its contribution to local development; (b) whether interactions between the immigrant and host communities take place on equal terms. That is why it is vital to accept and publicise the costs of taking in immigrants and in managing diversity. Such costs stem from the perpetuation of socio-economic inequalities. The danger is that those costs may fall on the poorest members of society, thereby boosting their perception of conflict and threat. This was the case of El Ejido, in Andalusia, where immigrants made up 30% of all those residing in the city. Most of them worked as cheap labourers in the areas greenhouses. Although crime and unemployment figures in El Ejido were below those of Spain as a whole, migratory pressures boosted native residents' fears and their rejection of immigrants, leading to victory by the Far-Right VOX party in the 2019 Spanish elections. VOX won no less than 35.98% of the votes cast in the town<sup>4</sup>. This situation exemplifies the importance of finding holistic, public solutions to head off politicisation and polarisation when it comes to immigration.

Hadj-Abdou stressed that **redistributive policies should redress these underlying socio-economic inequalities** by re-thinking and sharing costs and compensating those who are prejudiced by immigration. In other words, public benefits should be used to supplement the pittance many citizens currently earn.

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<sup>4</sup> EL PAÍS. (2019). Resultados electorales en El Ejido: Elecciones Generales 2019. Accessed 27th February 2020 at: <https://resultados.elpais.com/elecciones/2019/generales/congreso/01/04/902.html>

For example, more public gardens and houses could be built to provide more spaces for interaction, libraries could broaden their collections and offerings, schools could be greatly improved by both refurbishing them and tackling the issue of *de facto* segregation.

## Hurdles to overcome, challenges to consider, and best practices to be shared: Proposals for inter-cultural management

Cities, in Hadj Abdou's view, are the best places for coming up with the kind of fast, effective responses that get the best results. Once again, they need to bridge the gap between academe and the general public. Rather than dreaming up macro-level measures, one should opt for small, local, innovative initiatives because these often yield much bigger changes. Hadj Abdou then asked those attending the session to give examples of **success, of hurdles, and of failure** in Catalonia when putting inter-cultural approaches into action. Her aim here was to learn lessons from what had been done so far and to further progress in this field. This section sets out the proposals those attending Hadj Abdou's session made for inter-cultural management.

When one speaks about diversity management and working in this field, it is important to bear in mind the link between ideological convictions and outcomes. In the case of inter-culturalism, there is broad consensus among scholars on what it means and on the path that should be taken in the governance of our societies. By contrast, there is a general lack of knowledge at the social level, with many immigrants in the active population feeling rejected by the host society<sup>5</sup>. This sense of rejection stems from failure to fully implement anti-discrimination measures. In this respect, public administrations still have a long way to go in redressing these problems. The same can also be said for the rest of society: companies, trade unions, the education system, culture, and private-interest groups. Inter-cultural discourse needs to be fostered throughout society and the legal framework needs overhauling so that specific measures can be taken to improve immigrants' daily lives. It is a process that requires public administrations to continually assess and update measures so that they can learn from their mistakes and limit the scope for others to exploit initiatives to politicise immigration.

There is general agreement that all these changes require: (1) **a new approach to governance** —the so-called 'bottom-link model' — that directly links citizens to policy-makers, and; (2) a **horizontal** link between the public sector, groups, and social entities. The result would be a global, cross-cutting vision in which all actors fully assume and 'take ownership' of these processes. To make this possible, one needs to break down both self-evident and subtler barriers. Here, one should recall that those barriers prevent a sizeable section of the population enjoying peaceful co-existence, representation, participation, and integration in

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<sup>5</sup> Diaspora in this context means a group of peoples or communities of the same origin or nature in various countries. In this particular case, it refers to certain people in the community who take a more active role in integration in the host country.

society on reasonable terms (Equality, Equity, Non-discrimination). One of these barriers is Spain's *Ley de la Extranjería* (Aliens Act), which turns the natural process of migration into a major problem. An Act that should make absorbing and normalising migration more effective achieves precisely the reverse. Spain's present Aliens Act creates hurdles to migrants getting citizenship, working in public administration [a very wide category in Spain], rendering it hard if not impossible for migrants to work in public sector jobs. There is thus a need to speed up naturalisation procedures and to review staffing in public administration. Another issue that needs addressing is the granting of visas in migrants' countries of origin. This in turn means overhauling the criteria used to grant or turn down applications for residence and visas.

