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# Action for Inclusion in Europe City Working Groups

Research Paper 3

Cohesion and Belonging:  
Review of the Evidence

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## 1. Cohesion and belonging: building a shared civic identity

The last two decades have seen the demographic transformation of Europe, driven primarily by international migration. The current historical moment is defined by economic crisis, by a changing relationship between Europe and its neighbours, and the unprecedented scale of mobility within, into and now once again out of the continent. This transformation has manifested primarily in Europe's cities. As the world becomes more connected and concentrated in the cities of the 21st century, populations, cultures, economies and values in any one metropolis become more diverse.

The European city is marked by the "metropolitan paradox": the most brutal forms of exclusion and conflict alongside the most profound forms of conviviality and co-existence. It is in cities where diversity is experienced most intensely, to which the majority of migrants move, and where mobilisations against diversity are symbolically rooted. And it is also at local level where the possibility for new forms of identification and belonging emerge. A challenge for the European future is consequently not only the classical moral imperative to generate the good city but also to generate a sense of metropolitan cohesion and to govern diversity justly.

The challenge we are taking up here is this: How can Europe's cities manage diversity dynamics for urban liveability and urban sustainability under the force of massive economic, social, cultural and political change? How can we learn to build inclusive cities and inclusive urban citizenship?

More specifically, as cities become more diverse and more unequal, municipalities face the challenge of how to ensure that all citizens feel they have a stake in a common civic culture. Local authorities increasingly recognise their "place-making" role alongside their statutory service delivery functions. A city in which all residents feel they are valued increases residents' wellbeing and satisfaction, and creates a climate in which municipal measures are more effective. This background paper sets out some of the key issues around *building a common civic culture* in Europe's cities. The first section sets out the field which the paper addresses and discusses some of the key terms and concepts. The second section explores some of the evidence around the issues. The third section introduces the areas of intervention where cities can make a difference, illustrated by examples of promising or functioning practices.

## 2. What is the issue?

There is evidence that neighbourhood, city and national belonging and identification varies greatly between ethnic groups, between generations, and between places. Civic participation and active citizenship are also unevenly distributed across groups. Some cities have seen trends towards ethnic segregation, driven sometimes by discrimination and sometimes by particular groups' own choices. Public attitudes to migrants and minorities can constrain cities' ability to deliver the best integration outcomes.

It is in neighbourhoods where the difficult work of residents learning to live with diversity occurs. Efforts by authorities to recognise and celebrate different "communities" which live in a city do not always find ways to celebrate the common civic ties that bind different groups. Some

neighbourhoods – including diverse areas with large numbers of migrants, but also areas where “native” working class populations live – can be stigmatised in local and even national media discourses. Changing the narrative, at both neighbourhood and city level, has been one of the key strategies that cities have taken to build shared and inclusive forms of belonging.

At the same time, some cities struggle to include all residents equally in civic life. New migrants, particular racialised minorities, second generation youth and also marginalised members of majority populations (including the white working class) are among the groups often found to be excluded. Creating platforms for dialogue and active engagement, where excluded groups can participate in municipal decision-making, enables cities to govern more effectively and meet the complex and diverse needs of changing populations. And platforms for dialogue and engagement in turn make previously excluded residents feel part of the city.

### 3. Key terms and concepts

The key issues this paper highlights are diversity, cohesion, belonging, identity and participation. This section maps these terms before, in the next section, reviewing the main academic literatures on them.

*Diversity* is the presence of significant forms of difference in the population of a particular territory. Ethnic and cultural diversity is particularly important (including that brought by migration, but also long-lasting historical forms of diversity amongst settled populations) – but other forms of difference matter too, including gender and class difference. Scholars have also drawn attention to the proliferation of diversities (of migration status, ethnicity, faith, socio-economic standing and so on) in urban areas, creating the field of “superdiversity”, in which no single group is dominant and multiple and multiply defined groups share space (Vertovec 2007). Diversity, therefore, is the context in which processes of integration unfold.

*Cohesion* is the process that must happen in territorial communities to ensure all residents have the potential to interact and identify with each other. We see cohesion as among the features of a resilient, sustainable, liveable city – along with an equitable distribution of urban resources and rights. We do not see cohesion as the opposite or merely the absence of conflict. It is not simply the sharing of common values, but rather should be understood as a dynamic process of interaction that includes social solidarity, mundane conviviality and local belonging.

Some practitioners prefer a focus on cohesion *instead of* a focus on integration because for many the integration approach implicitly focuses on newcomers, marking them out as in need of special treatment or as problematic, and therefore does not resonate for existing residents. However, other approaches to integration (e.g. van Breugel et al 2014; Spencer and Charsley 2015; Pastore and Ponzio 2016) are explicit in insisting that integration is a whole of society issue, not just an issue of migrants and minorities. In these approaches, cohesion and integration are inter-related processes, each contributing to the other.

*Belonging* is the emotional attachment to a group or more often place, a sense of being at home. It involves both our sense of how we belong to a place, and our sense of ownership over a place

that belongs to us. Belonging includes an emotional dimension – not just being but also longing, as Elspeth Probyn (1996) puts it.

*Identity* refers to the ways in which we describe who we are and the ways others describe us: the groups to which we belong and feel part of and the categories used to make sense of ourselves and others. *Civic identity* is just one among the many social and biographical identities that people have; it refers to the sense in which a locality (such as a city), and belonging to or being an active citizen of a locality, makes up a part of who we are.

*Participation* refers to the involvement of citizens and other residents in structures and institutions of the state and civil society, formally or informally – from involvement in a voluntary organisation to voting in an election. There are several possible degrees of participation, from more superficial and passive to deeper and more active forms (as captured in Sherry Arnstein’s widely cited “ladder of participation”, 1969, discussed below.)

Our framework for thinking about these issues is the concept of **integration**. We conceptualise integration as multi-dimensional: as a *set of processes* which occur in different *domains* of life, in different ways and at different speeds, for individuals and groups (Spencer and Charsley 2015; Oliver and Gidley 2015).

Drawing on the European sociological literature (Entzinger 2000, Penninx and Martiniello 2004, Freeman 2004, Heckmann 2005, Geddes and Niessen 2005), we can identify the domains in which integration occurs (Spencer 2011:203; Spencer and Charsley 2015). Some of them are “harder” – the objective, easy to measure socio-economic dimensions – but others are “softer” and more subjective. This paper focuses on the latter: on issues relating to the domains of the *social* (as in processes of interaction); the *cultural* (relating to changes in values and behaviour); the *civic and political* (participation in community life and the democratic process) and *identity* (the processes through which individuals identify with the place and people among whom they live).

*Social interaction* includes the ways in which migrants and existing members of the receiving society interact with each other socially, and maps on to the three fields of “social connections” identified by Ager and Strang (2008): social bridges, social bonds and social links. This domain is profoundly local, exemplified above all by face-to-face interaction, for instance in workplaces, public space or at the school gate.

