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City Makers and the Politics of Urban Diversity Governance

Comparative Approaches from Europe and Asia

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Editors

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Editors
Jeremie Molho
Toronto Metropolitan University
Toronto, ON, Canada

Marie Gibert-Flutre
Department of East Asia Studies
Université Paris Cité
Paris, France

Kong Chong Ho
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
National University of Singapore
Singapore, Singapore

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About the Editors

Jérémie Molho is Senior Research Associate at the Canada Excellence Chair in Migration and Integration Program at Toronto Metropolitan University. His research focuses on the intersections of migration, urban change, and cultural governance in global cities. From 2023 to 2025, he has been Principal Investigator of *Fostering Integration Through the Arts*, a project exploring how community arts support newcomer integration in Toronto. Since 2024, he also has been leading *Highly Skilled Migration in Global Cities*, a SSHRC-funded study of the evolving motivations and experiences of hypermobile professionals across diverse urban contexts such as Istanbul, Doha, Singapore, and Toronto. He holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Angers and has held research positions at the European University Institute in Florence and the National University of Singapore. jeremie.molho@torontomu.ca

Marie Gibert-Flutre is Associate Professor of Geography in the Department of East Asia Studies (LCAO)/CESSMA at the Université Paris Cité. Her research deals with the dynamics of public and private spaces in the production and appropriation of urban space in Asia. By critically exploring "global Asia" from ordinary public spaces and neighborhoods, she turns in particular the traditional approach to "global cities" upside down and contributes to a renewed conception of metropolization as a highly situated process, where forces at play locally are both intertwined and labile. As Principal Investigator, she currently manages the Ho Chi Minh City case study of the International SEANNET 2 (Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network) research program: Communities of Learning, Research and Teaching Collaborative (funded by the Henry Luce Foundation). She has recently published the following books: *Les envers de la métropolisation: Les ruelles de Ho Chi Minh Ville (Vietnam)* (CNRS Edition, 2019) and *Asian Alleyways: An Urban Vernacular in Times of Globalization* (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), co-edited with Heide Imai. marie.gibert@u-paris.fr

Kong Chong Ho is currently Head of Urban Studies at the Yale-NUS College, National University of Singapore. Trained as an urban sociologist at the University of Chicago, his research interests are in the political economy of cities, higher education, and youth. Recent higher education studies publications include "Internationalization and Education-Related Mobility in Asia-Pacific Universities" *Oxford Handbook of Higher Education in the Asia-Pacific Region* 2023, (first author), "Student mobilities in a contagion: (Im)mobilising higher education?" *Geographical Research*, 2021 (Ravinder Sidhu as first author), and "Conceptualizing the second education circuit for China's doctoral students in Asia," *International Journal of Chinese Education,* 2020 (Yun GE as first author). ho_kc@yale-nus.edu.sg

About the Contributors

Beniamino Peruzzi Castellani is a fourth-year PhD Candidate in "Transnational Governance" (Department of Political Sciences and Sociology) at the Scuola Normale Superiore and at the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna (Florence, Italy). His research focuses on the diffusion of models, policies, and practices of diversity governance at the city level, comparing cases in Europe, Japan, and South Korea. He has an interdisciplinary academic background, with BA degrees in Philosophy and Art History, and MA degrees in Political Philosophy and Sociology of Religion (University of Pavia / Istituto Universitario Studi Superiori). He had international academic and working experiences in Germany, France, England, Spain, Morocco, China, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea. Among others, he has been a visiting student at the University of Cambridge during his MA and a visiting researcher at the University of Tokyo and at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona during his PhD. Since 2015, he has been organizing and coordinating teaching programs, training courses, and workshops aimed at promoting intercultural/inter-religious dialogue and social inclusion in the city of Florence. In 2020, he founded—and is currently President of—"Confluenze," an Association for Social Promotion working in the field of social inclusion. He is currently coordinating the project "Florentine religious experiences: Our living cultural heritage," which is aimed at carrying out the first systematic research on the history and experiences of the Florentine religious communities in order to create tools enabling to know the city's religious pluralism, deconstruct stereotypes and prejudices, and enhance the rights of religious minorities. beniamino.peruzzi@sns.it

Camille Schmoll completed a doctoral thesis at the University of Paris Nanterre (2004) and a Marie Curie post-doctorate at the European University Institute, Florence (2005–2007). She was a junior fellow of Institut Universitaire de France and an associate professor in geography at the University of Paris Diderot. She is now Directrice d'Etudes at EHESS, a member of the CNRS team "Géographie-cités," and a fellow of Institut Convergences Migrations. Her research topics include

international migration; gender and space; urban approaches to migration patterns; cosmopolitanism and borders; gender generation and the family in international migration; and qualitative approaches to migration. Recently, she engaged in a pluridisciplinary research program on the trajectories and welcoming policies of Ukranian migrants in Paris, in collaboration with Catherine Lejeune.

She recently published Les damnées de la mer. Femmes et frontieres en Méditerranée (La Découverte, 2020). She published several articles in the field, in journals such as *Identities. Global Studies in Culture and Power*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, and *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies*. She co-edited the following books: *Méditerranée. Frontières à la dérive* (2018, Le Passager Clandestin), *Migrations en Méditerranée* (with Catherine Wihtol de Wenden and Hélène Thiollet, 2015, CNRS Publisher), *Gender Generations and the Family within International Migration* (with Eleonore Kofman, Albert Kraler, and Martin Kohli, 2011, Amsterdam University Press), and more recently *Migration, Urbanity and Cosmopolitanism in a Globalized World* (Springer) with Hélène Thiollet, Catherine Lejeune, and Delphine Pages El Karoui. camilleschmoll@yahoo.fr

Catherine Lejeune is associate professor of American studies at University Paris Cité. She holds a PhD in Ethnic and Migration Studies from Université Paris Cité. Her interests have included US immigration law and policy. She has explored the ways in which local actors in US cities respond to immigration, and she has investigated the emergence of local-level policy-making in the absence of US national immigration reform. While her former research lied with the determinants of irregular migration in a comparative perspective (North America-Europe), her more recent interests focus on undocumented migrants in global cities, primarily US immigrant youths, and their lives as almost ordinary city residents in a highly diverse context and as emergent political subjects. She is currently investigating new forms of urban citizenship from a wider perspective. In the multidisciplinary program *Sociétés Plurielles* (USPC, 2014–2018), she coordinated with D. Pagès-El Karoui the research axis "World-cities: a comparative approach to Cosmopolitanism and Migration." Catherine Lejeune's latest related publications include "The Fabric of Irregular Labor Migration in 20th Century Western Europe and North America: a Comparative Approach," *Labor History*, Vol. 56, 2015, Iss 5; *Migration, Urbanity and Cosmopolitanism in a Globalized World*, with D. Pagès-El Karoui, C. Schmoll, & H. Thiollet, eds. Chapter 1 "Introduction" and Chapter 11 "Cosmopolitanism in US Sanctuary Cities: Dreamers Claiming Urban Citizenship," IMISCOE Research Series, Springer, 2021. lejeunec@univ-paris-diderot.fr

Daniel P. S. Goh is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology and Associate Provost (Undergraduate Education) at the National University of Singapore. He is a comparative-historical sociologist who studies state formation, postcolonialisms, race and multiculturalism, urbanisms, and religion. His recent edited volumes include *Worlding Multiculturalisms: The Politics of Inter-Asian*

Dwelling (Routledge, 2015), *Precarious Belongings: Affect and Nationalism in Asia* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), *Urban Asias: Essays on Futurity Past and Present* (JOVIS Verlag, 2018), and *Regulating Religion in Asia* (Cambridge, 2019). He has published over 50 articles in journals and books, including "Super-diversity and the Bio-politics of Migrant Worker Exclusion in Singapore," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 2019, 26 (3): 356–73. socgohd@nus.edu.sg

Dominique Vidal is Professor of Sociology at the Université Paris Cité and researcher at the Migrations and Society Research Unit (URMIS, https://www.urmis.fr and https://www.urmis.fr/dominique-vidal/). His work examines the dynamics between ordinary social relations and the political context or, to put it differently, the way in which ordinary social relations shape the political context and the political context shapes ordinary social relations. For a long time, his research has focused on countries that had recently adopted democratic institutions, specifically Brazil and South Africa. He is particularly interested in the relations between democratic ideals and the hard reality of everyday life. Within this framework, he has studied internal migrations and international migrations in big cities, the access of domestic workers to labor laws in Rio de Janeiro (most of these domestic workers are internal migrants from Northeast Brazil), the experience of Mozambican migrants in post-apartheid Johannesburg, and the Bolivian garment workers in São Paulo, Brazil. He is currently involved in two research projects: (1) on Portuguese migrants in the Paris region, and, more specifically, the Parisian janitors (roughly 75% Portuguese migrants or from Portuguese ascent), and (2) on Brazilian migrants in Maputo (Mozambique). dominique.vidal@u-paris.fr

Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho is Professor at the Department of Geography and Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. Her research explores the geographies of citizenship, currently focusing on multidirectional migration and diasporas and on transnationalism, aging, and care. elaine.ho@nus.edu.sg

Gilles Guiheux is Professor at Université Paris Cité (France) and a researcher at the Centre for Social Sciences Studies on the African, American, and Asian Worlds (CESSMA). He is a senior fellow at the Institut Universitaire de France (IUF). He received his PhD from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris). A China specialist, he specializes in economic sociology and sociology of labor. He has published numerous articles and contributions on enterprises and entrepreneurs, more recently, on industrial workers. His most recent book is a general history of contemporary China (Contemporary China: 1949 to the Present, London, Polity Press, 2023). He has recently co-edited a special issue of Le Mouvement social on China's labour regimes (2023/4). His upcoming book is titled *Comparing Labor in Contemporary China and in Postwar Japan and France. Precariousness in High-Growth Economies*, co-edited with Bernard Thomann (Amsterdam University Press, 2025). gilles.guiheux@u-paris.fr

Léa Réville is a second-year doctoral student on a CIFRE contract at the City of Paris in the Housing and Habitat Department. She is registered at the EHESS doctoral school (ED 286) and is attached to the Géographie-cités laboratory (UMR 8504). Her research combines urban geography and sociology of migration through the study of reception and integration structures for exiled people in Paris. After writing a master's thesis in Political Studies about the Halte humanitaire of Paris-Centre, she is currently working on a thesis directed by Camille Schmoll and entitled "The refuge city through the lens of temporary urbanism: analysis of a political initiative to open up public buildings to exiled populations in Paris." lea.reville@gmail.com

Lulu Fan is an associate professor of the School of Public Administration at South China University of Technology in Guangzhou, China. She obtained her Ph.D. in Sociology from the Department of Applied Social Sciences at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her primary research areas encompass the platform economy, informal employment, and the impact of artificial intelligence on work, among others. Her scholarly articles have been published in journals such as China Perspectives, China Information, Development and Change, and China Review.

Marco Cremaschi PhD Urban Planning, an expert in Urban Policies, is a professor at the Urban School, Sciences Po, Paris, and a fellow of the Institut Convergence Migration, Paris. His research consists of a comparative approach to large urban projects in cities and the reception of refugees. He has been working on the relocation of refugees and migrants in small Italian municipalities (2016-17 Lampedusa and Thessaloniki; 2013-16, Italian Ministry of Research) and the interaction of the informal housing sector and the arrival of migrants and refugees (Rome, Buenos Aires, and Calcutta, but also Amman and Khartoum). Other research interests include the financialization of housing (ANR-ORA, 2019-22 Co-Investigator); the implication of the representation of the crisis for policies, in particular, immigration and local development (RECRIRE, 2015-18 Horizon 2020); and the competition between regions and metropolitan bodies in Italy and France (Ecole Française de Rome). His recent publications include *Regulation and Planning: Practices, Institutions, Agency*, London: Routledge (2021, Yvonne Rydin, Robert Beauregard, Marco Cremaschi, Laura Lieto eds.); *Culture and policy-making. Pluralism, Performativity, and Semiotic Capital*, Cham: Springer (2021, M. Cremaschi, C. Fioretti, T. Mannarini, S. Salvatore); and *Réparer la ville: les workshops du Cycle pour un urbanisme des transitions: Lampedusa, Salonique, Buenos Aires et Berlin*, Planum. The Journal of Urbanism, suppl. n. 40, I Sem. (2020 dir., M. Cremaschi, Baratier, J.). marco.cremaschi@sciencespo.fr

Natalie Lang is Research Fellow at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS), University of Göttingen. Her research interests include the anthropology of religion, migration, and cities. She was Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asian Urbanisms Cluster and the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore (NUS), and Associated Junior Fellow at the Max

Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, University of Erfurt. She is also affiliated to the Centre d'études et de recherches sur l'Inde, l'Asie du Sud et sa diaspora Université du Québec à Montréal (CERIAS-UQAM). Her doctoral thesis in anthropology received the Frobenius Research Award 2019. Natalie Lang is the author of *Religion and Pride: Hindus in Search of Recognition in La Réunion* (Berghahn Books, 2021). She co-edits the research blog CoronAsur: Religion and Covid-19, and she co-edited *CoronAsur: Asian Religions in the Covidian Age* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2023). natalie.lang@cemis.uni-goettingen.de

Rochelle Yun Ge (Rochelle) obtained her PhD in Sociology from the National University of Singapore. She was a Harvard Yenching visiting fellow and currently the Dean of School of Education at the University of Saint Joseph, Macau SAR China. She works from a cross-disciplinary angle, integrating sociological perspectives into the research and teaching about education and social development. Her current research interests include student mobilities, internationalization of higher education, and regional development. Her work can be found in Routledge *Handbook of Asian Migrations*, *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *Journal of Population Research*, and so on. rochelle.ge@usj.edu.mo

Samantha Shu Fang Lim obtained her PhD in Comparative Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore (NUS), and she is currently Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Geography in NUS. Her research focuses on different housing communities in urban Asia, the everyday lives of ordinary individuals, and their social networks. Her current research project explores the lives of seniors living in different neighborhoods in Singapore and their social networks. samsfl@nus.edu.sg

Shai-Ann Koh is a former research assistant investigating topics under multiculturalism, urbanism, and Asian Christianities. She is currently serving as a coordinator for global study trip experiences at NUS College.

