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HELMUT ANHEIER & YUDHISHHIR RAJ ISAR
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Chapter 3

Challenges of Governance in Multi-ethnic Cities

Phil Wood

Abstract

Migration and cultural diversity have become dominant metaphors for the rapid change and growing anxiety in urban communities around the world. Whilst nation states jealously guard their powers to police borders, dispense or deny citizenship and dabble in the shaping of national identities; it is in our cities, on a daily basis, where the business of whether we can, or cannot, find a way of living and prospering together is being performed. Powerful forces, and visceral impulses, threaten to drive us toward greater segregation, suspicion, exploitation and conflict. However, the essay argues that cities can and must take a more proactive stance to forge diverse urban societies where citizens not only tolerate each other but co-create their world. A selection of examples is offered to illustrate how local government, civil society and migrants themselves are now shaping this emerging movement.

Introduction

Reports of the impending demise of the nation-state¹ may have been somewhat exaggerated² but its contortions, whilst trying to make sense of mesmerising change, have been a defining factor of our age. There have been many symptoms of globalization, of which the growth in migration has been but one. However, migration seems to have become for many, including national governments, an over-riding factor. And, when combined with the (not necessarily related) issue of international terrorism, it has in the minds of many been rapidly transformed into a question, a challenge and, indeed for some, an existential threat (Sassen, 1996).

Fanned by a 24-hour news media, we now have a climate in which national politicians feel impelled to act publicly and robustly in defence of clear national interests and identities which, only a few years earlier, they were content to keep implicit and vague. In its most high profile cases (such as the recent Swiss referendum on the building of minarets) this has become a *kulturkampf* between Western and Muslim values. In actual fact, though, we are seeing conflicts played out across the globe between interest groups and value systems of very many hues.

Meanwhile, another symptom of systemic transformation has been the rise of the city and city-region. This has been partly through the acceleration of an on-going factor of industrialization and rural depopulation which saw the world's urban population recently exceed 50%. But we have also seen a new confidence in cities as they have realised the growing power and influence to be achieved by positioning themselves in the 'space of flows' at the nodes of global networks of financial and symbolic capital that transcend national borders (Castells, 1996).

This realignment has inevitably created many paradoxes and disjunctions and in this chapter I aim to address only one of these, concerned with migration, cultural diversity and the governance of cities. This is the condition that, whilst the nation-states jealously retain control of borders and citizenship status; the majority of migrants (and the neighbours of migrants) live, work, pray, create, procreate and die in cities. Cities appear to have little formal power to regulate or even influence who their residents will be yet they are the places where, through the daily - and largely banal - interactions, conflicts or avoidances of people, the nature of societies will be defined (Amin, 2002).

My thesis is that whilst nation states will remain a factor for the foreseeable future, cities must stand up and take a more proactive role in the realms of migration, citizenship, cultural identity and (to adopt a Spanish term because no English one will do) *convivencia*. And action must move beyond the current preoccupation with legalistic and bureaucratic entitlements and responsibilities to much more culturally-nuanced understanding of urban life. This arises from my belief that a new form of local, city-based cosmopolitanism may be the best guarantee we have of achieving a world which is sustainable, equitable and beneficent rather than one gripped by fear, antagonism and atrophy.

This raises some serious questions and challenges in particular for those concerned with cultural policy in contemporary cities in all parts of the world. In this chapter I will try to make sense of these and offer some inspiring examples of good practice and practical ways forward.

Ways of thinking about diversity and cities

The first point to note is the scale of change, with many cities around the world now hosting substantial numbers of foreign-born residents, as the table below demonstrates:

Top 25 world cities by percentage of foreign-born in the population (Benton-Short, 2005)

	City	Year	City Population	FB Population	% FB
1	Dubai	2002	857,233	702,931	82.00
2	Miami	2000	2,253,362	1,147,765	50.94
3	Amsterdam	2002	735,328	347,634	47.28
4	Toronto	2001	4,647,960	2,091,100	44.99
5	Muscat	2000	661,000	294,881	44.61
6	Vancouver	2001	1,967,475	767,715	39.02
7	Auckland	2001	367,737	143,417	39.00
8	Geneva	2002	427,700	164,118	38.37
9	Mecca	1996	4,467,670	1,686,595	37.75
10	The Hague	1995	441,595	161,509	36.57
11	Los Angeles	2000	9,519,338	3,449,444	36.24
12	Tel Aviv	2002	2,075,500	747,400	36.01
13	Kiev	1992	2,616,000	941,760	36.00
14	Medina	2000	5,448,773	1,893,213	34.75
15	New York	2000	9,314,235	3,139,647	33.71
16	San Francisco	2000	1,731,183	554,819	32.05
17	Riyadh	2000	4,730,330	1,477,601	31.24
18	Perth	2001	1,336,239	422,547	31.62
19	Sydney	2001	3,961,451	1,235,908	31.20
20	Jerusalem	2002	678,300	208,700	30.77
21	Melbourne	2001	3,367,169	960,145	28.51
22	Frankfurt	2000	650,705	181,184	27.84
23	Tbilisi	1999	1,339,105	370,932	27.70
24	London	2001	7,172,091	1,940,390	27.05
25	Brussels	2002	978,384	260,040	26.58

