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Introduction

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Abstract
Conviviality across a number of disciplines now conveys a deeper concern with the human condition and how we think about human modes of togetherness. This collection of essays illustrates some of the ways conviviality can be used as an analytical tool to ask and explore the ways and conditions for living together. This introduction surveys a number of key ideas and meanings of 'conviviality' across various disciplines providing the readers with an overview of usages and understandings of the term. It identifies gaps in the existing literature, proposes how a comparative perspective elucidates the concepts and shows how the articles within this Special Issue contribute analytically to our understanding of conviviality.

Keywords
Collectives, comparison, conviviality, cosmopolitanism, everyday, multiculturalism, space

Perspectives on conviviality

The last decade has witnessed a growing concern with conviviality. Based on the Latin roots for 'with' and 'living', the term 'conviviality' has long been associated with sociable, friendly and festive traits. Yet now from cultural studies and philosophy to urban geography, sociology and anthropology, its current usages convey a

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deeper concern with the human condition and how we think about human modes of togetherness.

This collection of essays illustrates some of the ways in which conviviality can be used as an analytical tool to ask and explore the ways, and under what conditions, people constructively create modes of togetherness. What contextual features, projects and everyday tactics are involved in shaping, as Zygmunt Bauman (2003: 32) calls it, 'the art of negotiating shared meanings'? How do large normative projects on social order, such as cosmopolitanism, inter-cut the dimensions of practices of acknowledging and bridging difference in everyday life? While many theories and studies focus on conflicts, ruptures and discontinuities in social, ethnic and inter-religious relations, there is still relatively little knowledge, description and theory concerning the ways people live together successfully, how they envision a modus co-vivendi and what strategies they create in order to practice it. This volume contributes to closing this gap.

Current academic reflections on 'living together' display a great variety of stances. In all of them, however, conviviality emerges as an alternative to 'autonomy': it points towards considering individuals through the meanings of their interrelatedness. This entails focusing on the 'with' of conviviality, more than on 'living', which, as Boisvert (2010) argues, opens up the path to understanding human relations in a sense of interdependency at the root of human existence. In this way, conviviality has a conceptual family resemblance to several other notions currently in public and academic circulation, including cosmopolitanism, civility, trust, multiculture and multiculturalism, diversity, integration, cohesion and social capital. Most contemporary writers, however, emphasize conviviality's distinctiveness, despite other resemblances.

We believe this collection of essays is timely: a growing number of scientific commentators of social reality notice the emerging spirit of disappointment with public policies and projects that attempt to define the outcomes of human encounters in diverse societies and that are directed primarily to collectives defined in ethnic or national terms (such as multiculturalism – see Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010). It goes hand in hand with the trend towards 'active citizenship' that privileges individuality and targets individuals as agents, providing them with individual opportunities and choices (Soysal, 2012). In this context emerges also the criticism of the ideal cosmopolitanism as unrealistic, 'exploded' notion (Braidotti et al., 2013). Instead, the scholars seek for empirically robust and constructive new foundations for cosmopolitanism, and we believe that the concept of 'conviviality' is here more productive than another hyphenated mutated version of it.

In this introduction, we survey a number of key ideas and meanings of 'conviviality' across various disciplines. While not claiming to be comprehensive, we provide readers with an overview of works employing the term in order to convey the multiplicity of uses and understandings of conviviality. We thereby identify three main strings of the debate which are place/space, conviviality/conflict and normativities beyond essentialisms. We point towards gaps in the existing literature, propose how a comparative perspective elucidates the concept and show how the articles within this special issue contribute analytically to our understanding of conviviality.

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Convivial collectivities

One of the earliest social scientific proposals surrounding conviviality, and one of the most influential, is Ivan Illich's (1973) 'Tools for Conviviality'. For him, social tools, such as social institutions, could be fashioned in a way to help people live compatibly in complex social systems. The 'convivial society' of Illich is such a political arrangement which guarantees the protection of survival, justice and self-defined work. Illich's vision is rooted in his experience as a priest with a strong critique of the principle of maximal rationality. In an industrial society, Illich saw maximal rationality as a source of frustration and emotional instability for people. A convivial order is thus for him a post-industrial one, the model for a future that all societies could implement in their own, localized way.