Likewise, migrants find it much harder to get a job than natives in many other sectors too. This difference often carries over to the second or third-generation migrants, making social integration that much harder. This is already a problem in France. Given the French experience and that of other countries, we know that Catalonia has yet to reach the third generation, making it vital to break this vicious circle of marginalisation and let migrants climb the social ladder. One way to do this is through public administrations, which are responsible for fostering **inter-cultural inclusion in all staff selection and hiring processes not only in the public sector but also in business and private ones**. The commitment of the latter two spheres is essential for achieving more diverse workforces. Such diversity must encompass many aspects (place of origin, age, gender, and so forth) to prevent systematic exclusion of individuals from the labour market. This was the thinking behind the National Inter-culturalism Pact, which was drawn up in 2019 under the Catalan Government's aegis. The plan is to incorporate a host of commitments and goals between now and 2030, involving both the public and private sectors. With regard to access to jobs, the Catalan Government has committed itself to taking measures to foster equality, for example allowing foreigners to do public jobs, favour diversity, and ensure that minority groups are reflected in companies and employment in general. It also fosters interaction through benchmark programmes, mentoring, and acknowledging diversity and taking affirmative action to promote the equitable presence of minority groups in each sector of the labour market<sup>6</sup>.

Gemma Pinyol, Director of Migrations and Strategies, reinforced the idea that obtaining access to jobs and peaceful co-existence on equal terms with natives meant that **a stop should be put to painting other cultures and religions in exotic, folkloric terms**, especially in the public world. In this respect, Pinyol noted that diversity is **not solely migration, and that migration does not equate to diversity per se**.

In this brave new world of multi-level governance, the public sector has to shoulder more responsibilities and act to bring these changes about. Right now, many of these things fall to social bodies and NGOs, which strive to make local settings more liveable (neighbourhoods, districts, and municipalities). There is still a big

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<sup>6</sup> Generalitat de Catalunya. (2019). *Pacte Nacional per a la Interculturalitat (Document marc per al Procés Participatiu)* [PDF] (p. 46-47). Generalitat de Catalunya. Source: [https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/1115/2019\\_10\\_10\\_Document\\_1\\_PNI\\_-\\_v2.pdf](https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/1115/2019_10_10_Document_1_PNI_-_v2.pdf)

gap between the talk and life on the streets. In other words, there is a gaping chasm between what is uttered by politicians and what ends up getting done. For instance, *Fundació AGBAR* (charitable foundation) opened a fund worth €300,000 and put it at the disposal of the thirty-six town councils making up the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB) to carry out inter-cultural projects. Only three agreements have been signed since July 2017. This political sloth starkly contrasts with *Fundació AGBAR*'s links to sixty-five social entities in the Metropolitan Area. Initiatives with those entities covered a host of inter-cultural projects for fighting poverty, fostering quality jobs, and offering education. These projects have had a great impact — in 2019 alone, 14,889 people directly benefited, of whom 45% were migrants<sup>7</sup>.

As things stand, diversity management still takes a security-based approach, forgetting that migrants form part of the socio-cultural fabric. It is thus little wonder that clashes arise from 'policing-based' responses because this is the easy option. Yet such an approach heightens the risk of provoking extreme attitudes and discrimination. Given the need for a more global view and approach to such issues, the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB) launched its Social Cohesion and Inclusion Strategy<sup>8</sup> in the Besòs area in 2018. The scheme is still running. The Strategy covered Health professionals, police, and social and community workers. Its goal was to come up with integrated responses to the area's complex problems and the frequent clashes between social and ethnic groups. A specific example was the **Good Neighbour and Proper Use of Public Spaces Project**<sup>9</sup>, carried out in the city's strife-torn Mina de Sant Adrià del Besòs district between 2017 and 2018. Its purpose was to prevent social polarisation in the district and to improve integration among all sections of the community. The Town Council led the project. The goals were ambitious and many, such as making the place: pleasanter; more welcoming; sustainable; a good place to live; peaceful; where dialogue; tolerance and mutual respect prevailed. The project had two thematic strands. The first was mediation in citizens' disputes with their neighbours. The second involved support from the Local Housing Office and its relations with poor families at risk of social exclusion. For example, it helped in dealing with rental subsidies and helped people lacking 'inter-personal skills' fit in better with their neighbours in the district's blocks of flats.