Classical modes of understanding cities

Whilst the scale may be unprecedented in history, there is no shortage of examples from the past of cities built upon constant diversity, movement and change and, for better or worse, we have drawn many of our attitudes from the classic nation of migration, the United States. Take these two diametrically-opposed visions of the city as potential utopia:

Despite cultural antagonisms ... the city [of New York] remains a model of rough-hewn cosmopolitanism and multicultural tolerance, with an astonishing mix of peoples living side by side in reasonable harmony. (Burrows and Wallace (1999) quoted in Grillo (2001))

And as looming dystopia:

Most current, giddy discussions of the “postmodern” scene in Los Angeles neglect entirely these overbearing aspects of counter-urbanization and counter-insurgency. A triumphal gloss is laid over the brutalization of inner-city neighbourhoods and the increasing South Africanization of its spatial relations. (Davis (1992) quoted in Grillo (2001))

More prosaically, though, conventional wisdom on the relationship of cities, governance and migration has been formed from the experience of OECD countries in the post-war period. Although we might identify a variety of responses to the growth in labour migration during this time, three distinct models stand out (Bloomfield and Bianchini, 2004). Firstly the French approach of ‘civic cultural integration’, and to some extent the American ‘melting pot’, typify the requirement of migrants to assimilate into the majority culture in return for citizenship and civic rights. Abandoned by the US, it has been retained doggedly, but increasingly desperately, in France and may even be making a comeback in Denmark (Hedetoft, 2010).

Many other countries, but classically Germany, preferred an arms-length relationship inviting ‘guest workers’ to visit for labour but not to stay on for extended residence or citizenship. Largely discredited and abandoned in the 1980s there are signs of its recent return in the guise of ‘managed migration’ programmes, and more explicitly and ruthlessly in the Gulf States (of which more later).

Finally the model of ‘multiculturalism’ adopted in Canada, Australia, the UK, Netherlands, Sweden and latterly the US, seemed to many the acme of policy formulations, but has recently come under intense scrutiny. Critics accuse it of celebrating diversity but failing to build loyalty to the nation state and solidarity within multi-ethnic communities. Although we see the retention of many policies in many cities which are, in all but name, ‘multicultural’ the force of the backlash means it is now difficult to imagine a politician anywhere (with the possible exception of Canada) being prepared to declare themselves an unqualified multiculturalist (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010).

A diversity of diversity

But this post-war grand narrative of migration from rural locations in the Global South to cities in the developing world is now but one of many stories to be told in the much richer and more complex environment of migration and diversity in the 21st century (Balbo, 2005; Stren, 2009). International migrants now represent about 190 million people and whilst the flow of people is still mainly south to north some 40% of all movements take place *between* countries in the Global South (and if irregular migrants are added to the calculation the balance probably tips towards the latter) (Balbo 2009).

Very many of these movements are no longer 'one way streets' but made by people who move physically and culturally between two or more spaces as 'transnational' migrants. And migrants can no longer be easily pigeon-holed as young men in search of manual labour and adventure wherever they can find it. Qualified professionals, students and, increasingly, independent female workers are becoming the norm, and their destinations have become cities, and larger cities at that. These globalised 'super diverse' conurbations are magnetically attractive because they represent a nexus of employment opportunities, social connections and cultural security in an otherwise precarious world (Vertovec, 2007).

But whilst the city might once have provided an absorptive and integrating role it is now a far more fragmented and exclusionary place, with informality in employment, housing and citizenship appearing to be the preferred policy option of many jurisdictions (for newcomers and natives).

In a bid to face the overt negative effects of globalization, all countries in both South and North have been promoting decentralization policies (...) to transfer to local government the responsibility of providing cities with the infrastructure and services required by global competition as well as the basic services required by growing numbers of the urban poor. (...) consequently the attitude of many local governments is essentially of a laissez-faire type: city authorities absolve themselves from the responsibility of any pro-active supply of infrastructure and services, forcing migrant communities to rely on the private sector or self-provision to a very large extent. Lack of co-ordination among and within the many layers of government... is the norm, adding to their limited capacity to manage the issues of migration, which they often regard as only temporary and marginal (Balbo, 2005).

And the stakes are high – very high. A sad litany of communal conflict over the last two decades, from Nigeria to India and from the Parisian *banlieues* to industrial northern England, testifies to the passions and the misery that these forces evoke. Appadurai (2006, p 7) finds one explanation in the corrosive impact of the modern condition of uncertainty:

Large-scale violence is not simply the product of antagonistic identities but (...) itself is one of the ways in which the illusion of fixed and charged identities is produced, partly to allay the uncertainties about identity that global flows invariably produce ...especially when the forces of social uncertainty are allied to other fears about growing inequality, loss of national sovereignty, or threats to local security and livelihood.

So, in the light of the critique of all recently prevailing models, the emergence of transnational migration as a reality for cities around the world, and the ever-present threat of communal conflagration, what new patterns of policy and governance can be discerned?

In the West, we at first sight see a confusing patchwork of approaches often combining different elements of all three of the classic models. To coin a less than elegant phrase, I might describe a condition of 'neo-liberal integrationism' comprising continued openness to (highly specified) forms of migration justified purely on economic grounds; strict enforcement of tests to ascertain language, local knowledge and loyalty as the condition of citizenship; earnest public debates to determine the

nature of national identity; regular sops from politicians to the 'indigenous majority' that this identity is not being compromised; pressure placed upon minorities who are seen to be 'self-segregating' themselves from the majority; whilst a blind eye is turned to a growing underclass of undocumented migrants performing a range of grey but useful tasks.

