URBAN CULTURES *PAPER 3: cultural diversity*

"The mongrel city is a democratic, culturally pluralist world"
Leonie Sandercock (2003)

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Introduction: This Discussion Paper provides an exploration of a range of terminology found in academic discourse on cultural diversity such as, super-diversity, hyper-diversity, multiethnic, multi-cultural and their relevance to planning culturally.

What's in a name? – Unpacking the terminology

> ***In recent writings on migration and urbanism, various terms and concepts have been proposed to illustrate these growing phenomena. Geographer Curtis Roseman and others (1996) used EthniCities to characterize cities with a variety of people having distinctive cultures and origins. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1990: 7) suggests ethnoscapes to describe "landscapes of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live." Urban designer Noha Nasser (2004b) uses "Kaleido-scapes" to describe the landscapes of migrant groups as "a hybrid urban morphology that combines local vernaculars with global (or imported) elements." Borrowing from Salman Rushdie, planning historian Leonie Sandercock (2003: 1) put forward Mongrel Cities to conceptualize the new urban condition "in which difference, otherness, fragmentation, splintering, multiplicity, heterogeneity, diversity, plurality prevail."*** (Hou 2013 p4)

First let's attempt to unpack some of the jargon and terminology found in the academic literature relating to the cultural diversity of cities such as found in the quote above from an article by Jeffrey Hou, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA. Of the various terms referenced above the one that resonates the most in terms of my work is Leonie Sandercock's use of the metaphor of the "*mongrel city*" in her 2003 book *Cosmopolis II Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century*. Leonie Sandercock, in her contribution to the *Intercultural City Reader* (2004), suggested that the *mongrel city* is "*a democratic, culturally pluralist world*

in which strangers can, indeed become neighbors" (2004: 21). Or indeed become "lovers" as it is estimated that one in three marriages registered in Australia are interracial couples. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), as a reflection of the growing intercultural population in Australia, in 2018, about 32 per cent of registered marriages were of partners born in different countries, compared with 18 per cent in 2006.

In their 2020 article, *Translocality and Translocal Subjectivities: A Research Overview Across the Fields of Migration-, Culture-, and Urban Studies*, Erin Cory, Maria Hellström Reimer and Per Möller suggest that:

> *Migration is an inevitable aspect of contemporary societal life. Acknowledging this means that migratory issues are of everyone's interest, although they affect certain groups harder than others.* (2020: 25)

Before tackling the issues of urban planning and design in the "*mongrel city's*" culturally diverse communities it is useful to clarify some of the terminology used in academe and planning practice. Thinking and writing regarding 'urban diversity' has led to a wide range of terminology being used, with some being used interchangeably which has in my opinion led to confusion and lack of clarity in the discourse. In this section I will provide an overview of a range of terminology found in academic literature and attempt to provide some analysis and clarification of the terms and their relevance to planning culturally. This will include distinguishing between the terms: super-diversity & hyper-diversity; multiethnic & multi-Cultural.

Key to this discussion is the notion of 'cultural diversity', specifically from an urban planning and design perspective. Literature relating to understanding cultural diversity, include contributions from, Michael Burayidi (2000; 2003; 2015), Joost Dessein et al. (2015), Leonie Sandercock (2003) and Ruth Fincher et al. (2014) among others. Fincher for example states that the '*increasing ethnic and racial diversity of contemporary cities challenges urban planners who are charged with managing the built environment to promote social order and harmony*' (2014:5). In terms of 'social order and harmony', Ted Cantle, who was the Chair of the 2001 UK Community Cohesion Review Team, reminds us that today with our globalised world and high rates of intranational and international migration, '*Multi-Culturalism can simply describe the modern reality of most countries*' (2012:53).