Tommaso Vitale Sociologist and Dean of the Sciences Po Urban School, teaches both Urban Sociology and Urban Policy Analysis.

He got an MA in Political Science (1999—University of Milan), a PhD in Sociology (2003—University of Milan), a Certificate of Advanced Study in Comparative Institutional Analysis and Design (2004—Indiana University, Bloomington), and an HDR in Sociology (2023, Sciences Po). He is Researcher at Centre d'études européennes et de politique comparée, where he co-coordinates with V. Guiraudon the research program Cities, Borders and (Im)Mobility. He also coordinates the research seminar "Cities Are Back in Town." He is a member of the Editorial Boards of PArtecipazione e COnflitto—The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies and of Sociologica—International Journal for Sociological Debate. His empirical research has been organized around a main theoretical framework: a neo-structural sociology, not deterministic but attentive to structural contexts of oppor-

tunities at different scales, to explore the relationship between social and spatial factors influencing forms of "community action." Having been trained within a Weberian theoretical framework giving the city a generative role in structuring social, political, and economic interactions, his research looks at community action not as a form of solidarity but as a form of collective action not requiring a common identity. This framework irrigates his three research programs:1) Roma agency, integration, and upward social mobility; 2) the political sociology of associations and NGOs in urban societies; and 3) the impact of urban social and spatial structure on electoral behavior. He has published articles in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Journal of Public Policy*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, *Social Science Information*, *Scientometrics*, *Sociologie*, and others. tommaso.vitale@sciencespo.fr

Yang Yang is a research fellow at the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in Human Geography from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research focuses on transnational religious networks and the politics of ethno-religious identity in northwestern China. Her dissertation thus adopts an ethnographic approach to analyzing the impacts of Hui Muslims' grassroots connections to non-Chinese Muslim communities in Southeast Asia and the Middle East in the Hui's everyday lives in Xi'an, China. Her current research examines how the Hui diaspora in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, contributes to grassroots connections between China and Malaysia, and how Malaysia becomes Hui's new Muslim role model through serving as their preferred destination for halal tourism and their style references for Muslim fashion. Notably, this project analyzes how ethno-religious identities and mobility intersect in the contexts of migration and the recentering of Islamic teachings in both cultural and political contexts on a global scale. Her recent publications include a special Issue in Political Geography on "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Views from the Ground" (2020), co-authored with G. Oliveira, G. Murton, A. Rippa, and T. Harlan; "Travelling to the Past: Xi'an and Its Revived Tang Imperial City," co-authored with Zhu, Y. In White, L. (eds.) Commercial Nationalism. Bristol, United Kingdom: Channel View Publications in 2017; and *Making Cultural Cities in Asia: Mobility, Assemblage, and the Politics of Aspirational Urbanism*. London & New York: Routledge, co-edited with T. Oakes and J. Wang, in 2016. ariyang@nus.edu.sg

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Chapter 1
City Makers and Diversity Governance: The Roles of Urban Leaders, Migrants, and Civil Society

Jeremie Molho, Marie Gibert-Flutre, and Kong Chong Ho

1.1 Introduction

The rise of "superdiverse cities" has put traditional diversity governance frameworks to the test: "long-standing understandings and patterns of social and cultural difference" (Vertovec, 2015: 6) are faced with complexifying migration flows and rising identity claims. These challenges manifest not only through the global rise of nationalist discourses that stigmatize migrants and minorities (Triandafyllidou, 2017), but also through the multifaceted critiques of the dominant approaches to managing difference, such as assimilation and multiculturalism (Bloemraad et al., 2008). The city, which has long been seen as a key site to observe the relationship between migration and social transformations, is increasingly put forward as the driver of emerging diversity management models (Uitermark et al., 2005; Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2018; Caponio et al., 2019). Cities are not only spaces of everyday life and encounters for individuals of different backgrounds, origins, values, and religions (Wessendorf, 2013). They have also emerged as sites for political actors that operate on multiple scales and form transnational networks of knowledge exchange, mutual assistance, and advocacy (Ho, 2008).

J. Molho (✉)
Canada Excellence Chair in Migration and Integration Program, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: jeremie.molho@torontomu.ca

M. Gibert-Flutre
Department of East Asia Studies, Université Paris Cité, Paris, France
e-mail: marie.gibert@u-paris.fr

K. C. Ho
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: ho_kc@yale-nus.edu.sg

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Urban governance is a complex process, involving various types of actors such as states, local governments, private interests, and civil societies who collectively shape the decision-making and resource allocation in urban spaces (Le Galès, 1998). Following from this premise, diversity governance refers not only to the management of policy challenges arising from increasingly heterogeneous societies but also to the production and contestation of discourses on identity and belonging. It encompasses the formal and informal mechanisms through which different social groups—defined by race, ethnicity, gender, and other markers of difference—are organized, recognized, and integrated into the public life of the city (Levitt, 2015; Dines et al., 2021). In practice, diversity governance interrogates how distinctive identities are articulated and valued in the public sphere, the rights and opportunities accorded to various groups, and the degree to which their uniqueness is celebrated or marginalized (Garbaye, 2008).

In order to advance the analysis of emerging urban diversity processes, this book looks at how different kinds of city makers drive the politics of diversity governance by pushing forward their visions, values, and interests. City makers can designate economic and political elites that drive the transformation of global cities (Yamamura, 2022). However, marginalized communities can also be referred to as city makers in order to recognize and affirm their agency (Hunter, 2013). City makers contribute materially and symbolically to the production of urban space (Lefebvre, 1974). By approaching urban diversity governance through the lens of city makers, we intend to move away from the understanding of diversity governance as a fixed, top-down, and nation-centric framework, and approach it as a dynamic system generated by a range of urban actors that contribute to the fabric of the city.

Recent developments in Europe and Asia have put the national models of diversity governance to the test and shown the necessity for a renewed reflection. In Europe, the last decade has been marked by a series of refugee crises and the emergence of extreme right movements that have put at risk the values of openness and human rights at the core of the European project (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018). In Asia, in recent years, countries like India and Myanmar, known as models of multicultural coexistence where citizens of multiple religions and cultural backgrounds have lived side-by-side for centuries, inter-ethnic tensions, nationalist rhetoric, and violence have put the social fabric at risk (Lie, 2019; Roy Chowdhury, 2020). Cities in both regions are going through a number of dilemmas and challenges. Asian cities are characterized by a drive to attract labor to boost their growth (Yeoh & Lam, 2016). They have been confronted with rising patterns of urban exclusion and have had to come up with new tools for urban inclusion (Ye, 2019). European cities, despite their long tradition of welcoming and integration, are confronted with new challenges as they host populations from an ever-increasing diversity of cultures, with highly differentiated statuses and needs (Crul, 2016). European cities, which have traditionally approached urban diversity governance through the lens of assimilating foreigners within a uniform national culture, have had to reinvent themselves as spaces of intercultural interactions (Zapata-Barrero, 2015).

1.2 Objectives of This Book

The literature on diversity governance is often segmented along geographic lines, which prevents thinking about the contrasts and convergences across different contexts. This book proposes using global and cross-regional urban comparisons as a method to critically examine the politics of diversity governance in European and Asian cities. It builds on a collaboration between the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Université Paris Cité (UPCité) that brought scholars from Asia and Europe together to explore the challenges of governing increasingly diverse cities across the two continents comparatively.[1] Through two workshops held in Singapore and Paris, scholars in migration studies, urban studies, political science, sociology, geography, and other relevant disciplines came together to discuss emerging challenges and patterns of diversity governance in European and Asian cities.

In this volume, Europe and Asia are not treated as monolithic entities, and we do not intend to offer a comprehensive conceptualization of urban diversity governance for either entire region. Rather, we focus on the connections and interactions across what are conventionally considered separate regional segments in a globalized world. By bringing together rich empirical work from a limited set of cities such as Paris, Singapore, Barcelona, Guangzhou, Doha, and Hamamatsu, we aim to promote a transregional perspective, and emphasize that it is both useful and legitimate to think across regional boundaries rather than remain confined to the scale of a single region.

This book pursues two interrelated objectives:

1. Rethinking urban diversity governance through the lens of city makers. To move beyond the traditional view of diversity governance as an overarching framework conceived at the national level, our book redefines it as the product of actions taken by multiple city makers: from urban leaders branding their city's diversity to tourists and investors, to individual migrants and civil society activists combatting racism and exclusion. Each contribution reflects on the role of specific city makers while situating them within the broader urban diversity governance system. By employing the concept of city-makers to frame diversity governance, this book places agency at its center. This approach integrates various perspectives from the literature. First, it deciphers the role of the city within multiscalar diversity governance by analyzing how urban leaders mobilize resources and devise actions despite constraining institutional structures. Second, it highlights the ways in which migrants and minorities define their own strategies and navigate the city in the face of obstacles. Third, it emphasizes the crucial role of civil society actors in the politics of urban diversity, challenging traditional diversity management frameworks to advance alternative visions.

[1] We are grateful to the UPC-NUS Committee for the grant ANR-18-IDEX-0001 awarded to our project titled "Governing Diverse Cities in Europe and Asia" (1 January 2021 to 30 June 2023).

2. Advancing a cross-regional and translocal comparative approach to analyze the politics of urban diversity in contemporary cities. The book mobilizes comparison as both a theoretical and empirical approach to situate local diversity governance in global processes. The cross-regional comparison of cities in Europe and Asia aims to situate our reflections on urban diversity governance in their geographic context while discussing global shifts. The contributions of the book also mobilize translocal comparisons as a method to think about the city relationally in order to develop grounded theoretical tools that capture processes across different socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts. Our objective is not to produce an exhaustive analysis of European or Asian urban diversity governance, but to demonstrate that a transregional approach yields fresh insights into the dynamics of urban diversity in a globalized world. The volume's particular focus on cities like Paris and Singapore allows for in-depth and multifaceted explorations of these cases while linking them to wider transregional debates. In Paris, for instance, we examine the central urban dynamics of refugee reception and public space management, as well as processes of urban restructuring in the suburbs. In Singapore, the contributions address various dimensions of diversity governance, including housing, cultural policy, higher education, and religious diversity management.

1.3 Exploring Processes of Urban Diversity Governance

Traditional perspectives on diversity governance tend to either conceive it as the product of stable national frameworks or to interpret its mutations as the effects of the diffusion of neoliberalism (Zukin, 1998; Hatziprokopiou et al., 2016). While we acknowledge that these path-dependent frameworks and hegemonic movements are significant in shaping diversity governance, this book repositions the debate by emphasizing the dynamic agency of city makers. Instead of seeing urban diversity as a fixed, top-down construct, we argue that it is continuously navigated, negotiated and reinvented by local actors. This process-oriented approach reveals how urban diversity governance evolves in response to shifting local contexts, offering a more fluid understanding than traditional frameworks allow while remaining firmly grounded in the empirical realities observed through urban research and engagement with local stakeholders.

The first theoretical pillar dominating reflections on how diversity is governed centers on frameworks: models that are often enshrined in constitutions and legal apparatus, and that underpin the organization of social relations among people of different cultures and identities. The centrality of this approach is linked to the critical role that diversity governance plays in the formation and sustaining of the nation-state (Goh, 2008). Historically, the ability of empires to incorporate and manage diverse peoples has been deemed essential to their durability and influence (Sinopoli, 1994). With the rise of nation-states, the elaboration of national narratives to generate a common identity has led to the establishment of diversity

governance frameworks conceived as stable modes of regulating difference within a given territory (Castles, 1995). These frameworks, whether confined to abstract political thought or adopted as official stances by governments, tend to suggest that such theoretical constructs capture the essence of how diversity is managed across wide spaces, often at the expense of acknowledging heterogeneity, chaos, and the state's limited capacity to impose uniform visions on such complex matters.

Following this framework-driven focus, scholars have attempted international comparisons that emphasize how unique historical trajectories give rise to contrasting national models (Kymlicka, 2000). However, categorizing countries into clear-cut models can limit our understanding of complex variations. At the local level, researchers have deployed this framework approach to reflect on how models like assimilation or multiculturalism impact issues such as interethnic tensions and discrimination (Silberman et al., 2007; Chua, 2009; Matejskova & Leitner, 2011; Fincher et al., 2014). Yet, contradictions inevitably emerge at the local scale: the promises made in the abstract by national frameworks often do not materialize on the ground. Globalization has further challenged this framework approach, which is too narrowly focused on nation-state boundaries. The proliferation of transnational connections generates plural allegiances and questions the nation-state's dominance as the primary sphere of allegiance (Appadurai, 1996). Consequently, traditional national diversity governance frameworks are increasingly critiqued for restricting the cultural rights of migrants and minorities and for generating fragmentation and discrimination (Rodríguez-García, 2010).

