



## Intercultural Sustainability

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### What is it?

Intercultural sustainability as a term comprises any effort to design intercultural relations in ways that ensure a peaceful and a constructive coexistence of people across cultures. This notion builds a bridge between research on intercultural communication and intercultural relations on the one side and the global political discourse on sustainability on the other side.

On the side of intercultural research, the notion of intercultural sustainability takes up the insight that any form of research will always be initiated from normative motivations that influence the design of future research directions that sometimes are not made explicit.

The political discourse on sustainability comprising ecological, economic and social dimensions has recently included the notion of cultural sustainability into the latter, relating to the assumption that strong cultural identities may contribute to social cohesion. Intercultural sustainability instead relates to the insight that any other dimensions of sustainability will be put at risk as long as a peaceful management of people's assumptions about culture and cultural affiliations will not be ensured.

### Who uses the concept?

Nancy Duxbury and Eileen Gillette were among the first to explore the dimension of cultural sustainability in more detail from the perspective of urban planning. Dominic Busch provides a first exploration of contemporary implicit uses of the concept of intercultural sustainability including neighboring notions and meanings.

### Fit with intercultural dialogue?

The notion of intercultural sustainability in itself contains the insight of the necessity of developing common goals on how to cooperatively manage aspects of culture and cultural affiliation. However, it does not in any way pre-set the forms and contents of this goal. Instead, specifying these common goals cannot be reached but by permanent global and equal dialogue on the concept.

### What work remains?

Intercultural sustainability in itself is a notion that points at the need of a permanent debate and research on its content. Critical analyses of previous studies on intercultural communication and intercultural relations may reveal their underlying notions contributing to intercultural sustainability – ruptures and disagreements are to be expected. Contemporary research should be encouraged to reflect on its assumptions about intercultural sustainability more precisely, and on a global level, awareness must be raised for the need of a global dialogue on intercultural sustainability.

### Resources

- Busch, D. (2016). What is intercultural sustainability? A first exploration of linkages between culture and sustainability in intercultural research. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 9(1): 63-76. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v9n1p63>
- Duxbury, N., & Gillette, E. (2007). *Culture as a key dimension of sustainability: Exploring concepts, themes, and models*. Burnaby, Canada: Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities.