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Artistic separation versus artistic mixing in European multicultural cities

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This introductory article discusses the diversification of diversity in Europe. It then looks at the tension between ethnic separation and ethnic mixing in urban Europe in general terms. The next section elaborates on a similar tension in the field of popular arts. Finally, the article presents the main insights of the contributions to the special issue.

Keywords: multiculturalism; cities; popular arts; ethnicity; diversity; Europe

Introduction

The debate on the impact of globalisation on cultural diversity and identities has not yet been closed. Does globalisation lead to cultural homogeneity? Does it allow the emergence of new forms of cultural expressions and identities? The question remains open at the theoretical level. Empirically, it is however undisputable that most mid-size and large cities are de facto multicultural and display a wide variety of ethnic, racial, cultural, national and religious affiliations and identities. This diversity is not going to disappear in the foreseeable future. The standardisation of mass culture is certainly a trend that cannot be denied. But at the same time, various forms of cultural, ethnic, national, religious and post-national identities have emerged in the public sphere, especially at the local level, and are reconstructing themselves as a response to the standardisation trend. In a book published in 1995, the American historian, David Hollinger, introduced the expression 'diversification of diversity' to describe the dynamics of cultures and identities in the US context (Hollinger 1995). By analogy, one could claim that the European Union (EU) has also entered a process of 'diversification of its diversity', which follows specific patterns and calls to some extent for a specific European debate about European forms of diversity or about European diversities (Martiniello 2006, 2011). Recently, Steven Vertovec has coined the expression 'super-diversity' to refer to the extension and deepening of diversity in contemporary societies (Vertovec 2007). These processes counter the myth of monoculture, which is contradicted on a daily basis by the sociological and demographic evolution of the most EU cities.

Furthermore, the processes of diversification of diversity in terms of cultures and identities, which is particularly visible at the city level, and the processes of

reconstruction of social, economic and political inequality are closely connected. The economic, social and political inequality and ethno-cultural and national diversification overlap in many complex ways. Not all ethno-cultural and religious identities are equally recognised socially and politically in the EU. Some of those identities are considered to be legitimate while others are not. For example, more clearly than before September 11, the public expressions of Muslim identities in the EU raise not only fears among the European populations but also questions about the legitimacy of those identities in the EU context. Being simultaneously a Muslim and a citizen of the EU is not unanimously considered to be normal even though – or maybe because – the number of European Muslims increases in many EU countries and cities. Holders of illegitimate identities are more easily excluded from the labour market through mechanisms of ethnic, racial or religious discrimination, which can in turn reinforce their specific identity. In other words, those whose culture and identity is not well accepted as legitimate in the EU context are also often concentrated at the bottom of society both socially and economically. They also tend to be over-represented in deprived neighbourhoods either in inner cities or on the periphery. This can reinforce the constitution of 'identity sanctuaries' both for the majority populations and the minority populations, of distinct social worlds between which dialogue is easily replaced by either ethnicised conflicts or mutual ignorance and avoidance strategies. This obviously hurts social integration and cohesion.

Ethnic separation versus ethnic mixing in the urban EU

Contradictory trends seem to be simultaneously at work in many EU cities. On the one hand, there is a trend towards polarisation and fragmentation of many EU cities. Residential segregation, social and economic exclusion, ethnic, racial and religious discrimination processes are at work. They lead to minority and majority identity closure. In many different ways across the EU, the formation of homogeneous neighbourhoods both socio-economically and culturally has changed the morphology of many cities. But on the other hand, there is also a movement towards more residential integration and the formation of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in which co-inclusion and interactions between citizens with different ethnic and social backgrounds develop. Cultural mixing and the formation of new urban trans-ethnic identities respond to the fragmentation processes and contribute to the re-invention of urbanity.

The tension in multicultural cities between the objective urban polarisation and separation on the one hand, as well as urban mixing and bridging on the other hand, is echoed in the tension–opposition in public (political, media, academic, civic) discourse in the EU between, on the one hand, an apology for ethno-cultural diversity celebrating intercultural dialogue and, on the other hand, an anti-multicultural, post-multicultural or neo-assimilationist offensive. In February 2002, during a conference organised at the University of Montreal on the possible impact of the 9/11 attacks on ethnic relations, I claimed that deep down,

