Vancouver Centre of Excellence

Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis

Working Paper Series

RIIM

Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis

Rethinking Multiculturalism for the 21ˢᵗ Century*

Leonie Sandercock
School of Community and Regional Planning
University of British Columbia
leonies@interchange.ubc.ca

October 2003

2

Abstract: This paper is the first in a series of four, which covers (1) a rethinking of the philosophy of multiculturalism for the 21st century, (2) an exploration of the policy challenges that a multicultural society poses to urban planning and policy, urban governance, and citizenship, with examples of successful responses to these challenges (3) an analysis of the barriers to integration in one multicultural society, for one specific group, Sri Lankan Tamils in Toronto and Vancouver, with specific attention to the built environment and the claiming of space, (4) an examination of the role of one community-based organization, the Canadian Tamil Congress, in working for the integration of Tamils in Canada.

In this first paper I argue that the 20th century multicultural project in Western liberal democracies was fatally flawed as an ethno- and racially-based approach that was based on a static understanding of culture. My goal is to rethink multiculturalism as a form of democratic politics and as a perspective on human society, and thereby to elaborate the components of a revivified 21st century multicultural project. I do this in three stages. First I discuss five different imaginings of how we might live together in all of our differences. Through these different imaginings I explore what it means to be 'at home' in an increasingly globalized world; what a sense of belonging might be based on in a multicultural society; what it takes to combat racism and learn to live with difference; and how to encourage more intercultural encounters and exchanges. The second section seeks a deeper psychological and political understanding of difference and, through this, aims to explain why a politics of difference is related to basic questions of identity and belonging that cannot be wished away. Based on the above, the third section develops a multicultural perspective or project for 21st century cities.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, difference, identity, race, racialized liberal democracies, agonistic democracy, postcolonial, cosmopolitanism, neighborhoods, micro-publics, everyday, interculturalism.

Introduction

> The biggest impetus to fragmentation, violence, and anarchy today does not emerge from political engagement with the paradox of difference. It emerges from doctrines and movements that suppress it. Specifically it arises from totalistic identities engaged in implacable struggles against those differences that threaten their hegemony or exclusivity. Such culture wars do not reflect *too much* diversity, difference, or variety: they express contending demands to control the exclusive form the nation, state, or community must assume (Connolly 1995: xxi, my emphasis).

In *Towards Cosmopolis* (1998) I critiqued the modernist project of city-building and the planning mentality that supported it, a state-directed project with emancipatory ideals but less than emancipatory consequences. I asked what and who was missing, who was excluded from or marginalized by that project, and I drew attention to the 'voices from the borderlands,' to an emerging alternative to mainstream planning and city-building. I named that alternative 'cosmopolis,' a more inclusive social project for the 21st century, and grounded it not in another physical/design utopia but in the normative ideal of multiculturalism, which I implicitly equated with cosmopolitanism. There are clearly (in retrospect!) problems with this conclusion and, as scholars, it's good to remind ourselves that everything we do is a work in progress. In the spirit of critiquing and extending this earlier work, this paper acknowledges that multiculturalism itself has also been a state-directed project in some nations (Canada and Australia, for example) and as such, needs to be examined as yet another mentality of the state, for its exclusions and inclusions.

Further, what remained unsaid, and therefore unexamined, in *Towards Cosmopolis* was the reality of Western liberal democracies as always already racialized democracies, that is, as having inscribed a dominant race into their political, planning, and other institutions. In this paper I argue that all Western democracies, Canada included, are living in an as yet unresolved postcolonial condition that often confounds the apparently noble/liberal intentions of multiculturalism, since it is still members of the dominant race/culture who see themselves as dictating the terms of the new or emerging multicultural nation (see Hage 1998). For this reason I suggest that there are unresolved theoretical issues in regard to multiculturalism and planning, and that it is premature to assume that we have sorted out the theory and that we should be moving on to the practical challenges.[1] As a political theory and as a set of policies, multiculturalism remains (necessarily) very much a contested ideology, perpetually open to new definition as newcomers arrive and challenge congealed or congealing notions of identity, belonging, and citizenship.

---

[1] The collection of essays edited by Pestieau and Wallace (2003) makes the argument that we need to move on from the theory, and get on with the practicalities.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to step back from the practical question of how we can manage our co-existence in the shared spaces of the multi-ethnic cities and neighborhoods of the 21st century, and to take a closer look at some theoretical dimensions of multiculturalism. A second paper will look specifically at what kind of a practical challenge difference presents to cities, city planning and urban governance, and provide examples of and experiments with successful accommodation of difference concerning the integration of immigrants. The third and fourth papers will support the normative argument developed here with empirical research from our study of the integration of Sri Lankan Tamils in Vancouver and Toronto.

My goal here is to rethink multiculturalism as a form of democratic politics and as a perspective on human society and thereby to elaborate the components of a revivified 21st century multicultural (or intercultural) project. I do this in three stages. In Part One, I discuss five different *imaginings* of how we might live together in all of our differences: Richard Sennett's (1994) vision of a diverse civic culture based on meaningful intercultural interaction; James Donald's more limited notion of co-presence, or indifference to difference; the British government's recent answer, of 'community cohesion' through a shared identity; Ash Amin's emphasis on local negotiations of difference in 'the city's micro-publics of banal multicultures' (Amin 2002:13); and Annick Germain's questioning of what makes for the social sustainability of multiethnic neighborhoods in Montreal (Germain 2002) . Part One questions whether there is a sufficiently rich 'sociological imagination' of what interethnic co-existence might actually look and feel like, and how we might actually evaluate the success of the normative ideal. Through these different imaginings I probe what it means to be 'at home' in an increasingly globalized world; what a sense of belonging might be based on in a multicultural society; what it takes to combat racism and learn to live with difference; and how to encourage more intercultural encounters and exchanges.

In order to act within multicultural cities, we must understand 'difference' and how it becomes significant in identity politics, in claims regarding multiculturalism, and in spatial conflicts as well as cooperative endeavors. In the second section of the paper, I seek to deepen our psychological and political understanding of the concept of difference and through this to explain why a politics of difference is related to basic questions of identity and belonging and therefore cannot be wished away. Dealing with the paradoxical politics of difference is, I argue, a necessary condition of peaceful co-existence in multicultural cities and is best addressed through an agonistic view of democratic politics, 'fragile and temporary resolutions springing from the vibrant clash between empowered publics' (Amin 2002:1) rather than the search for a permanent consensus.

In the third section, I ask whether it is reasonable to assume that multicultural ideology is inherently emancipatory, a progressive movement towards more tolerant and just societies, worldwide. I agree with Mitchell (1996: 220), who finds 'this kind of abstract celebration of travel, hybridity, and multiculturalism to be premature.' I question the very foundation of 20th century multiculturalism as a state project based on static ethno-cultural identities and embedded in an unresolved postcolonial condition. I develop a multicultural perspective for 21st century cities that embraces the cultural embeddedness of all human beings; the inescapability but also desirability of cultural diversity and intercultural exchange; the right to the city, which is part of the right to difference; political community rather than ethno-(or any other sub-)cultural identity as the basis for a sense of belonging in multicultural societies; and social recognition as well as a just share of economic and political power for all cultures as a necessary basis for a stable, vibrant, and dynamic multicultural democracy.

Part One: How might we live together in all of our differences? Five imaginings.

How can we stroppy strangers live together without doing each other too much violence? (Donald 1999:147).

1. Richard Sennett: togetherness in difference

In *Flesh and Stone* (1994:358) Sennett laments that the apparent diversity of Greenwich Village in New York is actually only the diversity of the gaze, rather than a scene of discourse and interaction. He worries that the multiple cultures that inhabit the city are not fused into common purposes, and wonders whether 'difference inevitably provokes mutual withdrawal.' He assumes (and fears) that if the latter is true, then 'a multicultural city cannot have a common civic culture'(ibid). For Sennett, Greenwich Village poses a particular question of how a diverse civic culture might become something people feel in their bones. He deplores the ethnic separatism of old multicultural New York and not only looks but longs for evidence of citizens' understanding that they share a common destiny. This becomes a hauntingly reiterated question: nothing less than a moral challenge, the challenge of living together not simply in tolerant indifference to each other, but in active engagement. For Sennett then, there is a normative imperative in the multicultural city to engage in meaningful intercultural interaction.