However, over time Multi-Culturalism has become a contested term which led Leonie Sandercock, an early advocate, to re-evaluate her position and '*re-theorize multiculturalism, which I prefer to re-name as interculturalism, as a political and philosophical basis for thinking about how to deal with the challenge of difference in mongrel cities of the 21st century'* (2004:18). The strengths and weaknesses of multi-culturalism as opposed to Interculturalism has given rise to a debate that Ralph Grillo (2016) suggests '*might best be considered as labelling sets of tools for dealing with diversity; some distinctive and specific, others broadly similar, and with much overlap between them'* (2016: 5). Before addressing the debate between multi-culturalism and Interculturalism I would first like to establish the Australian context.

To understand the nature of Australia's cultural diversity in this globalised context it is useful to review the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census statistics (ABS, 2021) which show 30% of the population was born overseas, compared to 1966 when only 18% of the total population was born overseas. The 2021 statistics also show that almost half of the population had one or both parents were born overseas. After England and Aotearoa – New Zealand, the most common countries of birth were China 2.2% and India 1.9%. Overall, the census identified over 300 different cultural groups residing in Australia. A total of 62.5% of Australia's population growth

for this census period came from overseas arrivals, with 67% of Australia's population living in the capital cities, which are growing, urbanising, and diversifying.

Without doubt the Australian population is increasingly socially and culturally diverse raising the question does this make Australian cities "super" or "hyper" diverse?

Our Culturally Diverse World

Population Characteristics

This section reviews some of the literature around demographics and population characteristics associated with urban diversity. The focus is on naming and characteristics of a population's statistical composition rather than considering people's cultural affiliations and cultural frames of reference. Research has shown that there are a range of variations in terminology associated with the study of urban diversity, sometimes the differences are very clear and sometimes they are subtle and need to be unpacked to appreciate their contribution to the notion of a culturally diverse world.

Before we review the cultural diversity terminology associated with migration between cultures, it is important to acknowledge that in the settler societies of Australia, Aotearoa – New Zealand, the United States and Canada public discourse on Multi-Culturalism is mediated by the settlement histories of each of those countries. A crucial element of cultural and race relations in each of those countries is the historical treatment of Indigenous peoples and their contemporary place and welfare in these societies. As recognised, for example in the Australian context by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), discussions on Multi-Culturalism must necessarily include First Nations People and include engagement with issues of reconciliation. However, attempts to bring First Nations issues within the rubric of Multi-Culturalism in a policy context have been controversial. As the issues facing First Nations Australians cannot be compared with those facing Australians of migrant background as it is critical to recognise the unique consideration due to the First Nations Peoples and their relationship to the land.

Multiethnic & / or Multi-Cultural

> ***… one needs to distinguish between multiethnic and multicultural places because ''multiethnic'' signifies the coexistence of different groups in a shared space, while the 'multicultural' refers to the quality and type of cross-cultural interaction which can exist in such multiethnic places.***
> (Marotta, V. 2007: 41)

Vince Marotta suggests that Multiethnic cities are places where*, old cultural boundaries are dissolving and reinventing themselves in new ways, where urban dwellers adopt multiple and contradictory identities; but they are also places where new urban cultural identities exist, where class and culture intertwine, and where ethical relations can thrive in multicultural places* (2007: 58). Indeed, it can be argued that Culturally diverse places have become a modern reality for many cities due to the level of migration being seen across the world and peoples from diverse cultures seeking permanent settlement in a new country. For sociologist Enzo Colombo the term Multi-Cultural relates to situations in which, *people who hold 'different' habits, customs, traditions, languages and/or religions live alongside each other in the same social space, willing to maintain relevant*

aspects of their own difference and to have it publicly recognized. Usually, the term involves a positive evaluation of cultural diversity and the institutional commitment to its preservation (2015: 801).