neither immigration policies and integration policies nor ethnic relations in EU inner cities had changed (Martiniello 2002). True, pre-existing problems, such as the construction of restrictive and security geared migration policies, the rise of Islamism and of Islamophobia, persisting ethnic and racial discriminations, urban tensions between rival groups, etc., had not disappeared, but it was impossible to demonstrate that the 9/11 events would trigger their aggravation. More than 10 years later, it is hardly disputable that the anti-multiculturalist wave, already present before the 11 September 2001, swelled with these events and others afterwards to become a tidal wave that can hardly be resisted. It is characterised by an increasingly astringent discursive questioning of any multicultural society project and through the reassertion of a post-multiculturalist or neo-assimilationist agenda in the management of post-migration realities, particularly in the wake of a number of events that received significant media coverage throughout the world. Next to 9/11, the anti-multiculturalist discourse spread on the occasion of the following events: the murder of the Dutch populist leader Pim Fortuyn in 2002 (Fortuyn was known for his harsh positions on multiculturalism and Islam); the 2004 Madrid attacks by 'immigrants who were well integrated in Spain' with, according to some, the logistic support of the North African community in Brussels; the 2004 murder of film director Théo Van Gogh by a young Dutchman of Moroccan origin; the 2005 suicide bombing in London by young British citizens of immigrant background; 3 weeks of violent outbursts in several French neighbourhoods in 2005; or the clash about the publication of caricature of Muhammed the Prophet in January 2006; the Breivik affair in Norway in 2011 and many others.

These events, of very different nature, all had a major media aura both locally and internationally. For various reasons, all were presented as evidence that multiculturalism had failed and/or was dangerous. More precisely, the ethnocultural diversification of European societies was presented as a danger for social cohesion, especially at the city level. Mobilisation of some minorities around identity issues was interpreted as attempts to set up the dictatorship of minorities. On the other hand, some of these events were presented as evidence that policies implemented to manage or promote cultural diversity had failed, as had failed all multiculturalist society projects linked to these policies.

The content of the current anti-multiculturalist discourse is not new. In a very simplified way, it amounts to claiming that in post-migration contexts, multiculturalist discourse and policies have not achieved their aims. Multiculturalist discourse aimed at combining unity and diversity while ensuring the social and economic integration of immigrants and their offspring. Multiculturalist policies aimed at ensuring peaceful cohabitation between various ethnic groups in mutual respect and acceptance (if not at least tolerance) of their respective specificities. On the contrary, these discourse and policies would contribute to undermine social cohesion and national unity. They would lead to identity and community closure. They would favour spatial segregation. They would contribute to the high rate of unemployment among members of immigrant communities. They would also account for the poor performance in class of many

young people with immigrant origins. These various elements would explain the keen sense of alienation and frustration within ethno-cultural minorities, which leads to their rejection of Western and European society.

The solution to these tricky issues would be a return to an assimilationist political agenda in which it would be a priority for immigrants and their offspring to conform to European standards and 'values', before being granted any political, economic or social rights. In this 'model', the question of recognising a cultural specificity possibly together with cultural rights becomes at best secondary, since the primary aim to be achieved is cultural conformity. As already suggested, this kind of discourse, which is often called neo-assimilationist, is not at all new. What is new and possibly unexpected is that it came back to life after a rather long period of multicultural opening in several major de facto multicultural societies.

Beyond discourse, public policies have been reconsidered. In some countries with a tradition of multicultural policies, such as the Netherlands, governments strongly reoriented their interventions away from multicultural policies and towards more assimilationist policies of social, linguistic and economic integration. The most striking recent illustration of this trend can be observed in programmes for the integration of new migrants that are gradually being implemented in several member states of the EU (Carrera 2009). Participating in those programmes is less and less of an option for more and more new migrants. Such participation has often become compulsory to be granted some social allocations and rights. Their content focuses more and more on the acquisition and adoption of the language, standards and cultural values of the host country, which amounts to making sure that migrants will conform to the host culture. In some countries that are historically reluctant to implementing multicultural policies, the tendency to favour integration policies is confirmed, though in some cases, we can notice some opening to policies that are often associated with multiculturalist models. The adoption of positive discrimination policies in France and the introduction of a plan for diversity in companies in some countries illustrate this tendency.

Whatever the case may be, the anti-multiculturalist discourse is not without its ambiguities and apparent contradictions. First, its suspicion towards cultural diversity coexists with a discourse that highlights the need to call upon foreign immigration for both economic and demographic reasons. Now foreign immigration is no doubt a major factor of diversification in European societies and cities; the question is then how cultural diversity can be reduced on the one hand while running the risk of being increased on the other. Does the answer lie in a selection of new migrants on a cultural and/or religious basis? This seems difficult to conceive and to implement openly since it runs against the philosophy of non-discrimination that is supposed to inspire European policies. However, we should not be surprised if the most devious means were used to discourage, for instance, Muslims considering immigration. Second, it may at first sight seem contradictory that we should find this suspicion towards cultural diversity side by side with programmes favouring diversity. Is it perhaps assumed that granting individual positions and privileges to members of minorities, as part of those programmes will take the bite off possible cultural claims? The question deserves

to be asked. But beyond it, it seems clear that only 'light' and superficial diversity is encouraged in these programmes while 'deep' and substantial diversity is strongly resisted. In many EU firms, diversity programmes consist in hiring managers and executives with different skin colours or ethnic backgrounds. But these employees very often share the same culture and identity shaped in the similar business schools they have graduated in. Actually, they only display a very superficial diversity, which does not challenge the fundamental values of either their firm and of the society at large. In other words, this illustration shows that the promotion of superficial diversity does not contradict a more general assimilationist agenda in many EU societies. Third, there seems to be a contradiction between suspicion towards the principle of cultural diversity and the fact that respect for cultural diversity is presented as an EU value.

