



Cities and Cultural Diversity – is there a spatial form for multiculturalism?

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ABSTRACT

While the affinity between society and the spatial form of cities are generally acknowledged, the actual connection between them is seldom formalised. How urban form distributes people and resources in urban space and how this may underpins social relations, is rarely discussed in politics. Rather urban development is treated in broad numbers, such as housing units. Since urban form is a central task in urban planning and design, this is unfortunate given current challenges presented by migration, multiculturality and growing inequality in cities. In the effort to demonstrate such a link more thoroughly, this article addresses the spatial form of multiculturalism. Importantly, the aim is not to argue for or against multiculturalism or any particular take on cultural diversity, but rather how a political concept of this kind more precisely may be translated into spatial form. In support, the article will look into new developments in theory and methodology of spatial morphology known as space syntax.

Keywords: Spatial form, cultural diversity, multiculturalism, space syntax, urban design

INTRODUCTION: LINKING SOCIAL IDEALS TO THE SPATIAL FORM OF CITIES

That social evolution is closely tied to material culture is hardly questioned, neither that a critical part of material culture is constituted by buildings and in extension different forms of urban agglomerations. Hence, this paper departs from an understanding where societies by necessity evolve in close conjunction with spatial patterns structured by built form, that is, societies need cities to establish and support themselves and depending on the built form and the spatial structure of cities this will be more or less successful. Hence, it is also understood that the form that we choose to give our cities is a political act and in extension that urban planning and design is a political instrument. This does not imply a physical determinism, but rather rests on the argument that spatial form conditions human agency to the same degree as social institutions, cultural norms and political discourse. This also makes it clear that there is not only one force that shapes social evolution, but many. Having said that, it is the variable of spatial form that will be addressed here.

However, while there may be general agreement about a relation between society and the spatial form of cities, the actual mechanisms connecting spatial form and political agendas are seldom worked out in detail or formalised in any rigorous sense. Rather, the politics of urban development is generally treated in much broader terms, such as: numbers of housing units, extensions of public transport or protections of green areas. The actual form of the city, how it distributes people and resources in urban space, and how this creates inequalities, segregation

and denial of cultural expression, is rarely formally captured. Since what is structured and shaped in urban planning and design is land-use and the spatial form of cities, this is most unfortunate, given the social challenges currently presented by migration, multiculturalism and growing inequality in European cities.

In the effort to demonstrate the possibility of more precisely worked out links of this kind, this article will, on the one hand, address the idea of multiculturalism and especially how it has been expressed in public policy, such as *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain* (Parekh, 2000), where, importantly, the aim not is to argue for or against multiculturalism or any particular take on cultural diversity – which here is acknowledged as a contested and debated ideal that we do not aim to enter. On the contrary, the finer disputes in this field will be avoided in preference for a more broad conception of the idea, since the concern here not is the idea of multiculturalism in itself, but rather how a political concept of more or less any kind more precisely may be translated into and be supported by the spatial form of cities. On the other hand, the article will look into new developments in theory and methodology of spatial morphology known as space syntax research, that directly addresses the relation between spatial form and society (Hillier & Hanson, 1984). The built form of cities is in this research direction conceived of as inherently social in itself – as soon as inhabited by people that is – since cities are artefacts shaped in accordance with human activity, why they in return also condition human agency.

The article is structured into four sections. First, a broad introduction to the concept of multiculturalism and especially a discussion about the particular version of the concept made use of in this article; second, a similarly broad introduction to the space-society debate as a background to a deeper discussion on the conception of this relation in space syntax theory; third, an attempt to translate the chosen conception of multiculturalism into spatial form based on space syntax theory; the article ends with a concluding discussion about the spatial form of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism: a contested social ideal

Although various interpretations can be connoted to the idea of multiculturalism, the common denominator is the politics of recognition. Fundamentally, multiculturalism is an idea of justice, which emphasizes the right of individuals and groups to be culturally different, and recognizes and embraces struggles against oppression imposed by dominant groups on minorities due to their cultural differences (Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2006; Modood, 2013). The general idea of multiculturalism is a normative response to the prevailing cultural injustice and inequality in societies (Kymlicka, 2002).

The political theory of multiculturalism is one of the normative approaches to the current situation of cultural diversity in western societies. The socio-political conduct of multiculturalism is framed and articulated, not in absolute terms but in a variety of forms depending on the complex determinants of the spatiotemporal context. According to Modood (2013), the ‘multi’ in the term multiculturalism, on the one hand, emphasizes the plurality and multiplicity of the concept, and on the other hand, means that “specific policies, complexes of policies and multicultural institutional arrangements have to be customized to meet diverse (as well as common) vulnerabilities, needs and priorities” (Modood, 2013: 42).

