Researching class and diversity in multicultural neighbourhoods

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Territory, Diversity, Conviviality | Zaragoza | October 2018

Photo: Simon Rowe, Cacao, for Intersecting Diversities
Aim of paper

To sketch out seven key methodological dangers in researching territory, diversity and conviviality in urban space.

Paper based mainly on three research projects:

a. *Concordia Discors* (Pastore et al)

b. *Intersecting Diversities* (Berg et al)

c. *Away from the noise: Jewish-Muslim interactions & narratives in E1/Barbès* (Gidley and Everett)
THE THREE RESEARCH PROJECTS
a. Concordia Discors

Understanding Conflict and Integration Outcomes of Inter-Group Relations and Integration Policies in selected Neighbourhoods of Five European Cities

Research partners: TARKI, Budapest (Hungary); COMPAS, Oxford (UK); EFMS, Bamberg (Germany); FIERI, Turin (Italy); Autonomous University, Barcelona (Spain)

Associate partner: European Policy Centre (EPC)

Supported by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals
Concordia Discors neighbourhoods

**Barcelona, ES:**
- Poble Sec
- Sagrada Familia

**Budapest, HU:**
- Józsefváros
- Kőbánya

**London, UK:**
- Bermondsey
- Camberwell

**Nurnberg, DE:**
- Gostenhof
- Langwasser
- Werderau

**Torino, IT:**
- Barriera Di Milano
- San Paulo

Ferruccio Pastore and Irene Ponzo, eds, 2016

*Inter-group Relations and Migrant Integration in European Cities: Changing Neighbourhoods*


Open access online
b. *Intersecting Diversities*

Team: Mette Louise Berg, Ben Gidley, Caroline Oliver, Rachel Humphris, Ana Krausova, Hiranthi Jayaweera, Ana Krausova, Simon Rowe

in Elephant & Castle, South London

Focus on welfare domains: maternity, schooling, housing, elder care

*Photo: Elephant & castle, Simon Rowe, Cacao, for Intersecting Diversities*
Intersecting Diversities

Forthcoming article in Ethnic and Racial Studies: “Welfare micropublics and inequality: urban super-diversity in a time of austerity” Mette Louise Berg, Ben Gidley, and Anna Krausova

Photo: Elephant & castle, Simon Rowe, Cacao, for Intersecting Diversities
c. *Away from the noise:*
Jewish-Muslim interactions & narratives in E1/Barbès

Ben Gidley and Sami Everett
In Brick Lane/E1, London and Barbès/La Goutte d’Or, Paris
Forthcoming article in *Francosphères* December issue: “*Getting away from the noise: Jewish-Muslim interactions & narratives in E1/Barbès*”

*Photo: Barbès, Paris Sami Everett*
SEVEN METHODOLOGICAL DANGERS IN RESEARCHING URBAN DIVERSITY (AND TENTATIVE SUGGESTIONS OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES...)
1. The problem of methodological groupism

El problema de la grupismo metodológico

Long tradition of researching ethno-cultural “communities” in the city (the Bangladeshi community in East London, the Latin American community in Barcelona,... etc)

→ Reificando grupos etnicos

Danger of reifying groups, freezing them, obscuring what they have in common with (members of) other groups and what divides them internally
The problem of methodological groupism

• **methodological groupism** (Brubaker 2002)
  – In all social contexts various parties have an interest in the relevance, salience and power of group categories. “By *invoking* groups, they seek to *evoke* them, summon them, call them into being” (Brubaker, 2002, 166).

• **methodological ethnicism** (King 2001)

The problem of methodological groupism

- Invisible and dispersed groups
- Ethnography understands how differences become social significant *contingently*, at specific moments (cf *Who Are the Lue?* Moerman 1965)

*Photo: Elephant & Castle, London*

Simon Rowe, *Cacao*, for *Intersecting Diversities*
An alternative approach?

→ Space rather than group as unit of analysis

El espacio, más que la etnicidad, como unidad de análisis
2. Prioritising ethno-cultural difference

El supuesto a priori de que la diferencia que marca la diferencia es étnica.

• A priori assumption that the difference that makes a difference is ethnic
• Reduction of “diversity” to ethno-cultural diversity (and of “super-diversity” to “more” ethno-cultural diversity)

Photo: Barriera de Milano, Torino
Pietro Cingolani, FIERI, for Concordia Discors
Class

- Newer socio-economic lines of cleavage as new spatial injustices emerge – e.g. gentrification (e.g. Bermondsey), changing housing tenure (e.g. Werderau) – often these cleavages not ethnically marked

- Range of “other others”
  - Gentrifiers and new homeowners – but also tourists (Sagrada Familia), leisure/nightlife visitors (Poble Sec)

Photo: Bermondsey, South London
Ben Gidley, for Concordia Discors
An alternative approach?

- Intersectional approach
- Recognising the contingency of which difference makes a difference, and when
The turn to neighbourhoods

The diversity turn (Berg and Sigona):
• Superdiversity (Vertovec)
• Common-place diversity (Wessendorf)
• Conviviality (Gilroy, Vertovec, Nowicka, Wise)

BUT...
3. Methodological neighbourhoodism

“Methodological neighbourhoodism” 
(Berg and Gidley, forthcoming)

Photo: Simon Rowe, Cacao, for Intersecting Diversities
Reifying places:

• iconic sites: proper nouns as synecdoches for problematisations...

Google images hits for “Molenbeek”
...or for hopeful projections of conviviality

Hackney as iconic site of “superdiversity”
http://photogallery-mmg.mpg.de/?page_id=1654
An alternative approach?

