The Place-Making of Communities in Urban Spaces: The Invention of the Village Saint-Louis Sainte-Marthe

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1 Introduction

Heritage regimes are connected through different levels of political decision-making processes. Top-down and bottom-up movements influence each other within a local and global field of power. This chapter presents an empirical example that addresses the mutually constituting dynamics between migration and the restructuring and marketing of the global city of Paris. I focus on festive events as platforms for the negotiation of the inclusion and exclusion of newcomers and the transformation processes experienced by both the migrants and the city as a result of migration.¹ I use political and cultural events in a north-eastern district of Paris as the entry points to understand the different pathways of migrant urban incorporation. A place-based community has emerged through a collective struggle for recognition of material and immaterial heritage (patrimoine), when the whole district was threatened by local politicians who had planned its destruction. This chapter does not take pre-defined ethnic or religious groups as the units of analysis; there is no assumption that people who share a religious or national origin settle as a

community. The place-based community emerged only when the place of residence was threatened. The new consciousness of the common political will to save the district has lead to the invention of the Village Saint-Louis Sainte-Marthe as I will show below. By linking studies of events in translocal social spaces to an analysis of subjective rescaling processes, this chapter draws attention to the innovative methodological instruments of action theory.

The present case continues my interest in festive events as political arenas where inclusion/exclusion and transformation processes are negotiated. In the Parisian district of Sainte-Marthe, local political struggles are concentrated within festive situations. Through the invention of festive events members of a neighborhood are able to resist urban restructuring projects: Their collective actions produce a new, geographically defined “we-group,” which includes people from various and diverse economic and cultural backgrounds (Salzbrunn 2007a, 2007b). This research is based on ongoing participant observation in the district since 1999: more than 140 observed festive and political events; thirty interviews with the presidents and several members of the different associations; and interviews with the local politicians, shop and restaurant owners, and other inhabitants of the district. I demonstrate how through participation in political and cultural events in a city, migrants become actors in both the restructuring and rescaling of the place. It is by taking into account the larger project of restructuring Paris within a globally competitive tourist market (influenced by material and immaterial heritage politics) that we can understand the different pathways of migrant urban incorporation in a specific gentrifying Parisian neighborhood.

Focusing on a global city like Paris allows me to address the following questions. What are the differences in the rescaling processes experienced by cities and neighborhoods in these cities? How do the migrants themselves recognize their place in the city vis-à-vis their fellow city dwellers? How do they work out their ties to the city with the other neighborhood dwellers? How do rescaling processes effect the representation of locality and identity in each city? How does the historicity of the neighborhood (the places) shape the ways in which the migrants are being incorporated into the diverse neighborhoods of the urban? Through these research questions I move the study of migrants, global cities, and transnationalism beyond discussions of cultural diversity, cosmopolitanism, and migrants’ role in the labor economy (Jouve and Gagnon 2006; Kofman 2005; Lacroix, Sall, and Salzbrunn 2008). In contrast I offer a comparative perspective on migrants as active agents in community-building and the restructuring of locality.

2 “Localizing” Transnational Networks

The field of migration studies has extensively dealt with networks, transnational spaces, and migration fields since the beginning of the 1990s (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc Szanton 1992). More recently, researchers concerned with transnational
migration have once again expressed a concern with “the local.” However, contained within a shared interest in transnational process and apparently a similar focus on place and space are different perspectives that are worth distinguishing. In addition, by positing a transnational space bounded by a shared national origin or ethnicity, many of the studies have actually reinforced the notion of the naturalness of nation-based identities, reinvigorating methodological nationalism but in a new form (for a critique see Anghel, Gerharz, Rescher, and Salzbrunn 2008; Glick Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbra ndsen 2006; Glick Schiller and Wimmer 2002).

Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çaglar (Glick Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbra ndsen 2006) also speak of the local – not to indicate a general sense of multiple rootedness but to call for a specific investigation of the forces that shape specific places. They are concerned with the localities from which migrants and their descendants leave, in which they settle, and to which they are connected by social fields, which often extend across the borders of nation-states. Glick Schiller (2005) defines a transnational social field as a specific set of networks of ego-centered social relations that are linked to institutions situated within specific places. These fields contain social relations of unequal power constituted by differential access to forms of capital, military force, and means of discursive representation. Building on this approach, Glick Schiller and Çaglar (2011) offer a theorization of locality that brings together a transnational perspective on social relations and the scholarship on the neoliberal rescaling of local urban space. In addition, a common effort in place-making can be observed as a strategy of resistance against the destruction of the material and immaterial culture of the place.

