



GlobalDivercities Singapore Workshop **When “old” diversity meets “new”**

5-6 March 2012, Asia Research Institute, Singapore

This workshop examines preliminary findings of the GLOBALDIVERCITIES project in which we examine social interactions in diverse public spaces in New York, Johannesburg and Singapore.

As people increasingly come into contact with one another in heterogeneous and densely populated, bounded urban settings, it becomes imperative to ask how immigrant-led diversification challenges or transforms pre-existing social patterns to establish new norms of living together or new faultlines of tension in cities. Shared spaces in public – markets, corridors, public transit, playgrounds, parks – are key to urban living and hence, examining changing diversities. Much of the interactions across different groups of people can be fleeting, yet they do not exist in a decontextualized vacuum but rather, relate to more sustained and meaningful social processes. Indeed, whether as sites of conviviality or conflict, public spaces are not neutral – they are filled with signs, symbols and markers that are variously “read” by socially positioned and culturally-distinct peoples.

Public places, hence, are filled – made – with on-going processes that socially reproduce different groups where some groups feel more legitimate in some places than others. They can similarly be complex sites where conflict and convivialities coexist. As such, we need an urban politics that addresses the reproduction of inequalities as well as diversity and innovation. These issues provide multivariate ways of addressing the core research question of GLOBALDIVERCITIES: *In public spaces compared across cities, what accounts for similarities and differences in social and spatial patterns that arise under conditions of diversification, when new diversity-meets-old diversity?*

The main concern of this workshop is to set up a dialogue between the newer literature on *super diversity* – much of which attempts to move away from the conventional focus on ethnicity – with more traditional modes of enquiry in migration studies on gender, race, ethnicity and nationality that could hold robust analytical purchase for research on new diversities. This workshop then addresses how newer forms of diversity intersect with older conceptual notions of difference to both empirically and theoretically further and reconceptualise existing formations of class, race and gender difference.

Participation by invitation only

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