

TOWARDS INCLUSIVE CITIES MEETING IMMIGRANTS

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Abstract

Cities of tomorrow as communities promote social, economic, and inclusive growth, designing the future by strengthening the relationships between diversity, community, and sustainability to drive an inclusive city and improve the high quality of urban life. Cities evolve as communities, working for social and economic integration of immigrants, developing both sustainability and inclusion as sources for urban value creation, and managing diversity. Cities have a critical role in defining initiatives to ensure the social inclusion of immigrants within communities in the long-term, designing inclusive local policies and ensuring services, strengthening the participation, and making local institutions and services equally accessible.

Keywords

Inclusive cities; urban sustainability; social inclusion; communities; immigration.

Introduction

Rethinking cities of tomorrow relies on rediscovering urban communities that drive sustainable, social and economic growth, promoting a high quality of life as a source to shape urban competitiveness and promotion (Rogers, 1999). Cities develop local policies for managing immigration as a source for urban development, acquiring skilled, talented and diverse workforces, strengthening decentralized immigration, and pro-growth policies (Kühn, 2018).

Urban sustainability relates to social, ecological, and economic dimensions and relies on cities to achieve a high quality of life for the whole community. «Sustainable cities ensure the well-being and good quality of life for citizens, are environmentally friendly, and socially integrated and just» (Giddings, Hopwood, Mellor & O'Brien, 2006, p. 24). Urban social sustainability relates to community development and relies on promoting social interaction in the community, strengthening participation in groups and networks in the community, promoting community stability, safety and security, and sense of place (Dempsey, Bramley, Power & Brown, 2011).

In the *New Urban Agenda*, cities have a key role in promoting sustainable urban development in an increasingly urbanized world, by embracing diversity and strengthening social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, and promoting pluralism and peaceful coexistence within increasingly heterogeneous and multicultural societies. Sustainable as inclusive cities contribute to creating urban services and spaces where newcomers build their social networks and participate in the cultural and political life of the city enabling immigration as sustainable diversity as a part of the public life of the *polis* (United Nations, 2017).

Sustainable development relies on inclusive development in terms of social, relational, and ecological inclusiveness (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016) and implies to promote effective stakeholders' management to ensure inclusive environments (Zbuchea & Bira, 2019). Social inclusion refers to community development and connection to social networks within the community and enables people to participate in a process of changing their lives and collective life (Busatto, 2007). Inclusion is a two-way, long-term, and urban community-led process where collaborative processes involve national and local governments, public and private actors, non-governmental organizations, and community representatives that provide sources and capabilities to support sustainable diversity within the urban community (Papillon, 2002).

Cities as a *sui generis* form of organization identify, define, and implement strategies for managing human resource diversity, developing learning capabilities (Dass & Parker, 1999). Cities as sustainable communities promote an inclusive and integrated urban ecosystem, strengthening diversity as a source that helps urban regeneration and change (Haapio, 2012).

Understanding how cities can design and implement the future relies on strengthening the relationship between diversity, community, and sustainability to improve the high quality of urban life. Cities of the future enhance social sustainability as a source to create public value, driving economic and urban development. As sustainable, innovation-oriented, socially enabled, and inclusive communities, cities promote urban and social cohesion to ensure a high quality of life within the urban landscape.

As communities and agents of social change, cities invest in both sustainability and inclusion as sources for urban value creation, managing diversity. The study aims to elucidate how cities identify a pathway to evolve as inclusive urban communities encouraging social and political integration and participation of immigrants in urban life for social and economic urban growth.

The social and economic sustainability of cities relies on inclusive urban communities that contribute to engendering social value and innovation, promoting an inclusive vision to the integration of immigrants within urban communities.

