The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Department of Landscape

Design for Diversity
Intercultural Outdoor Places

Design for Diversity
Intercultural Outdoor Places

This publication is a report on the Design for Diversity: Intercultural Outdoor Places symposium that was held on 13th May 2015 at the Showroom in Sheffield, UK.

The symposium was organised by the Transnational Urban Outdoors (TUO) research group based at the Department of Landscape, the University of Sheffield.

Design for Diversity
Intercultural Outdoor Places

CONTENTS

About Symposium

The programme for the symposium focuses on two key questions:

How does the design of outdoor places support positive social experiences in culturally diverse neighbourhoods?

How can we plan, design and manage exciting and inclusive landscapes in urban areas characterised by migration?

We know that urban places have been shaped by migration for many decades. But increasingly these are locations that can be termed 'superdiverse' with higher densities of people of many different cultural backgrounds, generations, legal and economic status, and greater rates of population change. This diversity is seen (and heard) in urban outdoor places, and provides a shared understanding of who lives locally. In academic disciplines such as geography and sociology there is increasing interest in 'encounters', about how interactions can be positive and convivial, but also have the scope to reinforcing prejudice. It's important also to be aware of the environmental justice context: inequalities relating to different sectors of the population in terms of quality of the public realm and access to green space, of exposure to pollutants, and allocation of financial resource.

In facilitating this symposium we are not trying to argue that the public realm should be a patchwork of targeted interested meeting niche needs, or that representing diversity is simply a question of visual symbolism. Instead our argument is that we need to fully engage in continued understanding of the process of living together, and the role of the public realm in terms of change, and the possible conflict, raised by people sharing urban space.

In landscape architecture, as in the majority of professions, there is a historic bias towards policy and practice shaped by an academy of north American and European white males. The core urban design texts largely reflect this. And though the social value and affordances of public space is rightly at the heart of many landscape practices, this may be shaped on notions of an 'average person' that are simply not 'fit for purpose' in times and places of everyday multiculture. It seems important to take time to reflect whether this historic bias has inadvertently limited the breadth of our understandings of sociality and public space.

Planning, design and management of outdoor places cannot solve all issues concerned with urban living, but we would state that it has a role to play. The place where you live, what you feel able to do there, and whether you feel that you belong are all themes closely connected to quality of life. Can thoughtful design improve the social dynamics of a place? (We can certainly see that thoughtless design can exacerbate problems). And what kind of thinking is needed? We argue that cultural competency and confidence of working in diverse contexts should be core to practice in public environments.

This symposium is a chance to do some of this thinking collectively, and has been organised in order to bring together people from different backgrounds and different types of knowledge.

Among the speakers and among the delegates we have a mix of:

• People with on the ground expertise of making decisions regarding places with a high ethnic mix.
• People with in depth knowledge of particular places
• People who have had time to do slow and careful talking and listening in a range of contexts

Design for Diversity
Intercultural Outdoor Places

Interactive Links (please click on):

> The Landscape Institute
> Farrer Huxley Associates

Noel Farrar. President of the Landscape Institute, Farrer Huxley Associates.

Noel is a landscape architect and urban designer who has run his own award winning practice for 19 years and currently serves as President of the Landscape Institute where he campaigns for landscape led place making.

Critiquing the social dimensions of landscape architecture.

Landscape should be seen as inherently equitable and diverse. Successful landscape offers affordances to everyone to be able to enjoy the space effectively. Barcelona is a great example. But so too is an estate which was perceived as an unsafe drug haven transformed into a place for everybody through socially aware landscape design. Good urban space has possibilities, it's not prescriptive, people decide how they use it and in what ways. It's equitable!

Socrates understood this balance between the needs of the state and the rights of the individual through his careful watching of the agora, the market place, which he saw as the fundamental basis of democracy. These ideals are reflected much later on in the work of

Jane Jacobs who understood the fundamental qualities of cities and living closely together as being all about the social nuances of dynamics between people. That is collectivism and we need to realize how vulnerable this can be when there is an increasing tendency for the rights of the individual to outweigh those of society.

Landscape architects, and clients, need to understand how communities work; how people live together; how society actually meets; and what sort of physical space is needed to enable that in a positive way.

Please find the audio record of Noel's talk here.

