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Migration and New Diversities in  
Global Cities: Comparatively Conceiving,  
Observing and Visualizing Diversification  
in Urban Public Spaces



Steven Vertovec

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## Abstract

How can people with ever more diverse characteristics live together in the world's rapidly expanding cities? The UN estimates a doubling of world urban population by 2050. Meanwhile, global migration flows show profound diversification of migrants' nationality, ethnicity, language, gender, age, human capital and legal status. Everywhere, migrants with complex 'new diversity' traits dwell in cities alongside people from previous, 'old diversity' waves. The dynamics of diversification – despite their increasing ubiquity – remain seriously under-researched. We know little about how people in diversifying urban settings create new patterns of coexistence, or how and why they might tend towards conflict.

This Working Paper provides the background for the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project, which is funded for five years from 2011 by the European Research Council under its scheme for Advanced Investigator Grants. The GLOBALDIVERCITIES project's core research question is: in public spaces compared across cities, what accounts for similarities and differences in social and spatial patterns that arise under conditions of diversification, when new diversity-meets-old diversity? The project entails inter-disciplinary, multi-method research in New York (a classic city of immigration with new global migrant flows in a broadly supportive political context), Singapore (dominated by racial-cultural politics, and wholly dependent on new, highly restricted migrants), and Johannesburg (emerging from Apartheid with tensions around new and unregulated pan-African migrant flows). Spanning the fields of anthropology and human geography to research the changing nature of diversity and its socio-spatial patterns, strategic methods entail '*conceiving*' (exploring how old and new diversities are locally understood), '*observing*' (producing ethnographies of interaction) and '*visualizing*' (using images and innovative data mapping). Anticipated findings will significantly advance social scientific understanding of numerous, far-reaching global trends surrounding urbanization and social diversification.

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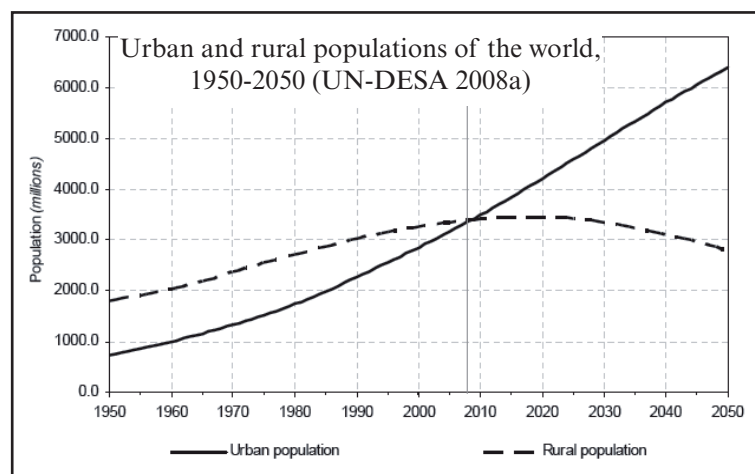
## Introduction

THE ‘COMING QUESTION OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY,’ surmised Stuart Hall (1993: 359), is how to fashion ‘the capacity to live with difference’. Although it was made almost twenty years ago, this conjecture has increasingly gained worldwide significance in light of the profound contemporary acceleration of urbanization and the transformation of international migration. Across the globe, more people, from more varied backgrounds, are coming into regular contact with one another in today’s growing cities. In dense urban settings where new and extraordinary patterns of diversification are most evident, what circumstances facilitate civility and cooperation between prior residents and newcomers, and what conditions contribute toward tension and conflict? Right now, these questions underline an urgent need to sharpen better social scientific understandings, and consequently to develop better-informed social policies concerning the ways that people can live positively together with ever-more socially and culturally differentiated others. This pertains especially to urban settings, where remarkable processes of diversification are most evident.

By way of addressing these issues, a team at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity have embarked on a large new project: ‘GLOBALDIVERCITIES’. This Working Paper provides the background reflections, research objectives, methodology and anticipated outcomes surrounding the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project.

## Urbanization and Diversification

United Nations statistics show that world urban population is expected to nearly double by 2050 (UN-DESA 2008a). Further, 70% of world’s population will be urban by 2050 (compared to only 10% a hundred years ago).



Indeed, the growth of the world's population will concentrate almost exclusively in urban areas.

Everywhere, in mega-cities and moderate-sized cities, developed and developing regions, migration is a key driver of rapid urbanization. Whether involving movements from the other side of the world, from across an immediate border or from rural hinterlands within the same nation-state (which nevertheless usually entails the movement of individuals with considerable ethnic, linguistic and other social differences), migration patterns over the past thirty years manifest marked patterns of diversification.

Agencies including the World Bank, the UN Population Division and the International Organization for Migration have each highlighted the on-going diversification of global migration, especially by way of migrants' countries of origin and channels of migration. Indeed, according to the latter 'diversification of migration flows and stocks is the new watchword for the current dynamics' (IOM 2003: 4). The increasing complexity of international migration over the last three decades, especially in terms of source areas, transit routes, destination countries, channels of migration, and the social characteristics of people who move has led to the emergence of conditions that I have termed 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007a). Coupled with rapid urban growth, the emergence of super-diversity poses significant social scientific questions and urgent public policy challenges. Whereas post-war global migration until the 1980s was comprised mainly of '*large numbers moving from particular places to particular places*' (e.g., Algeria-France, Turkey-Germany, Pakistan-UK, Morocco-Netherlands, Mexico-USA), since the 1980s we have witnessed more people in '*small numbers moving from many places to many places*' (Vertovec 2010a: 3,4). Further, a range of contemporary migration flows are made up of different proportions of people in terms of gender, age, and human capital. Meanwhile in most receiving countries over the past two decades, there have been significant changes to as well as a proliferation of, immigrant legal statuses (including variations within the categories of political asylum-seekers, designated refugees, workers with various kinds of visas, reunited family members, highly skilled migrants, entrepreneurs, students, temporary or restricted residents, undocumented persons, and people who have slipped between legal statuses). Differentially across many contexts, such diversification has brought about new patterns of inequality, segregation and prejudice, new experiences of space and contact, and new practices of cosmopolitanism, creolization and conviviality (Vertovec 2007a).