According to Parekh (2006), multiculturalism is about the relation and interaction between different cultures in an equal and just context, where one dominant culture has not imposed its values, norms and worldview on others. The multiculturalism perspective advocates the governance of multicultural community on the basis of recognition of the

existing cultural and ethnic identities present in society, and stresses that a just governance of a multicultural society could only be derived from an equal interaction among diverse cultures (Parekh, 2006: 13).

Based on the discourse surrounding multiculturalism, one of the factors that distinguishes this political approach from the liberal, conservative and other orthodox philosophical and political traditions is the multiculturalism emphasis on social groups, cultural communities and the multi-faceted and fluid nature of communities (Parekh, 2006). Given cultural affinities as one source of social groupings, it is of importance to conceptualize them not as coherent and absolute entities, but in a multiple and relational fashion to other identities and social categories (Young, 1990: 48).

In this respect, the report *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain* – by Parekh (2000) as chair of the committee – was one of the first formal political endeavours to try to discuss the relationship between social cohesion and cultural diversity in the multi-ethnic society of Britain. In the quest for a shared structure of authority or commonality as the source of social cohesion in a multi-ethnic society, the report casts light on the porous and fluid nature of communities. Parekh describes Britain as an example of a “community of individuals and communities”. On the one hand, every society is in essence perceived of as a community of overlapping communities, i.e. each community, as a social group, has affinities to other communities, and is not internally homogeneous. On the other hand, all citizens are at the same time members of different political, civic, regional, cultural and other social groups and communities. Social processes, which constitute communities and define the individuals’ affinities, may however undergo changes over time. Describing community as mixed and inherently fluid, Parekh (2001: 696) emphasizes that membership of individuals and groups in communities is not restricted to specific rigid groups. Instead, every individual or group can be a member of a variety of communities simultaneously.

Given these general tenets of multiculturalism, what more precisely is addressed here is how such ideals may be reflected and supported by the physical form of cities or, to the contrary, be hindered or even negated by it, leading up to the question: what spatial form may a multicultural city have?

‘Together-in-difference’: space in political theory

The spatial dimensions of political multiculturalism have to some extent already attracted the attention in political theory, particularly when it elaborates on the spatial setting of the multicultural city. For instance, as a part of the political conception of ‘differentiated citizenship’, and in a search for equality and justice in the multicultural democratic societies, Young (1999) argues that an ideal common polity of living together, what she calls “together-in-difference”, enables people to live together while retaining their group affinities. Considering “segregation” as a social problem, Young (1999: 237) postulates that living ‘together-in-difference’ can be an ideal of desegregation, social equality and justice. In this way, she tries to extend the political ideas surrounding multiculturalism into spatial considerations, arguing that the spatial separation and neighbourhood clustering of groups per se is not wrong; rather, it is segregation that is problematic (1999: 239) Young (1999: 237) sums up the concept of “together-in-difference” as an ideal of desegregation, which assumes that “people dwell together in a common polity but are locally differentiated into group affinities. ‘Together-in-difference’ both affirms such group affinity and calls for equality of life chances across space”. In sum, the concept of living ‘together-in-difference’ is an example of how political theory may propose a spatial framework for multiculturalism.

Another aspect of the spatial setting of multiculturalism that attracts the attention of political theory, is the right to public expression in urban public space for minority groups. As a criticism of the orthodox liberal-democratic states in the West, some multiculturalists argue that although liberal-democratic states do not oppose the freedom of citizens to express and practice their cultural affinities in the private realm, they do not recognize any group-differentiated rights based on cultural or ethnic differences in the public realm (Kymlicka, 1995: 3-4). According to Kymlicka (1995), similar to the adopted approach to govern the role of religion in modern society, the liberal-democratic states to some extent respond to cultural attachments with benign neglect, and try to exclude it from the state's responsibilities. There are, however, well-established arguments that no structured public space can be culturally neutral or free of cultural values and perspectives (Modood, 2013: 23 & 49), but rather are constituted (and biased) by a variety of cultural institutions. Based on these discussions, it can be argued that the right to cultural expression in the public realm is an important aspect of the ideal of living 'together-in-difference'. Freedom of expression in public not only gives different groups an equal chance to practice and follow their cultural principles, but also provides them with new insights into others' different worldviews, cultural values, and practices (Kymlicka, 1995: 82).

