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Cities in Movement: Migrants and Urban Changes

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Introduction: Presentation of the Book

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The present volume is based on papers that were originally presented at an international conference, held in Lisbon on the 11th and 12th November 2002, “Cities in Movement: Migrants and Urban Governance”, within the ambit of the Project “Reinventing Portuguese Metropolises: immigrants and urban governance”, funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (POCTI 38599/GEO/2001). The contribution made by Sonia Arbaci was presented at the 10th International Metropolis Conference (Toronto, 17th - 21st October, 2005), at the workshop “Housing Newcomers in European and North American Cities: Towards a Comparative Research Agenda”. The chapter written by Ana Paula Beja Horta, Jorge Malheiros and António da Graça was presented at the 11th International Metropolis Conference (Lisbon, 2nd - 6th October, 2006), at the workshop Migrant Organising and Transnational Linkages: Bridging Political and Socio-Economic Engagement.

Migrants are an increasingly relevant feature of urban growth and one of the major agents for social, economic and spatial change within cities. Most of the papers included in this book address various aspects of contemporary immigration trends and their effects on specific European cities and regions, on institutions and on the daily lives of immigrants. The interaction between sending and receiving countries is examined through the analysis of social networks which sustain the development of ethnic entrepreneurship connecting places of origin and destination. In addition, there is also a paper devoted to the debate on the extension of political rights to emigrants from Latin American countries.
Now, as in the past, immigrants and ethnic minorities tend to be concentrated in the most important urban agglomerations of each receiving country. Large metropolises and national capitals comprise privileged spaces of interaction, putting different parts of the world in contact with one another and emerging as structural nodes in the world economy. Today’s international migrations increasingly encompass more nodes of circulation, defined by a complex network of information, people, goods and capital that serve to interconnect the different communities of migrants throughout the world. Thus, the increase in international migration is, simultaneously, part and parcel of the process of globalization and major cities reinforce their position as structural points of the world economic system. At the same time, with regard to the social structure of cities, the most noticeable changes are related with increased income inequality between the social groups at the top and those at the bottom, as well as with the emergence of new types of poverty and social exclusion associated with unemployment, ageing and ethnic origin. These transformations lead to conflicts that have to be managed at the urban level and within the metropolitan territory. Therefore, urban politics are changing quickly, trying to find new responses to maintain the difficult balance between economic competitiveness and social cohesion (Andersen and Van Kempen, 2001: 3). The chapter by Maria Lucinda Fonseca, “Immigration, Urban Change and New Directions of Social Inclusion Policies: The Urban Community Development Program ‘K´CIDADE’ in Lisbon”, focuses on the changing socio-spatial structure of the Lisbon metropolitan area, which has been brought on by economic restructuring, immigrant settlement and the high risk of poverty and social exclusion faced by some migrant groups and their offspring. In addition, the paper discusses the new directions of social inclusion and urban policies and illustrates these trends through the presentation of an area-based initiative in the city of Lisbon in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood.

Housing in Southern European cities represents the most critical and controversial of urban conditions for the settlement and socio-spatial inclusion of immigrants (as well as for an increasing proportion of natives). From a comparative perspective, the chapter by Sonia Arbaci, “Housing and Urban Regimes in Southern European Multiethnic Cities: Structural Mechanisms of Ethnic Residential Marginalization by Spatial Dispersal”, investigates the role played by housing regimes, socio-urban processes of differentiation and the characteristics of immigrants in influencing the residential insertion of immigrants, in terms of urban distribution and patterns of social and spatial segregation. In particular, it demonstrates that low levels of spatial segregation of immigrants hide a real problem of social exclusion related to socio-tenure differentiation, quality of housing, rent exploitation and precarious living conditions. It also explores if current urban processes and housing dynamics have consolidated or reshaped
such patterns and conditions of ethnic settlement towards higher degrees of socio-spatial segregation. Finally, the paper opens up a debate on whether the residential insertion of immigrants is a critical issue jeopardizing their overall inclusion in Southern European urban societies, as current urban and residential conditions clearly restrain their access to resources and their potential for upward social mobility.

The difficulties of surviving trajectories of social exclusion for undocumented migrants, particularly those that have recently arrived in European cities and are not yet able to rely on co-ethnic social assistance networks, are analysed in the chapter by João Diogo Mateus, “Lost in Lisbon: Eastern European Immigrants Surviving on the Streets”. The migration wave from Eastern Europe to Portugal, initiating in the late 1990’s has led to hundreds of Eastern European immigrants having to spend the night on the streets of the city of Lisbon, or in shelters for the homeless. The author discusses the new aspects of homelessness, and based on field work and several interviews, explains why and how Eastern European immigrants – especially the non-documented ones – are the fastest growing homeless population in Lisbon.

