Planning in the multicultural city: Celebrating diversity or reinforcing difference?

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Abstract

Even as multiculturalism is condemned as a failure by national leaders in a number of countries, urban residents live successfully in cities of ethnic and racialized difference. This paper conducts a descriptive review, drawing on the contemporary English language literature, of the manner in which planning engages with multiculturalism in cities. Its geographical scope is international; having said that, in order to make a coherent discussion it focuses on eight cities, selected both for their ethnic and racialized diversity and for their situation within different national governance structures and different policy histories in relation to migration. Our overall argument is that planning and planners are presently engaging with the demographic reality of multiculturalism in the city through three major interventions: social mix planning in housing, planning for the commodification of diversity in ethnically identified businesses, and planning for public spaces and encounter. We begin by examining various understandings of multiculturalism – as a political philosophy, a policy framework, and a demographic reality – that are mobilized in cities with diverse government arrangements and histories of migration. Through a discussion of social mix, we proceed to assess the ways that urban planning has tried to ‘manage’ social difference in situations where difference has been interpreted as disorderly and in which it has been associated with disadvantage. We then consider how the multicultural features of some cities have been commodified, their diversity packaged to form showpieces for tourists and/or gentrifiers in ways which sometimes fail to consider the viability of housing and small businesses for longstanding residents and businesspeople. Finally, we investigate public spaces and facilities, discussing their regulation by planning and the conflicts that can ensue when spaces and facilities are claimed by some ethnic groups to the exclusion of others even as planners seek to promote intercultural awareness and encounter. Interrogating the involvement of planning in either celebrating diversity or reinforcing difference, we conclude that planning produces both outcomes, often simultaneously, but that its inclination over many decades to control forms of diversity that have been regarded as unruly has reinforced difference in cities. Accordingly, we propose that the construction of everyday multiculturalisms is the task of inhabitants as well as planners. Furthermore, positioning planners so that they are more effective, creative and visible in their engagement with ethnic and racialized difference in the contemporary neoliberal city should be a priority.

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1. Introduction

In many nation-states around the world, multiculturalism is currently a topic of heated public debate and rhetoric. In Europe, for example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has declared that “multiculturalism in Germany has failed” (Weaver, 2010). British Prime Minister David Cameron agreed, and has called on European governments to practice “a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism,” saying that Britain would no longer give official patronage to Muslim groups that had been “showered with public money despite doing little to combat terrorism.” (Wintour, 2011). Politicians in the Netherlands have decried the 2004 murder of Theo Van Gogh as an indicator of the problems caused by promotion of cultural diversity, and, in 2012, public protests concerning the film entitled Innocence of Muslims stirred controversy and critical responses in cities around the globe. Such controversies suggest that even in contexts where it may have gained a foothold, multiculturalism is not a universally accepted or acceptable political philosophy or policy (Hall, 2000).

The changing nature of city life features prominently in these debates about the past and future of multiculturalism. Claims of ‘failure’ are typically narrated with illustrations from the everyday life of urban neighbourhoods where conflict has erupted between inhabitants from different cultural and religious backgrounds, with blame apportioned to migrants who are said to have failed to ‘integrate’ into their host society. And yet even as multiculturalism is condemned as a failure by some, countless residents successfully live with difference on a daily basis in cities marked by cultural diversity (Kymlicka, 2010; Rath, 2011).
Given the significance of city life for the future of multiculturalism, the role of planning in both shaping and responding to the lived experience of diversity and difference warrants close scrutiny. Since its inception, various theories of social difference have informed the philosophies and practices of planners. These planning philosophies and practices generate urban outcomes that matter greatly for the wider politics of difference at urban, national and regional scales, because they profoundly shape the nature of inter-subjective relationships among urban inhabitants with different ethnic and racialized backgrounds. In our contemporary ‘age of migration’ (Castles & Miller, 2009), the question of whether some urban inhabitants’ ethnic and racialized identities are stigmatized, trivialized, valued, or recognized in relation to others is a crucial element of social justice in the city (see for example Fainstein, 2010; Fincher & Iveson, 2008; Sandercock, 1998, 2003).

The goal of this paper, then, is to critically review the practices of contemporary urban planning with regard to multiculturalism. Through a thematically organized description of current literature about planners’ efforts to grapple with ethnic and racialized difference in contemporary cities, we analyze commonalities and differences in planning interventions and outcomes and speculate on the factors giving rise to them. Such a review is a necessary prerequisite for debating the planning outcomes that ought to be pursued in the name of multiculturalism in cities into the future. These goals may include, inter alia, enhanced intercultural awareness and understanding, greater civility among urban residents from all ethnic and racialized backgrounds, and equitable treatment of all residents that respects cultural difference.

We have approached the review through a reading of the literature written recently in English concerning the socio-spatial outcomes that have been produced through planners’ efforts to shape the multicultural city. Reflecting the intersection of planning with other urban processes (see below), we have drawn upon literature from a range of disciplines including planning, geography, sociology and political economy. Acknowledging the limits of generalizing about multiculturalism and planning across places, we have focused on certain major cities around the world, selecting them not only because of their ethnically and racially diverse populations but also because they are cities positioned within a variety of national policy and jurisdictional contexts. Some of the national policies to which the cities are subject stress recognition of ethnic difference within the nation and others assimilation to a single national norm; some of the cities are positioned within federal systems with a high degree of local autonomy, while others have little power and authority vis-a-vis central and provincial governments (see Section 2). National views of multiculturalism are due in part to each nation’s distinct historical path to ethnic and racialized diversity. Some are settler societies where immigrants have been recruited to build the nation, others are nations of former empires to whose metropolises colonizers and colonials have returned, while still others are constituted formally as multiracial due to multiple phases of colonization and recent migration. In these varied contexts, municipal governments are largely responsible for managing the built environment to ensure social order and harmony among ethnically and racially diverse residents.

Our task in this review is immediately complicated because ‘multiculturalism’ has many meanings and operates across many institutional and geographical contexts. Multiculturalism is at once a philosophy of the nation and nationhood, a set of public policies, and a demographic reality in many countries and cities in which ethnic and racialized variations exist in the population. It is not uncommon that the demographic reality exists without a multicultural philosophy of the nation or enabling multicultural policies, and there is considerable variation in the ways multiculturalism is expressed and evaluated between countries and places. In this paper we take the multicultural city to be a place of variety in ethnicity and race. Exploring the contexts of such cities and the ways planning engages with ethnic and racialized difference in varied contexts is one of our key concerns in the sections to follow. Multicultural diversity as demographic reality can refer either to the distinctive presence of immigrant groups, arrived in the major countries of immigrant settlement over the last five decades, or to longstanding ethnic and racial differentiations in a nation and its cities especially where those differentiations are spatially distinct.

Nor is ‘planning’ an easy concept to pin down. For our purposes here, we have taken planning to be that part of urban governance and management which has as its main concerns (1) the ways that the interests and circumstances of individuals and groups are enhanced or limited by the characteristics of the built environment and its spatial features, and (2) the development of social, cultural and economic policies that change conditions in places. We emphasize that it is often difficult to disentangle a specific ‘planning’ policy and practice that influences a place from other social and economic interventions that also affect cities and their residents. We also note that many planning practices
that are not explicitly concerned with ‘multiculturalism’ nonetheless have significant bearing on inter-subjective relationships in multicultural cities. Nevertheless, we believe it is important to focus on planning discourses and practices, and we locate their conceptual roots regarding urban difference in the early 20th century. These conceptual roots (see Section 3) include: spatial assimilation theory, contact theory, the culture of poverty and urban underclass theses, and thinking about neighbourhood effects and social capital.

Of course the uses of such concepts, underpinning and guiding planning, have been influenced by broader economic policy priorities and ideologies. This is evident in the way planning has had varied aims, giving rise to two distinct but connected periods of concentrated energy around diversity and difference in (1) inter-World War socialism and post-war Keynesian social liberalism, and (2) neoliberalism since the early 1980s. Following Peck and Tickell (2002) who comment on the more recent phase, and noting that processes of neoliberalisation have taken varied forms in different times and places, the planning of multicultural cities exhibits both roll-back and roll-out neoliberalism, with the former characterized by a decrease in state responsibility for inclusion and planning, a withdrawal of the state from the provision of housing and a push for the privatization of public housing, and the latter by a new set of market-oriented government interventions, a focus on community and responsible citizen participation.

Alongside the importance of the neoliberal turn to the intent of planning in multicultural cities, we also acknowledge the importance of discussions in planning and urban theory about living together with difference. Principal in development of this theme has been Sandercock (1998, 2003) in her pursuit of cosmopolitanism and planning for ‘mongrel cities’. Sandercock’s proposed multicultural urban project goes beyond dominant conceptions of multiculturalism and multicultural policies by advancing the notion of intercultural coexistence, which stresses the importance of willingness to learn from the Other, and recognizing value in and knowledge of the Other. This conceptual argument concerning ‘how we might live together’ (2003, p. 87, ff) remains current and vital, as does Sandercock’s advocacy of participatory and inclusive planning processes even as we recognize their agonistic nature and setting. The concern of this paper is, however, to review how planning for the multicultural in contemporary cities is actually playing out differentially for ethnic and racialized groups and how to realize cosmopolis on the ground within the realities of the contemporary world – where cities, urban life and our own minds are increasingly disciplined by processes of neoliberalisation. Building on the analysis made by Mitchell (1993), we argue that the pairing of the multicultural with the neoliberal is producing a very particular multicultural planning in the twenty-first century that will be examined in the sections to follow.

In the review to follow, we discuss and evaluate the engagement of urban planning with multicultural difference in four sections. The first section examines how planning is shaped by its national context and each of the remaining sections considers a particular intervention of urban planning and its outcomes in selected major cities, distinguishing those forms of planning by the sites on which they focus, the human subjects they envisage and interact with, the particular strategies that they deploy and the outcomes of those strategies.

Section 2 sets the stage for the paper. Canvassing the ways that multiculturalism is simultaneously a nation-building philosophy, a policy framework, and a demographic reality, it goes on to examine the government arrangements that determine how urban planning is situated in governance. In this section, the cities that are the principal focus of the review are distinguished according to whether municipal initiatives are a principal tool for implementing multicultural policies (Toronto, Sydney, London, Amsterdam), municipal interventions resist national views of multiculturalism (Berlin, New York), and the municipal and national views of multiculturalism are tightly integrated (Singapore, Johannesburg). The varying ‘kinds’ or ‘meanings’ of multiculturalism that characterize each of these cities are described, along with their implications for planning. We note that there will be occasional reference to other cities, but that our intention is to build a commentary and review of planning focusing on the named cities as a principal organizing feature of the paper.

Section 3 points to the ways that urban planning has tried to ‘manage’ social difference in situations where difference has been interpreted as disorderly and in which it has been associated with disadvantage. Observing how planners handle difference in contemporary multicultural cities, where social mix is a prominent frame of reference for planning actions, requires comprehension of the social scientific theories long present in urban studies that have informed urban planning. We take time in this section, therefore, to trace some of the discursive shifts and actual practices in planning concerned with social mix and segregation, as they have taken place over the last century in selected
locations, before bringing our commentary to the present day.

Section 4 examines the ways in which the multicultural features of some cities have been commodified. Their diversity has been packaged to form showpieces for tourists or gentrifiers, and in some instances made part of emerging creative city strategies. The task of planning for these ethnically identified areas has in places become associated with business or growth coalitions, though the extent to which professional planners are involved in these alliances is not clear. The contrast between the involvement of urban policymakers, including planners, in developing urban features with this commercial orientation to diversity for the benefit of wealthier residents and visitors, and the focus of urban policy-makers and planners who are implementing social mix policies to deal with difference constructed as disorder and marginality, could not be clearer.

Section 5 asks us to consider the involvement of planning in the regulation of public spaces, public facilities and their programmes. Urban landscapes are dotted with facilities and spaces claimed by ethnically identified groups, and visible to others outside those groups, a situation sometimes leading to conflict at the local level that planning has sought to manage. In addition, however, planning has wanted to draw people together for encounter in urban public places, to promote intercultural awareness, understanding and connection across their differences, and regulation has sought also to facilitate this outcome.

These sections develop reviews of a variety of ways that planning is engaged in the life of the contemporary multicultural city. In a brief conclusion to the paper we raise some of the issues that cross-cut those we have discussed and that might be the focus of further thinking about how planning should be positioned and how planners might be positioning themselves given the inevitable and significant lived multiculturalism of our urban futures.

2. Urban perspectives on multiculturalism: similarities and dissimilarities

The increasing ethnic and racial diversity of contemporary cities challenges urban planners who are charged with managing the built environment to promote social order and harmony. Their practices and discourses are shaped by conceptions of the national community that vary tremendously from one nation-state to another (Castles & Miller, 2009) and that are experienced locally where the actions and discourses of planners are influential. In some instances, the local is the scale utilized to construct a culturally pluralistic nation, while in others, the local resists the nation-state taking initiatives to deal with diversity that oppose the conceptions of membership put forward at the national scale. Working at the local level, planners must also take account of the views and actions of non-governmental organizations that represent many ethnic and racial groups. To understand the impact of these national discourses and governance arrangements, this section reviews recent literature describing how urban planners manage the built environment to promote peaceable interactions between ethnic and racialized groups, ensure equitable access to local institutions, and reduce ethnic and racialized inequalities in diverse urban contexts. The review of the current planning literature illustrates similarities and differences in urban governance and management by:

1. outlining the diverse meanings attached to multiculturalism,
2. examining planning discourses and practices about diversity and difference, and
3. speculating on how local, regional and national contexts influence the urban governance and management of multicultural cities.

Despite the consensus that many cities are multicultural, insofar as their populations are ethnically and racially diverse (Hall, 2000), the political philosophies that underpin multiculturalism and the policies enacted in its name are hotly debated and contested in academic and policy circles (Bloemraad, 2011; Castles & Miller, 2009; Kymlicka, 2007; Miller, 2006; Triandafyllidou, Modood, & Meer, 2011). We argue that these debates discussed mainly at the level of the nation-state also shape planning practices and policies at the local level. In this section, our review of the literature focuses on similarities and differences in urban planning that arise across diverse national contexts. The review builds on recent case studies that have explored the spatial dimensions of successful living with difference (Kout rolękou, 2012; Parker & Kern, 2010) and diverse forms of belonging (Centner, 2012) in individual cities and neighbourhoods. While these case studies demonstrate the value of examining multiculturalism as demographic reality and policies implemented at the local level, our goal in this section is to situate urban planning discourses and practices in national contexts and illustrate the range of local responses to ethnic and racialized diversity as they are described in current literature available in English. We have concentrated on
studies of cities where national perspectives on multiculturalism, the powers delegated to the local level, its role in implementing multicultural policies, and the historical and contemporary experience of ethnic and racial diversity differ. The number of cities on which we focus is intended to illustrate the range of responses to diversity while remaining manageable within the constraints of a single article.

2.1. Making sense of multiculturalism

The diversity in each city and its pathway to pluralism is unique however, there are some broad trends related to migration policies and histories of imperialism and colonization (Castles & Miller, 2009; Hall, 2000; Koutrolikou, 2012). In settler societies, major cities such as New York, Sydney, and Toronto are home to large numbers of immigrants recruited to build each nation and swelling populations of temporary and undocumented migrants. In the cities of Western Europe, such as London and Berlin, diversity has been heightened by the return of colonizers and colonials to the metropolitan capitals of former empires and as an unintended consequence of guest-worker policies and humanitarian commitments to provide asylum. Singapore represents still another path to pluralism. Constituted as a multiracial nation, it now recruits both skilled and unskilled labour from countries around the globe (Yeoh & Lin, 2012). Finally, in Johannesburg, multiple phases of colonization combined with recent migration from Southern Africa have created an exceptionally diverse urban society.

The evolving nature of multiculturalism as a demographic reality challenges the discourses and practices of urban planning. Migration continuously introduces new ethnic and racialized groups into urban populations. As one example, influxes of migrants from the Caribbean and Asia into New York City complicate planning decisions that had focused on marginalized Puerto-Rican and African-American populations. The growing numbers of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg are the target of growing public animosity that planners struggle to mitigate, while the expansion of the European Union has brought Eastern Europeans to London and other Western European cities, where they also experience hostility. Political events also transform discourses and practices. Recent tendencies towards securitization have transformed urban planning by drawing attention to religious minorities, particularly Muslim migrants and their children (Modood & Meer, 2011). In Amsterdam and Berlin, planners must now take account of public concern that Muslim residents pose a security risk when proposing interventions to deal with the poverty in these communities. In Johannesburg, the end of apartheid has led to a wholesale revision of urban governance, ostensibly intended to strengthen the powers of local governments to reduce racialized and ethnic inequalities.

Debates about multiculturalism as a political philosophy influence the strategies and policies proposed to manage the problems associated with an ethnically and racially diverse society (Hall, 2000, p. 210). Some political philosophers argue that in liberal democracies, the state and its institutions must address ethnic and racial inequalities to ensure the individual rights of everyone in the nation (Bloemraad, 2011; Kymlicka, 2007; Taylor, 1992). According to this philosophical position, public institutions must acknowledge that society is heterogeneous and composed of multiple groups (Benhabib, 2002; Fincher & Iveson, 2008) so that they can ensure minority groups have rights that will redress economic, social, and political inequalities (Joppke, 2010). Tolerance is necessary but insufficient to ensure individual rights, the sine qua non of a liberal democracy. The proponents of multiculturalism argue that the nation can be ethnically and racially heterogeneous while still ensuring the individual rights for all members of the nation.

Critics of this political philosophy question the possibility of a heterogeneous nation in which individual rights are also assured on multiple grounds (Hall, 2000; Vertovec & Wassendorf, 2010). On the right, recognition of ethnic and racialized groups and their claims to group rights are seen to challenge the very notion of a nation-state that is conceived as homogeneous (Hall, 2000). Liberals argue that the political philosophy of multiculturalism promotes a cult of ethnicity that undercuts the universalism and neutrality of the liberal state. Indeed, some critics say that allowing ethnic and racialized minorities to maintain their own cultural practices and identities separates them from dominant groups and reinforces their subordinate positions (Koopmans, 2010). On the left, critics object to the static views of identity at the heart of the multicultural political philosophy in which an individual is assigned exclusively and seemingly forever to a specific ethnic or racial group (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2008). According to these critics, policies intended to encourage minority cultural practices often inadvertently label them as the less valuable practices of the “Other.” Radicals and antiracists note that the emphasis on cultural identities in multiculturalism overlooks and subordinates inequalities rooted in social
class, sexuality, and gender (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992).

The philosophical debates about multiculturalism affect the diverse and sometimes contradictory multicultural policies adopted by nation-states (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006; Castles & Miller, 2009; Koopmans, Michalowski, & Waibel, 2012). Although some have implemented policies and programmes at a national level that recognize the rights of ethnic and racialized groups, these policies rarely address ethnic and racialized inequalities effectively. Indeed, many states currently favour various forms of assimilation including assimilation to the dominant culture, rapid integration into the mainstream accompanied by private maintenance of cultural practices and identities and corporate and commercial approaches in which ethnic and racialized differences are managed by public institutions and the market (Hall, 2000; Hedetoft, 2010; Modood & Meer, 2011; Prins & Saharso, 2010; Vertovec & Wassendorf, 2010). Even in officially multicultural countries such as Canada and Australia where the rights of ethnic and racialized groups are enshrined in law, states sometimes downplay their commitments to equity and encourage assimilation.

2.2. Multiculturalism in diverse urban contexts

At the urban level, multicultural policies touch many aspects of governance and management, ranging from statements celebrating diversity as an economic advantage, to housing policies, economic development policies favouring ethnic precincts, and even supposedly inclusive procedures for public meetings (Bollens, 2002; Parnell & Pieterse, 2010; Qadeer, 2005; Sandercock, 2003). In this section, we illustrate how various planning discourses and practices regarding demographic multiculturalism are implemented in different urban contexts. The examples involve many different aspects of urban planning from social planning to infrastructure (Vitiello, 2009; Wallace & Friskén, 2000), but all aim to use the built environment to improve people’s current and future prospects.

We draw attention to the regional and national contexts because of their influence on the interpretation of multiculturalism and its implementation at the urban level. Urban planners respond to ethnic and racialized diversity with various powers and different degrees of autonomy. In Singapore, as mentioned earlier, municipal and national policies are one and the same, however, in Toronto, Sydney, Melbourne, New York City, and Los Angeles, local actions are limited by two senior levels of government. Other cities such as Amsterdam, Frankfurt, and Berlin often have more powers to raise revenue and more planning authority over housing and economic development than North American and Australian cities while the boroughs of London are akin to their colonial counterparts. In the Netherlands and United Kingdom, unitary states, the actions and views of only one other level of government, the national government is influential, while strong state governments also influence German cities. The presence of the European Union adds to jurisdictional complexity for European cities (Modood & Meer, 2011). The discourses and practices that result are also shaped by many actors including politicians, policymakers, and citizens at the local, regional and national levels who often hold contradictory conceptions of multiculturalism and rarely agree on the necessary strategies and policies. Within these diverse arrangements, local governments may be the instruments for implementing multicultural policy developed at the national level and they may resist it by promoting a different policy. Often, a combination of both strategies is pursued simultaneously.

2.3. Local strategies

We begin our review by discussing cities where the local is recognized as an important scale for developing and implementing multiculturalism strategies and policies proposed by more senior levels of government. Reviewing the literature about planning in Toronto, Sydney, London, and Amsterdam reveals some similarities in the practices of local planners despite diverse national discourses about membership in the nation. It also highlights the limitations of local planning for dealing with ethnic and racialized inequalities.

The rejection of multiculturalism as a national strategy for dealing with the issues that arise in an ethnically and racially pluralistic society by the Dutch government has parallels with the situation in the United States and Germany. While national discourses in the United States recognize its ethnic and racialized pluralism, assimilation is the official practice. The national discourse is increasingly similar in Germany where recent policy statements about immigration recognize the diversity of the nation and the importance of successful integration. Despite the rhetoric, most policies, particularly those regarding naturalization and education, demonstrate that assimilation still predominates. Although municipal governments in both contexts implement national programmes, the literature also reveals planning initiatives at the local level that promote successful living with difference.
We end the review of local initiatives by examining planning in two multicultural cities that are officially multiracial and where the capacity of the local government differs markedly. In Singapore, the local and national states are synonymous, endowing the local state with exceptional power and resources. The situation in Singapore indicates how the impulse to greater national control of multicultural policies and strategies may play out at the local level. It has immediate lessons for Amsterdam where there are already tendencies to greater national control, but similar trends are emerging in Toronto. In Johannesburg, the situation is reversed. The 1996 constitution explicitly bolstered the powers of local government, however, in the post-apartheid era, many local governments lack the financial and organizational capacity to exercise these powers effectively. Although the limited capacity of local governments in Johannesburg is extreme, it illustrates the potential impacts of austerity on local planning discourses and practices in all multicultural cities.