However, the latest successes of assimilationism can certainly be related to the questioning of identity in nation states whose logic has been disturbed by economic globalisation, by European political integration and by the dynamics of migrations and the claims for recognition by the migrant communities within them. The assertion of ethno-national identifications among immigrants and their offspring and the opening to post-ethnic or post-national identities, or at least of identities more permeable to diversity in the 1980s and 1990s on the one hand, and the reinvigoration of majority national identities conveyed through anti-multiculturalist discourse on the other can only be understood within the complex system of mutual influences that binds them together.

What about the arts?

In all those debates and policies, arts and especially the artistic productions of ethnic, racial, religious and migrant minorities are either ignored or at best considered to be irrelevant and non-problematic. The focus is on cultures in the anthropological sense and 'deep' cultural values, whose definition is far from being consensual and increasingly, on religion in general and on Islam in particular. The relevance of minority artistic practices is neglected and they are often not considered as important from social and economic challenges except of course for social actors directly involved in the spheres of art.

This lacuna is the starting point of the initiative taken by the author of this article within the European Network of Excellence IMISCOE (International Migration and Social Cohesion) in 2010 before it became the European Research Network IMISCOE. It was decided to form a new standing research committee with the aim of examining the relevance of popular arts in the theoretical and policy debates about diversity in post-migration urban settings. This research standing committee, named the POPADIVCIT (Popular Arts, Diversity and Cultural Policies in Post-Migration Urban Settings) initiative, is a spill-over project that started in former cluster B3 of IMISCOE on the socio-political mobilisation of immigrants and ethnic minorities through popular arts and culture (Martiniello and Lafleur 2008).

In order to examine the relevance of popular arts in the theoretical and policy debates about diversity and multiculturalism in multicultural cities, it endorses the research framework proposed by Steven Vertovec (2009) and focuses on three domains: configurations, representations and encounters of diversity.

At the cultural level, the aim is to examine how artistic productions of immigrant and ethno-racial minorities change the mainstream local artistic scene or, in other words, the local configuration of diversity both in the country of residence but also sometimes in the country of origin. How do migrants and ethnic minorities' artistic productions inspired (or not) by their experience of migration and/or discrimination change and enrich local artistic cultures through processes such as 'cultural métissage', fusion and invention? These artistic productions can be exported (back) to the country of origin and change the mainstream culture there too.

At the social level, the standing committee explores the idea that popular arts can help to build bridges, to facilitate the encounters among different populations sharing the same urban space. In other words, popular arts can become a means of communication and dialogue between different individuals or groups sharing the same city or the same neighbourhood.

At the policy level, the issue of representation of diversity in national, subnational and especially local cultural and artistic policies is examined: Are immigrant and ethnic artist's productions supported by official cultural institutions? Are local artistic policies becoming multicultural? How do migrant and ethnic artists mobilise in order to change cultural policies? The research group finally examines to what extent popular arts could be a useful tool in local integration and social cohesion policies. It explores the policy relevance of popular arts in post-migration cities. The initiative does not focus on a specific artistic form but considers music, cinema and theatre, dance, literature, urban festivals and parades, etc.

Presenting the special issue

In this broad framework, the special issue will discuss the tension or even the contradiction between ethno-cultural segregation/separation, on the one hand, and ethno-cultural mixing/'*métissage*' on the other hand, in the local artistic sphere of a sample of multicultural EU cities (Amsterdam, Antwerp, Brussels, Cologne, Malmö and Vienna). The papers show a variety of local experiences based on the participation of the individual authors in the standing committee. In other words, the cities examined in the special issue have not been selected for other reasons than the fact that the authors of the papers have been actively involved in the activities of the standing committee. At this stage, this is not a problem since this special issue does not provide a systemic comparison between cities but only insights on the various ways in which the issue of the tension between artistic separation and mixing is framed in various parts of the EU.

In order to make sense of these observed contradictory trends towards separation and mixing, the contributions to the special issue explore in each city

discourses, policies and practices in the local artistic field of post-migration multicultural cities by addressing one or more of the following questions: How do cities construct diversity discourses and policies? How do migrants and subsequent generations mobilise in the local artistic scene? What type of collective identities (post-colonial, religious, trans-ethnic, 'local', etc.) and ethnicities are publicly expressed and constructed in the field of arts? Are immigrant and ethnic artists and productions supported by official cultural institutions? Are local cultural policies becoming multicultural? How do migrant and ethnic artist mobilise in order to change cultural policies? The approach clearly combines top-down and bottom-up perspectives from a variety of large, mid-size and small European cities to make sense of the links between migrants and ethnic groups and artistic change at the local level. The city is therefore not considered simply as the context but the contributions examine how the city as an artistic space is changed by minority artistic expression and also how local cultural institutions change minority artistic expressions.