The paper is structured into six sections. Following the introduction and methodological section, in the third section, the international and European framework regarding sustainable and inclusive cities is elucidated. In the fourth section, inclusive and sustainable cities contribute to social value creation, constructing the urban community as an organizational framework to drive growth in the urban landscape and improve the quality of life. In the fifth section, it is elucidated how cities are dealing with immigrants' integration in the European scenario. In the sixth section, a framework of analysis is presented to elucidate that cities identify some pathways to develop as inclusive and sustainable urban communities, welcoming immigrants, integrating and including them within social, cultural and economic urban spaces of participation. Finally, conclusions are outlined.

Methodological section

The study is theoretical and relies on a review of the literature that is related to understanding the concepts of sustainable and inclusive city and community as drivers of integration and social inclusion of immigrants within urban communities as a source that helps cities to rediscover a sustainable pathway for social and economic growth. Inclusion, sustainability, diversity and community are key values that help cities to rethink themselves as communities that define strategy, promoting actions and initiatives about future urban development. The selected contributions are interpreted in a narrative synthesis to elucidate new perspectives and advance theoretical frameworks on emerging issues (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006; Dixon-Woods, Agarwall, Young, Jones & Sutton, 2004).

The International and European frameworks for inclusive and sustainable cities

Following the *UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations, 2015) urban communities, cities and human settlements need to be inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable by enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries by 2030 (11.b3).

According to the *New Urban Agenda*, cultural diversity contributes to both enriching humankind and promoting sustainable development of cities empowering citizens to actively play in development initiatives. Cities promote inclusivity and ensure that all inhabitants can produce safe, healthy, accessible, resilient and sustainable cities to foster prosperity and quality of life. In particular, it is stated that «sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with full and productive employment and decent work for all, is a key element of sustainable urban and territorial development and that cities and human settlements should be places of equal opportunities, allowing people to live healthy, productive, prosperous and fulfilling lives» (United Nations, 2017, p. 14).

Cities contribute to developing sources for European sustainable and inclusive growth, promoting competitive and high-employment economy, and fostering social and territorial cohesion (European Commission, 2010). Social inclusion relies on strengthening the community as a value and source to promote and develop the inclusion of people and groups. The inclusive city is an inclusive community that provides opportunities for the optimal well-being and healthy development of all children, youth, and adults. Cities need to become more inclusive communities avoiding entering into decline (Council Edmonton Social Planning, 2005). Today, cities are sustaining efforts for building an inclusive, open, and cohesive city developing creativity, diversity, and social innovation (European Union, 2011). Cities contribute to creating social and public value promoting urban development that relies on a long-term vision and implies promoting socially inclusive, sustainable and prosperous cities (European Commission, 2017).

Cities as inclusive and sustainable urban communities

Cities evolve as sustainable and inclusive communities, constructing urban and future developments, following a shared and social value view, and empowering citizens to actively play a key role in urban value creation, achieving urban sustainability (Haapio, 2012). Building urban sustainability relies on strengthening the community, empowering citizens to contribute to urban development and social capital (Bridger & Luloff, 2001; Haapio, 2012).

As sustainable ecosystems and engines of economic and social growth, cities are social incubators of change and innovation within urban communities (Newman & Jennings, 2008; Evans, Joas, Thundback & Theobald, 2005).

Stren and Polèse (2000) define the social sustainability for a city as «development (and/or growth) that is compatible with the harmonious evolution of civil society, fostering an environment conducive to the compatible cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social integration, with improvements in the quality of life for all segments of the population» (p. 15-16). «The primary focus of the city needs to be its people, operating at a human scale, rich in symbolism and with spaces and places for social interaction and the daily business of life» (Giddings, Hopwood, Mellor & O'Brien, 2006, p. 29).

Cities as sustainable communities contribute to developing an intelligent urban system, promoting social interaction by improving the wealth of people within the community (Innes & Booher, 2000). Cities contribute to shaping urban sustainability of infrastructures, making the city as an inclusive urban community (Bhattacharya, Patro & Rathi, 2016).

