



PLURISPACE

Negotiating Diversity in Expanded European Public Spaces

The project

PLURISPACE is a European project funded by HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area). Our objective is to confront theoretical approaches in the managing of ethnic and religious diversity with the practice and perceptions of representatives of voluntary associations and policy-makers working in the field of integration and migration. Our starting point is to consider four theoretical approaches that are recurrent in the field of migration studies, i.e., multiculturalism, interculturalism, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. The objective is to examine if and how the four analytical perspectives are translated into policies, laws and institutional practices across the different levels of governance (cities, states and European level). Our final goal is to find out what really works for a better understanding of a cohesive society and to develop new normativities in this direction in a multilevel public space.



Street art in Bristol, in the UK. Photo by Pier-Luc Dupont.

European public space(s)

Our project compares four countries: France, Spain, the UK and Norway. We define the European public space geographical area, which includes countries that are member of the European Union (Spain and France), but also those that are not members, but cooperate with the EU (Norway). We also include a third and new category, that is to say, ex-members of the EU, as is the case of the UK after Brexit. The European public space is multilevel, given that it encompasses such governing units as the municipality (city); the region; the state; and the European Union (EU), and beyond. We take into consideration the spatial-territorial dimension, the legal-institutional dimension and the discursive dimension. Each of our four perspectives - multiculturalism, interculturalism, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism presented here - has its distinct take on diversity management.



Street art in La Courneuve, France, at a Muslim butchery. Photo by Luana Franco Rocha.

What is Multiculturalism?

Multiculturalism is a 'difference'-sensitive approach to immigrant integration, emphasising the need to revise citizenship and national identity. Multiculturalism grows from an initial commitment to racial equality into a perspective that allows minorities to publicly oppose negative images of themselves in favour of positive self-definitions and institutional accommodations. The key concepts are:

- 1) Equal citizenship and national identity as a part of multicultural citizenship
- 2) Equal citizenship based on uniform laws and policies *and* those geared to respect for certain group identities
- 3) Inclusion of group identities into composite national identities
- 4) Policy Orientation in two main aspects:
 - Anti-discrimination/racism/Islamophobia etc
 - Positive inclusion



A Multicultural market in Bristol, in the UK. Photo by Pier-Luc Dupont.

What is Interculturalism?

Interculturalism means “cultural exchange”. So, it is by definition a relational concept. It emphasizes the fact that two agents exchange their culture through contact promotion and knowledge exchange. Behind this policy narrative, there is a sense of equality, power-sharing, democracy and human rights. Through contact, a new citizenship public identity arises, recognizing the values of diversity as a new public culture, or what has been called a “culture of diversity” which includes diversity-awareness, diversity-recognition, diversity-participation, diversity-representation, and attaining more shared public spaces. Within this premise there is the argument that living together in diversity cannot be anything other than the product of citizenship learning and the result of socialization, an action which public authorities should lead and thereby they should be responsible for providing such interactions to the entire population. In practice, this socialization process is hampered by discrimination and inequalities between different ethnic groups, making anti-discrimination an increasingly central component of intercultural politics.



A poster in La Courneuve, France, promoting the city hall action “Our world-city, a path to bring us together and live better together”. Photo by Luana Franco Rocha.

What is Transnationalism?

Transnationalism recognizes the multiple links and affiliations to home and host country and solidarities beyond borders. It refers to three levels:

- 1) The relationships with the country of origin
- 2) In the European context (a transnational space by definition): relations with the countries of origin and integrate these countries into the European space
- 3) In the global context: intervention of national and international bodies in the cultural and social life of the concerned populations

Transnationalism means:

- Bonds of solidarity across state borders based on affiliations defined as national, religious, linguistic or other
- Participation in at least two or more political spaces: associative activities (cultural, social, educational); voting abroad
- Integration in several political spaces as part of globalisation