*Cultural integration* includes morals, values, behaviour and lifestyle. This domain is less of a policy focus than some of the other domains, but is often highlighted in popular, media and politicians' discourses, as in discussions of the failure to learn the national language or the incompatible lifestyles of different religious groups. In this domain, the literature focuses on the attitudes of migrants and, to a lesser extent, on the public attitudes of receiving societies, including issues such as racism, myths and scare-mongering. Although culture is often associated with nations, culture is also experienced as local; culture varies from region to region, city to city, and even neighbourhood to neighbourhood – and urban areas are key sites of cultural innovation and intercultural exchange.

*Civic integration* includes issues such as voting rights and civic habits, which are clearly structured by the cultural domain. This domain roughly corresponds to the EU key area of Nationality, civic citizenship and respect for diversity. Civic engagement can happen at various levels, including the national (e.g. participation in national party political life or national campaigns) but more often the local (e.g. participation in local associations or local campaigns).

*Identity integration* Although clearly related to both cultural and civic integration, and less developed in the literature, this domain concerns the extent to which people feel they belong and can identify with the place of residence, both the locality and the nation (not withstanding retention of other identities related to their background).

All of these processes occur irrespective of what policies are pursued by governments at various geographical scales. However, policy in general and integration policy in particular can make a difference, opening up or closing down possibilities in all of these domains. This paper focuses in particular on *local-level policies* and, after reviewing the academic literature in the next section, we will turn to explore what works at a local level.

## 4. Reviewing the evidence

This section explores the evidence about the issues around integration in the field of cohesion and belonging, focusing on what are the barriers and facilitators for migrants, especially where the local level is relevant.

### **Social interaction**

Social interaction is a key domain of integration. The evidence is clear that different groups have very different profiles in terms of social interaction, but also that different locations have different profiles. We can group these profiles along two different axes. First, we can look at the degree and intensity of contacts between individuals – ranging from conflict, via co-existence and fleeting contact to conviviality. Second, we can explore the attitudes and representations groups have towards each other.

This is based on the “contact hypothesis” widely accepted within the social sciences and in policy, which suggests that contact between members of different groups has the potential to break down fears and anxieties and leads to greater understanding and tolerance (Allport 1954). This

theory has underpinned social psychological research that found that inter-group contact typically reduces inter-group prejudice (Pettigrew, 1971, 1986, 1998). Research about newly arrived asylum seekers, for example, generally supports the notion that individual contact improves community relations (ICAR 2005:3). On the other hand, the literature stresses that intergroup contact alone “does not always lead to reduced prejudice or improved relations between the groups” (Farley 1982:42), as this impact *depends on certain preconditions*. Some conditions for “optimal contact” that are shown to lead to improved inter-group relations are: contact in a situation of *equal group status*, cooperative activities pursuing *common goals*, and the support of *authorities or norms* (e.g. in anti-discrimination law).

More recent research concludes that the contact situation requires a *friendship potential* too, and typically this requires *time* (Pettigrew 1998:75-80); “*fleeting contacts*” are not enough. Pettigrew’s analysis also shows that learning about the other group (through new information), behavioral change, emotional ties and reappraisal of one’s own group are not sufficient in themselves but are necessary. For this to occur, duration is required – repetition breaks down anxieties – but, as Granovetter (1973) noted, the incidence of social interaction includes not just the frequency but also the *intensity* of interaction (See Entizinger and Biezeveld 2003:6).

As Pastore and Ponzio (2016) argue, a focus on contact should take us to *the specific sites in which interaction takes place*: typically public and semi-public spaces, often in cities. A helpful concept here is what Amin (2002, after Back 1999; Keith 1999) calls “*micropublics*”: spaces of associations where habit of practice substitutes the mere co-presence and dialogue and “prosaic negotiations” are compulsory; these spaces resemble the “zones of encounter” pointed out by Wood and Landry (2008), where deeper and more enduring interactions between people engaging in shared activities and common goals can take place. Much of the following discussion focuses on local government intervention in such spaces.

Underpinning the possibility of positive or negative interactions in such spaces are a range of factors tied to the specificity of place, such as flows and links *within* a locality and *between* a locality and others – for instance, the sense in which a suburb is connected to or cut off from opportunities afforded by the city. Exploring these factors generates several “ideal types” of modes of living together (mapped on to different sorts of urban locales) which seem to be present in the literature (e.g. Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007; Hickman et al 2012; Jensen and Gidley 2015; Robinson 2010; Wallman 2003), ranging from *cohesive but exclusive closed and brittle modes of community* to *less cohesive but more open and flexible modes of community characterised by commonplace diversity*. Consequently, cities and neighbourhoods vary considerably in this domain, and therefore require different forms of intervention. Thus for example, some cities have seen trends towards ethnic segregation, driven sometimes by discrimination and sometimes by particular groups’ own choices; others have seen trends towards mixing.

Within this literature, one key concept is *social capital*, as theorised by Robert Putnam (2000), whose work on social capital has informed the debates on integration and cohesion, especially in



the English-speaking world. Social capital in turn is often divided into different forms, e.g. by Ager and Strang (2008:4), who describe three crucial to integration:

1. *Social bonds* (connections within a community defined by, for example, ethnic, national or religious identity);
2. *Social bridges* (with members of other communities); and
3. *Social links* (with institutions, including local and central government services).

Ted Cattle, the intellectual architect of the UK's policy around cohesion, has similarly stressed the importance of contact and social interaction. In his work (e.g. 2001), as in many other accounts, social capital and social interaction are closely related to *where* people are housed, schooled and employed, and therefore relates closely to the socio-economic domain described above. He emphasised residential clustering, popularly described as "sleep-walking into segregation", as creating problems of cohesion.<sup>1</sup> However, other evidence points to the contrary. In the UK, analysis of the government's Citizenship Survey has found that the religious and ethnic concentration of a neighbourhood is statistically insignificant to a sense of belonging and identity with Britain across all groups (CLG 2010). Robinson and Reeve claim that "Evidence suggests that new immigrants are making a positive contribution to... the cultural and social fabric of towns and neighbourhoods and, in some situations, the regeneration and revitalisation of declining neighbourhoods" (2006:1). Similarly, Papillon writes that "The spatial concentration of immigrants may not necessarily be a problem: it may contribute to the creation of social networks and facilitate access to employment; but it may also, when combined with poverty, become an explosive mix, leading directly to the social exclusion of future generations." (2002:iii).

Finally, social interaction closely relates to area of integration identified by Entzinger and Biezeveld as "the *attitude* of recipient societies towards migrants". It is absolutely central to any understanding of integration as a two-way process. Ager and Strang spend a considerable amount of time looking at this. They describe a *minimal* level of integration, involving the absence of conflict and presence of "toleration", and a more *meaningful* level of integration, in which different groups actively mix. Beyond this, perhaps, is a situation where different people feel a sense of common belonging, involving friendship and family links across lines of difference as well as positive respect and shared values (2008:177-8).