Why does Sennett assume that sharing a common destiny in the city necessitates more than a willingness to live with difference in the manner of respectful distance? Why should it demand active engagement? He doesn't address these questions, nor does he ask what it would take, sociologically

and institutionally, to make such intercultural dialogue and exchange possible or more likely to happen. But other more recent authors have begun to ask and give tentative answers to these very questions (Parekh 2000; Amin 2002; Germain 2002). In terms of political philosophy, one might answer that in multicultural societies composed of many different cultures each of which has different values and practices, and not all of which are entirely comprehensible or acceptable to each other, conflicts are inevitable. In the absence of a practice of intercultural dialogue, conflicts are insoluble except by the imposition of one culture's views on another.

A society of cultural enclaves and de facto separatism is one in which different cultures do not know how to talk to each other, are not interested in each other's well-being, and assume that they have nothing to learn and nothing to gain from interaction. This becomes a problem for urban governance and for city planning in cities where contact between different cultures is increasingly part of everyday urban life in the growing number of multiethnic neighborhoods, in spite of the efforts of some groups to avoid 'cultural contamination' or ethnic mixture by fleeing to gated communities or so-called ethnic enclaves. A pragmatic argument then, is that intercultural contact and interaction is a necessary condition for being able to address the inevitable conflicts that will arise in multicultural societies.

Another way of looking at the question of why intercultural encounters might be a good thing would start with the acknowledgement that different cultures represent different systems of meaning and versions of the good life. But each culture realizes only a limited range of human capacities and emotions and grasps only a part of the totality of human existence: it therefore 'needs others to understand itself better, expand its intellectual and moral horizon, stretch its imagination and guard it against the obvious temptation to absolutize itself' (Parekh 2000:336-7). I suspect that this latter argument is what Sennett might have had in mind.

2. James Donald: an ethical indifference

In *Imagining the Modern City* (1999), Donald takes a less moralistic, less prescriptive, and apparently more pragmatic approach to the question of how we might live together. He is critical of the two most popular contemporary urban imaginings: the traditionalism of the New Urbanism (with its ideal of community firmly rooted in the past), and the cosmopolitanism of Richard Rogers, advisor to Tony Blair and author of a policy document advocating an urban renaissance, a revitalized and re-enchanted city (Urban Task Force 1999). What is missing from Rogers' vision, according to Donald, is 'any real sense of the city not only as a space of community or pleasurable encounters or self-creation, but also as the site of aggression, violence, and paranoia' (Donald 1999:135). Is it possible,

he asks, to imagine change that acknowledges difference without falling into phobic utopianism, communitarian nostalgia, or the disavowal of urban paranoia.

Shadowing Iris Young (1990), Donald sets up a normative ideal of city life that acknowledges not only the necessary desire for the security of home, but also the inevitability of migration, change and conflict, and thus an 'ethical need for an openness to unassimilated otherness' (Donald 1999:145). He argues that it is not possible to domesticate all traces of difference. 'The problem with community is that usually its advocates are referring to some phantom of the past, projected onto some future utopia at the cost of disavowing the unhomely reality of living in the present' (ibid). If we start from the reality of living in the present with strangers, then we might ask, what kind of commonality might exist or be brought into being? Donald's answer is 'broad social participation in the never completed process of making meanings and creating values…an always emerging, negotiated common culture' (Donald 1999:151). This process requires time and forbearance, not instant fixes. This is community redefined neither as identity nor as place but as a productive process of social interaction, apparently resolving the long-standing problem of the dark side of community (which has always troubled Sennett), the drawing of boundaries between those who belong and those who don't. Donald argues that we don't need to share cultural traditions with our neighbors in order to live alongside them, but we do need to be able to talk to them, while also accepting that they are and may remain strangers (as will we).[2]

This is the pragmatic urbanity that can make the violence of living together manageable. Then, urban politics would mean strangers working out how to live together. This is an appropriately *political* answer to Sennett's question of how multicultural societies might arrive at some workable notion of a common destiny. But when it comes to a thicker description of this 'openness to unassimilable difference,' the mundane, pragmatic skills of living in the city, sharing urban turf, neither Donald nor Sennett has much to say. Donald suggests 'reading the signs in the street; adapting to different ways of life right on your doorstep; learning tolerance and responsibility—or at least, as Simmel taught us, indifference—towards others and otherness; showing respect, or self-preservation, in not intruding on other people's space; picking up new rules when you migrate to a foreign city' (ibid:167). Donald seems to be contradicting himself here in retreating to a position of co-presence and indifference, having earlier advocated something more like an agonistic politics of broad social

---

[2] Strangely, Donald sidesteps racism, the dark side of cultural difference. Even 'assimilated' Jews in pre-war Europe remained Other, and anti-semitism was always latent. The same still goes for 'Blacks' today, not only in the US, but also in Canada, the UK and even Brazil. I have a Black student in my class at UBC who has lived in Canada for 25 years. Recently (November 2002) he was interrogated on the street by a complete stranger, who asked him where he was from. My student answered, 'Vancouver.' 'No, no,' pressed the stranger, 'where are you really from?' My student answered that he was born in Africa, to which the stranger replied, 'You should go back there. We don't want you here.'

participation in the *never completed process* of making meanings and an *always emerging* (never congealed), *negotiated common culture*. Surely this participation and negotiation in the interests of peaceful co-existence require something like daily habits of perhaps quite banal intercultural interaction in order to establish a basis for dialogue, which is difficult, if not impossible, without some pre-existing trust. I will turn to Ash Amin, and then to Annick Germain, for a discussion of how and where this daily interaction and negotiation of ethnic (and other) differences might be encouraged. But before that, I ask what British politicians and their advisors concluded about living together when they reflected on the aftermath of the race riots in three British cities in 2001.

3. The British Home Office: 'Public Order and Community Cohesion'

Riots sparked by interracial or interethnic conflict are not new to British cities since the first wave of postwar migration ferried former colonial subjects into the heartland of the erstwhile empire, confronting locals with the realities of decolonization and creating an uneasy and unresolved postcolonial stew. But the magnitude of damage and disturbance in Bradford, Oldham, and Burnley in the spring and summer of 2001 posed a perceived crisis of public order and prompted the Blair government to set up an inquiry inside the Home Office to address possible policy responses.[3] The inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion was asked to report to the Home Secretary on what Government could do to minimize the risk of further disorder, and to help build stronger, more cohesive communities. Independent review teams had also been set up in each city after the disturbances, and the Ministerial Group drew on the reports of those teams, as well as the findings of the Commission for Racial Equality's research into segregation in the North West of England, and the Policy Innovation Unit's study of ethnic minority access to the labor market. The outcome was *Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion* (Home Office 2001).

In searching for underlying causes, the Ministerial Group described these towns and their communities as 'deeply fractured' and segregated, but was unsure why and how this had come about. Nevertheless, their report notes a number of commonalities between the three cities and the specific neighborhoods (wards) in which the rioting erupted: all had average incomes amongst the lowest in the country; all wards affected were amongst 'the 20% most deprived in the country,' and some were among the most deprived 1%; the participants were mostly young men, 'both white and ethnic

---

[3] There was less serious disorder in a number of other places and many more towns, mainly in the north, were identified by police as being at 'significant risk of serious disorder.' The 'disorders' involved hundreds of mainly young people, inflicted injuries on over 400 police, and caused millions of pounds worth of damages (Home Office 2001:7).

minority'; extremist groups were active in these areas; and disturbances occurred in areas which had become fractured on racial, generational, cultural, and religious lines and where there was little dialogue, or much contact, between the various groups across these social divides (Home Office 2001:8). Drawing on the other sources noted above, the Ministerial Group identified the following 'key issues': the lack of a strong civic identity or shared social values to unite diverse communities; the fragmentation and polarization of communities; disengagement of young people from the local decision-making process, and an increasingly territorial mentality in asserting different racial, cultural and religious identities in response to real or perceived attacks; high levels of unemployment; 'weakness and disparities in police response to community issues, particularly racial incidents'; and 'irresponsible coverage of race stories' by the local media (ibid:11). In less bureaucratic and less euphemistic language, these issues could be summarized as poverty, exclusion, racism (institutionalized as well as interpersonal), and segregation.

