

Planning in the multicultural city: Celebrating diversity or reinforcing difference?

Ruth Fincher ^{a,*}, Kurt Iveson ^b, Helga Leitner ^{c,1}, Valerie Preston ^d

^a University of Melbourne, Australia

^b University of Sydney, Australia

^c University of California Los Angeles, United States

^d York University, Canada

Abstract

Even as multiculturalism is condemned as a failure by national leaders in a number of countries, urban residents live successfully in cities of ethnic and racialized difference. This paper conducts a descriptive review, drawing on the contemporary English language literature, of the manner in which planning engages with multiculturalism in cities. Its geographical scope is international; having said that, in order to make a coherent discussion it focuses on eight cities, selected both for their ethnic and racialized diversity and for their situation within different national governance structures and different policy histories in relation to migration. Our overall argument is that planning and planners are presently engaging with the demographic reality of multiculturalism in the city through three major interventions: social mix planning in housing, planning for the commodification of diversity in ethnically identified businesses, and planning for public spaces and encounter. We begin by examining various understandings of multiculturalism – as a political philosophy, a policy framework, and a demographic reality – that are mobilized in cities with diverse government arrangements and histories of migration. Through a discussion of social mix, we proceed to assess the ways that urban planning has tried to ‘manage’ social difference in situations where difference has been interpreted as disorderly and in which it has been associated with disadvantage. We then consider how the multicultural features of some cities have been commodified, their diversity packaged to form showpieces for tourists and/or gentrifiers in ways which sometimes fail to consider the viability of housing and small businesses for longstanding residents and businesspeople. Finally, we investigate public spaces and facilities, discussing their regulation by planning and the conflicts that can ensue when spaces and facilities are claimed by some ethnic groups to the exclusion of others even as planners seek to promote intercultural awareness and encounter. Interrogating the involvement of planning in either celebrating diversity or reinforcing difference, we conclude that planning produces both outcomes, often simultaneously, but that its inclination over many decades to control forms of diversity that have been regarded as unruly has reinforced difference in cities. Accordingly, we propose that the construction of everyday multiculturalisms is the task of inhabitants as well as planners. Furthermore, positioning planners so that they are more effective, creative and visible in their engagement with ethnic and racialized difference in the contemporary neoliberal city should be a priority.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Multiculturalism; Social mix planning; Commodification; Diversity; Difference; Public space

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +61 3 83440623.

E-mail address: r.fletcher@unimelb.edu.au (R. Fincher).

¹ With Sian Butcher, University of Minnesota, United States.

Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Urban perspectives on multiculturalism: similarities and dissimilarities	5
2.1.	Making sense of multiculturalism.	6
2.2.	Multiculturalism in diverse urban contexts.	7
2.3.	Local strategies	7
2.3.1.	Toronto: celebrating diversity?	8
2.3.2.	Sydney: recognizing the critical role of local governments?	9
2.3.3.	London: creating cohesive communities?	10
2.3.4.	Amsterdam: abandoning multiculturalism?	11
2.3.5.	New York: privatizing multiculturalism?	11
2.3.6.	Berlin: resisting national discourses?	12
2.3.7.	Singapore: achieving cosmopolitan multiracialism?	13
2.3.8.	Johannesburg: undoing apartheid?	14
2.4.	Commonalities and differences.	15
3.	Social mixing: the significance of residential space	16
3.1.	Planning for social mix – early socialism and Keynesian liberalism	16
3.2.	Planning for social mix – neoliberalism	18
3.3.	Interrogating social mixing – policies and concepts	21
3.4.	Should social mix planning be abandoned?	23
4.	Commodification: making places commercial	24
4.1.	Cities for visitors and tourism	25
4.2.	Including immigrants or ethnically defined groups in local government strategies to form creative cities or local business alliances	28
4.3.	Links between commodification of ethnicity and gentrification	31
4.4.	Issues for planning that is commodifying ethnic and racial difference.	33
5.	Multiculturalism and the urban public realm: sites/sights of difference	35
5.1.	Planning and the production of urban landscapes: contests over mosques and eruvim in multicultural cities	35
5.2.	Planning and the policing of public space: informal street trading	39
5.3.	Planning for multicultural encounter: festivals and beyond	43
5.4.	The public realm and the public interest in multicultural cities	45
6.	Conclusions.	45
	Acknowledgements	47
	References	48

1. Introduction

In many nation-states around the world, multiculturalism is currently a topic of heated public debate and rhetoric. In Europe, for example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has declared that “multiculturalism in Germany has failed” (Weaver, 2010). British Prime Minister David Cameron agreed, and has called on European governments to practice “a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism,” saying that Britain would no longer give official patronage to Muslim groups that had been “showered with public money despite doing little to combat terrorism.” (Wintour, 2011). Politicians in the Netherlands have decried the 2004 murder of Theo Van Gogh as an indicator of the problems caused by promotion of cultural diversity, and, in 2012, public protests concerning the film entitled

Innocence of Muslims stirred controversy and critical responses in cities around the globe. Such controversies suggest that even in contexts where it may have gained a foothold, multiculturalism is not a universally accepted or acceptable political philosophy or policy (Hall, 2000).

The changing nature of city life features prominently in these debates about the past and future of multiculturalism. Claims of ‘failure’ are typically narrated with illustrations from the everyday life of urban neighbourhoods where conflict has erupted between inhabitants from different cultural and religious backgrounds, with blame apportioned to migrants who are said to have failed to ‘integrate’ into their host society. And yet even as multiculturalism is condemned as a failure by some, countless residents successfully live with difference on a daily basis in cities marked by cultural diversity (Kymlicka, 2010; Rath, 2011).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1050829>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1050829>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)