Hence, our call for an agent-centric approach is driven by a desire to move beyond the generalized emphasis on stable, nationally defined institutional systems. The framework approach tends to overlook the dynamic and contested nature of diversity governance. Although it captures large-scale controversies surrounding diversity governance, it often sidelines the subtle forms of contestation and the diverse array of local actors that continuously navigate, negotiate, and sometimes subvert these established frameworks. This book, therefore, foregrounds an actor-centered approach that captures both the production of diversity governance embedded in multiscalar networks of power and the everyday practices through which local agents reframe and reshape it.

The second pillar dominating reflections on diversity governance is the critical lens that links the widespread adoption of new diversity management models with the global diffusion of neoliberal governance (Mayer, 2007; Saeys et al., 2019). These models, propagated through corporate and consulting discourses, promote human diversity as a resource to be tapped. In this context, the focus has shifted from ethno-racial differences to include dimensions such as disability, age, and sexual orientation. Proponents argue that diversity fuels urban vitality, fosters vibrant communities, and drives cosmopolitan urban spaces (Bolzoni, 2022), while also serving as an economic asset that contributes to innovation and urban regeneration (Ottaviano & Peri, 2006; Landry & Wood, 2012). However, critical scholars contend that neoliberal diversity management leads to a selective and elitist understanding of urban diversity, ultimately depoliticizing diversity governance (MacLeavy, 2008; Raco & Tasan-Kok, 2019).

While acknowledging these insights, our aim is not to reduce all diversity governance processes to a single dominant force (Roy & Ong, 2011; Parnell & Robinson, 2012). Instead, we seek to decipher the complex local processes through which urban diversity is managed and contested. Our approach foregrounds the agency of local actors, including civic groups and community organizations, that mobilize to challenge or offer counter-narratives to prevailing diversity management models.

Building on the critique of methodological nationalism, this volume reconceptualizes the city as an arena embedded in multiple, multiscalar networks (Brenner, 2004; Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016) and as the locus where urban diversity is produced, contested, and redefined. In this view, the city is not a passive recipient of dominant diversity management scripts but a space where various actors advance divergent interpretations and practices of diversity. This perspective is operationalized by focusing on three key processes that are essential for deciphering diversity governance: 1) Spatial processes: These capture the physical and symbolic transformation of urban space. Space is not only a backdrop for identity politics and the assertion of cultural belonging but also a site where inclusion and exclusion are materially and symbolically produced. The shaping of neighborhoods, public spaces, and symbolic landmarks is thus integral to understanding how urban identities are articulated and contested. 2) Policy-making processes: These reveal the organizational and institutional dynamics that govern the conception and implementation of urban policies such as housing, education, and cultural policies, that directly or indirectly influence how diversity is experienced and understood. They are driven by coalitions of local actors and interest groups, who coalesce around specific policy goals and sectors. 3) Transnational circulation processes: These highlight the connection between local diversity issues and translocal networks, characterized by the circulation and exchange of ideas, models. It suggests that urban diversity policies are not confined to local or national levels but are shaped through cross-city comparisons, competitions, and collaborations. By adopting this process-oriented approach, our volume seeks to capture the fluid and complex dynamics of urban diversity governance.

Firstly, the contributions in this volume analyze urban diversity governance by tracing how the management of urban space shapes the understanding and experience of diversity. This approach draws on urban studies scholarship, which has long discussed the way in which changing urban demographics transform cities, generating multiple political debates (Sandercock, 2003; Fainstein, 2005; Bunnell, 2008; Zukin et al., 2015; Molho, 2020). Deciphering the processes underpinning the material and symbolic transformation of urban space is key to understanding urban diversity governance: from assessing the impact of city planning on social groups to examining image-making strategies that selectively include or exclude particular identities. These processes involve a broad range of city-makers: policy-makers and developers who build, promote, and design urban spaces, as well as ordinary citizens whose daily actions and interactions both influence and are affected by urban change. Tracing the roles, interests, and identities of these city-makers is thus essential for understanding how urban diversity is governed.

Secondly, our inquiry into urban diversity governance examines the construction of various urban policies that directly or indirectly target or affect migrants and minorities. Many contributions in this volume analyze how the institutions and stakeholders responsible for urban services address the challenges of increasingly diverse cities. For instance, educational policies have to accommodate a plurality of values and worldviews, while employment policies need to be recalibrated to address the unique challenges faced by migrants, refugees, and disadvantaged minorities in the labor market (Spencer, 2009; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018). In addition, cities have implemented a diverse array of social and cultural policies aimed at enhancing residents' sense of belonging, fostering intercultural dialogue, ranging from refugee educational programs to festivals celebrating the diverse traditions of migrant populations (Collins & Friesen, 2011; Watson, 2019; Molho et al., 2020). These various urban policies involve a wide range of city-makers—from civil servants, educators, and private businesses to agencies promoting the city. Each policy sector is shaped by a constellation of professionals, interest groups, and users who, under the constraints of uneven power dynamics and resources, collectively decide the extent to which inclusion or exclusion will prevail. Tracing how these policies are constructed and implemented is key to deciphering urban diversity governance.

Thirdly, the contributions in this volume do not treat cities as closed entities or view city-makers as operating solely at the local scale. Instead, they draw on transnational studies to embrace the multiple connections in which diverse city-makers are embedded and examine how these networks affect diversity governance. Recent years have witnessed cities actively positioning themselves as welcoming spaces for refugees and migrants, even in contexts where national politics are adverse (Majka & Longazel, 2017; Mescoli, 2023; Bhabha, 2015; Abe & Katsaura, 2016). A range of transnational processes are involved. On one hand, formal city networks are formed to promote open and welcoming urban spaces, such as Arrival Cities, Solidarity Cities in Europe, or the Asia Pacific Cities Coalition of Cities against Discrimination (Dahiya & Das, 2020; Wonders & Fernández-Bessa, 2021). Attending to the multiple transnational networks in which cities are embedded is key to deciphering diversity governance. Transnationally connected city-makers harness their capacity to connect local resources with distant locales (Levitt, 2020). They range from charismatic mayors engaging in city diplomacy and architects circulating professional urban knowledge, to transnational entrepreneurs, traders, religious leaders, and ordinary urban dwellers sustaining multiple global connections.

By tracing spatial, policy-making, and transnational processes, we explore how urban diversity is continuously produced and reconfigured by a wide range of actors. This agent-centered perspective offers an alternative to static models of diversity governance, emphasizing the fluid, processual, and interconnected nature of contemporary city-making. Rather than reducing diversity to the outcomes of fixed institutional frameworks, we illuminate the everyday practices, strategic negotiations, and contested political arenas through which diversity is continuously reimagined and reconfigured.

1.4 City Makers and Diversity Governance

The book is organized into three sections, each emphasizing a distinct type of city maker and exploring their role in diversity governance. Approaching diversity governance through the lens of city makers acknowledges the agency of a wide range of urban actors, from civic leaders, to economic elites, grassroots organizations, migrant communities, and cultural activists, who, despite their differing resources, actively shape both the urban environment and its diversity narratives. The chapters examine how these actors transform the physical and symbolic landscapes of their cities while revealing the power dynamics that continuously reconfigure practices of inclusion and exclusion.

Throughout our exploration, we encounter contrasting visions of the city advanced by different city makers. The first section presents the city as a battleground of power struggles, where actors assert their visions through coalition-building and urban policy implementation. It analyzes the alliances that bind various urban leaders in promoting their diversity agendas, from coalitions championing diversity to state apparatuses policing public spaces and enforcing order over those seeking refuge. The second section shifts focus to the ordinary city, shaped by migrants as everyday city-makers whose influence derives not from formal economic or political authority but from the social resources they mobilize as they navigate daily life. These actors work to establish homes, secure livelihoods, and build better futures for themselves and their families. Finally, the third section explores the city as a space of hope, where civil society actors strive to advance a more inclusive urban vision. Rather than engaging in direct confrontation, these actors employ pragmatic strategies to co-produce a pluralistic discourse on urban diversity.

1.4.1 Urban Leaders as Diverse City-Makers

The first section examines the city as a space of power by focusing on how dominant city makers such as urban policymakers, economic elites, and developers, shape the urban landscape. This perspective builds on a tradition of analyzing the city as a contested arena where various interests and forms of power manifest. For instance, Göran Therborn's (2017) work in *Cities of Power* illustrates how national, popular, and global forces converge to shape urban spaces, arguing that cities remain deeply intertwined with nation-state agendas even amidst globalization. Similarly, the work of Glick-Schiller and Çağlar (2016) informs our approach by emphasizing how diverse forms of power impact migrants and other urban actors. Drawing on these theoretical traditions, this section unpacks the power struggles underpinning urban diversity governance by deconstructing top-down strategies that mobilize, instrumentalize, and reshape diversity in the city. By examining the actions of city makers and the collective processes they drive as they project their visions and transform their cities both symbolically and physically, we move beyond the view of diversity governance frameworks as stable, universal models. Instead, we reveal

the contingent and complex modalities of their formation, as well as the discrepancies between the top-down discourse promoted by dominant city makers and the on-the-ground effects experienced by those it affects.

The analysis of coalitions of powerful city makers who transform their cities to promote diversity is a recurring theme in several contributions in this book. These studies examine how urban coalitions mobilize identity to enhance a city's attractiveness, viewing diversity as a resource to secure investment and legitimize policy agendas. For instance, Beniamino Peruzzi Castellani's investigation of the Intercultural Cities network in Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan explores how heterogeneous coalitions leverage intercultural discourses as tools for economic growth and political legitimacy. Castellani argues that diverse city-making is not merely a localized process but operates within a framework of multiscalar interconnections. Emblematic strategies such as Barcelona's Intercultural City Plans, Hamamatsu's Intercultural City Visions, and Ansan's Multicultural Village Plan are implemented through the involvement of civil society and the business sector, both to empower cultural minorities and to elevate the city's stature in the global landscape of diversity governance.

Further extending our understanding of how growth coalitions harness urban diversity to promote a city's image, Marie Gibert-Flutre's analysis of the Silk Road wholesale market in Paris highlights the role of a new class of Chinese entrepreneurs in the economic restructuring of the Parisian suburbs. Traditionally viewed as peripheral actors in urban development, these migrant entrepreneurs have emerged as key city makers, shaping and reimagining urban space. Their strategic positioning has been crucial in transforming Chinese-run marketplaces from obscure urban enclaves into global showcases, thereby enhancing Paris's international status.

The contributions in this section underscore the inherently contested nature of top–down diversity governance. Marco Cremaschi and Tommaso Vitale, for instance, show how city-makers forge coalitions among actors with divergent visions to shape urban diversity governance on the ground. Their analysis of a temporary refugee reception center in Paris reveals the tension between the city's progressive, humanitarian approach and the restrictive policies promoted by the national government. Although Paris, in collaboration with NGOs and local organizations, sought to provide individualized support and demonstrate a commitment to human rights, pressure from the Ministry of the Interior forced the shelter to evolve into a space governed by contractual obligations. With this transformation, the promise of unconditional hospitality was compromised by requirements such as police visits and integration into the formal asylum system. This case illustrates the tensions that can arise when local initiatives must reconcile with restrictive state policies.

Other contributions in this volume deconstruct top-down models by examining how these discourses are experienced on the ground. For instance, Daniel Goh and Shai-Ann Koh's study of Singapore's Punggol public housing project highlights the contrast between the projected image of a technology-driven, cosmopolitan urban space and the daily experiences of xenophobic microaggressions faced by new immigrants. Their work uncovers how urban leaders reimagine the city as a cosmopolitan hub: policymakers, architects, and engineers have conceived and branded

Punggol as a digital district to attract global talent. Yet, by delving into the daily lives of Indian skilled immigrant families, the chapter demonstrates that these cosmopolitan aspirations are continually challenged by xenophobic attitudes and microaggressions. Despite the state's efforts to cultivate a cosmopolitan ethos, skilled migrants find themselves engaged in a daily process of community-building that navigates and confronts local xenophobia.

Our exploration of how diversity governance systems operate and affect urban residents is further enriched by examining the contrasting receptions of Ukrainian and other asylum seekers in Paris. In their chapter, Camille Schmoll and Catherine Lejeune analyze a multi-level approach to welcoming Ukrainian refugees in France. Alongside the French state, which plays a central role in orchestrating the reception of Ukrainian refugees, municipalities actively contribute to these efforts, utilizing municipal properties to create temporary shelters and children's playgrounds, and mobilizing municipal workers to help refugees navigate the welfare and protection systems. The chapter contrasts the experiences of Ukrainians with those of other migrants who have arrived in Paris since 2015 from countries such as Tunisia, Afghanistan, Syria, and Sudan. Unlike the Ukrainians, these migrants often lack official protection or assistance and face harsher urban realities, including homelessness and police hostility. Yet, supported by collectives, local NGOs, and community networks, these migrants actively participate in creating and sustaining communities, thereby influencing the social fabric of the city despite their marginalized status.

This section suggests that a relational, actor-based framework for understanding urban diversity must account for the logics behind the formation of cross-sector coalitions, whether these coalitions aim to inclusively harness diversity or strategically exclude certain groups. This approach yields empirical insights into how competing visions of diversity are continuously enacted and transformed in urban contexts. Furthermore, the contributions contrasting top-down diversity governance with the grassroots actions of migrants invite further exploration into how migrants can act as city-makers in their own rights, despite the restrictions they face in urban environments.

1.4.2 Migrants as Ordinary City Makers

The second section of the book shifts the analytical focus from top–down strategies to the everyday practices of migrant communities, to the ordinary acts of inhabiting, working, and leisure that cumulatively drive the transformation of the city. Through daily interactions and deliberate initiatives, migrants and minorities actively shape urban landscapes (Isin & Siemiatycki, 2002; Ehrkamp, 2005). As they redefine commercial districts to meet culturally specific needs, establish spaces for social and spiritual gatherings, they imprint their mark in the urban space. This section examines how these collective activities influence not just the physical fabric of cities but also their socio-political dynamics.