3 Translocal Social Spaces: The Importance of Local Living Conditions in the Process of Place-Making

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which migrants adapt their strategies of settlement and community-building to changing opportunity structures that are available in the specific place of settlement and are a product of the insertion of neighborhoods and cities within larger restructuring processes (Furlong, Biggart, and Cartmel 1996). Understanding the local power relations, the processes and discourses of political lobbying, and the concrete conditions of access to housing, property, business, residence permits, etc. is crucial in the implanting of the network within different localities. A common strategy developed by the inhabitants is to maintain their district as a whole, with its buildings and inhabitants – which also means to limit gentrification processes.

If we put aside the use of national states as the “natural” unit of analysis in global contexts and turn from space as a metaphor to an examination of migrants in relationship to specific localities, then we need a new methodological approach. I propose a methodology of actor networks within festive events that facilitates the study of new, inclusive groups within an urban environment. Such groupings may
Contribute to and be facilitated by transnational social fields. To develop this methodology, I bring together elements of network analysis and event analysis while paying attention to the positioning and restructuring of locality. Once we trace migrants beyond their ethnic connections to other networks present in the locality, we are able to see how networks enable migrants to become rooted in an urban context. The political, social, and economic context determines the evolution of the networks linked to a specific locality. It is particularly useful to trace members of these networks as they negotiate their participation in festive events.

Action theorists have noted that festive events are arenas for local negotiations through which migrants are either included or excluded by institutions and local actors who create, reinforce, change, or block the production of communal feelings; the study of such events makes transformation processes visible. This methodological choice avoids taking a particular ethnic, religious or sociocultural category as an entry point for the study of processes of communitarization. By communitarization, I mean the Weberian approach to group-building processes, *Vergemeinschaftungsprozesse* (Weber 1921: 29). I emphasize here the dynamic character of a group and the emergence of alliances that do not follow ethnic- or religious-based logics.

Focusing the interactive creation of space (Grathoff 1994: 52) and the production of the imagined other on the stage that urban festive events provide, I observe group-building processes within the social and geographic space of a neighborhood (Brubaker 2004; Glick Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbrandsen 2006). Hence I suggest a definition of translocal social spaces as those that result from new forms of delimitation that consist of but also reach beyond geographic or national boundaries. These spaces become the new sources of identification and action within specific local and global reference systems.

However, this does not imply a local determinist position that denies agency to the migrants. It is the migrants who also shape the conditions of the local. They contribute to the upgrading of certain cities and certain urban districts and zones. An entanglement of various subjective and objective rescaling processes is taking place. Rescaling has led to the reorganization of the relationship between localities, regions, nation-states, and global institutions. Rescaling is the outcome of neoliberal restructuring practices, especially rearrangements of governance, which position cities directly as global competitors (Glick Schiller and Çaglar 2011; Salzbrunn 2011).

The term scale can be defined as the summary assessment of the differential positioning of cities determined by the flow and control of capital and structures of power as they are constituted within regions, states and the globe (Glick Schiller and Çaglar 2011).

By focusing on festive events in global cities, I demonstrate that various actors who have differential access to power contribute to rescaling processes. Paris, while marketed as quintessentially French, is not representative of France. Nonetheless, the subjective process of repositioning cities, states and regions is multi-
layered and influenced by objective rescaling processes. The different ways Paris tries to maintain its positioning as a global city has an impact on ongoing (local) rescaling processes.

4 Case Study: Urban Belonging in Paris

In my case study, I move from examining migration through an ethnic or religious lens and concentrate on the insertion of migrants from multiple backgrounds within a particular neighborhood in the throes of gentrification processes. These processes were intensified by efforts of the city leadership to increase its competitiveness within the global tourist market. I examine an event as entry point into the local dynamics of the Parisian district of Sainte Marthe in order to show how groups emerge or evolve in a migratory context (Çaglar 1997; Salzbrunn 2002, 2008). In 2001 the global competition among cities contributed to the electoral victory of a Socialist mayor, Bertrand Delanoë, and his allies from the Green Party in Paris. This victory was the culmination of pressures to recognize, celebrate, and market the diversity of the city. Efforts to highlight Parisian diversity had begun in 1995, with leftist parties’ victory in municipal elections in the multiethnic neighborhoods. In addition, a global marketing trend that highlighted cultural and geographical diversity, as seen in several carnivals initiated in European cities such as Berlin and London (Knecht and Soysal 2005), stimulated efforts to market Paris as a capital of international recreation. The introduction of arts and crafts villages (such as a street of fashion in Barbès) and several festive events supported by the city of Paris – such as the Chinese New Year in 2007 – were all products of this commitment to highlight diverse cultures (Raulin 2004) in order to reposition the city within the global tourist industry. Nowadays, tourist guides and official agendas like L’officiel des spectacles recommend the Quartier hindon, Quartier juif and two of the Quartiers chinois (one of these is close to Sainte Marthe).