Although the key element of Illich's proposal is the notion of 'tools', he failed to specify its meaning clearly. Ideas, institutions and machines are equally tools for him. Convivial tools, according to Illich (1973: 27), promote learning, sociality, community and autonomous and creative intercourse among persons. He gives the example of a telephone, which makes communication between people possible while each individual can maintain control over it. More broadly, Illich saw the potential for modern tools of communication, if applied critically, to radically restructure societies. He foresaw the great role new media technologies may take in the process of democratization of societies, and this made his work attractive to a wide variety of followers. Much attention was dedicated, for example, to 'convivial tools' in the alternative technology movement (Hollick, 1982; Mitcham, 1991) which extended the notion of tools to include food self-sufficiency, earth-friendly home construction or new energy resources (Borremans, 1978; cf. Hoinacki and Mitcham, 2002). The authors concerned with media ecology, participatory media or complex systems of modern communication technologies often relate to Illich when considering the workings of such systems on human interactions, structures of collectivity or the rise of civil society (see Ameripour et al., 2010; Ells, 2009; Gauntlett, 2009; Martin, 1998); others consider the possibilities new media offer towards education for conviviality (Kahn and Kellner, 2007). Here, conviviality emerges as a practice of learning from learners, as opposed to being prescribed by the teacher, constituting a democratic, interdependent community of learners (Sipitakiat, 2001). This usage relates to Polanyi's (1958) understanding of community as sharing of passion and experience of knowledge (also see Nagy, 1992; Norton, 1975).

Illich's work on conviviality has been receipted punctually, often in combination with his proposals for new education (Illich, 1971). The largely unused potential of his work pertains to the holistic approach to human existence in complex systems that include other humans as well as natural and artificial environments; here, some objects and technologies serve as intermediaries that change the quality of human relations and possibilities for sociality and collectivity (Boisvert, 2010). Without reference to Illich, the concern with material settings for more conviviality is reflected in the works of urban planners and human geographers, discussed below. Illich's ideas were picked up by anthropologists Overing and Passes (2000) who translated his notion of 'convivial society' into the context of Amazonia. Their collection of articles is linked through the notion of convivial social tools such as beliefs, concepts and behaviours governing Amazonian society.

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Overing and Passes (2000) show that the convivial collectivity is an achievement; it requires constant effort. At the same time, however, they suggest that conviviality is a guiding principle, an intrinsic ethical and aesthetic value, for Amazonian people.

Recently, authors concerned with convivial social settings draw more frequently from Paul Gilroy's (2004) critique of multicultural Britain. Central to Gilroy is the concern to elevate 'conviviality', which in popular discourse means merely 'living together', into a theoretical concept that can be regarded as an alternative to multiculturalism. For him, the latter notion has broken down politically as it arrives from a 'world of racial hierarchy' in which being human is not enough to qualify for recognition (Gilroy, 2006) He distinguishes between multiculturalism and 'multiculture', the process of cohabitation and interaction as an ordinary feature of social life. Multiculture is characterized by a convivial mode of interaction in which differences have to be negotiated in real time. 'Conviviality', writes Gilroy (2006),

> is a social pattern in which different metropolitan groups dwell in close proximity but where their racial, linguistic and religious particularities do not – as the logic of ethnic absolutism suggests they must – add up to discontinuities of experience or insuperable problems of communication. (p. 27)

For Gilroy (2004), convivial culture renders racial and ethnic differences unremarkable: they become ordinary. Instead, people 'discover that the things which really divide them are much more profound: taste, lifestyles, leisure preferences' (pp. 39–40).

At various points in his work, Gilroy chooses to speak of 'conviviality' instead of 'cosmopolitanism' (for the discussion of the differences between the two terms, see also Morawska and Freitag, this volume). Cosmopolitanism, according to Gilroy (2004: 4), retains imperialist traces; it was entangled with the expansion of Europeans into new territories and comprised 'by consolidation and management of the resulting imperial orders' (for further discussion along these lines, see Van der Veer, 2002; Bhambra, 2011; Mignolo, 2011; for a similar critique of racism in Kant's cosmopolitanism, see Muthu, 2003; Kleingeld, 2007). Gilroy thus problematizes the existence of intercultural relationships and expresses the preference for the more dynamic notion of identification which highlights mobility and contingency rather than categorical fixity. However, he remains inconsistent in both the usages of the term he criticizes, as well in the argument for rejecting the term (Knowles, 2007). Confusingly, Gilroy depicts convivial carnival gatherings on the streets as 'cosmopolis' (Gilroy, 2006: 28) and, even more bewilderingly, introduces the notion of 'convivial cosmopolitanism' (Gilroy, 2004).