Another good practice was the setting up of the **Information Centre for Foreign Workers (CITE)** in the 1980s<sup>10</sup>. The Trade Unions were quick off the mark in grasping the problems posed by migration and the

<sup>7</sup> Fundació AGBAR. (2019). Fundació AGBAR | Projectos Sociales. Accessed 27th February 2020 at: <https://www.fundacioagbar.org/es/proyectos-sociales>

<sup>8</sup> AMB. (2019). Desenvolupament socioeconòmic: Estratègia d'Inclusió i Cohesió social al territori Besòs. Accessed 27th February 2020 at: [http://www.amb.cat/es/web/desenvolupament-socioeconomic/detall?p\\_p\\_id=56\\_INSTANCE\\_TOm9tp1Xv0IQ&\\_56\\_INSTANCE\\_TOm9tp1Xv0IQ\\_articleId=7758055&\\_56\\_INSTANCE\\_TOm9tp1Xv0IQ\\_groupId=11708](http://www.amb.cat/es/web/desenvolupament-socioeconomic/detall?p_p_id=56_INSTANCE_TOm9tp1Xv0IQ&_56_INSTANCE_TOm9tp1Xv0IQ_articleId=7758055&_56_INSTANCE_TOm9tp1Xv0IQ_groupId=11708)

<sup>9</sup> AMB. (2019). Desenvolupament socioeconòmic: Conveni per al projecte de gestió de Bon veïnatge i bon ús de l'espai públic al barri de la Mina. Accessed 27th February 2020 at: [https://docs.amb.cat/alfresco/api/-default-public/alfresco/versions/1/nodes/6337f753-c563-4552-8604-14f14b14e1b9/content/Exp\\_%201684\\_17%20%20Conveni%20Ajuntament%20Sant%20Adria%20%20Projecte%20Veinatge%20Barri%20Mpdf?attachment=false&mimeType=application/pdf&sizeInBytes=1338923](https://docs.amb.cat/alfresco/api/-default-public/alfresco/versions/1/nodes/6337f753-c563-4552-8604-14f14b14e1b9/content/Exp_%201684_17%20%20Conveni%20Ajuntament%20Sant%20Adria%20%20Projecte%20Veinatge%20Barri%20Mpdf?attachment=false&mimeType=application/pdf&sizeInBytes=1338923)

<sup>10</sup> CCOO Catalunya. (2020). Centre d'Informació per a Treballadors Estrangers - [www.ccoo.cat](http://www.ccoo.cat). Accessed 27th February 2020 at: <https://www.ccoo.cat/aspnet/immigracio.aspx>



need to come up with effective integration mechanisms. This association continues to operate, catering to both legal and illegal migrants, offering them advice and help in connection with Spain's Aliens Act, international mobility, and social and labour rights. Trade Union commitment to migrant workers has held firm ever since CITE was set up. It is based on the conviction that integrating immigrants means incorporating them in existing social organisations rather than setting up new ones just for them and in each sector. Another example is **the diversity** in trade union staff and in **trade union elections** — mirroring the different issues faced by different groups. This representation is also found in trade unions' governing bodies in those spheres where there are most foreign workers. At the same time, this institutional representation is accompanied by **special training courses titled "Dispelling prejudices"**. These courses target workers and associates, dispelling the rumours and myths spawned by xenophobic and racist political discourses.