Hence, different theorists of multiculturalism have addressed the spatial setting for multicultural cities, and have then also acknowledged the role of urban public space in the situation of living together with cultural diversity. However, the discussion about the spatiality of multiculturalism in political theory remains for the most part at a conceptual level and rarely includes a discussion about the shape and structure of physical space and of spatial relations in the concrete urban fabric, that is, it does not really address the issue of the urban spatial form of multi-culturalism.

'Civility of Indifference': Amin's alternative politics of living together

The role of space for multiculturalism has also been questioned from within human geography. Writing about the social sphere of strangers in society, for instance Ash Amin (2012) casts doubts on the current vision of a good society, in which all of the effort is put into establishing a common life by strengthening the social, communal and individual ties, and weakening the difference. Thus, endorsing the endeavour of the late twentieth century ideologies and movements – such as feminism and post-colonialism – to establish social and political structures in which various groups can enjoy respect and equality despite their differences. Amin (2012: 3) considers such a return to a quest for a communal society based on interpersonal and intercultural ties “regressive and unrealistic: regressive for its veiled xenophobia and exclusionary nostalgia, and unrealistic for its denial of the plural constituency of modern being and belonging”.

Following Bruno Latour's (2005) concept of the social as comprising both human and non-human elements, Amin (2012: 60) tries to shed light on the fact that the geography of physical encounter is not limited to the “immediacies of place” and “the friction of bodies”, and argues that the phenomenology of spatial proximity of humans to their surroundings and other humans should consider a variety of other influencing elements than physical proximity, such as experiences, objects, technologies, ideas, media, political situation, individual biographies, etc.

Amin (2012: 74-75) enunciates the “principle of convivium”, in which he argues that a politics of living together is not necessarily bound to recognition and establishment of ties between strangers in public spaces, but it can be organized through an unconscious “civility of indifference” to difference, based on “living together without strong expectations of mutual

empathy". In this respect, he considers "two organizing principles: multiplicity as the defining urban norm, and co-presence as being on common ground" (Amin, 2012: 75).

In the following, this concept of a 'civility of indifference', developed by Amin as an alternative approach to the issue of multiculturalism, will be adopted as the basis for a search for a spatial morphology that may support the idea of a multicultural society. Again, the aim is neither to argue for multiculturalism per se, or Amin's particular take on the topic, but rather to in principle see how societal ideals of this kind can be tied to spatial form.

THE SPACE-SOCIETY RELATION: DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

The issue of space in the social sciences is regularly directed to human geography, which may be said to have served the social sciences with spatial expertise. However, in recent decades, not least due to the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences more generally, there has also been vivid development of social theory within human geography itself. A brief outline of this development may prepare the ground for our further investigation.

Johnson and Sidaway (2004: 61-63) describe how human geography after a scientifically rather bleak history in the first part of the 20th century, primarily concerned with mapping the historical evolution of regions – which at the time formed the central entity of study in human geography – the discipline saw rapid scientific development during the quantitative revolution in the 1950s and 1960s. Physical space was in this new epistemological framework defined as an isolated object that could be studied and analysed by way of mathematical models and descriptive statistics (Rana, 2008: 266). However, in the 1970s and 1980s, as a backlash to such approaches, which often had proved reductive, the issue of the meaning of space as an experienced entity, possessing multi-faceted values, returned to human geography (Johnston and Sidaway, 2004: 194-201). Accordingly, space was re-conceptualized as a process or as 'relational' and hence as an inherent part of social, economic and other processes; space was understood to be "folded into" non-material social relations and the spatial analysis therefore included a variety of social processes (Gregory, 2000: 769). Although analysis of physical and material space as conceptualised during the quantitative revolution was continued by many geographers, the theme of social relations were central and for many seen as an integrated part of what now was referred to as the production of space. The nub of the argument for many theorists of this spatial turn was that space should not be conceived of as a concrete object of the physical world, but mainly as an inherent part of social process or a set of social relations.

While running the obvious risk of simplification, one may venture to say that despite this prolific production of social theory on space in recent decades, it to the most part avoids what may be deemed physical space. In stark contrast we have in the parallel quantitative tradition seen a development of increasing methodological sophistication in the description of physical space due to GIS, computer generated modelling and a greater access to data that, however, still primarily relies on rather pedestrian social theory, primarily originating in economics. Dodging the challenging issue of the epistemological divide between 'crits' and 'quants' within current human geography, we turn for answers to another discipline concerned with space, that is, architecture.