Interactive Links (please click on):

> MELA
> Book - Bridging Cultures
> Noha Nasser Youtube

Noha Nasser. Kingston University and MELA Social Enterprise.

Noha is an architect, academic, and social entrepreneur with a passion for community-led solutions to public spaces as places to bring people together across social and cultural boundaries.

Social innovation for social cohesion in public space.

"There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans."
Jane Jacobs, The death and life of American cities

Noha introduced her own background and journey, and how her experience of belonging to places has changed through time and global migration. This personal context and her professional training inspired her in undertaking research about place, identity and belonging. She argued that contestation in public spaces should be increasingly concerned with issues of tolerance and difference; and the importance of social cohesion in an era of increasing cultural diversity. As an urban designer, her main focus is on encouraging social cohesion through designing and creating spaces in which people get along in convivial encounters. To support and maximise the impact of this she has set up a social enterprise named MELA. Based on the Oldenburg's third place theory, MELA team liaise with people and local authorities to shape places outside of work and home, places where people choose to be together. MELA aims to listen to stories about people's needs and interests in public spaces and co-designs spaces that have cross-cultural fusions. She concluded by an invitation to those present to offer case studies and collaborations that may help shape this work.

Please find the audio record of Noha's talk here.

Interactive Links (please click on):

> Book - Commonplace Diversity. Social Relations in a Super-Diverse Context
> LSE Blog post - Commonplace diversity: stable and peaceful relations across myriad differences in Hackney

Susanne Wessendorf. Marie Curie Research Fellow at the Institute for Research into Superdiversity at the University of Birmingham.

Susanne is a social anthropologist and author of "Commonplace Diversity. Social Relations in a Super-Diverse Context" (Palgrave Macmillan 2014).

The social role of the public realm in etnhically diverse areas.

"Everyone comes from elsewhere". Susanne's talk focused on an area of historic and sustained ethnic diversity, the London borough of Hackney, where she is a resident and was also the site of her two year fieldwork. This is an area where diversity is so commonplace that it becomes un-noticeable. As an anthropologist, her focus was on the social networks that happen in this context and how difference is negotiated. Her analysis addressed issues of different realms public (relationship with strangers), parochial (places of regular routine association and communal relations) and private (home, intimate). She concluded that though the private realm is less frequently ethnically and socio-economically mixed, the public and parochial realms are both places where commonplace mixing across difference occurs. Public spaces of encounter include markets and playgrounds, especially where there are easy places to sit and start conversations. The parochial realm is important to understanding intercultural relations as more sustained and meaningful interactions occur here: in associations, clubs and school affiliated groups. It is potentially useful to identify overlaps between public and parochial realms where fleeting engagement might develop into more meaningful relationships, and she raised the question of the scope of landscape architecture in shaping the context for these interactions.

Please find the audio record of Susanne's talk here.

Discussion #1

1. What types/qualities of places offer most potential for positive interactions?

2. What types/qualities of places seem to raise concerns?

3. What might this imply for priorities of planning and design?

In the discussion people used cards with different typologies of public space as prompts. The points below are the viewpoints of individuals within these discussions, with apologise for lack of relevant context for some of these.

- Topography and views and benches, encouragement to go outside. Gathering areas can be different for different migrant groups.
- Hierarchy important, private to semi-private spaces.
- How can care-givers be more visible?
- Time of day relevant, can make a difference to ethnic diversity.
- Communal gardens may be better than allotments for social connections (also you need to pay to have an allotment, some inherent exclusivity).
- Activities need to spatially connected - locate them together so there is diversity and choice.
- Streetscapes are important as you move through them, maximise chances of seeing someone you know.
- Train stations really good examples of integration, where there's a problem people come together, can you increase the length of time people feel they can linger?
- Flowers, contact with nature, water features: pleasure in using public space, people feeling relaxed are more open to neighbours.
- The prevalence of the 'pastoral dream' as an ideal, not sure how relevant is this when people have grown up in different parts of the world.
- Need to remember regional differences, London more busy and hurried than Sheffield.
- Safety and sociability important, allow for spontaneity.
- Why people don't want to chance new friendship networks may be down to fear, and a context of non-engagement can then become the norm. Loneliness a significant problem in society.
- Need to normalise our understanding of public space users, it's not helpful to focus on specific ethnic groups.
- Schools are more likely than parks to be places where there is contact across difference.
- Public open space may not seem very relevant to people when there are severe pressures on housing.
- Tensions around crime and gangs, inclusion a slow process and needs to include people. Conflicts and myths of conflicts can be influenced by the media.
- Anti-social behaviour needs to be addressed, spatial and ethnic dimensions to how this is perceived.
- Importance of boundary places (Richard Sennett) – shared by people from neigh bourhoods with different populations.
- Who takes responsibility is important, how can we support community ownership?