Elsewhere, though, we see a diversity of approaches. Japan, for example, with a growing economy but an aged population needs extra labour but cannot countenance the prospect of large alien minorities or *gaikokujin*, so has tried to restrict migration to *nikkejin* (South Americans of ethnic Japanese background) with some unexpected and perplexing consequences (Tsuda, 2000). Incredibly there is even a growing body of thought which holds that, by investing heavily in robotics technology, Japan may one day return to a condition of complete ethnic homogeneity and fulfil all its industrial and social care labour requirements with machines rather than with potentially troublesome people (Harden, 2008; Robertson, 2010).

Cities in Latin America seem to express a far more relaxed attitude towards diversity and migration and also seem to demonstrate a great sense of municipal agency. Latin American cities, it is suggested, historically grasped autonomy from chronically weak national authorities but, in general, used their power to usher in sharply neo-liberal and entrepreneurial urban policies (Portes & Roberts, 2005), and cities became starkly segregated but on socio-economic more than ethnic grounds. However, as the last decade or so has ushered in more progressive political actors, the over-riding drive has been towards achieving greater equality and openness through an urban human rights approach. Brazil introduced a City Statue in 2001 becoming the first place in the world to bring into law an explicit 'Right to the City'. Through innovations such as participatory budgeting and local masterplans and the radical empowerment of neighbourhood associations, Brazilian citizens now have many of the tools with which to fashion communities with the resilience to prosper in the current climate (Fernandes, 2007). Mexico City meanwhile has recently brought into law a Statute for 'Hospitality, Intercultural Attention to Migrants and Human Mobility in the Federal District'. It sets policy, mechanisms and standards in the areas of hospitality, multiethnicity and human mobility for migrant families in the capital. It also promotes the participation of migrants as well as the public and private sectors in social planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes arising from the enforcement of the law.³

African cities face greater pressures of migration but in contrast to Latin America there has been little sign of civic agency. For example there have been many cases of xenophobia against African migrants in several South African cities (with apparent municipal insouciance) (Morris, 1998; Ostanel, 2010); and widespread evidence of segregation and conflict in West Africa (Agyei-Mensah & Owusu, 2010; Fourchard, 2011; Smith, 2006). In contrast to this the city of Dakar has been portrayed as a haven of harmony and cross-cultural co-operation but which exists in spite, rather than because, of municipal action or policy and which may (if not consciously nurtured) be under imminent threat (Ndiaye, 2005). The general picture across Africa is thus one of city authorities which regard the integration of migrants as a low priority compared to the more pressing challenges they face.

This pattern of a 'non-policy' approach to migration is also reported in various parts of South Asia (Barbora et al, 2010; Leaf, 2010). In Bangkok neither the municipal authorities nor civil society take migrants into account in their work and this is portrayed as an oversight which will return to haunt the city's aspirations to become a leading regional player (Chantavanich & Vungsiriphisal, 2005). In the Indian city of Ahmedabad, city authorities are accused of progressively ignoring, and then air-brushing out' that city's well-documented ethnic conflicts in order to ease in their own vision of a neo-liberal 'Mega City' project (Chatterjee, 2009).

But a very different picture emerges across the Persian Gulf in Dubai and other Emirati states where a colossal property development boom has been built from the capital of foreign investors, and on the back of an army of migrant labour (mainly from the Indian sub-continent), reinforced by a very clear and deliberate policy response. The working conditions and human rights which these workers endure represents not so much a return to the 'guest worker' model but the indentured labour system of 19th century colonialism, or even a form of latter-day slavery (Hari, 2009). These workers have no right to citizenship or permanent residence and yet many have little chance of ever returning home, so exist in a legal and literal no-man's land. The state and municipality make virtually no concessions to their presence and seem content to face the challenge of global migration by attempting to hermetically seal them off from the host society. In spite of this the migrants practice mild forms of resistance and are gradually putting down roots (Nagy, 2006; Elsheshtawy, 2008; Kanna, 2010) in these grotesque caricatures of urban community.

Challenges of governance

Having mapped out the newly evolving landscape, let us now look at the multi-dimensional challenges which confront cities.

Cities as international actors

Perhaps the greatest challenge to cities is the sheer pace and scale of migration which, if it continues to grow at current rates, some fear may overwhelm all but the best run and prosperous of city governance structures. There is now an emerging argument that migrant flows need to be kept to manageable levels, not only to enable receiving cities to cope, but to prevent catastrophic depopulation and destabilisation in many of the countries of origin. Thus we are now seeing in some developed world cities a recognition that they share a responsibility, not simply for the migration that manifests on their streets, but for that which is 'upstream' of them. In short, what can cities do to make life better in the countries of origin so that not so many people feel the desperate need to emigrate? A recent report (UNDP, 2010) charts examples of partnerships between Spanish and Moroccan and Italian and Romanian municipalities to jointly manage a previously chaotic situation which all too easily played into the hands of political extremism.⁴

A variant on this is 'city diplomacy' with cities taking on roles which might formerly have been the sole preserve of the foreign relations departments of their national governments. So, for example, we see Dutch cities making direct contact with cities in the former Yugoslavia to develop joint programmes around conflict resolution and economic development⁵.