In the last decade, a considerable body of evidence has built up showing that the optimal forms of meaningful interaction described – rich social bonds, bridges and links – are the necessary conditions for cities to realise the advantage of diversity. Much of this literature (summarised by Khovanova-Rubicondo and Pinelli 2012) takes an *intercultural approach*, which rests on the assumption that the active engagement together of individuals from different cultural backgrounds can contribute to the wealth and resilience of an enterprise, city or neighbourhood.

## Cultural integration

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<sup>1</sup> A considerable body of academic literature has been critical of Cattle's conclusions, e.g. Bagguley and Y. Hussain (2006); Kalra (2002); Kundnani (2007); McGhee (2008).

The cultural dimension of integration is perhaps the most controversial, as it is in the cultural domain that it is hardest to draw a clear line between integration and assimilation. In the UK, for example, a number of scholars have argued that the emphasis on cultural integration constitutes a “new assimilationism” (Rattansi 2002; Back et al 2002a, 2002b) or a “shift [to] an atavistic assimilationism that demands integration, reminiscent of the failed policies of the 1950s and 60s” (Bagguley and Hussain 2006). Similarly, Spoonley et al (2005:91), citing authors such as Vertovec and Jenson, note the following areas of contention:

- assuming a consensus about social cohesion as a desirable end-state
- the extent to which there are patterns of cooperative social interaction and shared core values
- what the common values consist of and how they are cultivated and maintained
- the extent to which the interest in social cohesion is a product of recent changes in economic policy and the greater labour market insecurity/flexibility and political restructuring.

However, most advocates of cohesion and integration do see shared values as a central feature of cohesion and integration. Maxwell, for example, claims that

*Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community (Maxwell 1996:13).*

### **The role of culture in integration**

An alternative way to think about cultural integration is not in terms of cultural *convergence*, but in terms of culture as a domain in which different groups (including “natives” and migrants, majorities and minorities) interact. In this sense, there is a considerable body of literature on various ways in which this takes place, including “acculturation”, “transculturation”, “hybridity” and “creolisation”.

- *Acculturation* is “Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups...under this definition acculturation is to be distinguished from...assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation.” (Redfield et al 1936). The term is typically used in a migration context, where one cultural group – that of the “native” majority – is dominant.
- *Transculturation* is the range of complex processes that occur as individuals drawn from different cultural contexts come into contact with each other, neither remaining the same but both changing as people readjust to each other in a series of stages and in multiple directions (Ortiz 1995). The term emerged in Latin America, in a context where there was not a single dominant group.
- *Hybridity* and *creolisation* both refer to the forms of mixing and creativity in such contexts, as people of different cultures draw on their distinct cultural resources to make something

new. Both terms have old uses in anthropological contexts, but have been widely used in discussing contemporary urban contexts, particularly those characterised by “super-diversity” (Cohen 2007).

All of these terms emphasise integration as a dynamic two-way or multi-directional process, rather than a process of simple convergence or becoming the same. Following from this, culture is a tool or sphere which has been increasingly used in policy actions to promote integration and inclusion, as will be discussed in the “What works” section below.

### **Integration online and offline**

Most of the integration literature summarised above is based on the observation of the processes of integration in urban communities. However, increasingly, interactions within and between groups occurs in the digital realm. Changing patterns of technology will affect how trends in identity, belonging and citizenship play out in the coming decades. Manuel Castells (2000b) described the emergence of a “network society” alongside the emergence of new forms of mobility that he named a “space of flows”. A line of thinking following from his work emphasises the emergence of *online identities* (Ellison 2013; Miller 2013), in complex relationships with offline identities, including place-based ones. However, as Miller (2013) has shown, online identities are not necessarily in opposition to offline ones, particularly as the anonymity favoured in the earlier internet has given way to stronger personal identities in the social media period. Thus local social media – often described as “hyperlocal” (e.g. Hess 2008, 2009) – such as local blogs, local online forums, and local residents networked through Twitter, have augmented and empowered local forms of civic action and place-based identities (Pé 2012, Bingham-Hall 2014), creating a form of “hyperlinked localism”.

There is also a growing literature on ethnic and other identities mobilising online, including both local and trans-local levels. This suggests that even as opting in and out of identities becomes easier, the possibilities for maintaining multiple identities are strengthened by online platforms. Therefore, smaller and more dispersed group identifications are increasingly able to sustain stronger forms of identity and belonging (Alonso and Oiarzabal 2010; Bernal 2006; Brinkerhoff 2009; Diminescu 2008, 2010; Franklin 2001; Wetzstein and Leitner 2013). In this sense, online identities open up the possibility of more flexible identifications – but also the maintenance of more closed, defensive and obdurate and even extremist identities that might not be sustainable offline.

### **Civic participation**

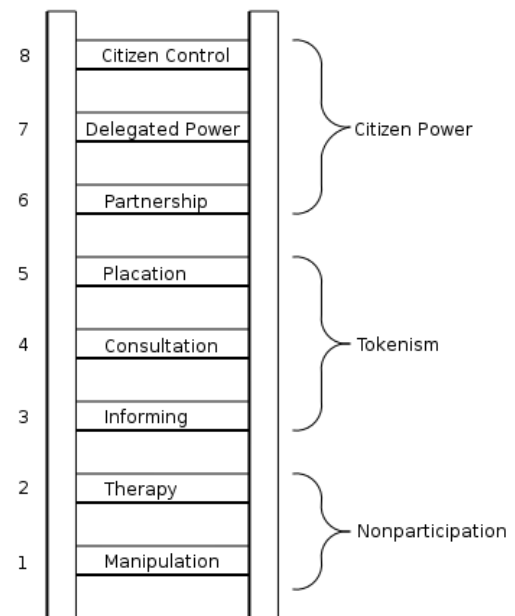
There is a broad consensus from European policy actors at every level that civic participation is a crucial domain of integration, and considerable interest in the importance of active citizenship, the civic and associational activity of migrants and the enhancement of opportunities for participation.

There are two key dimensions of this. First, there is migrant participation in specifically migrant civil society, which is strongly supported in particular by NGOs. “Civic participation in refugee community and migrant organisations can help newly arrived migrants and refugees settle and develop a social network. In addition, these organisations give refugees and migrants a voice”

(NGO Network of Integration Focal Points 2006:8). Second, there is migrant participation in mainstream civic institutions, both in the state and non-state sector. Each of these dimensions can be understood as a good in itself, but also as facilitating integration in other domains.