Another important feature of super-diversity is that, since new migrants tend to inhabit those urban spaces which still play host to migrants from previous waves, the new complexities are ‘layered’ on top of pre-existing patterns of diversity (including the socio-economic positions and geographical concentrations, social policies, daily interactions and physical environments that developed around the pre-existing patterns). How do prior conditions of diversity affect the incorporation of new migrants who are characterized by significantly different traits?

The world over, ‘for those cities experiencing rapid urbanization, multi-culturalism is a fact, but without the guarantees that interactions will be peaceful, productive, or characterized by mutual respect. In many instances, the opposite has been true’ (Landau 2008: 172). Social scientists have yet to fully describe and theorize the dynamics and implications of diversification and super-diversity, especially in the key urban spaces where new migrants mostly live. While the increased complexity of migration brings ‘acute challenges for governance’ (UN-Habitat 2005: vii) with respect to economic development, housing, planning, health and social services, ‘clearly, the current understanding of international migration in an urban environment is inadequate’ (Ibid.: 3).

Beyond conventional migration, ethnic and racial studies, the comparative study of diversity – of perceptions, configurations, inequalities, interactions, spatial manifestations, and of policy responses surrounding social and cultural differences – represents a significant and growing topic of cross-disciplinary interest in the social sciences. Numerous conferences, postgraduate degrees and courses, books and journals have recently developed around the topic. This is especially due to the kinds of issues raised by new forms of complexity or – as suggested above – the conjuncture of new forms meeting old forms. Hence the latest UNESCO *World Report*, which is devoted exclusively to diversity issues, states that ‘cultural diversity has emerged as a key concern at the turn of a new century’ (UNESCO 2009: 1). In light of increasing global complexities, UNESCO observes how ‘the political establishment has in this way found itself challenged, and cultural diversity has taken its place on the political agenda in most countries of the world’ (Ibid.: 4).

In these ways policy-makers and social scientists are converging on Stuart Hall’s question at the beginning of this working paper. To elaborate: over the next century, as cities the world over grow extraordinarily and new, highly differentiated immigrants come to live alongside previous immigrants, their descendants and longstanding residents, how can we learn more about relevant social processes so as to help ensure better coexistence and civility rather than more competition and conflict?

## Diversity in the City

The current state-of-the-art is insufficient for advanced analyses of contemporary and future conditions of diversity. Theories and methods used to study immigrants in urban settings are still largely based on those of the Chicago school of urban studies that were set out in the early and mid-part of the last century (Waters and Jiménez 2005). This primarily entails looking at particular, ethnically-defined groups by way of their respective processes of assimilation, measured in terms of changing socio-economic status, spatial concentration, linguistic change and intermarriage. The focus on assimilation – or, in European parlance, ‘integration’ – dominates the field, and is currently the foremost policy concern of most immigrant-receiving states (or, indeed, European-level agencies). Theory and research on multiculturalism has also tended to rely on a view of society as comprised of distinct ethnic groups living side-by-side and developing on their own terms (see Vertovec and Wessendorf 2006). To the extent that interethnic or intercultural relations have been examined, this has usually concerned binary minority-majority relations. However, as a UN-Habitat Report (2005: 9) recognizes, ‘it is quite possible that today, migrants are transforming the city to a point where the time honoured assimilation vs. multicultural (ethnic) alternative loses its heuristic value’.

Much more rare – but necessary, given the kind of global processes mentioned above – are micro-accounts of the nature and impacts of the existence of multiple differences, socio-economic positions and relations between an array of groups within a common context. That is to say: the social scientific study of diversity itself is seriously under-researched and under-theorized.

In keeping with the longstanding assimilation paradigm in migration studies, it has often been assumed that social cohesion requires some form of homogeneity, which is consequently upset by diversification (cf. Vertovec 1999; such a view is reinforced by Robert Putnam’s recent interventions, e.g. Putnam 2007). However, this assumption does not always ring true. For instance, drawing on studies of 14 neighbourhoods across the U.S., Philip Nyden and his colleagues (1998b: 265) show that ‘stable diverse communities are not a figment of a progressive policy researcher’s imagination—they do exist.’ This is reiterated in Logan and Zhang’s (2010) recent study of new diversity and the rise of ‘global neighborhoods’. Indeed, ‘There are plenty of neighbourhoods,’ as Ash Amin writes (2002, p. 960), ‘in which multiethnicity has not resulted in social breakdown, so ethnic mixture itself does not offer a compelling explanation for failure’. In order to foster a better understanding of the dynamics

of diversity – and how diversity might actually create new forms of social cohesion, Amin (2002) calls for an anthropology of ‘local micro politics of everyday interaction’ akin to what Leonie Sandercock (2003, p. 89) sees as ‘daily habits of perhaps quite banal intercultural interaction.’ Such interaction, I contend, should be additionally looked at in terms of the multiple variables of super-diversity mentioned above (gender, age, human capital, and legal status), and not solely in terms of basic ethnic or racial categories.