2.3.1. Toronto: celebrating diversity?

In 1971, Canada’s first multiculturalism policy recognized ethnic groups and their rights to preserve their culture in an officially bilingual country (Kymlicka, 2007). Viewed as a political strategy designed to mollify groups from European origins who were neither French nor English and might oppose the Official Languages Act that established French and English as Canada’s official languages, the policy was later enshrined in the Canadian constitution. In 1985, the Multiculturalism Act also recognized the growing racial diversity of Canada and committed Canada to eliminating all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, and religion. All of the provincial and territorial governments have enacted similar legislation although there is little coordination between the two levels of government. In this context of federal and provincial commitment to multiculturalism, the role of local governments is ambiguous. Current multicultural policies provide a framework for local action without mandating a specific role for local governments (Frisken, 2007; Wood & Gilbert, 2005). Senior levels of government are committed to working with nongovernmental organizations rather than municipal governments and funding for multicultural policies waxes and wanes, heightening municipal anxiety about long-term initiatives (Yan, Chau, & Sangha, 2010).

Despite the jurisdictional ambiguity, Toronto has been an important laboratory for local initiatives concerning diversity (Doucet, 2008; Frisken, 2007; Good, 2009; Goonewardena & Kipfer, 2005; Wallace & Frisken, 2000). Home to the largest concentration of foreign-born in Canada, approximately 43% of the total population, Toronto has attracted recent newcomers from Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and the Caribbean that have added to the large numbers of European immigrants who arrived before 1971 (Murdie, 2008). Approximately half live in the central city, the City of Toronto, and the other half in twenty adjacent municipalities, each with its own response to diversity.

Within the City of Toronto, social order and harmony are promoted actively by local funding for settlement services such as language training, job search workshops, and cultural orientation and committees that allow for citizen engagement and municipal involvement in federal-provincial consultations about language training and settlement services (Preston & Rose, 2012). Nevertheless, inequalities and unequal treatment persist. Racial profiling by the police who stop minority youth in specific low-income neighbourhoods continues (Wortley & Tanner, 2004) and there is a growing association between poverty and minority status in specific Toronto neighbourhoods (United Way of Greater Toronto, 2004). Finally, even though the number of municipal politicians from minority backgrounds has increased, their numbers decline steadily from the central city to the suburbs (Rose and Preston, 2012; Siemiatycki & Isin, 1997).

There is tremendous variation in local planning for ethnic and racialized diversity within the metropolitan area (Boudreau, Keil, & Young, 2009; Frisken, 2007; Good, 2009; Goonewardena & Kipfer, 2005; Wallace & Frisken, 2000). Trained to act in the interest of an undifferentiated municipal public, planners and local politicians (Good, 2009) have been slow to institute even basic policies such as translation and interpretation services at public meetings. The hesitation is most pronounced in the suburban municipalities where assimilationist views dominate (Frisken, 2007; Good, 2009; Wallace & Frisken, 2000) and conflicts around religious and retail land uses persist (Isin & Siemiatycki, 2002; Preston & Lo, 2000).

The current responses to ethnic and racialized diversity in the Toronto metropolitan area illustrate how pronouncements from senior levels of government

2 Central city refers to the municipality that acts as the employment hub for a metropolitan area. In the North American context, central cities are usually the municipalities around which metropolitan areas have developed.
may take diverse forms at the local level, even when multiculturalism is enshrined in the national constitution. Without an official mandate, municipalities are free to implement multiculturalism policies as they see fit. However the demographic reality of a multicultural population combined with senior governments’ commitments to nongovernmental organizations is encouraging all municipalities to grapple with multicultural policies, albeit with varying success.

2.3.2. Sydney: recognizing the critical role of local governments?

Australia like Canada is a settler society where British settlers have struggled to live equitably with indigenous peoples and subsequent waves of immigrants and where multiculturalism has been contested for decades. After dismantling the White Australia Policy in 1973, the national government adopted a series of measures beginning with the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975 that prohibited discrimination on the basis of race. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, multiculturalism was adopted as a policy framework to raise ‘awareness of cultural diversity and promote social cohesion, understanding and tolerance’ (Australia, 2011). Various initiatives including an Office of Multicultural Affairs in the early 1980s, a National Multicultural Advisory Council in the 1990s and several policy statements culminated recently in the passage of a new multicultural policy entitled The People of Australia – Australia’s Multicultural Policy (Australia, 2011). The policy commits the national government to create a just, inclusive and cohesive society in which all can participate and where government services are accessible to all. The government will also promote understanding and acceptance while responding forcefully to expressions of intolerance and discrimination. The national government pledges to work with its state and local counterparts to implement programmes that will achieve the goals of this recently announced multicultural policy. It is noteworthy that the recent policy makes no mention of the shifting interpretations of multiculturalism in the 1990s and early years of the new millennium when the then conservative government emphasized the British origins of Australian history and society (Forrest & Dunn, 2010). There are also no references to the class-based differences associated with minority status that have proved the greatest challenges for urban planners and politicians (Hage, 1997).

Recent immigration has enhanced demographic multiculturalism in Australia’s largest cities. The Sydney metropolitan area which has been the destination for approximately a third of all immigrants since the “White Australia” policy ended in the 1970s is typical. Large numbers of immigrants from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East have added to Sydney’s diverse population of European immigrants that had arrived after World War II. Ethnic mixing is still the norm with less than 10 percent of white Australians living in neighbourhoods where they comprise 80 percent or more of the population (Forrest, Poulsen, & Johnston, 2006). In Sydney and other large Australian cities, a growing Aboriginal population that suffers multiple forms of disadvantage is an important consideration in municipal interpretations of multiculturalism that focus almost exclusively on immigrants (Dunn, Thompson, Hanna, Murphy, & Burnley, 2001).

The literature emphasizes the important role of Australian local governments in promoting social order and harmony even though local government authorities have less power than their counterparts in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom (Dunn, Hanna, & Thompson, 2001; Dunn, Thompson, et al., 2001; Forrest & Dunn, 2010). Local government authorities are required to report annually on services for people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and to develop a social plan that integrates services for indigenous peoples and those from non-English-speaking backgrounds (Thompson, Dunn, Burnley, Murphy, & Hanna, 1998). Each government is expected to ensure equitable access for all cultural groups to services, improve community relations, and enhance representation and civic participation of all cultural groups.

In officially multicultural Australia, the federal and state levels of government recognize that local governments are critical agents in achieving social order and harmony. A survey of local officials indicated that local governments are using a variety of innovative policies and practices to ensure that ethnic and racial minorities have access to local services (Thompson et al., 1998). Celebrations of diversity in the form of fairs, festivals and other cultural events are also widespread, however, critical examinations of local community relations and anti-racist policies that would promote intercultural understanding and reduce inequalities are more likely to be undertaken by local authorities with large populations of immigrants than small ones (Sandercock & Attili, 2009). Dunn, Hanna, et al. (2001) and Dunn, Thompson, et al. (2001) argue that local governments sometimes emphasize fairly narrow aspects of multiculturalism, adopting a view of integration rooted in assimilation to ‘white’ Australian norms. Thompson et al. (1998) explain that resources are a major issue, particularly for small local
government authorities who often are the recipients of federal and state directives concerning multicultural policies without benefit of consultation, sufficient education about the policies, or additional resources. Wallace and Friskens (2000) find similar tendencies in small local governments in Canada who play an equally subordinate role in the implementation of national and provincial policies regarding multiculturalism.

2.3.3. London: creating cohesive communities?

The metropole of an empire that spanned the globe, multiculturalism has been a demographic fact in London for decades. Like Toronto, and Sydney, London is a city of super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007), home to British subjects from all corners of the former empire, refugees from World War II and the Cold War, migrant workers from Southern Europe, British citizens from the Commonwealth, primarily from the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, and many EU citizens who have the right to reside, work, and study in the United Kingdom (McDowell, Batnitzky, & Dyer, 2007; Wills et al., 2010). Ethnic and racialized minorities still experience economic, social and political disadvantage (Amin, 2012; Parekh, 2000). With its large minority population and its recent history of riots and bombings, London challenges popular notions of authentic Britishness as rural and pastoral (Neal & Walters, 2008).

The multicultural policies implemented in London have many parallels with those in Toronto and Sydney, despite official reluctance to mention multiculturalism. In the United Kingdom, demographic diversity has been managed by an evolving set of policies and bodies principally concerned with cohesion and community. The Race Relations Act of 1976 marked a watershed signifying state sponsorship of racial equality and establishing a commission with powers to investigate complaints of discrimination and a broad mandate to promote equality. Successive governments have emphasized the role of local authorities in fostering good relations between people with a protected characteristic of which race and religion are two. National priorities are expressed through the Department for Communities and Local Government that is charged with achieving integrated communities in which everyone can live and work successfully beside each other, but implementation is a local responsibility. The emphasis on local initiatives in the United Kingdom was reinforced by the Labour government that came to power in 1997 anxious to rejuvenate local democratic processes (Thornley, Rydin, Scanlon, & West, 2002). It has been bolstered by neoliberal policies intended to reduce the size of government and the public sector by relying on non-governmental organizations to deliver services. Faith organizations play an increasing role as service providers, reflecting in part the Blair government’s attention to religious institutions as a tool of neoliberalism and communitarianism (Grillo, 2010) and the growing salience of religion rather than ethnicity and race as a marker of diversity in British society (Peach, 2002).

The 32 Boroughs and City Corporation that make up the Greater London Area share many of the same powers as Australian and Canadian local governments, so it is not surprising that planning discourses and practices are similar, despite the British emphasis on cohesion and avoidance of any mention of multiculturalism in official national discourses. Many boroughs strive to improve access to municipal services for all ethnic and racial groups. This is particularly true for the provision of subsidized social housing, however, structural constraints such as rising housing and land prices, the stagnant incomes of low-income households, and the absence of national investments to expand the social housing stock often hinder efforts to achieve ethnic and racial mixing (Phillips, 2010). Some boroughs have also instituted innovative land use zoning and planning processes to resolve conflicts concerning the development of religious establishments such as eruvim and mosques (Gale & Naylor, 2002). Employment equity policies mandated by the national government have been implemented in many boroughs where there are large numbers of minorities (Open Society, 2012), however, there is less funding and expertise to promote intercultural understanding. Current activities mainly celebrate diversity through festivals rather than grappling with the challenges of achieving equity for all.

As observed in Australia, local governments are acknowledged as crucial actors in the strategies and policies intended to deal with the problems of a multicultural society, however, their actions are constrained by the national state. The creation of the Greater London Authority, GLA, provided an opportunity to set a city-wide agenda on cohesion and community that could balance the dominant influence of the national government. However, Thornley et al. (2002) note that the mandate of the GLA was highly constrained initially, while interests other than those of business had few avenues to influence its agenda. As a result, austerity measures being implemented nationally in the United Kingdom currently threaten boroughs’ efforts to promote community cohesion.
2.3.4. Amsterdam: abandoning multiculturalism?

In the Netherlands, national multiculturalism policies emphasizing the value of different cultures, tolerance for cultural differences, and optimism about future integration dominated until the 1990s (Priemus, 2007). Indeed, the Netherlands was seen as a model of how to promote successful multiculturalism. In response to the increasing diversity of Amsterdam and other large Dutch cities where growing numbers of Turkish and Moroccan guestworkers and Surinamese colonials had settled, the state enabled the development of schools and other services operated by each minority group (Engelen, 2006; Prins, 2002; Rath, 2009) under the Minorities Policy that was passed in 1979. Since the 1990s, these policies have been reversed at the national level in response to strident demands that migrants and their children assimilate. State funding for the largest ethnic groups to form advisory bodies that local governments were obliged to consult has been reduced drastically and is now available only to organizations that represent multiple ethnic groups (Entzinger, 2006). Multiculturalism policies have been criticized for encouraging the segregation of minorities who are described as unwilling and unable to learn Dutch and adopt Dutch culture and blamed for their persistent economic difficulties (Koopmans, 2010). In response, the recent Civic Integration Act explicitly refutes multiculturalism and group rights, emphasizing that individual migrants are responsible for integrating into Dutch society. To obtain permanent residence, individual migrants must pass demanding language and cultural tests, be self-reliant financially, including paying for language courses, and demonstrate that they are active in their neighbourhoods and communities (The Netherlands, 2013).

Local governments are identified explicitly in recent policy documents as key actors in ensuring successful integration, by promoting self-reliance and involvement in Dutch society through their administration of the social welfare system. Municipal attention has focused on the links between concentrated poverty and ethnic and racial segregation in Amsterdam and other large Dutch cities. Municipal governments that administer subsidized housing for low-income households are responsible for planning interventions that will reduce the spatial concentration of economically marginalized groups who are also mainly minorities. The ‘Big City’ Policy was instituted in the Netherlands in the late 1990s to reduce segregation of low-income groups, regardless of their ethnic and racial backgrounds by redeveloping the housing stock. Areas that had been predominantly subsidized rental units were replaced with a mixed housing stock that included owned and rented units, subsidized and market rentals, and low-rise and high-rise structures (Bolt & van Kempen, 2010; Priemus, 2007). The policy has been partially successful. Mixed income populations are now found in redeveloped areas however, ethnic and racial segregation has not declined much. Many minority households simply relocated to nearby enclaves of low-cost housing where other minority households are already concentrated (Priemus, 2007).

The Netherlands is an extreme example of the recent rejection of multiculturalism policies in parts of Western Europe. In responding to this shifting national discourse, local planners are hamstrung by the previous Minorities Policies that encouraged development of services that were offered separately by each ethnic and religious organization rather than by multicultural organizations or local government offices equipped to work with diverse clients. National discourses and policies now discourage local attempts to provide culturally appropriate services in multiple languages and the integration activities of local governments will be reduced when national funding for most integration activities is withdrawn in the near future. The national government has already stated its intention to end funding for language training and classes about Dutch history and culture that local governments had offered without charge to qualified migrants. Although local efforts to reduce concentrations of low-income households by redeveloping housing persist, these policies are having unintended and unexpected consequences that may well heighten the economic marginalization of minorities and, simultaneously, may increase their segregation.

2.3.5. New York: privatizing multiculturalism?

Multiculturalism in the United States is viewed as a private responsibility of the individual and his or her family (Bloemraad, 2003, 2011). Assimilation is de facto the official practice at the national level. As a result, programmes to promote cultural retention and successful integration such as dance and arts programmes, language classes, and housing targeting specific minorities are offered mainly by non-profit organizations rather than public agencies. Although many of these organizations receive some government funds, their non-profit status, autonomous governing boards, and ability to raise charitable funds allows them to operate somewhat more independently than public agencies (Ray, 2004; Trudeau & Veronis, 2009). Even where services for minorities are available through public agencies such as school boards, their goals must
be assessed carefully. For example, foreign-language programmes in many public schools are often intended to promote English-language learning by ensuring sound literacy skills in the child’s first language. Rather than maintaining minority cultures, these language programmes promote assimilation by facilitating the acquisition of English (Haque, 2012).

At the local level, the Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Affairs in New York City is charged with promoting the well-being of all immigrants (City of New York, 2012) by ensuring that city services are provided in multiple languages and that each city department provides services targeting immigrants that will facilitate their settlement. Many other policies indirectly support these initiatives. Equal opportunity employment programmes and minority contracting programmes that were implemented to combat the discrimination faced by African-Americans also benefit newly arrived minority workers and entrepreneurs (Ray, 2003; Waldinger, 1996). The city government also actively publicizes and financially supports ethnic precincts designed to attract tourists and residents interested in celebrating cultural diversity in restaurants and stores. New York City is typical of many central cities with large immigrant populations that have reiterated their commitment to ensuring the legal rights of immigrants and providing services for all eligible residents regardless of their immigration status (Foner, 2007; Walker & Leitner, 2011). A recent series of local laws and executive orders in New York City has tried to improve immigrants’ access to city services and the city does not participate in the Section 287(g) programme that empowers local police officers to enforce immigration legislation. New York City’s commitment to policies promoting immigrant integration contrasts with the tense relations between immigrants and American-born residents in nearby suburban municipalities where anti-immigrant municipal ordinances prohibiting landlords from renting to undocumented migrants and forbidding migrant workers from soliciting employment in public have been implemented (Foner, 2007; Leitner & Preston, 2012; Walker & Leitner, 2011).

There are parallels with the Toronto metropolitan area where municipal legislation and services promoting immigrant integration is more developed in the central city than in adjacent suburban municipalities. The parallels are noteworthy because the national and state contexts differ so dramatically. Multiculturalism has been a national policy in Canada and Australia and community cohesion has been the goal of successive British governments, unlike the United States where private responsibility for multicultural activities predominates. Despite this dominant perspective, New York City like other central city governments in the United State uses many of the same planning interventions found in Canadian, Australian, and British cities. The American case illustrates how privatizing the maintenance of cultural heritage contributes to diverse planning responses at the local level. New York City, like other central cities such as Los Angeles and Miami, uses local planning interventions to mitigate some of the inequalities associated with ethnic and racialized diversity, while more homogeneous suburban municipalities adopt policies that reinforce and stigmatize difference.

2.3.6. Berlin: resisting national discourses?

Germany is well known for its conflicted and complicated official positions regarding multiculturalism (e.g. Banting & Kymlicka, 2006; Phillips, 2010; Rath, 2011; Schönwälder, 2007). Recently, the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, attracted attention world-wide by declaring that multiculturalism in Germany had failed (Weaver, 2010). Multiculturalism has come to represent official and popular ambivalence about immigration. The populations of Turkish guest-workers and their descendants living in German cities sharply contradict widely held notions concerning the homogeneity of the German population (Beer, Deniz, & Schwedler, 2007; Ehrkamp, 2010).

Even though the federal government never adopted a multiculturalism policy, its rhetoric about diversity has evolved, creating openings for multicultural initiatives. With changes in the citizenship law in 1999 and a revised Immigration Act implemented on January 1, 2005, the national government abandoned rhetorical claims that Germany was NOT a country of immigration. Implicitly, the new legislation recognizes that immigrants comprise a permanent segment of German society and planning should focus on integration (Piening & Germerhausen, 2007; Schönwälder, 2007). In this context, the federal government, the Bund, introduced the Socially Integrative City programme setting redevelopment goals for parts of cities where economic disadvantage is high. Unlike the ‘Big City’ policy in the Netherlands that concentrates mainly on the redevelopment of the housing stock to disperse disadvantaged households and attract affluent households, the Socially Integrative City programme encourages state actors to collaborate with representatives from the public and private sectors in each neighbourhood (Hausserman, 2007). Recognizing that the federal government is unwilling to pay all of the costs for redevelopment, the goal is to leverage
resources within the local area while promoting tolerance and mutual understanding. Recent evaluations (Beer et al., 2007; Hausserman, 2007) suggest that the involvement of neighbourhood residents and institutions in decision-making is a welcome but incomplete innovation. In Berlin, Neighbourhood Councils mainly involved the most educated and successful residents from disadvantaged areas, concentrated on minority rather than neighbourhood representation, and were hamstrung by the limited economic resources in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The emphasis on disadvantaged “immigrants” in the recent activities of Neighbourhood Councils contrasts with the policy directions adopted in 2005 by the Berlin government. The Berlin policy promotes integration by recognizing that the receiving society and immigrants should enter into a dialogue to reach agreement about core values and integration targets (Piening & Germerhausen, 2007). An Advisory Council was established under the auspices of the Office of the Commissioner for Integration in which immigrant organizations and municipal departments will participate. Many of the principles and proposed programmes for the new integration policy hearken back to those established in Frankfurt – am-Main in 1989 (Friedmann & Lehrer, 1997).

Two aspects of the Berlin initiatives are noteworthy. While the national government has no official multiculturalism policy and promotes assimilation in its rhetoric, a municipal government has created initiatives that share many of the inclusionary characteristics of multicultural programmes elsewhere. At the same time, the Socially Integrative City programme highlights the limits of neighbourhood-based initiatives (Hausserman, 2007). Economic inequality and disadvantage as well as inadequate housing conditions are difficult if not impossible to address successfully with policies concerned solely with the neighbourhood and when local autonomy is limited by federal funding that reflects the goals and interests of the Bund. Although the local level may offer possibilities for progressive social change to promote equal opportunities for all cultural groups, the scope for change is limited by national policies that are in the initial stages of a transition from assimilation to integration.

2.3.7. Singapore: achieving cosmopolitan multiracialism?

Singapore stands alone among the cities and countries that we have reviewed as a multiracial city-state (Ang & Stratton, 1995; Huat, 2003; Moore, 2000). As a British colony, Singapore grew from an island with a small Malay population to a major city populated by Chinese, Malays, South Asians, and Europeans. From independence in 1959 from the United Kingdom and then from Malaysia in 1965, the Singaporean government has always recognized the multiracial character of the population. In this review, Singapore is also the only city that is also a national state. While the Singapore government shares common legal structures and precedents with those of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and even the United States, as a unitary state, its urban policies are often more muscular and interventionist. As a result, urban planning plays a major role in the management of diversity and difference.