Gilroy's preference for 'conviviality' in the light of his (and others') critique of 'cosmopolitanism' seems justified, but it needs further elaboration. There is, of course, a tremendous variety of approaches, understandings and interpretations of the notion of 'cosmopolitanism' (see, for instance, Brown and Held, 2010; Delanty, 2012; Rovisco and Nowicka, 2011; Vertovec and Cohen, 2002). Common to many views on cosmopolitanism is an intrinsic 'political' dimension. This does not necessarily entail politics as an institutional order but rather 'small "p" politics', or orientations, attitudes and actions aimed at establishing a more just, equal condition for all regardless of differences. Whether based on the ancient Cynic or Stoic commitment to helping human beings as

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such (beyond the loyalties of the polis), the Kantian view of cosmopolitan rights, or contemporary philosophical reflections concerning foreign others, cosmopolitanism is concerned with regulating relations between subjects that occupy fixed and unequal positions. Cosmopolitan moral politics can be articulated in institutional settings but also in ordinary ways of thinking and acting (Rovisco and Nowicka, 2011: 3). The key concern for cosmopolitan thinking is thus a normative question of how to appropriately frame relations between humans and arrive at a set of rules – surrounding tolerance, recognition, respect or openness – which allow collectives to operate in a way enabling most happiness, satisfaction and peace to all its members. These questions are not free from the problem of structure of power of those engaging, voluntarily or not, in such relations. As a number of commentators have critiqued, in many senses cosmopolitanism arrives from a situation of unequal positions – citizens and not-citizens, conquerors and conquered, fellow nationals and foreigners, majority and minority (Bhambra, 2010).

This is echoed in Gilroy's (2004) statement that the 'meaning and ambition of the term "cosmopolitanism" has been hijacked' with the onset of the new (European) imperialism (p. 59). While Gilroy does not reject the cosmopolitan ideal, he criticizes versions of it which construct human togetherness without abandoning the categories which fix people to particular, hierarchically located groups. For Gilroy, racial or ethnic difference in a convivial setting is mundane. Conviviality is thus fundamental, even if not a dominant, and not-necessarily political feature of urban life. Conviviality is important beyond the way it emphasized the 'with' dimension of existence; it might become a new paradigm for it carries the deep sense of rooted interweaving and pervasive 'with-ness' at the root of things in the sense of dependency and interdependency (Boisvert, 2010: 60).

To suggest conviviality might not be 'political', in the same sense as cosmopolitanism, does not mean it is not normative. Conviviality does indeed carry a normative connotation by conveying an optimal social setting. Gilroy's, as well as Illich's, interest is clear in defining the convivial settings, and this interest is shared by various authors. The concern with optimal settings for conviviality is thereby tied to the condition of ethnic plurality. Arizpe's (1998) postulate for more 'experiencing life together' instead of living side by side in a plural society, for example, is grounded in the notion of *convivència* as a mode of peaceful coexistence that mythically typified Christians, Jews and Muslims in medieval Spain. Arizpe's convivial kind of 'compatible living' of all humans with nature is a call for inter-generational and inter-ethnic solidarity.

Similarly, Erickson (2011) is interested in 'convivència' as a discourse shaping host-immigrant relationships in contemporary multiethnic Catalonia (see also Heil, this volume). Unlike authors (Glick, 1992; Suarez-Navaz, 2004) who see the continuity of reference to the historical coexistence of Christians, Muslims and Jews in medieval Iberia in discourses on mutual interpenetration and creative influence (but also rivalry and conflict), Erickson shows that in everyday settings, people tend to understand conviviality as mutually respectful relationships to neighbours in common spaces. Erickson's empirical research proves how 'old' public discourses now interpenetrate everyday practices at the micro-level, constituting an alternative to multicultural policies. His research reveals the tension between the political framings of intercultural difference and the mundane social interaction under conditions when cultural difference is present but has a secondary meaning. Importantly, Erickson reminds us that 'convivència' is a normative

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and often idealistic aspiration which does not exist in a vacuum. Once more, conviviality is offered as an alternative to multicultural politics. Or better, the two projects or aspirations – conviviality and multiculturalism – can co-exist, but neither necessarily derives from the other.