Interactive Links (please click on):

> City Park Bradford website
*> Article - The great meeting place: Bradford's
City Park and Inclusive urban space*
> Twitter @CityParkBD

Bhupinder Dev. Bradford City Council.

Bhupinder is a Chartered Town Planner and Development Plans Team Leader at Bradford City Council.

Planning and designing places for people - a City of Bradford Council Perspective.

Bhupinder outlined the importance of reinventing Bradford city during the post-industrial era, in particular the regeneration of the City Centre. Focusing on an award winning landscape and urban design project in the heart of the city centre, City Park, he highlighted the influences of the politics and economy. Bradford is a city significantly shaped by migration.

In the creation of the City Park inclusiveness was a key principle, which required engaging with a diverse range of users by adapting the participation methods to different interest groups. Now City Park has helped to change the perceptions of Bradford and created a shared sense of ownership for lifelong and recently arrived residents. High quality and

well-designed new public spaces as such need to be animated and vibrant, this is achieved by a creative collaboration of different public and private agencies for organisation of different events and activities.

City Park is a successful example of an adaptable and flexible space that can accommodate events and activities celebrating Bradford's social diversity, cultural and historical heritage.

Please find the audio record of Bhupinder's talk here.

Interactive Links (please click on):

> *Living Multiculture*

Sarah Neal. Reader in Sociology, University of Surrey.

Sarah has led research projects and published in the field of race, ethnicity, multiculture, community, belonging, place and policy-making.

Everyday encounters and use of parks.

Sarah talked about 'Living Multiculture' research project funded by the ESRC that explored the changing social and geographic dimensions of contemporary multiculture in urban England.

The 'everyday' is an important lens through which to understand the ways in which people experience urban multiculture and that micro does matter especially in terms of places and their complexities. Another argument is about importance of counter-narratives at the time of anti-migration discourse in the public realm in which cultural differences are associated with problems and division rather then dialogue and exchange.

Using range of mixed qualitative methods the research looked into parks as public spaces at three very different locations of Hackney, Milton Keynes and Oadby. It explored parks as samples of public spaces enabling for various practices to appear ranging from public events, organised groups and clubs associated with the parks, to more informal and individual set of practices and how they all relate to engagement with cross-cultural differences. She discussed key findings including the importance of memory and familiarity in the social rhythms of visiting parks, and how fleeting events can take on significance of association and representation. In particular, because parks were seen as places visited out of choice, users commonly expressed an affiliation with other users, enabling a general conviviality.

Please find the audio record of Sarah's talk here.

Interactive Links (please click on):

> *The Bench Project*
> *Walking Voices*

Clare Rishbeth. Lecturer in Landscape Architecture, University of Sheffield.

Clare teaches Landscape Architecture and conducts research projects on aspects of migration and landscape experience, currently looking at the social life of benches in Woolwich and Sutton, London.

Loitering or lingering? The politics and practice of outdoor sociability.

Clare suggested a focus on places for outdoor seating when thinking through issues of diversity in public places. Recounting two research projects – The Bench Project and Walking Voices – she outlined how socialising in public spaces can be culturally defined and is important for supporting visible presence, seeing and being seen, within a local community. However, ideas of how 'hanging out' can also been seen as negative, for example the increasing use of hostile architecture such as homeless spikes and uncomfortable benches. These assumptions of which users are problematic are often shaped by intersections of class, race, age and gender.

She called for landscape architects to be open-minded about differing activities, and to have a reflective and nuanced understanding of the communities who might use the urban realm in a given locality. Broad principles that might be especially important in areas of high diversity she suggested supporting and legitimising overlapping and flexible uses of space. Given the increase in hate crime, safety should be seen as a priority, designing sitting areas according to prospect refuge theory with good sightlines and multiple routes through. She concluded with a call to respect egalitarian values by reclaiming the pleasure and civic purpose of a public realm.