There are a number of remarkable things about this report. It acknowledges the complex mix of causes of the riots: economic, social, and cultural. Real material deprivation, as reflected in poor housing and high levels of unemployment, is compounded by low levels of education and poor recreational facilities. But equally important are 'the intrinsically difficult and controversial issues of social identity and values on which cohesion depends' (ibid:34). Accordingly the recommendations include not only a range of spending programs designed to target deprived areas, but also the call for a widespread debate about identity, shared values, and common citizenship as part of the process of building what the report calls 'cohesive communities.' There is concern that 'we cannot claim to be a truly multicultural society if the various communities within it live…a series of parallel lives which do not touch at any point' (ibid:13). There is the finding that most young people 'want to grow up in a mixed and inclusive society,' and that there has been too little reaching out to young people, and particularly to women. There is even explicit recognition that 'there is no single dominant and unchanging culture into which all must assimilate…Citizenship means finding a common place for diverse cultures and beliefs, consistent with our core values' (ibid: 20). The report intends that national government should take the lead in this debate about citizenship, civic identity, and shared values, but it also hopes that local government will recognize the need for this dialogue to take place at a local level. While the financial resources of the national government were to be mobilized in a series of programs for neighborhood regeneration, steps would also be taken to appoint facilitators 'to foster dialogue within and between fractured communities.'

How do you turn fractured communities into cohesive ones? How do you create a 'common sense of belonging regardless of race, culture or faith'? What underlying values about identity and nation are assumed, taken for granted, as opposed to open for debate? The report leaves me queasy on

these matters. It has erased history. There is no colonial past stalking its pages. There is no postcolonial hangover of racism among the 'white community' in these towns. The report's thinking about policy instruments for addressing deprivation is muddied by its murky thinking about the crucial symbolic issues of identity and belonging. There is a tautological definition of community cohesion as a 'shared sense of belonging based on common goals and core social values, respect for difference, and acceptance of the reciprocal rights and obligations of community members working together for the common good' (ibid:18). But if that shared sense of belonging is absent, and 'none of this can be imposed by government' (ibid), how then will it be conjured into being? Through community facilitators? No, the government will take the lead in articulating a vision (ibid). So whose vision is it, after all?

If we turn to David Blunkett, the Home Secretary in the Blair government, for guidance, we are plunged back into the problem of history and of unspoken assumptions about whose country it is and who does and does not belong. 'We have norms of acceptability and those who come into our home—for that is what it is—should accept those norms' (Blunkett, quoted in Alibhai-Brown 2001). The hybrid realities of a changing nation and culture have been swept under the carpet in the Home Secretary's statement. He seems to define the problem of living together as a problem of 'them' adjusting to 'us,' being gracious guests in 'our home.' The strength of the Home Office report was its attention to the macro issues of the political economy: the lack of employment, the quality of housing among both poor white and ethnic minority communities. Its lacunae are the historical/symbolic and the micro-sociological issues of living together. The micro-sociological issues require a much closer look at what actually happens in multicultural cities and neighborhoods, what kinds of interactions take place, what ways people are finding, or not, of co-existing. This brings me to my last two examples of imagining ways of living together in 21st century cities, those of geographer Ash Amin, and sociologist, Annick Germain.

4. Ash Amin: a politics of local liveability

Amin's *Ethnicity and the Multicultural City. Living with Diversity* (2002), is a self-described 'think piece' that uses the 2001 riots as a springboard 'to discuss what it takes to combat racism, live with difference and encourage mixture in a multicultural and multiethnic society' (Amin 2002:2). His paper serves me here as an extension and partly a critique of the three previous imaginings of peaceful co-existence (It specifically addresses only the third). It goes deeper and draws on different sources from the Home Office document. The political economy approach of the Home Office analysis of the riots never once mentions globalization, or the colonial past. That is Amin's starting

point. The dominant ethnic groups present in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham are Pakistani and Bangladeshi, of both recent and longer-term migrations. What this reflects is the twin and interdependent forces of postcolonialism and globalization. As several scholars have pointed out (Sassen 1996; Rocco 2000), the contemporary phenomena of immigration and ethnicity are constitutive of globalization and are reconfiguring the spaces of and social relations in cities in new ways. Cultures from all over the world are being de- and re-territorialized in global cities, whose neighborhoods accordingly become 'globalized localities' (Albrow 1997:51). The spaces created by the complex and multidimensional processes of globalization have become strategic sites for the formation of transnational identities and communities, as well as for new hybrid identities and complicated experiences and redefinitions of notions of 'home.' As Sassen has argued:

> What we still narrate in the language of immigration and ethnicity…is actually a series of processes having to do with the globalization of economic activity, of cultural activity, of identity formation. Too often immigration and ethnicity are constituted as otherness. Understanding them as a set of processes whereby global elements are localized, international labor markets are constituted, and cultures from all over the world are de- and re-territorialized, puts them right there at the centre along with the internationalization of capital, as a fundamental aspect of globalization (Sassen 1996:218).

This is the context for Amin's interpretative essay on the civil disturbances, which he sees as having both material and symbolic dimensions. He draws on ethnographic research to deepen understanding of both dimensions, as well as to assist in his argument for a focus on the everyday urban, 'the daily negotiation of ethnic difference.' Ethnographic research in the UK on areas of significant racial antagonism has identified two types of neighborhood. The first are old white working class areas in which successive waves of non-white immigration have been accompanied by continuing socio-economic deprivation and cultural and/or physical isolation 'between white residents lamenting the loss of a golden ethnically undisturbed past, and non-whites claiming a right of place.' The second are 'white flight' suburbs and estates that have become the refuge of an upwardly mobile working class and a fearful middle class disturbed by what they see as the replacement of a 'homely white nation' by foreign cultural contamination. Here, white supremacist values are activated to terrorize the few immigrants who try to settle there. The riots of 2001 displayed the processes at work in the first type of neighborhood, but also the white fear and antagonism typical of the second type (Amin 2002:2).

What is important to understand is that the cultural dynamics in these two types of neighborhood are very different from those in other ethnically mixed cities and neighborhoods where greater social and physical mobility, a local history of compromises, and a supportive local institutional infrastructure have come to support co-habitation. For example, in the Tooting

neighborhood of South London, Martin Albrow's research inquired about the strength of 'locality' and 'community' among a wide range of local inhabitants, from those born there to recent arrivals, and among all the most prominent ethnic groups. His analysis reveals that locality has much less salience for individuals and for social relations than older research paradigms invested in 'community' allow. His study reveals a very liquid sense of identity and belonging. His interviewees' stories suggest the possibility that

> Individuals with very different lifestyles and social networks can live in close proximity without untoward interference with each other. There is an old community for some, for others there is a new site for community which draws its culture from India. For some, Tooting is a setting for peer group leisure activity, for others it provides a place to sleep and access to London. It can be a spectacle for some, for others the anticipation of a better, more multicultural community (Albrow 1997:51).

In this middle income locality there is nothing like the traditional concept of community based on a shared local culture. Albrow describes a situation of 'minimum levels of tolerable co-existence' and civil inattention and avoidance strategies that prevent friction between people living different lifestyles. The locality is criss-crossed by networks of social relations whose scope and extent range from neighboring houses and a few weeks acquaintance to religious and kin relations spanning generations and continents.