In contrast to top-down efforts that promote diversity as a hallmark of modernity and development, this section analyses urban diversity governance through the lens of the ordinary city (Robinson, 2013). Drawing on Robinson's seminal critique of urban thinking of modernity and development as a model diffusing from developed to "underdeveloped" regions, we take distance from the wide-spread efforts of global or aspiring global cities to present themselves as beacons of progress through elite-led efforts to construct themselves as inclusive models. Shifting the focus to the ordinary city emphasizes how diversity is produced and experienced in everyday life. This approach foregrounds the agency of ordinary citizens, positioning migrants and minorities not as exceptional outliers but as integral parts of the urban fabric (Dahinden, 2016).

The contributions in this section offer a rich array of perspectives by examining different types of migrants. One chapter focuses on international students, who, while often considered temporary residents, act as highly mobile cultural brokers. Another chapter analyzes the experiences of internal migrants in China, highlighting how individuals with precarious legal status navigate significant challenges to establish themselves in rapidly transforming urban environments. Additionally, several studies explore diaspora communities, revealing the strategic positions that these groups occupy within urban economic networks. This diversity of perspectives enriches our understanding of how migrants and minorities constitute powerful agents in urban life.

The chapters in the second section illustrate how migrants navigate the city to fulfill their aspirations by building adaptive social networks. Whether forming ethnic niches in the labor market, establishing ethnic neighborhoods, or creating informal community spaces, these networks emerge as responses to material hardships, administrative restrictions, and pervasive racism. Although such conditions often force migrants to cope with exclusionary power structures, they also catalyze innovative forms of ordinary city-making. For example, the work of Samantha Lim and Elaine Ho shows that rural migrants in Guangzhou, despite significant constraints imposed by their residence status, actively navigate and reshape their urban environment through strategies rooted in solidarity and mutual aid. Their study underscores that, despite systemic barriers that exclude them from fundamental social benefits, these migrants exercise agency by mobilizing social networks and adaptive strategies to pursue their aspirations. The chapter also details the physical manifestation of rural migrant settlements in Guangzhou: urban villages characterized by distinct shapes and high densities. These informal housing settlements provide low-cost options for internal migrants and are shaped by the migrants' needs, while the local government's tolerance of these villages, despite their non-compliance with city planning regulations, acknowledges the essential economic role these migrants play in the city.

Similarly, Dominique Vidal's study of Portuguese janitors in Paris reveals how this community mobilizes informal networks to pursue aspirations of social mobility and become integral to the urban fabric. The prominence of Portuguese-origin concierges in Paris's private housing sector is a striking example of how migrant communities can become closely associated with specific occupations. This

demographic dominance illustrates how the Portuguese have not only adapted to but also shaped the urban economy of Paris. Through their ascent in this profession, they have emerged as key city makers. Their work extends beyond routine maintenance to encompass social connections both within and outside the buildings they manage. Portuguese janitors play multifaceted roles in safeguarding public health, contributing to violence prevention, disseminating real estate information, and participating in electoral campaigns. Their active involvement underscores their essential role in shaping the urban environment. The janitors' presence is integral to the daily routines of Parisians, facilitating interaction, mediating neighborly disputes, and reinforcing civic guidelines.

Other contributions in this section extend the analysis to translocal networks, showing that the construction of a city's international status is not solely the result of top–down branding efforts but also emerges from the ordinary, transnational circulations of migrants and diasporas. For example, Gilles Guiheux and Lulu Fan explore how the Chinese diaspora engages in trade networks to fulfill their social mobility aspirations, linking local practices to broader inter-city economic flows. Through industriousness and skill acquisition, garment industry migrant workers climb the economic hierarchy by building networks of suppliers and customers and establishing modest businesses. This manifests in the city through workshops, dormitories, and specialized clusters, marking these migrants as key contributors to the urban economy. Moreover, as they leverage transnational networks, they position the city within global and regional economic flows. In this way, the chapter portrays migrant garment workers as city-makers who contribute not only to the urban economy but also to socio-economic networks that transcend geographical boundaries.

Similarly, Rochelle Ge and Kong Chong Ho's analysis of student social networks highlights how international students serve as cultural brokers, bridging diverse social groups and circulating transnationally. By comparing the experiences of students in Singapore, Seoul and Beijing, this chapter argues that international students, often perceived merely as transient city-users, are indeed active participants in shaping the urban cultural landscape. Their academic pursuits and extracurricular engagements position students as cultural brokers, able to facilitate cross-cultural understanding and interaction within their host cities. Through sports, religious affiliations, and other communal activities, these students foster meaningful exchanges with local societies. The chapter further examines the multi-level implications of student mobility. Even as they forge friendships within their host cities, international students maintain connections with their home countries. Upon returning, they often continue to engage with their host city, retaining socio-economic ties and friendships. This illustrates international students' place as city-makers across global urban landscapes.

Together, these chapters illustrate that urban diversity governance is shaped not only by top-down urban strategies but also by the everyday agency of migrants. Their aspirations and the informal and transnational networks they build provide a counterpoint to elite-driven narratives, demonstrating that the ordinary acts of city-making are a potent force in reconfiguring urban diversity. The contributions in this

section illustrate that the governance of urban diversity can be understood as a series of mundane yet politically charged acts. By bringing these everyday processes to the forefront, this section underscores that beyond grand political discourses, cities are also shaped by the ordinary and incremental acts of city-making.

1.4.3 Civil Society as Progressive City Makers

In the third section, we turn our attention to the role of civil society actors in shaping urban diversity governance. The contributions in this section examine how these actors challenge exclusion and marginalization while forging new spaces for intercultural dialogue and participation. This perspective enables us to conceive of the city as a space of hope, echoing David Harvey's (2000) call for citizens to become architects of more just and livable environments. It also resonates with recent reflections on progressive cities (Douglass et al., 2019), which emphasize the potential of urban centers to foster participatory governance and expand the right to the city.

The chapters of the third section show that by building coalitions and engaging in pragmatic negotiations, civil society actors can reshape urban diversity governance. They can reconfigure urban narratives so that diverse individuals are recognized as integral members of the urban fabric. Civil society organizations are not merely conceived as social movements that rise to contest existing norms; rather, they actively negotiate with state and local authorities, residents, and other urban stakeholders to promote inclusion within the city. Throughout these contributions, the mediating role of various civil society actors emerges as key to advancing a more pluralistic form of urban governance.

The contributions in this section trace how different civil society actors strive to promote a more inclusive city while resisting institutional and popular hostilities toward migrants and minorities. For example, Léa Réville's study of Paris's Halte Humanitaire documents a coalition between municipal bodies and civil society activists that led to the creation of a refugee shelter in a heritage building in the heart of Paris. This initiative not only increased the visibility of exiles but also brought the issue of housing precariousness to the forefront. However, establishing such a shelter in a prestigious neighborhood has elicited ambivalent reactions from local residents and businesses. In this context, the shelter operators serve as mediators, working to integrate the facility into the local urban landscape. Réville shows how Halte workers foster understanding, mitigate tensions within the community, and strive to create an atmosphere of tranquility within the shelter. Ultimately, their work shifts local perceptions from rejection toward tolerance and can even inspire some residents to become active supporters of the shelter.

Other contributions in this section further develop the notion of civil society as a mediator for more inclusive diversity governance by exploring how actors from minority communities represent their interests and engage with urban authorities. For instance, Natalie Lang's chapter addresses the sensitive issue of religious

minorities' cultural expression in public spaces. Her work illustrates how religious leaders and practitioners among Hindus in both Singapore and Paris negotiate the city's religious diversity management framework. In these cities, Hindus express their religiosity in material and social terms, by establishing temples, organizing festivals, and maintaining a visible presence in public spaces. Lang's chapter highlights the crucial role of civil society leaders in representing their communities and engaging with local authorities to define the conditions under which their identities may be publicly expressed. It demonstrates how Hindus, despite constraints, craft subtle forms of self-governance that balance the need for public expression with prevailing secular norms. Ultimately, the presence and plurality of cults in the urban landscape depend on the mediating efforts of these actors. By navigating rules, understanding norms, and engaging with authorities, these mediators defend their communities' interests while operating within the regulatory framework of the host city.

Other contributions in this volume reflect on how the social position of certain community members can favor their emergence as mediators. This dynamic is evident in Xi'an, where elite Hui Muslims play a key role in incorporating their community into the Silk Road narrative. Yang Yang's chapter examines both the physical transformation of Xi'an's Muslim Quarter and the symbolic construction of the city as a Silk Road hub, celebrated as a model of peaceful intercultural relations in China. She shows that elite members of the Hui community act as symbolic brokers, actively participating in city-making by negotiating and reshaping the central narrative to their advantage. As elite actors, they can align this narrative with the state's strategy of promoting Xi'an as a Silk Road center while also mediating the interests and values of their community.

Similarly, Jeremie Molho's contribution examines how civil society actors empower marginalized migrants in Doha and Singapore through culture. These cultural city makers, who are themselves migrants occupy an intermediary position that enables them to negotiate with official narratives. Challenging cultural policy frameworks that structurally exclude migrants, these civil society actors carve out civic spaces that empower migrants and redefine their roles in the city, portraying them not merely as a labor force but as writers, artists, and community activists. By creating platforms that both address welfare needs and amplify migrant voices, these cultural city makers challenge exclusionary cultural policies. They navigate political restrictions with creativity, employing metaphor and allegory to express ideas that might otherwise be censored, and create a space to integrate a group traditionally marginalized and rendered invisible.

Together, these contributions illustrate that civil society actors play a key role in shaping urban diversity governance. They challenge conventional narratives and forge alternative visions of the city in which migrants and minorities are recognized as legitimate and vital contributors to urban life. This perspective enriches our understanding of urban diversity governance by bridging the gap between top–down urban strategies and bottom–up everyday practices of migrants and minorities.

1.5 An Agent-Centered Approach to Urban Diversity

In sum, this book mobilizes the notion of city makers to position agency at the center of the analysis of the governance of urban diversity. Rather than treating diversity as the outcome of fixed, top–down institutional frameworks, the chapters in this volume show that urban diversity is continuously produced, contested, and reconfigured through a multiplicity of processes. Firstly, they illuminate the role of urban leaders as pivotal actors within the multi-layered network of diversity governance, showcasing their ability to mobilize resources and enact change, even within the confines of restrictive institutional structures. Secondly, they shine a light on the often-overlooked agency of migrants and minorities who, despite systemic barriers, craft their own pathways and leave indelible marks on the urban landscape. Finally, they highlight the indispensable contributions of civil society actors who, through their mediating position, foster the emergence of more inclusive urban futures.

In conclusion, this volume does not seek to offer a single, unified theory of urban diversity governance. Instead, it suggests that the dynamic and complex nature of city-making is best understood by exploring the multiple, interwoven processes that collectively shape urban identities and landscapes. Through a rich set of case studies and cross-regional comparisons, the book invites us to appreciate the multiple forms of governance that define contemporary urban diversity.

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Part I
City Leaders in the Policies and Politics of Urban Diversity

Chapter 2
Making the "Diverse City" Between Europe and East Asia: Comparative Perspectives on Diversity Governance in Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan

Beniamino Peruzzi Castellani

2.1 Introduction

Until the second half of the twentieth century, cultural homogeneity was traditionally regarded as fundamental to the formation and survival of nation-states (e.g., Salzborn, 2021; Dalle Mulle et al., 2023). Accordingly, eradicating or controlling cultural differences was not just deemed acceptable but often considered necessary. However, beginning in the 1960s, a growing number of societies worldwide started challenging the longstanding ideal of homogeneity, instead embracing cultural pluralism as integral to their social foundations. The rapid spread of what has been labeled the "differentialist turn" (Brubaker, 2001) suggests that structural forces – transcending country-specific circumstances – are at play.

These forces include the "human rights revolution" (Iriye et al., 2012) and the worldwide shift toward democratization (Guo & Stradiotto, 2014). Both developments helped limit state authority over individuals and encouraged mobilization and advocacy for minority recognition (Kymlicka, 2007). In parallel, globalization ushered in a new era of migration, further reinforcing cultural pluralism, particularly in developed countries. Early sociological theories predicting the natural erosion of cultural differences over subsequent generations (for a review, see Alba & Nee, 2003) lost ground to the enduring cultural resilience of minority groups. Consequently, contemporary societies must now identify ways to structure communal life in diverse contexts. Under the broad banner of *multiculturalism*, a range of debates, policies, and practices have aimed to accommodate minority needs and demands without undermining majority interests.

B. P. Castellani (✉)
Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, Italy

Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy
e-mail: beniamino.peruzzi@sns.it

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By the turn of the millennium, the differentialist turn intersected with another noteworthy trend: the growing significance of cities in a multifaceted system of multiscale governance (Bache & Flinders, 2004; Piattoni, 2010; Fernández de Losada & Abdullah, 2019). This shift reflects broad structural factors, notably the diffusion of neoliberalism, which has triggered the decentralization of national responsibilities and promoted entrepreneurialism among cities (Harvey, 1989, 2005; Hall & Hubbard, 1998; Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Consequently, a "local turn" has taken root, both in scholarly inquiry and in policy development related to diversity governance, positioning cities as "entry points" for understanding how diversity transforms social life (Glick-Schiller & Çağlar, 2018) and as key actors advancing the differentialist turn (Caponio et al., 2019; Pisarevskaya & Scholten, 2022).