There have indeed been quantitative attempts to gauge diversity and to derive and evaluate measures of multi-group dynamics locally, not just in ethnic terms, but also with respect to variables such as age, income and occupational types (e.g., Reardon and Firebaugh 2002, Maly 2002). Yet it is essential to develop more and better qualitative studies of social interactions within contexts of super-diversity. For instance, such a need became clear in the influential Report on the 2001 riots in Oldham, UK (Home Office 2001). The Report – following which the government implemented a range of new policies – painted a now infamous picture of groups living ‘parallel lives’ that do not touch or overlap by way of meaningful interchanges. But social scientists – to say nothing of civil servants – have few accounts of what meaningful interchanges between multiple groups look like, how they are formed, maintained or broken, and how the state or other agencies might best promote them. While there are a few good studies of relations within diverse contexts (such as Lamphere 1992, Baumann 1996, Sanjek 1998, Maly 2005; cf. Vertovec 2010b), they have focused solely on ethnicity; further, they do not examine how new patterns of immigrant-led diversification have been encountered in places where pre-existing patterns and experiences of diversity already exist.

Therefore there is much to be learned by examining places and processes where people’s variegated engagement with diversification challenges or transforms pre-existing social patterns to establish new norms of living together, or new fault-lines of tension. Proper study should entail detailed, multi-modal research on how increased and ever-more complex facets of diversity are encountered and responded to, by a range of actors in specific public spaces. Here, and for the purposes of this project, I refer to *public spaces* as physical settings – especially streets, squares, parks and markets – which are in principle accessible to all regardless of background (gender, age, ethnicity, legal status, disability, etc.). In this sense the meaning is distinct from ‘the *public sphere*’, which I take as a domain of discourse and deliberation such as political institutions and media. Public spaces are key to examining encounters of diversity (Low et al. 2005). It is known that increased tolerance often accompanies

increased diversity by way of increased contact (see, inter alia, Hewstone 2009); however, much more attention should be given to the public contexts that may foster or limit contact, participation and networking opportunities (Talen 2010).

Moreover, local residents are usually very aware of the values, challenges and problems posed by new or increasing diversity, and their concerns are often tied directly to visible, physical/infrastructural/spatial factors (for instance transportation, availability of collective facilities, upkeep of common resources, uneven economic development or mobility, or lack of control in planning and design). Importantly, social interactions themselves are influenced by relations to materials and physical conditions in an immediate environment. This entails examining how people define their differences in relationship to uneven material and spatial conditions. Such an approach is also to be found in the emerging field of the spatiality of complexity, which emphasizes how ‘the spatial configuration of a system may be key to understanding and anticipating its behaviour’ (O’Sullivan et al. 2006: 612). Here, with much to contribute to the examination of diversification, the joint approach is towards analyzing interactions between actors themselves and between actors and their environment. The scope for analysis concerns: the ways structures and patterns emerge through negotiated social relations; the reformulation of physical environments; and variable relations to public space, as well as the uses and experiences thereof. Through such encounters in public space, however fleeting, everyday conventions and forms of civility are formed, shaped and maintained (Vertovec 2007b). Drawing upon and advancing this line of inquiry vis-à-vis the state-of-the-art in migration and ethnic studies, new research on encounters of diversity in public spaces will have significant lessons for social theory as well as public policy (including community development, planning and social services).

## The GLOBALDIVERCITIES Project

Having received funding from the European Research Council under its Advanced Investigators scheme, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project commenced in July 2011 with the research question: *in public spaces compared across cities, what accounts for similarities and differences in social and spatial patterns that arise under conditions of diversification, when new diversity-meets-old diversity?*

This question calls for a number of different lines of investigation including inquiry into: the nature of **public spaces**, how their multiple uses and meanings arise among

various groups in different kinds of cities; legacies of **historical conditions**, how diversity has been conceived, comprised, and managed by public authorities and local actors, and, importantly, how historical and current dynamics relate to **structures of inequality**; effects of **physical environments and material phenomena** (e.g. commercial, industrial, service and leisure infrastructure, spatial layout, housing access, building conditions, commodities), how they condition, constrain and create opportunities for social and spatial relationships; and **patterns of social interaction** – fleeting and sustained – how they develop through avoidance, intermingling, co-dependence and civility, and how new fault-lines of tension or conflict arise.

The question focuses on different manifestations of diversity. ‘Old diversity’ is a shorthand for describing longstanding patterns of social and cultural difference around which particular societal – and importantly, state – systems have developed (e.g., policies of exclusion or access, multi-ethnic residence or segregation, ethnic economies, and relationships of co-dependence or dispute). ‘New diversity’ (or super-diversity) refers to more recent milieus marked by on-going shifts in migration patterns (concerning national origins, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, age, human capital and legal status). In numerous contexts around the world, new migrant diversities are now being layered upon pre-existing, yet often fundamentally dissimilar, conditions of diversity. At the core of the project’s research question are more fundamental questions: what does diversification – and diversity as such – look like and mean to those of various backgrounds who dwell within it? Despite highly differing conditions, are their common patterns of social adjustment to diversification? How can urban policies foster or support positive patterns of adjustment? In order to provide the best, most forward-thinking answers to these questions, research requires a robust comparative, strategic and multi-method design.

### *Methodology*

Going back at least to Simmel, the city and its spaces have been regarded by social scientists as key sites of encounter between strangers. Yet, as noted above, migration and ethnic studies have largely concentrated on understanding integration processes of immigrants, their community development, transnational practices, and usually binary inter-ethnic relations between given groups. There exist, surprisingly, very few studies of diversity as such; nor is there much social scientific work on the nature, function and impacts of multiple encounters among people of diverse backgrounds in contemporary city spaces.

