

## **UNESCO and IUAV EGM on Cosmopolitan Urbanism: Urban Policies for the Social and Spatial Integration of International Migrants.**

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Globally, people are on the move - whether fleeing conflict, disasters or simply seeking a better life somewhere else, the number of people on the move today is greater than ever before. According to UN-DESA Population Division figures, it is estimated that currently some 200 million people constitute a group of forced and labour migrants and their families.<sup>1</sup> This figure is projected to increase to 230 million by 2050. Migration is a multi-dimensional and cross cutting issue and its impact on the changing urban landscape is a critical part of the process of globalization. Raising complex and often conflicting sets of policy challenges, it is increasingly at the forefront of local, national, regional and international agendas. This complexity is compounded by the fact that migration involves relations between sovereign states, while resulting essentially from decisions by individuals and families.<sup>2</sup> Migrants may move within their own country and between countries; some people move for short periods, others permanently; some are forced to move, others do so willingly; some people move with high levels of financial and human capital; others are not so well resourced; and so on<sup>3</sup>. Therefore making conclusive generalised observations about migratory flows and their impact is not always possible, but the importance and contemporary political saliency of the issue is such that it is essential to reach some actionable conclusions.

### **The urbanization and migration interface: a critical dimension for the future of cities.**<sup>4</sup>

According to global trends, migration is a predominantly urban phenomenon. Urban areas continue to be the essential sites of destination and settlement for migrant populations across the globe and the dynamics of urban growth and urbanization are often closely related to the dynamics of migration.<sup>5</sup> Migration is at the very heart of the growth and nature of cities, contributing fundamentally to their economic, social and

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<sup>1</sup> UN-DESA Population Division (New York: 2005)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Commission for Social Development, 42nd Session (New York: 2004.)

<sup>3</sup> Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, *Migration and Development* ( paper prepared for the policy analysis and research programme of the Global Commission on International Migration, Institute for Public Policy Research:2006) , 5.

<sup>4</sup> Jorge Gaspar, *Cities of Promise & Cities of Success: Migration, Cities & Urban Policy*, ( policy brief presented at the EU Greek Presidency conference on managing migration, Greece: 2003), 4

<sup>5</sup> Id., at, 3.

cultural complementarities and diversity.<sup>6</sup> The diversity of migration flows coupled with the changes in global migration patterns have also coincided with (and are related to) the emergence of “global” or “world” cities.<sup>7</sup> Migrants move to cities attracted by the possibility of better economic, political and social opportunities and globalising cities across the world are becoming the focus of migrant movements.

Cities may be viewed as the ‘bedrock of integration’<sup>8</sup> – the places where the cultural diversity of migrants, as well as the challenge of living together with the differences that shape the social contemporary urban environment are brought together. Cities face distinct challenges and specific responsibilities- it can be argued that the success and failure of issues relating to integration and inclusion are first and foremost experienced at the city level. In this regard local authorities find themselves at the frontline- it is at the local level of municipalities and cities that tensions between national and local government policy becomes visible, and the need for coordination between migration policies and policies addressing inclusion and integration become urgent.<sup>9</sup> While migration is largely regulated at the national level in terms of who enters a country and in what numbers, cities and local authorities have an essential role to play key role in promoting social integration, participation and representation of migrants.<sup>10</sup>

Related to this 21<sup>st</sup> century urban reality is the fact that in many countries, international migrants constitute a growing group of urban residents that are victims of social exclusion, spatial segregation, and discriminatory behavior. They are often denied access to housing and urban services and have limited voice in decision-making. The challenges that arise are considerable and cut across all areas of city governance.<sup>11</sup> Few city governments have fully developed policies that deal explicitly with the issues posed by migration, or refer to migration in their urban development plans, often reflecting the low level of understanding that the impact of migration can have on urban development. Frequently, migration is solely perceived as a problem, where migrants are believed to endanger city economic and social stability.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ninety five per cent of the world’s urban population growth in the next two decades will be absorbed by cities in the developing world, and other cities in the developed world to which people migrate. It is estimated that almost half (46.5%) of Africa’s projected population will live in cities by the year 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Marie Price et al, “The world settles in: Washington DC, as an immigrant gateway” *Urban Geography*, 26, no.1 (2005): 61-82

<sup>8</sup> Brain Ray, *Immigrant Integration: Building to Opportunity* (Migration Policy Institute: 2002), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Rinus Pennix, *Integration: The role of Communities, Institutions and the State*, (migration Policy Institute: 2003), 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*,3

<sup>12</sup> Jorge Gaspar, *Cities of Promise & Cities of Success: Migration, Cities & Urban Policy*, (Policy brief presented at the Greek Presidency Conference on Managing Migration, Greece: May 2003), 1.