A somewhat different approach is proposed by Laurier and Philo (2006), who attempt to understand the normative underlying the convivial. They differentiate between 'convivial' as a practice of participants of particular settings and 'convivial' as a quality of places and shared imaginaries of 'normal' human togetherness that underpin the 'gestures of conviviality'. For Laurier and Philo, conviviality is particular and contextual and not universal, and it is possible only in relation to social norms defining what is 'normal' and 'appropriate'. But while Laurier and Philo (2006) suggest that there is no tension between the normative framework and practices of conviviality, Erickson (2011) points to a possibility of tension between the convivial aspiration and practice and multicultural or universalistic discourses.

Conviviality and conflict lie close to each other, as Karner and Parker (2011) show for highly ethnically and religiously differentiated neighbourhoods (see also Vigneswaran, this volume). Examining perceptions of locality among residents and entrepreneurs in the Alum Rock area of Birmingham, United Kingdom, they show that the 'everyday conviviality of boundary-crossing and inter-ethnic solidarities' is accompanied by local conflicts, ethnic exclusion and boundary maintenance. At the local level, thus, community life is highly ambivalent. Conviviality is established in different routine practices of giving and taking, talking and sharing, exchanging news and goods and so on (cf. Hickman et al., 2012). These banal interactions across social and ethnic boundaries give a sense of togetherness. But at the same time, business and religion are also contexts that accommodate conflict situations of boundary marking. Through the notion of conviviality, according to Karner and Parker (2011), the clear-cut divisions between solidarity and conflict, inclusion and exclusion, can be contested.

A more radical proposal for 'conflicting conviviality' as an analytical tool has been made by Mattioli (2012). His case study is located in Skopje, Macedonia, which is characterized by the complex relations of ethnicity. Mattioli tries to demonstrate how subordinate groups resist the hegemonic discourses; their integration as a group is achieved through a number of convivial interactions and general references to conviviality. At the same time, however, these groups reproduce the hegemonic discourses through involving the notion of 'conflict'. The interesting moment is the switch between self-understandings as an interacting individual and member of a group in a conflict situation.

Conviviality as a mode of interaction in ethnically diversified communities is, according to Hattam and Zembylas (2010), a possibility for relating to each other beyond 'claims and denials' (Gilroy, 2004; also see Blommaert, this volume). Picking up on Gilroy, Hattam and Zembylas understand conviviality as a mode of consciousness that is principally against fixed and reified categorizations. Furthermore, for Hattam and Zembylas, conviviality has an ethnical dimension since it can help to deal with anger, indignation and denials of the past to create a better present and future.

Conviviality emerges in the debate as an alternative to multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. For many authors, it offers a new vocabulary to speak of a collective without

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referring to fixed categories of ethnicity. However, insofar the conviviality narrative puts the vision of a peaceful present and a sustainable future, it has a normative dimension.

Convivial spaces

During the most recent dOCUMENTA (13) event, one of the world's largest and most influential modern and contemporary art exhibitions that took place in Kassel, Germany, in 2012, there was a series of lectures and discussions devoted to the concept of conviviality. The exhibition notes described the need to address 'the notion of equality through the point of view of social interaction [… alongside] modes of dissent and engagement, and the understanding of political and public forms of distribution'. In discussion with the Artistic Director of dOCUMENTA (13), Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, the artist and cultural critic Suely Rolnik, defined 'conviviality' as the human capacity to relate to the world. With the term 'worldling', the two interlocutors put in focus the question of how we relate to each other and to our environment. Rolnik stressed a topic common to many social scientific considerations as well: namely, that conviviality is not about collaboration between people but about their capacity to be affected by the world which precedes them acting to transform what she terms 'cartography of togetherness'. For her, the dOCUMENTA (13) exhibition is equal to 'conviviality' in the sense it invites all kinds of people to take time, get affected by the environment and co-create the space and situation for togetherness to happen. Christov-Bakargiev complemented her in stressing that conviviality is about potentiality and location: about creating local spaces which offer a possibility for something to come to exist while remembering that the expected might not occur. For Rolnik, conviviality is meaningful as it reminds us that it is not possible to prescribe ways of experiencing; Christov-Bakargiev, then, added that we ought not to forget that we may design spaces and expect particular effects, but we cannot control how togetherness happens.