Finally we see an emerging trend for national and local government in countries of emigration to start thinking of their diasporic communities in terms of what they might be able to contribute to communities in their former homeland. Of course remittances have been and remain a powerful means of redistributing resources from the developed to the developing world, but these flows existed largely in the private world of migrant individuals and their families. Indeed, because of often-justified suspicion of misappropriation of funds by public authorities, remittances were considered by migrants and aid organisations alike as the means most like to ensure funds reached the people and places that most need them. However, we are now seeing examples of state and municipal agencies in countries of origin entering into formal collaboration with diasporic communities - often known as Home Town Associations (HTA).

The most developed examples of HTAs are found in Mexico's relationship with the United States (although other examples have been noted in other parts of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa) (Torres and Kuznetzov, 2006; Somerville et al, 2008). This is for reasons of scale (there are estimated to be over 30 million people resident in the US of Mexican background, and up to 3,000 HTAs); because of the considerable degree of transnational movement and communication; and the

tendency in Mexico for national government to devolve a high level of responsibility to municipalities for local governance and development. HTAs are now raising substantial funds in US migrant communities and supervising their allocation in partnership with Mexican municipalities on welfare, economic development and infrastructure projects. Another interesting aspect of these relationships is the influence on local political culture in the municipalities of origin. According to a survey carried out by the Michoacán state government migrant support agency, 37 per cent of the 113 mayors who governed in the state during 2002–2004 were returned migrants (Fox and Bada, 2008).

The City/Nation interface

But many more pressing challenges may be found in a different sphere, the ever more complex relationship between cities and their national governments over the vexed issues of migration and identity.

Citizenship

Whilst some nation states may have devolved some of their sovereignty to supra-national bodies such as the European Union, they are less willing to surrender anything to upstart cities. But as cities come increasingly face to face with the realities of globalization they are demanding more powers and resources to deal with them, so a tussle is underway. Not least over citizenship, which national governments see as their sole preserve. However, in Spain for example several cities including Madrid and Barcelona have been experimenting with forms of local citizenship. In Madrid the city granted local citizenship rights to migrants who had been resident in the city for 6 months, regardless of what status they had been given by the national government. These included rights to stand for election to neighbourhood councils and decide on the allocation of public funds to local projects. Although Madrid subsequently revoked these laws the experiment is continuing in Barcelona and in other Catalan cities⁶

Security policy

This is another responsibility national government has always held dearly to itself, with a very clear separation from domestic local policy, but we have seen a blurring of former rigid lines of demarcation in recent years. Following the 7 July 2005 suicide bombings in London, the British security services took a direct interest in parts of the country which they perceived as potential breeding grounds for future extremists, ie urban neighbourhoods of large Pakistani and Bangladeshi settlement (Thomas, 2009). The Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism introduced a scheme (the alarmingly titled Preventing Violent Extremism) in which it directed local authorities in identifying suspects vulnerable to radicalisation, through the medium of youth and community workers and saturating some neighbourhoods with closed-circuit TV cameras. Many saw this as an unacceptable transgression of local democracy and there has since been a backlash in many localities and the programme abolished. However, in other parts of the world local communities, migrants and civil society groups continue to suffer a heavy burden of state security surveillance and curtailment of rights in the name of anti-terrorism (Cortright, 2008).

Divergent trajectories

Although some receiving states, such as Canada, go to great lengths to settle migrant populations evenly around the country there is an inexorable gravitation to the major and capital cities (Hyndman, 2006). This sets up interesting dynamics between the metropolis and the rest of the country. In some cases (for example Oslo, Copenhagen and Helsinki) we are seeing the city adopting increasingly cosmopolitan policies and attitudes whilst the rest of their country seems to be moving towards less tolerant attitudes and political groupings. This is leading to the formation of transnational networks of cosmopolitan cities who may feel themselves to have more in common with each other than with their own governments and fellow countrymen.⁷

Intra city questions

Finally there are local governance challenges, within city hall and on the city streets.

Cities are having varying degrees of success in coming to terms with the fact that in a super-diverse environment, there is always the prospect of different creeds, lifestyles and interests coming into contradiction with each other. One approach to this has been to balkanize the city into ethnic enclaves which rarely interact and therefore avoid conflict. This has been cited by critics as the downside of multiculturalism (Cantle, 2005) and, whilst discredited, it is still widely practiced. It is certainly true that different national cultures approach conflict differently and we can see this playing out in the varying degrees of success with which different cities around the world are managing the discordance of difference.

Often city authorities seem most comfortable dealing with migration and diversity simply as an instrumental and legalistic process whereby outsiders are either rejected, or moved along a conveyor belt to acceptance, by the machinery of state. There is a suspicion that many cities would prefer to leave the matter at that, and avoid the messier and more ambiguous social and cultural and political-economy issues that diversity and migration throw up. My suspicion is that wilful or unintentional negligence by city authorities of these deeper questions arising from migration is merely storing up problems for the future.