This study gives us an important insight into the changing social relations within globalized localities. Where is community here? It may be nowhere, says Albrow, and this new situation therefore needs a new vocabulary. How meaningful is the newly promoted (by the Home Office) notion of community cohesion, when people's affective ties are not necessarily related to the local place where they live? Where is the deconstruction, and reconstruction, of what 'community' might mean in the globalized localities of multicultural cities? 'Globalization makes co-present enclaves of diverse origins one possible social configuration characterizing a new Europe' (Albrow 1997:54).

While Albrow's research seems to support the urban imaginings of James Donald, discussed earlier, in terms of the feasibility of an attitude of tolerant indifference and co-presence, the difference between Tooting and the northern mill towns that are the subject of Amin's reflection is significant. In those one-industry towns, when the mills declined, white and non-white workers alike were unemployed. The largest employers soon became the public services, but discrimination kept most of these jobs for whites. Non-whites pooled resources and opened shops, takeaways, minicab businesses. There was intense competition for low-paid and precarious work. Economic uncertainty and related social deprivation has been a constant for over twenty years and 'a pathology of social rejection…reinforces family and communalist bonds' (Amin 2002:4). Ethnic resentment has bred on

this socio-economic deprivation and sense of desperation. It is in such areas that social cohesion and cultural interchange have failed.

What conclusions does Amin draw from this? For one thing, he argues against several currently popular policy fixes. One such fix is based on the belief that cultural and physical isolation lies at the heart of the disturbances, so the way forward must lie in greater ethnic mixing in housing at the neighborhood scale. The Home Office, in its response to the riots, made such recommendations that future housing schemes should be ethnically mixed, and others have suggested that existing estates should create mini-villages and develop better public spaces so that interaction can take place between ethnic groups. Another popular policy fix in the urban literature, and rooted in republican urban theory, looks to the powers of visibility and encounter between strangers in the open or public spaces of the city. The freedom to associate and mingle in cafes, parks, streets, shopping malls, and squares (a feature of Richard Rogers' recipe for urban renaissance) has been linked to the development of an urban civic culture based on the freedom and pleasure of lingering, the serendipity of the chance encounter, and the public awareness that these are shared spaces.[4] The depressing reality, Amin counters, is that far from being spaces where diversity is being negotiated, these spaces tend either to be territorialized by particular groups (whites, youth, skateboarders, Asian families…) or they are spaces of transit, with very little contact between strangers. 'The city's public spaces are not natural servants of multicultural engagement' (Amin 2002:11).[5]

If ethnic mixture through housing cannot be engineered, and public space is not the site of meaningful multicultural encounter, how can fear and intolerance be challenged, how might residents begin to negotiate and come to terms with difference in the city? Amin's answer is important and will be supported by my examples from Frankfurt, Rotterdam, Vancouver, and other cities in a second paper for this series. The contact spaces of housing estates and public places fall short of nurturing inter-ethnic understanding, he argues, 'because they are not spaces of interdependence and habitual engagement' (ibid:12). He goes on to suggest that the sites for coming to terms with ethnic (and surely other) differences are the 'micro-publics' where dialogue and prosaic negotiations are compulsory, in sites such as the workplace, schools, colleges, youth centers, sports clubs, community centers, neighborhood houses, and the micro-publics of 'banal transgression,' (such as colleges of

---

[4] In addition to the Rogers Report (Urban Task Force 1999) already noted, the writings of Richard Sennett and Iris Young have been much quoted in support of this view of the efficacy of public space.

[5] Amin is not dismissive of urban planning efforts to make public spaces more inclusive, safe, and pleasant, and does not diminish the achievements of cities like Leicester or Vancouver in publicizing their commitments to multiculturalism by using public sites to support minority voices, ethnic pluralism, and alternative local histories. His point is rather (and I agree) to caution against raised expectations from the uses of public space for intercultural dialogue and understanding, 'for even in the most carefully designed and inclusive spaces, the marginalized and the prejudiced stay away' (Amin 2002:11).

further education) in which people from different cultural backgrounds are thrown together in new settings which disrupt familiar patterns and create the possibility of initiating new attachments.

Other sites of banal transgression include community gardens, child-care facilities, community centers, neighborhood watch schemes, youth projects, and regeneration of derelict spaces. I provide just such an example (Sandercock, forthcoming 2003, Chapter 7), in the Community Fire Station in the Handsworth neighborhood of Birmingham, where white Britons are working alongside Asian and Afro-Caribbean Britons in a variety of projects for neighborhood regeneration and improvement. In the next paper for this series, I will discuss the Collingwood Neighborhood House in Vancouver as another example of a successful site of intercultural interaction. Part of what happens in such everyday contacts is the overcoming of feelings of strangeness in the simple process of sharing tasks and comparing ways of doing things. But such initiatives will not automatically become sites of social inclusion. They also need organizational and discursive strategies that are designed to build voice, to foster a sense of common benefit, to develop confidence among disempowered groups, and to arbitrate when disputes arise. The essential point is that 'changes in attitude and behavior spring from lived experiences' (Amin 2002:15).

The key policy implication from Amin's work, then, is that the project of living with diversity needs to be worked at 'in the city's micro-publics of banal multicultures' (ibid:13). What seems misguided, in terms of addressing ethnic tension, is the Home Office's emphasis on 'community cohesion,' defined as shared values and a shared sense of place. It is clear from Albrow's work, as well as that of Amin, that in today's globalized localities there is not necessarily any shared sense of place and that this is not the best 'glue' for understanding and co-existence within multicultural neighborhoods.

There are clear limits then to how far 'community cohesion' can become the basis of living with difference. Amin suggests a different vocabulary of local accommodation to difference – 'a vocabulary of rights of presence, bridging difference, getting along' (ibid: 17). The achievement of these rights depends on a politics of active local citizenship, an agonistic politics (as sketched by Donald) of broad social participation in the never completed process of making meanings, and an always emerging, contested and negotiated common culture.[6] I turn now to the work of French Canadian sociologist Annick Germain, whose very grounded work in Montreal's multiethnic neighborhoods provides yet another perspective on what it might mean to live with diversity.

---

[6] But it also depends on a *multicultural political culture*, that is, one with effective antiracism policies, with strong legal, institutional and informal sanctions against racial and cultural hatred, a public culture that no longer treats immigrants as 'guests,' and a truly inclusive political system at all levels of governance. This is the subject of the third section of this paper.

5. Annick Germain: 'a neighborhood affair?'

How do modes of interethnic co-existence develop over time, in the particular spaces of a city? For the past decade, French-Canadian sociologist Annick Germain and her colleagues have been studying the increasingly multiethnic neighborhoods of Montreal in order to better understand what factors contribute to peaceful interethnic co-existence and to what extent the 'diversity management policies' of the city have been successful (see Seguin and Germain 2000;Germain and Rose 2000; Germain 2002). Germain's work, then, is not simply an *imagining* of what interethnic co-existence might look like. It is also an empirical probe into the actual situations in various neighborhoods of Montreal. Her findings both support and complicate those of Amin.

I'm particularly interested here in that aspect of Germain's research design which has systematically observed the public spaces in the city where interethnic contact takes place. These include parks, public squares, subway stations, commercial thoroughfares, and the like: in short, meeting places. A common pattern emerges, according to Germain (2002: 382) of peaceful but distant co-existence between users of diverse ethnic origins, who 'seem to respect a code of common courtesy that allows them to take pleasure to be in a public space while still maintaining a certain distance from other users.' While this 'code' does not prevent occasional tensions from erupting, it does enable public space to be shared in a non-conflictual, and relatively unfearful way. Such co-existence is of course a far cry from actual intergroup social mixing, 'but a type of acclimatization or socialization to diversity is present nonetheless, that allows these neighborhoods to benefit from a certain public animation and conviviality, essential for inclusive city-building' (Germain, ibid).