Despite extensive research on the relationship between cities and diversity, we still lack comprehensive views of how theoretical and practical approaches to diversity governance take root and evolve. Existing studies mostly limit themselves to "nested" analyses within local or regional contexts, overlooking broader governance scales (Glick-Schiller & Çağlar, 2018). Furthermore, much of the existing literature is Western-centric, with a predominant focus on Europe and North America.

This chapter takes some initial steps to address these shortcomings by delving into the emergence of diversity governance and the role of cities in advancing the differentialist turn in Europe, Japan, and South Korea. A central concept here is the *diverse city*, which I define as an urban context that not only hosts isolated multicultural initiatives but also formally integrates diversity into its brand and long-term vision, actively sustaining diversity governance. In such contexts, certain key policies or practices – what I call the *core* of the diverse city – are foundational, while the stakeholders who actively shape them may be referred to as *diverse-city makers*. The process through which these efforts unfold is *diverse-city making*.

Naturally, diverse-city making is not merely a local endeavor. It is deeply embedded in "multiscalar" networks (Glick-Schiller & Çağlar, 2018) that span local, national, and transnational contexts. Consequently, diverse cities often function as crucial junctures where local, national, and transnational diversity strategies converge and take concrete form. Their role becomes particularly salient when they participate in networks with other diverse cities, exchanging best practices and engaging in coordinated lobbying across multiple layers of governance. This multiscalar perspective offers fresh insights into how diversity governance unfolds and how the differentialist turn operates both within individual nations and across international contexts.

Guided by these methodological considerations, I looked for cities in Europe and East Asia best known for their sustained commitment to diversity governance. This case selection was informed by an analysis of leading migration-focused city networks and, in particular, the Intercultural Cities (ICC) Network. Established in 2008 as a joint pilot project of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, the ICC has evolved into a prominent long-term program, supporting member cities in crafting intercultural strategies. It now stands as one of the largest and most influential platforms dedicated to cultural diversity and its governance.

Based on this analysis, three cities were chosen: Barcelona (Spain), Hamamatsu (Japan), and Ansan (South Korea). Barcelona exemplifies a European intercultural city. Unlike many European ICC participants, which tend to engage sporadically, Barcelona is recognized for its longstanding dedication to interculturalism and for shaping broader European intercultural policy. In fact, the city pioneered intercultural strategies in 1997 and has maintained close ties with the ICC while also establishing its own network within Spain.

The case selection for the East-Asian context was easier as only four cities are currently members of the ICC Network – one in Japan (Hamamatsu), and three in South Korea (Ansan, Guro-gu, and Asan). Among these, I selected Hamamatsu in Japan and Ansan in South Korea, representing, respectively, the first and second Asian members of the ICC. Both cities have relatively large migrant populations, a solid history of innovative diversity governance, and play crucial roles in forming national city networks that focus on multicultural or intercultural issues. Together, they offer valuable comparative insights into how diversity governance discourses arise and spread across distinct global regions.

This chapter compares certain aspects of diverse-city making in these three settings, focusing on (a) the origins and consolidation of their diverse-city frameworks, (b) the distinctive cores of their approaches and the ways in which diversity is conceptualized, and (c) the key stakeholders – diverse-city makers – who have been driving these initiatives. It also explores how these cities contribute to the differentialist turn in their respective national contexts. Special attention is paid to their promotion of interculturalism as members of the ICC Network. While a comprehensive discussion of this subject exceeds the scope of the chapter, the comparative perspectives and preliminary insights presented here aim to spark further in-depth examinations.

This study draws on secondary sources in English, Spanish, and Japanese, as well as qualitative fieldwork carried out in each city between 2021 and 2023. The fieldwork included interviews with political and administrative officials and representatives of civil society organizations, along with direct observation of initiatives designed to foster cultural diversity and inclusion. It is important to note that, while I am fluent in Spanish and Japanese, my limited proficiency in Korean presented challenges during fieldwork in South Korea. However, the widespread use of English by diverse-city makers in Ansan helped mitigate these constraints.

Following this introduction, the next section offers a concise overview of the differentialist turn in Europe, Japan, and South Korea. The rationale for focusing on one supranational region (Europe) and two national contexts (Japan and South Korea) is straightforward: while all these contexts are interwoven with broader multiscalar processes, debates about cultural diversity in Japan and South Korea remain largely framed in national terms, whereas Spain's discussion is more thoroughly integrated within the wider European dialogue, making it unproductive to isolate it at the national level. Section 2.3 then examines the processes of diverse-city making in Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan. The final section compares the trajectories of these diverse cities and their broader impact on the differentialist turn in their regions, outlining avenues for future research.

2.2 The Differentialist Turn in Europe, Japan, and South Korea

Contrary to common expectations, the onset of the differentialist turn in the European context did not significantly precede parallel developments in Japan and South Korea. While certain European countries, including the UK, Sweden, and Denmark, began experimenting with multicultural policies during the 1970s and 1980s, others – including Spain – initially resisted recasting themselves as immigrant-receiving, multicultural nations. The 1990s marked a turning point. Following the establishment of the European Union in 1992, its subsequent enlargement, the advance of the European integration project, and the continuous growth of migration flows brought the issue of cultural diversity to the center of the European discourse. These changes coincided with a broader crisis in traditional Western multiculturalism, creating space for the emergence of a *made-in-Europe* approach to cultural diversity: European *interculturalism*.

Meanwhile, Japan and South Korea, until recently, have shared the conviction to be *immune* from the globalization of labor migration. Yet, as a consequence of their impending population decline, rapidly aging society, and growing low-skilled labor demands, both these countries have progressively transformed into major destinations for migration flows in the Asian context. As a result of these transformations, multicultural discourses have gained increasing traction in their academic, social, and policy arenas.

In this section, let us briefly explore how the differentialist turn has manifested in these three contexts – Europe, Japan, and South Korea – highlighting the key narratives and approaches that have emerged in each.

2.2.1 European Interculturalism

When the first European Community was established in 1952, cultural diversity received scant attention; indeed, the term *culture* itself did not appear in foundational agreements until the Maastricht Treaty founded the European Union in 1992. What has been referred to as the European "cultural turn" (Shore, 2006, 14) consolidated, in particular, during the 1990s, as the EU's steady enlargement brought diverse nations and populations under a shared institutional umbrella, prompting calls for narratives embracing a unifying *European cultural identity*.

This coincided with another crucial phenomenon characterizing Western developed countries, which has often been referred to in terms of a general "retreat from multiculturalism" (Joppke, 2004) or "multicultural backlash" (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). This crisis of Western traditional multicultural approaches was triggered by a mix of social, economic, and political factors, including increasing minority riots, the post-2001 fear of cultural extremism and radicalization, the waves of global financial crises, and the politicization of migration amid rising

right-wing populism (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). This backdrop fostered a surge in identitarian concerns, pointing to the risks and costs of cultural differences. At the same time, traditional multiculturalism also became the target of *friendly fire* from those who did not oppose cultural pluralism but lamented the failure to ensure social cohesion and integration of cultural minorities (Joppke, 2017).

In response, a new multicultural approach was formulated at the European level, under the banner of a concept that had long been employed in European discourse: *intercultural dialogue*. Following a *mors tua, vita mea* logic, on the one hand, this new approach discursively transformed multiculturalism into the scapegoat for tensions and controversies related to cultural diversity (Kymlicka, 2010; Joppke, 2017). On the other hand, it promised to solve the failures of traditional multiculturalism both by addressing the need for integration and capitalizing on the opportunities represented by diversity. Borrowing a term previously used in Quebec in contrast to Canadian multiculturalism (Chiasson, 2012), European policymakers framed this new approach as *interculturalism*.

Strategically, the solid theoretical underpinnings of multiculturalism were not discarded but rather incorporated and reframed in the new approach. Indeed, like multiculturalism, interculturalism embraced human rights and the commitment to promoting equality and combating discrimination and exclusion. However, it significantly surpassed traditional multiculturalism in three key aspects. Firstly, it emphasized the narrative of diversity as a source of economic growth and social development, stressing the link between cultural diversity and the new *cool* concept of *creativity* (Landry, 2000; Florida, 2002). Secondly, it incorporated new crucial multicultural concepts such as "mainstreaming" (Hankivsky, 2005) and "superdiversity" (Vertovec, 2007), advocating for an intersectional approach in diversity governance that transcends the conventional binary of majority/minority and narrow interpretations of diversity limited to race, ethnicity, and nationality. Lastly, interculturalism pointed to a straightforward and intuitive method to mitigate tensions and conflicts among diverse cultural groups: namely, the promotion of *positive contact* among people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is noteworthy that, despite some efforts (e.g. Zapata-Barrero, 2015), the exact nature of positive contact and its practical implementation remains somewhat elusive.

Though some remained skeptical about the revolutionary scope of interculturalism, and many criticized its theoretical foundation (e.g., Meer et al., 2016), this narrative quickly became the predominant framework for cultural diversity governance in Europe. By 2008, both EU institutions and the Council of Europe (CoE) enthusiastically embraced this approach, initially referred to in terms of *intercultural dialogue*: in that same year, the EU officially organized the *European Year of Intercultural Dialogue*, and, concurrently, the CoE published its famous *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (Council of Europe, 2008). By the 2010s, the term *intercultural dialogue* was increasingly substituted by *interculturalism*.

As an approach grounded on the promotion of contact among individuals, the *natural habitat* of interculturalism is the local level. Accordingly, interculturalism became an additional resource for the EU and the CoE to strategically fortify their relationship with a category of actors identified as natural allies for advancing the

European integration project and overcoming the resistance of national powers: namely, cities, and especially the so-called *entrepreneurial* cities, whose strategic agenda is mainly oriented towards socio-economic development and the promotion of their sphere of influence both at the national and international levels. Owing to the intuitive appeal of its concepts and the support from supra-national entities, interculturalism quickly became the leading narrative for diversity governance in European cities.

In order to actively promote the diffusion and implementation of interculturalism in cities, in 2008, the CoE launched the "Inter-Cultural Cities" (ICC) Network, a platform aimed at providing technical support for developing intercultural strategies and fostering exchanges of experiences and best practices among cities. An Intercultural City Index was introduced to assess and compare the interculturality levels of cities using various indicators. Member cities agree to uphold intercultural principles and develop intercultural initiatives.

The network's rapid expansion testifies to the appeal of this framework: from an original cohort of 11 member cities, as of 2023, the ICC Network includes 142 municipalities worldwide, spanning North Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, Australia, and East Asia. Through its global events, the CoE reinforces both the ICC Network and interculturalism more generally, extending its international influence.

2.2.2 Japanese tabunka kyōsei

The emergence of multicultural discourses in Japan dates back to the early twentieth century, when some of the country's neglected and marginalized national minorities – such as Ainus, Burakumin, Okinawans, and *zainichi* Koreans – began advocating for their cultural and civil rights (Weiner, 2009). Their efforts gained ground after World War II as Japan moved toward democracy, yet the narrative of a homogeneous Japan still held sway, and tight immigration policies stifled the earliest signs of a differentialist turn.

The first signs of change emerged during Japan's postwar economic boom, which reawakened ambitions to assert its role on the global stage – no longer as an empire but as a global economic superpower. The Japanese government and elites were convinced that, to this aim, the country needed to transform into an international and *Western-like* state. This led to a top-down diffusion of a wide range of strategies framed under the new brand *kokusaika* (internationalization), promoting positive visions of a *globally engaged Japan* and a cosmopolitan mindset for the Japanese population. Yet, *kokusaika* initiatives did not challenge the prevailing ideal of homogeneity, nor did they lead to relaxing restrictions against migration.

The situation shifted in the late 1980s, when Japan's economy soared, and domestic labor shortages for low-wage jobs became glaring. In 1990, for the first time, democratic Japan engaged in reforming its immigration policies. However, in clear contradiction with domestic labor demands, Japan kept its doors shut to low-skilled workers, with only one exception: overseas Japanese who had emigrated in previous

decades and their descendants, known as *nikkeijin* – mainly from Brazil, Argentina, and Peru. This policy was driven by racial and ethnic preferences aimed at preserving homogeneity. Yet, the assumption that shared ancestry would ensure cultural integration quickly proved unrealistic: despite their Japanese ancestry, many of these individuals lacked Japanese language proficiency and familiarity with contemporary Japanese culture (Tsuda, 2003). Meanwhile, domestic demands for low-skilled labor remained unmet, prompting secondary channels like trainee programs that spurred arrivals from China, Korea, and the Philippines (Douglass & Roberts, 2000).

By the 1990s, Japan had effectively become an immigration country. It was at this point that new discourses advocating for the recognition of cultural minorities as part of Japanese society and challenging traditional assimilationist approaches started emerging. These discourses revolved around the key concept of *tabunka kyōsei* (multicultural coexistence/conviviality), which gained prominence, especially, after the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake (see Peruzzi Castellani, 2023b). Indeed, the disaster highlighted the urgent need for aid and support for foreign residents who faced barriers in accessing information and assistance due to language and cultural differences.

The concept started spreading all over the country, embraced by both local and prefectural governments as an overarching framework for supporting migrant communities. In 2006, it gained national prominence when the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications included it in the *Regional Plan for the Promotion of Tabunka Kyōsei*. Despite this endorsement, the official focus remained largely on improving essential services for migrants rather than recognizing them as integral to a multicultural Japan.