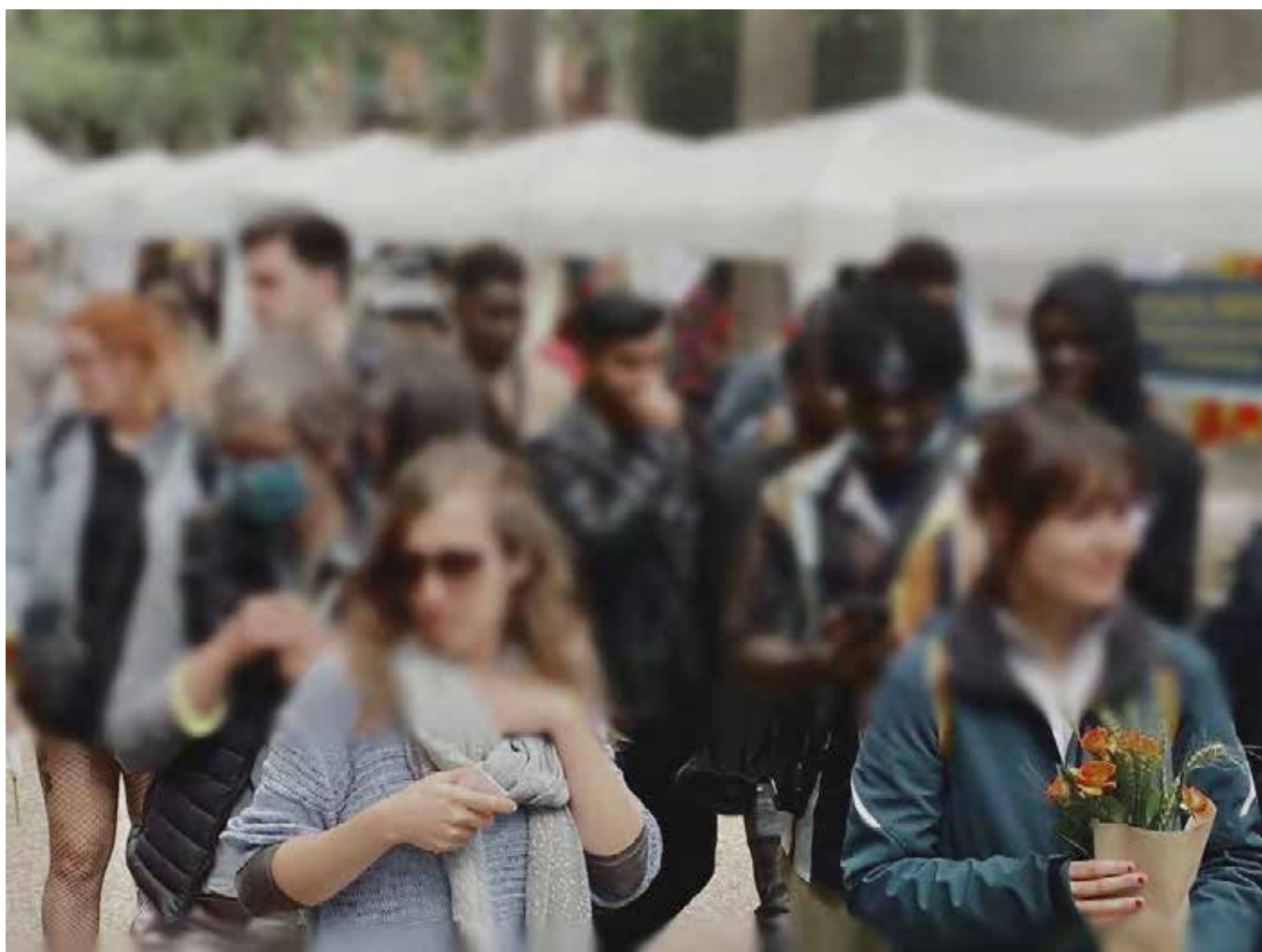


Advertisement of an international mobile phone company.