The GLOBALDIVERCITIES project takes as its starting points the following premises:

- Migrant dynamics are inherently tied to the transformation of urban political economies; migrants are drawn by and contribute strongly to such transformations (e.g., Sassen 2008, Samers 2002, Price and Benton-Short 2008, Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2009).
- Around the world, the past three decades have witnessed a profound diversification of migration flows, observable directly in specific urban sites and public spaces where new migrants settle (Vertovec 2007a,b, 2010b);
- Immigrants largely learn social codes and negotiate their places in new settings through everyday encounters in key public spaces such as parks, markets and streets; moreover, these are usually the same sites inhabited by previous migrants and their descendants (Vertovec 2007b). Research on (new) migrant- (old) migrant relations is rare;
- Migrants contribute to the shaping of public spaces not just through social practices, but through physical and material transformations, often reflecting transnational ties (Vertovec 2009). Hence new migrant diversities in cities can be approached in terms of what John Urry (2003: 138) calls ‘the dialectic of moorings *and* mobilities’ whereby ‘social life seems to be increasingly constituted through material worlds that involve new and distinct moorings that enable, produce and presuppose extensive new mobilities’;
- Public spaces directly condition encounters (through public regulations, physical configurations and material conditions). Moreover, such spaces have the potential to be mutually negotiated in terms of configuration and use (e.g., Amin 2002, 2008, Watson 2006a,b);
- Within the same public spaces, we need to account for a wide range of interactions, since people interact differently with different people, at different times, for different reasons. Especially in dense urban settings, interaction in public space is often fleeting; fleeting encounters with strangers, however, underpin much by way of everyday experience, out-group attitude formation, and broader modes of civility (Lofland 1973, 1998). The nature and impacts of such variegated, fleeting encounters – and their relation to more sustained and meaningful social relationships and social structures – is also a comparatively understudied field, particularly with regard to diversity issues;
- To understand better how diverse encounters in urban public spaces function, we must study how they unfold ‘in the entanglement between people and the mate-

rial and visual culture of public space, rather than solely in the quality of social interaction between strangers' (Amin 2008: 8). Further, public spaces are not neutral. They are filled with signs, symbols and markers that are variously 'read' by socially positioned and culturally distinct people. In this way, 'public spaces mean completely different things for different groups' (Lownsborough & Beunderman 2007: 19). Research on diversity in public space should concern 'social processes that make spaces into places, with conflicts over access and control of space, and with the values and meaning people attach to place' (Low et al. 2005: 3).

Following these premises, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES research plan represents at once: a significant and pressing topic, an innovative approach, new multi-disciplinary techniques and comparative data that will underscore a convincing analysis. The project is sure to open up new understandings of several areas of study – especially concerning the nature of diversification and people's responses to it, the relations between diverse groups and their environments, and contemporary trends that will likely effect the future of many cities across the planet.

### *Research Sites*

The GLOBALDIVERCITIES research question is fundamentally based on a comparative approach '*across cities*' where specific historical and contemporary '*conditions of diversification*' and patterns of '*new diversity-meets-old diversity*' arise. Drawn from an array of possible contexts, the sites for comparison in the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project have been specifically chosen for a number of reasons. Processes of diversification and the layering of 'old' and 'new' diversities are understudied. Therefore, the choice of cities has been made according to 'diverse case' selection strategy in order to take account of multiple variables leading to typological theorizing (Gerring 2007). Here, variables refer to possible modes, constraints and opportunities of diversity encounter. The selection thus reflects the differentiated historical and political-economic circumstances behind the changing patterns and politics of diversity in cities and neighbourhoods, with discrete conditions shaping trajectories, layers of diversity and the social relations deriving from them. It is proposed that looking at diversification in key global cities will take on an increasing relevance as more and more cities come to resemble them in important ways, especially in terms of increasing economic, demographic and cultural flows. The project is not, however, directly concerned with testing hypotheses or interrogating theories of global cities.

In each case city, the choice of neighbourhoods has been made with attention to contexts in which new super-diversity is evident, where no single group dominates, and where (physical/spatial, visual and social) manifestations of old and new diversities can be seen to meet. The public spaces within each are expected to offer common sites for fleeting and more sustained encounters embodying processes of stress alongside processes manifesting the construction of new, common and productive modes of interaction.

### *New York*

‘Ethnic diversity is the expectation in New York’ (Foner 2008: 65). It is the classic city of immigration and, as the country’s foremost port of entry, has historically received several waves of newcomers. Already in 1900, 37% of the city’s population was foreign-born. Over decades upon decades of influx, a unique social and political culture has been created around the absorption of successive waves of immigrants. The latest data from the New York Department of City Planning show that, within of a population of just over 8 million, foreign-born residents comprise 36% of the city. Given New York’s long history of welcoming and absorbing immigrants, ‘it is not surprising that the city’s official commitment to cultural pluralism and cultural diversity stands out’ (Foner 2010: 44).

What’s more, besides the inherent place of immigration in the city’s heritage, there is much new about it. New York City’s foreign-born population has doubled in the past thirty years. In addition, groups are coming from places whence they had never come before. Breaking from the pattern of successive waves from different places (Ireland, Italy, Blacks from the southern USA, Mexico, etc.), extraordinary diversity is the hallmark of contemporary immigration to New York. It is often said that today, virtually every country in the world is represented by recent migrants to the city. In the New York 2000 census, the top sending countries were Dominican Republic, China and Jamaica – together accounting for less than 30% of immigrant inflow; the remainder included every region in the world, with no other group accounting for more than 5%. There is now ‘an incredible ethnic mix that results from the combination of the city’s immigrant history and the current inflows’ (Foner 2008: 65). In addition to diversified places of origin, there has been an increased heterogeneity of human capital, occupational and class backgrounds, indicative of differing migration processes, channels, legal statuses and transnational practices. For instance, women outnumber men in nearly all foreign-born groups (with important exceptions including Mexicans and Bangladeshis, among whom there are far more men). Thus



in a number of ways, 'if present-day New York City has been shaped by its immigrant past, it is also being remade by the latest arrivals' (Ibid.).