→ Ethnographies of non-places?
(Suzi Hall on a street, Rhys-Taylor on markets, Wise on workplaces, Neal on schools, Berg et al on Elephant)

Bus map of Elephant & Castle, – see Berg, Gidley, Krausova, forthcoming
An alternative approach?

→ Space as socially constructed: 
neighbourhood ≠ a container for the social

→ Extending the field – following cases beyond the field

Bus map of Elephant & Castle, 
– see Berg, Gidley, Krausova, forthcoming
Attending to multiple scales

- Patterning diversity – micro-local or nano scales
- Space and time
- The trans-local

Map: Elephant & Castle, Ana Krausova, for Intersecting Diversities – see Berg, Gidley, Krausova, forthcoming
Attending to multiple scales

• Patterning diversity – micro-local or nano scales (*micro-publics* – see Back, Amin)

• Space and time

• The trans-local
Attending to multiple scales

• Patterning diversity – micro-local or nano scales

• Space and time (the quotidian rhythms of use of space)

• The trans-local

Photo: Elephant & Castle
Ben Gidley
Attending to multiple scales

- Patterning diversity – micro-local or nano scales
- Space and time
- The trans-local (the multiple elsewheres tangibly present here)

Photo: Elephant & Castle
Ben Gidley
4. Focus on attitudes instead of practices: Saying versus doing

*Actitudes o prácticas, decir o hacer.*

A fourth methodological problem is when conviviality is indexed by how residents respond to interview- or survey-based research, rather than (also) observing how people interact in real time.

Sometimes attitudes, or representations, do not coincide with interactions. For example...
Saying versus doing:  
*Concordia Discors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONS</th>
<th>REPRESENTATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Different ethnic groups in public libraries in Bermondsey and Camberwell (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese families and old Hungarian nannies in Taraliget residential park in Kőbánya (HU)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chinese traders and Roma employees in Four Tigers Market in Józsefváros (HU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of contacts</td>
<td>Elderly people, teenagers and mothers with children in SPA garden in San Paolo (ITA)</td>
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<td>Pakistani and natives in Poble Sec (SPA)</td>
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<td>Affluent middle class residents in re-developed docklands and working class residents on council estates, north Bermondsey (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict/Competition</td>
<td>Arabs and Hungarian shopkeepers in Józsefváros (HU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourists and residents in Sagrada Familia (SPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Turkish residents and old German and Turkish residents in MAN’s housing stock in Werderau (GE)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Positive representations combined with negative interactions
– e.g. “Arabs” and Hungarian shopkeepers in Népszínház Street, Józsefváros, describe each other in terms of mutual respect while practising intense and harmful forms of competition

– see Boglárka Szalai and Krisztina La-Torre in Pastore and Ponzo 2016

Positive representations combined with no interactions – e.g. middle class whites and minority residents in Camberwell, former love diversity but don’t practise it outside purchasing “ethnic” food

– see Jenson and Gidley in Pastore and Ponzo 2016
Saying versus doing: *Concordia Discors*

Negative representations combined with positive interactions
– e.g. (1) Chinese traders and Roma employees in Four Tigers Market in Józsefváros – mundane forms of trust and reciprocity, a “market-language” lingua franca, etc
– see Boglárka Szalai and Krisztina La-Torre in Pastore and Ponzo 2016

*Photo: Józsefváros, Budapest Endre Sik, Tarki, for Concordia Disors*
Negative representations combined with positive interactions
– e.g. (2) white natives and minorities in Bermondsey, London – xenophobic language combined with intense trust relations
– see Jenson and Gidley in Pastore and Ponzo 2016
Saying versus doing: *Beyond the Noise*

Negative representations combined with positive interactions
– e.g. (3) Jewish/Muslim commercial interactions in garment and food industries in Barbès and London E1 – trustful relations combined with stereotyping and racialised representations
– see Everett and Gidley in December issue of *Francosphères*

Photo: Barbès, Paris
Sami Everett
Class and the norm against prejudice

- The **norm against prejudice** (US research: Mendelberg; Plant and Devine; Blinder. European research: Ivarsflaten, Blinder and Ford)
- Higher educated people learn not to speak in prejudiced ways
An alternative approach?

→ Attending to the banal, unremarkable things, the unspoken
– e.g. gestural communication, semiotic overload, discretionary practices of street level bureaucrats, or residents’ choreography of difference in space

Photo: Elephant & Castle, Simon Rowe, Cacao, for Intersecting Diversities
5. Ignoring private, commercial and state spaces

*Ignorando espacios privados, comerciales y estatales.*

- Wealth of diversity research on public and parochial spaces, e.g. markets, parks, shopping centres
- Relative lack of diversity research focused on homes, businesses, welfare institutions

*Photo: Elephant & Castle, Simon Rowe, Cacao, for Intersecting Diversities*
An alternative approach?

→ “Micropublics” – term coined by Les Back, popularised by Ash Amin

“Welfare micropublics” (Berg and Gidley, forthcoming)

Photo: Elephant & Castle, Caroline Oliver, for Intersecting Diversities
6. Neglecting role of the state in shaping diversity

Desatención del papel del Estado en la configuración de la diversidad.

• The *national* state (e.g. immigration policies – *civic stratification*)
• The *local* state (the role of street level bureaucrats and *welfare micropublics*)
• Examples from Elephant and Castle (maternity, education and youth, housing...)

Photo: Elephant & Castle, Simon Rowe, Cacao, for Intersecting Diversities
7. Neglecting inequality in understanding diversity

Desatención de la desigualdad en la comprensión de la diversidad

- Class exclusions (including those driven by gentrification) are (at least) as significant as ethno-cultural cleavages.
- Unequal access to social rights structures the experience of micro-publics.

Photo: Elephant & Castle, Simon Rowe, Cacao, for Intersecting Diversities
Muchas gracias!

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