The Singapore government has pursued an explicit policy of multiracialism linked to a commitment to merit-based social mobility (Ang & Stratton, 1995). The racial composition of Singapore has not changed much since independence, with a population that is 75 percent Chinese, 15 percent Malay, 7 percent Indian, and approximately 3 percent other known as Eurasian. Racial categories are fixed at birth by registration, usually in the racial group of the child’s father. Upon independence, the Singapore government argued that economic growth fuelled by a capitalist economy would benefit people from all races, so people from each of the racial groups are to be treated the same, rewarded solely on the basis of merit. With this ideological stance, an economic hierarchy that favours Chinese and in which Malays are found at the bottom with Indians in the middle persists. One response to the persistent economic disparities allowed the Malay community to form a self-help group, Mendaki, funded by donations from all Muslims and by matching money from the government (Moore, 2000). The government also provided space, training and staff to the organization that offered tutoring services and scholarships to improve the educational outcomes for Malay children. In response to Malay children’s improved examination results, Indian and Chinese self-help groups were formed, ostensibly to help community members in the lowest-income brackets. However, this decision reinforced existing inequality. Due to the predominance of Chinese in Singapore, the Chinese self-help group has more funding and offers more extensive services than the other two organizations, enhancing the educational achievements of the Chinese who are already economically dominant (Moore, 2000). Housing is a second critical arena in which the Singapore government has pursued its goals of a harmonious multiracial society and simultaneously addressed some of the economic disparities among the three main racial groups.
Huat, 2003). With more than 85 percent of the population living in housing developed by the Singapore government, the government enforces strict quotas on the racial backgrounds of residents in each housing development (Sin, 2003). In developments where the racial mix deviates from the national proportions for each of the three main groups, housing units are only offered for sale to members of underrepresented groups.

Current policies in Singapore reify racial and ethnic identities. Singapore citizens are assigned to one of three racial categories, regardless of their own identification with them (Ang & Stratton, 1995). The rigidity of racial categories is reinforced by policies that rely on ethnic organizations to deal with social and economic inequalities and that assign housing units on the basis of racial category. These policies have not always led to social order and harmony. Public controversies have arisen regularly in response to government-mandated redevelopment of ethnic enclaves (Chang, 2000b; Kong, 2003) and contemporary international migration is disrupting the current social hierarchy. Growing numbers of immigrants enter temporarily as domestic workers, low-skill workers, and highly skilled workers (Yeoh & Lin, 2012). The presence of growing numbers of temporary workers is altering labour market conditions. For example, after years of lobbying, domestic workers have finally earned the right to one day off each week, setting a minimum standard for all workers. There is also growing concern that skilled foreigners are competing with Singapore citizens for managerial and professional jobs. The government response is very familiar. It has attempted to promote intercultural interaction between immigrants and other residents of Singapore by a Community Integration Fund and an enhanced orientation programme for immigrants that introduces them to Singapore culture and history, policies similar to those adopted in other cities of immigrants such as Amsterdam. Despite its distinctive character, multiculturalism in a unitary state evokes some of the same planning discourses and practices that we saw in cities where current national discourses emphasize cultural diversity and official discussions of race and racialization are rare.

2.3.8. Johannesburg: undoing apartheid?

In the post-apartheid era, South Africa adopted many tenets of multiculturalism and simultaneously recognized the role of local governments in achieving social order and harmony in the complex multiracial and multiethnic society that is contemporary South Africa. Struggling with the question of who is a South African, the 1996 Constitution recognizes cultural pluralism, bans racialism and sexism, and protects the cultural, linguistic, gender, and religious rights of individuals (Bekker & Leidlé, 2003). Citizenship is granted to legal permanent residents, however, all those residing in South Africa enjoy some limited rights (Klaaren, 2010). Equally important, the constitution calls for cooperation between all three levels of government, central, provincial, and local, in which each level of government has a ‘distinctive, interrelated, and interdependent’ role. Enforcement of the constitution, particularly the clauses banning racism and sexism, protecting individual rights, and promoting cultural pluralism are shared among all three levels of government (Bekker & Leidlé, 2003). The government also reviewed the boundaries, responsibilities and powers of local governments, so that by 2004, the large cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town had metropolitan governments underpinned by numerous small local governments.

The cultural diversity of South Africa is astonishing. As an example, the 1996 Constitution recognizes eleven official languages (Bekker & Leidlé, 2003). In addition to the racialized categories that prevailed under apartheid, traditional tribal affiliations, and multiple linguistic groups, migrants have added to the diversity of South African society. There is a long history of cross-border labour migration to the mines, South Africa now recognizes the rights to asylum of refugees although the refugee claimant system is under-resourced and slow, and the number of legal immigrants from Africa, Europe and North America is increasing after plummeting in the 1990s (Crush, 2008). An unknown but large number of unauthorized migrants also enter annually from nearby African states. Simone (2004) has captured the everyday experience of diversity on certain Johannesburg streets in his remarkable ethnography.

Cultural diversity in South Africa is linked inexorably with inequality. It has proved difficult to undo the legacy of apartheid that favoured services and facilities for white South Africans at the expense of all other ethnic and racial groups (Parnell & Pieterse, 2010). While local governments rely on many of the tools used elsewhere, they must also create the administrative structures and practices needed for local governance and management. For example, local governments are charged with promoting civic participation, however just as we saw in Berlin, the capacity of different individuals and groups to engage with local governments varies. In the case of Johannesburg, local participation also required functioning local governments that hold regular elections and where
elected officials are accountable to their constituents, a novelty in some areas of the city (Liepitz, 2008). Parnell and Pieterse (2010) note that support for neoliberalism that reduces city resources also limits the rights of poor minorities. Ambitious plans to extend basic utilities such as electricity and water lines and to improve schools and other educational facilities have been stymied as much by limited administrative infrastructure as by limited financial resources. For example, property ownership is well documented in wealthy areas dominated by white South Africans, but it is not clear in many poor areas where coloured and black residents are concentrated (Parnell & Pieterse, 2010). In this context where basic administrative infrastructure is very uneven, local governments are having great difficulty achieving the multicultural equality called for in the recent federal constitution.

Under the 1996 Constitution, local governments must recognize the self-determination rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities and where appropriate the roles of traditional chiefs and customary law (Bekker & Leidlé, 2003). Language policies and programmes provide some insight into possible future local efforts to deal with cultural diversity. Language has particularly potent political connotations in South Africa where Afrikaans and English spoken mainly by whites were the official languages during apartheid. In this context, multilingualism is embraced as a move away from apartheid that undermines essentialised ethnic and racial identities while allowing for intercultural understanding, a critical prerequisite for successful initiatives at the local level (Barnard, 2006). Simone (2004) describes how individuals from multiple linguistic and cultural groups interact successfully along the streets of Johannesburg. It remains to see if local governments can help South African society move beyond these informal means of living together to achieve the promise of the 1996 Constitution without substantial infusions of financial and other resources.

2.4. Commonalities and differences

Reviewing urban examples of multiculturalism highlights its diverse meanings. Although urban planners and politicians from all the cities that we have considered share the goal of achieving social order and harmonious relations among different ethnic and racial groups, the contexts of their activities vary. While ambivalence about multiculturalism persists in all of the nation-states that we have considered, official views range from the celebratory stance of the City of Toronto to the emphasis on private responsibility for maintenance of cultural and linguistic heritage in New York City. Multiracialism characterizes Singapore where policies focus on the numbers of people from different racial backgrounds to ensure that in all contexts, the population represents the racial composition of the nation. In Johannesburg, the racialization stemming from apartheid frames all planning concerning cultural difference.

There is a shared and growing concern with concentrations of ethnic and racial minorities that are also suffering economic disadvantage, however, policy responses are highly varied. In Amsterdam, the ‘Big City’ policy seeks to reverse decline by altering the housing stock in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, while in Singapore, the government closely monitors the racial composition of housing developments to promote mixing. In Toronto, social and cultural programmes have been introduced in priority neighbourhoods of concentrated poverty and minority settlement. A similar strategy is being adopted in Berlin where Neighbourhood Councils are supposed to encourage community participation in urban planning and in Johannesburg where the local government is experimenting with various forms of civic participation. In New York City, on the other hand, municipal programmes are designed more narrowly to promote intercultural interaction rather than reduce poverty.

Regardless of the national views regarding multiculturalism, local governments engage in remarkably similar practices to reduce tensions and increase cohesion when cultural difference is associated with disadvantage. The commonalities in planning practices may reflect the range of policy levers available to planners at the local level. Historically, urban planning that is concerned with how to reduce inequality and its potential for conflict and discord within urban societies has been less developed than other branches of contemporary urban planning. In the current neoliberal era where the market dominates, urban planning is viewed as the handmaiden to investment and redevelopment, concentrating on physical planning such as housing redevelopment rather than the traditional goals of social planning. The economic priorities of neoliberal urban governance also contribute to the similarities in practices. Market-oriented solutions to the marginalization of minorities are now in favour in many of the cities that we studied, leading to homogenization of planning discourses and practices. The rapid transfer of neoliberal policies from one national jurisdiction to another has also contributed to the commonalities that we have observed across these diverse national contexts (Peck, 2011; Robinson, 2011).
Neoliberal governance encourages local responses to ethnic and racialized difference, in an effort to hold all stakeholders responsible for social order and harmony regardless of whether they have the power to make change.

3. Social mixing: the significance of residential space

In a context in which immigration has greatly diversified the racial and cultural mix of urban residents as well as increased inequalities in wealth, patterns of spatial segregation of the poor and of ethnic and racial minorities have engendered anxieties among planners, policy makers and social scientists alike. At the same time, socio-spatial mixing has been hailed for its possibilities of promoting social cohesion, upward mobility and neighbourhood regeneration. In this section we consider how urban planning in its various forms has attempted to manage this “ungleiche Vielfalt” (unequal diversity) of cities through interventions into residential spaces.

State-sanctioned, market-reinforced and/or culturally buttressed residential segregation was the predominant solution or ‘cure of problems’ associated with social inequalities and ethnic and racial difference in many ‘modern’ cities up into the 20th century (in some contexts very far into the 20th century). This was especially the case regarding the racialized Other, in both colonial and metropolitan contexts, but also the social, internal Other at times. However, policies that explicitly endorse the racial and ethnic segregation of space have become less politically tenable in many contemporary liberal democracies (with some notable exceptions see Yiftachel, 2009), and have been replaced by social mix as the dominant frame of reference for planning.

Over the past 50 years immigrant and ethnic and racial minority ‘ghettos’ have become sites of particular anxiety for many planners in European and North American cities. Concentrations of social, cultural and racial Others have been associated with high unemployment; high population densities; high crime rates and lack of safety; poor housing stock and social disorder. A well-known example is that of the modernist experiment on Amsterdam’s Southeastern fringe, the Bijlmeer. Rejected in the 1970s by Dutch middle classes for low-rise homes in the suburbs, ‘Bijlmeer’ (as it is commonly called) became the place to settle the poor, the unemployed and recent arrivals (Mak, 2003). Many immigrants from newly independent Surinam settled in the Bijlmeer after 1975, constituting what came to be thought of as the Netherlands’ first ‘black town’, with only between 20 and 30% of residents of Dutch origin. This first ‘black town’ has been pathologised by planners for its unappealing aesthetic, its isolation from the rest of the networked city, and high levels of population turnover and housing vacancy (Hellemans & Wassenberg, 2004).

Across diversifying Northern cities, neighbourhoods like Bijlmeer, Brixton in London, and Kreuzberg in Berlin, have become spatial ‘testing grounds’ for different planning and policy solutions, one of the most prominent being social mixing. By ‘social mix’ or ‘socio-spatial mixing,’ we mean planning efforts that strive for some combination of the following: balancing the socio-economic variance of residents; a mix of different housing tenures (public and private rentals, owner-occupation); facilitating a mix of age groups; and achieving the right variation in the ethnic or racial mix of residents, usually in a spatially defined area (neighbourhood, block, street or even building) (Arthurson, 2010b, p. 226–227).

In this section we trace the discursive shifts and practices in social mix planning as they unfolded since the early 20th century across space and time (on the evolution of the idea of social mix also see Sarkissian, 1976). We locate these in a range of 20th century social scientific theories, including spatial assimilation theory, contact theory, culture of poverty, urban underclass, and neighbourhood effects theses, and arguments around social capital. Informed by these concepts we trace two distinct, but connected periods of concentrated energy around social mix: that of inter-war socialism and postwar Keynesian social liberalism, and neoliberalism since the early 1980s. Within these periods we identify and interpret changes in (1) the subjects of intervention – at times the poor, in other moments, the racial Other or the foreigner (never the ‘native’ affluent); and (2) the various sites and strategies of intervention – from neighbourhood settlement quotas, to dispersal policies, housing restructuring (tenure diversification, in situ upgrading), to area-based urban renewal, and the creation of spaces for intercultural encounter. Finally, we review and assess conceptual critiques of social mix policies and attempts to measure their efficacy on the ground.

3.1. Planning for social mix – early socialism and Keynesian liberalism

It was in the early part of the 20th century that social mix planning was implemented on a large scale for the first time. It was taken up in parts of Europe within a
radical redistributive project that was organized around specific notions of workers’ rights as citizens through social housing. Residential mix in Vienna in the 1930s, and Berlage’s Southeastern extension of Amsterdam for example were aimed at realizing the right of the working class (not just the affluent) to live in beautiful and well-located parts of the city and to facilitate working class sociality and solidarity through urban design (Bobek & Lichtenberger, 1978; Marcuse, 1985; Wagenaar, 2003). It was an explicitly class-oriented project, with little in-migration into Europe at this time.

In the US, urban policy-makers and scholars were less interested in building worker solidarity, and more interested in the integration of European immigrants through a natural process of “spatial assimilation” from ethnic ghettos to assimilated suburbia by the third generation (Gordon, 1964; Park, Burgess, & McKenzie, 1925). Social assimilation was deemed a function of spatial proximity between groups, but required the right mix of migrants within dominant populations. However, at the time, there was little active planning intervention to produce these proximities, and racial segregation remained entrenched. In colonial urban planning more generally, ethnic and racial mix was to be actively prevented through spatial buffer zones, segregated housing and amenities, and urban influx control mechanisms (Home, 1997; King, 1976).

Urban reconstruction after the Second World War in Europe under social liberalism gave planners the room to think the city differently, while at the same time improving access to scarce housing. Galster (2007a) sees the social mixing promoted in post-war housing policies as underpinned by two goals: that of “economic efficiency” and “distributive equity.” Across Europe, social housing estates were constructed in modernist high-rise form on the urban fringe and in inner cities cleared out by war damage. These estates were supposed to cater both to the working and middle classes – not just the poor as in the US and in the former colonial powers, for the new migrants arriving from the edges of crumbling Empire. The post-World War II reconstruction era was also marked by the increased immigration of guestworkers recruited from Turkey, North Africa and the Caribbean. Their settlement was a source of new public and political anxiety.

In the UK, for example most migrants found housing in the discriminatory private rental market often in declining inner-city areas (Wood & Landry, 2008, p. 115) that were close to industrial work opportunities. Growing racial tensions in these neighbourhoods precipitated state actions targeting what was considered the root problem: “too many ‘coloured colonials’ packed into too little space” (Smith, 1988, p. 430). Minority racial and ethnic concentration was discouraged throughout the 1960s and 1970s through national migration controls alongside national legislation such as the Race Relations Act (Smith, 1988).

In Germany, the employment of foreign workers from the Mediterranean was conceived as a temporary migration of single individuals that could be housed in dormitories. However, when migrants did not leave, and settled with their families, neighbourhood settlement quotas were introduced to prevent ghettoisation. In 1975, the city of Berlin attempted to curtail Turkish settlement in three inner city neighbourhoods – Kreuzberg, Tiergarten and Wedding – through an ordinance prohibiting further Turkish immigrant settlement in these districts, where Turks accounted for 19, 14 and 10 percent of the population, respectively. This action was justified on the grounds that Germany needed to prevent at all costs the dangers and problems associated with ghettoisation – frequently invoking the spectre of ghetto riots in US cities of the late 1960s.3 This policy was not very successful, as Turkish residents found ways to circumvent it. In addition, at the individual level, landlords included addenda to leases that specified how many people could live in an apartment/house to prevent the settling of large, extended Turkish families (Mandel, 2008, p. 148). Thus, both the state and individual landlords worked to prevent settlement of the external immigrant Other in the first place.

It is worth noting that it was US scholarship that dominated the ‘scientific’ study of intergroup relations in the immediate postwar period. One of the first explanatory theories and solutions for reducing intergroup conflict and prejudice came from American psychologist Gordon Allport (1954). He suggested that under certain conditions,4 regular interpersonal contact between groups has the potential to reduce prejudice and improve social relations between in-groups and out-groups, majorities and minorities. Prejudice dissipates through contact via increased knowledge of the Other, reduction of anxiety of the Other and potential for increased empathy towards the Other, first at the individual scale, but perhaps also across the whole population (Matejskova & Leitner, 2011, p. 719).

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3 The enforcement of this ordinance was made possible because foreign residents have to file their name and address with the local policy.

4 Equality of status; a shared common project or goal; the potential to become friends in a non-competitive environment, and institutional support for these interactions.
While Allport’s contact hypothesis did not take the neighbourhood scale as its explicit site of contact, studies deploying the contact hypothesis were important in the Brown vs. Board of Education case that led to the formal repeal of racial segregation in US schools by the Supreme Court in 1954 (Putnam, 2007). This major legislative shift began to re-shape US planning and housing policies, together with anxiety over social unrest in black ‘ghettos,’ and later the activism of the Fair Housing Movement of the 1960s (Goetz, 2003, p. 85; Sarkissian, 1976, p. 240). The subject of intervention was primarily the impoverished African-American minority in the central city. The Fair Housing movement mobilized federal housing resources to construct new dispersed public housing for the racialized poor in largely white neighbourhood and suburbs, rather than in central city public housing ghettos. Goetz (2003) notes that these “first generation dispersal” attempts, explicitly about racial redistribution and anti-discrimination, met with much resistance from white suburban constituents and thus only limited roll out. The struggle to implement this scatter-site public housing largely played out in court until it was halted altogether by President Reagan. Since the late 1960s, the US has actively promoted de-concentration away from public housing ghettos into the private housing market, through structural demolition (e.g. the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe Project in St. Louis) and/or dispersal of internal Others as well as refugees. In Canada, planners also promoted scatter-site public housing largely because of the perceived failure of large social housing developments.

3.2. Planning for social mix – neoliberalism

During the 1970s and 1980s we see a general lull in social mix planning in the UK and the US under roll-back neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002). In contrast, social mix planning through quotas and spatial dispersal continued elsewhere. For example, Singapore introduced ethnic quotas on all public housing. In the “multi-ethnic” city state, the state sought to “reproduce, as closely as possible, a microcosm of Singapore’s ethnic mix in every block, every neighbourhood, every electoral constituency and every New Town” (Sin, 2003, p. 530) – a “new spatial order” (Ooi, 1991 as cited in Sin, 2003). But the state was also responding to rising concerns over the perceived segregation and associated political threat of non-Chinese ethnic groups under the previously laissez-faire apartment allocation system (Sin, 2003). As such, housing transactions since 1989 must maintain the national ethnic balance at the neighbourhood, block and building scale. This policy was represented as critical for “the long-term stability of the nation” (p. 531), and a cohesive, racially harmonious and integrated Singapore.

Since the 1990s – in the roll-out phase of neoliberalism – we see a greater diversification of social mix policies from the tried-and-tested-quota systems and household-based spatial dispersal, to neighbourhood revitalization through housing restructuring (tenure diversification, mixed-income development, in situ upgrading), infrastructure and public space improvements, to the creation of programmes and spaces that facilitate individual encounter at the interpersonal scale. In terms of governance, mix is increasingly driven not just by the state, but by new public–private partnerships. The renewed and intensified interest in a diverse set of social mix policies has also to be seen within the context of a renewed political urgency around immigration and segregation – for example, the 1992 LA riots; physical violence against immigrants and refugees in German cities; the 2001 riots in small UK cities such as Bradford – as well as the rise of new theoretical concepts circulating within the academy, and policy and planning circles.

The most influential of these new theoretical concepts include the Neighbourhood Effects and Social Capital theses. Building on older conceptual arguments (such as spatial assimilation, the contact hypothesis and notions of the spatially trapped ‘underclass’), these theories/theses similarly stress the efficacy of social mix for social inclusion, social mobility, poverty reduction, social cohesion, urban revitalization, but with a renewed emphasis on the local social and physical environment in creating a certain citizen and community. It is at this scale that urban planners are uniquely qualified to intervene in and shape outcomes.

Scholarship on Neighbourhood Effects argues that the neighbourhood has “an independent residential and social environment effect” on education (grades and dropout rates), levels of social deviance and social exclusion, health outcomes, welfare uptake, work opportunities and employment, and social mobility (van Ham, Manley, Bailey, Simpson, & Macleman, 2011, p. 1). These effects are thought to operate through a number of mechanisms: “peer groups; concentrated poverty and adult role-models; and, physical infrastructure and institutional networks” (Bauder, 2002, p. 86). Deprived neighbourhoods are seen as lacking on these various counts: residents are isolated from socioeconomic opportunities and the spatial concentration of poverty is high; there is an absence of positive role models, resulting in deviant behavioural norms and
work ethics; physical infrastructure is in decline, and levels of social organization and control are low (Musterd & Pinkster, 2009). Living in such a neighbourhood “has a negative effect on residents’ life chances over and above the effect of their individual characteristics” (van Ham et al., 2011, p. 1). Neighbourhood effects thinking purports that disadvantaged and disorderly neighbourhoods produce disadvantaged and disorderly citizens, with little scope for social mobility, potentially posing threats to wider “moral order or social cohesion” (Forrest & Kearns, 2001, p. 2133). Thus, social mix planning informed by neighbourhood effects thinking continues to be predominantly concerned with neighbourhoods of concentrated poverty, ethnic Others or social housing rather than the highly segregated and gated communities of elites (Musterd & Andersson, 2005).

Social capital as “a resource for individual action” (Briggs, 1998, p. 178) is argued to come from interactions with others (ties and networks); the subsequent accumulation of obligations; strong norms of reciprocity; group identification and solidarity; and trust that is rewarded and sanctioned (Briggs, 1998; Portes, 1998). Social networks allow people to increase their social capital through two kinds of interactions: ‘bonding ties’ within groups that are useful for in-group cohesion and everyday support; and ‘bridging ties’ between and across groups, and are more useful for economic opportunities, and broader societal consensus (Putnam, 1993). Segregation and concentrated poverty are obstacles to the accumulation of bridging social capital (Briggs, 2005): while residents in such areas demonstrate strong local ties, they have few ties beyond the neighbourhood and beyond the social group. They are “socially isolated” from job networks and appropriate role models (Briggs, 1998, p. 187) and residing in stigmatized, marginal neighbourhoods even produces negative social capital (for details see Wacquant, 1998). Neighbourhood decline itself can also lead to “a cumulative decline in social capital”, weakening networks, trust and civic engagement through high population turnover (Forrest & Kearns, 2001, p. 2139). Neighbourhood-based planning and housing policy are seen as crucial in rectifying this.