I believe the real challenge that migration poses for the city governance is the need to rapidly realign its mindset, from one which delivers a 'one-size-fits-all' service to a homogeneous citizenry, to coping with the needs and demands of a super-diverse population. This asks serious questions of how well the city actually knows itself. Does it have the data on who is living where, how they live and who they interact with, in a world where communities of several thousand can appear or disappear in a matter of months? (van Liempt, 2010) Does it have the intelligence and cultural competence to make sense of this data and translate it into effective policy and action? Does it have the political courage to formulate a comprehensive policy and stick to in the face of wildfire single-issue media storms around anything from the burka to offensive cartoons?

Cultural diversity questions will have to be asked across the full range of city functions from education and housing to libraries and graveyard provision, and this in turn asks serious questions of the flexibility of the local political culture and bureaucratic machine to adapt to change, break out of its silos and work transversally and holistically. And whilst some cities may have had several decades to adapt to these conditions others are being asked to make the transition in a matter of years, with varying degrees of success.⁸

City Responses

I will now draw partly upon my own experiences of cities to observe and analyse how cities are responding to the challenges they face. As we have seen above, these are myriad and space only allows us to focus on two of these here - public space and cultural policy - which are particularly germane to this volume.

Public space

As we have noted above, one of the most profound consequences of neoliberal economics on cities has been the changing nature of public space. In developed countries this has been characterised by the appropriation of formerly public domains in to privatised commercial and residential areas accompanied by increased security and exclusion. In the developing world the neoliberal demand for open markets and flexibility have combined an increasing casualization of the labour market with a growing proportion of workers forced into non-contractual and informal forms of work. This affects

both indigenous and migrant workers but, as can be imagined, the latter are far more susceptible, lacking the institutional structures and social networks to defend themselves. This means migrants falling back increasingly to the streets as the primary place of trade and business. Such business tends to be popular with the poorer consumers of such cities as it provides everyday and specialist goods at lower prices, but is increasingly unpopular with city authorities who perceive informal street trading as irregular, unhygienic and illegal.

In most developing world cities we now see a daily contestation between informal traders, the public, the authorities and international commercial interests to determine who will have the freedom of the streets and who will not. As the majority of such traders are either internal or foreign migrants, such interactions can have a defining influence on the quality of life of migrants in the city. South Africa, because of its high levels of migration, presents these issues in extremis, but also offers alternative scenarios dependent upon the response cities choose to make. Take the example of Durban below. Meanwhile with examples from Serbia and Germany below, I note other ways in which the presence of migrants has renegotiated the meaning of public space.

Contesting the ecology of African public space

For many years since the fall of apartheid, the city of Durban has suggested an alternative trajectory for the South African approach to public space and diversity (Brown et al, 2010). Warwick Junction is a transport hub for the local and regional populations of the city with some 460,000 people moving through the area each day and, not surprisingly, a wide range of trading and fringe activities proliferated nearby. One of the most prevalent of these is the medicinal herb trade for spiritual and physical ailments. Growing out of ancient Zulu traditions, this fringe activity has developed into a market of 500 informal traders, making Warwick Junction the largest Muti (herbal medicine) market in Southern Africa. But the market also features traders with long-standing or more contemporary migrant backgrounds from south and east Asia as well as the rest of Africa. There are an estimated 8,000 street traders at Warwick Junction the majority of who are women.

What struck me when I visited a few years ago was, firstly, the contrast with other South African cities: the otherworldliness of abandoned and squatted Johannesburg and the cold corporate order of Cape Town. Durban seemed messier but far more dynamic and interactive. But equally impressive was the subtle and culturally-sensitive way in which the city authorities were trying to manage this bubbling cauldron of trade and ethnic exchange, which moderated its excesses whilst retaining its mercurial energy and distinctiveness (Dobson et al, 2009). Keith Hart (the originator of the concept of the 'informal economy') said of the Durban authorities "I have not come across any other example where the interests of street traders and local authorities were negotiated with mutual respect over a period as long as the Warwick project"⁹. This then appeared to be one city which was facing the challenges of globalization with a high degree of originality, competence and courage.

Or so it seemed until 2009 when Durban City Council approved plans to clear much of the site and subsidise a private developer to build a shopping mall and taxi rank (Skinner, 2009). The development was presented as something which would benefit all and make it a modern and competitive city fit to host international events such as the 2010 World Cup. This, of course, arouses an important issue in the cultural policy field. Major sporting and cultural events are presented as offering manifold benefits for cities in emerging economies, but the apparent about-face of the authorities in Durban and the obvious threat to the very special ecology which is Warwick Junction has fuelled a growing campaign of sceptical opposition.¹⁰

One hopes that in the process of 'modernization' the city of Durban will not sacrifice its spirit of municipal inventiveness, cultural inclusiveness and street level democracy to become just another neo-liberal clone city.

