

Introduction

In 1999 the European Union decided to address the research community with the question of whether and how the diversity of its cultures could be a source of competitiveness for its economy. ENGIME, a network made up of nine European universities and research centres, decided to address this question using the cities as laboratories of diversity. Looking at cities as the places where diversity meets, where its richness is experienced, and where conflicts explode more often, our attempt was to understand how cultures and cultural diversity interplay with economic growth and development. We decided that it was not the task of a discipline alone, and we brought together researchers from a variety of disciplines: social and political scientists, economists, psychologists and historians, to share knowledge and research. We decided to keep the network as open as possible and to organise workshops to invite researchers through a widely diffused call for papers. Besides the call for papers, two to four experienced researchers participated in each workshop upon invitation.

Working together proved to be the real value added of the network, and at the same time the most difficult task. Indeed, the first task of the network was to build a common glossary and to establish a common understanding of the issues at stake. Such an objective was soon shown to be naïve. The way we structured our research, the way we defined the issues, the methodologies that we were applying were so different and enshrined in our disciplines (and in personal experiences) that forcing communication at that level soon appeared to be only time-consuming and to bring very few benefits (if any). Rather, it appeared that our collaboration was much more fruitful when, while leaving disciplines with their methodological choices and tools, we were focusing on the policy questions, or providing the answers to the relevant policy questions

Over the period 2000–2004, six workshops were organised in Leuven, The Hague, Milan, Athens and (twice) Rome. Overall, over 60 papers were presented and 170 researchers participated (mainly from Europe but also from the US and Latin America, Australia, Africa and India). Urban experiences and cases from some 30 cities from four continents (and from history) were analysed and presented. Some undertook econometric analyses of large databases covering hundreds of cities in the US and Europe; others

presented rich stories on neighbourhoods in cities; and still others discussed different theoretical perspectives.

The workshops covered six specialised themes. The first workshop tried to establish a preliminary map of diversity, focusing on how different disciplines address and understand diversity. The second one studied communication at individual and group levels to understand the different types and forms of interaction that may be present in a multicultural environment. The third workshop discussed the costs of breaking communication down, i.e. how social exclusion and conflicts arise in multicultural environments and what are the consequent costs for society. The fourth event examined the concept of governance, how it has evolved in response to rising diversity and how various governance models are used for managing ethnic, religious or linguistic differences in an urban environment. The fifth workshop looked at the role of trust and social capital as a means to restore and to reinforce cross-cultural relationships.

It was at this point that some common themes emerged. It became clear that, despite the different focuses, workshops were always coming back to key words such as space, proximity and power relationships; and that such key words were essential to understand how differences interact in urban settings. Based on those key words, we then started to re-think our approach to diversity into a new conceptual framework. The sixth and final workshop was therefore used to reassess the new framework with the key researchers that we had met along the way.

This book is the result of our understanding of how to govern culturally diverse cities to make them socially and economically sustainable in the longer term. We have organised it in the following way. The first two chapters form the conceptual cornerstones of the book. Chapter 1 introduces the key notions to understand the complex relationship between the city and (cultural) differences. Considering the dynamics of contemporary, culturally diverse urban settings, it discusses the evolution of the concept of (cultural) diversity, linking it to the notions of identity, hybridity and cultural compression as well as the history of the notion of sustainability. Chapter 2 presents our first attempt to identify the principles of governing diversity. Starting from three well-known political policies (i.e. segregation, assimilation and integration) we indicate the need to develop policies that are able to govern cultural diversity in a dynamic, nonlinear and spatio-temporal complex way and to propose the general conditions of such a political policy. The following chapters are contributions from different disciplines to further develop and to test our line of thinking. Relying on econometric analyses of a new database, Chapter 3 shows that, over the last two decades, the degree of cultural diversity has increased rapidly in every European region. It further examines the relationship between diversity and development, identifying the

conditions under which diversity leads to economic performance. The following eight chapters complement this economic approach, offering us detailed and rich descriptions of case studies on diverse cities. These eight case studies were presented in our ENGIME workshops. They were selected precisely because they contribute the most to our learning about how cultural diversity can be best governed. The case studies focus on Stockholm, Baroda, Banská Bystrica, Chicago, London, Dortmund, Rome and Antwerp. For each of these chapters, we briefly introduce the case, linking each case to our conceptual discussions in Chapters 1 and 2. We conclude this book with Chapter 12, which integrates the learning across the different contributions. It presents guidelines and processual conditions facilitating intercultural encounters within current global cities.