Drawing on these concepts recent programmes emphasize the importance of the ‘right’ social mix of households that will increase stocks of social capital and trust, and hence social mobility; reduce conflict and increase social order, social cohesion and the value of the neighbourhood. These goals are not necessarily packaged together, and are weighted differently in different contexts (and by different authors). Thus, as we will show below, the specifics of new social mix planning vary across countries and cities depending on differences in planning cultures, the role of the state and market in housing and neighbourhood development, and commitment to multicultural policies.

In Dutch cities, decreased investments in social housing and an increased emphasis on immigrant assimilation have occurred in tandem with large scale targeted housing/neighbourhood restructuring through public–private partnerships since the 1990s (Fainstein, 2010). 170 neighbourhoods were marked for restructuring, which meant diversifying new and old housing stock primarily within post-war housing estates through a combination of demolition, upgrading, selling off social housing units, and infill construction of new mixed housing types (Galster, 2007b; Uitermark, 2003). These measures aimed at reducing outmigration from the neighbourhoods, and attracting middle class people into the area through new upscale housing options in order to foster social cohesion and social capital within the neighbourhood (Burgers, 2009; van Kempen & Gideon, 2009). In the Blijmeer neighbourhood in Amsterdam, restructuring was premised on the demolition and replacement of a quarter of the housing stock, selling off another quarter, and upgrading the remaining half (Bodaar, 2006; Fainstein, 2010). New owner-occupied low-rise units were to be built in which original residents would have first preference. New mixed-use design would include space for businesses near residences, alongside investment in new public infrastructure, interventions around safety, job creation, education, multicultural celebration, etc.

In the US urban context of high segregation of poor racial minorities, social mix policies have been reinvigorated with the explicit goal of de-concentrating poverty and building social capital in ghettos (Goetz, 2003, 2010). Since the late 1990s, some public housing and the neighbourhoods around them have been part of two experimental initiatives: one, tenant-based housing voucher programmes, the most well-known being the Moving to Opportunity Programme in which households from historically low-income, racialized public

5 Note that other countries with historically substantial public intervention in housing markets like Australia (Arthurson, 2002), Sweden, France and the UK have also engaged in housing restructuring (Galster, 2007b) to differing degrees.

6 The latter was largely due to resident mobilization.
housing blocks volunteer to move to low poverty and high opportunity neighbourhoods (Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010). The other programme involves the demolition of public housing and its replacement with mixed-income, mixed-use development – the best known being the HOPE VI programme (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere), in which a certain percentage of the new housing is reserved for lower-income families (Goetz, 2010), and New Urbanism design principles are engaged to attract higher income groups to revive these neighbourhoods. While these seem to present opposite forms of mix – one “mixing low-income people into wealthier neighbourhoods”, the other “attract[ing] higher-income groups into more disadvantaged communities” (Goetz, 2003, p. 55) – both initiatives share a similar logic and belief that “communities simply are not viable without a cadre of employed residents to sustain businesses, provide role models, and increase social capital” and that the stigma of subsidized housing will be reduced through mixing (Goetz, 2003, p. 59). While the focus is on poverty reduction, it is important to note that poverty is highly racialized.

In German cities social mix planning through housing mechanisms has been supplemented with a diversity of supportive physical, social, and economic development strategies. Germany’s Socially Integrative Cities programme is a good example of this, targeting both the renewal of the state’s large housing stock (which is already quite mixed in terms of tenure) and the development of public infrastructure such as community centres that can promote encounters with difference (Dick, 2011; Matejskova & Leitner, 2011; see also Section 5 of this paper). Community development programmes have been introduced to mitigate the threat of ‘parallel societies’ next-door to one another, and build conviviality and social capital via “neighbourhood get-togethers, park improvement projects”, and social interventions connecting youth and local economic development (Dick, 2011). In Stuttgart, the City Council made a “Pact of Integration” in 2001 to foster immigrant inclusion through education, language, economic growth, equal rights, democratic forums, multilingual resources and cultural investments (Wood & Landry, 2008).

In the UK under New Labour, we have seen a multitude of socio-spatial interventions at the neighbourhood scale to produce cohesive places across ethnicity and decrease economic exclusion. Since the Bradford riots of 2001, areas of poverty concentration and ethnic clustering have been prime sites of policy intervention. The local advancement of “mixed communities” (i.e. not ethnically or class-concentrated ones) has been offered as a solution to combating inequality and marginalization, increasing social inclusion, and as a stimulus for economic development, cultural vitality and innovation (Imrie, Lees, & Raco, 2009; Lupton & Fuller, 2009). The main mechanisms for achieving this include public–private regeneration of public housing estates, facilitating better minority access to social housing in non-concentrated areas, new mixed-tenure housing developments, and neighbourhood renewal more generally (Lees, 2008; Watt, 2009; Wood & Landry, 2008). The regeneration of public housing estates, which has in part been funded by selling off social housing units to private buyers, shares some similarities with programmes in the Netherlands and Australia. In the UK, recent refinements of the New Labour cohesion agenda have seen the promotion of an increasingly communitarian vision – focusing on “what we have in common rather than obsessing with those things that make us different” (cited in Robinson, 2008, p. 21–22) and promoting active citizen participation.

Despite differences across country and city contexts, there are common elements in contemporary social mix planning. Across Northern cities, social mix programmes, driven by public–private partnerships, seek to attract (or maintain) the middle classes and their social capital and ‘mainstream’ their values into the disadvantaged neighbourhoods through some combination of public housing privatization and demolition, upgrading and new mixed-income development which diversifies the housing stock to prioritize home ownership. At the same time, disadvantaged, socially isolated public housing residents are dispersed into private rental stock in low poverty, often majority white areas with better schooling and job opportunities. Neighbourhood and community become the major organizing principles, increasingly focusing on regenerating existing poor and/or ethnic neighbourhoods. Contemporary social mix planning relies on new discourses of poverty de-concentration and community cohesion that mask differences along class, ethnic and racial lines. Of course, scholars and many policy makers recognize these differences and their intersectionality, but it is interesting to see how the subjects of intervention are named or not

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7 This was inspired by Chicago’s massive Gautreaux program from 1974 to 1998 (Goetz & Chapple, 2010).

8 Racialized clusters themselves produced by past multicultural and housing policies.
named in contemporary social mix regimes. Another distinct characteristic of the socio-spatial interventions at the neighbourhood scale has been their participatory and communitarian vision of sustainable social change. Citizen participation is promoted as an alternative to top-down planning and the construction of social capital, civic culture and community at the same time (Ratcliffe, 2011).

3.3. Interrogating social mixing – policies and concepts

How have scholars assessed recent programmes and policies? Some say it is too soon to adjudicate, and the case-by-case evaluation studies are too scattered to draw any general conclusions. Quantitative measures indicate there has been relative success in terms of increasing the tenure mix in programme areas (Arthurson, 2010b, p. 228) and/or changing the social composition of the population (Burgers, 2009, 145). However, the stated qualitative goals of social mix planning to promote social inclusion of racialized minorities and low income immigrants and decrease concentrated poverty are more difficult to trace (Joseph, Chaskin, & Webber, 2007). By and large though, empirical assessments from Australia to the Netherlands, UK to the US thus far generally show that social mix projects tend to be disappointing in reaching their stated aims of either socio-economic mobility or improved social relations – at best they are found to be ambiguous and at worst downright harmful (Bolt, Phillips, & van Kempen, 2010; Cheshire, 2007).

On the positive side, surveys point to an improved quality of environment and housing stock for residents (Bolt & van Kempen, 2011; Burgers, 2009; Goetz, 2003) and perceptions of improved safety (Goetz, 2010; Joseph et al., 2007), particularly for women (Briggs et al., 2010). Access to better schools and services are reported in some cases (Bolt & van Kempen, 2011; Goetz, 2003), and sometimes improved neighbourhood reputation (Arthurson, 2010b). In the US for example, the effects of mixed-income development through HOPE VI projects on the built environment have been dramatic, transforming dilapidated public housing sites into attractive mixed-income neighbourhoods of low-rise housing in neotraditional style (Goetz, 2003).

Yet who this transformed landscape benefits and how far it has achieved its economic and social goals for households is less clear. Assessments of US dispersal programmes such as HOPE VI provide no evidence of households’ increased access to employment or economic independence after dispersal, often to nearby equally marginal neighbourhoods (Goetz, 2010, p. 150). Voluntary dispersal programmes for low-income central city residents to the suburbs have facilitated increased proximity to job opportunities, but because of racial discrimination in the labour market, lack of good public transportation and kin-based childcare, economic benefits often could not be realized (Goetz, 2003, p. 80). Dispersal of immigrants and refugees to small towns has resulted in a spatial mismatch between residential location and job opportunities and services (Hynes, 2011). Neighbourhood restructuring and dispersal often destroy existing social networks and the bonding social capital that is critical to poor and migrant communities in their everyday lives (Lees, 2008; Lehman-Frisch, 2011). Furthermore, the reduction in the availability of affordable housing has jeopardized the social mobility of poor residents, who are being priced out of the regenerated areas and displaced to other poor neighbourhoods (Bolt et al., 2010; Goetz, 2003; Lees, 2008; Rose, 2004). In contrast, for the middle classes, social mix programmes have been successful in consolidating their social mobility through increased access to homeownership, as in the case of Amsterdam’s Bijlmermeer and the Surinamese middle class (Aalbers, 2011).

The economic impacts of social mix planning at the neighbourhood scale have also been ambiguous. The few existing studies of mixed-income development in the US (HOPE VI) demonstrate either little private investment in the neighbourhood after de-concentration (usually through demolition) and further marginalization of the area once the most successful households are “cream ed off” through selective mobility programmes. There has also been rampant neighbourhood gentrification, as in Chicago (Goetz, 2003, p. 69–70, 242). These processes have been racialized (Patillo, 2009). In the UK, black and ethnic minority neighbourhoods have been disproportionately affected (Phillips & Harrison, 2010, p. 299). However, neighbourhood gentrification is not necessarily considered a failure of social mix planning. For example, HOPE VI’s success was never

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9 To note, this section relies on both primary assessments of selected policies as well as review papers summarizing findings of different policies. There are of course limitations in drawing on review papers (Bond et al., 2011).

10 For example, the number of higher-income households in restructured neighbourhoods in the Netherlands has increased (Bolt & van Kempen, 2011).

11 Surveys of beneficiaries have been the most common method of evaluation, Goetz notes, and often without a control group for reference, making causal arguments difficult (2003, 75–76).
premised only on the upward mobility of original residents, but aimed to revitalize previously under-valued areas through attracting middle-class residents and thus increasing the tax base and reducing the demand for services. But getting the right balance of neighbourhood investment without gentrification (Patillo, 2009) is a tightrope that planners in general are struggling to manage (Rose et al., 2012, see also Section 4 of this paper).

Alongside economic goals, what has been the record of social mix planning in relation to interactions and improved social relations between social groups? Contrary to the presumption that social mix policies will increase interactions between social groups, most local studies of newly restructured neighbourhoods, housing estates, and dispersed households, find little increased interaction between different groups (in Australia see Arthurson, 2002, 2010a; in the US see Joseph & Chaskin, 2010; Goetz, 2003, p. 81–82; in the Netherlands see Bolt & van Kempen, 2011). Even if inter-group contact occurs, Matejskova and Leitner (2011) found that more intergroup contact in high-rise suburban housing estates between local German residents and Russian speaking, ethnic German resettlers, may reinforce, rather than reduce prejudice (Valentine, 2010). Tenure mix especially does not always create social interaction (Bolt et al., 2010, p. 132; Bond, Sautkina, & Kearns, 2011) – it can even reduce interactions. In the UK and Singapore, scholars point to already existing interactions between different groups that are not the product of social mix programmes, and in fact have happened despite them (Finney & Simpson, 2009; Sin, 2003). Furthermore, much of the burden of interaction is placed on the poor and ethnicised Other. In the UK, social mix choice-based letting schemes rely far more on ethnic and racial minority relocation to white areas than vice versa, and minority assimilation therein (Phillips & Harrison, 2010). The scale of mix also matters for social interaction – interactions across tenure are even less likely if rental housing is clustered in one part of the area, and owned houses in another (Arthurson, 2010b).

A number of scholars, however, argue that it may be too soon to measure the effects of tenure mix on social relations (Bolt & van Kempen, 2011; Goetz, 2010). Other non-housing-based strategies have also had ambiguous outcomes on social relations. In Germany, local, community-based immigrant integration did little to improve immigrant-host society relations (Matejskova & Leitner, 2011; see also Section 5 of this paper).

Besides critiques of the impacts of social mix policies on the economic and social achievements of the poor and minorities, some scholars have also taken the planning process to task, finding little evidence of participation by the urban poor in the dispersal or renewal process (Duke, 2009). However, residents’ participation in the process varies across countries. For example, in the UK, New Labour explicitly tried to promote community participation in planning neighbourhood change (Wallace, 2010), while in the Netherlands, in the Bijlmeer, it was the collective pressure of the residents that brought about increased participation (Bodaaar, 2006). Starting in 1996, Bijlmeer’s Surinamese (and particularly middle class) residents fought for more black involvement in renewal, radically changing the process of renewal after 2000 to a much less top-down decision making process that constructed more social housing units than were demolished, with far less dispersal and displacement of original residents (Fainstein, 2010). This mobilization was the start of a broader rise in immigrant political power in the area – an unexpected outcome for social mix planning.

Along with empirical evaluations of how programmes and policies have fared in relation to their stated aims, scholars have voiced some incisive critiques of the concepts, claims and the assumptions underlying social mix in its various forms. Critical scholars argue that deployments of ‘community’ as development ‘partner’ can facilitate new projects of governmentality, as can social mix planning in general. For example, Sin (2003) argues that Singapore’s ethnic quotas are deployed more for the surveillance and close “management of society” by “technocratic” means than the promotion of social cohesion and coexistence. Based on analysis of policy documents, Uitermark (2003) argues that social mix planning in the Netherlands has not been primarily about facilitating immigrant integration or poverty alleviation (for example Musterd & Andersson, 2005). Rather – the management of disadvantaged neighbourhoods through social mixing policies has been part of a wider – urban focused – neoliberal growth strategy. Similarly, Lees (2008) suggests that social mix planning is simply gentrification by another name – a class project that is claimed to have beneficial economic ramifications across the board.

The shortcomings of social mix to ‘fix’ problems associated with segregation can in part be located in the

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12 Here, governance is understood in a broad sense, as a kind of activity in which various actors (not just governments) seek to produce behaviours and spaces that conform to their vision of the ‘good city’ (Rose, 2000).
underlying assumption that the segregation of the poor and ethnic minorities from mainstream society has deleterious effects. However, a number of scholars contest this base premise, especially in Europe and Canada. Not all racial or ethnic segregation/concentration is associated with ghettoisation and negative effects for the ‘host’ and the ‘guest’ population (Marcuse, 2005; Peach, 1996, 2009). Some scholars have demonstrated the positive effects of ethnic clustering on migrants or persecuted minorities away from a potentially hostile host population, building appropriate services and strong enclave economies (Lehman-Frisch, 2011; Qadeer, 2005; Smith & Ley, 2008). Other scholars have questioned dominant public discourses claiming that immigrants self-segregate and choose to lead parallel lives. Scholarship in the UK has shown that segregation is NOT on the increase, NOR a product of immigrants’ choosing. Many immigrants want to live in mixed neighbourhoods but their residential decisions are limited by discrimination in the housing and labour markets (Finney & Simpson, 2009; Phillips & Harrison, 2010; Phillips, Simpson, & Ahmed, 2008).

Scholars have also pointed to the limitations of the Neighbourhood Effects Thesis as a basis for designing social mix policies. This thesis steers programmes towards treating symptoms instead of causes of poverty and segregation (cf. Andersson, Brämå, & Holmqvist, 2010; Ostendorf, Musterd, & De Vos, 2001). While the focus on geographically bounded neighbourhoods is appealing to policy makers, isolating neighbourhood effects from other intervening variables is difficult (Martin, 2003). Furthermore, the emphasis on neighbourhood effects reinscribes representations of dysfunctional individuals produced by pathological neighbourhoods in ways that mirror earlier culture of poverty and underclass arguments (Bauder, 2002).

A focus on the neighbourhood as site of intervention reifies and bounds the neighbourhood in Cartesian space, rather than approaching neighbourhood space as produced by and producing a diverse set of socio-spatial relations (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Privileging the neighbourhood fails to capture the realities of lives lived across many spaces. Australian scholar Arthurson (2010a, p. 61) critiques social mix’s assumption that “propinquity facilitates social interaction between residents across income levels and housing tenures” with benefits to the poor, as out-dated and simplistic. People do not simply inhabit, interact and build networks in neighbourhood spaces, but much of the interactions among different groups occur at other sites, such as schools, workplaces, recreation facilities and places of worship. Matejskova and Leitner (2011) have shown that regular and sustained contacts and interactions with difference in particular in the workplace are more conducive for the establishment of cross-cultural relations and sensibilities than interactions in neighbourhood spaces (cf. Amin, 2006; Ellis, Wright, & Parks, 2004). Community centres that offer language training and other programmes for immigrants living nearby have the potential to promote cross-cultural contacts, but their success depends on engaging a cross-section of neighbourhood residents in decisions about the activities and priorities (Sandercock & Attili, 2009).

Studies also alert us that contact and proximity will reduce Othering and promote inter-group relations only under certain preconditions (Allport, 1954) including: equality of status, a shared common project or goal, the potential to become friends in a non-competitive environment, and institutional support for these interactions. Unfortunately, social mix planning has not adequately grappled with the absence of these preconditions in the everyday. Indeed “real life contact between members of different social groups is always structurally mediated and embedded in particular historical and geographical contexts of power relations between and within social groups” (Matejskova & Leitner, 2011, p. 721).

Finally, based on empirical evidence, scholars have questioned the assumption that social mixing at the neighbourhood scale will lead to the accumulation of social capital, especially bridging ties which are supposed to be beneficial for social mobility. Studies have shown that dispersal of poor minorities, for example, disrupts communities and destroys existing networks without concomitant development of new bridging ties (Bolt et al., 2010). Further, evidence of weak employment post relocation and/or housing restructuring suggests that social mobility is dependent on a range of factors beyond simply the types of interaction and neighbourhood one lives in.

3.4. Should social mix planning be abandoned?

Over the last half century social mix planning at the neighbourhood scale has come to be seen as the dominant solution to managing the undesirable segregation of internal and external Others in diverse cities. As we have shown, social mix planning encompasses a wide repertoire of strategies. These have been taken up

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13 For example, structural obstacles such as a lack of education and labour market access and racial discrimination.
in varied ways at different times and in different places, influenced by dominant social theoretical concepts and prevailing political ideologies. Cutting across this temporal and spatial variance, however, is the premise that for poor people and ethnic minorities living in proximity with the affluent and the majority is beneficial for managing urban diversity in all of its forms. Indeed, presumptions about the efficacy of different social groups living in propinquity with one another are at the core of both social mixing policies and the social theoretical concepts informing these.

Many scholars reviewed here agree that social mixing policies have failed to live up to their claims to address both social inequalities and discrimination of internal and external Others in diverse cities. Does this mean that social mix planning and policies should simply be abandoned? There are different answers to this question that range from reformist approaches to an outright dismissal of social mix planning. Burgers (2009) in the Netherlands and Goetz (2003, 2010) in the US do not want to give up neighbourhood-based social mix planning in favour of only individual-centred policies. However, they propose a broader definition of poverty and its causes that informs a more multi-pronged approach that is not limited to housing or the individual (Goetz, 2003, p. 255). Others suggest that housing-based policies seem best approached through in situ upgrading for existing residents, and creation of new affordable rental stock, rather than demolition, dispersal and privatization – this is a route that better protects the housing rights of existing and diverse communities (Arthurson, 2002; Goetz, 2010; Phillips & Harrison, 2010).

Furthermore, we emphasize with others that social mixing occurs at different sites and that the site of the residence is perhaps not the most important one. As discussed above, more attention needs to be paid in particular to the site of the workplace, as a space where not only social capital is accumulated but also important negotiations across difference occur. We also query the lack of concern with segregation of white/rich residential spaces. The normalization of these spaces exempts them from demands for social mixing, in turn putting the onus of integration on the poor and racialized minorities.

Finally, the examples discussed here have demonstrated the limitations of planning that enforces social mix from the top down. Instead of planner and design-centric approaches to promote social mixing and immigrant integration, we need to look at both how local residents and social movements are already imagining and constructing neighbourhood and community spaces of coexistence. Take the example of the Minneapolis North-Side public housing removal, a top-down planning initiative designed to de-concentrate poverty. Rather than simply welcoming the removal of their homes, residents resisted on the grounds that this would tear apart strong social networks and community structure amongst certain immigrant groups – especially the Hmong residents – residing in the neighbourhood (Goetz, 2003). This example demonstrates that the building of communities across social and racial inequality needs to recognize difference, and not simply presume that the state or the planner knows what is best for a particular community.

This requires moving beyond the usual repertoire of social mixing strategies, offering an alternative that emphasizes process over design, couched in demands for social and spatial justice and recognition of cultural difference, instead of simply ameliorating the negative effects of concentrated poverty and ethnic segregation, or capitalizing on diversity. This is not to reify or romanticize community-based bottom-up strategies that promote neighbourhood spaces for living with difference. Instead we argue for greater attention to the existing variety of community-based bottom-up strategies. Some community-based strategies may engage with official planning processes around social mix, while others may deploy an oppositional mode that rejects official planning processes and dominant models for living with difference. Further, alternative imaginaries are not simply promoted and enacted by social movements, but may also be found in more mundane everyday relationship-building between neighbours (Datta, 2012) or in an “anticipatory urban politics” (Simone, 2010).