Germain's observations of actual public spaces in Montreal lead us to query the rather categorical assertion of Amin that 'the city's public spaces are not natural servants of multicultural engagement' (Amin 2002:11). Remember that Amin is here not referring to a specific city, but to cities in general. But how can he support such a catch-all assertion? Surely we need more contextualised studies of actual public spaces in specific cities, and we need to go beyond the observation technique to ask what are the supporting political, cultural, and institutional mechanisms that encourage such a 'code of common courtesy' as exists in Montreal. Germain does just that by situating her study in the broader policies and philosophy of the Quebec Ministry of Citizen relations, and the City of Montreal's Intercultural Affairs Bureau, which comes directly under the Mayor, and has existed since the mid-1980s. She also notes the importance of a more fluid housing market, and housing prices lower than those in Toronto and Vancouver; and of a decent public transport system that facilitates mobility between different parts of the city, and encourages its discovery (Germain

2002: 383). These factors make urban space relatively more accessible for all residents, rather than trapping certain groups in certain neighborhoods ('holding pens') forever.

Germain also invokes Jean Remy's 'paradox of the inconsequential' to suggest that the city's public spaces, as well as the official diversity management policies that embrace such everyday activities as sports and recreation, may be significant precisely because they are everyday, or 'banal' (to recall Amin's phrase). Remy's paradox goes like this. 'Places may be all the more important because the encounters that take place in them have little consequence for the broad issues of social life' (Germain 2002: 384). On this point, Germain and Amin would seem to be in agreement that the project of living with diversity needs to be worked at in the city's 'micro-publics of banal multicultures' where prosaic negotiations and dialogue are both necessary and possible.

What I take theoretically from these five reflections on and imaginings about multicultural co-existence is the need for a more grounded, monitored approach to actual multiethnic neighborhoods, as well as the need to interrogate whether the neighborhood 'remains an ideal laboratory for understanding how modes of coexistence develop' (Germain 2002: 377).

In the next section I take up the issue of difference and identity in relation to national belonging and question the adequacy of framing the issues of a multicultural society through the language of race and minority ethnicity.

Part Two: Thinking through identity/difference

> We have norms of acceptability and those who come into our home—for that is what it is—should accept those norms (David Blunkett, quoted in Alibhai-Brown 2001).

> …seven years ago I finally decided this place was my place, and that was because I had a daughter whose father was of these islands. This did not make me any less black, Asian or Muslim—those identities are in my blood, thick and forever. But it made me kick more vigorously at those stern, steely gates that keep people of color outside the heart of the nation then blame them for fighting each other in the multicultural wastelands into which the establishment has pushed them. A number of us broke through. The going was (and still is) incredibly hard but we are in now and, bit by bit, the very essence of Britishness is being transformed (Alibhai-Brown 2001).

The above remarks of David Blunkett were made in December of 2001, after Britain's experience of a spring and summer of 'race riots' in three northern cities. It was a time of questioning of the previous half-century of immigration, the race relations problems that had emerged, and the policy response of multiculturalism. At the heart of this questioning was a perturbation over what it meant/means to be British. Notions of identity were being unsettled. The response of Blunkett, the Home Secretary in the

Blair government, was a rather crude reassertion of us-and-them thinking. His words epitomize a long-standing but much-contested view that immigrants are guests in the home of the host nation and must behave the way their hosts want them to behave: adopt the norms of 'Britishness,' or get out. Implicit in this view is that there is only one correct way to be British and that it is the responsibility of newcomers to learn how to fit in with it. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, herself an immigrant of three decades standing, contests this pure and static notion of national identity, counterposing it with a notion of a more inclusive, dynamic and evolving identity which can accommodate the new hybrid realities of a changing culture. She urges 'a national conversation about our collective identity' (Alibhai-Brown 2000:10)

At stake here, and across European (or any of the large number of globalizing) cities today, are contested notions of identity and understandings of difference, and conflicting ways of belonging and feeling at home in the world. The Home Secretary expresses the view that there is a historic Britishness that must be protected from impurity. (Sections of the Austrian, Danish, French and Dutch populations have been making similar noises in 2002.) In this view, what it means to be British, to be 'at home' in Britain, is being threatened by immigrants who bring a different cultural baggage with them. Interestingly, the (fragile) notion of identity at the heart of this view is one that is both afraid of and yet dependent on difference. Let's think about how this works.

When a person's self-identity is insecure or fragile, doubts about that identity—and how it relates to national identity may be part of the insecurity—are posed and resolved by the constitution of an Other against which that identity may define itself, and assert its superiority. In order to feel 'at home' in the nation and in the wider world, this fragile sense of identity seeks to subdue or erase from consciousness (or worse) that which is strange, those who are 'not like us.' Attempts to protect the purity and certainty of a hegemonic identity—Britishness, Danishness, and so on—by defining certain differences as independent sites of evil, or disloyalty, or disorder, have a long history.[7] There are diverse political tactics through which doubts about self-identity are posed and resolved, but the general strategy is the establishing of a *system of identity and difference* that is given legal sanctions, which defines who belongs and who does not. Over long periods of time, these systems of identity and difference become congealed as cultural norms and beliefs, entrenching themselves as the hegemonic status quo. Connolly (1991) argues that evil infiltrates the public domain when attempts are made to secure the surety of self- and national identity—and the powers and privileges that accompany it—with spatial, social and economic policies that demand conformity with a previously scripted identity, while defining the outsider as an outsider (a polluter of pure identities) in perpetuity.

---

[7] For much of my interpretation in this section I am indebted to the work of William Connolly (1991, 1995) and Julia Kristeva (1991).

There is a paradox in the relationship between identity and difference. The quest for a pure and unchanging *identity* (an undiluted Britishness, or Danishness) is at once framed by and yet seeks to eliminate difference; it seeks the conformity, disappearance, or invisibility of the Other. That is the paradox of identity. But what of *difference* and *its* political strategies? Surely difference, too, is constituted by its Other—as woman is in patriarchal societies, or to be gay and lesbian in heterosexual societies, or to be Black in white societies—and so is constituted by the hegemonic identity which it resists and seeks to change. Difference, defined as that which is outside, in opposition to the congealed norms of any society, is constituted by/against hegemonic identity. Identity and difference then are an intertwined and always historically specific system of dialectical relations, fundamental to which is inclusion (belonging) and its opposite, exclusion (not belonging). Here then is a double paradox. Some notion of identity is, arguably, indispensable to life itself (Connolly 1991), and some sense of culturally-based identity would seem to be inescapable, in that all human beings are culturally embedded (Parekh 2000:336).[8] But while the politics of pure identity seeks to eliminate the Other, the politics of difference[9] seeks recognition and inclusion.

A more robust sense of identity as outlined by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown or Salman Rushdie (1991) must be able to embrace cultural autonomy and, at the same time, work to strengthen intercultural solidarity. If one dimension of such a cultural pluralism is a concern with reconciling old and new identities by accepting the inevitability of 'hybridity,' or 'mongrelization,' then another is the commitment to actively contest what is to be valued across diverse cultures. Thus Alibhai-Brown feels 'under no obligation to bring my daughter and son up to drink themselves to death in a pub for a laugh,' nor does she want to see young Asian and Muslim women imprisoned in 'high-pressure ghettoes…in the name of "culture",' a culture that forces obedience to patriarchal authority and arranged marriages (Alibhai-Brown 2001). Negotiating new identities then becomes central to daily social and spatial practices, as newcomers assert their rights to the city, to make a home for themselves, to occupy and transform space.[10]

What now seems insidious in terms of debates about belonging in relation to the nation is the way in which the identities of minorities have been essentialized on the grounds of culture and ethnicity. The ethnicization and racialization of the identities of non-white or non-Anglo people in Western liberal democracies, even the most officially multicultural among them (Canada and

---

[8] 'Culturally embedded' in the sense that we grow up and live within a culturally structured world, organize our lives and social relations within its system of meaning and significance, and place some value on our cultural identity (Parekh 200:336)

[9] Or what Cornell West called 'the new cultural politics of difference' (West 1990), or James Tully calls the 'politics of cultural recognition' (Tully 1995).