The discussion between Rolnik and Christov-Bakargiev reflects the issues which have been present in the scientific discourse of the last decade: the concern with how people relate to each other and how are societies and spaces organized to create optimal conditions for more meaningful living together. It is particularly urban spaces which have been at the fore of interest among many contemporary commentators on conviviality.

For instance, Nigel Thrift (2008) points towards an urban politics that 'assemble intimacy, kindness and compassion' which he calls 'social and aesthetic technologies of being'. When Thrift speaks of conviviality, he is interested in everyday, banal, affective and relational aspects of city life (see also Wise and Velayutham and Blommaert, both this volume). He stresses the fleeting nature of urban conviviality emerging in encounters which are pre-cognitive, affective and emotional. In the similar vein, Hinchliffe and Whatmore (2006) choose to speak of politics of conviviality as a project with is more broadly concerned with accommodation of difference in urban spaces. However, they go away from investigating how people recognize those who are culturally or ethnically different; their focus is on the ecologies of urban spaces; thus, their way of understanding conviviality includes humans, material settings and patterns and rhythms of people in the city.

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The concerns of many contemporary urbanists clearly diverge from works concerned predominantly with ethnic, racial and cultural difference. For example, Fincher (2003) asks how urban planners can enable convivial encounters. He sees a growing diversity of people in urban settings as a challenge for city life. Normatively, Fincher underlines the need for 'easy familiarity' between strangers in daily life and small-scale interactions in urban spaces. In this way, Fincher draws on Peattie (1998) who introduced the idea of conviviality into the area of urban planning. Peattie stressed the difference between 'community planning' and 'spatial planning', aiming at establishing long-term relationships and connections to a particular place. Importantly, he noticed, there is 'politics of place' involved in convivial settings, underlying a tendency for boundary marking and exclusion of the unlike. Hence, planning practices need to recognize that it might not be sufficient to create spaces for convivial kinds of interaction through addressing material settings alone.

Understanding conviviality in relation to optimal spatial setting is also implicit in the work of Wood et al. (2010) who investigate how the sense of community is achieved through the exercise of walking in the neighbourhood. For Wood and his colleagues, convivial space is that which is vibrant and inclusive, pedestrian friendly and enabling social interaction. Using ethnomethodology, and with the help of similar ideological apparatus, Laurier and Philo (2006) understand cafes as places produced as convivial by particular kinds of human gestures and behaviours. Similarly, Simpson (2011) investigates how street performers contribute to everyday production of moments of conviviality in public space. He argues that the presence and encounters of performers on the streets, even if fleeting and ephemeral, effects how people relate to each other in a more positive way. This happens through the momentary sense of community among those who watch the performers, facilitating the transitory contact between strangers.

In the same vein, Koch and Latham (2011) consider how cities can be made into more inclusive and convivial spaces that are simply better for the people that inhabit them. Their interest is in how space can change from criminal to convivial, and more broadly, how convivial spaces are assembled. They draw on a number of previous works, including Fincher and Iveson's (2008) and Peattie's (1998), to understand conviviality as a concept that can help researchers make sense of qualities of collective life marked by openness and the accommodation of difference. While their focus on material–practical arrangements is inspired by Hinchliffe and Whatmore (2006), they also see conviviality as a way of nurturing the capacity of individuals to thrive in combination with others.

The last point derives particularly from Ash Amin's (2008) understanding of conviviality as an element of civic formation in public space. Amin proposes that we should understand conviviality as a 'form of solidarity with space'. His interest is prompted by a reading of public space as 'situated multiplicity', or what Massey (2005) calls 'thrown togetherness'. Amin distances himself from thinking of conviviality wholly in terms of social inclusion and cultural recognition, but he also diverges from Gilroy's understanding of conviviality as a virtue of everyday encounters with multicultural otherness. Moreover, Amin's interests are not related to political attempts to structure interpersonal interactions in public space by bringing people from different backgrounds together. Instead Amin (2008), sees conviviality as a 'momentary contact' with multiplicity of bodies, matter and technology that is experienced 'as a promise of plenitude' (p. 22). It

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is this kind of fleeting experience of space that can make one aware of belonging to a 'larger fabric of urban life', and at the same time giving a sense of participation, access and sustainability in, to and of a space. Empathy towards the stranger – the key interest for Gilroy and other scholars – is for Amin a by-product of the convivial experience of such situated multiplicity. For Amin, conviviality is thus closely linked to 'civic ease' in public space (also see Wessendorf, Blommaert and Wise and Velayutham, this volume).