4. Commodification: making places commercial

This section considers the commodification of racial or ethnic diversity in cities, and the part played by planning in it. The ideas and practices of the entrepreneurial city (Harvey, 1989) or the neoliberal city (Sager, 2011) have set the scene for certain modes of governance involving alliances between businesses and government, and sometimes community organizations. Global inter-urban competition in which place-marketing and growth policies focus on expanded consumption are common and influence or involve planning. These strategies are helped along by ubiquitous conferences and events (including international sporting competitions like the Olympic Games) held in cities to draw in consumers from elsewhere and attract publicity (Kipfer & Keil, 2002; Rogerson, 2002;
4.1. Cities for visitors and tourism

When cities, or parts of them, are places for visitors (Eisinger, 2000; Judd & Fainstein, 1999), then ethnicity in distinct places is a form of diversity that can be pitched to those visitors by place-marketing. “Places”, say Judd and Fainstein (1999, p. 4), constitute the essence of the tourist experience, and so places in cities are ‘sold’ to consumers as a product. Governments, often local governments involved in planning and providing infrastructure in local built environments, can contribute strongly to conditions for the entrepreneurial place-marketing of places.

In the cities of immigrant settler nations, immigrant ethnicity is sometimes a basis for the development of major new tourist precincts. Localities like Little Italy or Chinatown, where immigrants clustered to live and work in the past, have become busy restaurant districts attracting outsiders. They are selectively preserved by business coalitions for visitors, often with some contest from the local Chinese and Italian communities who no longer live there (Anderson, 1990, 1991; Conforti, 1996). In Europe, these types of tourist-oriented makeovers are now on the rise too. European cities in the UK and The Netherlands have “discovered their old historic Chinatowns and Little Italys” (Hall & Rath, 2007, p. 2–3), even though, in The Netherlands at least, political trends have not favoured immigration in recent years.

In the United States, where racialized difference is not solely about immigrants in the host society, there is commodification of some African American places. In New York City, Harlem has been the site of developments in cultural tourism, using the opportunities provided to small business there by federal urban empowerment funds (Hoffman, 2003). It is noted that minorities in the United States are the fastest-growing group of consumers (Porter, 1995), and that the cultural branding associated with Harlem now draws African Americans from elsewhere in the United States to the area even though tourism there originated with overseas visitors (Halter, 2007; Hoffman, 2003).

Of course the precise circumstances of the development of branding and tourism around ethnic or racialized difference will vary in specific cities and nations. But in most cases there are alliances between local or higher levels of government, community and business organizations, to make these commodifications happen. (Though Preston and Lo (2000) observe that in Toronto, Canada, collections of enterprises offering Chinese goods and services, which are Chinese shopping malls in fact, are being led by real estate developers with minimal government involvement.) A number of related factors seem necessary if the commodification of migrants’ places is to succeed (Hall & Rath, 2007, p. 16–18): the presence of effective local growth coalitions, policies and regulations that support and commercialize diversity, spatial concentrations of visible immigrant activities, immigrant entrepreneurship in shops that showcase the community’s characteristics, social infrastructure in
the ethnic community in the form of community organizations involved in the commodification even if the people in these organizations do not live in the area, accessibility and safety for tourists, and the capacity for the ethnicity in question to be marketed to the relevant groups of visitors. Not everything can be marketed to everyone, however – an example is that in Auckland, New Zealand, overseas visitors may be drawn by the marketing claim that Auckland is the ‘world’s largest Polynesian city’, but New Zealanders are not (Hall & Rath, 2007, p. 19).

Drawing on our cities of main focus, how are ethnically distinct places being commodified for a broader group of consumers than local, often less wealthy, co-ethnics? Where is the involvement of planning in these activities and what outcomes are planners seeking there, if their contributions can be singled out?

In London, local governments have been initiating expanded consumption in certain areas of major cities that are longstanding sites of immigrant settlement and also poverty, with an eye to reducing the socio-economic differences between these deprived localities and other areas (Shaw, Bagwell, & Karmowska, 2004). Jacobs (1996) and Eade (2000) describe the complex community wrangles resulting over immigrant business development, gentrification, conservation and local government politics in Spitalfields, and in ‘Banglatown’ in Brick Lane in East London (though the term ‘community’ should not be taken to suggest a unified immigrant position in these contests). These areas are contrasted to the development of an Asian fashion district in Green Street, West Ham, London Borough of Newham, in which investment by London’s Asian business community has been directed at developing a shopping district for wealthier Asian families, even from overseas. This Green Street initiative differs from other areas like Banglatown, in not catering to western ideas of the exotic (Shaw et al., 2004). Local governments have been centrally involved with other local stakeholders in establishing urban regeneration frameworks and incentives in London to encourage such local development, for example designating certain areas as cultural quarters, improving old infrastructure like markets and pathways with new urban designs, and marketing events associated with a longstanding immigrant presence. But analysts judge that the frameworks used to date to encourage redevelopment in immigrant places have been less successful in making these developments ‘sustainable’ in ways like limiting rental rises for local businesses, and reconciling the interests of business in economic growth with the interests of longstanding local residents in keeping the area functioning socially (Shaw et al., 2004).

Elsewhere in the UK, in Birmingham, the city government has sought to develop a new image for the city as a ‘vibrant hub of multicultural diversity’ through a marketing focus on the cuisine of its Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and African Caribbean populations. In this case government preparation for such place-marketing has involved primarily physical infrastructure development such as the creation of pedestrian-only malls (Jones & Ram, 2007). Like Shaw et al. (2004) and Jones and Ram (2007) interpret the marketing of ethnicity led by government as unsustainable, in the Birmingham case because the growth of small businesses in the ‘Balti Quarter’ has created an environment in which cutting prices and exploiting (often family members’) labour is the only way these businesses can survive. Socio-economic polarization is occurring. ‘At the top is a discourse of urban redevelopment, multiculturalism, spectacle, consumer choice and the pursuit of leisure. At the bottom is a tale of marginal economic survival, unsocial hours and under-rewarded toil under precarious conditions of ever-present risk.’ (Jones & Ram, 2007, p. 64).

With reference to certain major Asian cities, and particularly Singapore, tourism has been seen by governments as a way of building the national economy, of projecting a cultural identity both nationally and internationally (Mullins, 1999). Meetings, incentive travel, conventions, and exhibitions are now being encouraged in Singapore, and the city is exploiting its unique historical importance by promoting its heritage, rebuilding its markets (which were destroyed in the urban renewal schemes of the 1970s), and reconstructing its ethnic enclaves. State-directed conservation and heritage organizations have been guiding this process and marketing their product not just to tourists but to local consumers as well (Mullins, 1999, p. 250). Yeoh (2005) finds that the Singaporean state retains its priority of promoting national identity through tourist promotion: the redevelopment of Singapore’s Chinatown, Little India and Kampong Glam (the Malaysian enclave) as designated ‘historical districts’, this dating from a change in urban policy in the late 1980s, was both to halt the decline in tourist numbers and also to retain a clear Asian identity in Singapore. Focusing on Singapore’s Little India, whose 13 hectares was gazetted by the government’s Urban Redevelopment Authority in 1989 so that removal or alteration of a building requires planning approval, Chang (2000a)
remarks something similar to that noted by researchers commenting on immigrant commercial areas in the UK. Government planners initiate the conditions for an ethnically specified tourist precinct, but then do not control the resulting economic outcomes so as to benefit existing ethnic community members. In Singapore’s Little India:

Merchants specializing in high turnover goods have set up shop, while less lucrative enterprises – such as those selling household items and groceries – are gradually phased out. The Little India Arcade (LIA) in particular suffers from this problem because rents here are extremely high and many traditional activities have moved elsewhere. Local visitors and tourists are the main patrons of LIA, whereas residents are repelled by the loss of shops/services which once catered to their everyday needs. (Chang, 2000a, p. 354)

Tourists interviewed by Chang were unimpressed by one outcome of the planning policy: any business that could pay the rent was permitted to occupy the renovated shops in Little India – including Japanese retail outlets and internationally visible chains like UK-headquartered The Body Shop!

In post-apartheid South Africa, tourism planning is, as elsewhere, associated with economic development, usually in major cities. Business tourism for conventions and meetings is the major part of tourism planning in Johannesburg. It occurs in the primarily white-occupied (formerly ‘white’) northern areas of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Area that are deemed to be more secure for visitors (Rogerson, 2002). For in Johannesburg, the spaces of the inner city, deserted by the white population after the end of apartheid in the mid-1990s when white people moved north to affluent and gated suburbs, are now the destinations of poor immigrants from other parts of Africa and are widely viewed as unruly spaces (Murray, 2008). Applications for the establishment of casinos in the inner city areas of Johannesburg, that might have prompted development there, were denied in the late 1990s (Rogerson, 2002). Poor, African immigrants are providing some agency for change in this part of the city. There is ‘a tentative and often precarious process of remaking the inner city, especially now that the policies and economics that once moored it to the surrounding city have mostly worn away. In many respects the inner city has been “let go” and forced to reweave its connections with the larger world by making the most of its limited means’ (Simone, 2004, p. 411).

So, are there attempts to plan the revitalization of Johannesburg’s less wealthy locations, official as opposed to informal attempts at doing the ‘reweaving’ that Simone (2004) refers to, and are they associated with tourism that is ethnically defined? Cultural tourism in Johannesburg is present, though support of institutions for the arts that were previously located in inner city spaces has dropped off since the mid-1990s. But there is the beginning of international visitor-led ‘justice tourism’ to the city’s formerly ‘black’ towns, particularly Soweto and also Alexandra. In Soweto, the major tourist attraction is the ‘struggle route’, made up of sites significant to past anti-apartheid struggles (Rogerson, 2004). In Alexandra, a township located within the wealthy suburb of Sandton, and which long provided workers to support that wealthy suburb at the same time as being a place of political struggle from the 1940s to the 1980s (Rogerson, 2004, p. 252) entertainment sites are developing as well. Questions have been raised about whether township tours are unethical voyeurism, with tourists observing poor people and their places appropriately. One response to these questions has been to show that through lively interactions between tourists, tour guides and people living in the township communities the circumstances of contemporary South Africa are discussed and critically observed, rather than one-way voyeurism occurring (Butler, 2010). Municipal government programmes are including both Soweto and Alexandra as part of the overall tourism experience being advertised for Johannesburg. Government funds have not been provided to start up small businesses in these places or train would-be entrepreneurs, however, despite avowed government concern with expanding black entrepreneurship in a tourism sector which is dominated by white business ownership (Rogerson, 2004).

The renovation of particular sites in the inner city of Johannesburg, associated with the struggles to overturn apartheid, and interpretations of it, may well propel some leisure tourism to inner city locations. For example, the longstanding prison site on Constitution Hill in Johannesburg is now home to a new constitutional court, as well as preservation of some past prison buildings, these developments co-located in a spirit of visible reconciliation (Gevisser, 2004; Van der Merwe & Patel, 2005). In addition, however, sites of spectacular consumption possibilities are developing as drawcards in wealthier, suburban, enclosed enclaves. Melrose Arch is one, a large development of expensive high rise apartment buildings, hotels, cafes and shops, built in an existing residential area near Sandton to
attract business tourists. It has become a tourist attraction for Johannesburg dwellers too as they ‘escape’ from the realities elsewhere in the city and consume here in safety (Drisuweit & Schattauer, 2004).

In accounts of the commodification of ethnicity through the development of tourist enclaves in areas of immigrant or minority-identified commercial premises, the agents through which this development occurs are generally understood to be business-led alliances that include government economic planners. Rarely is the role of local immigrant entrepreneurs in initiating such economic changes noted. But immigrants and immigrant entrepreneurs may themselves proclaim their own ethnicity, and draw economic and social benefit from that and from their spatial clustering. Thus one group of analysts has sought ‘to analyze the manifestations of ethnic diversity as commodified by immigrants’ and ‘how these expressions of culture can be transformed into a vehicle for socio-economic development, to the advantage of both immigrants and the city at large’ (Rath, 2007, p. xvi). One interesting example, different from the common restaurant-led commodification process, is the growth in Canada of Korean-focussed businesses (package tours, home-stay businesses and educational consultancies) by immigrants who came to Canada as students from Korea and later obtained permanent resident status there (Kwak & Hiebert, 2007). Otherwise, many cases presented suggest that in the attempt to create and periodically update ‘ethnic precincts’ offering the products of immigrant or minority communities for broader consumption, smaller entrepreneurs from the immigrant or minority communities are often sidelined, as in Birmingham (Jones & Ram, 2007). Also, there can be problems of legitimacy and authenticity as a few individuals or businesses present themselves as ‘representing’ a culture, a matter raised about Sydney’s ethnic precincts (Collins, 2007, and see Lin, 1998).

In Berlin, particularly in the Kreuzberg locality, the agency of Turkish immigrant entrepreneurs, women as well as men (Mushaben, 2006), does seem notable. This occurs in a context in which alliances of government with community and business organizations seem to have been lacking. In a situation of high unemployment of Germans of Turkish origin, these immigrants set up their own businesses relying on networks amongst themselves. Their entrepreneurship is not necessarily aimed at attracting visitors – sometimes it is aimed at co-ethnics quite specifically – though for expansion and longer-term success a broader clientele is needed, and sometimes there are distinctions between whether bars and restaurants are aimed at young people rather than a wider range of age groups (Pecoud, 2004, p. 10). (Indeed, many bars frequented by Turkish young people in Berlin avoid locations in the well-known Turkish-German neighbourhoods, Caglar, 2001.) Entrepreneurial agency in this context requires a capacity to both draw on the resources of one’s own ethnically identified community, and to develop external linkages to attract custom.

At the same time as this immigrant entrepreneurship develops through networks of immigrants themselves, major programmes aiming at social inclusion and urban regeneration have been proceeding in German cities, including Berlin, without making a strong connection with immigrant small businesspeople (though recently a government-sponsored business association has begun to give advice to start-up entrepreneurs, Kil & Silver, 2006, p. 99). The Socially Integrative City programme (referred to already in Section 3), which began in 1999 in many German cities, did not promote the integration of immigrants and their own associations in the programme (Bockmeyer, 2006; Silver, 2005).

4.2. Including immigrants or ethnically defined groups in local government strategies to form creative cities or local business alliances

Local governments adopt a range of strategies, advancing entrepreneurialism, that may incorporate ethnically or racially defined difference. One is to seek the ‘creative city’ – a concept widely known and debated, following its development by Florida (2002), Landry (2001) and others (for example, Sager (2011, p. 155) describes ‘cultural display’ as ‘amongst the tools of neoliberal urban development strategies’). Another is to form business alliances that include or have a relationship with ethnically defined groups, to enhance development in the city associated with those groups.

First, we consider creative city strategies. In discussions about the creative city, the implications of ethnic diversity and racialized differences in the city (alongside other forms of ‘diversity’ like ‘tolerance’ of gays and lesbians and presence of artists and ‘bohemians’) for urban economic development are canvassed (Florida, 2002). Florida has made the argument that the presence of immigrants in a city is associated with economic development there, which can be understood as the presence of ethnic entrepreneurship such as that described for Berlin, as well as the presence of highly skilled, high-tech industry workers who are internationally mobile. The emphasis here is on active, nimble and therefore ‘creative’ entrepreneurial activity that might be associated with these groups. The
presence of racial minorities, however, is not associated with urban economic growth, in the way Florida measures it, and is, furthermore, associated with inequality in the city, often through segregation and discrimination. This is a confusing aspect of Florida’s treatment of difference in the city, in which the term ‘racial minorities’ is deemed not to be associated with creativity but the presence of immigrants is associated with creativity. Which groups are included in the measurement of ‘racial minorities’ and ‘immigrants’ is the reason for this apparently contradictory finding. Other authors comment that Florida’s measure of racial diversity collates all ‘non-whites’ despite there being different racial groups within such a category, so that it is not surprising that urban economic development (measured as growth in the high-tech industry sectors) is not clearly linked with the presence of these groups (Thomas & Darnton, 2006).

There are also broader criticisms of Florida’s work. Some relate to questions of causality, holding that it is not clear in Florida’s work whether cities are creative because they are already diverse, or whether they attract diversity because they are creative; others express concern that without decisive urban strategies to protect the interest of low-income artists and other creative workers, gentrification will follow the presence of these workers and they will be displaced (Shaw & Fincher, 2010). Peck’s (2005) excoriating linking of creative city ideas with acceptance of growing urban inequality, because that thinking is a form of libertarian neoliberalism, is one of the most powerful. Peck (2005, p. 759) argues that workers not part of the creative classes, and particularly the casualised urban working poor, are expected in creative city thinking to accept an increasingly casualised labour market and to throw away their expectations of social and economic entitlements, income growth and security. Further, creative city thinking disregards the interests of those deemed uncreative: ‘Florida’s proposals ultimately amount to a plea for grassroots agency with a communitarian conscience amongst a privileged class of creatives’, says Peck (2005, p. 760), ‘lubricated by modest public-sector support for culturally appropriate forms of gentrification and consumption’. Matters of racialization and ethnic diversity are rarely singled out for particular comment in the critiques of Florida’s ideas and political position. Michael Porter’s earlier claims (1995) about the comparative advantage of the American inner city for investment, because of the unmet demand there for services and products providing for Latino and African American needs (for culturally specific beauty products, media and food, for example) do seem to foreshadow Florida’s thoughts about the advantages of difference in the city, though not with reference to the same ethnic groups. Porter’s ideas have reportedly been influential in the establishment of small business lending programmes in New York’s Harlem (Hoffman, 2003). Thus, we see in creative city strategies a yearning for the class transformation of urban places, often associated with gentrification, with the subjects of this form of policy thinking the casualised workforce who are either ‘creative’ workers to be encouraged, or disregarded uncreative workers.

Australian cities have been the focus of recent critical attention, in assessments of governments’ attempts to develop creative city strategic planning. Though only one Australian city, Brisbane, has a formal creative city strategy administered by its metropolitan-wide government, governments in other cities’ central municipalities (for none other than Brisbane has metropolitan-wide government) use the ideas of Florida and Landry as useful frames of reference (Atkinson & Easthope, 2009). Divisive is not interpreted to mean participants in a racialized and ethnicised multiculture – in general the city authorities here have in mind development of the creative industries associated with the visual and performing arts. And indeed this thinking is accompanied by failures to include lower-income groups – creative city strategy is not a social inclusion strategy. ‘For the community and NGO sectors, creative cities are perceived to maintain the privilege of privilege and cut few paths towards a more sustainable position for those on lower incomes. The latter are seen to be potentially threatening to the investment of footloose creative “gentrifiers” or business investors’ (Atkinson & Easthope, 2009, p. 75). The irony that Florida’s original model of the economically productive creative city was based on an idea of inclusion or tolerance should not be lost – but it is clear that this was a limited form of inclusion, where social diversity still had to be combined with economic capacity (Luckman, Gibson, & Lea, 2009). Indeed, even regional development policy discussions in Australia have drawn on the thinking of Florida, to identify ways that cultural pursuits in regions could be developed entrepreneurially so as to reap economic gains (Gibson & Klocker, 2005). If ethnic diversity were a feature of regions, in this way of thinking, it would be valued only insofar as it might be consumed by others, commodified, and not for its existence alone or its social benefits.

So how does creative city thinking appear in Sydney and does it, even if other Australian cities’ planning does not, tilt towards a particular consideration of the
city’s lived multiculturalism? In this metropolitan area, there are the internationally common, commodified, commercial precincts of Chinatown and Little Italy in the inner city, as well as large, diverse, immigrant suburbs in western Sydney whose major shopping streets showcase ethnically identified commerce (Collins & Poynting, 2000; Ley & Murphy, 2001). There is an inner city pocket of Aboriginal housing and community in the suburb of Redfern (Shaw, 2000) as well as many Aboriginal people living in the suburbs of western Sydney (Collins & Poynting, 2000).

Despite the diverse lived multiculturalism of Sydney, the literature about entrepreneurial planning for the city and use of creative city frameworks provides little evidence that ethnicised diversity is a specific matter of focus. In its successful bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games, Sydney’s leaders presented Sydney as a city an important part of whose new economy was based on consumption. Evidence for this was that Sydney had developed heritage precincts, waterfront rehabilitation, a casino, and so on (Waitt (1999) writing before the adoption of creative city thinking which emerged primarily in the 2000s). The Olympic bid did dwell specifically on multiculturalism as it is lived in Sydney, in response, says Waitt (1999, p. 1065) to the original vision of the Olympic Games as generating harmony between diverse peoples. But the meaning of multiculturalism for the bid was limited to the claim that everyone in this Australian city is friendly and welcoming. ‘In Sydney, attitudes, language, religion and food mix easily in friendliness and fairness. The result is a rich cultural community, a city of 140 cultures and over 180 languages’ the Prime Minister’s wife said in her 1993 bid speech (as cited in Waitt, 1999, p. 1065). This view of multicultural Sydney dwells on the longstanding and relatively unconflicted presence in the city of diverse immigrant groups, and does not emphasize the periods of racist resistance to certain racialized groups and their spatial concentration in certain places. In particular it does not mention the concentration of Vietnamese immigrants in the suburb of Cabramatta which was the subject of racist and racialising commentary in the media and elsewhere in the 1980s and 1990s (Ley & Murphy, 2001), and the presence of Aboriginal people and housing in the inner suburb of Redfern, which has been the subject of media and other complaints as well (Waitt, 1999; Shaw, 2000).

The ‘City of Cities’ metropolitan planning strategy released by the New South Wales State government for its capital city, Sydney, in 2005 does not target ethnically identified groups for development or the city’s multiculturalism, despite the strategy’s vision of improved liveability and global economic competitiveness (Searle, 2006).