Rebuilding public space in Serbia - literally

Subotica is a city in Serbia close to the border with Hungary. For most of its history its population has comprised a rich mix of Hungarians, Serbs, Croats, Macedonians, Germans, Albanians and Roma, with no group in a majority, reflecting a history of conquest, migration and accommodation. Most children grew up routinely speaking two or three languages, learning about each other's religions and living side by side. This came to an end in 1991 with the outbreak of the war that destroyed Yugoslavia. Whilst Subotica was spared armed conflict itself, it has been profoundly changed by those tumultuous events as thousands of people left the city in a hurry. They were of all ethnic backgrounds but generally the best-educated and most cosmopolitan citizens who wanted no part in the nationalistic rancour and they now reside in Vienna, Berlin, New York never to return. Their empty houses have been filled by new communities driven to Subotica from other parts of the disintegrating country. Mainly they are Serbs, nursing a deep resentment of their eviction from ancestral homes in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo and not especially enamoured of the cosmopolitan traditions of their new home. But another group of refugees were Muslim Roma, hounded out of Kosovo and obliged to make a new home in the meanest and most decayed parts of Subotica.

Since the war Serbia has sunk into a sullen torpor, as Europe's pariah state and, hard on the EU border, Subotica feels this exclusion most of all. It has tried to maintain its self-respect and distinctive traditions by resisting centralising diktats from Milošević and his successors in Belgrade. However the cosmopolis had disintegrated into a patchwork of rival tribes jealously accentuating and guarding those aspects of their identity which distinguished them, and monoglot had become the norm

In the neighbourhood of Peščara, Serbs, Croats and Hungarians lived side by side amongst derelict houses and impassable roads, but such was their suspicion of each other that none were prepared to take action to rectify the situation, even though they very often could not reach the shops or schools. Also worried about this was Stevan Nikolić, leader of the outcast Roma community. One day he persuaded a friend to lend him an excavator and some tools and road materials and a small group of Roma people began repairing the road. As other (non-Roma people) passed by Nikolić persuaded them to join in and, over the course of a week, this multi-ethnic group of neighbours who had never spoken before had created a new road for their district. So impressed was the local authority that it supported the creation of a neighbourhood council to improve the district. With the support of the city's Local Democracy Agency many other parts of the city now also have non-sectarian neighbourhood councils.

We should never ignore the foresight of the outsider to see what is missing or to point out the absurdity of what exists.¹¹

Migrantas - a visual language of migration

Most global cities are now home to thousands of migrant women, but they often remain invisible and unknown to most of their fellow citizens. Migrantas is a collective of migrant women active in Germany and Spain who have pooled their skills into a project which aims to take the issues that arise in the daily lives of migrant women and to present them in ways which can be absorbed and understood by their fellow citizens. They quite literally re-appropriate the public space with images and ideas drawn directly from migrant experience in a way that cannot be easily ignored.

The process begins with Migrantas meeting migrant women in their own collective spaces with workshops to reflect together on the many issues of migration. Women from very different backgrounds, and residency statuses exchange their experiences and express these in simple drawings, thus overcoming language shortcomings.

After a careful analysis of all the drawings from different workshops, Migrantas culls key elements and common themes, for example the heartbreak of a family divided by distance, or the worry of one woman that other people in the street look on her as a potential terrorist. It then translates their central motifs into a visual language accessible to everyone – pictograms, the visual language of Migrantas. Their simple, universally understandable images stir emotions, and people from different backgrounds recognize themselves in the representations, while others gain new insights or modify their own perspectives.

All Migrantas projects end with an exhibition. The participants now see their drawings presented in public and experience public recognition of their voices and social participation, whilst visitors to the exhibitions receive an opportunity to become better acquainted with the experiences of migrant women.

One of Migrantas' major goals, and achievements, is to make the pictograms visible in public urban spaces. They appear as posters where there is normally commercial advertising, as projected digital animations on public screens, as flyers or postcards or shopping bags. Thus migrant women's perspectives and lived realities are taken out of the individual private space and made visible in the public space, creating an encounter which triggers reactions and self-reflection in the passer-by.¹²

PICTURE HERE

Cultural Policy

Rising multi-ethnicity presents a very real challenge to the cultural institutions of the city. Museums, galleries, theatres and libraries may have been created in very different times for very different audiences than the ones they now encounter, and this raises powerful questions of whether and how they should respond to change.

Museums may have been created explicitly as the expression of a dominant or monolithic culture, or as part of the nation-building myth of a formerly subject people or city. Or they may simply be repositories of artefacts and symbols with meaning for an educated elite but largely illegible to others. Elena Delgado of Madrid's Museo de América is in no doubt that her profession must embrace the challenge:

The significance of a museum lies not only in its collections, but also in the reflections and insights it is able to trigger around the objects, the knowledge it provides and the multiple visions and interpretations it offers on the heritage in its care (...) As metaphorical "free zones", museums must strive to take their place at the intersections, in those spaces where individuals and distinct cultural identities can act and interact, transform and be transformed (...) In order to become a space for negotiation, museums must disown those homogenising and discriminating values which are still very closely connected to their role in legitimising historic identity. (...) one task for cultural and educational institutions should be the development of strategies to help citizens learn to live with conflict, with the other and with difference, by promoting attitudes which lead to the intersection of cultures and of knowledge (Delgado, 2009).

Me and the Other in Turin's Museums

Italy is one country where the weight of history hangs particularly heavily, and where there has been a remarkable change in the ethnic composition of many cities. National government has taken a particularly strident stance on what it sees as the threat to Italian heritage posed by diversity, even going to the ludicrous lengths of attempting to outlaw foreign food (Owen, 2009). In response to this a raft of Italian city museums have undertaken radical reforms of their policies and practices. Turin, which is so often the standard-bearer of cosmopolitan values in Italy, led the way and seven projects were presented in the conference 'Me and the Other in Turin's Museums'.

