REIMAGINING FUTURES- THREATS AND CHALLENGES FOR URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

Key themes in public space debate

Growing diversity of cities particularly as a result of processes of globalisation- the making of everyday multiculturalism.

Gentrification, regeneration and redevelopment policies

Commercialisation, privatisation and securitisation of public spaces.

Maintaining and making flexible and open public spaces
SOME THOUGHTS

Cities are always and inevitably spaces that are made and unmade, shifting across time and space, produced in the interstices and textures of everyday socio-cultural, political, economic, and material life.

There is no one narrative that can ever make sense of cities, which are instead heterogeneous, shifting and unsettled terrains embedded in ever changing contested socio-political landscapes and routines.

- Therefore policy planning and design initiatives have to be flexible and responsive to different contexts.
CITIES ARE UNSETTLED PLACES

- One such landscape of the unsettled spaces of the city is the ‘multi-cultural’ variously understood and conceived by urban theorists, and frequently mobilized as a strategy by urban policy makers or politicians either in negative or inclusive terms.

- ‘Successful multiculturalism’ is ‘made’ and is a precarious and often unstable settlement.
My Research looks at one area in London to consider:

First, to what extent did the locality follow the perceived trend in many globalized cities towards the acquisition of habits or capacity for diverse individuals to share space with relative harmony and tolerance – variously termed conviviality, cosmopolitanism and/or everyday multiculturalism.

• Second, what constitutes the elements of these terms and how is everyday multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism or conviviality assembled and what are its components?

• Third, what is the assemblage of forces fracturing these achievements in living across differences in the city that many of us want to celebrate, defend and encourage?
FINDINGS

- Explorations of this rapidly changing space which shifted from white working class to a very diverse population a decade ago revealed:
  - Resentment and nostalgia
  - Recent research revealed:
  - Successful everyday multiculturalism.
MARKET DAY
MOROCCAN CAFE
EVERYDAY LIFE
CLOTH STALL IN THE MARKET
FRANK’S
EXTENDED SHOP
Informal initiatives- in Queens Crescent shop owners let street traders attach stalls to the shop
New community associations- youth projects, community gardens etc
Mosques in old shops or private houses
Interstitial places for informal meeting and work- Chris the tailor.
Strong Community policing
Key Local figures- Frank the grocer
IN Volvement of Migrants in Key Organisations

Important to involve new migrant communities in local organisations
Public libraries
Language classes
Consultation
New projects- eg the community garden, the youth project, the City Farm
STRATEGIES
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Important
LOCAL MOSQUE
COMMUNITY GARDEN
VIBRANT STREET CULTURE
INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES OF REGENERATION

Government regeneration policy frequently led by private developers- land and housing seen as profit.

In capital cities this has negative consequences for migrants- where predominance of informal sector employment

Queens Crescent example- small businesses –eg car repairs, clothing workshops etc sold for redevelopment.
MAKING AND PROTECTING FLEXIBLE OPEN SPACES FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

Water (Blue) Spaces

- Fountains
- Ponds
- Pools
- Beaches
BRADFORD MIRROR POOL AT SUNSET
A SUNNY WEEKEND
BRADFORD POOL AT NIGHT
KIDS PLAYING AT NIGHT
THE MENS’ POND
THE MIXED POND
THE WOMEN’S POND
THE WOMEN’S POND
ANGLERS
CONSTRUCTION ON THE DAMS
SITE WALK FOR THE ANTI POND GROUP