Convivial everydayness

The context of the everyday life is where we ought to seek conviviality (Boisvert, 2010: 61). All the authors employing the term located their analysis in the realm of the mundane. Boisvert (2010) suggests that 'convivialism' should entail a perspective on the human that 'starts and ends' in the everyday. Furthermore, to focus on conviviality means to focus on continuity and thus to encompass simultaneously conflict and friendliness, and practices and situations of boundary markings and crossings.

There is so far no systematic reflection on the meaning of everydayness for conviviality together with the possible advantages of employing of the term 'conviviality' for our understanding of the human condition. Nevertheless, many authors examining the actual situations in which everyday routines and practices lead to conviviality point to a number of social processes which have been addressed through the conventional sociological notions. For example, Edensor and Millington (2009) analyse class conflict across popular practices of illumination for Christmas. By examining the motivations of Christmas light displayers, they show how the ideal of conviviality underlies this practice. They associate the ideal of festive pleasure and neighbourliness with the displayers, whom they contrast to 'tastemakers', and thus show how class specific the ideal of conviviality is. By focusing on the conflict of classes involved in the practice and discourse on Christmas illumination, Edensor and Millington conceive of 'conviviality' as an element of cultural capital. They, thus remind us that conviviality – as aspiration and as ideal – is socially located (see also Freitag, this volume).

The social situatedness of conviviality is also a concern for Dunlap (2009), who inquires into leisure activities, in particular communal meals, of individuals associated with one community. Dunlap is interested in the nature and function of conviviality within the context of community-making through the practice of family dinners. While Dunlap uses the notion of conviviality as proxy for leisure, he points towards an important aspect which is how conviviality is a part of localized, hegemonic discourses on a community's purported culture. Similarly, Germov et al. (2011) investigate the representations of the slow food movement in the Australian print media. More akin to older, traditional denotations of the term, they define conviviality as 'social pleasures of sharing good food'. The aim of the slow food movement is to promote conviviality in the form of feasts and festivities. The joyful aspects of spending time connecting with friends, family and community through the pleasure of sharing 'good food' is highlighted by the official discourses of the movement. Their research thus points to how official discourses intertwine with everyday practices; interestingly, they show the link between what Borremans (1978) suggested as a convivial tool – sustainable forms of food production – and consumption, the practice of sharing and celebrating together in a community.

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The structures of community feeling are the interest of Neal and Walters (2008). They study how belonging is produced, maintained and recreated in local rural environments, assigning conviviality a particularly strong role within rural social organizations. Conviviality is for them a missing link between 'yearning for human togetherness' and 'tensions and conflict' constituting community life. The experience of conviviality is central, according to them, to making community through a number of routine practices and performances. Neal and Walters often, however, tend to equate conviviality with sociability. However, by demonstrating how everyday practices of support and reciprocity, small-scale activities and narratives of friendship and kindness lead to fragile conviviality, they remind us that conviviality is not organically occurring but requires constant labour as well as technical and semi-formal organization.

Similarly Rabo (2011), drawing on Gilroy (2004) in preferring the notion of conviviality to cosmopolitanism and using it an analytical tool to capture the everyday 'living together', places conviviality within a complex history of religious, linguistic and ethnic heterogeneity in the town of Aleppo (cf. Freitag, this volume). Rabo diverges from Gilroy insofar she argues that conviviality in Aleppo is rooted in the particular social organization of religiously based 'sects' and intra-communal autonomy; thus, conviviality is for Aleppo a way of living with clearly delineated categories of difference.

Comparing convivialities

All in all, conviviality increasingly appears in the context of normative concerns with how to make spaces more positively interactive, or conversely how spaces might become more convivial through everyday practices and routines of people inhabiting them. However, conviviality offers more than just a descriptive category that captures the modes of peaceful and happy togetherness. The authors concerned with conviviality increasingly see the concept as a potential alternative to the notions that derive from the debates on community cohesion, inclusion and integration (and their dichotomous 'other': conflict, exclusion, dissolution); conviviality emerges here as a remedy to public and political discourse on multicultural societies and cosmopolitan world order.