Please find the audio record of Clare's talk here.

Discussion #2

1.   How might the ways in which people use, appropriate and adapt spaces in ethnically diverse communities be reflected in design? (Affordances)

2.   How does the way in which people can see in and around places (visual permeability), and the way in which people can choose different routes through places (physical permeability), have significance in locations with ethnically diverse populations?

The points below are the viewpoints of individuals within these discussions, with apologise for lack of relevant context for some of these.

- 'No universal person' – city as a playground. Need spaces that are adaptable and multi-purpose and allow for people watching.
- Involve people as much as possible and design in activities and programming not just physical design.
- City Park Bradford is visually permeable, helps makes people feel safe though police still have a role.
- Not only about migrants but also bridging socio-economic difference.
- Car-free design for pedestrians, places need to be on the way for somewhere.
- Maintain eye-level openness but keep some shrubs for points of refuge.
- Design needs to be context specific and fewer fixed facilities –overlap typologies.
- Safety important so attention needed on designing out crime, the usefulness of semi-private spaces.
- Semi-circle benches so that people can talk together, especially elderly people, and recognising the importance of grandparents are providing childcare, need intergenerational spaces.
- Barnsley Council provided movable chairs (not sure this still happening).
- How can we design outdoor spaces which relate to parochial realm – need to think about being able to adopt structures, intermediate ownership (Jeff Hou).
- Timescales of when appropriation happens, so who makes decisions about public space / park management and is this sustainable?
- Bringing activities from indoors to outdoors, what do we mean by truly public space, and specifically outdoor public space. Perceptions of indoor place as being more managed.
- Design needs to be responsive to internal diversity in local populations. 22

Design for Diversity
Intercultural Outdoor Places

Audio recordings of all talks can be found at **Sheffield Landscape Sondcloud** page.

About TUO

The Transnational Urban Outdoors (TUO) research group is based in the Department of Landscape at the University of Sheffield. We are a group of academic researchers who have trained and practiced in landscape architecture and urban design, and also currently teach on professionally accredited courses. Our research addresses issues of ethnic and cultural diversity in urban places. We are Clare Rishbeth, Farnaz Ganji and Goran Vodicka.

Our research objectives are:

To understand qualities of landscape experience, especially how values and preferences might be shaped by personal and community histories of migration.
To analyse how people from diverse backgrounds use public open spaces and streets and how these places may support positive intercultural encounters.
To discuss how a context of growing superdiversity in urban populations needs to be reflected in practice in landscape architecture and urban planning and policy, design and management.

Our current research projects include:

The Un-Sociable Bench: how outdoor seating can provide places for positive or problematic intercultural encounters, research and filmmaking in Greenwich and Sutton, London.

A study of residential and city centre locations in Bradford, exploring the relationship between urban design and social functions.

Co-produced research on intercultural social dynamics of streets and public spaces in Page Hall, Sheffield.