The space-society relation: developments in architecture

One may find similar contradictory developments in architecture, where the theoretical debate typical for the spatial turn and its rich after-tow also has found root, while one at the same time may see successful theory developing along orthodox quantitative lines (E.g. Calthorpe 1993). Our central concern here however, is the possibility of a spatial morphology that may capture

and manifest social and political ideals in built form, why we turn to a specific theoretical and methodological direction in architectural research called space syntax that has its origins in exactly such a quest. The central figure behind this direction, Bill Hillier, questions head on whether space is “completely amorphous, and so nothing, until given shape by social agency” and in extension also the assumption that “space in itself” is of no theoretical value and therefore useless as an autonomous object of study and analysis (Hillier, 2008: 223). In the foundational space syntax text, ‘The social logic of space’, co-authored by Hillier and Julienne Hanson (1984), they argue to the contrary, and that the roots of this misinterpretation of physical space is to be found in the “paradoxes of epistemology” as they put it (Hillier and Hanson, 1984: 9), that is, in the quest for a relation between the immaterial minds of ‘subjects’ and the concrete materiality of ‘objects’. Hence, Hillier and Hanson are in concert with most contemporary theory about the need to overcome this dichotomy; however, they do this with a twist of their own.

First of all, however, we need to clarify their particular conception of space, which, coming from architecture, has a natural affinity to built form in a manner not found in human geography. What they more specifically refer to here is spatial structure – or spatial configurations, which is the term they prefer – that is, urban spatial patterns defined by built form, such as buildings, roads and landscaping. Making use of David Harvey’s tripartite division of spatial conceptions (Harvey, 2005), we may clarify this idea. When it comes to pure geometric description of spatial configurations defined by built form, for instance in drawings and maps, they understand space as ‘absolute’. However, due to their emphasis on configuration, what is foregrounded is the relation between different spaces, rather than the shape or size of individual spaces in themselves, for instance, the rooms within a building or the streets within a city. Therefore, what more precisely is their concern is what Harvey would define as ‘relative’ space. For geometric description and analysis of this relative property of space, space syntax research make use of graph theory as applied in network analysis.

However, the true twist is that Hillier and Hanson conceive of these configurative properties of urban space, not as an object outside of social relations, but on the contrary as a social relation in itself, in a sense mimicking the contemporary idea in geography that: space is ‘folded into’ non-material social relations, but taking it on from the other side so to speak, so that: social relations are ‘built into’ material space. This is possible, they argue, since architecturally defined space, where we more generally should include any man-made structure that create spatial configurations for human use, inherently reflects social relations, since such space is structured and shaped in accordance with human behaviour, why spatial configurations will mirror different social patterns by putting different people and uses in particular relations to each other.

The core of the argument, hence, is that the spatial order of the built environment is in itself a social behaviour, not merely a by-product of social relations: “By the assumption that what is to be sought is a relation between the ‘social’ subject (whether individual or group) and the ‘spatial’ object acting as distinct entities, space is desocialised at the same time as society is despatialised. This misrepresents the problem at a very deep level, since it makes unavailable the most fundamental fact of space: that through its ordering of space the man-made physical world is already a social behaviour. It constitutes (not merely represents) a form of order in itself: one which is created for social purposes, whether by design or accumulatively, and through which society is both constrained and recognisable. It must be the first task of theory to describe space as such a system” (Hillier and Hanson, 1984: 9).

The space-society relation: the sociological foundations of space syntax

According to Hanson and Hillier (1987), the relations between the built environment and social organizations fall into two distinct categories of spatial orders. First, there is 'the arrangement of space by society', that is: "the ways in which every culture transforms its environment by means of boundaries, solid objects and differentiated spaces, into the pattern of buildings and settlements which we recognize as giving a society a distinct architectural identity" (Hanson and Hillier, 1987: 262). Important to note is how they argue that the characteristics of such spatial order are found rather as spatial patterns or configurations than particular architectural elements and signs.

The second spatial order is 'the arrangement of society in space', that is: "the ways in which the members of a society are themselves deployed in space, in both social groups and networks, to construct the patterns of encounter and avoidance which are characteristic of that society" (Hanson and Hillier, 1987: 263). This ordering cannot simply be discerned as a spatial pattern and is therefore mainly associated with social patterns. However, although many non-physical factors are included in people's social activities, they finally take on materiality and construct spatial arrangements.

These orders can be further explicated in sociological terms by way of Durkheim's distinction of organic and mechanic solidarities, they argue, where the former, according to Durkheim, relies on difference and division of labour typical for modern society, and the latter on similarity and deemed typical for pre-industrial society. This distinction is held to be absolutely central by Hillier and Hanson, since it implies a critical role for space in social relations in that organic solidarity typically is dependent on space while mechanic solidarity is not (Hillier and Hanson, 1984: 18). This means that we can identify two types of 'social' relations in society, which Hillier and Hanson call spatial groupings and transpatial groupings, where almost every individual (and group) in society typically is a member of both kinds (Hillier and Hanson, 1984: 263).