There are clearly degrees of participation in both these dimensions. Arnstein's ladder of participation is frequently used to capture this:

*"The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy. These two rungs describe levels of "non-participation" that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to "educate" or "cure" the participants. Rungs 3 and 4 progress to levels of "tokenism" that allow the have-nots to hear and to have a voice: (3) Informing and (4) Consultation. When they are proffered by powerholders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under these conditions they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no "muscle," hence no assurance of changing the status quo. Rung (5) Placation is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the powerholders the continued right to decide.*



*Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizens can enter into a (6) Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. At the topmost rungs, (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power."*

Civic participation and active citizenship are also unevenly distributed across groups. Migrants without legal status are by definition excluded from almost all forms of civic participation; longer established groups tend to build up stronger infrastructure for engagement over time. There are a number of barriers to migrant participation in civic life identified in the literature. They include: *practical* barriers such as lack of information and understanding of relevant decision-making processes, *economic barriers* such as lack of resources to attend meetings and lack of affordable and appropriate childcare; *personal barriers* such as lack of confidence, feelings of discomfort in formal meetings or communication barriers - several jobs to support themselves and families; and *motivational barriers* such as scepticism as to whether involvement is likely to make any difference. For example, UK into who wasn't being heard by governance structures in diverse

communities found that the most marginalised groups who experience these barriers the most sharply included refused asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants (Blake et al 2008).

Factors of success identified in the literature, on the other hand, include building upon clear, coherent and consistent frameworks that are easier for migrants to navigate; outreach and partnership with the voluntary and community sector, working with the organisations most able to reach the hardest to engage; welcome packs and welcome events to facilitate the introduction of migrants into civic life; and events which enable different groups to come together (Blake et al 2008). Local authorities have a key role in delivering these factors of success, but alongside other partners in the state sector and civil society, as part of a shared responsibility.

## **Identity and belonging**

Spoonley et al (2008:92) note that:

*“There are different ways in which new settlers come to feel part of a community after arrival. There is an expressional or subjective dimension of being part of a community or society, which relates to the acceptance of identity and individuality. There is also a functional dimension of incorporation in which the labour market and other public domain activities are often central (van der Leun 2003:23). The wellbeing of immigrants and their families depends on the contribution of both the expressional and functional aspects. This sense of belonging and acceptance is an important part of both an immigrant’s sense of settlement success as well as acceptance by host communities.”*

It is important here, recalling again that integration is a dynamic, two-way process, not to focus exclusively on the identifications and sense of belonging of migrants, but also that the receiving society’s framing of identity and belonging is a key determinant. Ager and Strang note that “Definitions of integration adopted by a nation inevitably depend on that nation’s sense of identity, its “cultural understandings of nation and nationhood” (Saggar 1995: 106). This sense of identity as a nation incorporates certain values; and these are values that significantly shape the way that a concept such as integration is approached” (2008:173-4).

In the UK 89% of foreign-born residents say they feel part of Britain and 83% say they feel they strongly belong to Britain, not very different from the UK-born population (CLG 2010). However, this is the exception rather than the rule. There is considerable evidence, from across Europe, that migrants often come to identify locally before they come to identify with the nation, and that local identification is often (but not always) stronger than national identification. There is evidence that neighbourhood, city and national belonging and identification varies greatly between ethnic groups, between generations, and between places (see CLG 2009, 2010; Heckmann and Lüken-Klaßen 2013; Mulvey 2013; Savage et al 2005; Stone and Muir 2007).

In all of the domains described in this section, local and regional authorities across Europe, working with other stakeholders, have sought to intervene to foster the processes of integration. What works in these attempts?

## 5. What works

Some of the academic literature on integration has been characterised by what Scholten (2011) has named “model thinking”, which takes a normative perspective (how things should be) rather than attend to what actually happens on the ground, i.e. to how policymakers perceive and frame integration policies (Caponio, Ponzio and Ricucci 2013; Zincone and Caponio 2012). It is in real cities and neighbourhoods that the processes of integration unfold, in the context of the interventions (or absence of interventions) of a range of local actors. In this section, therefore, we a turn to what works on the ground. In particular, we focus on what happens in urban contexts in European cities.

In discussing integration policy, it is crucial that we recognise that it, like integration processes, also has a multi-level and multi-scalar dynamic: although integration mainly happens at the scale of the local, the ingrained disadvantages experienced by migrants are probably beyond the power of local governments and require larger policy levers. Nonetheless, local governments do have significant powers to shape integration outcomes, and most powerfully in these “softer” domains of integration.

Hence a series of European Commission statements in the last decade have articulated a growing recognition of this local and regional role in integration. The Ministerial Conference at Vichy in 2008 concluded that “local agents’ roles in integration especially the role of local administration and cities in the building and carrying out of integration programmes are crucial”. The Zaragoza ministerial declaration on integration in 2010 re-affirmed this emphasis on localism:

*Cities and their districts are privileged areas to foster intercultural dialogue and the promotion of cultural diversity... It is necessary that local governments develop and obtain capacities and synergies to better manage equality and diversity. For that purpose, they should develop tools in order to help design public policies which could be adapted to the needs of the changing population.*

While much of the academic literature on integration has emphasised national models (e.g. Favell 1998; Joppke 1998), on the ground it is clear that city level policies have their own dynamic. An emerging literature has begun to explore the local level (Alexander 2007; Caponio and Borkert 2010; Penninx et al 2004). Cities often lead the way in relation to their national contexts. Local governments act as innovators and as policy entrepreneurs, and can significantly influence the course of policy development at a national level or be at odds with it, a development sometimes called be categorised as “decoupling” (Caponio and Borkert, 2010; Jorgensen, 2012; Penninx et al, 2004; Scholten and Penninx, 2015). As Sarah Spencer has written,

*Cities (the object of study in many cases rather than smaller municipalities) may largely work within a paradigm set by their national government and be no more inclined to be inclusive (or even less so) than their national counterpart (Mahnig, 2004: 33; see Ambrosini, 2013, and Caneva, c2014 in relation to Italian cities, the policy justification for exclusion and counter-advocacy by civil society). Yet others have notably developed more inclusive approaches. That has been explained variously as a response to ethnic mobilisation and*

*relative political openness to it, within policy frameworks set at the national level, for instance (Garbaye, 2004, comparing French and UK cities); or by a broader pragmatism to solve problems that present at the local level (Poppelaars and Scholten, 2008).*

For example, as Peter Scholten shows, in an “old” migration context, Amsterdam developed a multiculturalist model at a local level, originating policies that were later rolled out nationally and seen as a Dutch national model for some time; in contrast, Rotterdam preceded the Netherlands in developing integration policies, and did not follow national trends until the rise of Pim Fortuyn in 2002, when his party Liveable Rotterdam (Leefbaar Rotterdam) entered local government and the city developed an assimilationist agenda (Scholten 2013). Similarly, in Spain, a “new” migration country, it is the “plans” developed by cities and by regional level autonomous communities – often those facing more rapid demographic change than the country as a whole – that have led the emergence of integration and especially intercultural policy innovation (Arango and Brey 2012).