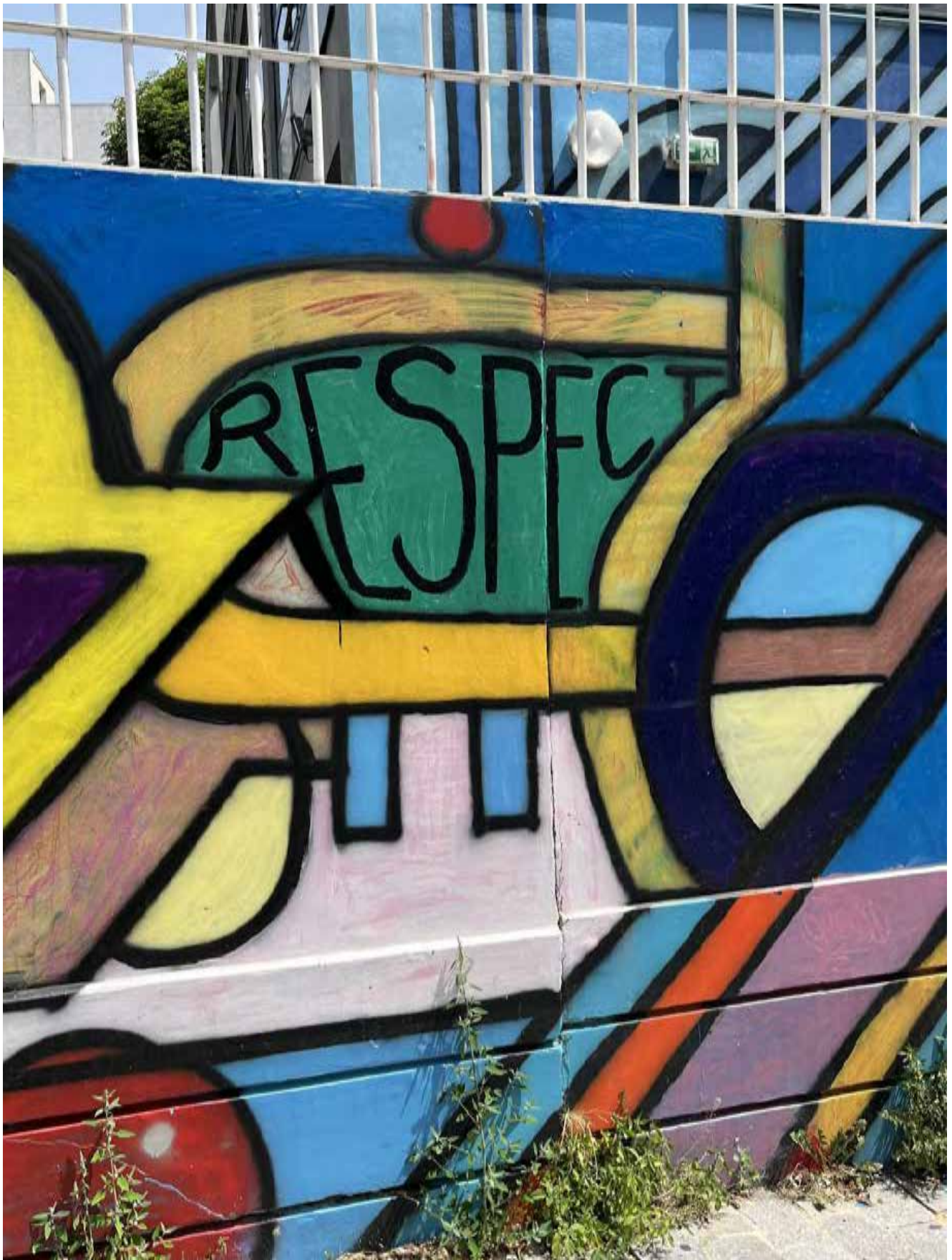
What is Cosmopolitanism?

Cosmopolitanism intends to extend the rights beyond nation-state membership, understanding the public space as universalist. The core of cosmopolitanism is moral universalism, based on fundamental universal civil and political rights. The main concepts are:

- 1) Moral universalism
- 2) Inclusion and socialization (Cosmopolitanism is about inculcating persons a set of universal constitutional-democratic principles rather than a specific culture)
- 3) Difference and diversity (Cosmopolitanism is not difference-blind but is mainly tailored to the individual, not the collective)
- 4) Ensuring openness to the world and individual autonomy



People at a street market in Barcelona, Spain. Photo by Zenia Hellgren.



Street art in Paris. Photo by Riva Kastoryano.



Street art in Paris. Photo by Riva Kastoryano.

Official discourses

- In most of the documents the use of specific terms to define the policies implemented were avoided.
- Despite the general lack of direct reference to the normativity used, it was still possible to distinguish some of the -isms across the documents.

UK

At the national level, the UK policy outlook can broadly be characterised as a mix of interculturalist encouragement of mixing and contact, in multi-level collaboration with community and religious groups and local authorities, alongside multiculturalist accommodations in education and ethnic monitoring in culture and the arts. A cosmopolitan trend can be detected in the work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the discourse of Fundamental British Values, but very little by way of a transnational attitude transpires in policy documents. Local policies show aspects of multiculturalism, interculturalism and cosmopolitanism.

France

In France, although there is little mention of the -isms in the documents assessed, it was possible to identify aspects of all four approaches, either as an element to be implemented (such as interculturalism) or to be rejected (such as multiculturalism). At the local levels, both local administrations prefer to implement an approach that is more related to interculturalism. The two cities call attention to the importance of intergroup contact as a main starting point to create social cohesion and promote anti-discrimination and equal rights.

