

Building a New Home:

How Built Environments Can Help Cities and Migrating People Acculturate

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Bottom line:

- As living organisms, cities and populations develop identity thru predictable and necessary (although conflictual) steps
- The development struggle is similar to identity development for minority individuals
- Public policy must be designed to acknowledge and support progression thru development steps
- Environments that replicate homes of origin support healthy development and acculturation

City & population identity

City identity

- “She is tossed by the waves but does not sink”
- “Valiant, steadfast, compassionate”
- “Strong in justice”
- “Happy the city where citizens obey”
- “Always invincible”
- “I am not led, I lead”
- “I take but I surrender”

City identity

- “She is tossed by the waves but does not sink” **Paris**
- “Valiant, steadfast, compassionate” **Amsterdam**
- “Strong in justice” **Frankfort**
- “Happy the city where citizens obey” **Dublin**
- “Always invincible” **Warsaw**
- “I am not led, I lead” **Sao Paulo**
- “I take but I surrender” **Sydney**

Population identity

- When arrived?
- How did you get here? Voluntary vs. involuntary?
 - Slave?
 - Refugee?
 - Pioneer?
 - Freedom fighter?
- Where did you come from? Running away; running toward; indigenous?

“[The organism] does not change merely by adding parts but through reorganization as it reaches limits or thresholds. It contains differentiated parts but form and function are always linked. The whole organism is homeostatic, self-repairing and regulating toward a dynamic balance. Cycles of life and death are normal to organisms as is rhythmic passage from one state to another....Like organisms, settlements are born, grow, and mature.”

(Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Individual identity development

Modified Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model

STAGE	ATTITUDE TOWARD SELF	ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER
Conformity	Self-deprecating or neutral	Other appreciating
Dissonance versus appreciating	Conflict between self-deprecating and self-appreciating	Conflict between other-deprecating and other-appreciating
Resistance and immersion	Self-appreciating	Other-deprecating
Introspection	Concern with basis of self-appreciation	Concern with basis of other-deprecating
Integrative awareness	Selective appreciation	Selective appreciation

What the model does:

- Accentuates the dynamic developmental process, allowing for appreciation of inherent struggle (conforming is only the beginning)
- Highlights attention to stage differences, allowing for understanding why effectiveness does not transfer across time, place, population (tailoring is necessary)
- Allows for anticipation and preparation regarding policies, programs, & procedures (can't avoid stages; can take perspective, expect, tolerate)

Public policy examples

What didn't work

- Protestors of U.S. Military in Italy: “Italy is facing ‘un-integrated foreigners’” (2014)
- Cities that treat outsiders (missionary families, etc) as if they have the “right” solutions, while the host is “backwards” or “deficient”

What worked

- Houston post Hurricane Katrina:
 - 250,000 evacuees; nearly half stayed
 - “Katrina Evacuees Shift Houston’s Identity” (CNN)
 - “You can’t never take the New Orleans out of me...We’re a tight-knit community and we kind of show Houston how to have fun and party....and they show us more economics and business”

What might have led to success

- Never counted the evacuee population separately
- Opportunity for job growth: physical and economic expansion
- Stayed the course despite negative reports

Replicate built environments

“...architectural impulse seems connected to a longing for communication and commemoration...an ambition to let others know who we are – and, in the process, to remind ourselves.”

(de Botton, The Architecture of Happiness)





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Discussion