## **Urban policies for the social and spatial integration of international migrants**

Managing the complex relationship and interdependence between international migration and urban development requires new responses and necessitates a rethinking of urban policies in order to address challenges and maximise opportunities. UN-HABITAT recognises that if we want to build inclusive societies, we have to pay attention to building inclusive cities – without this, social and economic cohesion, and social and spatial equality will suffer. As public policies influence the conditions and opportunities for social and spatial integration and also for social exclusion and marginalization, their inclusion in appropriate policy interventions are important in order to promote sustainable urban development.

However, we must realize that stating the social and spatial integration of migrants as our broad objective is far simpler than defining what integration is in practice and the context sensitive interventions and processes to accomplish it. Centering on the complex dynamics of separation and interaction and the social interactions and relationships within and between groups, the reality is that some forms and degrees of segregation and separation between communities and residents will continue to shape the pattern of life in some cities.<sup>13</sup> This complexity is underlined by the fact that spatial proximity or integration does not automatically result in social interaction or social integration. Moreover it has been argued that, ‘...segregation is a universal phenomenon, which is as old as the city itself. The socio-spatial structure of the city can be read like a map recording the structure of society...’<sup>14</sup> Thus the reality in many of our cities is a complex picture of partial segregation co-existing with practical accommodation of difference and everyday social mixing.<sup>15</sup>

However, it is nonetheless important that segregation does not become polarisation, that identities are not built on exclusionary grounds and that separation does not express itself in ignorance, prejudice and fear of other people and it is crucial that these issues are addressed in urban policies. While a socially and spatially integrated society is desirable, we also need to reflect that these characteristics may have to exist in some sort of creative tension.<sup>16</sup> Integration in all its forms may simply imply the existence of a stable community in which people can find a niche. This may be lacking in a mobile, ever changing city, particularly so in informal settlements throughout the world, unless policies address the issue.

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<sup>13</sup> Hudson et al., *Social cohesion in Diverse Communities*, (London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007)

<sup>14</sup> Haubermann & Siebel (2001), quoted in Alonso Alfredo Ayala Aleman, *A theoretical framework of the integration process of barrios in Caracas, Venezuela* (n.p., n.d.), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Hudson, *Op cit.*, 10

<sup>16</sup> In most societies, there is an ever-present tension between tolerance, prejudice and racism, and cohesion and conflict.

## **Social exclusion and spatial segregation in informal settlements**

Indeed for UN-HABITAT, one of the one of the most challenging development issues in our cities is the socioeconomic and spatial integration of people living in informal settlements. 2007 is a significant landmark in urban history, as it is the moment when the world entered a new urban millennium with the majority of people living in cities for the first time in history.<sup>17</sup> It is also the point where the number of slum dwellers in the world reached the one billion mark. In reality, this means that on average one in every three city residents will be living in inadequate housing with none or few basic services. For many migrants, informal settlements represent the entry point to the city as they find people they know and communities that can help sustain the first steps of economic and social integration into city life.

People living in informal settlements often feel a sense of dislocation from the surrounding formal city and must struggle not only with the daily realities of their living environment, reflected in the lack of access to basic urban services, but also with insecurity of tenure, ambiguous citizenship status, unemployment, high crime rates and a lack of participation or power in the decision making processes that affect their lives.<sup>18</sup> The combination of social isolation and geographical segregation is therefore a powerful mechanism of exclusion in the lives of slum dwellers.<sup>19</sup>

Through exclusion from access to justice, security, political representation and citizenship, slum dwellers are often seen as ‘spectators of a city’<sup>20</sup> that denies them the right to socioeconomic opportunities and political participation.<sup>21</sup> This leads in many instances to independent services and self-governing initiatives that are neither planned nor provided by the local government being provided for in informal settlements; a parallel world of urban existence and alternative lifeworlds.<sup>22</sup> This ‘splintering’ of the city poses major challenges to urban policies that address issues of social and spatial integration and has important implications for urban governance and sustainable urbanisation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> By 2030 it is expected that 60% of the world’s population will live in urban areas.

<sup>18</sup> Alonso Alfredo Ayala Aleman, *A theoretical framework of the integration process of barrios in Caracas, Venezuela*, (n.p., n.d.) 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pg 2

<sup>20</sup> Villanueva & Baldó (1995) quoted in Alonso Alfredo Ayala Aleman, *A theoretical framework of the integration process of barrios in Caracas, Venezuela*, (n.p.,n.d.),3

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>22</sup> Sandro Cattacin, *Why Not “Ghettos”? The Governance of Migration in the Splintering city* (Malmo University, Wily Brandt series of working papers in international migration and ethnic relations: 2006), 8

<sup>23</sup> Graham and Marvin (2002), quoted in Sandro Cattacin, *Why Not “Ghettos”? The Governance of Migration in the Splintering city* (Malmo University, Wily Brandt series of working papers in international migration and ethnic relations: 2006), 7.