Each Borough of New York has a unique mix of old and new diversities. Queens is one of the most renowned, where 46% of one million people are foreign-born. Emblematic of diversification in the city as a whole, the foreign-born population of Queens increased 6.3% between 2000 and 2006, comprising a wide array of countries of origin with no group dominating. The site for GLOBALDIVERCITIES project research will be the Queens' district of Astoria: here, within the 2008 total population estimate of 211,220, over 46% are foreign born. In Astoria the largest country of birth cohort is Greece (9.8%), followed by Bangladesh (7.8%), Ecuador (7.4%), Mexico (7.3%), Colombia (5.7%), Italy (5.1%), Dominican Republic (3.7%), Brazil (3.7%), China (3.4%), and India (2.9%); the rest – no less than 43.1% – is comprised of smaller cohorts from all over the world. Field sites will importantly focus on key public spaces including commercial streets such as 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Astoria Park, Arrow Park Community Gardens and Green Market. In New York, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES team will work closely with Prof. Nancy Foner and colleagues at the City University of New York (CUNY).

### Singapore

Since colonial times, Singapore has been a highly regulated multi-ethnic city. Politics and public images are based on the official multiracial CMIO model (Chinese, Malay, Indian, and "Others"), together with the establishment of four official languages (Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English). Racial and cultural harmony is considered fundamental to Singapore's existence, and so visibly emphasized in public culture. Hence every Singapore citizen is 'inscribed with a race-culture' (Chua 2009: 242), and cultural diversity is to be celebrated especially in highly public festivals.

Unquestionably a prosperous global city, Singapore is extremely dependent on labour migrants for its continuing economic maintenance and development. Most of this dependency is controlled by a restrictive work permit system for low skilled workers in manufacturing, construction, and domestic services (while there are also large numbers of high skilled foreign workers and students). In recent years, Singapore's non-resident workforce increased by 170% – from 248,000 in 1990 to 670,000 in 2006. UN estimates suggest that international migrants comprise over 1.9 million (40.7%) of Singapore's total population of 4.8 million (UN-DESA 2008b). The majority of them come, via bilateral agreements, from countries such as India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Myanmar and Thailand. Old migration streams (especially

from China and Malaysia) conditioned by colonial politics continue to be important alongside the recent arrivals from elsewhere. A major government concern in Singapore is to ensure that the foreign worker population remains temporary. 'State policy has remained firmly committed to ensuring that unskilled and low-skilled foreign workers are managed as a temporary and controlled phenomenon through a series of measures,' observes Brenda Yeoh (2006: 29), 'key among which are the work permit system, the dependency ceiling (which regulates the proportion of foreign to local workers), and the foreign worker levy'. Diversity is conditioned by the ambiguous categories of citizen-noncitizen and resident-non-resident which are charged with identity politics, while 'use-and-discard' state measures prevent immigrants from gaining any significant foothold in Singaporean society (Yeoh and Yap 2008). Within such a context, while foreigners' physical presence in large numbers in public space (on their weekly day off) may create 'moral panics' and catalyse fear of 'the other', the State's response is not to deny immigrants' right to public space but to subject their presence to state-sponsored social measures (Yeoh 2006: 32). Accordingly, the government has invested \$7 million into the new National Integration Council which will try to promote interactions between different groups as 'part of Singapore's transformation from a micro-managed melting pot into a cosmopolitan city-state' (*The Economist* 14 November 2009, 68).

In Singapore, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will concentrate on the area of Jurong West (pop. 264,000 in 2009). With an estimated 1000 factories as well as shipyards, it is a well-known neighbourhood of mixed immigrant concentration. Tens of thousands of foreign (far more male than female) workers live in designated dormitories. Important public spaces for research are Jurong Point Shopping Centre, Gek Poh shopping centre and numerous surrounding hawker centres (unlicensed food stalls), Jurong West Park, and the new Scal Recreation Centre (purpose-built for foreign workers). In Singapore the GLOBAL-DIVERCITIES team will work closely with Prof. Brenda Yeoh, Prof. Lily Kong and colleagues at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

### Johannesburg

After 1990 and the collapse of Apartheid, migration to South Africa (and to Johannesburg in particular) from the region, the continent and the rest of the world has dramatically increased (UN-Habitat 2005). Actual demographics of immigration to South Africa are exceedingly difficult to know, and they entail very heated political debates within the country. Perhaps a reasoned estimate of foreigners from all over

Africa – legal and illegal – is between one to three million, although the numbers may be rising due to the on-going Zimbabwean crisis (Wa Kabwe 2008). Additionally, there are substantial flows of informal cross-border traders, circular migration, and rural-urban movement from ethnically and linguistically different parts of South Africa itself. Foreigners in South Africa encompass temporary legal contract workers, legal immigrants and migrants with marketable skills, variously ‘forced migrants’ and irregular or undocumented migrants.

Under Apartheid, migration to the cities was blocked; with that block removed, urban migration has boomed (from throughout South Africa as well as from abroad). The urban population of South Africa is anticipated to grow from 50.4% in 2000 to 68.6% in 2025 (Marcuse 2003). Currently the South African urban context witnesses the meeting of old and new diversities, where ‘the country’s urban and peri-urban centres are shaped by the legacies of apartheid planning, social fragmentation and new patterns of migration’ (Landau & Haupt 2007: 4). In addition to being the metropolis and economic powerhouse of the entire southern African region, Johannesburg is in many ways the quintessential post-Apartheid city (i.e., once highly regulated and now largely informal in terms of migration). Here, rapid and profound processes of urbanization have developed over the past two decades (Parnell and Crankshaw 2009). The 2001 census indicates a population of 3.2 million within the surrounding province of Gauteng that has a population 9.6 million. Following ‘the varied nature and complex forms of immigration to Johannesburg’ (Crush 2005: 121), estimates suggest that currently up to 40% of Johannesburg’s population is of migrant origin (Ibid.). What’s more, ‘the migrant population of the city is relatively small in absolute numbers, but is also extremely heterogeneous, in terms of both national origin and life skills’ (Crush 2008: 279). Origins of migrations to Johannesburg include Zimbabwe, DRC, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Somalia, Nigeria and other parts of South Africa. Mixed and precarious legal statuses, furthermore, situate many migrants socially, economically and geographically as well. These facts have important ramifications for shaping public discourse, public spaces and the city as a whole. It is critical to bear in mind that Johannesburg is a city characterized by extremely high levels of intolerance and xenophobia, even leading to terrible riots in 2008. Consequently, Jonathan Crush (2005: 121) implores, ‘as Johannesburg authorities begin to articulate a policy on the presence of migrants, it is imperative that they take account of migrant diversity’.

