

CONFERENCE NEWS

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OSLO 2002

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL METROPOLIS CONFERENCE

“Cities are where globalisation is being worked out”

“Cities have become one of the major ways globalisation is being worked out. It’s in the cities that globalisation is being localized. I don’t like the word chaos, I prefer “complexity” which emphasizes growth and change,” says Michael Dear, professor at the University of Southern California.

TEXT: BJØRG DYSTVOLD NILSSON

Dear, who has studied the growth of Los Angeles, sees this city as the archetype of what he calls a postmodern city. “LA has always been a multicultural, multilingual, multimediated city. The city’s identity is derived from the activities of the hinterland. This is the most typical characteristic of a postmodern city,” Dear says. “The many centres of LA don’t replicate each other, each has its own identity.”

The postmodern city differs from the modernist city, like Chicago, which is characterized by a centre that organizes the hinterland. Dear mentions New York as another example of a modernist city with a dense downtown and less dense rings surrounding the centre.

“LA was long seen by city planners

as the exception. That has changed, and now urbanists see it as a prototype. Every American city that is growing, is growing in the fashion of LA,” Dear says.

He says the city has grown in a fragmented manner. “It’s missing the overall modernist intentionalities. It has been very difficult to plan because the speed of development has been so great. So this decentralized metropolis has for instance a very badly planned traffic system. This is a big problem. But one of the positive things about fragmentation is an enormous diversity. The region consists of 177 cities. There is a remarkable range of recreational, residential and working areas. What is not so positive is that there is no integration between them and no regional coherence”.

Dear tells about a very diverse, cosmopolitan population, even if there are certain enclaves for the rich and for the poor, and certain very “white,” “black,” “Asian,” or Latino neighbourhoods.

“LA has a very interesting micro-geography. There is a huge diversity in the city. The divisions are more determined by class than by race. When I leave LA I always find it very odd to come to places where all people are white. I’m used to mixed populations, I enjoy it and I think it’s healthy,” he says.

He sees some challenges though. “Modern cities have growing pain as they adjust to twenty-first century realities. Growth is leading to a great diversification. At the same time, the political structures we have are from



the 19th century. We know we live in a “post-something” world. But we don’t really know what to call it. It’s a Kafkaesque situation, where we wake up in a new world and only obsolete structures are left, not handling change. The county of Los Angeles for instance has a population of 8 million people and only 7 elected representatives. That is not representative democracy. We have to reinvent a democratic system to catch up with the changes. We need new ways of seeing cities if we are to invent appropriate policies.”

Facts:

The labour market

- Employment among first generation immigrants was 50.9 per cent at the end of 2000. Employment among the entire population (aged 16-74 years) was 61.1 per cent.
- There has been a marked increase in the level of employment among non-western immigrants in the last half of the 1990s.
- Immigrants from Africa had the lowest level of labour force participation, 41.8 per cent, while immigrants from South and Central America had the highest level among non-western immigrants with 54.6 per cent.
- Non-western immigrants in particular have high levels of unemployment. African immigrants had the highest rate of registered unemployment, with 12.8 per cent.

SSB

Today’s Youth:

Himmilo Youth in Norway

Himmilo arranges activities for Somali youth in Oslo. The focus is on culture and identity. Activities include: meetings and seminars for youth, courses for the leader team and resource group, sports tournaments for the youth and creating a meeting place for the different generations by involving both youth and parents.

Some of the youth are involved in crime and drugs and need rehabilitation, positive feedback and support. Himmilo therefore stresses the importance of building self-confidence and highlighting the cultural roots of the youth. Most of the youths parents belong to low income groups and therefore have limited means when it comes to fulfilling the children’s needs for positive leisure time activities. We aim to be an important tool in filling this void with positive activities.

EUROCITIES – CHILD OF METROPOLIS



In October 2001, an initiative was proposed by the cities of Rotterdam and Barcelona to give political consideration to the issue of immigration and integration. An initial policy paper on “Immigration and Integration: The role of Local Authorities” was subsequently developed based on the outcomes of discussions by Eurocities Social Welfare Committee members at the workshop on Immigration and the Role of Local authorities held at the Metropolis Conference in Rotterdam in November 2001.