But this creative city planning for Sydney has occurred at the level of the State Government, rather than municipal government. The failure to highlight ethnically identified, creative city strategies in the State Government’s planning policy may be because the development of planning for Sydney’s multicultural has been a task of local governments, particularly those in municipalities with high proportions of immigrants in their populations. And these local governments have not to date (at least as evidenced in the literature about them) seen as their priority the development of their populations’ characteristics as a commodity. For example, governments of two of Sydney’s suburbs see their task of planning for and with ethnic diversity squarely as responding to residents’ settlement needs in the present and future – providing services, supporting local ethnic community organizations, providing advocacy and assistance to residents with training, employment and housing (Thompson, 2003). These are Canterbury and Fairfield City Councils, both in western Sydney. Canterbury, with around 45% of its population born overseas, primarily in Greece, Lebanon, and more recently China and the Pacific Islands, and with most residents of lower income and many not speaking English well, provides community support workers to undertake these tasks. In Fairfield, the municipality with the greatest proportion of its population born overseas of any in Australia, and with 70 languages spoken and residents from 130 countries (Thompson, 2003), a cultural planner has been appointed to oversee developments, and to revitalize one suburb in the municipality with urban designs appealing and meaningful to current residents. Fairfield is the location of the suburb of Cabramatta, home to more than 40% of Sydney’s Vietnamese community and an area in which tourism is growing because of its concentration of Vietnamese restaurants and cultural facilities (Thompson, 2003). Now, for the most part, the planning of a decade ago in these two municipalities is planning for the benefit of ethnically diverse local dwellers in an area where multiculturalism is everyday life – it is not planning guided by a wish to respond to the consumption needs of a creative class. But Cabramatta is an area now attracting tourists as well as Vietnamese co-nationals from elsewhere in Sydney, and these tourists are interested in taking tours of the area’s sites, including its themed public spaces and its restaurants. Accordingly, local government is marketing the municipality as a multicultural place (which is now becoming known, though not formally, as Vietnamatta,
say Collins & Kunz, 2009). This seems unable to be described as creative city strategising, though it is the establishment of a cultural or ethnic precinct. From this situation, it seems clear that ethnically identified precincts in Sydney are not to date the outcome of creative city strategies, and many (especially those in outer suburban areas like the ones in Sydney’s west) are not even necessarily commodifying ethnicity (though their local government might now be responding to that possibility).

Another governmental strategy pursued at the local scale is to form business alliances in order to hasten and coordinate economic growth in the city. Here, the politics of urban growth become highly evident, in their local specificity. The characteristics of urban business alliances (what Molotch (1976) famously termed city ‘growth machines’, a term long accepted as an apt characterization of urban growth in the United States and indeed in Canadian and UK cities (Light, 2002), vary. One element of their variation is the manner in which they incorporate immigrant or ethnically identified entrepreneurs. Another varying element is the extent to which governmental agencies (including planners) are actively part of the alliances. Examples come from New York City. There, Zukin et al. (2009) have documented the retail gentrification of Central Harlem, an African American neighbourhood in which disinvestment occurred between the 1960s and 1980s, but where since the 1990s ‘a panoply of state agencies – led by the New York City government, the Harlem Community Development Corporation (a subsidiary of New York State’s Empire State Development Corporation), and the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ) established by the US Congress in 1994 – has supported commercial investment through a series of coordinated policies and interrelated organisations’ (Zukin et al., 2009, p. 50). The loan criteria of UMEZ favour the Black middle class, say these authors, though most recipients of the commercial loans do not live in Central Harlem. And though the city government has instituted inclusionary zoning for apartment housing in the area, retail gentrification is making it difficult for longstanding small business to remain viable. There is thus a class transformation of the area being expressed in its retail changes, whose subjects (consumers) are visitors and tourists. Zukin et al. (2009) argue that urban policy, planning, needs to be directed at protecting these local shops for local residents. In a second example from New York City, Chinatown is the setting. Charting the efforts of the longstanding Chinese community to reclaim sites of historical significance in Chinatown, and mark these sites as museums or publicly and ethnically identified gathering places, Lin (1999) remarks upon the clash between these efforts and the interests of contemporary Chinese investors seeking to gentrify and build high-rise apartments in the area. In this case, co-ethnic economic and cultural interests in the city were at odds, and were supported by different parts of the local state apparatus.

Chinatowns are of great current interest as places in which ethnically identified growth alliances may be found, which either oppose or combine the capacities of longstanding members of the Chinese diaspora and of overseas Chinese investors. In Los Angeles, Light (2002) has described the manner in which Chinese (and also Korean) immigrants have re-activated the local urban growth machine at a time (1970–1999) when white American growth alliances in the city were foundering. Whole areas of the suburbs were rebuilt using investment capital from co-ethnic banks, sometimes overseas-based banks. The resulting housing was advertised in China, and then taken up by middle class Chinese immigrants moving to Los Angeles. Again this is a class transformation of older suburbs, accomplished within an identified ethnic group. In London, where Chinatown is located in a regenerating area, a variety of longstanding Chinese community groups and organizations were initially opposed to redevelopment of the area (as in New York City), but municipal government efforts to incorporate and involve the local Chinese businesses and locality-users in the urban redevelopment have attained their compliance (Hatzipro kokio & Montagna, 2012).

The forms of incorporation of immigrant and minority groups in urban growth alliances vary; government-led business alliances may include ethnically identified community members as partners, may form alliances that treat these groups in specific ways as clients, or may help to resolve conflicts between groups and their overseas ethnic counterparts. Sometimes, as in Los Angeles, business alliances may be established from within a particular ethnically identified group. The full range of these alliances are often to be found in circumstances of urban renewal, in which the home neighbourhoods of immigrant or minority groups are attractive sites for investment and upgrading, and so those groups become involved or incorporated in political struggles around the fate of this urban space.

4.3. Links between commodification of ethnicity and gentrification

More than a decade ago, Lees (2000) called for research on gentrification to include discussions of race
and ethnicity more systematically and critically, in order to offset problems with the implicit class and race oppositions organizing the gentrification literature. She observed too simple a focus on ‘middle-class gentrifiers/incomers (white) versus working-class residents/displaced (black). In the revanchist city thesis racial/ethnic minorities are more often than not represented as victims – Jacobs’ (1996) study of the affirmation of Bengali identity and entrepreneurial spirit in the creation of ‘Banglatown’ in the Spitalfields area of London suggests otherwise’ (Lees, 2000, p. 400). Another example of African American residents not being entirely the ‘victims’ of gentrification is in the transformation of retailing in Central Harlem, in New York City, by the African American middle class (Zukin et al., 2009).

Thus the agency of immigrants and minority groups needs to be understood as a possible contributor to gentrification in some settings, even as lower-income immigrants and minority groups have been vulnerable to displacement in others. Associating the commodification of ethnicity in some jurisdictions with gentrification may also show that this entrepreneurial activity might be either a precursor to or a result of gentrification. So, in central Melbourne, Australia, one of the earliest gentrifying areas in that city contains a new, up-market restaurant, intended to train Aboriginal young people in hospitality skills as they offer a restaurant service to middle-class consumers who are generally not Aboriginal people. This restaurant replaces an Aboriginal health service previously using the building (Cummins & Shaw, 2009). The story is more complex than a simple displacement of one activity and victimized group by another, however, as the building is still owned by the Aboriginal health service, which has sub-let it as a social enterprise and will use the rental income for health programmes for Aboriginal people elsewhere. So, whether this circumstance is the result of gentrification, a contribution to it, or whether it is a clever strategy to take advantage of gentrification, is a question showcasing the complexity of the matter.

Gentrification has a suburban face too, when led by the commodification of ethnicity. In the suburbs of major American cities such as Los Angeles, ‘ethnoburbs’ have been observed (Li, 1998, 2009). These are mixed residential and business areas in multi-ethnic suburban locations, in which one ethnic group is strongly though not exclusively present, and in which that one group’s presence is visible in the kinds of redevelopments taking place. These refurbished suburbs differ in their built form and social character from inner city ethnic enclaves like Chinatowns. In Flushing, a suburb of New York City, investment by Taiwanese immigrants in combined commercial and residential real estate since the 1980s has transformed that locality into a thriving suburban Chinatown dominated commercially by ethnic Chinese immigrants with a Taiwanese background (Huang, 2010). Huang argues that this is not a satellite of the downtown Chinatown of New York (unlike claims made by other analysts), but rather a middle class redevelopment, sparked by the actions of a particular entrepreneur who designed specific business and residential investment opportunities for Taiwanese immigrants, knowing of their cultural preferences. It is our view that this phenomenon is more common than the literature indicates. It occurs also, for example, in the Toronto suburbs of Markham and Brampton.

Toronto is a city whose multicultural nature and changes have been analyzed over the past few decades, with some interest in the links between immigration and gentrification and the complexities of that relationship. One strand of literature examines how some (though not all) sites in immigrants’ original destinations (like pre-World War 2 Chinatown) have become tourist destinations now rather than immigrant residential enclaves (Murdie & Texeira, 2003). (As a product of this long process, Qadeer (2005) views Toronto as having healthy ethnic enclaves that function well socially and encourage ethnic entrepreneurship, and in which people choose to stay living rather than feeling constrained to stay living.)

Another strand of research considers more precisely the spatial intersection of immigrant-driven commercial areas with the nearby gentrification of housing that is not necessarily occupied by members of the immigrant group being commercially showcased. Core to it is the work of Hackworth and Rekers (2005). They examine four neighbourhoods in central Toronto – Little Italy, Corso Italia, Greektown on Danforth and Gerrard India Bazaar – because these are areas that are specifically identified ethnically, and because there are business improvement associations set up to support them commercially, and to reinforce their ethnic ‘branding’ and marketing. (Business Improvement Associations are ‘collections of property owners that agree to a self-taxation scheme that will be used to provide services to a particular neighbourhood’, Hackworth & Rekers, 2005, p. 233.) The close link between the successful commercial streets of ethnically branded premises and gentrification in the surrounding housing is evidenced in Little Italy by real estate brochures’ attempts to portray the advantages of the area to the purchasers of new,
expensive condominiums. In Greektown it has been observable in the difficulties that restaurants and coffee shops wanting to continue to serve the Greek community have had in trying both to do that and to cater to the influx of young, wealthier ‘yuppies’, in a real estate market of rising rents. Corso Italia is a neighbourhood echoing the transformation of Little Italy twenty years before. At the time of writing, Hackworth and Rekers (2005) remark that its businesses are not yet so dominated by restaurants as in Little Italy and some still serve basic goods to a largely Italian clientele – but the changes associated with gentrification seem on some indicators of residential conversions and purchases to be on the way. Like Corso Italia, Gerrard India Bazaar exhibits some signs of gentrification in pockets (artists’ premises, some residential changes). Hackworth and Rekers (2005, p. 232) note the importance of local business improvement associations whose ‘packaging efforts are translating into a constructed multicultural urbanity that is attractive to young urban professionals of many ethnic backgrounds.’ The associations (not always intentionally) make the link occur between the commodification of ethnicity and nearby gentrification.

Other research (Murdie & Texeira, 2011) considers the way Portuguese immigrants in west central Toronto, many of them longstanding residents in and around Little Portugal, are experiencing ongoing gentrification. The findings are mixed, with some homeowners benefitting from the rising house prices by selling their homes for a tidy sum and moving elsewhere, and others who are unwilling to move finding the rental and maintenance costs of their housing difficult to meet. Similarly varied are the responses of shop owners, some of whom appreciate the custom of newcomers and some who do not. In the neighbourhoods of major Canadian cities, including Toronto, in which a process of gentrification has played out over decades and is considered now to be ‘complete’, ethnic and socio-economic diversity has been reduced. The situation now differs from that in the initial stages of gentrification, in which ethnic and economic diversity could be said to have been increased because of the introduction of higher income residents to lower-income areas that often served as immigration reception locations (Walks & Maarinen, 2008). How long the commercially developed shopping and entertainment precincts, that are ethnically identified, will survive in a final stage of gentrification remains unclear.

At the start of our discussion of gentrification and its association with the commodification of ethnicity, we signalled that our focus would be on ways that the places and commercial establishments of ethnically identified groups became part of a gentrification process. This might be either because those groups intended this to be so (as in the American ‘ethnoburbs’), for their own benefit, or because those groups’ places and commercial establishments were spatially contiguous with gentrification that was unrelated to their presence, and they had to adapt to it over time. The assumption that any involvement of ethnic minority groups with gentrification was to the groups’ disadvantage as they became displaced victims of that process was not to be the sole interest of our discussion. Having said this, however, the issue of displacement of poor minority communities in processes of gentrification has been of great concern to social scientists over decades, especially in investigations of how public policy might be implicated in encouraging such displacement.

(Atkinson (2000), writing about central London, is one example.) A flurry of writing has taken issue with recent American analyses denying that displacement of poor people by gentrification is significant and that public policies supporting poor people to live in gentrifying areas should be dismantled (Newman & Wyly, 2006; Slater, 2009). A wide-ranging study about gentrification in New York City, based on qualitative and quantitative data (Newman & Wyly, 2006), indicates that even if dramatic quantitative evidence of large-scale displacement of poor people from gentrifying neighbourhoods does not exist, and poor minority (especially Latino) residents of these neighbourhoods are remaining there (‘staying put’), what is happening is that these poor remaining residents are moving in with friends and family and thus experiencing overcrowding, or taking up publicly subsidized housing options of one form or another. ‘It is deeply troubling’ these authors say, ‘that public regulation of the market helps to mitigate displacement pressures and that this fact is then used to justify deregulation and privatization, because, we are told, gentrification is a boost for everyone’ (Newman & Wyly, 2006, p. 42).

4.4. Issues for planning that is commodifying ethnic and racial difference

What kind of planning, what parts of planning, are involved in the commodification of racially and ethnically identified difference in some forms of visitor-oriented urban redevelopment, creative city thinking, establishment of local business alliances, and gentrification? It has been noted in the literature that planning the entrepreneurial or neoliberal city is a shift that may draw the planning task away from its previous
emphasis on service provision and enhancement of the wellbeing of city dwellers and businesses, and towards positioning the city in global competition for investment and consumption. Thus, the social norms of planning like redistribution, recognition and encounter (Fincher & Iveson, 2008), that focus inwards to the wellbeing of a locality’s population, might be nudged aside in favour of looking outwards to economic competitiveness. This is nowhere more obvious than when cities are competing to host a major international event. As an example, in the heightened context of preparations for a 2008 Olympic Games bid, Toronto’s shift to entrepreneurial planning and away from redistributive planning was described (Kipfer & Keil, 2002, p. 238).

The locally concerned and locally accountable planning of the everyday, in this example, is subsumed in the all-consuming endeavour of the Olympics bid. But not every day is focused on an Olympics bid, and local planning for housing, retail and economic development occurs in the multicultural reality of most big cities outside such pressing contexts. What are the issues commonly raised for planners in the context of attempts in many cities to commodify ethnic and racial difference? What should they be looking out for, as they participate in a range of institutional practices that might include collaboration with local growth coalitions, or establishing a range of strategic plans in circumstances in which neoliberal policies are becoming more prominent for local places? We argue that a major concern for planners should be use of progressive norms like those proposed by Fincher and Iveson (2008); if used actively by planners to build and assess proposals for the commodification of areas identified with ethnic or racial difference, these concepts might help formulate ways to ensure that the benefits of commercial redevelopment accrue to people across the class and income spectrum.

Our view is reflected in the critical literature. Overall there are two issues canvassed there for planning, in light of the turn to neoliberal policies for cities. The first is the question of how ethnicity and the identities of those in ethnic communities fare under circumstances of the commodification of their places and practices for the consumption of outsiders. Thus, Collins (2007) is concerned, in Sydney, at the manner in which repeated redevelopments of that city’s ethnic precincts may render those places illegitimate and inauthentic in the eyes of the ethnic community supposedly being represented by the precinct. (This line of concern, which centres on the importance of retaining and recognizing ethnic communities, is one critiqued by Amin (2012).) Many other researchers (for example Shaw et al. (2004) in London, Chang (2000a) in Singapore and Conforti (1996) and Zukin et al. (2009) in New York) express concerns at the impacts of rising prices for small businesspeople and for local co-ethnic consumers, in ethnically identified commercial precincts being developed or gentrified for outside visitors. In gentrifying areas in which poor residents or business-owners, in many places people of minority or immigrant background, lose housing and social networks, as well as shopping facilities and business premises they could afford, this is of great concern, especially when public policies seem to encourage such an outcome (Newman & Wyly, 2006). There are longstanding anxieties about the redevelopment of lower-income urban neighbourhoods, which raise the question of whether planning practices perform better at preparing the conditions for initial redevelopment than ensuring the sustainability of those places for existing residents and businesses (if indeed such sustainability is at all the intention of planning in such circumstances).

The second issue about the commodification of ethnicity and race in the entrepreneurial city relates to the allocation of priorities by those engaged in planning and their capacity to make these priorities influential in their collaborations with other institutional and community-based actors. Planning is one part of the strategic endeavours at local and other scales to make cities better places. Planners are included in alliances formed to promote urban redevelopment, and may participate there as representatives from public or private sector institutions or community organizations. In this broad task, certain goals may be given more priority than others at certain times. So, is planning, and are planners, asserting their time-honoured goals for redistribution and recognition in the economic and political debates about futures in their localities – or are they silent or being silenced? In the literature the precise role of planners in the teams of players concerned with the regeneration and betterment of cities is not always clear.

In New York, Fainstein and Powers (2007) identify two prevalent views about tourism developments and their relevance to ethnic diversity in that city. On the one hand, there is criticism of local government’s directing its resources to central areas and big corporations rather than to suburban locations and smaller entrepreneurs there. On the other hand, there is concern that investing in those suburban areas of smaller business may over-commercialize community endeavours (the point made by Collins (2007) about Sydney). Fainstein and Powers (2007) align firmly with the view that government investment should not primarily be directed at central...
areas and big corporations, and that it is far worse to exclude minority groups than to avoid them for fear of commodification. Their question is how place-based tourism can contribute to community wellbeing – and they suggest that this can be planned for. The role of planning and planners in the social transformation of city neighbourhoods to make them inclusive, has been remarked by Sandercock (2003, chap. 7), who argues that the presence of an individual planner in a local place is not sufficient to sustain a process for change towards greater urban inclusion. Rather, she finds that institutional settings need to be established that support the proposed transformation. ‘These include new ideas about economic development, new discourses about identity and belonging, new sources of funding for community-based programmes, new institutional arrangements within city council, and between city council and the variety of ethno-cultural capital networks. All of this might be thought of as planning work, but not all of it is done by planners. Some of it is done by politicians, some by residents and community organizations, some by combinations of these acting together.’ (Sandercock, 2003, p. 178–179). Recommendations and stories are urgently required about how individual planners, working together with others from institutions and communities to advance entrepreneurialism in the city, can ensure that their values and priorities are heard.

5. Multiculturalism and the urban public realm: sites/sights of difference

In this section we consider how urban planning, in its various guises, has responded to the ethnic diversity of cities through regulating and (re)making the urban public realm. The urban public realm, which is both a material or physical space in which encounters across difference take place and a political forum through which claims concerning the nature and possibilities of that lived difference are articulated, is of key significance for our discussion of planning in multicultural cities. As with urban housing markets and urban economies, the urban public realm is a context through which the global, the national and local come together, impinging upon one another in all sorts of ways.

As has been noted in earlier sections, ‘multiculturalism’ is simultaneously: a demographic reality to which planners must respond in light of national immigration settings and urban concentrations of ethnic minorities and newly arrived migrants; a kind of policy framework which some national and urban authorities have adopted in response to this reality, and; a philosophy mobilized by various state and non-state actors in order to frame and legitimate their political claims. As we shall see, disputes over the making of the urban public realm involve a complex jostling of these different registers and meanings of multiculturalism. We will consider three key ways in which planners have sought to navigate these complexities, through:

1. the planning and production of urban landscapes – in this case, we consider planning interventions relating to structures of religious observance;
2. the planning and regulation of public space – in this case, we consider the regulation of informal street trading by immigrant traders;
3. the promotion of encounter and contact among different ethnic groups – in this case, we focus especially on multicultural festivals.

Across each of these domains, we ask: how has the ‘public interest’ been conceptualized and acted upon by planners in their efforts to regulate and remake the public realm in cities characterized by a diversity of publics?

5.1. Planning and the production of urban landscapes: contests over mosques and eruvim in multicultural cities

In the course of everyday lives characterized by transnational ties, ethnic minority and migrant communities frequently ‘insert their belonging’ in urban neighbourhoods through place-making activities that contribute to change in urban landscapes (Ehrkamp, 2005). These changes to urban landscapes made by ethnic minority and migrant communities often give rise to debate and conflict, precisely because landscapes “help to constitute community values, playing a central role in the performance of place-based social identities and distinction” (Duncan & Duncan, 2001). Migrant communities seeking to establish themselves in new cities “establish collective, cultural expressions of their identity in places of worship, commercial environments, recreational facilities, and community centres” (Isin & Siemiatycki, 2002, p. 197). Here, then, the politics of identity and citizenship intersect with the production of urban landscapes and public spaces, and planning is crucial to this process. Those seeking to create, modify, or reject elements of the built environment must of necessity engage with the planning system of their city. And so the question arises: how do planners respond, and whose interests do they serve in such disputes? Where planners claim to act as neutral
arbiters of these competing interests, do the planning frameworks which guide their practice actually serve to marginalize systematically the interests of ethnic minorities and migrant groups? What styles of architecture, what cultures of retailing, what practices of worship, what habits of public sociality, are considered ‘normal’ in existing planning frameworks which regulate neighbourhood land use, from zone plans to ordinances regulating behaviour in public space? In many land use conflicts, critics have been concerned that technical planning criteria are mobilized by opponents who are motivated by more than a concern for parking spaces.

Particular sites have tended to become objects of contention and debate in this contested politics of place-making and landscape change. This section will examine the role of planning instruments in conflicts over such sites: to what extent have such instruments worked to reinforce some dominant groups’ claims to ‘host’ status premised on their ethnic identities, and to what extent have such instruments been successfully reformed to open up a more democratic politics of belonging in which no group is presumed to have a naturalized claim to turf? To examine this issue, we focus on how planners have responded to the creation of structures of religious observance associated with ethnic minority populations: mosques and eruvim.

While religious diversity in cities is not strictly equivalent with ethnic diversity, of course these two forms of diversity are strongly related. Religious beliefs and practices are frequently bound up with the prevailing norms of national identity, even in societies where there is formal separation of church and state. When the religious beliefs and practices of migrants do not conform to these prevailing religious norms, the ‘difference’ introduced by migrants has often been associated with their religious affiliation. As such, it is not surprising that religion often features in the contested politics of identity and citizenship in multi-cultural cities. Contentious debates may emerge about a range of issues, from styles of dress and sociality associated with particular religions to the establishment of places of worship. In disputes over places of worship and religious structures and practices in particular, urban planners are obviously key protagonists, with proponents and opponents of new structures seeking to influence the granting of planning permissions. Islamic mosques and Jewish eruvim are among the religious structures that have been contentious in many cities in recent years. While proposals to develop mosques are by no means always contested, there is nonetheless a growing literature which reports on instances of conflict over their location in European, North American and Australasian cities. There is also a smaller but no less interesting literature on conflicts over eruvim (Cooper, 1996; Siemiatycki, 2005; Watson, 2005). In this section, we consider some case studies of conflicts over such structures, and examine the roles played by planners and planning frameworks in generating and influencing these conflicts.