One is a member of a spatial grouping when membership is created by spatial proximity, such as being a neighbour in the neighbourhood one lives in, or an employee at the particular office where one works or, more transiently, a member of a temporary gathering in public space. Membership of a transpatial grouping, by contrast, is independent of space, they continue. In this case, people form social groups, not due to spatial proximity but similarity in one way or another; for instance by being part of the social group of singles, independently of the neighbourhood one lives, or being part of the group of computer programmers independently of the particular office one happens to work at. We then see how spatial groupings tend to bring together people from different social groups, while transpatial groupings unite people who are spatially separated. This leads Hanson and Hillier to conclude that "space can also reassemble what society divides" (Hanson and Hillier, 1987: 265), that is, spatial form can create spatial groupings, which in turn imply social potential, out of in other respects socially heterogeneous individuals.

This argument has been developed further by a long series of sociologists, typically influenced by Durkheim (Goffman, 1963; Giddens, 1984; Collins, 2004), not least arguing that even such transient spatial groupings as temporarily co-present people in urban space may form critical constituents of the social fabric, not least due to their repetitive and routine character. We here identify a first hint of how spatial form, in extension of this argument, may provide support for a multicultural society by spatially bringing together culturally heterogeneous groups, that is, to some extent reassembling what society divides.

LINKING MULTICULTURALISM TO SPATIAL FORM: CO-PRESENCE AND MULTIPLICITY

If the general principles of how space may be linked to society according to space syntax theory are to be applied more specifically to the ideal of living ‘together-in-difference’, we have to be more precise about the latter concept in this context, just as we need to become more precise about what we mean by the ‘spatial configuration’ of urban space. Concerning the first, we talk about the principles for how cultural difference can be supported by spatial form, which does not need to imply specific built forms that correspond to particular cultures; in our take on this it rather has its outset in the much more generic aim of identifying the spatial support for difference in general, that is, how spatial form may support more or less any categorical differentiation of people. This is so since spatial form on the level we speak here, that is, the configuration (or syntax) of spatial form rather than its symbolic expression (or semiotics), simply does not have the specificity necessary to express specific cultural demands but rather performs on a more generic level. In the end this seems reasonable, because we will never exactly know what particular cultural groupings that will be of concern in the typically transient space of cities. What is deemed important here is to better understand how spatial form may support categorical differentiation, not particular identities.

Having said that, it should also be clear that we believe it naive to assume that the politics of multiculturalism could be accomplished merely through spatial interventions; for such a complex and multi-faceted entity, there is obviously need to take into account a multitude of other human and non-human relations. At the same time, spatial conditions may prove critical for sustaining such an ideal over time due to their typical longevity. Moreover, spatial form is a medium used in urban planning and design, why it forms a critical tool, if rightly understood, to create support for such politics of multiculturalism.

Hence, on the one hand, we see that through a particular interpretation of multiculturalism, which here is Amin’s ideal of a ‘civility of indifference’ and, in extension, the identification of two critical attributes of this notion, identified by Amin himself, that is, co-presence and multiplicity, we have two concepts that can be made operative in our aim to translate multiculturalism into spatial form, or more correctly, identify spatial forms that may support a multicultural society. The spatial demand of ‘co-presence’, we argue, concerns conditions that create the opportunity for people with different cultural identities – however floating these may be – to come together and share space, both so that they may express their own identities to other cultural groups and so that they may become aware of other cultural groups, albeit in the aim of a ‘civility of indifference without strong expectations of mutual empathy’. The spatial demand of ‘multiplicity’ concerns conditions that create opportunity for different cultural groups to appropriate spaces where they are free to manifest and develop their cultural idiosyncrasy without continuously being challenged by other groups.

On the other hand, according to space syntax theory, spatial form has the potential to create patterns of co-presence (Hillier and Vaughan, 2007), which according to a long line of sociologists can prove essential in the daily reproduction of society (Durkheim, 1984; Goffman, 1963; Giddens, 1984; Collins, 2004). Essential to the creation of such co-presences according to space syntax theory, is how spatial configurations distributes human movement in urban space. More precisely, we here rely on the theory of natural movement developed within space syntax, where the pedestrian movement flow within urban space is demonstrated to depend on the city’s spatial form or configuration rather than the distribution of attractions, that is, it is shown how physical space can have agency by conditioning human behaviour (Hillier et al., 1993). More precisely, one argues that the natural movement, which is the amount of pedestrian movement in public urban space that is determined by the spatial configuration of the urban fabric, “although not always quantitatively the largest component

of movement in urban spaces, is so much the most pervasive type of movement in urban areas that without it most spaces will be empty for most of the time” (Hillier et al., 1993). As we soon will explore, such spatially generated co-presence can moreover both result in spatial groupings of social and cultural heterogeneity and homogeneity; that is, spatial form can in principle generate the conditions for both co-presence and multiplicity, the two central attributes of a multicultural society in Amin’s interpretation.