It is against such a background that this collection of essays seeks to address conviviality. The contributors consider the everyday situations of interactions between people of different backgrounds without losing sight of the broader contexts in which these interactions take place: the public discourses, institutional frameworks and material settings which might foster or hinder conviviality.

This collection involves, above all, a comparative perspective. All its contributors consider how conviviality has been imagined within various traditions, parts of the world and periods of history. They attempt thereby to close the gap in the existing literature which so far encompasses single-case studies that focused primarily, with very few exceptions (Ameripour et al., 2010; Overing and Passes, 2000; Rabo, 2011), on the Western societies. The contributors draw on the empirical material collected sometimes over many years of research or in comparatively designed studies to examine ideological foundations and sociological realities in a variety of human projects across times, culture and space. While not exclusively, the contributions apply qualitative, primarily ethnographic methods of investigations, and Morawska makes an explicit claim on the

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advantages of comparative qualitative approach to the study of conviviality in real-life situations.

In her opening essay to this volume, Morawska employs a historical sociological perspective to identify the different social conditions for the emergence and endurance of cultures of conviviality. Drawing on her research on everyday multiculturalism in cities as different as medieval Alexandria, early modern Venice and 19th- and 20th-century Berlin, she demonstrates the complexity of emergence and endurance of convivial cultures, pointing to the relevance of institutional conditions for peacefully living together. A similar view is represented by Freitag in her historical comparison of different cities of the 19th and early 20th Ottoman Empire. For Freitag, conviviality is rooted in the cosmopolitan culture of the empire and yet it undergoes a change in the course of modernizing reforms of the 19th century. The temporal line of comparison is also key to Blommaert's contribution. He positions the notion of conviviality within a steadily changing context of a neighbourhood in Antwerp, pointing to the inter-generational and inter-ethnic relationships in transition that challenge the everyday togetherness.

Heil considers processes of transition and change in situations when migrants move between two cultural contexts. He investigates expectations and experiences of conviviality in two neighbourhoods, one in Catalonia, Spain, and the other in Casamance, Senegal, which are linked through international flows of migrants. He positions these within broader contexts to show how normative connotations included in political rhetoric and public discourses impact on actual practices of conviviality. Through careful comparison, Heil displays local and the transnational workings of social institutions and how the notions of neighbourliness and conviviality differ across time and space. Differing neighbourhoods are also the subject of investigation for Wise and Velayutham. Taking a situated approach to understand the everyday practice of diversity, they ethnographically explore Singapore's high-density public housing and Sydney's suburbs.

Wessendorf takes a different line of comparison. She investigates the London Borough of Hackney, arguably one of the world's most diverse places. Here, Wessendorf draws from her ethnography to probe the distinction between public and semi-public spaces as core units of analysis rather than geographically bounded localities since it is the nature of such public and semi-private spaces that impacts most on key forms and contents of social interactions. By shifting from purely geographical understanding of space, Wessendorf can show how norms of civility and sociability specific to each realm shape everyday intercultural encounters. Through her study, Wessendorf displays the limitations of a comparative framework based entirely on geographical vocabulary. This point is picked up by Vigneswaran who studies a social milieu in Johannesburg that is characterized by intense inter-group animosity and violence: policing culture. He considers three different situations in urban encounters all involving people who are supposed to provide security. By taking such an extreme environment as a test site for our understanding of conviviality, and comparing it with its variants in societies less affected by violence, Vigneswaran creates the opportunity for generating hypotheses regarding a wide variety of conviviality's forms and manifestations.

Vigneswaran's contribution demonstrates how conviviality and conflict intertwine in everyday practices related to people's basic need for protection and security. Central to his hypothesis is the notion of uncertainty which shapes local convivial interactions and