[10] Or as previously dominated groups such as gays and lesbians, women, people with disabilities, decide to engage in a politics of identity/difference, a politics of place-claiming and place-making (Kenney 2001).

Australia), has had the effect of bracketing them as minorities, as people whose claims can only ever be minor within a national culture and frame of national belonging defined by others and their majority histories, usually read as histories of white belonging and white supremacy (Amin 2002; Hage 1998). But the claims of Asian youths in Britain's northern mill towns, just as those of Black Britons or 'Lebanese Australians' or 'Chinese Canadians,' are claims for more than minority recognition and minority rights. Theirs is a claim for the mainstream,[11] for a metaphorical shift from the margins to the centre, both in terms of the right to visibility and the right to reshape that mainstream. It is nothing less than a claim to full citizenship and a public naming of what has hitherto prevented that full citizenship—the assumption that to be British, Canadian, Australian, Dutch, and so on, is to be white, and part of white culture. As long as that assumption remains intact, the status of minority ethnic groups in all the Western democracies will remain of a different order to that of whites, always under question, always at the mercy of the 'tolerance' of the dominant culture, a tolerance built on an unequal power relationship (Hage 1998).

The crucial implication of this discussion is that in order to enable all citizens, regardless of 'race' or ethnicity or any other cultural criteria, to become equal members of the nation and contribute to an *evolving national identity,* 'the ethnic moorings of national belonging need to be exposed and replaced by criteria that have nothing to do with whiteness' (Amin 2002:22). Or as Gilroy (2000:328) puts it, 'the racial ontology of sovereign territory' needs to be recognized and contested. This requires an imagination of the nation as something other than a racial or ethnic territorial space, perhaps an imagination that conceives the nation as a space of traveling cultures and peoples with varying degrees and geographies of attachment. Such a move must insist that race and ethnicity are taken out of the definition of national identity and national belonging 'and replaced by ideals of citizenship, democracy and political community' (Amin 2002:23). This brings me to the rethinking of 20th century notions of multiculturalism (based as it was/is on ethno-cultural recognition), and that is the subject of the final section of this paper.

Part Three: Multiculturalism: Part of the solution or part of the problem?

'Multiculturalism is a boring word. It is grey and small and domestic. It does not include Europeans, It does not include internationalism. It is like an old cardigan knitted out of different colored scraps of wool.' (Young Asian man, quoted in Alibhai-Brown, 2000.)

'I think this kind of thing is for sad old people.' (Young Black man, quoted in Alibhai-Brown, ibid.)

---

[11] Or, perhaps, it is a claim for 'the end of mainstream' (see Dang 2002).

> 'I am sick of being told that I must be loyal to all that Britain is and was (including its destructive historical role) but that at the same time I must never forget that I am only a guest (unwanted and merely to be tolerated), with such a fragile existence that the bag must always be half-packed. Every time a political leader speaks in this way— and they have done so since 1948—they take away our right and desire to belong.' (Alibhai-Brown 2001).

If multiculturalism is to remain a relevant social project for the multiethnic cities of the 21st century, then surely it's time to explain what I mean by the term and engage with its detractors. I'd like to start with the young Black and Asian men in the above quotations. For them, multiculturalism is passé, yesterday's fashion, too limiting in the range of identities it permits. British feminist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown enlists these young men to her cause, which is to argue that what might once have been a good idea has reached it shelf life, is no longer relevant, in fact is downright divisive. Confessing that she was 'once a priestess of this philosophy,' Alibhai-Brown's case, in her pamphlet *After Multiculturalism* (2000), is that too much power and money has been given to Black and Asian 'community,' encouraging the perpetuation of ethnic enclaves that 'imprison the young and women in the name of "culture".' Teenagers who have grown up with multiculturalism, she argues, are impatient with the whole ideology. 'They reject the traditional categories which multiculturalism tries to shoehorn them into… their identities are changing in unpredictable ways.' This ideology is also guilty of creating resentment among poor whites, a conclusion reached by the Home Office's inquiry into community cohesion after the summer race riots, with which Alibhai-Brown agrees. She wants a 'new shared sense of Britishness… a strong diverse British identity' (Alibhai-Brown 2000).

Alibhai-Brown is not in fact talking about *the* 'ideology of multiculturalism' but about a specific version of it, which took root in Britain in the 1960s, proposed as a progressive response to the arrival of immigrants from Britain's former colonies with very different cultural backgrounds from traditional Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Celtic Britons. As a *fact*, multiculturalism describes the increasing cultural diversity of societies in late modernity. Empirically, many societies and many cities could be described today as multicultural. But very few countries have embraced and institutionalized an *ideology* of multiculturalism. Australia and Canada have done so since the late 1960s, as have Singapore and Malaysia, while during the same period, the USA has lived through its 'multicultural wars,' still uneasy with the whole notion, preferring the traditional 'melting pot' metaphor and its associated politics of assimilation. France has been most adamant that there is no place for this political recognition of difference in their republic. The Dutch and the Danish have been, at least until 2002, the most open to multicultural policy claims. Each of these countries has a

different definition of multiculturalism, different sets of public policies to deal with/respond to cultural difference, and correspondingly different definitions of citizenship.[12]

As an *ideology*, then, multiculturalism has a multiplicity of meanings. What is common in the sociological content of the term in the West—but never spoken of—is that it was formulated as a framework, a set of policies, for the national accommodation of non-white immigration. It was a liberal response that skirted the reality of the already racialized constitution of these societies and masked the existence of institutionalized racism.[13] The histories of multicultural policies are in fact much more complex and contested than this, and I can't really do justice to the genealogy of the term without a much more contextualized discussion of each country, which is not my purpose here. So instead, drawing on the distinguished British cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall, I will simply summarize the *range* of meanings that have been given to multiculturalism as ideology, and some of the dangers embedded in it. I then argue that since it is impractical to do away with the term, it is important to be precise about how we might want to use it.

Hall (2000) theorizes the multicultural question as both a global and local terrain of political contestation with crucial implications for the West. It is contested by the conservative Right, in defense of the purity and cultural integrity of the nation. It is contested by liberals, who claim that the 'cult of ethnicity,' the notion of 'group rights,' and the pursuit of 'difference' threaten the universalism and neutrality of the liberal state. Multiculturalism is also contested by 'modernizers of various political persuasions.' For them, the triumph of the (alleged) universalism of Western civilization over the particularisms of ethnic, religious, and racial belonging established in the Enlightenment marked an entirely worthy transition from tradition to modernity that is, and should be, irreversible. Some postmodern versions of *cosmopolitanism* oppose multiculturalism as imposing a too narrow, or closed, sense of identity. Some radicals argue that multiculturalism divides along ethnic lines what should be a united front of race and class against injustice and exploitation. Others point to commercialized, boutique, or consumerist multiculturalism as celebrating difference without making a difference (Hall 2000:211).

Clearly, multiculturalism is not a single doctrine and does not represent an already achieved state of affairs. It describes a variety of political strategies and processes that are everywhere incomplete. Just as there are different multicultural societies, so there are different multiculturalisms. Conservative multiculturalism insists on the assimilation of difference into the traditions and customs

---

[12] My next paper in this series will deal with these citizenship issues.
[13] See Hage (1998), on Australia; Hesse (2000) and Hall (2000), on the UK; Bannerji (1995, 2000), on Canada.

of the majority. Liberal multiculturalism seeks to integrate the different cultural groups as fast as possible into the 'mainstream' provided by a universal individual citizenship… Pluralist multiculturalism formally enfranchises the differences between groups along cultural lines and accords different group rights to different communities within a more…communitarian political order. Commercial multiculturalism assumes that if the diversity of individuals from different communities is recognized in the marketplace, then the problems of cultural difference will be dissolved through private consumption, without any need for a redistribution of power and resources. Corporate multiculturalism (public or private) seeks to 'manage' minority cultural differences in the interests of the centre. Critical or 'revolutionary' multiculturalism foregrounds power, privilege, the hierarchy of oppressions and the movements of resistance… And so on (Hall 2000:210).