### **Smart mainstreaming**

At all levels of government, policies are developed to facilitate integration or to direct it in particular ways, according to prevailing political imperatives and contextual conditions. However, it is not just *integration policy* as such which has an impact on integration; all policy fields make a difference. For example, it may be mainstream employment policy, rather than migrant integration policy as such, which has a greater effect on migrants’ employment opportunities in a given territory.

Therefore, it is encouraging that the European Union has increasingly foregrounded the idea of mainstreaming migrant integration since the Common Basic Principles of Integration (2004) and European Common Agenda on Integration (COM 2005, 389). The second European Handbook on Integration developed this approach more concretely, identifying three principles: that the perspective of migrant groups should be incorporated into all policies at all levels of governance; that organisations tasked with addressing the needs of the general society or community should ensure equal access to their services by an increasingly diverse population; and, that government agencies must learn to balance mainstreamed approaches with targeted measures in those contexts where more specific migrant needs are evidenced (Niessen and Schibel 2007:14).

This type of mainstreaming is referred to in the political science literature as “deconcentration”: taking policy responsibility from one agency or department of government (at whatever level) and sharing it with others (Petrovic et al 2012). This approach can be seen in almost all European countries. It has the value of shifting the integration discourse away from a stigmatising focus on migrants as representing problems to be solved or needs to be met; integration is increasingly seen as a whole society challenge, as an issue of citizenship and inclusion.

However, research shows that mainstreaming integration policy can lead to vulnerable groups falling below authorities’ radars and becoming ever more excluded. The EU’s Upstream research project, looking at the mainstreaming of local integration policies across five countries, found that a number of key groups were typically left out by mainstreamed approaches:

- New migrants, especially from “new” origin countries and especially in areas with less migration history.
- Migrants with limited or unclear legal status.
- “Hidden” migrant populations, e.g.
  - those working long hours (especially in grey economy) and not accessing universal services because of their lifecourse position
  - older migrants without language skills
  - migrants from “emerging” countries of origin/ethnic groups, i.e. new to service providers (Gidley 2015)

In light of this, we argue that what is needed is what might be called “*smart*” *mainstreaming* (Feldman and Gidley 2014). A recent report reviewing integration practices and policies across several EU countries commissioned by the Open Society Foundations (Ramalingam 2014) came to similar conclusions, arguing for a form of “360° mainstreaming”: using mainstream policy levers in combination with evidence-based targeted measures in relation to specific needs. As Saggarr and Somerville (2011) argue, it is mainstream policy rather than tailored migrant-oriented policy that has the greatest purchase in securing better public outcomes for migrants across the main socio-economic domains – but *does so most effectively when attention is paid to the evidence on where particularly intense disadvantage persists*.

The Upstream project therefore concluded the following:

*“In the mainstreaming success stories we observed, frontline bureaucrats and agencies had detailed knowledge of the specific needs of their target populations, through both*

- *personal – almost ethnographic – experience with vulnerable residents (in the case of street level bureaucrats); and*
- *fine-grained quantitative data on the profile of populations as a whole.*

*The qualitative knowledge held by frontline workers is often not valued within agencies. Quantitative data is much more highly valued – but is less likely to be collected, aggregated or analysed during times of austerity, because it is seen as a luxury that can be cut. In some countries, the generic turn itself had also led to a loss of the evidence base, as collecting information by ethnicity or migration background can be seen as violating the “whole community” approach of mainstreaming. However, both these forms of knowledge can enable more surgically accurate targeting of provision, so local authorities can do more with less; cutting the research capacities of public agencies is often a false economy” (Gidley 2015).*

The report also emphasised the importance of data and evaluation (including the qualitative knowledge held by experienced frontline workers) in

*“enabling public agencies to understand emerging and hidden forms of specific need in their populations, and maximising the opportunities inherent in flexible pragmatism by bending mainstream provision to meet these needs. Colour-blind policies are not a smart*



*form of mainstreaming: smart mainstreaming means understanding population needs in order to bend mainstream practices” (Gidley 2015).*

What smart mainstreaming means is that, as Han Entzinger wrote in a report on integration policy in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, *“good integration policy is really nothing more and nothing less than good urban policy”* (2012). In the next section, we turn to how integration policy and integration policy can be synchronised in practice.

### **Inclusive identities**

There is some evidence that younger people and minority ethnic residents identify more strongly with city identities: such identities tend to be relatively inclusive in the sense that they are less marked by ethnicity than national identities and are therefore more open to diversity. Drawing on the detailed analysis of different localities developed by Hickman et al (2012), Reicher and Hopkins (2013:6) suggest that:

*“where a place is defined in terms of a successive history of migrations and in terms of a developing mixture of populations and cultures, then new migrants are accepted more easily and cohesion (understood not as bland uniformity but as an accommodation of differences) is maintained. Conversely, where local identity is defined in terms of a settled 'indigenous' population (and where the reality of previous migrations and cultural variety is suppressed) then new migrants are seen as more problematic and the potential for conflict is heightened.”*

This has a crucial policy implication, for how local authorities and others can use place making and place branding strategies to make more resilient places:

*“it is crucial to start by creating a context which minimises the purchase of versions of identity that problematise migrants and that allow them to be represented as the source of difficulties for existing members of the community. This means ensuring that questions of poverty and social inequality are addressed in areas of settlement and of ensuring that any increase of population is matched by increased social provision. At the same time, however, such economic policies must be matched by leadership in the social and cultural domain so as to promote a notion of community as a developing relationship between diverse streams of people (Reicher and Hopkins 2013:6).”*

We can point to several examples from across Europe (Collett and Gidley 2012) of local and regional authorities acting to promote such open forms of identity, confirming the role political leadership in shaping belonging. Examples include campaigns such as “I Love Hackney”, “One Oldham”, “Wij Amsterdammers” or “Oxlo: Oslo Extra Large”. Linked to this, we can see the proliferation of forms of municipal citizenship, including directly elected mayors (and in some cities parallel Young Mayors, elected by young people), alongside participatory forms of governance such as citizen’s panels and youth parliaments, and at sub-city level in neighbourhood forum approaches.

These are examples of different symbolic values being applied to urban identity in Europe's cities through processes of *city-branding*. City branding (or place branding more in general) refers to strategies to attribute value or meaning to a city, with the aim of influencing actors within as well as beyond the city itself (Hospers 2004; Kavatzis 2004; Dinnie 2011). City brands not only describe a city's identity, but also communicate in specific discursive practices (e.g. Bührmann et al. 2008) and specific narratives (often associated with symbols, images, emotions and stories) to influence perceptions of the city (Hospers 2006). Therefore While much of the literature on city-branding rightly stresses the role of municipal authorities, we can see how place making is both a top-down and ground-up process, actively engaged in by residents, by local authorities, and by a range of other actors such as estate agents and property developers. Thus for example Paganoni (2012:13, cf Keith 2005). describes the ways in which various actors "attempt to present their cities as diasporic, cosmopolitan and 'glocalized' spaces" In this sense, we need to look at both the physical and symbolic landscapes of city terrain in order to track both identity formation and place-branding.