A common theme has been the use of artefacts to trigger reflection, reminiscence, expression and finally dialogue between individuals and groups who might otherwise not encounter each, or might potentially be in conflict (Bodo et al, 2009). These include 'Tongue for Tongue' which employed story-telling as a means for cultural mediators of different backgrounds to open up and relate the collections of Turin's Museum of anthropology and Ethnography to contemporary concerns. '

Meanwhile 'City Telling' took multi-ethnic parties of people through the city, creating personal routes that identified 'third spaces' of cultural, linguistic and aesthetic interaction. And 'There's a Garden in Every Story' in the Botanical Garden of Turin which challenged locals to discover the global interconnectedness of the city through the plants that it used; and for new migrants to make connections between old and new homelands through plants.

Museums and heritage sites occupy a special place in the multi-ethnic city offering the opportunity of an open space in which potentially divisive and difficult issues can be approached from fresh angles which build new cultural and social capital

Libraries too are ubiquitous city institutions whose roles and relevance have been brought into question by the speed of cultural and technological change but who, through the process of reappraisal, can offer a special contribution to the challenges of multi-ethnicity. The first professional position that I personally ever held was to encourage unemployed people and migrants to make use of their local library as places of resource and creativity. Libraries are wonderful places but often the buildings, and even some of the librarians, were not as welcoming and accessible as they might be. Sadly, it now seems that if libraries don't make themselves more relevant to their communities they may start to disappear. This is why I was so glad to visit the Idea Stores.

Idea Stores

Tower Hamlets is London's most diverse borough and is undergoing a process of gradually replacing each of its old branch libraries with Idea Stores. Designed especially by the Ghanaian architect David Adjaye to stress accessibility, transparency and flexibility they are located next to major shops and keep the same opening hours (including Sundays) to encourage maximum usage. They have high staff numbers including 'meeters and greeters' there to encourage first time users to feel welcome and comfortable. Although still holding large book stocks they also have space available for a wide variety of other usages to ensure they are seen by people in the neighbourhood as the centre of their community¹³.

The stated objectives of the Council are: "... to bring the community together and to empower individuals to help themselves, whether it is learning to read, pursuing hobbies, expanding their knowledge or seeking a job.

I found the physical presence of an Idea Store is striking. Firstly, it does not have a defined threshold between street and library so one is drawn inside without the feeling one is crossing any kind of boundary. This helps to create the sense of neutrality of the space which encourages users to interact. It seems significant that Adjaye was the architect chosen to bring this new concept to life. Born in Tanzania of Ghanaian parents, he grew up in several different parts of world, trained in London and now lives mainly in the Middle East and Africa. He describes his upbringing as placing him in a situation in which he had to:

... negotiate different notions of publicness, different notions of privateness, different notions of civicness, by shifting through many places in probably the most formative time in my upbringing. That had a subliminal effect which later became triggered as a desire to work within this world. There is no doubt there is a link between the two. (Allison, 2006)

Recent research suggests that the Idea Stores are managing to balance the maintenance of traditional library functions with their newer responsibilities for social inclusion and interaction (Hartley, 2005).

But urban cultures do not require an institution to give them shape and meaning – the streets will do. Festivals can be a dynamic means of expressing questions or truths about the city that have not or cannot be addressed through formal channels. Traditional carnivals such as in Rio de Janeiro, New Orleans, Port of Spain, Venice or Cologne are founded upon the right to public irreverence, transgression and licentiousness, and have long acted as valves to release social or political pressures. More recently established carnivals such London's Notting Hill or Berlin's Karnival der Kulturen represent a commandeering of the public space to express to the city its multi-ethnic reality.

Festival Kanal: From no-go to must-go zones

One festival which in which I recently participated struck me as an acute example of how the arts can hold up a mirror to the city and to challenge it to face up to unpalatable truths. Brussels is the political and administrative capital of Europe and, as such, has acquired many of the trappings of the contemporary neo-liberal city. In its patterns of ownership and land use the city centre caters increasingly for business, residential and entertainment requirements of a sophisticated and mobile professional elite. But Brussels is also a city of transnational migrants from the developing world who fashion a living at the fringes of this other city. The schism between these two different cities is no more apparent than the two banks of the Albert Canal at Porte de Flandre. On the south side yuppies slip out of gentrified apartments to lounge in trendy bars, whilst across the watery divide in Molenbeek workless or hard-pressed Moroccans and Pakistanis sip mint tea in dishevelled cafes. Two worlds which barely interact or even acknowledge each other.

Local activist Wim Embrechts was affronted by the complacency of this slide towards no-go areas and launched the Festival Kanal in September 2010 to shake up the city and make the canal district a 'must go zone'. For me the highlight was his commissioning of artist Emilio López-Menchero to make a direct and blatant intervention on the very bridge that connects the two cities. Overnight, as Brussels slept, he built an exact replica of the Checkpoint Charlie border post and then, as morning came and drivers tried to cross the bridge, he and colleagues dressed in American and Soviet military uniform stopped them to remind them they were passing from one city (and ideological zone) to another. Most responded with either bemusement or amusement but the project aroused high passion too, even resulting in an attempt at arson on the checkpoint.