However, the term "Multi-Culturalism" has become associated with policy approaches that recognise the existence of cultural diversity within the community rather than the empirical fact of a demographic mix within the society or specific community. A key criticism of Multi-Culturalism is that it is a *'feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity'* (Will Kymlicka. 2010) and therefore celebrating difference rather than building community. Indeed, Tasan-Kok et al, suggests that Multi-Culturalism is:

> *'… entrenching social divisions and even for creating the breeding ground for extremism (see Meer and Modood, 2012; Vertovec, 2010). Thus, a broad backlash against multiculturalism has emerged in the public discourse (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010), not only because of the challenge of emphasising differences in society, but also because older models of multiculturalism are challenged by the changing conditions such as the changing nature of global migration, new social formations spanning nation-states and persistently poor immigrant and ethnic minority groups.'* (2010:16)

In both the UK and Europe, the term Multi-Culturalism has become challenged and by some considered a failure. In 2015 German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that in Germany, Multi-Culturalism had failed as it "*leads to parallel societies and therefore remains a life lie"*. (Washington Post, December 14, 2015). Predating the statement by Angela Merkel, in 2008 the Council of Europe published a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue titled *"Living Together As Equals in Dignity"* which stated that:

> *Whilst driven by benign intentions, multiculturalism is now seen by many as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension, as well as having contributed to the undermining of the rights of individuals – and, in particular, women – within minority communities, perceived as if these were single collective actors. The cultural diversity of contemporary societies has to be acknowledged as an empirical fact. However, a recurrent theme of the consultation was that multiculturalism was a policy with which respondents no longer felt at ease. (2008: 19)*

Cultural diversity has been part of the Australia population since the early phases of post colonisation, however, the term 'multi-cultural', referring to the culturally diverse community resulting from migration to Australia, was first mentioned in a 1973 speech entitled *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*, delivered by Al Grassby, the then Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Labor Government. This was further reinforced by the Liberal opposition in their 1974 "*The Way Ahead*" publication, which makes reference to the '*need to overcome the complex problems confronting migrants, especially non-English speaking migrants, who already live in the multi-cultural society of today's Australia'* (Koleth, 2010). Since the 1970s, Multi-Culturalism has had political acknowledgement and support at all three levels of Australian government.

The Scanlon Foundation survey mapping social cohesion includes surveying attitudes to immigration, and population issues. The survey askes the question do you agree that *'multiculturalism has been good for Australia'*? Over recent years the level of agreement to this question has been consistently high, with 77% of those surveyed in 2018 agreeing, and rising to 84% in 2020 and rising again to 88% in the 2022 survey.

It is important to note that the survey findings also indicated that while a majority of those surveyed supported the notion that Australians '*should do more to learn'* about the diversity of customs and cultures that migration brings. However, there is also a high proportion of respondents that agree with the view that immigrants '*should change their behaviour to be more like Australians.*'

In 1988 the initial bipartisanship that had characterised the introduction of a Multi-Cultural framework was effectively broken when then Opposition Leader, John Howard, called for the abandonment of the term Multi-Culturalism, and a focus on 'One Australia' that:

> *'…respects our cultural diversity and acknowledges that we are drawn from many parts of the world but requires of all of us a loyalty to Australia at all times and to her institutions and her values and her traditions which transcends loyalty to any other set of values anywhere in the world.' (1988)*

It should be noted that John Howard was clearly not including the First Nations people's 'values and traditions' in his 'One Australia'. Howard continued his objection to the concept of multi-culturalism throughout his time as Prime Minister and even continued to object to the concept in his retirement.

Super-Diversity and / or Hyper-Diversity

> ***Super-diversity has emerged both as a description of empirical phenomena (the proliferation of diversities) and as a normative claim that increased pluralism (both associated with migration as well as wider changes in our understanding of identity categories) requires social scientists and policy makers to develop approaches to register this.*** (Meer, N. 2014:144)

A review of the diversity literature shows that there is some conjecture regarding the terms super-diversity and hyper-diversity. For example, urban social geographer and planner Tuna Tasan-Kok, and her colleagues remind us, in *Towards Hyper-Diversified European Cities a Critical Literature Review* (2014), that due to globalisation, many major cities have in the last decades and are continuing to become more Hyper-diverse than ever. Whereas Anthropologist Steven Vertovec proposes the notion of '*cities of super-diversity"* (2007). Vertovec states that:

> *'Super-diversity' is proposed as a summary term. Whatever we choose to call it, there is much to be gained by a multidimensional perspective on diversity, both in terms of moving beyond 'the ethnic group as either the unit of analysis or sole object of study' (Nina Glick Schiller et al. 2006: 613) and by appreciating the coalescence of factors which condition people's lives* (2007:1026).