While the distinctiveness of social, economic, political and urban structures are important in shaping immigrants’ lives, immigrants themselves also contribute in a wide range of ways to processes of urban and social change, as their trajectories are shaped by the interaction between urban institutions and the specific characteristics of ethnic groups. The chapter by Alina Esteves, “Hosting Policies in Lisbon and Washington D.C.: The Role of Local Actors in the Integration of Immigrants”, explores the differences between the local institutional fabric, reception practices and the creation of infrastructures for immigrant newcomers, in two new cities of immigration, with varying political ideologies, historical traditions and policy contexts: Washington D. C. and Lisbon.

Within modern diverse cities there are tensions between the interests of individuals and of the groups of which they are a part. Individual urban residents play many roles, with their ethnicity being only one among a number of significant attributes. The city is a potential space for fluidity and hybridisation in which individuals can create their own ways of operating and their own identities. The chapter written by Paul White, “The Individual and the Group: Cultural and Social Capital – Enabling Change in the Ethnic City”, deals with some of the crucial theoretical issues relating the individual to the group. It goes on to illustrate different ways of operating within ethnically-diverse cities through examples drawn from different European countries.

The contribution by Adrian Favell and Marco Martiniello, “Multi-national, Multi-cultural and Multi-levelled Brussels: National and Ethnic Politics in the ‘Capital
of Europe”, sets out the paradoxical intersection of national, non-national and ethnic minority politics in Brussels, a multicultural and multinational city at the heart of the linguistic struggle of the Belgian regions. After first explaining the complex distribution of power and competences within the Belgian federal structure, they explore whether these structures work to include or exclude disadvantaged ethnic groups. To better understand these processes, they introduce theories of multi-level governance in this context, and cross-reference them with theories of post-national citizenship and ethnic organisation and mobilization.

The issue of collective migrant mobilization, from a social capital approach to the political participation of ethnic groups, is discussed in the chapter by Ana Paula Beja Horta, Jorge Malheiros and António da Graça, “Ethnic Civic Communities and Political Participation: The Case Study of Capeverdean Associations in Three Municipalities of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and in Rotterdam”. Following a comparative analysis (cross-country and cross-local) of Capeverdean organizational processes in Lisbon and in Rotterdam, two main dimensions are explored: the organizational structure of the associations and the density of its networks within the community and outside it. The empirical findings also highlight the fact that ethnic civic engagement tends to stimulate political participation.

Lorenzo López Trigal, in the chapter, “Recent Migratory Tendencies in Spain and Their Repercussions in Urban Areas”, provides an overview of the Southern European migration system with a special focus on the Spanish case. Cities such as Madrid and Barcelona were used as case studies in order to illustrate the incorporation of immigrants in Spanish cities.

The political responses to immigration in European states and cities are analysed in two chapters. The first, “Responding to the Southern European States’ Encounter with Large-scale Immigration: A New Integration Model”, by Demetrios Papademetriou, addresses the recent large-scale immigration to Southern European countries, focusing on the need to find new political responses to immigration. Underlining the complexity of interactions between newcomers and the host society, the author advocates the need of cooperation between the state, local governments and institutions to manage migration for everyone’s benefit. The second, by Rinus Peninx, “Migration and the City: Local Citizenship and Integration Policies”, outlines the nature of recent migration movements in Europe and develops a typology of policy reactions on the national level in European countries. Focussing on integration processes at the city level, the author argues that there is a need for new concepts of integration policies and new strategies for implementation in multiethnic cities, in order to prevent social exclusion and develop positive interactions between different ethnic groups.
Globalization and increasing interactions of migrant communities between sending and host countries have become an increasingly relevant research topic in migration studies. Based on a comparative empirical study of Chinese entrepreneurship in Lisbon, Portugal (as an example of a host society environment), and in Qingtian (the village where the majority of Chinese entrepreneurs residing in Portugal come from), the chapter by Catarina Oliveira and Francisco Lima da Costa, “Being Your Own Boss: Entrepreneurship as a Lever for Migration?”, provides a valuable contribution to explore the role of networks and social relations between sending and receiving countries, in migration and integration processes, as well as in the structuring of “communities”.

With the consolidation of transnational communities all over the world, the sending countries are reacting, for the first time, creating links with those who, whilst living abroad, still maintain interest in both societies. Focusing on 10 Latin American countries that have approved, or are debating, the inclusion of emigrants in local political life, allowing them to vote abroad, or creating new forms of political representation, the contribution by Leticia Calderón Chelius, “The Other Side of the Moon: The Extension of Political Rights to Emigrants”, the Latin American Experience, offers different aspects that contribute towards the rethinking of the character of traditional citizenship.

References

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