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relationships between the vulnerable and the violent. Freitag's analysis, on the contrary, points to numerous violent conflicts between religious and ethnic groups which resulted from the rise of competing nationalisms within the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century. Such conflicts stood in clear opposition to cosmopolitan aspirations. Freitag argues that the scholarship on Ottoman cosmopolitanism cannot explain the concrete mechanisms of people living together because it neglects the long histories of urban conflict. Conviviality is for her thus a more suitable heuristic tool to analyse the Ottoman experience. Both contributions shift their attention away from a dichotomist understanding of conflict and conviviality towards exploration of circumstances – in particular institutional – under which people manage everyday frictions. Heil's innovation, on the contrary, is to see conflict as a form of interaction; as such, conflict is a productive moment that enables further cooperation and interaction between people formerly involved in situations of tension and violence. In Heil's study, conflict relates to everyday violations of the norms of civility; yet in its core, the work is about the ability to interact, negotiate and translate between the sides. That is how conflict becomes an aspect of conviviality. Similarly, Wise and Velayutham understand conflict as a micro-tissue of social interaction between neighbours. In their study, they show that conflicts over everyday issues such as gardens, corridors and rubbish are modes of convivial interaction.

While never wholly determinative, the spatial settings of convivial encounters matter. Wise and Velayutham pay particular attention to spatial orderings which mediate the experience and meanings made of cultural difference. However, they go beyond other works which focus exclusively on spatial arrangements of difference. Optimal space and materialities alone, they argue, are not sufficient to produce conviviality. They identify the role of 'transversal enablers', individuals who knit together connections in the community. These are often charismatic people who make people feel welcome by engaging in gift exchange or creating opportunities for the production of care and trust across cultural borders. Wessendorf's examination of parochial spaces shows a similar role of 'shared themes' which constitute spaces of convivial encounters and create a ground for more meaningful networks of mutual support. Blommaert gives particular attention to how the situated uses of language – in his studied case 'oecumenical' Dutch -, offer a kind of platform for bridging ethnic, generational and social differences in an evolving neighbourhood that is becoming home to new immigrants from all over the world. Meanwhile Vigneswaran's study focuses on the lack of plentiful and accessible public space, and how this situation itself facilitates convivial exchange. He shows how particular material arrangements – for example, limited areas for pedestrians on the streets – constitute niches for new kinds of negotiations of conviviality. Vigneswaran's understanding of space is that of a territory, and he considers it in the context of protection and security. Heil, on the contrary, points to two possible understandings of neighbourliness in terms of residency, a mode of occupying space in long duration, and of mobility, which means an acquisition of space by the newly arrived.

Through the careful consideration of when and how space matters for conviviality, the authors to this collection show that local encounters are always mediated by forces 'larger than' the very moment of contact (cf. Amin, 2012). Wise and Velayutham, Heil and Freitag systematically investigate the role of public rhetoric and political discourses

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around the notions of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism which shape the particular spatial arrangements of difference. In particular for Freitag, cosmopolitanism is relevant both as personal outlook of people involved in convivial interactions and as political rhetoric shaping everyday life in highly diverse societies. Wise and Velayutham compare the public discourses in their two research sites as different forms of intercultural habitus that underpin the practices of conviviality. They show how everyday situations, highly localized and with limited duration, can break through highly racialized political discourses and policies. Freitag picks up the distinction between elite versus mundane cosmopolitanism and makes it productive for the discussion on conviviality. She demonstrates that while elitist political cosmopolitan rhetoric established one form of convivial culture, the alliance-centred discourses among traders and professional groups produced a non-elitist, everyday conviviality.

Freitag's contribution points towards the importance of social class for the experience of conviviality. Morawska reminds us, too, that conviviality is also strongly embedded in the structures of gender. Morawska argues for considering conviviality as a process of becoming which is grounded in the local and historical interplay of a number of factors at macro and micro levels. For her, thus, 'cultures of conviviality' cannot be reduced to the orientations and practices of individuals that recreate them.

The contributions comprising this special issue are representative of an emerging line of research that considers conviviality as an analytical tool for comparison in order to explore the fragile, changing and diverse local configurations of diversity. In this way, they draw on notions of protection, neighbourliness, transience, negotiation and translation to interrogate the ways conviviality and conflict variably intertwine in everyday life. Importantly, through a careful comparison of diverse spatial and temporal contexts, and bearing in mind the workings of gender and class, they go beyond assigning convivial practice to settings defined by ethnic, racial or religious difference. Instead, the contributing authors demonstrate how such fixed categories increasingly become silent, and how other divisions – such as between the vulnerable and the protectors (Vigneswaran), between the newcomers and long-standing residents (Heil and Blommaert) and between those who respect or violate norms of civility (Wise and Velayutham) – become relevant for living together. Through such comparisons, we believe, the meanings, contours and conditions of conviviality can become much clearer.

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