On the other hand, Tasan-Kok, et al. (2014) propose that, importantly, cities are not only diverse in ethnic terms as discussed regarding Super-diversity, but that also many differences exist in socio-economic and social circumstances. Hyper-diversity has been proposed as an alternative to super-diversity as it is considered to reflect the broad range of community member's lifestyles, sexual orientations, political attitudes, and recreational activities among others and acknowledges the complex interactions that are potentially associated with such variables. For example, Tasan-Kok states that, *'People belonging to the same population or ethnic group may show quite different attitudes, for example with respect to school, work, parents and towards other groups; they may have very different daily and lifetime routines.'* (2014:7) A further contribution to this debate is made by the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) who suggest that the concept of hyper-diversity captures the quantitatively and qualitatively diverse forms of urban diversity that are now emerging in contemporary globalised cities around the world and that hyper-diversity refers to:

> *… an intense diversification of the population in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities. The concept of hyper-diversity captures the quantitatively and qualitatively diverse forms of urban diversity that are now emerging.* (EUKN 2013)

Therefore:

> *Individuals who at first sight appear to belong to a fixed group may show different attitudes and behaviours. They may live in the same neighbourhood, but lead very different lives and have access to different opportunities.* (EUKN 2013).

While it is important to discuss the reality of diversity in cities globally, in terms of considering diversity from a cultural perspective as proposed in this publication, the EUKN statements above have particular relevance. As they remind us that there is hyper-diversity within individual culture groups that needs to be considered from the perspective of urban planning and design.

Perhaps the answer to the question, are Australian cities "super" or "hyper" diverse? would be that Australian cities have transitioned through super-diversity to a state of hyper-diversity across the entire population regardless of ethnicity or place of birth. Perhaps the final word on this question of super v hyper is best answered by social anthropologist, Ralph Grillo, when he states:

> *It should also be recognised that while superdiversity may be envisaged as a state, it is perhaps better conceived as a process, superdiversification. Diversification is happening for complex reasons and at some point what might be thought of as simple diversity 'becomes', or is perceived as, or both, superdiversity, or indeed 'hyperdiversity'*. (2016: 43)

In the Australian context, I would suggest that while it can be argued we are very much a hyper-diverse population, the focus on diversity terminology seems locked in the concept of multi-culturalism. Indeed, if we want urban planners to plan culturally it is important that we understand the nature of our cities diversity if we are to address the needs of all citizens, including in this era of heightened migration cross boarder movements of people, such as transnational migration.

Transnationals

> ***Transnational migration is the process by which immigrants forge and sustain relationships that link together their societies of origin and present settlement.*** (Glick-Schiller et al. 1995: 48)

Building on this definition from Nina Glick-Schiller (1995), Deborah Phillips (2007) has suggested that transnationalism is one of the big issues to be considered and addressed in relationship to immigrant settlement in Western countries, she states that:

> *"We can no longer assume that minority ethnic families are a localised unit, set on a trajectory of assimilation into the nation state in which they are living. Rather, families are increasingly likely to maintain transnational connections, which complicate the link between place of residence and ideas of local and national belonging"* (Phillips, D. 2007: 1142).

Another dimension of a transnational city is that of expatriate workers, this is of relevance in cities such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi and other Gulf States (GCC) where migrant labour has been the foundation of their rapid urban development. In 2022 the World Cup was held in Doha where Qatar government had spent between $220bn-$300bn on infrastructure projects built by an estimated migrant workforce of one million involved in construction work. In these cases, the resulting source of migrant employment is providing the means to earn higher wages than in the country of origin and therefore to deploy remittances to families. Sadly, while providing employment opportunities the countries have not maintained high standards of workplace safety and as a result there are also a high number of fatalities and injuries on these construction sites.