Linking multiculturalism to spatial form: the foreground/background networks

As we have seen, the sociological foundations of space syntax theory are found in the tradition of Emile Durkheim and in particular his distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity. At the same time, this is a simplified and exaggerated image of two types of societies. In real life we find both mechanic and organic solidarities at work in most societies, albeit one may dominate over the other. According to Hillier it is possible to demonstrate that the spatial form of cities typically manifests some notable consistencies in its underlying patterns related to the need in most urban societies of both kinds of solidarities. More exactly, Hillier suggests that the spatial form of cities can be broken down into two networks, albeit both actually part of the same network. In Hillier’s words, “by some as yet unknown process, cities of all kinds, however they begin, seem to evolve into a foreground network of linked centres at all scales, from a couple of shops and a cafe’ through to whole sub-cities, set into a background network of largely residential space” (Hillier, 2012: 139).



Figure 1. The foreground network (darker grey), according to Hillier, facilitating socio-economic exchange and renewal through high accessibility, and the background network (lighter grey), facilitating socio-cultural continuity and reproduction through low accessibility. The pattern is produced by measuring the “Choice-value” for all street segments in the complete street system of London (Hillier & Vaughan, 2007). Choice, which is similar to what in network analysis is known as “betweenness centrality”, is a measure that captures how often a particular street segment is part of all potential routes within the street system.

What Hillier points out in the proposition of the foreground and background network is the easily demonstrated fact that the street network of cities at the same time produces both a structure of spaces (streets) of high accessibility within the system (a foreground network) and a structure of less accessible and more localised spaces, (a background network). In reality these are naturally not two isolated structures but form a continuity of varying degrees of accessibility within the same street network.

We may then easily see how the spaces with high accessibility within the system (the foreground network) is likely to not only capture high movement flows of people, but also that the people who make up these flows are drawn from many parts of the city, due to the high accessibility of these spaces from the system as a whole. Hence we can also infer that it is likely that these spaces create co-presences of a heterogeneous kind, since they attract movement from very many parts of the city and, in extension, that these co-presences of difference create conditions for exchange, whether it is exchange of a social, economic or informational kind.

Similarly, it can be argued that the spaces (streets) with low accessibility from the system as a whole (the background network), are not likely to capture as high movement flows as the more accessible spaces and, more interestingly, they are also likely due to their localised character to create co-presences of a greater homogeneity, since the movement flows that they attract primarily are drawn from the local neighbourhood, that is, rather than exchange we can interpret these spaces to be spaces that create conditions for reaffirmation, for instance, reaffirmation of a local culture of one kind or another.

Based on this argumentation, which as far as movement flows are concerned also are easy to demonstrate (Hillier & Iida 2005), Hillier draws the conclusion that the foreground and background networks are both essential in supporting two fundamental needs of any society, that is, on the one hand, the renewal of society through new constellations and exchange, on the other hand, the reproduction of society through confirmation and repetition of established forms.

By extension, it is not difficult to see how the foreground network may offer the spatial conditions typical for organic solidarity, where differences meet in the necessary feat to form a broad set of differences recreate the whole, and how the background network offers the spatial support typical for mechanic solidarity where similarity and the collective consciousness can be reaffirmed. In line with Durkheim, however, we should not see this simply as an expression of these types of solidarities, that is, take the typical view of seeing space through the prism of society, but rather the opposite and see how space not only represents these solidarities but takes part in constituting them. It would simply be difficult, if not impossible, to develop an organic solidarity if there were no spaces where differences could meet for exchange and, on the contrary, it would be difficult to create these differences in the first place, if there were not any localised spaces where such difference could originate and be confirmed.

Finally, we here also see a tentative outline of how there could be a spatial form that could support a 'civility of indifference', where we have identified the central attributes to be 'co-presence' and 'multiplicity'. The background network is where multiplicity can develop in a series of less accessible neighbourhoods that each allows for confirmation of particularity and the foreground network is where these particularities become co-present and potentially enter exchange.