Can a concept that has so many valences and such diverse and contradictory enemies possibly have any further use value? Alternatively, is its contested status precisely its value, an indication that a radical pluralist ethos is alive and well? My position is that we are inevitably implicated in the politics of multiculturalism, that is, in the actual production of multiculturalism on the ground, given the importance of contemporary demographic and socio-cultural forces (such as international migrations; a contested postcoloniality; the resurgence of indigenous peoples; and the rise of mobilized civil society). Therefore we need to find a way to publicly manifest the significance of cultural diversity, and to debate the value of various identities/differences; that is, to ask which differences exist, but should not, and which do not exist, but should.[14] Far from banishing the concept to political purgatory (as the Australian Prime Minister John Howard has done since 1996), or inventing a new term, we need to give it as rich a substance as possible, a substance that expands political possibilities and identities rather than purifying or closing them down. This leads me to define a *multicultural perspective*, (rather than a program), as a political and philosophical basis for thinking about how to deal with the challenge of difference in multicultural cities.

A multicultural perspective *for the 21st century*[15] might be composed of the following premises:

- The cultural embeddedness of humans is inescapable. We grow up in a culturally structured world, are deeply shaped by it, and necessarily view the world from within a specific culture.

---

[14] See Chantal Mouffe's discussion of this dilemma in her case for an agonistic democratic politics in *The Democratic Paradox* (2000).

[15] Before writing the third draft of this section, I discovered (thanks to Patsy Healey) Bhikhu Parekh's contribution to the debate, *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000), which parallels my own thinking. I have incorporated some of his insights.

We are capable of critically evaluating our own culture's beliefs and practices, and of understanding and appreciating as well as criticizing those of other cultures. But some form of cultural identity and belonging seems unavoidable.

- 'Culture' cannot be understood as static, eternally given, essentialist. It is always evolving, dynamic and hybrid of necessity. All cultures, even allegedly conservative or traditional ones, contain multiple differences within themselves that are continually being re-negotiated.

- Cultural diversity is a positive and intercultural dialogue is a necessary element of culturally diverse societies. No culture is perfect or can be perfected, but all cultures have something to learn from and contribute to others. Cultures grow through the everyday practices of social interaction.

- The political contestation of multiculturalism is inevitable. Among other things, it is symptomatic of an unresolved postcolonial condition in the West, an unfinished decolonization project.

- At the core of multiculturalism as a daily political practice are two rights: the right to difference and the right to the city. The right to difference means recognizing the legitimacy and specific needs of minority or subaltern cultures. The right to the city is the right to presence, to occupy public space, and to participate as an equal in public affairs.

- The 'right to difference' at the heart of multiculturalism must be perpetually contested against other rights (for example, human rights) and redefined according to new formulations and considerations.

- The notion of the perpetual contestation of multiculturalism implies an agonistic democratic politics that demands active citizenship and daily negotiations of difference in all of the banal sites of intercultural interaction.

- A sense of belonging in a multicultural society cannot be based on race, religion, or ethnicity but needs to be based on a shared commitment to political community. Such a commitment requires an empowered citizenry.

- Reducing fear and intolerance can only be achieved by addressing the material as well as cultural dimensions of 'recognition'. This means addressing the prevailing inequalities of political and economic power as well as developing new stories about and symbols of national and local identity and belonging.

There are (at least) two public goods embedded in a version of multiculturalism based on these understandings. One is the critical freedom to question in thought, and challenge in practice, one's inherited cultural ways. The other is the recognition of the widely-shared aspiration to belong to a culture and a place, and so to be at home in the world. This sense of belonging would be lost if one's culture were excluded, or if it was imposed on everyone. But there can also be a sense of belonging that comes from being associated with other cultures, gaining in strength and compassion from accommodation among and interrelations with others, and it is important to recognize and nurture those spaces of accommodation and intermingling. This version of multiculturalism accepts the indispensability of group identity to human life (and therefore to politics), precisely because it is inseparable from belonging. But this acceptance needs to be complicated by an insistence, a vigorous struggle against the idea that one's own group identity has a claim to intrinsic truth. If we can

acknowledge a drive within ourselves, and within all of our particular cultures, to naturalize the identities given to us, we can simultaneously be vigilant about the danger implicit in this drive, which is the almost irresistible desire to impose one's identity, one's way of life, one's very definition of normality and of goodness, on others. Thus we arrive at a lived conception of identity/difference that recognizes itself as historically contingent and inherently relational; and a cultivation of a care for difference through strategies of critical detachment from the identities that constitute us (Connolly 1991; Tully 1995). In this multicultural imagination, the twin goods of belonging and of freedom can be made to support rather than oppose each other.

From a multicultural perspective, the good society does not commit itself to a particular vision of the good life and then ask how much diversity it can tolerate within the limits set by this vision. To do so would be to foreclose future societal development. Rather, a multicultural perspective advocates accepting the reality and desirability of cultural diversity and then structuring political life accordingly. At the very least, this political life must be dialogically and agonistically constituted. But the dialogue requires certain institutional preconditions, such as freedom of speech, participatory public spaces, empowered citizens, agreed procedures and basic ethical norms, and the active policing of discriminatory practices. It also calls for 'such essential political virtues as mutual respect and concern, tolerance, self-restraint, willingness to enter into unfamiliar worlds of thought, love of diversity, a mind open to new ideas and a heart open to others' needs, and the ability to persuade and live with unresolved differences' (Parekh 2000: 340).

A notion of the common good is vital to any political society. From a multicultural perspective, this common good must be generated not by transcending or ignoring cultural and other differences (the liberal position), but through their interplay in a dialogical, agonistic political life. Finally, a sense of belonging, which is important in any society, cannot be ethnic or based on shared cultural, ethnic or other characteristics. A multicultural society is too diverse for that. A sense of belonging must ultimately be political, based on a shared commitment to a political community (Parekh 2000:341; Amin 2002:23). This commitment 'does not involve sharing common substantive goals, for its members might deeply disagree about these, nor a common view of its history which they may read differently, nor a particular economic or social system… commitment to the political community involves commitment to its continuing existence and well-being… and implies that one cares enough not to harm its interests and undermine its integrity' (Parekh 2000: 341-342).

Since commitment, or belonging, must be reciprocal, citizens will not feel these things unless their political community is also committed to them and makes them feel that they belong. Here's the rub, then. A multicultural political community 'cannot expect its members to develop a sense of

belonging to it unless it equally values and cherishes them in all their diversity, and reflects this in its structure, policies, conduct of public affairs, self-understanding and self-definition' (Parekh 2000:342). It would be safe to say that no existing (self-described) multicultural society can yet claim to have achieved this state of affairs, for reasons that have already been elaborated: political and economic inequalities accompanied by an unresolved postcolonial condition that we may as well name as racism. But in recent years these issues have been identified, increasingly documented, and are becoming the focus of political activity in many countries. The 21st century is indisputably the century of multicultural cities and societies. It will also be the century of struggle for multiculturalism, and against fundamentalism, which is a belief in cultural (or religious) purity. The following paper turns to how this struggle plays itself out in cities and neighborhoods, and what citizens, city governments, and the city building professions can do to advance the project of a 21st century multiculturalism.

References

Albrow, M. 1997. Travelling Beyond Local Cultures: Socioscapes in a Global City. In *Living the Global City. Globalization as a local process*, ed. J. Eade. London: Routledge.

Alibhai-Brown, Y. 2000. 'Diversity versus Multiculturalism,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 May.

———. 2001. 'Mr. Blunkett has insulted all of us,' *The Independent*, 10 December.

Amin, Ash. 2002. *Ethnicity and the Multicultural City. Living with Diversity*. Report for the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions. Durham: University of Durham.

