PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

BOB W. WHITE / Workshop Objectives and Orientations

The «Building Intercultural Cities» workshop brings together practitioners and theoreticians in an effort to mobilize knowledge about the creation and implementation of intercultural policies for cities. The structure of the workshop—city-based case studies in the morning and practical theory workshops in the afternoon—reflects the question that is at the center of our research partnership: How can we reduce the gap between public policy and intercultural practices on the ground? In order to answer this question we need to look at the frameworks that inform policy, but also historical context and change over time. Workshop participants will be asked to participate in the process of identifying a certain number of common principles that facilitate social cohesion through intercultural policy and planning.

PATRICE ALLARD / Social Diversity and Intercultural Challenges in Montreal

Intercultural dynamics are a living part of individual’s lives and the societies in which they live. Cities are at the center of this process. A global portrait of ethnocultural diversity in Montreal will shed light on the challenges that are faced by those involved in intercultural policy and practice. After presenting some demographic material about diversity in Montreal, we will explore several factors that lead to the discrimination of ethnic and visible minorities. An analysis of the different roles and responsibilities of municipal administrations (service provider, mediator, facilitator, employer) will precede a series of local examples in order to reflect upon the links between public policy and intercultural practice in the city.

IRENA GUIDIKOVA / Intercultural Cities in Contemporary Europe

Intercultural Cities, a Council of Europe initiative, has developed and tested, at the local level, a diversity management model, called intercultural integration. It is based on the notion of diversity advantage – considering migrants and minorities as a resource for local economic, social and cultural development, and not as vulnerable groups in need of welfare support and services, or a threat to social cohesion and the nation’s identity. Intercultural integration implies a strategic reorientation of urban governance and policies to encourage adequate representation, positive intercultural mixing and interaction, and institutional capacity to deal with cultural conflict. Intercultural cities offers a comprehensive methodology for helping cities develop their diversity strategies, and a range of analytical and assessment tools, including the Intercultural cities INDEX. The presentation will introduce the main principles and the operational framework of the intercultural integration model, along with some illustrative examples of how the model translates into practice.
CÉLINE MAYE, OLIVER FREEMAN / Township of Neuchâtel

The township of Neuchâtel was the first Swiss regional state entity to institutionalize issues related to the integration of foreigners, with the creation of a commission in 1990. The current name of the Office of Multicultural Cohesion (COSM) summarizes the Neuchâtel model of integration: a process of mutual adaptation between Swiss and foreign populations, understood not as an end in itself but as a means of ensuring social cohesion. The intercultural policy of the township is designed for greater participation in economic, social, cultural, and political life. A particular focus is on welcoming new arrivals and quickly providing them with information regarding the issue of citizenship, in a township where foreigners who are permanently residents can vote. A charter of citizenship referring to the principles and foundations of Neuchâtel is thus widely distributed. Particular attention is paid to collaboration with migrant associations and communities. The role of mediation, as a link between these associations and the state, is provided by COSM. The commission also works closely with the Community with respect to integration and multicultural cohesion (ICMC). The commission is composed of forty members, more than a quarter of whom represent migrant associations. In addition to public services and academia, the commission includes representatives from trade unions and employers in a space for encouraging dialogue and together building intercultural policy. In each term, the priorities and recommendations to be implemented are drawn up. For Neuchâtel, in the future, it will be a matter of preserving its specificity in a deteriorating climate that tends to harden speech and impact federal laws.

PAUL CHAPMAN, JUDE BLOOMFIELD / Lewisham Borough of London

The presentation will seek to explain how and why Lewisham has embraced cultural diversity and embedded it in innovative ways across many policy domains without having an explicit intercultural discourse. It will argue that Lewisham’s ‘diversity of diversity’, its political culture of solidarity and commitment to equality, strategic leadership, the growing legitimacy and openness of its institutions to long-term collaboration with critical and diverse intellectuals, artists and the wider civil society have shaped policies which reflect and harness intercultural reality. It will consider the impact of this on new transversal structures of policy-making and partnership relations with voluntary and community organisations. Some examples will illustrate the positive intercultural impact of its community engagement strategy – e.g. local neighbourhood assemblies, and its regeneration strategy e.g. in Deptford High St. Finally some of the problems threatening an egalitarian policy ethos will also be highlighted - and the limitation the lack of an explicit intercultural commitment poses.

LA MAISONNÉE / Social Participation and Full Citizenship

The failure to recognize immigrants as full participants within institutions is a barrier to integration. With regards to employment, what immigrants can bring in terms of interests and skills is a crucial part of recognition. This difficulty is closely related to the “discrimination shock” experienced by many immigrants. In order to understand this dynamic, it is necessary to analyse not only the situation of the immigrant, but also that of the host society, which manifests certain difficulties, often unable to see the investment that newly arrived immigrants and their
children make in its institutions. In terms of intercultural relations, the majority retains the power to categorize others, thus, a priori, we must ask the question: Do we accept that contact with people who are different will also transform the host society? As with immigrants, to what point is it possible and with what means? This is a question that is as much ideological as sociological. There are many co-existing visions of social participation by and for immigrants. By encouraging immigrants to participate in multiple social and professional networks, La Maisononnée aims to provide them with the means to learn the parameters of their host society as part of a process that occurs over time. At the same time, the Quebec Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion targets more a functional participation within the employment market. Which vision do the stakeholders at the Maisononnée adopt in their interventions with immigrant families?