2.2.3 South Korean damunhwa

Like Japan, South Korea constructed its identity as a modern nation by relying on narratives depicting a mono-ethnic and mono-cultural country. At the same time, this process was accompanied by the devaluation and dismissal of what was considered *non-Korean*. Particularly, during the authoritarian regime of Park Chung Hee (1963–1979), the government actively repressed the most visible minority group, Chinese-Koreans (Lie, 2014, 13–15).

However, by the 1980s, rapid economic growth triggered considerable change. As South Korea needed more workers, especially for low-skilled jobs, the country gradually opened its labor markets. Early policies resembled Japan's, limiting residency periods and primarily aimed at attracting ethnic Koreans from China, Central Asia, and the Americas.

Progressively, South Korea also became a prominent destination for female marriage migrants, particularly from China and Southeast Asia. These arrangements offered a solution to the shortage of prospective Korean brides in rural areas. By the early 2000s, more than a third of Korean male farmers were married to foreign nationals (*ivi*, 19).

Following the 1997 IMF crisis, President Kim Dae Jung (1998–2003) tried to reshape the role of South Korea in the international arena. Under the banner of *segyehwa* (internationalization/globalization) – the South Korean equivalent of the Japanese *kokusaika* – the government promoted international relations and exchanges and the expansion of Korean culture and business at the global level. The declared aim was a "Second Nation Building," where citizens were called to become "active agents of national reform" and transform into "global citizens" (Kim, 1999). In this climate, activists, scholars, and media outlets began advocating *damunhwa* (multiculture).

Once a niche academic term, *damunhwa* rose to prominence in the early 2000s as a key concept to frame claims for recognition of migrants and other cultural minorities. Eventually, *damunhwa* was embraced by the central government: after including it to frame the *Multicultural* [damunwha] *Family Support Act* in 2008, the term became a key concept for South Korea's migrant-related policies and initiatives.

Initially, officials mostly employed *damunhwa* to refer to linguistic and cultural support for marriage migrants, largely overlooking the demands of other minority groups (Lim, 2014, 46–47; Ghazarian, 2018, 22–30; Han, 2007, 49). However, over time, grassroots movements – particularly among labor migrants, along with pro-democracy activists, NGOs, and religious organizations – managed to successfully redefine this narrow interpretation: eventually, the government reframed *damunhwa* in terms of practices for social inclusion targeting all cultural minorities and fundamentally connected to broader human rights agendas (Lim, 2014; Yamanaka, 2014; Ghazarian, 2018).

2.3 Making the "Diverse City" in Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan

European interculturalism, Japanese *tabunka kyōsei*, and South Korean *damunhwa* each offer distinct frameworks that have propelled the differentialist turn within their respective geographical and sociocultural context. Yet, across Europe, Japan, and South Korea alike, the most committed and dynamic champions of cultural diversity are often local governments – particularly municipal administrations – that grapple with the practical complexities of increasingly diverse communities.

Three cities stand out as pivotal *laboratories* and nodal points where national and international multicultural debates converge, evolve, and find concrete expression in local policies: Barcelona (Spain), Hamamatsu (Japan), and Ansan (South Korea). In this section, we examine the development of each city's diversity governance model and its influential role at both national and transnational levels.

2.3.1 Barcelona

Barcelona is the second-most populous municipality of Spain, with a total population of 1,655,956 as of 2023 (Idescat, 2023), 27.8% of whom are foreign citizens. The city once enjoyed significant political autonomy as the capital of the Principality of Catalonia before its integration into a centralized Spanish administration in 1714. By the nineteenth century, it had also become a vital industrial hub. Following the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1979, Barcelona positioned itself on the world stage through major international events – such as the 1992 Olympics – and active engagement in global networks. This international outlook ultimately paved the way for Barcelona's evolution into a diverse city.

Barcelona's official commitment to cultural diversity can be traced back to 1997 when the City Council published its first policy for social inclusion – the *Municipal Plan for Interculturality* – in response to the sudden growing influx of migrants. In 2002, the city introduced its first *Municipal Immigration Plan*, which notably received unanimous backing from all political parties in the City Council. This broad political consensus became a hallmark of Barcelona's diversity governance, ensuring long-term stability and support for key policies.

A turning point came with the election of Mayor Jordi Hereu (2006–2011). Viewing migration and cultural diversity as pivotal to Barcelona's global identity and creative potential, Hereu created the position of *Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue* in 2007. This role was established with the mandate to develop both a new immigration strategy and a comprehensive plan to foster cultural diversity and social inclusion. Dani de Torres, the first person appointed to this role, conducted extensive negotiations with local politicians and civil society, underscoring the need for a clear theoretical framework to guide diversity governance.

Under de Torres' guidance, in 2008 – coinciding with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue – Barcelona formally embraced an intercultural approach centered on three core principles: (1) recognizing diversity, (2) fostering equality, and (3) promoting positive interaction among cultural groups (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2010, 11–12). A citywide series of debates and events, organized in the framework of the *Barcelona Intercultural Dialogue Programme*, further popularized this new paradigm and drew the attention of the Council of Europe's ICC Network. This connection established a direct relationship between Barcelona's City Council and the ICC Network, paving the way for the city to join the network in 2009.

In October 2008, after extensive preparation, the City Council unanimously approved the *Immigration Working Plan 2008–2011*. This paved the way for the development of a comprehensive plan for cultural diversity governance. The resulting *Barcelona Interculturality Plan 2010–2020* was crafted through a participatory and cross-cutting process anchored in three key methodological principles: (a)

participation, ensuring broad engagement from institutional representatives and civil society; (b) *transversalization*, incorporating various municipal areas and departments into the plan's framework; and (c) *political consensus*, achieved through the consolidated practice of negotiating unanimous approval by all political groups.

While it nominally took an intersectional perspective, the plan primarily addressed migration as the focal point of diversity. In the name of the common interest toward social cohesion, the plan called for general and consistent public-private partnerships to tackle diversity challenges by encouraging interaction between majority and minority communities. The intuitive appeal of interculturalism's conceptual framework and its strategic clarity successfully aligned the diverse interests within city governance: civil society was affirmed in its key role and saw opportunities for empowerment; political and institutional actors gained a clear direction for realizing the vision of an intercultural Barcelona, enhancing their engagement with civil society; and economic actors recognized opportunities to participate in public-private partnerships, reinforcing their governance role and leveraging cultural diversity to invest in the local cultural industries by connecting diversity with creativity.

Over the following decade, stakeholders from various sectors – including civil society groups and private businesses – coordinated efforts to implement the plan (Bermúdez et al., 2018). The city's steadfast commitment to interculturalism led the Council of Europe to showcase Barcelona as a model intercultural city, influential in shaping the European conversation on cultural diversity and promoting Barcelona's framework as a sort of manifesto of European interculturalism (Peruzzi Castellani, 2023a). In 2011, under de Torres' leadership, Barcelona helped establish the *Red de Ciudades Interculturales* (Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities, or RECI), bolstering collaboration among Spanish cities and amplifying their collective voice at the national level.

When the initial plan expired, a new Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, Khalid Ghali, spearheaded an assessment of the city's diversity initiatives. This work culminated in the drafting of a second *Barcelona Interculturality Plan* for the period 2021–2030. Adhering to established participatory and consensus-driven methods, the updated plan broadened its definition of diversity beyond migration, adopting a *super-diversity* lens that included women, senior citizens, youth, and various other intersectional identities. It also reinforced the idea that diversity fuels Barcelona's social and economic vitality (for a more detailed comparison between the two plans see *ivi*, 4–6).

From Barcelona's experience, several insights emerge. First, the entrepreneurial aspirations of the city's strategic agenda and the practical realities of migration served as key catalysts for its diverse-city initiatives. Second, the formal *core* of the diverse city is defined by two intercultural plans, which gradually broadened the scope of diversity beyond the sole phenomenon of migration to encompass a wider array of social identities through an intersectional approach. Additionally, in the second plan, the synergy between creativity and diversity was further emphasized, positioning this latter as a vital resource for Barcelona's social and economic advancement.

Finally, several key diverse-city makers emerged in the construction of the diverse city. These are the following: (a) the major and the local administration – particularly the technical office of the Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue – which provided political support and logistical groundwork, setting the stage for the city's intercultural initiatives; (b) civil society organizations engaging in the co-management of initiatives to promote cultural diversity with the local administration; and (c) business actors, leveraging the general interest in diversity to foster the local cultural industry. Importantly, diverse-city makers do not include only members of the majority group. Indeed, members of local cultural minorities belonging to all three identified categories of diverse-city makers have been increasingly participating in the system of diversity governance.

2.3.2 Hamamatsu

As of October 2023, Hamamatsu boasts a population of 789,822, with approximately 3% (24,433) being foreign residents – mostly Brazilian *nikkeijin* (Hamamatsu City, 2023). Incorporated as a city in 1911 with a total population of just 36,782, Hamamatsu was already on the path of modernization and economic enhancement. Renowned for its textile production since the nineteenth century, it cultivated a business-friendly environment that gave rise to some of Japan's leading corporations, including Yamaha, Honda Motor, Suzuki, and Kawai. By 1960, the population had more than quadrupled from its early days, and by 2000, it surpassed half a million.

Unsurprisingly, Hamamatsu soon became an eager participant in the national *kokusaika* (internationalization) campaigns. Aiming at boosting the city's image both at the national and international level, in 1982, Mayor Masaru Kurihara (1979–1999) launched the Hamamatsu Foundation for International Communication and Exchanges (HICE) to foster global ties – funded jointly by the City Council and local business elites. As industrial demand for low-wage labor soared following Japan's immigration policy reforms in the 1990s, Hamamatsu attracted significant numbers of nikkeijin. By the early 2000s, it was home to Japan's largest nikkeijin population, introducing both economic opportunities and cultural challenges.

Without national guidelines for migrant integration, under the leadership of the new Mayor Yasuyuki Kitawaki (1999–2007), the city pursued dual strategies. On the one hand, by leveraging the spreading narrative of *tabunka kyōsei*, Hamamatsu envisioned itself as a community where foreigners and Japanese citizens collaborate towards building a *global city* – this view was encapsulated in the city's 2001 strategic agenda, the *2001 Hamamatsu World City Vision*. Cultural diversity, deemed essential for a global city, was integrated into the framework of *kokusaika*, with resources initially dedicated to international exchanges reallocated to provide essential services and support for migrants. These initiatives were coordinated by HICE mainly through partnerships with local NGOs.

On the other hand, in that same 2001, Mayor Kitawaki founded the Japanese Council of Cities with Concentrations of Foreign Residents, a network of cities aimed at sharing effective cultural diversity governance practices and, importantly, lobbying the central government for a comprehensive national integration policy. The contribution of the Council was crucial to fostering the formulation of the national *Regional Plan for the Promotion of Tabunka Kyōsei* in 2006 (see also Shipper, 2018).

Kitawaki's emphasis on *tabunka kyōsei* continued and consolidated under the government of the subsequent Mayor Yasutomo Suzuki (2007–2023). Suzuki advanced the discussion about the role of cultural diversity in Hamamatsu by integrating it into the emerging *creative-city* framework (Landry, 2000; Florida, 2002), introduced in Japan thanks to the work of Masayuki Sasaki, professor at Ōsaka University (e.g., Sasaki, 2001). This evolution was clearly expressed in the 2011 *Vision for Creative City Hamamatsu*, whose key slogan was *A creative city built on civil collaboration, shining into the future.* In particular, *tabunka kyōsei* was positioned as the main principle for *civil collaboration*, thus essential for ensuring the city's shining future. In this framework, the concept of diversity was reframed as spanning both new arrivals and the second generation of migrant families, leading to a dual focus on basic assistance for new migrants and the integration of migrant children into the education system. The city also launched initiatives to strengthen the connection between diversity and creativity, offering incentives and support to local artists and entrepreneurs with migrant backgrounds.

At the same time, Hamamatsu started leveraging its image as a diverse city to strengthen its role at the international level. In 2012, the city hosted a 2012 summit on interculturalism in partnership with the Council of Europe and Japan Foundation. This event was attended by the mayors of a number of Japanese, South Korean, and European cities and ended with the signing of a *Hamamatsu Declaration* where participating cities officially committed to interculturalism and to promoting "promote global partnership among intercultural cities to learn from each other's knowledge and experience to develop more effective policies" (Japan Foundation 2012).

It became progressively clear to the local government that interculturalism could represent an effective frame for Hamamatsu to promote diversity as a key societal and economic strength and, at the same time, gain international recognition. Accordingly, paralleling Barcelona's example, starting in 2013, Hamamatsu formulated a series of four-year plans known as *Hamamatsu Intercultural City Visions* – at least since 2017, the terms *intercultural* and *interculturalism* have been employed as the English translation of *tabunka kyōsei*. In all these documents, Hamamatsu's approach to interculturalism was specified as grounded on the three principles of *cooperation*, *creativity*, and *safety*. Hamamatsu's commitment to interculturalism and the city's interest in being internationally recognized as a model of a diverse city led to the decision of joining the ICC Network in 2017. In this way, Hamamatsu was able to boast the title of the *first intercultural city in Asia*. However, while adopting the label of interculturalism has enhanced branding and communication, Hamamatsu's strategies for diversity governance have remained largely consistent since the introduction of the 2011 *Vision for Creative City Hamamatsu*.

Similar to Barcelona, the catalyzers of diverse-city making in Hamamatsu were the city's entrepreneurial ambitions and the impact of migration. The core of the diverse city is represented by the city's strategic action plan whereby, under the banner, respectively, of *global city*, *creative city*, and *intercultural cities*, the ideal of *tabunka kyōsei* – currently translated in English as *interculturalism* in Hamamatsu's documents – was embraced. In these frameworks, the concept of diversity has evolved from focusing solely on newcomers to encompassing all residents with a migrant background.