Foreigners make up the majority in particular Johannesburg neighbourhoods. The likely site for research in this project will be the district of Hillbrow (estimated

population 97,000). Formerly a 'Whites only' area, Hillbrow has become a central site for migration from townships, from throughout rural South Africa and from all over Africa (Everatt et al. 2004). Important public spaces for GLOBALDIVERCITIES research will be Hillbrow Market, Joubert Park and the new eKhaya Park. In Johannesburg the GLOBALDIVERCITIES team will work closely with Prof. Loren Landau and colleagues at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

### *Value of comparison*

Comparative analysis of social and spatial dynamics in these cases will address that part of the GLOBALDIVERCITIES research question asking '*what accounts for similarities and differences*'? A systematic comparison will show in sharp relief similarities and differences in the roles of the following in shaping such on-going dynamics: historical conditioning; the role of the state, including local policies; the specific makeup of diversity in terms of ethnicity, language, religion and socio-economic profile and patterns of inequality; processes of political-economic transformation; the nature of new migration flows that mix differentially with existing configurations of socio-economic and cultural diversity; the nature of public spaces (particularly in terms of access, regulation, policing, mixed use); the economic, material and physical development of cities and local areas (including processes of gentrification, abandonment, informalization, and segregation); and the nature of locally produced fields of power (including who has access to and say in the socio-spatial shaping of public spaces in areas where old and new diversities meet).

Comparing New York and Johannesburg, Peter Marcuse (2003: 4) has signalled that 'patterns of migration, both internal and external, are directly tied to these spatial configurations.' The parameters and conditions surrounding and shaping the impacts of migration, and the emergence of new social and spatial patterns, have yet to be fully accounted for. Through a controlled, strategic comparison of key cases, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will provide rich new data and critical analyses contributing significantly to our understanding of these processes.

The GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will therefore represent a major, internationally comparative project that will generate significant findings concerning major trends and developments in global cities. We can expect with confidence that GLOBALDIVERCITIES will make a powerful impact on the fields of migration, diversity and urban change, generating a range of exciting new theoretical and policy-relevant insights.

GLOBALDIVERCITIES project material will also be compared with other case studies of super-diversity in global cities currently underway at the Max Planck Institute: three projects on super-diversity in London (where 2001 data show 1.9 million [27%] of 7 million people as foreign-born), especially focusing on the Borough of Hackney; and research in Frankfurt (where 2000 data show 181,000 [27.8%] of 650,000 people as foreign-born), concentrating on the Bahnhofsviertel. Further comparison will be made, too, with material to be generated over the next four years by the Institute's 'Diversity and Contact' (DIVCON) project, entailing a three-wave longitudinal survey of multi-group interactions in 80 neighbourhoods across 15 German cities, together with in-depth qualitative study in four of these. The GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will also benefit from collaboration with the 'Comparative Study of Urban Aspirations in Mega-Cities' research programme at the Max Planck Institute: led by Peter van der Veer and Arjun Appadurai (New York University), and initially focusing on Mumbai, projects in this programme will examine context, design and the ideational character of many processes affecting the development of mega-cities and the role of ethnic and religious aspirations within them.

### *Research methods*

Several complementary research methods will be used to examine our research question's component parts, '*compared across cities,*' '*social patterns that arise,*' and '*when new diversity-meets-old diversity*'. Methods will centre on data acquisition, analysis and attempts to understand better the multi-faceted nature of social encounters in urban public spaces under conditions of diversification, with a view onto their temporality, spatiality and multiple meanings for inhabitants (Watson 2006a). They include tested approaches for elucidating the 'micro-ecology of pedestrian streets [that] bears directly on patterns of interaction' (Sampson et al. 2002: 470), approaches which themselves entail mixed methods (see especially Low et al. 2005). Below, the multiple and complementary project methods are grouped under three overlapping domains of research and analysis: ***conceiving***, ***observing*** and ***visualizing*** the interfaces of diversity, space and social encounters in each of the three cities under study.

### *Conceiving*

This domain of activity centres on exploring the ways old and new diversities are imagined, 'read' and represented locally, including how ethnicities, cultures or religions themselves are understood. Significant here is the question of how such read-

ings of ‘new diversities’ are conditioned by the locally demotic or by officially dominant categories constructed around the ‘old diversity’ (cf. Baumann 1996). Here too, researchers will focus on the meanings of given public spaces, on the perceived nature of the locality, and as Ash Amin (2002: 967) has advocated, ‘on everyday lived experiences and local negotiations of difference, on micro-cultures of place through which abstract rights and obligations, together with local structures and resources, meaningfully interact with distinctive individual and interpersonal experiences.’ This is the domain of the residents’ views and interpretations, along with their responses to the uncertainties, threats, delights, and strategies of socio-spatial navigation through what are presumed to be the same spaces in areas of extraordinary, and ever-changing, diversity.