In nations where there has been substantial migration of Muslims from certain parts of the Middle East, Africa and Asia, those communities have typically tended to live in cities. Gradually, many migrant Muslim communities have sought to establish mosques in those cities – not only as spaces for worship, but also as spaces of community and belonging. Indeed, these more public and civic purposes are crucial to understanding the desire for mosque establishment. Mosques, in other words, are visible manifestations of Muslim communities, for Muslims and non-Muslims alike – Muslim migrants are seeking to establish a physical and symbolic space in the urban public realm, through which they can build their own community and gain recognition of their presence from the wider community (Cesari, 2005; Isin & Siemiatycki, 2002).

In Toronto, several notable applications for planning approval to establish mosques, either through the retrofitting of existing buildings or the construction of new buildings, have been initially rejected by City planning authorities in acrimonious disputes. Isin and Siemiatycki (2002) describe the struggles to establish the Talim-Ul-Islam mosque in a designated ‘employment zone’ in the North York municipality, and a mosque proposed by the Canadian Islamic Trust Foundation in Mississauga municipality. In these two cases, mosques were proposed for abandoned or vacant spaces in industrial zones. In both cases, applications were initially rejected by municipal planners on technical grounds: issues such as proximity to industry and other places of worship, parking, and land-use (in which certain zones were to be set aside as ‘employment zones’). In a third case, in 1996 City planners initially approved a proposal to expand the El-Noor mosque, which had been established a decade earlier through the purchase and renovation of a disused Protestant Church in a residential neighbourhood. This approval was appealed by a group of 85 residents who pooled their resources to challenge the decision at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), and was further opposed by a petition of 250 residents. At the hearings, opposition to the expansion was justified on the grounds of both parking (that worshippers’ cars were taking up residential spaces and sometimes blocking driveways
already), and on the grounds that the proposed new minaret and dome would change the neighbourhood character and population. The appeal was rejected, although minor modifications to the expansion plans were required. In each of the cases, mosque proponents felt that they were singled out for negative treatment: in the case of the Talim-Ul-Islam mosque, for example, while there were three churches and a Sikh temple nearby, only the mosque was determined to be an illegal use of space. In each case, favourable decisions by the OMB vindicated their position. But it is worth noting that mosques have not been the only places of worship to have been denied planning permission in employment zones in Toronto – Hindu Temples and Baptist Churches have also been rejected on similar grounds (Hackworth & Stein, 2012).

Residential suburbs in Sydney have also been the site of several acrimonious disputes over the approval of new mosques in recent decades. As in the case of Toronto, applications to local planning authorities for the development of mosques in the last two decades have been made against a backdrop of both an official embrace of ‘multiculturalism’ as a policy setting at the national scale and on-going tensions over the nature and extent of this embrace, including post 9/11 stigmatisations of Islam. In a review of planning processes concerning 11 of these mosques, Dunn (2001, 2005) notes that opponents to mosques frequently appealed to local authorities to reject permission on the grounds that the Muslim desire for ‘cultural maintenance’ was ‘divisive’ and/or an imposition of ‘their values’ on ‘us’ that would attract concentrations of Muslim migrants to the surrounding residential areas. In an earlier study, he noted that concerns about the effects of a mosque in the western suburb of Fairfield were expressed in terms such ‘foothold’, ‘intrusion’, ‘enclave’, ‘occupied’, ‘overwhelmed’ and ‘takeover’ (Dunn, 2001, p. 298). For Dunn, such concerns “constructed the nation and locality as non-Muslim (Christian) and generated a sense of threat or loss for residents” (Dunn, 2001, p. 298). One of the key points to take out of Dunn’s studies of mosque development conflicts in Sydney is that even where the decision-making processes of local authorities are restricted to technical concerns about land-use such as parking, congestion, noise, and even ‘character’, their decisions are made in the context of wider public discussions in which other arguments hold sway. So, for instance, even if a given Council cannot be explicitly anti-Muslim, Council officers frequently cited the extent of community opposition to a new mosque as a factor in their decision-making.

Of course, mosques are not the only religious structures that have been the subject of planning disputes. Proposals to establish Jewish eruvim in cities like London, Toronto, New York and Sydney have also become flashpoints in the urban politics of identity and ethnicity. For observant Jews, the transfer of objects between the enclosed private domain and the public domain is not permitted on Sabbath days. The eruv is a ritual enclosure that merges these different kinds of domain for Jews on the Sabbath, thereby allowing them to transfer objects including everyday necessities like house keys, wheelchairs, walking canes and frames, prams, and the like outside their home while within the boundaries established by an eruv. Eruvim can make use of existing boundaries in the landscape – such as a line of houses on a street or existing electricity and telephone wires – to establish the boundaries of the symbolic enclosure. Where the existing landscape does not provide an unbroken enclosure, the eruv requires the installation of further poles and/or wires (which can include even relatively unobtrusive material such as nylon fishing wire). The construction of eruvim frequently typically requires the permission of planning authorities – as necessitated both by Jewish law, and also by restrictions on third party uses of urban infrastructure such as telegraph poles which frequently form part of an eruv. Compared to the mosques discussed above and other religious structures, then, eruvim are relatively ‘invisible’ – they are indeed material structures, but are largely established through symbolic investment in existing (infra)-structures rather than through the creation of new structures.

Watson (2005) provides an account of the decade-long dispute over the establishment of an eruv in Barnet, a neighbourhood in North London. While this 11 mile long eruv made use of existing infrastructure for most of its boundary, it required the installation of 80 new poles in the public domain, which would carry a 1000 yard length of fishing wire 0.3 mm thick. An initial application to Barnet Council to establish this eruv in 1992 with the installation of poles and wires was “rejected on the grounds that the poles and wire were visually obtrusive and constituted unnecessary street furniture which was detrimental to the character and appearance of the street” (Watson, 2005, p. 604). After two subsequent modified applications were also rejected by the Council, the decisions were appealed to the Department of Environment Court, which in 1994
overturned Council’s rejection of the eruv and required it to grant permission, on the basis that Council had no good reason to reject the eruv. For the next eight years, “all sorts of planning, legal, and other devices were deployed to delay the construction of the eruv, with continuing protests from the eruv objectors, and stalling by Barnet Council”. Permission was finally granted in 2002.

In the conflict over the eruv, voices were raised against the eruv for several reasons beyond these technical issues. Some residents worried about an influx of Orthodox Jews into the neighbourhood should the eruv be established, others worried about the potential impact on property prices, yet others worried that structures associated with the eruv would attract hateful forms of vandalism. Several complainants argued that the eruv would undermine the ‘character’ of the area, which was one of England’s first ‘garden suburbs’. Importantly, however, Watson also notes that in the case of this particular eruv (as with others in the United States), Jewish voices were not united in their support for the eruv. Jewish critiques ranged from non-Orthodox concerns that the eruv would create a kind of ghetto for Jews and/or strain relations between Jews and others in the community, to religious concerns that eruvim in fact breach the strict requirements of the Sabbath.

Also of interest for our purposes is that some concerns about the eruv in Barnet were expressed through the conceptual frame of the public–private distinction. While the neighbourhood already had countless poles and other pieces of infrastructure in the public domain that were also visually obtrusive, they were conceived to be for the purely functional and ‘public’ benefit of all (providing light, phone, electricity, etc.). The eruv poles, by contrast, had symbolic function and were problematized by many on the grounds that they were for the ‘private’ and sectional interests of traditional Jews.

For Watson, this conflict over the Barnet eruv “sharply expose[s] some of the limits of living with difference and normative versions of multiculturalism in the city” (2005, p. 597). As with the analysis of mosque developments, Watson is also critical of the notion that rejections of the eruv on technical grounds were somehow ‘objective’. In her view, “discourses of opposition which draw on legal or official arguments can often mask a more profound resistance from the dominant culture (in this instance, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) to ‘Otherness’ which is little more than thinly veiled racism (in this case, anti-Semitism)” (2005, p. 598). Of particular concern to her was the implicit notion of objectors that religious ‘difference’ is fine, so long as it expressed privately and does not depend on or demand public recognition and expression.

We want to draw two key points out of this discussion of planning conflicts over the urban landscape associated with mosques and eruvim. First, in no case discussed here has the planning system adjudicated on requests to develop new religious structures based on the ethnicity or religion of the applicants. However, it is clear that the technical criteria on which decisions are made – concerning a range of factors from parking and noise to neighbourhood character and economic development – are not ‘neutral’ when it comes to ethnicity and religion. Here, planning must be understood as political, in the sense that all technical planning instruments are designed to produce and reproduce particular kinds of places – there can be no planning without an answer to the inherently political question: what kind of place should this street/suburb/city be? As such, the notion that disputes over the construction or installation of religious structures are best settled through ‘impartial’ application of ‘objective’ planning criteria is a problematic claim indeed. Gale’s (2004) study of mosque developments in Birmingham which have been actively embraced by planners is instructive here. Birmingham now conceives of itself as a multicultural city characterized by ethnic and religious diversity. As such, a mosque is not ‘out of character’ per se. This is not to say that any new mosque in Birmingham will not raise issues such as parking, or that some residents and businesses will not make the case that a mosque is ‘out of character’ with their perception of a neighbourhood. But the official embrace of multiculturalism has extended to a rethinking of technical planning criteria concerning a range of issues, from the apparently banal such as parking and even the colour of telegraph poles to more significant issues of neighbourhood character and land-use planning.

Second, the complex politics of the public–private distinction also come into play in these disputes over religion in the diverse city. This distinction is mobilized in quite different ways in the examples above. The official denial of planning permission to mosques and other places of worship in employment zones in Toronto was justified in the wider ‘public interest’, with jobs being prioritized over people’s implicitly ‘private’ beliefs in some form of religion. In Sydney, opponents of mosques argued that local authorities who had approved mosques had given in to the influence of ‘sectional interests’, as against an ethno-nationalist concept of the ‘public interest’. In Birmingham, on the other hand, mosques were approved on the grounds that...
it would bring places of worship out of informal, ‘private’ spaces of the home and into the public world of planning ordinances and approvals. In Barnet, part of the opposition to the eruv stemmed from the notion that religious practices could be tolerated so long as they remained matters of private interest and were conducted in private places. The installation of structures on streets, on the other hand, could only be tolerated by some if they were installed for everyone’s benefit, i.e. for ‘the public’ as the social totality.

Reflecting on this in the context of our wider discussion of the ‘sites and sights’ of difference, it is interesting to note that while the visibility (and indeed audibility) of structures like mosques associated with religious and ethnic minorities is frequently at issue, this is not the only source of contention. The eruv, in contrast to the mosque, is relatively ‘invisible’ (and silent), mostly making use of existing urban infrastructure and involving at most a few extra poles and wires – and yet as Watson (2005) notes, even these minor changes sometimes cause controversy. And in contrast to both of these instances, in some cases such as Birmingham it is the invisibility of religious and ethnic minorities, rather than their visibility, that has been problematized by planners. This is precisely because the planning of cities and the policing of their populations depends on the capacity of planners and other authorities to see as much as possible. In the case of Birmingham above, we see planners preferring to approve mosques in order to bring Muslim gatherings out ‘into the open’ rather than have them taking place in the relative invisibility of domestic living rooms or shops. This dynamic is also in play currently in Toronto, where planners are on the one hand encouraging religious groups who are currently gathering in sites like abandoned warehouses to seek planning approvals where these sites have not been approved as places of worship. And yet, when applications are rejected, this has the potential to push those groups back into sites where they do not have to engage with the formal planning system.

It seems, then, that it is not simply the visibility and/or audibility of religious structures that is the root of the issue here, but their publicness – and that publicness may take a variety of forms. That is, the question of whether or not a structure (be it a highly visible mosque or an relatively invisible eruv) should be permitted hinges on the politics of public recognition – to approve such structures is to grant a particular group a form of legitimacy and rights which their opponents seek to deny, often on nationalist and/or racist grounds. In reflecting on the mosque conflict in East York, Toronto, Isin and Siemiatycki (2002, p. 189) argue that “the issues in the struggle were deeper than finding a place of worship to practice religious freedoms and faith; they also involved the articulation of Muslim groups in a way that recognized their presence both symbolically and spatially”. Precisely because there is a symbolic as well as a material dimension to spatial change associated with the claims of migrant religious groups, attempts by planners to duck ethno-nationalist complaints about new religious structures associated with migrant groups by suggesting that decisions are only technical matters are highly problematic and reinforce a normalized whiteness.

Even where the technical and/or legal planning framework cannot admit arguments on questions of neighbourhood ‘feel’ or ‘character’, this is precisely what these struggles are about. Those opposing non-Christian religious structures in the disputes discussed above frequently define the ‘feel’ or ‘character’ in ethno-nationalist terms, asserting that mosques or eruvos are unwelcome foreign intrusions that are ‘out of place’.

5.2. Planning and the policing of public space: informal street trading

As with changes to the urban landscape discussed above, the presence of new migrant cultures in public spaces is often registered by dominant groups in the form of sights (from bodies and dress through to shop signs, places of worship, community services, etc.), smells (restaurants, grocery shops), and sounds (languages spoken, music) that do not conform to existing ethno-nationalist norms and are thereby ‘Othered’. As such, public spaces have become both sites and objects of the urban politics of identity and citizenship associated with multiculturalism.

As an expanding body of literature since the 1990s has argued, public spaces in cities the world over seem increasingly inhospitable to those who are ‘Othered’ with respect to dominant cultural and classed norms of behaviour (Mitchell, 2003; Smith & Low, 2006). Punitive forms of policing and regulation have become common-place in cities where ‘the community’ is said to be threatened by the ‘anti-social behaviour’ of those who are unwilling or unable to conform to community norms. Where liberal forms of urban governance may have sought to ameliorate such conflicts through integrationist social programmes, in neoliberalising cities such ameliorative measures are giving way to punitive social control measures (Dean, 2002; Rose, 2000). The ‘broken windows’ thesis has come to be particularly influential in justifying such measures
(Mitchell, 2003). The thesis is based on the premise that law and order efforts ought to focus on the small-scale normative infractions because “serious street crime flourishes in areas in which disorderly behaviour goes unchecked” (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Broken windows are a problem, then, because “one unrepaid window sends a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing” (Wilson & Kelling, 1982, p. 31). As such, minor infractions to existing norms cannot be tolerated, because they are said to give rise to a vicious cycle of urban decline. Not surprisingly, when urban authorities conceive of their cities as subject to competition for residents, tourists and investors, they are anxious not to risk such decline.

In cities where difference is often equated with deviance, the aesthetic differences introduced into urban life by immigrant (and other minority) groups can easily become the target of punitive social control measures informed by the broken windows thesis. Many of the policing operations associated with the anti-social behaviour agenda and ‘zero tolerance’ – such as public space ‘sweeps’ which make use of new ‘stop-and-search’ or ‘move-on’ powers to clamp down on ‘anti-social behaviour’ – have been accused of unfairly profiling and targeting ethnic-minority young people. However, while the regulation of urban public spaces is typically a matter for the police, the police are often required to enforce planning ordinances which seek to regulate behaviour through the codification of place-based rules and restrictions. Contests over the policing of informal trading on the streets of many cities therefore provide an excellent example of how the planning of urban public spaces becomes caught up in the wider politics of multicultural citizenship.

Depending on the context and jurisdiction, the use of streets and other public spaces for trading can come into conflict with a range of regulations, from land-use planning and zoning to occupational health and safety, taxation, labour and consumer standards (Cross, 2000). Historically, planning regimes have tended to view informal and unlicensed trading in public space as a problem, precisely because it challenges the efforts of planners to control the way in which those spaces are used. As in the case of planning and regulating structures of religious observance, the regulation of street trading takes on a particular political inflection in multicultural cities. For many immigrants and poor ethnic minority communities seeking to establish themselves in cities, selling goods and services on the street is an important economic activity. This is especially the case in those wealthy globalizing cities where the growth of immigration has coincided with de-industrialisation and the growth of informal economies, and also in poorer cities where immigration has coincided with economic structural adjustment including the decline of subsistence agriculture and privatization. Street traders take advantage of public space in order to minimize overhead costs like rent, utilities and planning approvals (Cross, 2000). Further, as Bhowmik (2005) makes clear, there is not only growing demand for the kind of informal work offered by street trading, but also for the kinds of cheap goods and services provided by the street traders. As such, the regulation of trading on a popular corner or traffic island through planning and policing can have profound implications for the economic opportunities of immigrants.

Given the significance of street trading and other informal economic activities for immigrant communities in some cities, attempts to restrict or eradicate those activities through planning codes which ‘zone them out’ will exacerbate the political and economic exclusion of some immigrant communities. Such restrictions often generate political counter-claims from migrant groups, who assert their rights to trade on the street as a crucial citizenship right. Attempts to ‘stamp out’ street trading, from the perspective of the street traders and their customers, are experienced as attacks on their identity and culture as well as their economic opportunities, even when no explicit reference is made to the ethnicity of traders. But of course, explicit reference is often made to the ethnicity of traders by their critics, who sometimes frame the highly visible presence of immigrant street traders in public as an unwelcome change to the character of an urban neighbourhood. Such critics have frequently turned to the planning system as a tool to ‘protect’ their neighbourhoods from street traders perceived to be introducing foreign and unwelcome sights, sounds, smells and socialities into the streets. We now turn to examples, to explore how tensions over street trading have arisen and been addressed in Los Angeles and Singapore.

In Los Angeles, where street trading emerged as one of the most visible informal economic activities, the place of immigrant street traders in public space has been a contentious issue for several decades. Some of these traders were undocumented migrants, selling fruit on the streets for poor pay in order to reimburse debts to those who facilitated their passage into the United States from Mexico (Crawford, 1995). Yet others were using street trading as a form of economic mobility, using resources generated in the informal sector to supplement or substitute income earned from low wage
jobs and/or as a step towards establishing more formal enterprises (Crawford, 1995; Weber, 2001). For many immigrant women, street trading also served as an economic activity that could be independently organized around caring commitments (Crawford, 1995; Weber, 2001).

The growth of street trading in Los Angeles gradually generated resentment, both from shopkeepers concerned about competition, and from existing residents for whom street trading was one of the more visible signs of the growing Latinisation of the city (Weber, 2001). From the late 1980s onwards, both police and planning powers were mobilized by those seeking to remove traders (and others classed as ‘disorderly’) from the streets and public spaces of the city. Multiple, and sometimes violent, arrests of street traders said to be in breach of public space regulations generated a response from traders, who formed the Asociacion de Vendedores Ambulantes (AVA) in order to contest the arrests and the City codes making their activity illegal (Crawford, 1995; Weber, 2001).

By the mid-1990s, proposals had been floated to establish designated areas in the city where street trading could be legalized and regulated. But as Margaret Crawford pointed out (1995, p. 6), such proposals were always going to be problematic for traders because they “restrict one of the main advantages of vending: its flexibility to respond to changes in activity and demand.” In any case, through the claims and counter-claims about street trading in Los Angeles, we see how the planning system becomes enmeshed in the wider politics of multiculturalism in that city: by “defending their livelihood, vendors are becoming a political as well as an economic presence in the city” (Crawford, 1995, p. 7). On-going struggles to secure space for Latino/a street traders against punitive policing and planning have indeed contributed to the wider politicization of that community in Los Angeles, culminating in massive political demonstrations during the 2000s. Meanwhile, several scholars have argued that the forms of urbanism introduced into Los Angeles by Latinos constitute an innovative form of ‘do-it-yourself’ urbanism that has converted dead and auto-dominated spaces into more vibrant forms of public space (Rios, 2010; Rojas, 2010).

In Singapore, planning has played quite a different role in the regulation of street trading. There, over the course of several decades, the government has introduced a licensing system for those wanting to hawk food and other goods on the streets, and constructed ‘hawker centres’ to which street traders have been relocated. Compared to most cities in Asia and beyond, the Singaporean Government has been “highly interventionist in its management of food hawking. The approach is an outcome of a philosophy and agenda shaped by the desire to exercise order and control …” (Henderson, Yun, Poon, & Xu, 2012, p. 851). This extraordinary intervention to stamp out unregulated food vending in public space was a highly symbolic aspect of the post-World War 2 modernization project. Kong (2007) notes several reasons for the hostility shown by officials towards hawkers as early as the 1950s:

For one, the activities of the hawkers conflicted with the goals of development, for they were competing directly with the modern sector for land usage. Another reason was that Singapore was striving to be a modern city, and the colonial administration regarded such small-scale trading as traditional and not in keeping with this goal. More concretely, hawkers were thought to be unhygienic, linked as they were with cholera and typhoid outbreaks … Public health aside, street hawking detracted from the functionality and efficiency of the city. Their higgledy-piggledy appearance and street-side location lent a certain haphazard charm to the scene but also contributed to the disorderliness of the streets and impeded traffic and pedestrian flow. (p. 25–26)

Nonetheless, not everyone shared the officials’ hostility. As Kong continues: “Public sympathy was on the side of the hawkers, popularly seen to be poor men and women, committing no offence and trying to earn an honest living.” (2007, p. 26).

The resulting report and its recommendations set in train a process that sought to regulate hawking rather than abolish it altogether. This process of incorporation of hawkers, while now relatively complete, took several decades and was often fiercely contested. Registration and relocation drives over the course of the 1950s and 1960s had by no means curbed street hawking by the 1970s. From the early 1970s onwards, crack-downs on illegal hawking were accompanied by a large-scale construction programme to construct enough hawker centres and marketplaces to accommodate the licensed hawkers. In some cases, approval for new housing development projects was made conditional on the construction of hawker facilities. In other cases, the Hawkers Department purchased its own land. These centres provided clean water, sewage and drainage, and power supply. Rents were highly subsidized to mimic the small start-up costs of street trading. Licenses were made conditional on participation in training programmes on healthy food handling (Kong, 2007).
One of the unanticipated, but much commented-upon, outcomes of this programme has been the spatial concentration of hawkers from different ethnic backgrounds in hawker centres, and the forms of conviviality and encounter that now find a home in the centres. The centres have become tourist attractions in their own right, and a 2010 survey found that at least 50% of local Singaporeans eat at hawker centres six or more times a week (Henderson et al., 2012). The current chair of the National Environment Agency in Singapore responsible for regulating the centres argues that:

People from different social and racial backgrounds gather at hawker centres for breakfast in the mornings and sit around in the evenings for drinks and general chats. The atmosphere in the hawker centres is informal and relaxed. It goes beyond a matter of convenience. Hawker centres have become informal gathering places for people to meet, mingle and interact. Over time, they have become a special element in our society, part of how we live, something unique in Singapore. (cited in Kong, 2007, p. 91)

While there is no doubt truth to this position, it risks glossing over the conflictual history of the centres. And their future is by no means assured. In particular, the question of rents and affordability is emerging as one of the challenges to the nature of hawker centres in Singapore. While so-called ‘first generation’ hawkers who were moved into the centres from the streets in decades past received subsidized rents, those seeking new licenses to trade in hawker centres now pay significantly higher market rents (Kong, 2007). Notwithstanding the fact that market rates are phased in gradually, the barriers to entry into ‘hawking’ are increasing significantly, thereby reducing the characteristics that made it viable for Chinese and other migrants in the past. If policy-makers now appreciate the unexpected benefits of urban encounter associated with the hawker centres, then it is important for them to consider what circumstances contributed to this outcome and what changes in those circumstances might detract from it.