The contributors have different disciplinary backgrounds (anthropology, cultural studies, political science, sociology, urban studies and planning, etc.). They choose different starting points for their analysis. The contributions on Antwerp, Brussels and Cologne privilege a grass-roots and mobilisation perspective. Els Vanderwaeren starts with the initiative taken by a local migrant NGO in Antwerp to organise a street parade imported from Latin-American traditions, i.e. the Murga, in which music, dance and costume play a central role in order to promote intercultural encounters in a city that is often rather culturally polarised. In Brussels, Joe Costanzo and Fatima Zibouh study how artists (Flemish, French-speaking, immigrant ethnic minority) and generally, cultural workers have mobilised in order to create a common cultural space in the very diverse urban space. They also examine how immigrant origin artists are trying to get recognition from local cultural institutions. As to Monika Salzbrunn, she shows how migrants and asylum seekers have contributed to redefine the local popular art space by inventing an alternative carnival in a city that hosts one the largest traditional carnival in Europe.

Alternatively, the contributions on Amsterdam, Malmö, and Vienna focus on cultural policies and/or cultural institutions in cities in which the official rhetoric promotes diversity and intercultural relations. Christine Delhaye and Victor van de Ven compare how two different cultural venues in Amsterdam (the very well-known Paradiso and the Meervaart) cater to a culturally diverse public. They examine how these two venues concretise their commitment to cultural pluralism. The case of Malmö presented by Berndt Clavier and Asko Kaupinnen focuses on what the authors call the technologies of governmentalisation. They analyse the work of two artistic and cultural institutions in the city, whose aim is to promote participation and social cohesion. As to Wiebke Sievers, she offers a critical analysis of the development of 'multicultural' cultural policies in Vienna by taking the example of literature.

However, the distinction between a grass-roots perspective and policy-institutional perspective is not a sharp one. Several articles offer interesting insights into the articulation between grass-roots artistic practices, official rhetoric and public cultural policies. On the one hand, official rhetoric and cultural policies open up or close down avenues for artistic practices and cultural consumption. On the other hand, some grass-roots artistic initiatives can become a part of cultural policies though a process I would like to call 'policisation of artistic practices'. This process refers to the different ways in which grass-roots autonomous cultural initiatives and projects are transformed into or included in public cultural policy instruments implemented by official cultural institutions.

The articles also offer insights into several important issues in the discussion about the relevance of popular arts in social cohesion and integration in multicultural cities. First, they question our understanding of the city. Is it a confined material territorial space? Is it an administrative unit whose existence is legally recognised or is it a level of governmentality and political regulation? Some articles locate the research in the streets by looking at street events and practices (festival, parades, etc.) through which citizens of all origins try to re-appropriate the local territory and to redefine the city, its identity and local citizenship (Antwerp, Cologne, Brussels, for example). Other articles examine what goes in the buildings occupied by cultural institutions located in the city as places of implementation of public cultural policies and forms of governmentality (Malmö, Amsterdam, Vienna). Some do both (Brussels). Second, the contributions illustrate the importance of taking into account both the historical past of the cities (for example, their colonial past or their role in tragic events such as the slave trade) and contemporary features (the presence of a strong far-right and nationalist movements, for example) to make sense of the cultural dynamics and of the inclusion of immigrant ethnic minorities in the local artistic scene. Third, the Cologne contribution shows how immigrant artistic practices can contribute to changing the internal and external image of the city though the invention of cultural traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Finally, they discuss without solving it the issue of the impact of cultural policies on the cultural interactions between individuals and groups with different cultural backgrounds and more generally on social cohesion and social integration. Clearly, cultural policies can have perverse effects too. A policy designed to promote intercultural relations can actually encourage separation. But a general cultural policy not specifically aimed at cultural mixing can indeed reach that result. The article on Malmö is very telling on these points.

To conclude, this collection of articles demonstrate the importance of arts and culture even, maybe above all, in the period of dramatic global social and economic transformations we are now experiencing. As Alan Lomax, the American ethnomusicologist said in an interview:

> I think the most important thing anybody can do is to try to restore the balance. I call this cultural equity. The slogan is: organize that everybody with every culture would achieve equal time on the air and in the classroom! Cultural equity should join

all the other important principles of human dignity: freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom to work and live and enjoy yourself and freedom for your culture to express itself. Cause, that's all we got, you know. We're just culture! (Kappers 2005)

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