Hamamatsu's strategy for managing diversity is built on collaborations between local administration and NGOs, often supported by private foundations or enterprises. The initiatives, centrally coordinated by the City Council through HICE, are directed to three crucial aims: (1) promoting basic assistance to newcomers through public-private partnerships; (2) promoting assistance to migrant children for their inclusion in the local school system; (3) providing incentives to foreigners-led NGOs and enterprises. The key diverse-city makers are the same as Barcelona's ones: (a) the mayor and the local administration – particularly HICE; (b) civil society organizations engaging in the co-management of initiatives to promote cultural diversity with the local administration; (c) business actors, aimed at attracting migrant laborers and leveraging the general interest in diversity to foster the local cultural industry. While cultural minorities are active within NGOs and businesses, their participation in policymaking is limited unless they obtain Japanese citizenship, indicating room for more inclusive policy engagement processes.

2.3.3 Ansan

With 12.6% of its total population represented by foreign residents – 86,487 out of a total population of 715,088 as of 2024 (KOSIS, 2024) – Ansan stands out as the most ethnically diverse city in South Korea. Ansan was officially incorporated as a city in 1986, during the development of the Banwol Industrial Complex, transforming a small fishing village into a bustling industrial center almost overnight – its population soaring from 31,140 in 1980 to 510,314 by 1995 (Kim, 2015).

The late 1990s saw dramatic shifts in South Korea's economy due to the IMF crisis and neoliberal policies, significantly impacting the demographics of industrial cities. In Ansan, more than half of the Korean nationals living and working in densely populated areas close to the industrial district – particularly the neighborhood of Wongok-dong – migrated to other cities, especially Seoul. This created strong pull factors for low-skilled migrant workers, who started flowing into the city, filling the places left by Koreans. By the early 2000s, these international migrants had revitalized Ansan's economy, with areas near the industrial district experiencing high concentrations of foreign residents. Particularly, Wongok-dong evolved into a vibrant multicultural enclave with migrant networks, foreign schools, and supportive NGOs and religious organizations.

The national pro-democracy and human rights movements provided a backdrop for local pro-migrant activists to advocate for migrants' and cultural minorities' rights under the *damunhwa* banner. Responding to civil society's push and aiming to mitigate potential social tensions, the City Council prioritized social inclusion and cultural diversity. Ansan became the first South Korean municipality to pass an *Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents* in 2007, and an *Ordinance on the Promotion of Human Rights for Foreign Residents* in 2009. In 2008, a *Community Center for Foreign Residents* was opened, which, through the co-management of the local administration and pro-migrant NGOs, started providing migrants with legal support and assistance for all the procedures related to immigration. By 2010, foreign representatives and NGO leaders were participating in municipal committees on diversity policy.

Because local governments in South Korea rely heavily on national funding (Lee & Suh, 2021), cities compete to showcase innovative projects. Motivated by the central government's cultural policy enthusiasm, which spurred the *Hallyu* or "Korean Wave" (Lim, 2022), many municipalities, including Ansan, have sought to leverage their local cultural industries to boost their economies. It was not long before Ansan recognized the potential of leveraging its unique cultural diversity to access special national funding and enhance tourism.

Eventually, after intricate political negotiations, the local government secured permission from the national government to convert Wongok-dong into a *Multicultural Village Special Zone*. In 2009, this ambitious plan started, with the Ministry of Knowledge Economy allocating a budget of 18.6 billion KRW until 2013 – the project was then extended for another 5 years and, again, until 2023, with a budget increasing each time. Key urban enhancements and transformations in Wongok-dong included the installation of multilingual signage, the development of public and multipurpose spaces, and the establishment of the renowned Street of Multicultural Food, featuring over 200 ethnic restaurants.

The creation of the Multicultural Village led to the relocation of most of the structures and practices of diversity governance in Wongok-dong, notably through the establishment in the neighborhood of the Ansan's Foreign Residents Support Center. This center, akin to Hamamatsu's HICE, operates in collaboration with numerous NGOs under the local government's umbrella, streamlining the city's diversity governance efforts.

The centralization of diversity governance in Wongok-dong resulted in a somewhat localized and segregated approach to diversity. While Ansan has remained a pioneer in recognizing the rights of cultural minorities – for instance, enacting policies for healthcare assistance to undocumented migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic – these efforts largely originate from Wongok-dong's stakeholders, indicating that advocacy and recognition channels for cultural minorities are critically concentrated in this neighborhood.

Following its participation in an intercultural-cities summit in Hamamatsu in 2012, Ansan intensified its efforts to be recognized as a diverse city both nationally and internationally. Motivated by the examples of Hamamatsu and other intercultural cities, in that same year, the city launched the South Korean National Network

of Multicultural Cities, aimed at promoting city-level advocacy and knowledge-sharing. Moreover, in 2013, the city hosted a new summit of European, Japanese, and South Korean intercultural cities.

Progressively, also Ansan turned to the conceptual framework of interculturalism both to reinforce its communication strategies and enhance its brand as a diverse city. While no comprehensive strategic plan for the promotion of interculturalism has still been formulated, Ansan's City Council has begun to systematically use *interculturalism* to define its approach to *damunhwa* in English-language materials. The emphasis on fostering personal interactions became even stronger, and upon joining the ICC Network, Ansan briefly topped Hamamatsu in the ICC Index, gaining symbolic status as Asia's leading intercultural city.

As in the other cases, Ansan's transformation into a diverse city was driven by entrepreneurial growth and migration. The core of its system of diversity governance lies in the Multicultural Village Special Zone, where forward-looking policies support minority rights and showcase cultural diversity. The scope of diversity governance in Ansan is mainly restricted to individuals with migrant origins and mostly localized in Wongok-dong. Accordingly, beyond the mayor(s) and the City Council, most of the diverse-city makers are geographically localized in the Multicultural Village. This includes the Ansan's Foreign Residents Support Center, along with its associated civil society and business collaborators. Despite this spatial segregation, a distinguishing factor of Ansan is that, apart from local politicians and members of the administration, many of the diverse-city makers are members of cultural minorities (living in Wongok-dong).

2.4 Concluding Remarks: The "Diverse City" Between Europe and East Asia

Across both Europe and East Asia, cultural diversity is significantly transforming social landscapes. Even though individual regions have distinct social, economic, and political contexts, countries in these geographical areas are collectively transitioning from an ideal of cultural homogeneity toward cultural pluralism. This chapter has traced the contours of such a differentialist turn in Europe, Japan, and South Korea, focusing on the emergence of diverse cities in Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan. Despite notable differences, including geographic and cultural distances, these cities share a general drive for economic growth that has attracted significant migration. In turn, this migration has sparked innovative diversity governance models that could propel the differentialist turn both nationally and globally. This conclusion summarizes the key insights from a comparative perspective.

First, as concerns diverse-city making, the role of mayors, city councils, and administrative officials clearly emerges as pivotal in institutionalizing diversity governance. In all three cities considered, strategic plans championed by city councils – Barcelona *Interculturality Plans*, Hamamatsu *Intercultural City Visions*, and

Ansan's *Multicultural Village Plan* – serve as the backbone of each locality's approach to cultural diversity. Implementing these plans typically involves collaborative arrangements or co-management, where civil society and business stakeholders guide major initiatives.

Over time, each city has made efforts to include individuals from minority groups in formulating and running these initiatives. In particular, Barcelona and Ansan, to varying degrees, have successfully integrated people from diverse cultural backgrounds into key policymaking roles, reflecting a broader commitment to harnessing a wide range of community experiences for shaping and governing multicultural urban environments.

The scope and objectives of diversity governance evolve continually in diverse cities, as does the very concept of *diversity* itself. Early on, policies generally focused on providing basic services for newly arrived migrants. Gradually, however, cultural diversity came to be celebrated as an economic and social asset. The *creative-city* framework has significantly influenced this thinking by suggesting that cultural diversity can energize local development and cultural initiatives.

Initially, in all three cities, the term *diversity* referred mostly to newcomers. Barcelona has been particularly proactive in broadening the concept to include an intersectional lens, thereby moving toward a super-diversity perspective in which overlapping social identities are taken into account. While Hamamatsu and Ansan are beginning to adopt similar approaches, their focus remains mostly on migrant populations. Nevertheless, the evolving recognition that *diversity* encompasses a broader set of social identities highlights a continuing transformation in how these cities embrace and manage multicultural complexity.

Finally, we have seen that diverse cities are actively seeking to strengthen their influence and visibility, both within their own countries and on the global stage. In their respective geographical contexts, Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan have taken the lead in forming networks dedicated to actively promoting cultural pluralism and lobbying their national governments to adopt more inclusive policies. Simultaneously, their participation in transnational frameworks like the Inter-Cultural Cities (ICC) Network has opened up new channels for international collaboration, allowing these cities to share innovative practices and resources while enhancing their global profiles.

By strategically adapting and promoting the strategies exchanged through these networks, Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan have positioned themselves at the forefront of a multiscale system of diversity governance. They demonstrate how frameworks such as the creative city model and interculturalism can spark broader innovation in diversity management worldwide. As key catalysts for social change, these cities offer fertile ground for local stakeholders – from policymakers and civil society to business leaders and minority communities – to shape increasingly inclusive and dynamic urban environments. In so doing, they reinforce their stature as significant players in the ongoing evolution of urban policy and practice.

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Chapter 3
The Policy of Refugee Reception and the Policing of Public Space in Paris

Marco Cremaschi and Tommaso Vitale

Since 2015, there has been a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in Europe, sparking a renewed discussion about the integration of refugees. The reception of refugees in the urban region of Paris is the outcome of a long process of structuring different policy streams. This marks a "local turning point" in the governance of migrations, with cities becoming the central level for the development of new local migration policies (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017).

Various local arrangements adapt public services and facilities to accommodate the increasingly heterogeneous local population (Raco & Tasan Kok, 2019). Such a process mainly occurs along the lines of multilevel governance and civil society involvement already developed to deal with migrants.

This chapter analyses local refugee reception initiatives against the backdrop of broader public policies for the reception of migrants in general (OECD, 2018), given the overlapping of certain actor networks, institutional resources, and territorialization logics. In France, the state remains the predominant actor in the reception and integration of foreigners, with only limited room for manoeuvre afforded to local authorities. However, this chapter argues that the very evolution of reception practices—and the governance arrangements that sustain them—depends not solely on formal institutional frameworks, but on the presence and political handling of *urban conflict*.

Far from a static or linear process, refugee reception in urban spaces unfolds through contentious interactions between top-down state actors (such as the police and national agencies) and bottom-up initiatives (including NGOs, grassroots collectives, and social movements). What enables the system to adapt and function is not consensus, but rather the *capacity of local administrations to mediate, navigate,*

M. Cremaschi · T. Vitale (✉)
Sciences Po, Centre for European Studies and Comparative Politics (CEE) & Urban School, Paris, France
e-mail: tommaso.vitale@sciencespo.fr

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and politically manage these conflicts. In this context, moderate conflict becomes a driver of change: it reveals frictions, forces articulation between actors, and contributes to adjustments in policy delivery and institutional arrangements—even in a landscape marked by normative constraints and persistent challenges in rights protection.

The analysis thus points to a gradual shift from centralised, command-and-control models to more fragmented, negotiated, and adaptive forms of governance—what can be described as *regulation-in-progress*. Urban space emerges here as a political arena where divergent logics and interests are confronted, and where the possibilities for asylum and integration are not only implemented, but actively shaped—and often contested—through everyday political labour and spatial negotiation.

The arrival process in the Paris case does not correspond to an ordinary pattern of establishing an ethnic neighborhood, as an optimistic account of the refugees' arrival suggests deploying the analogy of the nineteenth-century migrants' neighborhood (Saunders, 2010). The actual process of settlement is nothing like smooth and eventless and does not coalesce in spontaneous order, if it ever had; social interactions and the 'institutional memory' of places (Cremaschi et al., 2020) play a crucial role in shaping informal practices related to migration, practices that do not occur naturally.

Several reasons support this analytical perspective. To begin with, although the legal and conceptual distinctions between migrants (or foreign-born individuals) and asylum seekers (potentially refugees) have been clarified on multiple occasions, these differences often remain blurred in practice. Individuals entitled to reception frequently find themselves slipping into illegality, facing sudden rejections or, conversely, receiving temporary authorisations. Some accept this state of legal ambiguity as the lesser evil, hoping for the chance to continue their journey toward their intended destination. Yet, for most, this legal uncertainty is experienced as one of the many expressions of institutional irrationality. Furthermore, refugee policies in France lack a clearly defined framework (Lelévrier et al., 2017). They operate within a fragmented institutional landscape, yet they intersect with a highly stratified urban and metropolitan social geography (Préteceille, 2007). This geography is further shaped by mainstream social and urban policies (Fioretti, 2021), which continue to rely on traditional integration measures such as language instruction and vocational training. Finally, while dominant policy narratives frame the 2015 so-called refugee crisis as a moment of rupture and innovation in Paris' reception policies (Bonn, 2022), policy analysis tends instead to emphasise continuity and institutional isomorphism. From this viewpoint, different policy streams may converge in ways that transcend initial intentions, spatial proximity, or contextual specificities, enabling their interaction and mutual reinforcement.