Sainte Marthe is named after one of the two parallel streets in the district. Many of the current buildings in the area were built in the 1860s in a former Parisian suburb (Faubourg) by the Comte de Madre, an entrepreneur whose utopian ideas led to the invention of a new architecture for workers’ homes, known today as le style Madre. These tiny two- and four-story houses were constructed with cheap material and no foundation. A workshop or boutique was installed on the ground floor, while on the upper floors the workers’ living quarters consisted of one- or two-room apartments without sanitation. The building complex still has the form of an H on the map: Two parallel streets were joined in the middle by a small perpendicular street. These were closed by gates because at the end of the nineteenth century the whole district was private property.

By the 1980s the buildings were in danger of collapsing because of their poor quality, and at the beginning of 1991 the mayor wanted to destroy the whole quarter in order to construct huge buildings like the ones located north and east of
Sainte Marthe. The inhabitants, afraid of being expelled, developed a variety of resistance strategies. The association, *Village Saint-Louis Sainte-Marthe*, organized banquets and festivals through an extensive public relations campaign in order to win public and political support. The association’s name alluded to a territorial identity within a big city. In the festivals and activities organized by the association, the architectural and aesthetic value of the houses and the cultural richness of the inhabitants were emphasized. The history of the place and the inhabitants’ struggle against their common enemy of right-wing politicians and real estate speculators strengthened a sense of belonging to this particular neighborhood.

In 1994 the notion of rehabilitation figured for the first time in the new urban projects in Paris. During the municipal election campaign in 1995, the local left-wing agenda focused on opposition to real estate speculation (which would have lead to destruction of the neighborhood) and support for restoration of this quarter. Thanks to mobilizations against the destruction of the neighborhood complexes in 1995, the Left won district elections. Subsequently, in 2001, the whole city of Paris was conquered by the Left for the first time. However, it was not until 2003 that the restoration project of the quarter was approved and the home owners were offered financial support.

A central point of interest in *Sainte Marthe* is the celebration of cultural diversity by the inhabitants themselves, but also, once their struggle had become more and more visible, by the new left-wing Mayor. Today the population includes working migrants from North Africa and the former Yugoslavia who arrived in the 1960s, artists and musicians who have occupied the deserted ateliers of the artisans, and a middle-class population attracted by the diversity and village like ambience of the place. Since the 1990s festive events have been organized on *Sainte Marthe* Square in which participants display their cultural background through on-stage performances next to amateur or professional music groups, belly dancers or clowns. The latter are engaged in order to entertain the numerous children present during the events.

The events are organized by *Les quatre horizons* (*Four Horizons*), an association created in 1997 as a consequence of an inner conflict within the previous (still existing) association *Village Saint-Louis Sainte-Marthe*. The name *Village* had already been part of the strategy to create a common territory-based identity. *Saint-Louis* refers to the hospital of the same name founded in 1607. Until the 19th century, this was the only building in this area. Today it is situated right next to the street *Sainte-Marthe*, the second part of the first association’s name. This association had focused its struggle on the conservation of the architecture. The founder and president of the second association, *Les quatre horizons*, Kheira, is a French woman of Algerian origin who has sought to provide activities to the inhabitants (especially the youth) of the quarter, create links between different people from different horizons and backgrounds, and establish a meeting venue for the Algerian women who suffer from isolation. She works as a house-keeper in the district and serves as a mediator between people searching for housing and for sites for shops, and she
is known as an informal real estate agent. Because of her involvement in real estate transactions in the district, she has been criticized by several inhabitants, even though she is engaged in saving the neighborhood from destruction. *Four Horizons* organizes cultural events such as outdoor balls, as well as public couscous banquets and carnivals, which have made *Sainte Marthe* more and more popular in the eyes of tourists, potential investors in real estate, and local political representatives. The organization of festive events also has played a central role in shaping the inhabitants’ identification with the quarter.