As well as emerging *city-level* identities, citizenships and forms of belonging, it is also important to foreground *sub-city* level dynamics too, including neighbourhood processes, which play a constitutive role in how we see the city itself. Ethnographic accounts foreground examples of bottom-up neighbourhood identities, which sometimes draw on but sometimes cut across class or ethnic identities (e.g. Tyler 2007). Equally, other literatures point to how bottom-up sub-local identities can come together with policy discourses and state narratives, with civil society and private sector actors playing a key role alongside municipalities (Keith 2004a,b, 2005; Moss 2002; Brown et al 2000).

### **Intercultural models**

As social psychologists Crisp and Hewstone (2007) have shown, interventions which reinforce factors that raise people's sense of membership of multiple, cross-cutting identity categorisations shared with other individuals (rather than dwelling on single group memberships) are effective in moderating tendencies towards conflict. The UK's Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) developed a series of principles to help think through what this might mean, including an emphasis on "visible social justice" – that the moral choices involved in allocating resources should be made transparent to citizens to avoid identity-based resentments – and "an ethics of hospitality" – the promotion of place-based identities that are open to newcomers (see Keith 2007b).

The Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities programme, drawing on analysis by as Phil Wood, Charles Landry and Ricard Zapata Barrero (e.g. Wood and Landry 2008), has developed this further:

*"In relations with civil society the centre of gravity is not with ethnic community "representatives" who are often advocates of cultural "purity", but with the expression of plural voices in each community. Public funding gives priority to cross-cultural activities of non-for profit organisations that emphasise common principles and objectives rather than sectarian interests... In the public realm, cities identify key public spaces (formal and*

*informal) and invest in the redesign, animation and maintenance to raise levels of usage and interaction by all ethnic groups as well as across ages and social strata. Those involved in urban planning have a strong cultural awareness which helps them develop a better understanding of how different groups use space and incorporate into planning and design guidelines. In housing, programmes Intercultural cities seek to promote mixing, de-segregation, intercultural contacts and interaction through special activities and events. They also give ethnic groups confidence and information enabling them to consider taking housing opportunities outside traditional enclaves. An [effective] urban intercultural strategy requires a committed leadership but also an intimate understanding of the complexities of diversity which can be found only in culturally diverse political and administrative structures. Opening up of the political system and public service for minorities and empowering intercultural innovators and bridge-builders, is a fundamental condition for a genuine intercultural approach” (Council of Europe 2012:3).*

These kinds of findings clearly have implications for planning and urban design, and a rich tradition of urbanism has sought to develop principles and practices for addressing such issues, from Sennett’s *Uses of Disorder* (1970) to the work of Leonie Sandercock (e.g. 2003) and of the Comedia group (e.g. Wood and Landry 2008).

### **Interfaith contact and the post-secular city**

Migration has been one of the factors reversing a long-observed trend to secularisation in Europe’s cities, making faith-based organisations ever more important in social interventions. Some commentators (e.g. Eade 2011, 2012, Molendijk et al 2010, Beaumont and Baker 2011) now talk about the emergence of “the post-secular city”. They argue that religion, faith communities and spiritual values have returned to the centre of public life, especially public policy, governance, and social identity. They state that this in turn is exemplified by the rising number of religious spaces in our urban landscapes. Beaumont and Baker (2011:46) identify such spaces as both “spaces of belonging” and “spaces of becoming”, where, for example, young Muslims develop practices of citizenship and secular citizens learn to understand diversity.<sup>2</sup>

There has been little systematic evaluation of interfaith work. One attempt to map interfaith activity in Europe did, however, review 395 case studies from across seven EU countries (Kahn-Harris 2007). It identified initiatives aiming at dialogue (including sharing experiences and beliefs, discussion of similarities and differences, and conflict resolution), shared worship, shared social and/or cultural activities, and side-by-side social activism, and inter-faith education. Among the examples were some innovative use of arts practice, such as the UK’s YaD Arts, which used live and digital music, film production, performance and visual art, dance and educational programmes from various ethnic groups to foster new forms of interaction which it framed as “mash ups”, opportunities for cultural hybridisation.<sup>3</sup> Other groups focus on young people, such as Germany’s

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<sup>2</sup> See Garnett and Harris (2013) for some sophisticated analyses of how this plays out in different urban contexts

<sup>3</sup> See <https://yadarts.wordpress.com/>

Xenos – Leben und Arbeiten in Vielfalt (Living and Working in Diversity), identified as an effective initiative, which provided training for young people.<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, while it identified several centres or spaces designed to promote intercultural contact (e.g. Berlin's Berlin's Antirassistisch-Interkulturelles Informationszentrum, Brussels' the Centre de la Culture Judéo-Marocaine and Centre Bruxellois d'Action Interculturelle, Warsaw's COMPERIO Centrum Współpracy Kultur Intercultural Cooperation Centre), the report found very few spaces dedicated to interfaith contact. These included one in Italy: the Laboratorio per il Dialogo Interreligioso di Salerno (The Salerno Laboratory for Inter-religious Dialogue). Another rare example (not mentioned in the report) is the Derby Multi-Faith Centre, whose innovative architecture enables the space to be used by different faith groups, together or separately.<sup>5</sup>

Interfaith initiatives have often not been included in the literature on integration. There are some exceptions, however. The Open Society Foundation's *Integration: What Works* report (Ramalingam 2014) included the UK's The Faiths Forum (3FF) as a good practice example. Underpinned by a theory of change based on contact theory – the idea that honest, positive and sustained contact leads to attitude change – 3FF creates opportunities for such contact among children and young people. One project is Urban Dialogues, which builds connections between artists of different faiths and beliefs. The OSF report identified the following among “what works” with 3FF:

- Taking risks: working outside “easy” target groups, e.g. with the most conservative religious schools
- Skilling people up to have difficult conversations themselves
- Embracing new media and engaging with broader constituencies to make change, e.g. through developing “messaging” across different media.

Other examples of the use of inter-faith dialogue in an integration context is Lewisham's Intercultural Cities programme, which has included the creation of a multi-faith centre whereby three different denominational congregations are working together to design and build a shared devotional and community space (London Borough of Lewisham 2011).