The artist described his work as a statement not only upon the ghettoization of Brussels, but the growing separation of the Flemish and Walloon halves of Belgium, and of the increasingly formidable barriers which 'fortress Europe' is throwing up around itself.¹⁴

PICTURE HERE

Conclusion – a way forward

There is presently a striving to find a more sophisticated, less instrumental and more culturally-nuanced understanding of diversity in cities. We have for example seen 'pluricultural urbanism' (Boudry et al, 2005), 'cosmopolitan urbanism' (Binnie et al, 2006) and 'open cities'¹⁵. My own preference is for the concept of interculturality because it seems best able to convey the sense of movement and dynamism which characterises life within and between contemporary globalized cities. According to one writer it:

... reminds us of interaction and encounter, ie what happens when a relationship of exchange is established between groups. Whereas multiculturalism entails the acceptance of difference, interculturality implies that negotiation, conflict and mutual exchange exist between different groups (Garcia Canclini, 2006, p 166)

For me interculturality also implies movement in the identity of individuals and groups – away from fixed and immutable positions to hybrid and multiple identities. It also accepts that conflict is not only inevitable but a normal part of a healthy and dynamic cosmopolis (Sandercock, 2003). It advocates an agonistic approach which finds new relationships and innovations emerging from mediated conflict, rather than the antagonistic contests which currently characterise many of our diverse cities (Mouffe, 2000).

The Intercultural City approach (Wood and Landry, 2008), is an attempt to equip cities with conceptual and practical toolkits for evolving distinctive governance models which respond to local conditions whilst riding the waves of global transformation. It maintains that integration is not a process to be undertaken by, or done to, the minorities or newcomers, but a two-way street in which all citizens must travel. In this sense it seeks to move beyond the concept of 'tolerance' (which so

easily translates into indifference) to one of active engagement, negotiation and co-creation of the city.

It adopts from the business world the notion of 'diversity advantage' based on the idea that, given favourable circumstances, heterogeneity will always outperform homogeneity (Page, 2007). Whilst cities are clearly far more complex than any business, the model argues that if cities can create conditions for – and remove barriers to - inter-ethnic mixing they are more likely to produce social and economic innovations which contribute to the common good.

This notion has been taken up and refined by the Council of Europe in its Intercultural Cities programme¹⁶. From a pilot project of 11 European cities the programme is now expanding to take in cities of other continents which are developing and sharing policy and practical experience on what an intercultural city might be. A comprehensive but flexible methodology has evolved which enables cities of very different sizes and context to reappraise themselves 'through an intercultural lens' and to design new alliances, policies and practices (Wood, 2009). A suite of indicators and a process of measurement have been devised, enabling cities to evaluate and compare their strengths and weaknesses (and some of the findings are provided in the statistical appendix to this volume¹⁷), and giving them the possibility to take account of global trends but design bespoke solutions appropriate to local conditions.

This is important in the context of this Volume because it both encourages the city to understand itself more deeply, holistically and culturally; and emboldens and empowers the city to embrace and take ownership of its diversity and shape its destiny, not from fear and exclusion of change, but through generosity of spirit and mutual enterprise.

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Endnotes

- ¹ See for example Vito Tanzi (1998) *The Demise of the Nation State?* International Monetary Fund Working Paper, 98/120.
- ² After all the nation states and their central banks remained the refuge of last resort when the global financial system required a bail-out in the financial crash of 2008.
- ³ See *Mexico City: a law to embed interculturality in the city policies* at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Newsletter/newsletter12/mexico_en.asp.
- ⁴ Although this movement is not without its critics, see Raghuram (2009).
- ⁵ See <http://www.citydiplomacy.org/>.
- ⁶ See <http://pagines.uab.cat/translocalcat/en>.
- ⁷ For example, the influential Vice-Mayor of Malmö, Sweden Kent Andersson has spoken widely on the topic of 'City versus State: Perspectives on urban citizenship in multicultural immigrant societies'.
- ⁸ In terms of a city making an intelligent and comprehensive response to a rapid change in demographic circumstances, the most impressive approach I personally have witnessed has been in the Intercultural Plan of the city of Barcelona, <http://www.interculturalitat.cat/>.
- ⁹ See http://www.inclusivecities.org/Warwick_Junction.html.
- ¹⁰ Streetnet, the international alliance of street vendors which was originally launched in Durban in 2002, has declared a 'World Class Cities For All' Campaign, demanding a new way of dealing with such events, starting with the Commonwealth Games 2010 in Delhi and the 2014 World Cup Finals in Brazil. See http://www.streetnet.org.za/?page_id=250.
- ¹¹ Story drawn from interviews conducted by the author. Further information on Subotica's Local Partnerships for Tolerance at <http://lda-subotica.org/publikacije/local-partnerships-EN.pdf>.
- ¹² More information at <http://www.migrantas.org>.
- ¹³ See <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/>.
- ¹⁴ More Information at <http://emiliolopez-mencherero.be/spip.php?article74>.
- ¹⁵ See <http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/>.
- ¹⁶ <http://www.coe.int/interculturalcities>.
- ¹⁷ See the Intercultural Cities Index at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/Index/default_en.asp.