This sets out a number of principles and policy suggestions, including a proposal for a Code of Conduct for European Cities on minimum standards for the reception and integration of immigrants.

This code should contain minimum standards referring to the provision of basic needs and other necessary arrangements in order to guarantee the humane treatment of all immigrants who seek residence in their jurisdiction. In the implementation of this Code of Conduct, it is proposed that cities should jointly monitor the progress they make in receiving and integrating newcomers in their respective territories. Annual reports should inform the national and European authorities about the obstacles met in the development of local policies and the unintended consequences of past interventions.

It is hoped to finalise and obtain the political agreement of Eurocities members to this Code of Conduct by the summer 2003.



Lunch

- Pizza
- Focaccia with sundried tomatoes and salami
- Ciabatta with tunafish
- Crudit  with dip
- Petit choux

There is also a vegetarian lunch alternative. This is marked with a special sign.

EDITORS:

EVA HAAGENSEN
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DESIGN:



TOGETHERNESS IN DIFFERENCE

What is your impression of Oslo as a multicultural city?



■ I'm impressed about the areas near by the hotel that are occupied by immigrants. This is something I don't know from Zurich, a city that has more immigrants. The cultural differences are very visible.

Urs Watter
Found. For Pop., Migr. And Environment, Switzerland



■ From just a glance around the hotel people from all different cultures are very visible. On the surface it seems like people are living together in harmony. I've noticed that immigrants are walking with immigrants; I've not seen any interaction between people with different background.

Helene Lackenbauer
Senior Program Officer, Swedish Red Cross, Sweden



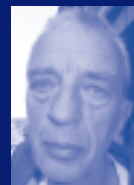
■ I am struck by the commonality of working through challenges of diversity to create stronger new communities.

Julie Cool
Senior Research Analyst, Status of Women, Canada



■ I am impressed by the visible diversity, but I feel that this is limited to specific spaces. Being in that multicultural space is fun!

Christiane Harzig
University of Bremen, Germany



■ It's very segregated; you have to go to certain areas to find the multiculturalism. I find suburbs like Holmlia interesting, where the multicultural society is developing from below, with the children. You don't see as many immigrants downtown as in some other European cities.

Flemming Røgilds
Research Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Denmark

“Berlin depends upon immigration”

“The future of Berlin depends upon immigration, also from foreign countries. But the politicians are obsessed with the idea of control, and want to prevent immigration. This is a great contradiction and a political disaster,” says Hartmut Häussermann, professor of urban and regional sociology at the Humbolt-University in Berlin.

TEXT: BJØRG DYSTVOLD NILSSON

He hopes this situation can change to the better with the new law of immigration coming into effect in Germany from January 1, 2003.

“With this law the integration of immigrants will become a task of public institutions. An administration of immigration will be created, which will enable us to develop policies. Until now we have had no coherent policy to integrate, or to use the resources of immigrants in a better way than in the past”, Häussermann says, not undermining that he doesn't believe that this new law will be sufficient.

Häussermann has studied the socio-spatial changes of Berlin after the unification of the city in 1989, and is of the opinion that the city has gone from being a divided to a fragmented city.

“Berlin now has a united sector in the centre. But in spite of the unification, Berlin is in a process of “demi-cation” of the population. Berlin was a very socially mixed city before 1989 because suburbanization could not take place. In West Berlin due to the wall, and in East Berlin because of a very centralized housing policy. Now



the more affluent people tend to move out to homogenous neighbourhoods in the suburbs. On the other hand we see the formation of some very disadvantaged neighbourhoods with a concentration of poverty and unemployment,” Häussermann says. He underlines that there are both people with foreign and domestic background in these areas.

Berlin underwent fundamental changes within very few years and is now in a very difficult economic situation.