## Cultural approaches

Arts and culture have an increasingly recognised but relatively under-researched role in promoting integration, in particular in the domain of identity and belonging, that of civil participation, and that of social integration. Martiniello, in a review of the literature, describes the relationship immigrants or ethnicized minorities and the arts as a “relatively neglected research area” (2015

In relation to the domain of *social* integration, Martiniello notes that “artistic expressions can help build bridges to facilitate encounters (Vertovec 2009) between populations with different ethnic origins sharing the same city or the same neighbourhood” but that arts, like sport, can divide as

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.xenos-de.de/xenos/DE/Startseite/inhalt.html>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://multifaithcentre.org/>

well as unite, serving to create very advanced forms of mixing and also obdurate and extremist self-segregating identities. Matarasso (1997), in an influential review of the evidence, summarised the importance in relation to the social integration:

*Participatory arts projects can contribute to social cohesion in several ways. At a basic level, they bring people together, and provide neutral spaces in which friendships can develop. They encourage partnership and co-operation. Some projects, like Portsmouth's home festival, promote intercultural understanding and help recognise the contribution of all sections of the community.*

The importance of art's ability to create safe, neutral spaces in which differences and potential conflicts can be raised and explored without leading to antagonism is perhaps especially important. Arts projects that focus on "common ground" – on shared projects and shared futures – also has the potential to shift attention away the differences that divide us (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2006; Gidley and Rooke 2008).

Matarosso's (1997) review of the evaluation evidence on the arts as a tool for social inclusion also highlights its role in relation to *civic* integration:

*"Taking part in local arts projects is a popular way of becoming involved in community activities... As a result it helps build organisational skills and capacity, as seen, for example, in almost 30 fèisean (Gaelic festivals) which have grown up recently across the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Skills learnt in the arts can be applied to other local projects: in South Uist, the fèis organiser has gone on to establish a major women's training organisation with EU funding. Participatory arts projects can also be empowering, and help people gain control over their lives – sometimes, as with Acting Up's work with severely disabled people, in a very practical sense. They can also play a vital role in the regeneration process, facilitating consultation and partnership between residents and public agencies. Arts projects can nurture local democracy. They encourage people to become more active citizens, and strengthen support for local and self-help projects."*

Similarly, Rooke and Kendall (2014), in an evaluation report on a participatory theatre project in London, argue that:

*"When we consider community empowerment and citizenship, participatory and collaborative art and theatre specifically can be understood as a space of critical pedagogy (Friere 2000), whereby participation and arts praxis can be liberating experience, beyond the cultural opportunities available through cultural education and more passive participation in cultural activities."*

And a similar point is made by Martiniello: "arts can be the basis for forming collective identities and can play an important role in social and political mobilization (Martiniello and Lafleur 2008; Mattern 1998)... artistic expressions play a role in the negotiation and assertion of various conceptions of local (ethnic, transethnic, etc.) identities."

This takes us to the domain of *identity and belonging*. Matarosso adds:

*“Participatory arts projects have an important role in celebrating local cultures and traditions... In new areas they can help develop local identity and belonging... The arts can affirm the pride of marginalised groups, and help improve their local image. Participatory projects can encourage people to become involved in environmental improvements and make them feel better about where they live. They can also help transform perceptions of public agencies and local authorities, renewing the public image of cities for their own citizens, as well as outsiders.”*

Place-based identities, and an economy based around them, are also promoted through arts. Martiniello, echoing points made by Keith (2005) and Khovanova-Rubicondo and Pinelli (2012), writes of

“the impact of immigrant and ethnic artistic expressions on the local economy through ethnic tourism (Rath 2006) and festivals, and also the development of a local immigrant and ethnic artistic life... Some cities efficiently market their ethnic, artistic and cultural diversity and see it as an asset for their economic development by attracting global visitors and consumers. Members of immigrant and ethnicized groups find there opportunities for cultural recognition and also for economic integration and empowerment by seizing the opportunities supplied by the market of diversity.”

Numerous evaluation projects present qualitative (but rarely quantitative) data showing examples of these impacts, for instance by creating venues that bring people together who would not otherwise, by fostering trust and widening or deepening social networks through the practice of collaboration, by building pride in local achievements, by giving people a sense of their capacity to make change, by providing creative means and skills to articulate desires and demands to civic powers (Costello 1998; Dolan 1995; Landry et al. 1996; Ogilvie 2000; Rooke 2013; Slater and Gidley 2007; Williams 1995; Wollheim 2000).

Good practice examples:

- *Isle of Dogs Music*, in a deprived post-industrial area with high levels of tension between “natives” and (mainly Bangladeshi) minorities, delivered by a music conservatory, Trinity College of Music, involved music students working with older white people to learn traditional songs, teach them to Bangladeshi schoolchildren, who sang them back at performances to elders in daycare centres. This project worked across several barriers, including generational, on the basis of creating something new in common.
- Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn, as part of the Documenta XI arts festival in Cassel, Germany, 2002, took cultural tourists visiting a city’s high art festival out of their comfort zone to a deprived outer city social housing estate to see his artwork, the *Bataille Monument*. He entrusted the residents of the suburb to look after the Monument and serve as its guides. He trained some as taxi drivers, painting the taxis, to take people from the town centre to the suburb, breaking down its sense of exclusion.

## **Designing integration into places**

Since the 1990s, there has been a policy turn to the neighbourhood in several European countries, and “neighbourhood management”, “neighbourhood planning” and “neighbourhood improvement” are some of the terms approaches increasingly taken. Shared public spaces and residential areas have been as one of the key spheres where a focus on interaction would help build cohesion (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2006). Housing neighbourhoods are crucial, and therefore the housing sector and other agencies which have a neighbourhood focus play vital roles in building community cohesion. As the UK’s Civic Renewal Unit’s *Firm Foundations* argued,

*“At neighbourhood or parish level, local action-planning provides a useful starting point for drawing people together and creating a shared agenda for action. It can often lead to, or strengthen, a partnership or network, or it can result in the development of a community anchor organisation. Community development support can help activities and networks to reach all the groups in a neighbourhood, including rather than excluding people” (2004:27).*

These approaches draw on the methodologies of *community development and community organising*, processes of prioritising the perspectives and actions of communities in building local policy, by working with residents to come together to act in their shared self-interest (Braden and Mayo 1999; Craig et al 2011).

In parallel, as part of the local turn in integration has been the development of attempts to *design integration into the urban or suburban landscape*. One example is the Ristinummi 2.0 project, focusing on an outer city area of Vaasa, Finland, home to both a migrant background and ageing “native” population, which set out to develop a participative design process to “map needs and desires” in the area (Hägglund et al 2013). Organisations such as The CityRepair in Portland, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) in New York City, and Placemaking Chicago have promoted methodologies for “place-making” to make urban and suburban areas more resonant for their residents, for example by designing in opportunities to interact with others and to engage civically, e.g. through making mundane public spaces such as benches and places or bus stop waiting areas more appealing, by creating new spaces such as community gardens, or by foregrounding “neutral” spaces accessible to all such as markets or libraries (Shaikh 2010). The concept of the “urban commons” takes a similar approach.