> *Since the infrastructural development schemes of the GCC nations have been steadily attracting millions of migrants to work in the various industries, services, and institutions being established, the net result is that Qatar and the UAE are currently experiencing the sharpest demographic imbalances in the world, with anywhere between 80 and 90% of the population made up of foreign nationals*. (Mirgani, S. 2017:5)

This not only applies to the army of "guest" workers providing manual labour on construction sites in the rapidly growing cities of the world, but it must be recognised that contemporary transnational migration exists world-wide and is also highly differentiated by class, gender, generation, region, religion, and political and economic circumstance of migration within the same migrating 'nationality', even within a single transnational city. For example, in addition to the UAE's construction workers from countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan there are large numbers of professional expats employed as engineers, architects and project managers on the same building projects. There are also vast numbers of transnational women workers, especially from the Philippines, employed in hospitality and domestic work in wealthy countries who are focused on providing remittance money to support families left behind in their countries of origin. In Australia the transnational seasonal workers will include peoples from the Pacific Islands through the 'Pacific Australia Labour Mobility' (PALM) scheme which provides all workers with the same workplace rights and laws as Australian workers, and additional measures are in place to support the wellbeing of workers while they live and work in Australia.

These transnational workers can experience the cultural and physical capital, consumption practices, political organising networks, or lifestyle of the host country. They are also able, due to the advanced means of communication and travel, to maintain transnational connections, ideas, images, technologies, and socio-cultural practices that have historically been associated with their countries of origin. This demonstrates that the notion of transnationalism *'does not necessarily suggest that state borders have diminished, rather that individuals and networks are traversing these borders on a sustained basis.'* (Michele Lobo et al. 2011: 2).

As Michael Smith. in *Transnational urbanism revisited* reminds us:

> *Greater access to the means of maintaining contact across space is widespread geographically (i.e., is transnationalised) and also is spread widely across national social-class structures. One result of this diffusion of mobility is that there is now a vastly more complicated pattern of migration and (un/re)settlement of migrants, transmigrants, immigrants and refugees across nation-states than ever before.* (2005: 239)

Smith suggests that this co-presence in more than one spatial location, be it a place or country is viewed as occurring in the postmodern 'now' rather than, as in earlier times, in sequenced stages of time and place. In part he suggests the current ability to be transnational is due to the widespread availability of and access to advanced means of communication and transport, ranging from affordable air travel, inexpensive phone cards and the ease of money transfers.

Globally there are large numbers of many young students seeking higher education qualification at overseas universities in countries such as Australia. Cory et al refer to this trend when they state that:

> *Besides conflict-related and work-related migration, there is today also the growing education migration nexus (Robertson 2018:539). For young people, studying abroad is one avenue to cross-border mobility, giving rise to what researchers have described as "mutant mobilities" (Allon et. al. 2008; Robertson 2018), as the initial incentives for dislocation tend to shift over time. Research on student-migrants in Australia shows "how specific urban localities, materialities and social practices are involved in the negotiation of the 'translocal' self" (Robertson 2018:540). (Cory, E. et al. 2020: 17)*

Personal observations from visiting and working in cities that have concentrations of 'Transnational' populations demonstrate that there are built environment impacts to be considered when Planning Culturally. An obvious impact is on the nature of workers housing such as single men's quarters and retail outlets specialising in providing foods and goods from the workers countries of origin and the prevalence of money transfer facilities to assist in sending money home to family. I have also observed the importance of places to gather during time off work, these might be ethnically focused community centres, cafes or clubs and public spaces such as parks and plazas. For example, in Abu Dhabi busloads of construction workers can be seen being dropped off at parklands in the city during their limited free time. In conversation, the workers highlighted the fact that they are sending so much of their wages home that they cannot afford to spend money on their time off work and therefore there is no alternative but to take advantage of the public places to meet their friends and fellow 'transnationals'.

Conclusions:

From the perspective of Planning Culturally this paper has a focus on a wide range of diversity perspectives and population characteristics. This range of cultural diversity presents real challenges for urban planners and designers as they need to gain awareness of the diverse cultures, their beliefs, values, behaviours, and relationship to the built environment in order to design culturally relevant urban environments.

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