Community development helps to strengthen civil society, focusing on the actions of communities to develop social, economic and environmental policies (Craig, Gorman & Vercseg, 2004). Inclusive cities and communities contribute to promoting the well-being of individuals and the social and economic health of nations. (Council Edmonton Social Planning, 2005). According to Freiler (2008), social inclusion implies that people are respected and contribute as members of their community. As an inclusive urban community, a city promotes integration, cooperation and interactivity, and offers a place to enable public and private sectors towards social and economic health and well-being of the whole community, is equitable, and strengthens diversity (Clutterbuck & Novick, 2003). Pathways to inclusion mean to develop social change and rely on social and community-driven innovations and collaboration by involving individuals and communities (Lord & Hutchinson, 2007).

An inclusive city helps support sustainable urban development and promotes growth with equity, develops social inclusion by strengthening a collaborative and participatory space of action and strategy among public and private actors and stakeholders, stresses urban citizenship, enabling the inhabitants who belong to it to exercise their rights and responsibilities (Varma & Gill, 2010). Inclusive cities promote growth with equity enabling everyone to fully contribute by participation to the social, economic, and political opportunities that cities have to offer addressing the issue of sustainability (Newman & Jennings, 2008).

Cities as inclusive communities meeting immigrants

Sustainable and inclusive cities are successful and intelligent cities that emphasize and embrace diversity both culturally and ethnically (Briggs, 2006). As dealing with migration's matters, cities develop policies for the integration and the construction of new spaces of coexistence that make the contemporary city as an inclusive community (Monno & Serreli, 2020).

Cities are an important locus for driving immigrant integration and local factors contribute to effectively shaping integration dynamics (De Graauw & Vermeleen, 2016). In particular, immigrants contribute to changing the social and cultural shape of the cities they settle in (Benton-Short, Price & Friedman, 2005).

Immigrants' inclusion is a process and ongoing challenge that develops within urban communities and spaces (Gebhardt, 2014). In particular, the social inclusion of immigrants and the governance of ethnocultural diversity emerge at the level of local policies (Ambrosini & Boccagni, 2015). Integration begins from the moment migrants arrive in their host countries and where migrants settle can affect their paths to integration. As newcomers, migrants have a significant role in defining the social and economic shape of a city (Broadhead, 2020).

Despite the introduction of rigid legislation and anti-immigrant policies, recently cities are introducing policies that help social inclusion of immigrants within urban ecosystems, reflecting varying levels of receptivity toward newcomers. There is a growing trend of cities labeling themselves as welcoming or immigrant-friendly toward immigrants and refugees (Rodriguez, McDaniel & Ahebee, 2018).

Cities contribute to developing inclusion by creating welcoming communities that prosper because everyone feels welcome, including immigrants and refugees (McDaniel, Rodriguez & Wang, 2019). Cities can face the question of immigrant citizenship following an inclusion-oriented view, becoming a polity that guarantees equal opportunities, recognizes the diversity and supports social interaction (Gebhardt, 2016).

Cities are frontrunners of integration policies that often develop innovative blueprints for welfare societies as a whole. According to Costa and Ewert (2014) «cities *may be* localities where migrants become integrated as users and co-producers of social services and where communities of *de facto* outsiders get strengthened» (p. 134).

According to Shrider (2018) cities need to support immigrants' integration creating a context of reception to support immigrant-driven revitalization strategies. Individuals and communities contribute to fostering collaborative processes that involve individuals, groups, and organizations and developing the commitment to the community for urban value creation (Housel, Saxen & Wahrab, 2018). Cities contribute to exerting influence on the cultural and social dynamics of a place by designing urban policies to support the social inclusion of immigrants (George, Selimos & Ku, 2017).

Cities contribute to developing multiculturalist policies that enable political and economic inclusion and citizenship to actively recognize and value cultural diversity, to facilitate social and political integration of immigrants as future members and citizens

of the society in terms of rights acknowledged in the country and participation facilities (Bloemraad, 2007).

Towards immigrants' inclusion within European urban communities

Migrants and refugees inclusion is one of the goals of smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in the European Union. Historically, in the post-war period Northwest European countries conceived the immigrant workforce as a source to support economic development on a temporary basis and stay without thinking about the chance of attracting people with their families. So, this perspective did not consider the need for cultural, political and economic integration policies of newcomers (Pennix, 2014).