The association receives public funding from the State Secretary of Urban Affairs for its social work and from the district mayor for participating in the organization of the annual multi-sited nationwide *Fête de la Musique* on the square *Sainte Marthe*. It also gets money from members fees (thirty to forty members) and from the banquets and food sold during the festivals. In the course of building and conducting these events, the association interacts with various key persons in the district: the mayor and elected deputies and the presidents of other associations (especially the association for local history). Others, such as local artists and craftswomen, participate in and benefit from these festive events.

In 2001 the small picturesque central square at the upper end of *Sainte Marthe* Street, which had been abandoned by the inhabitants because of the petty crime that occurred there, was symbolically inaugurated as one of the representative streets of Paris and was officially named *Place Sainte Marthe*. The act of putting plates with that name on different house facades of the square was a kind of political victory for the mobilized residents of the neighborhood. During the *Fête de la Rentrée* in 2005 (celebrating the end of school vacation), the organizers interviewed the local inhabitants in order to collect their impressions. All those interviewed seemed to be appreciative of the solidarity between the neighbors and of the beautiful and rare architecture of the district. Those interviewed testified to the strong sense of belonging experienced by the inhabitants of the neighborhood. The presentation of this audio self-portrait during a festive event was itself instrumental in shaping a place-based identification among the residents of *Sainte Marthe*.

In this quarter, feasts called “carnivals” have been celebrated in three different forms. One is a summer carnival organized by a theater company and supported by the city. Local artists from the *Rue Sainte Marthe* and the president of *Four Horizons* have enlivened this event by helping the children create masks and costumes. Second, beginning in 2003, several inhabitants of the quarter participated in a new type of summer carnival inspired by the London *Notting Hill* carnival. They named it *Barbès Tour* in reference to a popular quarter in the northern Paris (Barbès) where migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa have settled. The year 2003 was declared the official year of Algeria in France; the president of *Four Horizons* and its other members acknowledged this in the festival by wearing Berber costumes in front of a banner with “Algeria my love” written in Arabic. In 2004 the *Barbès Tour* took place in Barbès and *Sainte Marthe*, where a concert with different musical styles was given.
The third type of carnival is one based on the Roman Catholic calendar. Every year, on Mardi Gras, one day before Ash Wednesday, the Four Horizons had offered crêpes to the children of Sainte Marthe and prepared a Moroccan dish (tajine) in a local restaurant run by an association, La Rôtisserie (that was closed on October 8th 2012). There is also reference to a Catholic feast day (la Chandeleur), which has become only a pretext for consuming crêpes together. Similarly, in 2004 Four Horizons celebrated both Halloween and the beginning of Ramadan at a restaurant. All these references and the activities exemplify the cultural bricolage that marks the neighborhood. By consciously mixing Catholic and Muslim references during the festive events, as well as combining food and music from various origins, Four Horizons and the inhabitants of the neighborhood draw attention to the inhabitants’ place-based sense of belonging. Despite the power asymmetries within this field of identification, the local political identity construed through festive events has led to the emergence of a we-group and created a sense of belonging that extends beyond ethnic and religious origin and identity.

One important consequence of these activities was that the new left-wing mayor realized the cultural and economic potential of the quarter. In 1996, he launched a district-wide festival called “Ensemble, nous sommes le Xe” (together, we are the tenth district of Paris), during which the local associations presented their activities and their particular cultural identities (through food, music, clothes), which led in some cases to a reinvention of these identities. It takes place since then and from 2004, a specific theme is chosen every year.

The local governance structures thus contributed to the development of place-based identities. The District Mayor followed the program of Mayor Bertrand Delanoë, who had based his activities on four principles: “solidarity; quality of life; openness to the world; citizenship.” Although different neighborhood groups presented and sold their so-called traditional craft objects and/or food, the display of cultural heritage was only one aspect of the residents’ activities. These gatherings and festive events also provided local entertainment and opportunities for the negotiation of local power relations and for influencing the ongoing urban restructuring processes by repositioning the neighborhood anew within the global tourist industry. They provided venues for publicly pressuring the politicians taking part in these events to revisit their image of the neighborhood and the urban redevelopment plans they advocated. The new Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, elected in April 2014, declared that she wants to continue inclusive urban politics: “My vision of Paris is a metropolis where migrants are first of all considered as a chance, where foreigners are integrated into local public life, where public services adapt to everyone and where language barriers do not exist anymore.”

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Several French presidents have had a similar discourse, but sometimes limited their action to the exhibition of diversity (as in the *Musée du Quai Branly*, “where cultures engage in dialogue”), thought by François Mitterrand and achieved by Jacques Chirac.