Spain

Unlike the other cases, in Spain Interculturalism dominates diversity discourses at all three political levels that define policies addressing immigrant origin populations in Spain. Other approaches to diversity play a much more marginal role. The term "multiculturalism" is perceived to have negative connotations, commonly interpreted as a producer of ethnic divisions and inequality. In the cities of Barcelona and Bilbao, it is clear that interculturalism is the mainstream policy, although actors may have different views on how to carry out interculturalism. The main challenge consists of the lack of evaluability of intercultural policies and the unclear transfer of intercultural policies into actual outcomes.

Norway

The Immigrant Minority Index of 2021 associates Norwegian policies to a multicultural perspective., although dual citizenship has only been allowed after year 2020. The policy of enhancing the teaching of mother tongues is also an example of multicultural policies.

Discourses of voluntary associations

- Civil society representatives frequently rejected the term 'integration', as they believe that it is unreasonable to target in the same policy newly arrived migrants and people who have already been for generations in the host country.
- Spain, France and Norway tend to associate integration with a cosmopolitan approach - on the grounds of equal and fundamental human rights, but some interviewees criticize the disparity of treatment between immigrants in regular and irregular situations, as it is perceived as a barrier to such equality.
- All four concepts are present in the discourse of civil society, whether explicitly or implicitly. Nevertheless, some -isms seem to have more relevance in some countries than in others.

UK

In a nod to multiculturalism, participants in the UK are in favour of hyphenated identities in the public space: "The more we can explain our identity and be able to be out and proud about it, the better.[...] You want to be able to take your whole person to work, to different parts of your life and feel safe about that". With respect to transnationalism, all UK participants agreed in principle with the possibility of holding multiple citizenships, even if for different reasons and with different emphases.

France

Almost all interviews showed some kind of complementarity between two or more concepts, in some situations in a contradictory perspective. For instance, multiculturalism was criticized by many of the participants for what they described as an 'Anglo-Saxon' model that is incompatible with the French Republic. A refusal to address issues such as race and ethnicity was also shown by some participants, arguing that these are outdated concepts or inconsistent with the French reality, which does not recognize ethnic minorities. *"In France there is no treatment by minorities. First of all, I don't know what an ethnic minority is"*. The idea of living together and sharing with people from different backgrounds has been mentioned by several participants as a model to follow. *We are in favour of a model of society that we call active coexistence, and which consists of people living together, acknowledging their identity, while being open to the identity of others"*.

Spain

In the Spanish case, interculturalism is by far the preferred paradigm by the social actors. However, they also express some concerns about the gap between rhetoric and implementation, and how to go beyond the usual view of interculturalism as 'inter-personal interaction'. Besides, Multiculturalism is often considered necessary at earlier stages of the integration process, in order to compensate for discrimination affecting immigrants and ethnic minority groups: *"The recognition of differences is the first step towards saying 'you exist' and 'you are as important as the other', and your language and traditions should be on our calendar of festivities. But then, this leads us to the common points"*.

Norway

Most Norwegian participants espoused a kind of multicultural attitude, which was based on a Scandinavian approach to cosmopolitanism. There was broad acceptance for most forms of cultural expression, as long as it did not harm or disturb others unduly. There was a clear disparity between those participants who were themselves members of a minority and those that were not. The latter generally called for a general acceptance of difference, and were generally in favour of hyphenated identities. The former were far more likely to call for increased contact and knowledge between groups, placed a greater importance on group as well as individual identities, and were often sceptical of hyphenated identities, noting that they were used as a tool for othering in everyday discourse.

Official Discourses: Overview of priorities in the management of diversity

The table below summarises our interpretation of the number of direct or indirect references made to each of the -isms in official documents according to country and city. the number of stars refers to the relevance of each priority. 0 stars refers to no reference, 1 star some reference, 2 stars important references and 3 stars very important references.

Country/Local level	Multiculturalism	Interculturalism	Transnationalism	Cosmopolitanism
France		***	*	***
La Courneuve		***		
Vaulx-en-Velin		***		
Spain		***		
Barcelona		***		
Bilbao		***		
The UK	*	***		*
Bristol	*	*		*
Brent	*	*		*
Norway	***		**	**
Oslo	***	*		
Drammen	***	**		

Discourses of voluntary associations: Overview of priorities in the management of diversity

The table below summarises our interpretation of the number of direct or indirect references made to each of the -isms in the discourse of leaders of voluntary associations in each country. The number of stars refers to the relevance of each priority. 0 star refers to no reference, 1 star some reference, 2 stars important references and 3 stars very important references.