In 2003 the European Commission formulated a more comprehensive and explicit view on integration policies conceptualizing the integration as a two-way process that involves both immigrants and the receiving society (Pennix, 2014).

In the *European agenda on migration* (2015) migration will increasingly be an important way to enhance the sustainability of the welfare system and growth and will ensure the equipment of qualified talents and skills coming from outside.

In the *Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals*, it is acknowledged that integration policies help people participate and contribute to driving future well-being, prosperity, inclusiveness, and cohesion of European society (European Commission, 2016). In particular, «integration policies work best when they are designed coherent systems that facilitate participation and empowerment of everyone in society – third-country nationals and the communities into which they settle. This means that integration should go beyond participation in the labor market and mastering the language of the host country; integration is most effective when it is anchored in what it means to live in diverse European societies» (European Commission, 2016, p. 3-4).

According to European Commission (2019), it is stated that «Integration is a key step in the migration process, to ensure that skills and competences of those who have a right to stay are used and developed for the benefit of all, but also to ensure inclusive and cohesive societies. Successful integration of legally residing third-country nationals is thus critical to making migration work both economically and socially» (p. 17).

European cities can emerge as central actors driving the immigrant integration process and active players in developing inclusion policies and removing obstacles to immigrant participation and contribution to urban sustainable social and economic growth. Cities have developed strategies to increase awareness and appreciation of diversity, promoting intercultural orientation, inclusion, and equal opportunities to create inclusive institutions and services. In particular, cities play a vital role in ensuring that immigrants are integrated within urban communities they live over the long term (Gebhardt, 2014).

Cities are leading the way in setting up local institutions and services to reflect the diversity of those they serve and promoting inclusive local identities (Gebhardt, 2014). With regards to local immigration policies that concern some European capitals immigrant integration is essentially used as a tool to foster and to maintain economic

growth in the city. Ethno-cultural diversity is seen increasingly as a competitive asset, with which to improve the socio-economic performance of cities (Hadj-Abdou, 2014).

Local context provides opportunities for the political inclusion of immigrants in policy processes (Morales & Giugni, 2011). The effective integration of migrants is a critical issue for local and regional development. In particular, European small and medium cities as migrant destinations need to develop policies to integrate new community members by ensuring service delivery, working with local civil society to provide complementary integration measures to create more inclusive and sustainable cities. There are local integration policies that encourage the integration of immigrants within cities as urban communities: enhancing effectiveness of migrant integration policy through improved coordination and implementation; seeking policy coherence in addressing the multi-dimensional needs and opportunities of and for migrants; accessing to and using financial resources adapted to local responsibilities for migrant integration; taking account throughout migrants' lifetimes and status evolution; creating spaces where integration brings migrant and native-born communities closer; building capacity in the civil key services that receive migrants and newcomers; strengthening cooperation with non-governmental organizations and stakeholders; matching migrant skills with economic and job opportunities (OECD, 2018).

Developing socio-economic processes that involve immigrants helps reduce the levels of residential segregation and facilitate the social and economic of immigrants in urban communities (Malheiros & Vala, 2004). The answers that cities provide can be different in terms of political and administrative context and economic issues. Despite dominant political orientations cities tend to govern migration equality policies in different ways going beyond integration and non-discrimination: the relationship between city government and national government, European funding and peer exchange, civil society capacity in managing migration on the municipal agenda, and the paths of local civil servants contribute to exerting influence on the design of migration governance (Flamant, 2020).

Economic interests and competition matter. Cities can view immigrant integration as a means to support and advance urban economic growth and promote ethnocultural diversity as a competitive asset that helps improve the social and economic performance of cities. As stated by Hadji-Abdou (2014) «immigrant integration is not necessarily or exclusively about granting immigrants a better position in their societies of settlement, but that immigrant integration is driven to a great extent by economic interests» (p. 1891).