Key techniques or sources for data acquisition within the ‘*conceiving*’ domain include:

- archival research (especially minutes of urban planning committees, accounts of public meetings, press reports relating to the development, crime or conflicts in the area);
- statistical data surrounding socio-economic (especially aspects of inequality including, educational and occupational), cultural (including ethnic, religious and linguistic), geographic (physical and infrastructural) and demographic (including age, gender and family) characteristics of the area;
- various sampling techniques to collect qualitative data, particularly:
  - random questionnaires (in key public spaces such as markets);
  - in-depth interviews with key informants;
  - impromptu group interviews (when people gather in public places such as school gates while waiting for children);
  - focus groups with a range of locals, particularly to gather their mental maps of the area (such as what people live where, who moves when in what kind of space, how particular streets or sites are characterized), their ‘readings’ of diversity, meanings of locality and local identity, and nature of place attachments; and
  - expert interviews (with people having special knowledge and experience to comment on an area, such as urban policy-makers, religious and community leaders, vendors’ representatives, police, teachers, health and social workers).

Quantitative material will be subject to various modes of Stata analysis and data visualization (see below), while qualitative material will be coded for content analysis using Atlas Ti software.

### *Observing*

At the core of the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project is the method of extensive ethnographic observation. Within the respective contexts of diversity, ethnography will focus on those ‘spaces of interdependence and habitual engagement’ (Amin 2002: 969) where people with a variety of social and cultural characteristics meet one another through fleeting encounters and sustained or routinized interactions in observable, public arenas. Contextual characteristics of those arenas, their physical conditions, spatial configurations, material elements and uses throughout the day and year are all observable as well.

Ethnographic examination should identify regularities, tensions, disruptions and negotiations in people’s encounters and interactions; moreover, drawing significantly on Lofland (1973, 1998), researchers’ attention will be drawn toward the production, negotiation and reproduction of rules, norms and codes for appropriate behaviour in public spaces. This includes social (including, possibly, class-based) and culturally differing expectations surrounding what one should do in public spaces, and what should remain in private spaces: such expectations tend to be differentially gendered and embodied practices as well (Watson 2006b). In these ways people may actually inhabit the same public spaces differently. In accordance with these discrete or shared/negotiated uses of space, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will also consider to what degree, and how, some people might be arranging their lives to create a ‘community of similarity’ within a context of diversity (Sennett 1996), or how some react with practical segregation underpinned by attitudes of ‘mixiphobia’ (Bauman 2003).

Key techniques or sources for data acquisition within the ‘*observing*’ domain include:

- participant observation in key spaces of mixing, especially parks, shopping streets and markets; some specific examples of the kind of public space interactions to be observed in the project include:
  - buying and selling, complaints and information-gathering about products in markets;
  - banal discussions or other communication while waiting for children or transport;
  - minor courtesies (holding doors, helping parents with buggies, offering right of way);
  - modes of meeting, greeting and acknowledgement of various kinds of acquaintances;

- rebukes for perceived improper behavior (e.g. wrongful disposal of waste, lack of control of children, jumping queue).
- participant observation in community organizations and public meetings in the area;
- transect walks (a kind of mobile interview in which the research walks a particular route with one or more informants in order to gather descriptions and interpretive accounts of the physical and social environment as well as to observe their interactions with people and materials along the way);
- behavioural mapping (recording key informant's specific activities located in space and time).

Paramount in an ethnographic account is not just the high quality of the data and the rigour and ethics of its acquisition, but also the richness and evocative potential in its descriptive write-up. Considerable attention will be paid to this dimension, particularly through individual feedback among project members and consultants as well as through workshops and seminars with local academics, policymakers and practitioners.

### *Visualizing*

In the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project, the notion of 'visualization' is used in two senses. The first concerns creating, gathering and documenting visual material; the second refers to making data visible in new and compelling ways. Both will be combined for the purposes of better description, presentation and, importantly, analysis. The latter purpose is based on the premise that often, by being able to see data and its relations (importantly, for instance, in spatial terms), one is able to notice regularities and anomalies that remain unrecognizable with other methods.

Let us summarize the first sense of this domain as *visual anthropology*. The methods and technologies explore exciting methods of ethnographic research (see van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001). Photography, film and video are the key media for visual anthropology research. These will be used not just to gather visual evidence on material conditions and social practices – reflecting the sights, sounds, and feel of the streets (Sampson et al. 2002) – but also, significantly, to elicit information and commentary by informants (Pink 2007). Analysis of visual materials will draw on the latest developments in 'critical visual methodology' (stressing the cultural significance, social practices and power relations in which material is embedded; Rose 2007) and



will be undertaken with expert consultants at the Institute of Visual Ethnography, Göttingen.

Key techniques for data acquisition and analysis surrounding *visual anthropology* include:

- following initial training in visual anthropology methods, field researchers will make substantial use of photography and video in all aspects of their research. Images taken in neighbourhoods and key public spaces will be geo-referenced through use of digital cameras fitted with global positioning system (GPS) adapters. Images will ultimately be processed with digital editing software and other state-of-the-art editing and printing facilities in Göttingen;
- semi-structured interviews will utilize photos and videos as prompts for gathering factual information, eliciting interpretation and stimulating discussion;
- the transit walks, mentioned above, will include geo-referenced photographic or video records;
- key informants will be given disposable cameras to photograph, and then describe and comment upon, their own representations of their social worlds. These will also function as informant photo diaries, and will facilitate the exercise of mental mapping alongside transit walks through local streets, parks and markets;
- Finally, as one of the unique modes of analysis and special outputs of the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project, a full-length ethnographic film will be made by a professional visual anthropologist and consultant editor, assisted by a doctoral student in visual anthropology. With material filmed in collaboration with the project teams and advisors in each of the three cities, this film will draw together and present in an influential and comparative way evidence and analyses of diversification and public space encounters in global urban contexts.