BELGACEM RAHMANI / Montreal’s Urban Development Plan

To begin, it is necessary to contextualize the question of ethnic and religious diversity that is the object of the development plan of Montreal; members of a plural society will encompass a multiplicity of characteristics, including cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, physiological diversity and status diversity, to name a few. Within the framework of the next Montreal Development Plan, we present an overview of the issues, challenges and principles that should underpin this development in a context of increasing diversity and cosmopolitanism. This presentation addresses these different questions from the angle of economic development by focusing on ethnic commercial routes before turning to an analysis of urban space and the fluidity of emergent territorial configurations within a context of increasing religious diversity. We conclude with an analysis of cultural spaces and public recreation, as well as social housing and the reality of immigrant families. From this analysis will follow a number of suggestions for the administrators of this development plan in order to show that intercultural policy has become essential for the city of Montreal.

HELENA ROJAS, DANIEL DE TORRES BARDERI / City of Botkyrka

Recently, Botkyrka became the first municipality in Sweden where the majority of the inhabitants with immigrant background are born in Sweden. This means that Botkyrka, with other Swedish municipalities soon to follow, has reached the next step after more than 50 years of immigration flows from different parts of the world. This presentation will address the steps Botkyrka has taken to see the intercultural approach as a central aspect of the strategic focus for the municipality. It will also explain Botkyrka’s character, context and challenges as one of the youngest and the most ethnic diverse municipality in Sweden. We will accomplish this goal by explaining the long-term planning strategy for an intercultural Botkyrka, and the strategic importance of working to make the day to day work of the municipal administration intercultural (5 year goal) as well as Botkyrka as a place and the Stockholm region (10 year goal) and Sweden as a whole (15 year goal). Within the administration we are introducing a paradigm shift that may be more painful in the Swedish context and history of a strong public service. The target is to go from the integration/multicultural policies to embrace an approach that is explicitly intercultural. Without this progression, there is a strong belief that Botkyrka will never be able to achieve equal rights for all inhabitants, or change perceptions about who is seen and accepted as Swedish - something that can be seen as a major limitation to reaching common goals.
Since 2001, the City of Reggio Emilia has been improving intercultural policies with an ongoing commitment. The main action has been to create an Intercultural Centre that will enable foreign citizens and associations of cultural minorities to participate more fully in the social, cultural, economical, and political life of the city. For Mondinsieme and the City of Reggio Emilia, the process of creating intercultural policy in a way that improves social cohesion should focus on at least on three features: 1) **Participation of associations and second generation residents**: it is important to involve people with a migration background in the process that shapes policies concerning the needs and services of the city’s residents. In these terms, they are not a target population, but actively involved in the process of integration, which is increasingly a collective enterprise. 2) **Schools and education**: we think that it is necessary to recognize the strategic value of schools as the place for promoting cultural diversity and taking action against discrimination and racism, thereby enhancing the role of young people as active citizens that respect, include, and recognize people from different backgrounds. 3) **Cultural diversity in media and public spaces**: intercultural communication, art, storytelling plays a key role in contributing to freedom, equality, and cohesion among people, ensuring participation in political, economic and social life, and giving them a place in public spaces. The “narrative capital” of people with a background in migration is a valuable source of knowledge and a potential of improvement for the community they live in. This presentation focuses on the conditions to develop an intercultural framework in Reggio Emilia, starting from the historical, juridical, and political context related to immigration in Italy, to the direct and active involvement of the Municipality in these issues. Furthermore, strategies to ensure intercultural policies will endure to the extent that integration policies focus on the cultural and educational needs of the population, thus strengthening networks at several levels, with local, regional, national, and international organizations.

