

## INTRODUCTION

### **Immigration in Multinational States A Theoretical and Contextual Perspective**

Ricard ZAPATA-BARRERO

During the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the normative debate on multiculturalism has been one-dimensional. It has deployed arguments related to cultural demands linked either to feminism and sub-cultural identities, immigration, or national minorities. Little attention has been given to the relations between these dimensions, and how they affect each other in making demands upon the nation-state.

There exist “circumstances of multiculturalism” that can only be theoretically interpreted through contextual analysis. Certain contexts demand theoretical answers to institutional questions that arise from the management of tensions that result from competing cultural demands. Such contexts mainly involve minority nations that are stateless yet enjoy a particular set of competencies for self-government. Examples include the Flemish community within Belgium, as well as minority nations such as the *Québécois* in Canada, and Catalans in Spain. The purpose of this book is to analyze these interactions, taking into account the specificities of these contexts. The primary aim of this study is to establish basic normative arguments while advancing an institutional analysis of the interaction between cultural demands of immigrants and minority nations in three contexts: Quebec, Flanders and Catalonia.

Independent of the set of approaches and perspectives, scholars that deal with multiculturalism agree that liberal states are not culturally neutral and that what is at stake is the legitimacy of the nation-state in a multicultural society. Maintaining the unity required for assuring stability and cohesion, while at the same time respecting cultural diversity has constituted the main source of disagreement. There has also been an analytical need for differentiating empirical dimensions of multiculturalism, and some typologies have been more useful than others in orientating research agendas. Beyond these distinctions, however, the main sources of inspiration have drawn from the work of Will Kymlicka, a

Canadian philosopher. His well-known distinction between multinational and polyethnic political communities has been used to distinguish a set of problems and inspired two streams of literature and research: one related to national demands of cultural/political communities within a multinational state, and another associated with cultural demands of immigrants.

Cultural pluralism in modern states can therefore be sub-divided into “multinational” diversity, on the one hand, and “polyethnic” diversity on the other. Indeed, while multiculturalism speaks to the issue of incorporating minority cultures within a larger state, it can just as well refer to the incorporation of cultural diversity brought about by newly-arrived immigrants. Because each cultural demand has different normative implications, Kymlicka proposes the use of distinct terms to designate each situation. While it is assumed that cultural demands of immigrants and cultural demands of minority nations or stateless nations are analytically distinguishable, scholars have failed to contemplate or to analyze the normative implications of the cultural demands deriving from the triadic relationship and interaction between nation-states, minority nations and immigrants.

This book is a tentative elaboration of a conceptual framework that seeks to advance theoretical reflections and contextual concerns related to immigration in multinational states. Bearing the above statements in mind, the aim is to chart the issues of importance to this topic in an effort to develop a broader research programme comparing related cases, such as Quebec, Flanders and Catalonia.

We will see how the relationship between immigration and minority nations generates a whole series of normative questions that have scarcely been addressed in academic debates. We will discuss arguments following the logic that states and minority nations with a measure of political autonomy are not culturally neutral in dealing with immigration. We will further analyze how both minority nations and immigrants challenge the idea of a culturally homogeneous nation-state. This raises questions regarding the legitimacy of the nation-state in a multicultural society. It also pushes us to think of other conceptualizations of “political community” and de-nationalized forms of citizenship.

This theoretical framework allows us to reflect on how to undertake a comparative study between cases like Quebec, Flanders and Catalonia. The primary questions at stake relate to policies of self-government, that is to say, those policies whose main objective is the management of the minority cultural community itself. In this sense, all immigration policies manage immigrants’ belonging to a political community. Classical studies have failed to address this issue adequately in societies where a

dual belonging exists: belonging to the dominant state political community and belonging to a minority nation.

\* \*  
\*

This book has its origins in an edited volume published in Catalan by a Catalan editor: *Immigració i Autogovern*, editorial Proa, 2007 (ISBN 978-84-8437-932-4) and promoted by the Catalan Foundation, *Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata Trias Fargas* (Catdem, formerly *Fundació Trias Fargas*), directed by Vicenç Villatoro during the Catalan edition, and by Agustí Colomines in the current English edition.

Given the positive reception of the volume, but limited circle of its readers, the editor and contributors have decided to update our chapters and to offer them to an English-speaking audience. We now take the opportunity to thank Alain-G. Gagnon, Director of the Collection *Diversitas* (P.I.E. Peter Lang) for supporting this initiative. During the manuscript process, I would like to thank Júlia Canosa, from CatDem, for taking care of the whole process of edition, and Raffaele Iacovino (Skelton-Clarke Research Fellow, Queen's University, Kingston) for her reading and comments of the last draft manuscript.

With this English edition, we also seek the opportunity to introduce the terms of this debate into the international research agenda. The book is a result of a research workshop organized at Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona, Spain) on June 27, 2005, entitled "Immigration and Self-government: Theoretical and Institutional Prospects". Following the same philosophy that encouraged the meeting, we have divided this volume into three main parts, corresponding to the contexts of Quebec, Flanders and Catalonia respectively. For the current English edition, we have added a new theoretical chapter ("Setting a Research Agenda on the Interaction Between Cultural Demands of Immigrants and Minority Nations") that has already been published in the *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* (Vol. 5(4) 2007; 1-25). Each part contains two chapters that address the topic from distinct perspectives. One addresses how immigration is seen from a self-government perspective. The other, by contrast, asks how self-government is interpreted from an immigration perspective.

Analyzing the context of Quebec, Alain-G. Gagnon ("Immigration in a Multinational Context: From a *Laissez-faire* Approach to an Institutional Framework in Quebec") discusses the process of designing policies of immigration from the perspective of self-government, taking as a *leitmotif* the passage from informal relations of policy management to institutionally-regulated relations. For their part, Micheline Labelle and François Rocher ("From Immigration Policies in Quebec to the Debate

on Citizenship: A Critical Assessment of the Competitive Management of Diversity”) review immigration policies, focusing on a citizenship perspective that now guides the framework for policies in Quebec.

Addressing the context of Flanders, Hassan Bousetta (“Minority Protection, Multiculturalism and Federalism in Brussels”) carries out a detailed analysis of the implications posed by immigration in a multinational context such as Belgium in general, and Brussels in particular, with all its institutional and social complexity. Patrick Loobuyck and Dirk Jacobs (“The Flemish Immigrant Society: Policy Challenges at Different Levels”) examine the link between immigration and self-government from the perspective of immigration, emphasizing the notion of “immigrant society” as the most appropriate label for Flanders.

Lastly, the context of Catalonia is addressed by Àngel Castiñeira (“Immigration and Multinational States: The Case of Catalonia”), where he addresses key concerns raised by immigration as part of the process of self-government in Catalonia, and by Ricard Zapata-Barrero (“Building a Philosophy of Immigration in Catalonia: The Terms of the Debate”), who reviews the main normative and institutional challenges raised by immigration in Catalonia.

*Ricard Zapata-Barrero*  
*Sant Pol de Mar (Barcelona)*