Linking multiculturalism to spatial form: towards a non-correspondence theory

What we see here is a distancing by Hillier and Hanson from the idea of a neat overlap between spatial demarcations and social groups. In contrast they argue for a non-correspondence theory where the critical mechanism is how human movement in urban space creates more transient spatial groupings, which they however are able to demonstrate have quite stable patterns. Hanson and Hillier ground this idea of a non-correspondence in the earlier discussed distinction between spatial and transpatial groupings from which they draw two very different types of “socio-spatial possibility” (1987). They depart from a simple system with two spatial groups (in two separate locations) and two transpatial groups (as two categories: As and Bs) and describe two different arrangements for this simple system. The first is to have the As in one location and the Bs in another, that is, a correspondence between spatial groups (locations) and transpatial groups (categories) (1987: 264). In this correspondence arrangement, locations and categories reinforce each other in that two spatial groups (locations) and two transpatial groups (categories) correspond to each other “locally, to produce a unified picture of reality in which transpatial identities are also spatial identities” (Hanson and Hillier, 1987: 265).

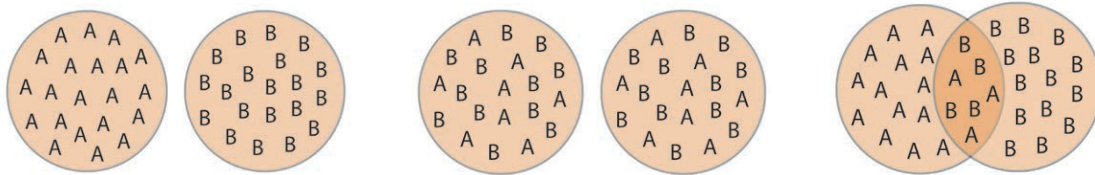


Figure 2. Three arrangements of two categories in space. Adapted from Hanson and Hillier (1987).

The second arrangement is to have a mix of both categories, As and Bs, in each of the two locations, where it, accordingly, is a non-correspondence relation between spatial groups (locations) and transpatial groups (categories). In this arrangement, locations and categories do not reinforce each other but are mixed as to produce the potential for encounters between different categories of people. That is, the spatial structure plays “an important role in social relations by working against the tendency of social categorisation to divide society into discrete groups” (Hanson and Hillier, 1987: 265).

Let us now consider to what degree each of these two arrangements may fit our conception of a multicultural society. According to the first arrangement, people who share a similar cultural identity cluster together and establish a spatial enclave or neighbourhood. This spatial separation of cultural communities, as Young (1999) suggests, should not per se be considered a social problem and is not in discord with the general policy ideal of living “together-in-difference”. In fact, it can be argued that it is such spatial enclaves that allow members of cultural communities the opportunity to express and practice their particular cultural values and customs, and perhaps not least, be confirmed by people sharing these cultural persuasions. However, the main criticism of this arrangement is that there is a high risk that such spatial enclaves tend towards social segregation; that it does not allow for different communities to naturally meet. In other words, this situation may lead to the emergence of parallel lives.

To reduce the risk of social segregation, the second arrangement in our example sounds more reasonable; that is, completely mixing the two cultural groups across the neighbourhoods, thus maximising the chance of encounter between their members. However, this arrangement leaves us with two concerns. The first has to do with the feasibility of such totally mixed neighbourhoods in the reality of today’s multicultural societies. The history of

urbanism serves as evidence that society has a strong tendency to divide and separate social groups into separated spatial groupings, why achieving totally mixed neighbourhoods, where the rich live next door to the poor so to speak, may prove utopian. The second concern raises the question whether by appreciating cities as a set of totally mixed neighbourhoods, there would be the risk that the right for different cultures to have their own domain to exercise and sustain their particular cultural differences would be compromised. Therefore, one may also question how desirable the proposition of mixed neighbourhoods is as a solution to a more inclusive society (Vaughan and Arbaci, 2011: 131).

Having said that, one may present a third arrangement that allow each neighbourhood to be dominated by a cultural group, while simultaneously providing spaces where the two neighbourhoods overlap and thereby create opportunity for encounter among individuals from both. In other words, there is, on the one hand, a correspondence between spatial groups (locations) and transpatial groups (categories), where the two cultural groups may find affirmation of their respective principles and customs and, on the other hand, a non-correspondence situation in an overlapping area between the two neighbourhoods, where space works “against the tendency of social categorization to divide society into discrete groups” (Hanson and Hillier, 1987: 265). Thus, the third arrangement presents a principal idea of how spatial form may generate and sustain both multiplicity and co-presence.