It is important to note that if I had focused on the members of the district who were of Algerian descent, I could have told a story of an ethnic or transnational network: There are indeed connections between the president of *Four Horizons*, her nephew in Great Britain, and her uncles in Algeria. To begin instead with neighborhood ties and the evolving sense of local community does not deny the fact that this “communitas” (which had emerged through a threat - see Baumann 2001) evolves with the political context faced by North Africans. Living within transnational social fields, North Africans in Paris are very sensitive to France’s colonial history. They also face increasing daily restriction of access to public space, especially around *Belleville* and *Sainte Marthe*, because of growing identity controls, which the government justifies by concerns about illegal migration. This was particularly important during Nicolas Sarkozy’s presidency: The inhabitants of *Sainte Marthe* had voted massively for the left-wing candidate Ségolène Royal in 2008 and therefore continued to deprecate the right wing’s policy. Therefore, between 2008 and 2013 (the end of Sarkozy’s presidency after the victory of the Left), the inhabitants of *Sainte Marthe* (and several other districts of Paris) cultivated their idea of living in a sort of protected island, despite the threat of identity controls organized by the (national) police (and dangerous for residents without residence permit). As Sadio Bee, a Senegalese fashion designer living and working in *Sainte Marthe* puts it in 2013: “We are a big village here. Everybody knows each other, people help each other. The hospitality and the atmosphere remind me of Senegal.”

This atmosphere was put forward by many inhabitants and by the presidents of associations during the struggle for conservation of the material and immaterial heritage of *Sainte Marthe*. Whereas the association *Village Saint-Louis Sainte-Marthe* put forward the material heritage and thought about an application for the UNESCO label because of the particular architecture of the buildings, the association *Les quatre horizons* has underlined the immaterial heritage: the extraordinary cultural richness of this cosmopolitan neighborhood.

However, in *Sainte Marthe* the response to the surveillance of migrants by policemen has been local rather than solely ethnic or religious. Surveillance has led to the development of solidarity networks for the protection of political and economic refugees. Several individuals were supported by a network that extends beyond persons of Algerian descent. Inhabitants of *Sainte Marthe* include these forms of solidarity among the reasons to be proud of their neighborhood. Consequently, I argue that cultural practices and alliances can best be analyzed in the context of

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4 Interview with Sadio Bee held by Monika Salzbrunn in French in Paris on August 31st, 2013. Translated by the author.
specific local political, social, and economic conditions, which are manifested within a specific time and space (Barth 1969; Cohen 1993). Actors’ identities are “partial, multiple and fractured by cross-cutting alliances” (Werbner 1997: 265).

The local dynamics of Sainte Marthe were shaped by the struggle to re-structure the neighborhood as part of broader globe-spanning forces that are repositioning cities. The residents resisting the gentrification of the neighborhood were able to find support for their cause from the district authorities because of the increasing value of cultural diversity (displayed within the neighborhood) in marketing cities within the global tourist industry. The appropriation of urban space by the migrants in this case and its repositioning locally and globally were partly the outcomes of the subjective rescaling of the place from the local inhabitants’ perspective (both migrant and native) and of local politicians’ recognition of this neighborhood’s value in repositioning Paris. Sainte Marthe is now proudly cited by official sources and publications as a picturesque model for a peaceful cosmopolitan environment - which is a result of the rescaling process. As Bodaar and Rath point out, the city boosters increasingly acknowledge that urban diversity is a vital resource for the prosperity of cities and a potential catalyst for socio-economic development, particularly since business investors consider this diversity as one of the factors determining the location of businesses. The commodification and marketing of diversity, through the commercial use of the presence of the ethnic ‘others’ or their symbols, fits in well with this process, and this helps explain the growing enthusiasm for ‘interesting’ landscapes that have the potential to draw tourists. (Bodaar and Rath 2005: 4)

Daniel Fabre and Anna Iuso (2009) have also underlined the complex relation that inhabitants entertain with monuments: One possible attitude resides in an appropriation (Fabre and Iuso 2009: 26) of the buildings, sometimes with a certain kind of irony. The inhabitants of Sainte Marthe are satisfied with the almost achieved renovation process, but are conscious of the price they had to pay: A growing attention from outside that provided a growing afflux of tourists. Monuments and heritage, as Fabre writes in his latest book edited with Annick Arnaud (2013), are sources of emotions.