The community development and place-making approaches have recently been increasingly combined, in efforts to engage residents more thoroughly in the design process rather than simply to consult them (Shaikh 2010). Returning to the theme of *smart mainstreaming* discussed above, the synchronisation of regeneration and integration initiatives involved in the local turn can be described as a mode of mainstreaming, moving away from a focus on problem minorities to a (local) whole-of-society approach.

The (mostly qualitative) evaluation literature around these sorts of interventions finds that it is typically effective to start by identifying what constitutes “common ground” in a neighbourhood. As well as identifying common ground *amongst* residents, this also means overlapping “agency-down” and “resident-up” interests, as well as cross-agency and intra-community shared agendas.

Crucially, it is essential that the intervention is *seen* to be doing this: an issue of transparency in practice (Gidley and Rooke 2008).

When interventions are aimed at building community cohesion in an area, they often take the issue of the separate communities present in the area (and their separate identities) as their starting point. For example, projects are explicitly presented as bringing the local migrant or minority ethnic population (often imagined as a “community”, e.g. “*the Somali community*” or “*the Muslim community*”) together with the majority ethnic population (again, imagined as a distinct “community”). This assumes that people’s primary identification is with their ethnic or cultural difference, and encourages residents to focus on the differences which separate them, differences which can become highly politicised and racialised in “deprived” communities where people are effectively competing for scarce resources (Amit 2002; Anastasio et al 2000; Mayo 2000). However, if neighbourhood work in areas with diverse populations is done carefully, without starting from separate identities, but instead starts with *place*, then it can be an opportunity to engage residents and meet their needs and build cohesion. In this way, inequalities between different sections of the community can be addressed without generating more tension. Thus the focus on place allows equality and fairness to be given centre stage and *then* allows issues of difference to be opened up safely.

It has been argued that this place-based approach avoids two traps common in integration and cohesion work: the “*we are all the same*” approach and the “*we are all different*” approach (Gidley and Rooke 2008). The “we are all the same” approach has the danger of ignoring not just the differences between people, but, crucially, the inequalities between them: different levels of access to services, for example. The “we are all different” approach, described by Hewitt (1997) as “clumsy multiculturalism”, has the danger of making some residents (usually “native” residents) feel less valued or less favoured, thus potentially contributing to renewed tension (Hewitt 2005). A place-based approach, in contrast, starting by focusing on what all the sections of the population have in common offers an opportunity for people to find common ground outside of their social identity. This echoes the findings of the UK Commission on Integration and Cohesion which identifies that “we need to set out a new understanding of integration and cohesion – one that responds to local complexity, and that reinforces a sense of common purpose across communities” (2007: 37).

For example, the Newtown Neighbourhood project in a deprived suburban village on the edge of London, which worked to build inclusion in an area with significant community tensions and a large Roma population, made a number of recommendations on what works in this sort of field:

- Not using labels (i.e. not badging activities with a title that associates it with a particular group in the neighbourhood) unless necessary. For example, the project was never badged locally as a “Gypsy/Traveller project”, but rather as a “local project”.
- Avoiding focusing on problems. Rather than always focusing on what is wrong with the area, the project focused on solutions and changes for the better. This avoids getting caught up in the cycle of stigmatisation and blame whereby interventions to improve an area can perpetuate the image of the area as “deprived” and problematic.



- Reclaiming the area's history by celebrating the positive aspects of the area and its story: drawing on narratives of place helped generate good news stories about the area, and thus contribute to a positive shared future.
- Integrating images of shared local landmarks and objects that have different meaning for different sections of the neighbourhood in publicity was a subtle way of communicating inclusiveness.
- Once a level of cohesion and common purpose was built through this focus on place, the delivery team were able to start talking about differences and inequalities, but in a way that avoided contributing to racialisation or blame, for example by encouraging residents to at exclusions and inequalities in the area through peer research, therefore articulating but also moving beyond their own immediate needs and concerns. For example, the project used a workshop on local demographics, as part of a research training session, as a tool of getting residents to identify a sample representing the local population. This opened up the issue of fairness and representation in a non-divisive way, as residents themselves identified the need to include all sections of the community in the project. Residents even suggested that certain minority communities needed to be over-represented in the research sample, because, although their numerical presence was small they constituted a significant perspective that needed to be heard in the research. Once common ground has been created, you can start to continuously monitor who might be being excluded, in a subtle, but visibly fair and transparent way, on an on-going basis (Gidley and Rooke 2008).

Threaded through all of these learning points is the value of *harnessing residents' knowledge of their area and its needs*, something which can be done through participatory research or new modes of civic engagement.

### **New modes of civic engagement**

A growing literature argues for the importance of combining formal platforms of representative engagement with a range of formal and informal platforms for participatory engagement (Mayo and Rooke 2006). The extensive reach of the former and the intensive reach of the latter complement each other, engaging different sorts of citizens at different times. Multiplying the spaces and forms of participation multiply the effects of each (Rooke and Kendall 2014).

Across Europe, local authorities are experimenting with migrant councils. One example analysed by the EU-MIA project was the Conseil Nantais pour la Citoyenneté des Etrangers, CNCE (Nantes Council for the Citizenship of Foreigners), in Nantes, France (Roman 2014). Among the "what works" elements identified were constant outreach to diversify the constituencies represented on the council. However, the emphasis on active and not just passive citizenship challenges local authorities to develop ways of involving people in "big picture" strategic thought (not just in migrant-specific topics), and involving people in "co-creation", in themselves implementing change in the context of rolling back of state responsibilities.

Most recently, there has been a growing interest in electronic means of participatory engagement. In an age of austerity, digital platforms offer the further potential to provide online solutions as a cost-effective response to cuts.

As well as using digital means for participation in municipal affairs, there are examples of using innovative technologies to create opportunities for dialogue or for building local belonging. In the Ristinummi 2.0 example mentioned above, the project team created geo caches “telling the tale of the magical Ristinummi suburb scattered here and there” in the area, and the [www.teatime.fi](http://www.teatime.fi) website enabling people from different cultural backgrounds to meet each other over a cup of coffee or tea in their homes.<sup>6</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

This paper outlined a series of key terms through which we can explore integration in terms of cohesion and belonging. It summarised the academic literature and then introduced a series of “what works” lessons drawn from evaluations and good practice examples. In terms of social interaction, we highlighted the importance of *meaningful engagement* and understanding the spaces in which it occurs. We explored *cultural integration* and the ways in which culture and the arts can be a tool for several forms of integration. The neglected *online* space in which integration occurs was also highlighted, as well as deepening forms of *civic participation* beyond formal representative politics.

We recommended the approach of *smart mainstreaming*, a whole-of-community approach that avoids stigmatising minorities while attending to evidence of changing and emerging need. The fostering of *inclusive civic identities* was framed as an example, as was the turn to the local and the attempt to design integration into spaces. Intercultural approaches – avoiding the twin dangers of seeing everyone as the same and emphasising their differences – were another example.

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.mediacity.fi/projects/ristinummi-20>

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