As with the discussion of religious structures, our analysis points to the fact that the policing and planning of street trading has a political dimension. Planners have responded to disputes over street trading in different ways in different cities. In some cases they have sought to resolve disputes through negotiated compromises which seek to bring informal activities into the formal economy through licensing and other forms of spatial regulation that are in the conventional planning toolkit. However, efforts by planners to license street trading and ‘formalise’ the activity by giving it a proper place risk undermining the very conditions that make it attractive to some people in the first place (Cross, 2000). In other contexts where planners have not taken such an approach, the line between legality and illegality for street traders is often far from clear. In a study of street trading in New York City, where the ‘vast majority’ of the city’s estimated 10,000 street traders are thought to be migrants, Devlin (2006) argues that existing planning regulations pertaining to street trading are so complicated that both traders and law enforcement officials operate in a heightened state of uncertainty. For him, this situation is open to exploitation by anti-vending interests:

Rather than establishing discrete categories of formality/informality, of legality/illegality, the vending laws in New York City produce a unique form of informality. It is an informality that is fluid and contingent. This type of informality is a condition that can be tactically mobilized by anti-vending interests in a flexible, decentralized, and often invisible battle against street vendors. (Devlin, 2006, p. 4)

In other words, without clarity of their rights, vendors are subject to intimidation and harassment by nearby shop-keepers, property holders and others, because even the ‘letter of the law’ offers no clear defence of their position. In these circumstances, as in Los Angeles where the law is explicitly punitive, immigrant street traders are only able to secure space through evasion and avoidance, leaving them highly vulnerable both economically and physically.

Here again, the debates of street vending challenge planners not only to rethink their local regulations, but to rethink their visions of public space more generally. As Cross (2000, p. 43) argues, for planners, “a good part of the problem lies not in the phenomenon occurring in their streets, but in their preconceived notions of the “appropriate” use of public space.” The micropolitics of positive urban encounter that are now appreciated by many are difficult to create as a formal part of the regulatory frameworks of planning. Whether convivial encounter will occur and whether it will be sustained is an elusive matter and not always able to be instigated by formal planning actions, were they even to seek it. Nevertheless, from the growing number of observations of places and situations in which convivial encounter does occur in the city, there are developing some ideas and criteria for planners of the small-scale fostering of meetings across difference that they can encourage as
they implement their regulatory frameworks, and that they can explicitly try not to harm or preclude. We turn to these questions now.

5.3. Planning for multicultural encounter: festivals and beyond

While the sections above consider the ways in which planning has sought to regulate changes to urban landscapes and public spaces associated with multiculturalism, planning has also been mobilized to promote inter-cultural encounter as a means to head off the kinds of conflicts discussed above. Advocates of different forms of ‘multiculturalism’ in planning have come to invest their hopes in the transformative potential of ‘encounter’. Commonly, this form of planning practice involves the creation of opportunities for interactions between ethnic communities, in the hope that contact will reduce prejudice and social conflict. What kinds of goals and assumptions have informed these planning efforts, and what kinds of outcomes have been produced? Often, these goals are only vaguely specified. Sometimes, it seems that contact and encounter are presented as different routes to ‘cohesion’ and ‘integration’ of ethnic minority communities, while other times encounter is envisaged as a process that might transform dominant ethnonational as well as migrant identities (Fincher & Iveson, 2008). Either way, the question of whether contact and encounter can produce any kind of change beyond the time/space of the encounter itself is increasingly being challenged (Valentine, 2008).

In what follows, we assess whether such planning efforts can open up opportunities for people from different backgrounds to engage in shared activities which might address discrimination and prejudice, fostering new identifications and solidarities across difference. We begin with a consideration of multicultural festivals, before considering the significance of the wider urban public realm for the everyday experience of multiculturalism in the city.

Festivals of one kind or another have become an established part of the repertoire of contemporary urban planning in multicultural cities.14 They have become commonplace in many cities and urban neighbourhoods around the world and include: thematic festivals (such as comedy, film, or music festivals), festivals which celebrate a particular place (whether that be a neighbourhood or a city), festivals which celebrate a particular culture and/or community (such as gay and lesbian festivals and ethnic cultural festivals). The formal embrace of festivals by urban authorities can be explained with reference to at least two commonly held priorities. First, festivals are increasingly being mobilized by urban authorities in the service of place-marketing (as discussed in Section 4). A successful festival, it is hoped, might help to put a neighbourhood or a city ‘on the map’, making it distinctive and thereby drawing in tourists and investment from elsewhere. Thematic and place-focused festivals are obviously particularly important here. Second, festivals are often supported as a means to celebrate a particular way of life and/or community which is perceived to be stigmatized or marginalized in the wider public sphere. So, for example, municipal governments across a wide range of cities have actively embraced festivals as a way of promoting multiculturalism, hoping that such festivals will promote greater tolerance and understanding of ethnic minority communities and cross-cultural understanding. In Australia, Dunn, Hanna, et al. (2001) and Dunn, Thompson, et al. (2001) surveyed Australian local governments about the actions that they were taking to foster good intercommunal relations between cultural groups. They found that “the most often reported programmes took the form of cultural festivals, food fairs, multicultural days, fiestas, and arts projects” (2001, p. 1581). Such festivals are used as “strategies for celebrating diversity, sharply contrasting with the pathologizing of difference that deviates from a presumed cultural norm (an Anglo-Celtic norm in the case of Australia)” (2001, p. 1577).

Critics of festivals designed to advance these goals argue that they work to reinscribe/reinforce existing inequalities in cities as ‘spectacles’ rather than genuinely open festival events with radical potential. Most obviously, the place-marketing impulse behind festivals has been attacked on the grounds that it inevitably privileges only those activities and places that can be marketed to tourists and other spectators as consumers. As such, the image of the city portrayed in the festival becomes of paramount importance, and people, places and activities which do not fit with the desired image are excluded from the festival time-space.

The celebratory impulse behind multicultural festivals has also been attacked by critics who argue that it tends to pursue a weak kind of tolerance by exoticising minority cultures and ethnicities in order to make them ‘safe’ for the majority. Critics of dominant forms of

14 Parts of this discussion on festivals are drawn from Fincher and Iveson (2008).

multiculturalism have argued that multicultural festivals are often premised on the logic that they provide minority ethnic groups with opportunities to demonstrate the value of their culture to the white ‘host’ culture (Hage, 1998, p. 117–118). As such, they work to reinforce the position of dominant groups as ‘hosts’, who may ‘enrich themselves’ through their participation in the festival experience. Furthermore, such festivals can tend towards overly simplistic presentations of ethnic minority cultures, overlooking their internal diversity and dynamism (Dunn, Hanna, et al., 2001; Dunn, Thompson, et al., 2001, p. 1579).

However, other studies suggest that multicultural festivals can partially escape simplistic representations, and that transformative cross-cultural encounters may take place. Permezel and Duffy’s (2007) account of one multicultural festival in suburban Melbourne is particularly suggestive here. In response to the existing critiques of multicultural festivals, they argue that multicultural festivals intended as celebrations and for consumption of Otherness can transcend their own intentions. As they note, it is important not to simply take the intentions of planners as given, as if they wholly determine the outcome of festival-going and experiencing. Instead, it is important to look at what people actually do at festivals. Through such an analysis, they argue, it is possible to see that people’s mode of participation “often exceeds the way local government attempts to manage cultural difference through its multicultural policies” (Permezel & Duffy, 2007, p. 367). Music and food, for example, can be much more than ‘shallow signifiers of culture’. By engaging the senses, such activities can help to ensure that festivals become “a place of experimentation”, such that “the structure of the local festival allows and enables dialogue in potentially collaborative and innovative ways” (Permezel & Duffy, 2007, p. 367).

The literature suggests that there are numerous ways in which festivals have managed to foster a form of cross-cultural politics beyond a ‘consumption’ of the ethnicised Other. First, the flexibility of the festival’s theme and presentation is important. Precisely because immigrant and ethnic minority groups are themselves internally differentiated, festivals do not have to be organized so as to completely avoid disagreement and discord in order that a ‘united front’ is presented to their intended audience. So, in the case of multicultural festivals, this might mean that organizers work hard to include second generation young people alongside established community leaders in the planning of festival events. Second, the spatial location of festivals is very significant for the kinds of encounters they might sustain. The location of some festivals ensures that festival-goers will most likely share a time-space only with others ‘like them’, while others are deliberately located to expose urban inhabitants to strangers through initiating forms of spatial dislocation. For example, planners in Leicester in the UK have recently realized that while support for festivals such as Dewali, Christmas and the Caribbean carnival can help to ‘celebrate diversity’, to be effective in addressing the segregation of different groups such festivals need to be embedded in a range of cultural spaces beyond central or well-established entertainment zones (Singh, 2003, p. 49). And finally, there is a need for festival organizers to establish less formal activities and spaces as part of the festival, and to explicitly acknowledge (and even embrace) the notion that not all festival activities can be pre-determined by their organizers: “There is an important interplay between the formal institutional expectations and outcomes, and creating less formal and structured environments where people can come together” (Permezel & Duffy, 2007, p. 374).

But even as planned events such as festivals can perhaps sustain more transformative encounters across difference, there remains the question of whether the encounters that are fostered in dedicated events such as festivals will have an impact beyond the encounter itself. As we noted earlier in the section on social mix (Section 3), encounters across cultures take place at a wide variety of sites beyond those that usually feature in planning policies explicitly concerned with multiculturalism and diversity. Indeed, a growing body of scholarship points out that the everyday infrastructures and systems of cities tend to generate certain patterns of inter-cultural interaction in sites often not typically associated with multiculturalism. Examples include participation in ‘micro-publics’ like school parent committees (Amin, 2002), public library reading groups (Fincher & Iveson, 2008), everyday neighbourly practices like gardening and eating (Wise, 2010), sub-cultural formations like music scenes (Gilroy, 2004), and workplaces (Ellis et al., 2004). Such sites have the potential to foster certain forms of solidarity and respect across ethnic difference through shared involvement in common projects (Matejskova & Leitner, 2011). Although it should be noted that such sites can also serve to reinforce prejudice and nationalist norms, ‘undoing’ any of the progressive potential that might have been produced in settings discussed above (Valentine, 2008).

The important point here is that policy decisions and settings beyond those associated with ‘multiculturalism’ per se can have powerful effects in shaping the
experience of diversity in cities. In particular, the planning of the urban public realm more broadly will have profound impacts on the nature of inter-cultural encounter and solidarity in multicultural cities. Multicultural festivals and the like may be significant, but the provision of services such as public libraries, public transportation, public schooling and neighbourhood houses will also play a vital role in establishing the conditions of ‘everyday multiculturalism’ (Wise & Velayutham, 2009). Without such universally accessible spaces and services, the ‘splintering’ of the city along both class and cultural lines will no doubt be exacerbated (Graham & Marvin, 2001), no matter whether the presence of immigrants is formally recognized in a festival or facility.

5.4. The public realm and the public interest in multicultural cities

Multiculturalism has an aesthetic dimension: it is registered by the senses in the production of urban landscapes, in the experience of public spaces, in the staging of events and the provision of facilities. As such, the politics of identity associated with multiculturalism often takes the form of aesthetic interventions – from efforts to construct or block particular styles of architecture, to efforts to police the visible presence of different groups and behaviours in public space, to efforts to foreground and celebrate these differences. Given that planning operates in a context of a contested politics of national identity, there is no possibility of aesthetic neutrality. The implicit or explicit orientation towards multiculturalism, as both empirical reality and political philosophy, simply cannot be ‘neutral’ when faced with competing claims premised on irreconcilable positions in these debates. This is not to say that planning processes should not seek to operate in the ‘public interest’, but rather to say that the public interest is not out there waiting to be found, but is something that has to be constructed through a political process in a situation characterized by multiple and often competing publics. It is an interesting question for further research how planning frameworks and practices, which in many jurisdictions do not even emphasize the importance of the ‘social’ in the life and functioning of the city, can come to give priority to the aesthetic and the sensory in their great variety.

6. Conclusions

We began by asking – is planning in the multicultural city celebrating diversity or reinforcing difference? Our answer, of course, is that it is doing both, and often simultaneously. For example, the commodification of places and the holding of multicultural festivals for their ethnic ‘interest’ is a celebration of diversity at the same time as it is reinforcing the apparent difference of those living in ways unusual to behold for a local non-immigrant or non-minority person. But in addition there has been the constant presence through decades of planning efforts to regulate and discipline the poor and marginalized minority groups, thereby reinforcing the perception that poverty and marginalization must be managed and strictly controlled. The philosophy of some current social mix programmes retains an emphasis on ‘improving’ the poor themselves, even as it seeks also to enhance their physical living environments.

There is also the question of what planners in the multicultural city should be doing, and whether our review finds that they are taking actions that fit with the norms and expectations of ‘good practice’. Our paper has not focused primarily on the norms of planning thought and their appearance (or not) in practice, though the norms of redistribution, recognition and encounter (Fincher & Iveson, 2008) have guided our comments about prevailing shifts to neoliberal governance and their implications for the planning task. Important to note is the point that a focus on broad norms about what multicultural planning should be, which are often associated with the emancipatory and empowering potential of such planning, can be associated with a failure to explore the complex and grounded nature of planning in places, politics and contexts (Van der Horst & Ouwehand, 2012). Such a focus may also lead analysts to ignore the benefits of market-led changes in the city that might involve immigrants, because explicitly commercial objectives are considered outside the scope of certain longstanding norms of planning in the multicultural city (Van der Horst & Ouwehand, 2012). Equally, this focus might lead to failure to recognize how formally instituted planning changes, if they are driven top-down with reference to norms, often benefit from combining with more organic changes in the life of the city.

Across the sections through which we have reviewed the involvements of planning in the contemporary multicultural city, four issues emerged which have implications for the ways planners understand, manage and support ethnic and racialized difference as part of the life and the institutional frameworks of the city.

First, we have seen the complex ways in which planning is positioned, with respect to multiculturalism as demographic reality, policy, and philosophy. Across
each of these dimensions of multiculturalism, urban planning and city governance both respond to and actively shape outcomes, and indeed could do more of this. So, for instance, while immigration policies set at the national scale play a significant role in establishing multiculturalism as a demographic reality to which planning frameworks must respond, those local planning frameworks inevitably shape how the reality of diversity is spatialized and experienced on the ground. Also, because immigration policies and urban planning frameworks are typically the domain of a variety of agencies and scales of government there is the potential for such policies and frameworks to operate simultaneously with different philosophical and even practical orientations towards lived multiculturalism. In many federal systems, local governments display and act upon their own understandings of multiculturalism as it is lived and as it can be valued in the city, even if national policies and claims about multiculturalism seem at odds with local practice. From the vantage point of the city, the national and the global are both ‘in here’ as well as ‘out there’ (Massey, 2005). The case can certainly be made that managing the urban sites of immigrant lives, which is a task of planners as well as other locally sited actors, should be recognized and foreshadowed more thoroughly in the taking of national decisions and that planners should become more visible in arguing for this to occur.

No doubt linked to the presence of the global in the national and local, we found surprising similarities in the actions of urban planners despite differences in national and regional policies concerning multiculturalism. For example, social mix policies and interventions supporting the commodification of ethnic enclaves are often remarkably similar though their broader context differs. There are also variations across cities in the planning policies invoked to manage cultural diversity/difference. For example, Dutch and Singaporean policies pay a great deal of attention to housing, while Canadian approaches tend to emphasize settlement services. In Germany neighbourhood and community programmes have been highlighted recently. Overall, we have found more similarities between cities than across countries. Professional planners adhere to their understandings of the variety of ways to engage with local communities and their built environments, and this produces policies and practices in cities that are recognizable in their features from one place to another. Planners are to be applauded for this resilience, even when national politics makes their task difficult.

Second, it bears noting that specific subjects and sites are regularly chosen for urban planning intervention in the name of managing diversity and difference. Much of the planning effort in cities across the globe has targeted as subjects poor immigrants and minorities and the neighbourhoods and public spaces in which they live. We have already observed the ubiquity of social mix policies based on the premise that managing diversity and social order will be easier if poor people and ethnic minority groups live in proximity to the affluent and the (usually non-ethnicised) majority. This outcome is pursued either by controlling the location of public or social housing, or more recently, by attracting higher-income groups into disadvantaged areas. Planners and planning documents rarely express concern about the deleterious consequences for the city of the self-segregation of white or rich residential spaces. These spaces are considered normal, unremarkable, and their exemption from demands for social mixing puts the responsibility for active integration onto the shoulders of poor and racialized minorities. Regarding the sites of intervention, we emphasize that social mixing can occur in many settings and that the residence is perhaps less important than other sites such as the workplace, or libraries and other public facilities. Certainly, more attention needs to be paid to the workplace as a setting where social capital is accumulated and important negotiations across difference occur. If we then think about the role of the planner in selecting these subjects and sites for intervention, the implications of our review include that planning practice needs to steer away from any tendency to view the lives and neighbourhoods of poor minorities and immigrants as inherently problematic, more than the lives of other ‘groups’, and therefore as more legitimately the object of close planning control. Also the preoccupation of planning with residential neighbourhoods and housing as major sites for integration might be replaced by considering a wider range of places as sites in which a more inclusive daily life could occur, as well as the varied spatial scales at which this might be possible, including those retail precincts that we have considered in Section 4.

Third, we have seen that a wide range of urban planning efforts, which are not portrayed as relevant to multicultural relations in the city, nevertheless have an impact on the nature of diversity and difference there. Some planning projects are explicitly concerned with addressing issues of difference and diversity in urban populations – such as social mix programmes in housing, efforts to establish ethnically identified local economies and the promotion of cultural recognition through the planning of celebratory events and the provision of multilingual services. But all manner of other planning tools and issues have cultural dimensions. For instance, traffic
and parking regulations, the zoning of land-uses, and even the provision of electric wires and telegraph poles can be caught up in disputes arising from the citizenship claims of immigrant communities and racialized minorities. Criteria for regulating such issues are far from neutral, and much more than simple technical matters.

The circumstances of South African cities may also be used as an example here. There, gaps in municipal infrastructure of all types – physical services, social services, political and administrative structures – limit the capacity of local actors to achieve racial integration and equality, despite the existence of an inclusive legislative framework. In contrast in Singapore, strong planning powers have not always created harmony and social order between the Chinese majority and ethnicised minorities. For the future, discussions of informal practices like street vending, prominent in many cities of the Global South and Global North though less acknowledged and accepted in the latter, have much to contribute to thinking about planning and multiculturalism. They raise questions about the degree of alignment between planning and social control, a matter that sits in the shadows of many of the issues that we have canvassed under the heading of planning in the multicultural city. We think it important that the implications of all planning policies for diverse segments of the population should be acknowledged as part of the task of ‘multicultural planning’. Understanding the city as everywhere and in every way multicultural is an important underpinning for planning practice.

Fourth, we have seen that urban planning and governance in multicultural cities is not and should not be the sole preserve of professional planners, a point long made by Leonie Sandercock (1998, 2003). Planning and planners are part of strategic endeavours at local and other scales to make improvements for urban residents. Planners participate in alliances to promote urban redevelopment, as representatives from either public and private sector institutions or community organizations. Within this purview, certain goals are often privileged over others. In this context, are planners asserting their time-honoured social goals for redistribution, recognition of difference, and social inclusion in the economic and political debates about the futures of their localities or are they being silent? Our review reveals examples in cities around the world where planners design and implement government programmes that assist ethnic entrepreneurship in localities of immigrant or minority settlement. Nevertheless, the literature suggests that the daily, positive, multicultural interactions promoted in ethnic precincts and in markets, festivals, and international events such as the Olympics are not valued so much for themselves as for their commercial and economic benefits to the city hosting them.

We have also shown (unsurprisingly) the limitations of planning that tries to enforce social mix from the top down, and the need to involve local residents and civic organizations more actively in the construction of diverse neighbourhood or community spaces of coexistence. Residents often petition urban planners, disputing and promoting changes to their neighbourhoods and cities, based on their own understandings of and desires for multiculturalism. But planners are rarely able to achieve outcomes acting on their own. Usually in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders, planners have built support for interventions that are then implemented successfully. Accordingly, instead of planner and design-centric approaches to promote social mixing and immigrant integration, we need to look at how local residents and social movements are already imagining and constructing neighbourhood and community spaces of coexistence.

With this in mind, planning must be distinguished from social control. While planners must certainly be concerned with outcomes as well as processes, the co-construction of everyday multiculturalisms is in the end the task of inhabitants as well as planners. While the limitations of state withdrawal under the guise of neoliberalism are noted by many analysts, it is also evident that bureaucratic control can stifle creativity and the emergence of new solidarities. To put this another way, planners will find themselves required to play a variety of roles if they are to foster forms of multicultural urbanism that tackle inequalities based on ethnic and racialized difference. We have seen in this review that in some instances, racism is best tackled by planners being strongly interventionist in the shaping of places and policies. In other instances, it has been the role of planners to step back and find ways to support more ‘organic’ and informal multiculturalisms through the relaxing and/or reframing of existing planning controls. So, while we offer no simple prescriptions for planners, we hope that this review of what is being done in the name of multiculturalism by planners in cities around the world can contribute to the hard work of those who aspire for planning to contribute to more equal and just cities.

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References


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