5 Conclusion: Rescaling Processes, Community-Building and Heritage Politics

Several processes of structural and migrant subjective rescaling can be observed in the present case. It is also possible to observe the processes through which the subjective scaling has a direct impact on the institutional structures of urban life in ways that reposition the entire city in relationship to flows of people, capital, and relations of power related to heritage politics. The pressure put by the inhabitants
to local politicians in order to prevent the district from destruction has contributed to a victory by the left. Thanks to a celebration of material and immaterial heritage (a cosmopolitan environment), diversity has come on the political agenda. This local development is increasingly important in a broader political context where national borders and boundaries are reconstructed.

After September 11, 2001, identity controls were expanded from national borders to inner public space in Europe and have increasingly become an appearance-based form of racial profiling. This form of surveillance produces new feelings of exclusion and denies practices of belonging, particularly among those of Arab or sub-Saharan origin, despite their European citizenship. It reinforces however these migrants’ belonging to specific neighborhoods like Sainte Marthe/Belleville and therefore contributes to new forms of community-building. These nationwide or continent-wide administrative and executive practices are part of the uneven distribution of power within social fields and contribute to the subjective rescaling of places by migrants. As migrants experience these exclusion and inclusion processes in several global cities, their cultural, political, and financial activities contribute directly to the rescaling of districts within these cities. In the present case, the cultural and human values of the population in Sainte Marthe were put as an argument in favor of a preservation of its architecture and of its social and cultural diversity as part of the immaterial heritage. In response, the left-wing Mayor accepted to transform the project of destruction into a rehabilitation project. The few buildings that could not be prevented from destruction because of their bad basic structures were replaced by social housing in order to limit gentrification processes and real estate speculation.

As local leaders who must constantly assure the continuing successful regional and global connectedness of their cities, mayors of global cities support and celebrate the diversity of their urban space. They strive to facilitate continued global flows of capital, of investments, and of a highly skilled (migrant) labor force, as well as of tourists. Placing my analysis on the local rather than the national level allows me to analyze the situations in which urban discourses and policies may differ from those formulated by national leaders. The district mayors in the northeastern quarters of Paris generate responses to migration that reflect an awareness of competitive marketing of both cities and the contributions of migrants to both the restructuring and the marketing.

However, the short-term success of the rescaling process in Paris may lead to midterm social problems and increase inequalities in the city. Today, the rehabilitation project of Sainte Marthe is almost terminated and several properties, renewed with public funding in order to help the owners who would not have been able to finance the major part of the costs, are offered to investors or people belonging to the upper middle class, for prices up to 8,700 Euros per square meter. An ancient art gallery in the principal street of Sainte Marthe was even replaced by a real estate

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5 Observations in real estate agencies around Sainte Marthe between August 2013 and April 2014.
agency. In part, the gentrification process being mediated through neighborhood interventions and struggles reinforced the notion of belonging. However, several individuals profited from the risen real estate prices by selling their apartments. The Parisian and district mayors were able to retain their positions within this dynamic, at least as long as they maintained a certain balance between different interest groups in the voters’ eyes.

Paris’s recognition of urban diversity was a product of the local context of Paris, including its specific electoral politics. These were shaped by the global and regional pressures asserted on the city leaders and the way they sought to reposition the city and themselves in urban politics and governance structures. Rescaling processes within the city, realized partly by migrants’ activities and festive events, place the city on a different scale for an emerging type of tourist who travels in search of sociologically dynamic quarters like Notting Hill in London or Kreuzberg in Berlin. Nevertheless, it should be noted that perceptions of France and its restrictive immigration laws (reinforced until 2012) make New York a more attractive place for highly skilled migrants (Salzbrunn 2011).

Paris shares intensive gentrification processes where spaces are globally marketed in ways that reflect the struggle through which this city seeks to retain its leading global positioning. Examining the relationship between urban rescaling processes and migration allowed us to reposition urban political economy within more global fields of capital, tourism, investment, and transnational social fields. It also placed the restructuring of neighborhoods and gentrification processes within globally extending markets in interaction with migrants’ transnational social fields and settlement dynamics. Using festivals as entry points to analyze the interplay between migrant dynamics, transnational networks, global restructuring, and questions of political representation, this chapter illustrated how local political discourses on immigration may diverge from homogenized narratives of national policy.

Furthermore, focusing on localities rather than on specific groups based on national, ethnic, or religious criteria allowed us to go beyond methodological nationalism and to follow the actor’s social practices, which extend beyond national frameworks. I suggest that a focus on events can avoid taking a defined ethnic, religious, or sociocultural category as a key issue in the processes of communitariization. This epistemological perspective with its comparative design reveals some surprising crosscutting local alliances that go beyond predefined categories.
References