Discussion

As communities and engines of social innovation and inclusion, cities contribute to shaping civic citizenship and driving social, economic, cultural value creation, identifying a pathway towards a sustainability-oriented vision for urban growth and learning in the long-term.

Rethinking a pathway for driving cities as inclusive urban communities relies on reconsidering the strategic role of cities as sustainable communities that contribute to

supporting the social and economic development of urban societies to improve the urban quality of life and competitiveness.

As agents of social change, cities contribute to the social inclusion of immigrants in urban society. Constructing an open, democratic and diverse society relies on shaping cities as inclusive and sustainable urban communities that contribute to improving the quality of life and competitiveness in local and global environments, strengthening both integration and inclusion of immigrants within urban communities. Increasingly, cities become incubators and spaces that enhance social and economic sustainability and innovation.

As future-oriented communities oriented, cities consider sustainability as a vision that guides urban communities to design urban planning to develop innovation-driven and community-oriented pathways.

As sustainable communities, cities promote social and economic growth to develop the city as an inclusive and open, sustainability-oriented community, moving from ensuring services to involving all the stakeholders to play a proactive role in the urban value co-creation process, rediscovering knowledge sources and promoting innovation to construct better policies for urban governance.

As shown in figure 1, the main contribution of this study is to identify a framework of analysis to understand how cities evolve becoming sustainable and inclusive communities enhancing diversity and valuing the contribution of migrants as members of urban society and community. Sustainability as a source for action and vision for change helps cities to address initiatives and organizational capabilities to promote the social inclusion of migrants within urban ecosystems.

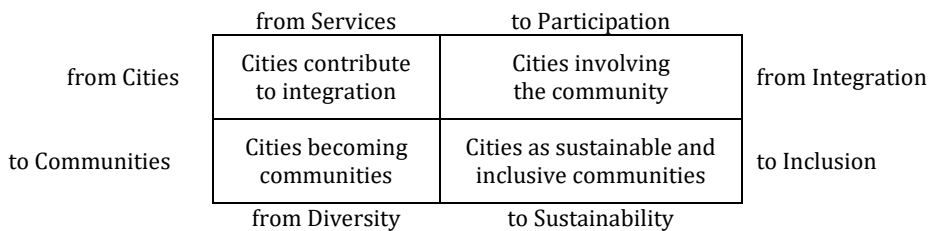


Figure 1. Driving cities towards sustainable and inclusive urban communities

Cities promote initiatives for the integration of immigrants in urban spaces by managing diversity as a source for sustainable urban development and moving from providing services to developing policies for citizen participation. Cities as communities identify a pathway to drive sustainable and inclusive urban communities, meeting the needs of citizens and ensuring high quality of life, and promoting better democratic participation in urban policy processes.

Cities as communities design the future promoting sustainability and developing inclusion-oriented policies as a strategic and organizational source for driving urban development and constructing organizational frameworks for social innovation design

that relies on collaboration, participation, partnerships, and connection to networks within urban environments.

Conclusions

Cities of tomorrow evolve as inclusive and sustainable communities, integrating newcomers and immigrants in the urban space. Cities have a key role in becoming a bridge for social and economic inclusion of immigrants, managing diversity through policies and initiatives that contribute to enhancing the sustainability of urban communities.

There are managerial, organizational, and social implications. Cities develop organizational patterns to enable social inclusion of immigrants within urban communities as a source that helps social and economic growth of the city and contributes to enhancing the urban identity and citizenship. Cities construct a pathway for social inclusion by developing social innovation as a source that helps urban communities to drive social and economic growth and promote sustainable development by involving all the stakeholders of urban ecosystems, mobilizing organizational and managerial competencies that enhance urban and social value creation.

The study is conceptual and provides only a theoretical framework of analysis. It does not provide any empirical analysis. Future urban development relies on more inclusive and open cities as communities. Future research perspectives imply to consider how Italian cities are designing and implementing welcoming, inclusive, and entrepreneurship policies to foster immigrants' integration in urban society and economy drives value creation.

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