The second sense of the ‘visualizing’ domain – and perhaps the most innovative – can be summarized as *geographic visualization*. Here, various kinds of quantitative material are rendered into graphic images as well as creatively mapped to identify spatial relationships. This is particularly useful for understanding and describing city locations and their relations with data pertaining to demographic, socio-economic and physical conditions. ‘Geographic visualization then is both a practical form of information processing and also a compelling form of rhetorical communication’ (Dodge et al. 2008: 7). The field is currently a dynamic one, not least given the continuous advance of techniques and powerful methods surrounding geographical information systems (GIS) and ‘geo-web’ tools (such as Google Maps and TerrainView-Globe).

The GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will hire a specialist in geographic visualization to work with material regarding each of the three city research locations.

Key techniques for data acquisition and analysis surrounding *geographic visualization* include:

- innovative mapping, including the use of socio-economic and demographic data visualized in graphic form and integrated into GIS maps. Similarly, *visual anthropology* material from field photographs, informant-produced images and visual material from transit walks, alongside observations and ethnographic notes that have been georeferenced (by location, type and domain) on hand-held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) devices will be GIS mapped.
- Linguistic landscaping, that is, geographically representing the visibility and distribution of languages (or, indeed, the absence of certain languages) in a given space (see Barni and Extra 2008). Linguistic landscaping ‘provides us with new and advanced methodological approaches to better document and understand the public space; it contextualizes the public space within issues of identity and language’ (Shohamy and Gorter 2009: 4). The method is based on an approach in which ‘language facts that landmark the public space are to be seen as social facts the variations of which should relate to more general social phenomena’ (Ben-Rafael 2009: 40). This includes:
  - compiling photographs and other evidence of written traces of languages: publicity posters, advertising, public information campaigns, graffiti, shops signs, menus;
  - keeping geo-referenced notes on linguistic observation (language use and code-switching in conversations, parents instructing/scolding children, announcements, market hawkers, music);
  - subjecting such evidence of linguistic diversity to specialist software such as MapGeoLing.
- Developing overlay methods for combining material concerning mental maps, behavioural maps, physical maps, visual images (and the notes surrounding them), data visualizations and ethnographic observations. In this way each source and type of data will inform the analysis of another, and together create unique pictures – and subsequently, comparative analyses – of public spaces and the nature of diversity encounters within them.

## Expected outcomes

By way of closely addressing its core research question through a mixed-method, inter-disciplinary approach, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will make significant contributions to social science and to various fields of policy development.

**Theory-building.** The GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will prove significantly ground-breaking solely in terms of its combined methods and data; however, considerable theoretical advances are expected as well. Some key theoretical themes and concepts to be developed include those of: situated encounters and collaborative meanings of public space; co-produced repertoires of communication, interaction and cosmopolitan practice; the nature of fleeting encounters and their relation to sustained ones; the manifestations of ‘conviviality’ and the roots of conflict; whether and how differences get (re)interpreted as ‘culture’; the ways physical configurations and material settings condition social contacts and how such settings are themselves co-created by diverse groups. Overall, theoretical exploration of these themes will contribute towards better understanding of contemporary and future trends of global urban complexity.

The comparative nature of the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project will facilitate the creation of useful typologies and model-building. Again, the cities and sites have been specifically selected by way of common processes in very diverse socio-cultural, socio-economic and political settings. The project will not expect ‘North American’, ‘African’ or ‘Asian’ models (nor even necessarily ‘New York’, ‘Singapore’ or ‘Johannesburg’ models), but rather a variety of differences and commonalities of conditions and processes that cross-cut each case.

**Policy implications.** Based largely on the current paradigm in migration and ethnic studies, many urban and ethnic relation policies comprise rather prosaic rhetoric and limited initiatives to promote social cohesion, rebuild social capital, promote social integration or stimulate civic engagement. However, current patterns of diversification surpass such policies. Bearing directly on the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project objectives, the UN-Habitat (2005: 344) Report on *International Migrants and the City* suggests: ‘the best ways of developing cosmopolitan cities and linking international migration and urban development in a more positive fashion evoke complex questions. For this reason, the issue of how best to address urban international migration and what policies and practices can and should be adopted requires further research,

particularly in developing country cities.’ The same Report also stresses that, ‘the increasing ethnic diversity of present-day cities all over the world, including in many countries with little or no multicultural tradition, often evoke anxiety and fear among local residents’ (Ibid.: 9). In this way, one of the aims of policy should be to build public capacity for inter-ethnic relations centred on better and more realistic perceptions of immigration. In turn, ‘Host society perceptions are also a function of the patterns of international migrant settlement in the public, urban space and the uses they make thereof’ (Ibid.: 334). Therefore, once more, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project should provide critical new data and insights that should assist policy-makers to undertake more effective public campaigns. Other specific areas of policy that should benefit from the project’s findings are urban planning and architecture, policing, and social services, since each requires a high degree of understanding of diverse people’s socio-cultural and socio-economic positions, practices and interactions, and relation to urban spaces. As Nyden and his colleagues (1998a: 12) acknowledge, ‘no one magical silver bullet will end segregation and create stable diversity.’ However, better-informed policies (here, concerning emergent social and geographical formations, patterns of interaction, and uses of public spaces) can encourage diverse populations toward ‘the art of negotiating shared meanings and a *modus covivendi*’ (Bauman 2003: 32). The GLOBALDIVERCITIES project has this principle at its heart.

In all these ways, the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project is indeed extensive – we hope, visionary, original and ground-breaking – in scope and ambition, but inherently realistic and viable. Its outcomes are certain to make major impacts, advancing well beyond the state of the art, in social science and policy on topics of increasing global concern.

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