

# The future European city and demographic change: challenges, opportunities and perspectives.

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## The holy grail?

- Cultural, social and intergenerational solidarity and cohesion
- The glass is half full! ( “ageing is a major achievement not a problem”, Julius Op de Beke)

## Cities without cohesion?

## City of despair



## City of walls



Challenges: “Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness”  
Many candles!!!!



## Intergenerational challenges

- EU dependency ratio will rise from 49% in 2005 to 66% in 2030 ( Green paper)
- Consequences? Danish example (Erik Simonsen). Lower employment growth and tax base, increased public expenditure and financial pressure on welfare state. BUT **optimism** in higher labour market participation?
- Pessimism? EU cohesion policy as window dressing for a neo-liberal economic project. Decline of solidarity and demise of the welfare state. (Klaus Kunzmann 2004)

Challenge of cultural differences  
in cities: assimilation,  
integration, separation?

Demographic change is also  
cultural change!!



## Challenge for government structures: active citizenship

- Need “shared cities” (but low participation of migrants and ethnic communities in urban politics)
- Importance of “citizenship”. EU constitution stalled but citizenship started in cities
- Citizenship not just based on rights but negotiation across differences. Need for trust ( “bridging social capital” . Putman)
- Living with “agonism”. “Mutual respect can help to domesticate antagonism to agonism in which people recognise the boundaries of what is and is not possible”. J Hillier, 2006 ( in ed. Schwedler and Neill, Cultural Inclusion in the European City)

## Conclusion

- Agonistic democracy? Sandercock , Mongrel Cities, 2003
- “a normative ideal of urban citizenship...in which there is no closure to the multicultural urban and political project; that is, no permanent state of integration and harmony towards which we are moving, but an always contested engagement and continually redefined notion of the common good and shared destiny of the citizens of the city” p151