“The eastern part of the city lost 80 percent of its industrial work places within 6 to 7 years. This is a fundamental change with no previous historic example. Until 1989 the whole city was heavily subsidized, both east and west. East Berlin had a state economy, and also in West Berlin every single economic activity had state subsidies. Surrounded by the Wall, with no hinterland and no secure transport relations, West Berlin could not live as an economic unit. There-

fore, all important economic activity moved from West Berlin into West Germany in the early 1960s. This has not been changed after the unification. The only nationally important institution that has come back is the government, but that was arranged with an agreement that for each job moving from Bonn to Berlin, one job in public sector had to move from Berlin to Bonn. So the credit is zero. There is a lot of new economic activities here, but not enough to nurture a city with 3.5 million inhabitants,” Häussermann says. He hopes for new national economic support for Berlin after the national elections on September 22.

The city has 350 000 inhabitants who are foreign citizens. About half of them are Turkish.

“A lot of immigrants from eastern Europe come to Berlin; from Poland, from Russia and from the former Yugoslavia. Some very interesting historical patterns are reviving. Affluent Russian immigrants have concentrated on the exact same place where there used to be a Russian colony in the 1920s. It is called Charlottenburg, but is now, as then, known as “Charlottengrad”.



Photo©: Department for Press an information, Berlin

Performers Yesterday:



Andreas Ljones

Andreas Ljones is born 11.01.74, one of the Norwegian well-known fiddle players. He graduated from the Norwegian Music Academy last year, is now the folk musician on the diploma study at the same

Academy. Andreas is few times National Champion in traditional folk music, and he has participated in several concerts both national and international such as; Germany, France and South Africa. He is described as an experimental folk musician and has composed music for theatre, film and ballet.



ALIOU CISSOKHO

Aliou Cissokho is a true griot and master cora player from Senegal. Aliou Cissokho comes from a griot family and learnt to play the instrument from his father. Such has been the tradition in the family for more than 700 years. Aliou has played with the National Orchestra of Senegal as well as done a number of recordings, both in Norway and Senegal. Apart from recordings, Aliou has performed in many international festivals and has played with such heavyweights like Fakra Toure. In addition to playing the Cora, Aliou is also a singer, percussionist and drummer.

TEXT: Kjeldstadlie, professor at the University of Oslo

OSLO – THOUSAND YEARS OF IMMIGRATION

The city is about 1000 years old, so is its' immigration history. Filip, Askatin and Laurentius were among the first we know by name – English abbots in the Cistercian monastery. Lodver Svarte (the Black) is another early immigrant, a merchant from the German Hansa town of Rostock, who in 1302 paid to have his burial ground in the city; he planned to stay. Askatin and Lodver were career migrants, brought to bridge a gap of knowledge between more advanced societies and the Norwegian periphery, typical of immigrants in the medieval and early modern period.

During the rise of modern capitalism in the 19th century, labour migrants were the dominant group of newcomers; in this case Swedish young men and women from the border areas, who saw Oslo as their natural labour market. Their modern counterpart are the Turks and Pakistanis of the 1970s.

Then, in the 20th century, the refugees have been the typical, but by all means not the only immigrants – East European Jews, Russian refugees from czarist persecution or the Bolshevik revolution, various groups fleeing from Hitler, cold war refugees after WWII and in the last generation nationalities like Chileans, Vietnamese, Iranians, Iraqis, Bosnians, Kosovars and Somalians.

Although there was a heavy concentration of Swedes along the Oslofjord and a strong Kvæni population of Finnish descent in northern Norway, Oslo was the immigration capital at the beginning of the 20th century. One third of all who came to Norway on the years around WWI, settled in Oslo. There was a number of nationalities (41 i 1920), and religions and congregations (including one “Brahma” and two muslims). This almost cosmopolitan character was partly due to

the second world war, but also inherent in a capital – its size, centrality and in the case of Oslo, its relative social openness, it was never controlled by a closed traditional local elite.

Today's pattern is the same. In the 1990s one third of all immigrants and half of the non-Western immigrants in Norway live in Oslo. Immigrants and their children constitute close to one fifth of its population. There is a concentration of residence in the old east side, where 90 percent of the pupils at the local school have minority background. The trend, however, points towards suburbs as immigrant dwelling areas.

The device of the city – “unanimitet et constanter” – may seem less relevant in today's manifold. However, if one stresses its long migration history and its relative lack of deep, disruptive tensions, the caption may not be inapt after all.