Bannerji, H. 1995. *Thinking Through*. Toronto: Women's Press.

———. 2000. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.

Connolly, W. 1991. *Identity\Difference*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

———. 1995. *The Ethos of Pluralization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dang, S. 2002. *Creating Cosmopolis:The end of mainstream.* Masters Thesis, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia.

Donald, J. 1999. *Imagining the Modern City*. London: The Athlone Press.

Germain, A. 2002. The social sustainability of multicultural cities: A neighborhood affair? BELGEO 377-86.

Germain, A. and Rose, D. 2000. Montreal. The Quest for a Metropolis. London: Wiley and Sons.

Gilroy, P. 2000. *Between Camps*. London: Penguin.

Hage, G. 1998. *White Nation: fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society*. Sydney: Pluto Press.

Hall, S. 2000. Conclusion: the Multi-cultural Question. In *Un/settled Multiculturalisms*, ed. B. Hesse. London: Zed Books.

Hesse, B. 2000. Introduction. In *Un/settled Multiculturalisms*, ed. B. Hesse. London: Zed Books.

Home Office. 2001. *Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion*. London: Home Office/Her Majesty's Government.

Kenney, M. 2001. *Mapping Gay L.A. The Intersection of Place and Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Kristeva, . 1991. *Strangers to Ourselves*. New York: Columbia University Press. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez.

Mitchell, K. 1996. In Whose Interest? Transnational Capital and the Production of Multiculturalism in Canada. In *Global/Local. Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, ed. R. Wilson and W. Dissanayake. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mouffe, C. 2000. *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.

Parekh, B. 2000. *Rethinking Multiculturalism*. London: Macmillan.

Pestieau, K. and M. Wallace. 2003. Challenges and Opportunities for Planning in the Ethno-culturally Diverse City: A Collection of Papers – Introduction. *Planning Theory and Practice* 4 (3): 253-58.

Rocco, R. 2000. Associational rights-claims, civil society and place. In *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, ed. E. Isin. London: Routledge.

Rushdie, S. 1992. *Imaginary Homelands*. London: Granta Books.

Sassen, S. 1996. Whose City Is It? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims. *Public Culture*, 8:205-223.

Seguin, A-M, and A. Germain. 2000. The Social Sustainability of Montreal: A Local or a State Matter? In *The Social Sustainability of Cities. Diversity and Management of Change*, ed. M. Polese and R. Stren. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Sennett, R. 1994. *Flesh and Stone. The Body and The City in Western Civilization*. New York: Norton.

Tully, J. 1995. *Strange Multiplicity. Constitutionalism in an age of diversity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Urban Task Force. 1999. *Towards an Urban Renaissance*. London: E & FN Spon.

West, C. 1990. The New Cultural Politics of Difference. In *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. R. Ferguson, M. Gever, T. T. Minh-ha, and C. West. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Young, I. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

No.	Author(s)	Title	Date
02-01	Galina Didukh	Immigrants and the Demand for Shelter	01/02
02-02	Abdala Mansour, Nicolas Marceau and Steeve Mongrain	Gangs and Crime Deterrence	02/02
02-03	Harald Bauder and Emilie Cameron	Cultural Barriers to Labour Market Integration: Immigrants from South Asia and the former Yugoslavia	02/02
02-04	Brian Geiger	Clothing Demand for Canadian-born and Foreign-born Households	01/02
02-05	Dan Hiebert	Canadian Immigration and the Selection-settlement Services Trade-off: Exploring Immigrant Economic Participation in British Columbia	02/02
02-06	David W. Edgington and Thomas A. Hutton	Multicultural and Local Government in Greater Vancouver	03/02
02-07	Steven Vertovec	Religion in Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism	03/02
02-08	Isabel Dyck	Becoming Canadian? Girls, Home and School and Renegotiating Feminine Identity	05/02
02-09	Parin Dossa	Modernization and Global Restructuring of Women's Work: Border-Crossing Stories of Iranian Women	03/02
02-10	Barry Edmonston	Interprovincial Migration of Canadian Immigrants	03/02
02-11	Handy Gozalie	Immigrants' Earnings and Assimilation into Canada's Labour Market: The Case of Overachievers.	04/02
02-12	Isabel Dyck and Arlene Tigar Mclaren	"I don't feel quite competent here": Immigrant Mothers' Involvement with Schooling	05/02
02-13	Geraldine Pratt	Between Homes: Displacement and Belonging for Second Generation Filipino-Canadian Youths	06/02
02-14	Kangqing Zhang and Don DeVoretz	Human Capital Investment and Flows: A Multiperiod Model for China	07/02
02-15	Minelle Mahtani and Alison Mountz	Immigration to British Columbia: Media Representation and Public Opinion	08/02
02-16	Kathrine Richardson	Sieve or Shield? NAFTA and its Influence within Cascadia	06/02
02-17	Don J. DeVoretz, Zhongdong Ma and Kangqing Zhang	Triangular Human Capital Flows: Some Empirical Evidence from Hong Kong and Canada	10/02
02-18	Deirdre McKay	Filipina Identities: Geographies of Social Integration/Exclusion in the Canadian Metropolis	10/02
02-19	Aranzazu Recalde	Recent Latin Americans in Vancouver: Unyielding Diverse Needs Versus Insufficient Services	08/02

No.	Author(s)	Title	Date
02-20	Gillian Creese and Edith Ngene Kambere	"What Colour is Your English"?"	11/02
02-21	Kate Geddie	Licence to Labour: Obstacles Facing Vancouver's Foreign-Trained Engineers	11/02
02-22	Bernard Henin and Michelle R. Bennett	Immigration to Canada's Mid-Sized Cities: A Study of Latin Americans and Africans in Victoria, BC	12/02
02-23	A. Charlton, S. Duff, D. Grant, A. Mountz, R.Pike, J. Sohn and C. Taylor	The Challenges to Responding to Human Smuggling in Canada: Practitioners Reflect on the 1999 Boat Arrivals in British Columbia	12/02
03-01	David Ley	Offsetting Immigration and Domestic Migration I Gateway Cities: Canadian and Australian Reflections on an 'American Dilemma'	01/03
03-02	Don DeVoretz and Kangqing Zhang	Citizenship, Passports and the Brain Exchange Triangle	01/03
03-03	Johanna L. Waters and Sin Yih Teo	Social and Cultural Impacts of Immigration: An Examination of the Concept of 'Social Cohesion' with Implications for British Columbia	01/03
03-04	June Beynon, Roumiana Ilieva, and Marela Dichupa	"Do you know your language?" How Teachers of Punjabi and Chinese Ancestries Construct their Family Languages in their Personal and Professional Lives	01/03
03-05	Daniel Hiebert, Jock Collins, and Paul Spoonley	Uneven Globalization: Neoliberal Regimes, Immigration, and Multiculturalism in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand	02/03
03-06	Daniel Hiebert	Are Immigrants Welcome? Introducing the Vancouver Community Studies Survey	03/03
03-07	Yan Shi	The Impact of Canada's Immigration Act on Chinese Independent Immigrants	04/03
03-08	Roger Andersson	Settlement Dispersal of Immigrants and Refugees in Europe: Policy and Outcomes	03/03
03-09	Daniel Hiebert and Ravi Pendakur	Who's Cooking? The Changing Ethnic Division of Labour in Canada, 1971-1996	03/03
03-10	Serviy Pivnenko and Don DeVoretz	Economic Performance of Ukrainian Immigrants in Canada and the United States	03/03
03-11	Don J. DeVoretz, Sergiy Pivnenko, Diane Coulombe	The Immigrant Triangle: Québec, Canada and the Rest of the World	05/03
03-12	David W. Edgington, Michael A. Goldberg,and Thomas A. Hutton	The Hong Kong Chinese in Vancouver	04/03
03-13	Margaret Walton-Roberts and Geraldine Pratt	Mobile Modernities: One South Asian Family Negotiates Immigration, Gender and Class	09/03