Last, the session gave an example of municipal shortcomings, in this case the failure to implement Barcelona City Council's **scheme monitoring indicators**. This failure crippled evaluation since without results one cannot learn lessons or suggest rational improvements. Above all, without such indicators, there is no scope for creating a positive discourse on what has been done. There is a need for broad political commitment to monitoring clear goals and defending them through thick and thin. In this respect, there has to be consensus on both long-term goals and on swiftly coming up with solutions. Continuing with the example of Barcelona, two major challenges that persist are: (1) **the formation of ghettos and growing barriers to access to housing;** (2) **school segregation that does not reflect geographic segregation** (in some schools, the level of segregation is much higher than that of the district in which the school is sited). It is vital that public policies boost access to housing to facilitate the dispersion of immigrants throughout the city. A balance also needs to be struck with school segregation so that this more or less reflects the social pattern found in a district or in the city as a whole.

On the positive side, examples were given of Barcelona City Council's best practices. Ones that were highlighted included promoting and/or subsidising inter-cultural projects in the cultural field. Indeed, subsidy applications require all projects to: (1) meet inter-cultural criteria for incorporating diversity; (2) foster local cultural and sports activities that encourage participation by all residents. The last example given was the **improvements made to the Municipal Census**. It is now possible to put one's name on the census without having a fixed abode. This lets highly vulnerable people receive minimum public services (health care, education, local services, etc.).

## Conclusions

Today's global economic, political, and social context differs greatly from that of the 1980s. Constant, complex changes are taking place in a world that is ever more connected and interdependent in every field and at all levels (local, national, supra-national, and international). Cities play a very active role in this process, competing with one another on a world level and in so doing; become the main actors in fostering social cohesion and co-existence among their citizens. This role goes beyond the provision of welfare services and welcoming immigrants. That is because cities can create opportunities through 'bottom-linked' governance, spreading all citizens' ideas, and co-operating with other economic, political, and social actors. This inter-cultural approach is the most effective one for overcoming the challenges of managing immigration and integration. Indeed, one could argue that it is the only one capable of working in today's socially and politically polarised societies. Ever more actors are seizing on citizens' worries to build highly partisan discourses on migration that stress either only the costs or only the benefits. The whole issue has now become so politicised that it is stunting immigrants' rights and opportunities. Immigration is now lauded by the 'winners' on whom its benefits are showered, and cursed by the 'losers' who end up footing most of the costs. To put an end to this destructive dynamic, public administrations and the media must join in this debate and address the issues in a much more responsible, pragmatic, and inclusive fashion. That is to say, one needs to grasp the many values and worries of that section of society that is 'sitting on the fence' and is caught between the two extremes.

This can be done by offering a much more contextualised, balanced, and inclusive discourse that seeks the middle ground. One therefore needs to speak frankly of the costs and benefits of managing migration and to give voice and agency to immigrants themselves. This in turn would elicit the empathy needed for social cohesion. Second, public policies are needed to stimulate meaningful inter-ethnic interaction and to redress underlying socio-economic inequalities. Only by tearing down barriers (whether self-evident or hidden) can one ensure that all citizens are fully represented and integrated in society, and able to compete on equal terms with their peers on the basis of Equity, Equality, and Non-Discrimination.

There are several specific proposals for inter-cultural management worth highlighting. The first is speeding up legal and political processes for integrating newcomers. Among other things, this means giving immigrants the vote and the right to be elected, as well as letting them work in the public sector. The second is to ensure the labour integration of immigrants and their offspring on exactly the same terms as those enjoyed by other citizens. This requires inter-culturalism in both public and private sector recruitment procedures. Third, the local sphere needs to play a leading role in working these changes, joining forces with sundry social actors to achieve these ends. This means shifting from a security-obsessed view of migration and diversity to a perspective that takes greater account of socio-cultural factors. In this respect, one needs to delve deeper into the commitment and work of: companies; social entities; NGOs; citizens' associations. Fourth, effective management of immigration and diversity in our societies must rest on clear goals and tools for evaluating the progress and success of the measures taken.

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