A number of studies have highlighted the difficulties faced by newcomers who professional development and integration within their host society. If overall the unemployment rate of natives is lower than immigrants, there are differences, often important, between immigrant communities. We can observe that, in their quest for professional integration, certain individuals benefit from advantages of an extensive and broad community network that is particularly focused on interethnic and/or religious solidarity, while others do not. This leads us to ask whether the strength or weakness of the intra-community networks is linked to the entrepreneurial spirit? In other words, of those communities that offer assistance, is it because they have special expertise, contrary to others? Or, from a wider perspective, are there other factors that are important to understand, without reinforcing cultural and social ghettos? In the framework of the upcoming Montreal Development Plan, this analysis presents an overview of the issues and challenges, as well as the principles that should underpin this development within a context of increasing immigration and increasingly visible ethnic and religious diversity.
Since the digital revolution, libraries have become powerful mechanisms in the transformation of information and knowledge management. By virtue of the local nature of their services, which places them at the heart of their communities, they are also tools for social transformation. Libraries play a unique role. Their presence in neighbourhoods, their accessibility and free access allow for human-level interventions and offer an environment for the development of individuals and communities. Although far from having attained its full potential, this is especially true in a compact urban environment such as Montreal, where forty-five libraries reflect an exceptional heritage. Indeed, at the intersection of these key encounters that every citizen has in their life, from education, career and general culture to the quality of the surrounding environment, libraries are favourable and secure spaces for the convergence of services that are today dispersed, but, were they to be brought together, would invite efficacy, efficiency and coherence. In view of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery, this presentation proposes to develop and enrich the importance of this social issue as a site of convergence. All the while keeping in mind that new habits and expectations have significantly changed the role of libraries in the past few years, this presentation also recommends the principles and routes of action for initiating dialogue for reinforcing their role.

Much of what Barcelona is today in terms of intercultural relations has to do with our history and geographical location, but also with the city's leading position in economy, tourism, the arts, culture, academic research. In this highly multicultural context, the City of Barcelona began to develop a commitment to interculturality more than fifteen years ago, coinciding with the rise in immigration from African, Asian and Latin American countries that occurred at the end of the 90s. In an effort to provide the local administration with a road map for intercultural practices, city plans have reflected the interaction with the rich social fabric of community-based organisations and innovative research and training initiatives, which have often been a few steps ahead in exploring conceptual issues and methodologies for ensuring equal opportunities and social cohesion. Today the impulse given in previous stages of local government with regards to intercultural policies has paved the way for a period of strategic growth and consolidation of practices and projects both internally throughout city hall departments and externally on the city and neighborhood level. With a strong focus on fostering opportunities for positive community interaction between people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, we are learning from our work together with the wide variety of stakeholders and agents involved in facing the challenges through dialogue and networking processes on the micro level. Impact thus seems to be greater in the long run and more appropriate now by implementing practices and developing tools on a smaller scale. In the face of obstacles and in the knowledge of existing opportunities, this allows for engaging more people and mobilizing key sectors across the city in advancing the cause of intercultural policy. In turn, these dynamic and flexible strategies feed back into the city's intercultural policy framework with greater insight regarding how exactly the common principles of interculturality should be implemented in each context and over time.
TONE SKODVIN, PHIL WOOD / City of Oslo

The Oslo city council, in partnership with a dynamic civil society, takes an active role in policy-making and diversity management, and this is reflected in consistently high rankings for Oslo in the Intercultural Cities Index. The city’s integration policy - OXLO Oslo Extra Large – has evolved from an anti-racist campaign into a comprehensive, value-based strategy for promoting diversity in all sectors. Equality of access to services and opportunities, and the maintenance of social trust, are fundamental values at the heart of Oslo’s approach. Heavy investment in language tuition, childcare and education is now paying dividends, with minorities performing strongly at university and in many sectors of the labour market. However, there remain some tricky issues to resolve such as the persistence of discrimination in recruitment and private housing, and welfare dependency amongst some groups. The presentation will trace a ‘timeline’ of significant moments in the recent past where key policy choices had to be made, examining how the city faced up to them. It will analyse what this reveals about the policy community and ‘management culture’ the city, through the relationships between different sectors and the nature of their discourse, the different forms of leadership that emerge and the complex local/national dynamics, arriving at some conclusions about the ‘Oslo way’ of doing things.

KIRA BERMUDEZ ANDERSON, PATRICE ALLARD, RICARD ZAPATA-BARRERO, BOB W. WHITE / Technical Partnership Between Barcelona and Montreal

In 2011 the city of Montreal was recognized by the Council of Europe as part of its “Intercultural Cities” program. In September 2012, representatives from the city of Montreal were invited to participate in a conference on intercultural cities organized by the GRITIM-UPF, the Red de Ciudades Interculturales (RECI) and the Council of Europe. Informal discussions led participants from Montreal and Barcelona to think of the benefits to representatives of both cities to create future collaborations (http://labrri.wordpress.com/2012/10/21/monitoring-intercultural-cities/). As a first step, representatives of both cities offered to organize a series of videoconferences with the goal of comparing ideas and orientations for the elaboration of intercultural policies and practices. Throughout these discussions we discussed a variety of topics, ranging from intercultural theory, to political mobilization strategies and specific programs and initiatives. The roundtable discussion will take up some of the highlights of the videoconferences and discuss not only the model of technical partnership between cities but also plans for the future.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

After two days of work bringing together experts, researchers, city representatives and community organizers, we will attempt to look at what data has been generated from the workshop. In this general discussion we will attempt to answer the question that has been at the center of our concerns: How can we reduce the gap between public policies and intercultural practices on the ground? During this session we will see if it is possible to identify a number of common principles for the creation of intercultural policy frameworks. In order to do this, we need to examine the factors that constrain and facilitate policies that lead to intercultural dialogue and more generally social inclusion and cohesion.