Conferences

Maps & Mapping

Public Space

PLACE ATTACHMENT

ADVANCES IN THEORY, METHODS AND APPLICATIONS

Books

Sheffield & Bradford
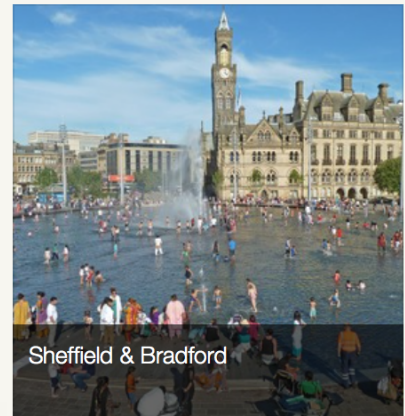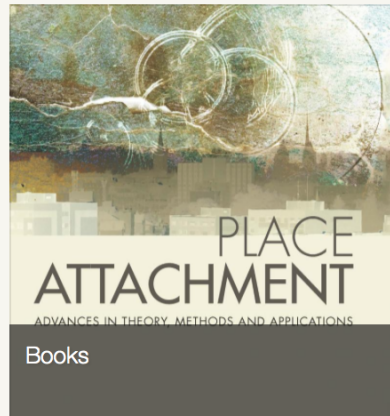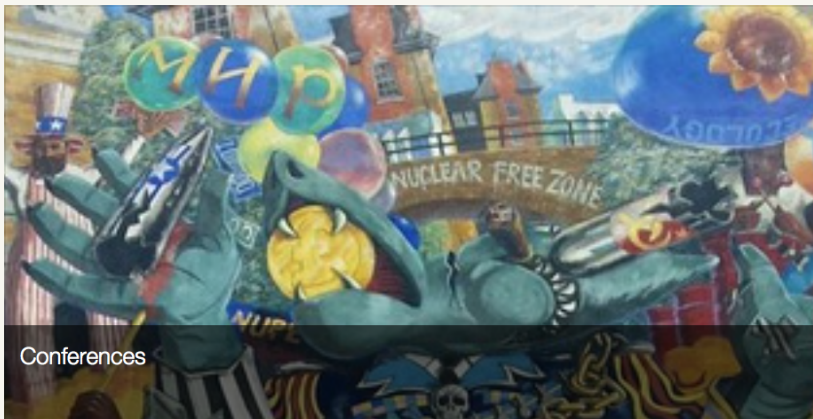
Please visit TUO Bundlr page (http://bundlr.com/u/tuo) where we collect and share interesting information.

Suggestions for further reading

The following references give an insight into key academic debates that have informed our thinking in developing Design for Diversity: Intercultural Outdoor Places symposium.

Manifesto for an Intercultural Urbanism (Saitta, 2014) http://bit.ly/1p1JfxJ

Walking Voices: executive summary (Rishbeth, 2007) http://goo.gl/h9or2t

Equally spaced (Lownsbrough & Beunderman, Demos, 2007) http://goo.gl/xcXaW5

Public Spaces and Social Relations (Dines et al, JRF, 2006) http://goo.gl/Ffe4bW

Inclusive or exclusive spaces? (Agyeman, 2010) http://bit.ly/1kydmS8

on 1: Planning to design scales

es/qualities of places offer most potential for
interactions?

es/qualities of places seem to raise concerns?

ght this imply for priorities of planning and

age cards to prompt discussion – feel free to refine/adapt the
logies and discuss important distinctions and,

ng two or more cards together suggest som   ent?

Design for Diversity
Intercultural Outdoor Places

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all the speakers, delegates and discussion facilitators (Professor Brian Orland, Wafa Al Madani, Megan Waller and Josepha Richard).

SHEFFIELD
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE

The
University
Of
Sheffield.
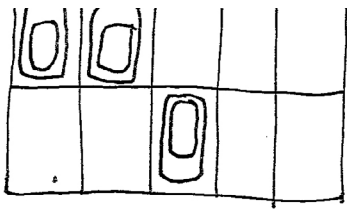
car park
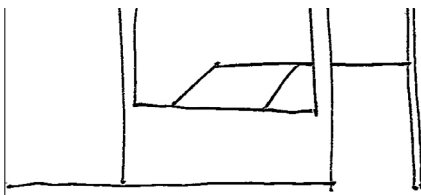
outside
takeaway
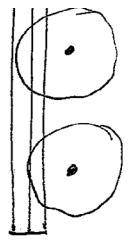
squar[e]
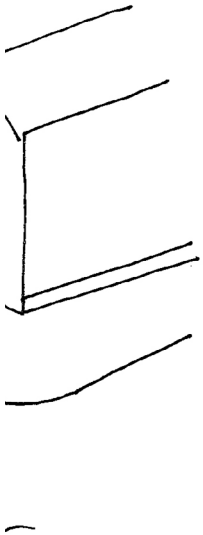
flower
bed
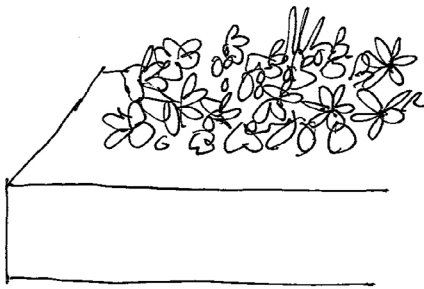
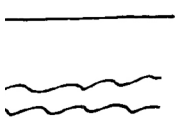water
feature.
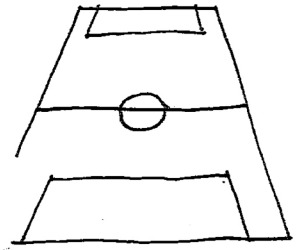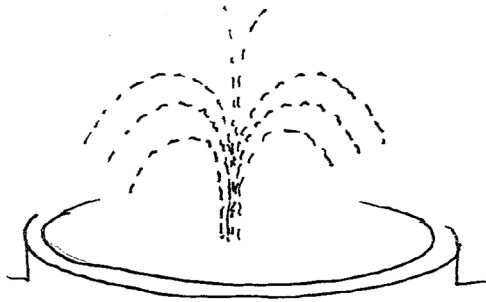
sports
faciliti[es]
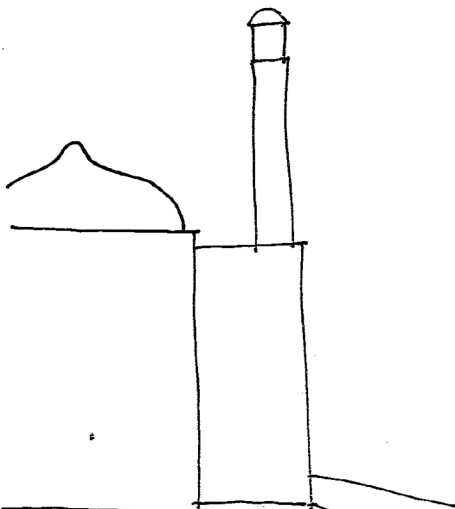
outside
mosque