Country	Multiculturalism	Interculturalism	Transnationalism	Cosmopolitanism
France	*	***	**	***
Spain		***	*	*
The UK	***	*	*	*
Norway	***			***



A Baptist church in Bristol, in the UK. Photo Pier-Luc Dupont

Outcomes

Considering the discourses of official representatives and leaders of voluntary associations:

- Tendency to prefer an intercultural perspective based on social cohesion, but also keeping migrants' own identities and bonds to the home country.
- Fundamental human rights also underpin a universalist discourse.
- High level of complementarity between the four -isms.
- A single normativity cannot cover all the complexity that this issue demands.
- Need to think of new concepts for the management of diversity and the integration of migrants where there is room for complementarity among the four paradigms, in a multilevel perspective.



Street market in La Courneuve, France. Photo by Luana Franco Rocha

Recommendations for policy-makers

- Insist that integration and citizenship can be compatible with cultural diversity, and support the contributions of migrants and minorities
- Refrain from casting interculturalism or cosmopolitanism as alternatives to multiculturalism, looking instead for ways of reconciling these policy perspectives
- Enhance transnational ties facilitating multiple citizenships, naturalisation and family reunification
- Uphold and promote the human right to non-discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity and religion
- Include asylum seekers and other migrants into consultative mechanisms on equality and diversity
- Work with civil society and other policymakers at all territorial levels to develop coordinated strategies for social cohesion



Street art in Bristol, in the UK. Photo by Pier-Luc Dupont.

Further readings

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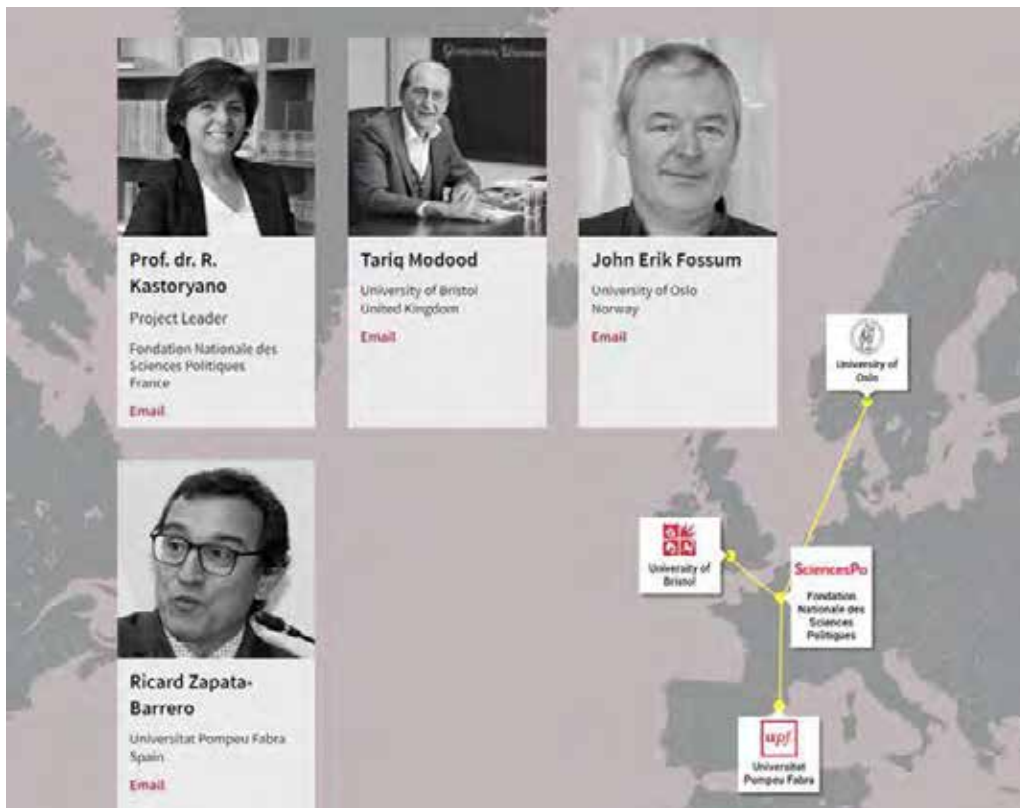
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Project partners



The graphic displays four project partners with their names, titles, and affiliations, alongside a map of Europe with institutional logos connected by a yellow line. The partners are:

- Prof. dr. R. Kastoryano**, Project Leader, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, France. Email: [\[redacted\]](#)
- Tariq Modood**, University of Bristol, United Kingdom. Email: [\[redacted\]](#)
- John Erik Fossum**, University of Oslo, Norway. Email: [\[redacted\]](#)
- Ricard Zapata-Barrero**, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain. Email: [\[redacted\]](#)

The map shows connections to the University of Oslo, University of Bristol, SciencesPo (Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques), and Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

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