CONCLUSION: THE SPATIAL URBAN FORM OF MULTICULTURALISM

We may conclude the discussion so far by pointing out how we above see Amin’s concepts of ‘co-presence’ and ‘multiplicity’ translated into two different types of co-presence of people in urban space that we may call ‘co-presence of homogeneity’ and ‘co-presence of heterogeneity’. The first type is, moreover, typically found in what we have called the background network of urban space since, as discussed above, this network with its lower degree of accessibility, is likely to primarily attract local people and therefore also mostly expressions of ‘local culture’. The second type is typically found in the foreground network, which with its higher degree of accessibility, is likely to attract people from a wider set of neighbourhoods in the city and therefore also a broader spectrum of cultural expressions.

In relation to the attempt to connect the ideal of living ‘together-in-difference’ to spatial form, one may also conclude that to spatially support a multi-cultural society of the kind argued by Amin, both of these types of spaces are needed. To create the spatial conditions for the urban habit of a ‘civility of indifference’ there is need of the kind of spaces typically found in the foreground network, since it is here one finds spaces that present situations of cultural heterogeneity where people, speaking most generally, may become used to seeing and mingling with difference and therefore be more likely to develop what Amin calls a ‘civility of indifference’. Just as important, however, is the background network, which produces localised spaces where differences are allowed to develop without constantly being challenged. Being many, these localised spaces are essential for the development of cultural difference in the first place, that is, this is where multiplicity is generated and sustained. What we need to keep in mind in the latter case is how local homogeneity is what generates global multiplicity.

DISCUSSION: THE MULTICULTURALITY OF CITIES

However, while these distinctions may prove useful on a conceptual level, we soon realise that what we find in real life cities are not certain distinct spaces containing co-presences of homogeneity and other spaces containing co-presences of heterogeneity, but rather a continuous series of spaces of different spatial accessibility or reach, from the most local to the most global, where the mechanism of co-presence at each level seems capable of creating a homogeneity or categorical identity out of a heterogeneity at a lower level, that is, ‘space

seems to reassemble what society divides'. Hence, what we need to acknowledge is that any co-presence of people, even on the most local level, always will represent a categorical heterogeneity of some kind – even though one may share many cultural traits, there will also be differences – but also that however differentiated any co-presence of heterogeneity seems to be, there are also similarities – at least the fact that one for a moment share the same space.

The central issue here seems to be that a spatial grouping has some kind of homogenising effect so that such a grouping over time also develops into a social grouping of sorts. This reflects Durkheim's argument, where a mechanical solidarity due to the effects of dynamic density, that is, an increase in human proximity, for instance through urbanisation, changed into a new form of social grouping based on organic solidarity. If we now consider this to be a continuous process over scales in cities, we see how their spatial form may support the production of social groupings at each scale through the creation of spatial groupings.

Actually, there is extensive research to support this. On the one hand, we know that there are strong tendencies for groups that carry categorical similarities, whether in socio-economic or ethnic-cultural terms, to spatially cluster in particular parts of cities. While this may be the result of external forces, for instance not being able to afford housing at choice, we often also see an internal preference for social groups to search out proximity to their own group. Hence, we see processes where social groupings take support in spatial groupings. On the other hand, there is the notion of neighbourhood effects (Lupton, 2003), based on the observation that people living in spatial proximity, for instance within a particular neighbourhood, develop categorical similarities. This may be due to a dominant categorical group that, so to speak, sets the tone, but it may also be due to continuous local co-presence and exchange, whereby a local culture develops that in the end also may influence dominant categorical groups. Hence, we also see processes where spatial groupings develop into quite particular social groupings. Importantly, in both cases spatial form has a reinforcing and sustaining role. As a matter of fact, this is what we see in the images generated typical for space syntax (Figure 1). Rather than two distinct networks, we see a spatial continuity of varying degrees of accessibility within the urban network as a whole – there is not just a set of light grey lines and a set of dark grey lines but a continuity of shades from dark to light. We may then conclude that rather than lack of particular spaces for exchange – or 'meetings', as is the common term in policy documents – what may prove critical when creating conditions for multicultural cities, is to avoid breaks in this interscalar continuity of spaces of confirmation and exchange.

Finally, we may reflect upon the fact that this description rather than being specifically multicultural, seems to describe any modern society, typically constituted by a great diversity of social groupings. More specifically, it seems to capture any society of people living in great proximity, that is, urban societies, typically held together by organic solidarities characterised by the interdependency of differences. What we seem to realise here is that cities, in spatial terms, not only are characterised by great density, but also by a typical interscalar continuity of spaces of confirmation and exchange. The reason seems to be that since cities typically are multicultural societies, spatial urban form needs to reassemble what society divide.

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