shopping
areas

?

sea
[stat]?
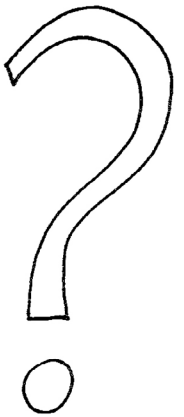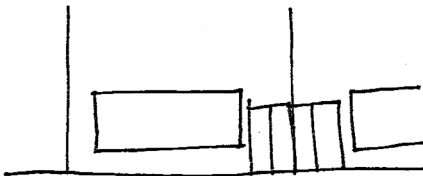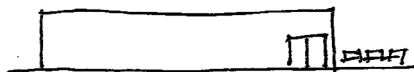
allotment
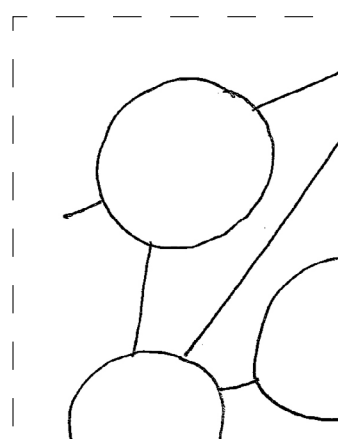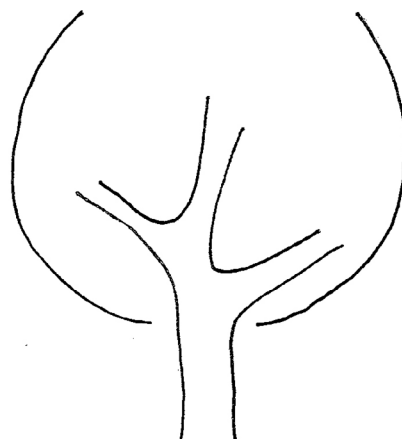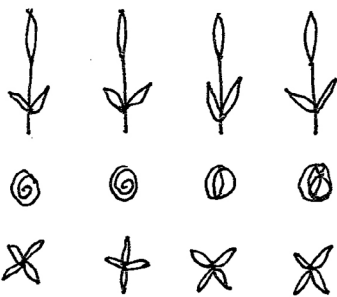
Contact

Department of Landscape
University of Sheffield
Floor 13
The Arts Tower
Western Bank
Sheffield
S10 2TN
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 (0)114 2220600
Fax: +44 (0)114 2220627

website: www.shef.ac.uk/landscape
email: landscape@sheffield.ac.uk
twitter: @LandscapeSheff

Copyright and re-use policy