## **The Right to the City and Urban Citizenship**

The increasing scope and scale of migration demands a rethinking of traditional notions of citizenship as well as new thinking about the social integration of immigrants.<sup>24</sup> Citizenship is frequently invoked in policy discourse both as an instrument and goal of immigrant integration. Yet, in migration contexts, citizenship as a legal status with a bundle of legal rights and duties attached, marks a distinction between members and outsiders based on their different relations to particular states and thus highlights the boundaries of formal citizenship.<sup>25</sup>

This has led to an increasing focus in debates, in looking to alternative and more inclusive forms of citizenship, such as urban citizenship. Urban citizenship is a concept of citizenship understood as everyday practices of life in the city, which includes both responsibilities and a variety of rights that are realized in a city and to which access is given by different laws and societal actors<sup>26</sup>. This production of partial (and informal) rights outside the sphere of the state therefore transforms the logic of citizenship.<sup>27</sup> Cities can thus be seen to provide the space for testing and expanding notions of citizenship and associated rights and responsibilities.<sup>28</sup> Mention needs to be made at this point of the collaboration between UNESCO and UN-HABITAT on the Right to the City.

Participation by all underlines the concept of social inclusion and as argued above, exclusion is often the consequence of processes that take no account of the views of residents, including migrants of varying legal status by governments at all levels.

The Right to the City does not merely focus on citizenship as legal rights, although these are important. The Right to the City is viewed as an extension of a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights. The Right to the City can thus be viewed at a basic level as the right to presence, to occupy public space and to participate as an equal in public affairs and urban democratic processes.<sup>29</sup> The emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities.<sup>30</sup> The Right to the City is therefore based on common values where respect for diversity means that no groups or individuals lack legitimacy to express their concerns or to influence decision-making and that there is sense of shared responsibility.

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<sup>24</sup> Leonie Sandercock, *Reconsidering multiculturalism: towards an intercultural project*, (n.p., n.d.), 3, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Rainer Baubock et al, *Migration and citizenship: Legal Status, Rights and political participation*, (State of the art report for IMISCOE cluster B3:2006), 5.

<sup>26</sup> Sandercock, Leonie. "Sustainability: a dialectical tale," (online paper), 2004. Accessed 19 September 2007. Available at: [//www.scarp.ubc.ca](http://www.scarp.ubc.ca).

<sup>27</sup> Sandro Cattacin, *Why Not "Ghettos"? The Governance of Migration in the Splintering city* (Malmo University, Wily Brandt series of working papers in international migration and ethnic relations: 2006), 11.

<sup>28</sup> Barrow Cadbury Trust, *Cities in transition*, (London: Global Exchange Forum Report: 2006), 23

<sup>29</sup> Sandercock, Leonie. "Sustainability: a dialectical tale," (online paper), 2004. Accessed 19 September 2007. Available at : [//www.scarp.ubc.ca](http://www.scarp.ubc.ca)

<sup>30</sup> Isin (2000), quoted in Sandro Cattacin, *Why Not "Ghettos"? The Governance of Migration in the Splintering city* (Malmo University, Wily Brandt series of working papers in international migration and ethnic relations: 2006), 8.

A number of cities such as Porto Alegre and Montreal have already formulated their own notion of the Right to The City. UNESCO's and UN-HABITAT's method of work is not to develop common international norms, but to explore the commonalities and similarities between different approaches. There are many areas of potential policy intervention that cities can pursue to encourage social and spatial integration and foster urban environments in which inclusion rather than exclusion and conflict are the norm.<sup>31</sup> The utility of the Right to the City in addressing specific problems related to the exclusion of migrants is an important area for further investigation.

### **Key issues to be addressed in the area of social and spatial integration of migrants**

Research into migration, the Right to the City and the role of urban policy needs to address the following questions:

- What role for cities and urban governance in addressing issues of social and spatial integration of international migrants?
- How can urban policy respond to the new realities of transnational migration?
- How can planning practices/urban policy respond to the 'challenge of difference' in the city?
- What are the consequences of social and spatial exclusion for sustainable urban development?
- What kind of interventions can effectively reduce segregation and social exclusion?
- How can we address the interface between urban policy and the politics of immigration which is a critical dimension for the future of cities worldwide?

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<sup>31</sup> Jorge Gaspar, *Cities of Promise & Cities of Success: Migration, Cities & Urban Policy*, (Policy brief presented at the Greek Presidency Conference on Managing Migration, Greece: May 2003), 1.