While we are interested in examining urban space and the spatial dimension of integration processes within cities, relying solely on a spatial perspective can lead to confusion and hinder our ability to observe the interaction of structuring phenomena (Cremaschi & Le Galès, 2018). These phenomena occur across multiple levels of governance and various dimensions of economic structuring. In certain cases,

there is a legitimate risk of confusion, such as when considering the feasibility of developing a social geography related to legal foreign presence, often referred to as second-generation immigrants. Conversely, attempting to construct a geography focused on asylum seekers or broadly encompassing 'refugees' may lack both robust data as well as any political coherence. Nevertheless, the alignment of reception centers (see Chap. 11) with migration areas is not arbitrary; it results from the territorial concentration of adversity factors and the convergence of actor networks. Of particular significance is the intricate layering of policies associated with the reception issue and the way it attracts resources and attention, even if not formulated with precision.

Given these premises, the observation of what occurs in public space remains crucial. It serves as a strength, both methodologically and substantively, for understanding the quality of life in cities. Additionally, from a purely political standpoint, it sheds light on dimensions of legitimacy and political intervention—both infrastructural and symbolic—by local governments. This is particularly relevant in large capital cities with progressive local administrations (Therborn, 2017). An examination of public space provides insights into the disconnection between regulation and reception within the Parisian context. The visibility of refugees in public spheres has been instrumental in heightening civic consciousness in Paris. Simultaneously, it serves as a subject of political apprehension and an opportunity for the display of state-inflicted violence by humanitarian NGOs, too. The governance of public open spaces extends beyond traditional command and control approaches, emphasizing delegation, integration of new knowledge and technologies, negotiation, and self-regulation. The central concern involves an evolving, albeit ambiguous and partially contradictory, process of outsourcing certain aspects of reception policies without a well-experienced governance mode (Artioli & Le Galès, 2025).

The next section describes the relevant social geography of Paris. Social transformations due to deindustrialization have left a lasting impact, concentrating immigrant populations in areas marked by blue-collar workers and social housing estates. While Paris actively engages in social and redistributive policies, achieving a balanced geographical distribution for diverse social groups remains a challenge.

The ensuing section delineates the social policy responsibilities of both central and local institutions, against the backdrop of which the handling of refugees has transformed into a separate specific policy domain. Despite ongoing collaboration in Paris, challenges endure due to the stance of the French government and the inadequate coordination within the EU.

The following three sections analyse the role of space in shaping reception policies in Paris, highlighting three distinct but interrelated spatial framings. Firstly, the so-called "Project Territories" of the EU Structural Funds illustrate a gradual shift in which territorial coalitions reinterpret national regulations in light of their own competences and operational expertise, thereby adapting policy implementation to local configurations. Secondly, despite such local initiatives, the scope of locally managed reception efforts often encounters a deadlock when confronted with rigid normative injunctions from central state authorities, revealing persistent tensions

between decentralised action and national constraints. Thirdly, both governmental bodies and local actors deliberately mobilise spatial arrangements as instruments of repression, using urban space not only to assert control but also to mitigate conflict between competing and often incompatible uses.

The conclusions deal with the evolving landscape of local reception policies driven by state and non-state actors, and their interaction, following changing mix of contention and collaboration. Despite innovative efforts, there is a lack of coherence, and central dispersion policies (Dollet, 2023) contradict local commitments, raising questions about the role of local governance. However, the cyclical coming and going between the dismantling of refugee camps and sheltering asylum seekers question the notion and scope of integration, highlighting the porous boundary between formal and informal regulations. Besides, the design of policies cannot underestimate the role of space in shaping welcoming practices.

3.1 A Growing Capital

In France, the migrant population, which includes foreign-born citizens, made up 10.2% of the total population in 2020, according to INSEE 2021 data. Among these migrants, 4.4 million were foreign-born residents, with an additional 2.4 million having acquired French citizenship, bringing the total to 6.8 million. Furthermore, there were approximately 0.8 million foreigners born in France, making the total number of foreigners in the country around 5.1 million.

France has a rich immigration history, with migrants comprising 4% of the population as far back as 1920 (Insee, 2012). What is interesting is that France has a higher proportion of former immigrants and children of immigrants who have been naturalised and are now citizens compared to other major countries, with estimates ranging from 21% (based on the High Council for Integration criteria) to 27% (according to Insee, 2012). Ethnic and cultural diversity may significantly impact how the public perceives migration, often more so than the actual numbers (Giorgi & Vitale, 2017).

Only half of the migrants who arrive each year fit the typical image of migrants from the Global South (see Chap. 13 in this book). For instance, in 2018, one-third of the 265,000 residence permits issued in France were for student immigration. Due to the EU freedom of movement treaty, France hosted 30,000 minors and 76,000 new European immigrants that same year. Additionally, in 2012, 90% of immigrants resided in large urban areas, a trend that has continued in the past 12 years, in coherence with the general trends of the country.

France's migration patterns are influenced by its colonial past, with approximately half of the migrants coming from Africa, 27% from Europe, and 18% from Asia. Notably, the number of migrants from Europe has decreased since 1982, while the share of migrants from the Maghreb has remained stable, and migrants from Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have more than doubled. The composition of migration varies at different geographic scales, from regions to metropolitan areas and cities.

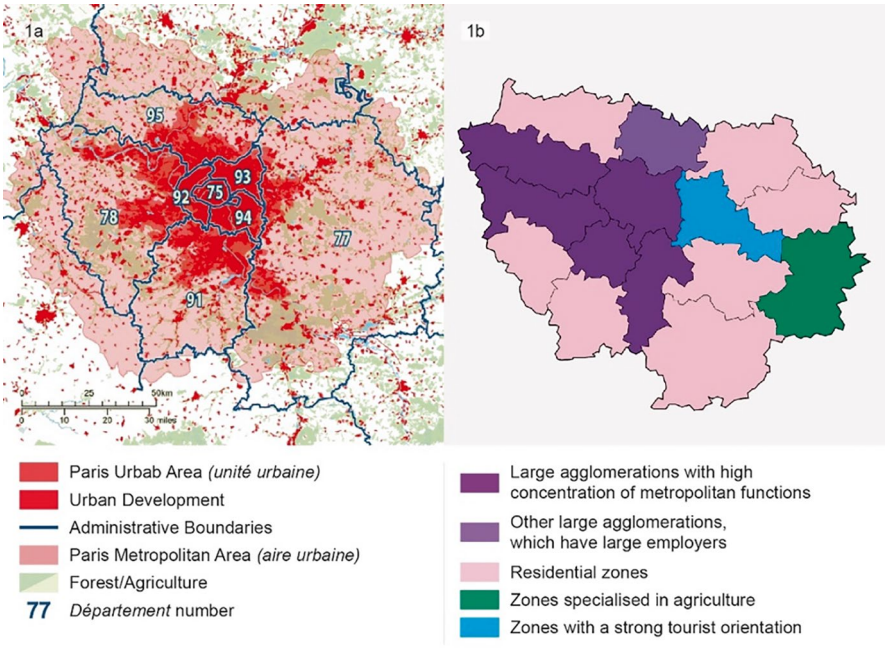

Fig. 3.1 The metropolitan area (**a**) and travel-to-work areas (**b**) in Île-de-France. Source: Insee (2020)

Several definitions exist for the Paris metropolitan area, considering its economic functions and influence, which extends well beyond the immediate region. While the Insee statistical metropolitan area is expansive and covers a wide geographical area (Fig. 3.1a), its area of influence encompasses almost the entire north of France, and its attractivity involves most of the region (Fig. 3.1b). In the 2017 Census, the Urban Area of Paris had a population of 10,785,092, with growth outpacing the national average[1] (Insee, 2020).

In 2016, a new institution, the *Métropole du Grand Paris* (Greater Paris Metropolitan Authority; henceforth: Mgp), emerged as an adding political layer for the metropolitan area (Fig. 3.2), competing with the Ile de France Region, the Departments, and the city of Paris (Le Galès & Mouchard, 2023). Mgp covers a smaller area than the Insee statistical area, encompassing four departments, including the city of Paris and its surrounding areas. While Paris has experienced stagnant population growth since the 1960s, the metropolitan area has expanded significantly. The Mgp is divided in 12 s tiers institutions (*Établissements publics territoriaux*: Epts) that regroup 131 municipalities. The Mgp handles financial

[1] Over the last three decades, France's population has increased by 9.4 million people, with half of this growth occurring in major cities, including 20% in Paris and the 13 largest urban areas. In most of these urban areas, the city centres have seen a decline in population as residents move to nearby municipalities.

The MGP is divided into EPTs:
T1 – Ville de Paris
T2 – Vallée Sud Grand Paris (VSGP)
T3 – Grand Paris Seine Ouest (GPSO)
T4 – Paris Ouest La Défense (POLD)
T5 – Boucle Nord de Seine (BNS)
T6 – Plaine Commune (PC)
T7 – Paris Terres d'Envol (PTE)
T8 – Est Ensemble (EE)
T9 – Grand Paris - Grand Est (GPGE)
T10 – Paris-Est-Marne et Bois (PEMB)
T11 – Grand Paris Sud Est Avenir (GPSEA)
T12 – Grand-Orly Seine Bièvre (GOSB)

Fig. 3.2 The MGP (metropolitan body) and the EPTs (second tiers institutions). Source: Cour de comptes, 2023

redistribution (Allé, 2023) and EPTs the social urban policy; they share responsibilities on major development projects, improving and rehabilitating housing.

The Paris metropolitan region is home to 2.2 million immigrants, a share that continues to grow since the beginning of the new millennium. Foreign-born residents are not evenly distributed within the Greater Paris area (Fig. 3.3). Deprived neighbourhoods host around 30%, 10% higher than the city's average, according to INSEE 2015 data (Table 3.1). Migrants, foreign-born residents and, of late, asylum seekers or informal refugees tend to concentrate in specific geographical areas along the north-eastern arc and the southern longitudinal spine of the MGP (Boussad et al., 2017). These areas have a higher percentage of foreign-born residents than the regional average, with Plaine Commune having the highest concentration at 37.5% (Table 3.2). Specific municipalities, like La Courneuve, Aubervilliers, and Saint-Denis, have foreign-born residents making up around 40% of their populations. These municipalities are characterised by high shares of young people, large families, unemployment, social assistance recipients, lower education, and social housing, and high odds of social and economic exclusion. 46% to 65% of the workforce comprises blue-collar workers, while the number of highly skilled workers is limited and much lower than in all other parts of the metropolitan area (Table 3.3)

Paris also attracts young adults due to the availability of university and training courses and entry-level job opportunities. Much of the policies implemented in the Paris metropolitan area can be attributed to its economic significance, social and geographic inequalities, and efforts to balance internal redistribution (Le Galès, 2020; see also Diemer et al., 2022).

Yet, the geographic distribution of migrants is closely tied to factors like unemployment. Despite having a relatively young population, the overlap of unemployment, social housing, and low education levels raises questions about segregation within the Paris metropolitan region (Boussad et al., 2017). Scholars consider multiple dimensions of segregation, including residential distribution, ethnic isolation,

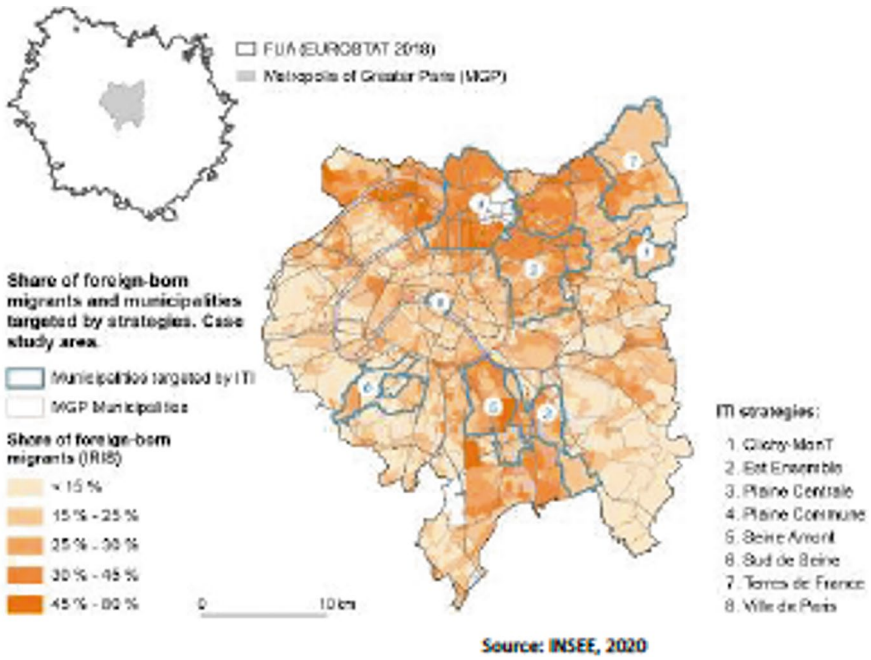

Fig. 3.3 Foreign-born population per municipalities and case study areas in the MGP. Source: Insee (2020)

Table 3.1 Migrants in the region by geographical scale

	Total population 2018	Annual growth rate 2013–2018	Migrants	% Migrants
Paris	2,175,601	0.5	440,464	20.2
MGP	7,075,028	0.4	[a]1,551,420	[a]22.1
Statistical Metropolitan Area (Aire Urbaine : FUA)	10,816,803	0.4	2,200,000	20.3
Region Ile de France (IdF)	12,213,447	0.4	2,378,567	19.5

Source: INSEE, RP2018 exploitation principale
+ INSEE 2012
[a] INSEE 2015

and concentration (Oberti & Préteceille, 2016). It is worth noting that there is little evidence of ethnic minorities being concentrated in 'ghettos' as seen in the United States; instead, mixed neighbourhoods are prevalent (Apur, 2023).[2]

[2] Following APUR (2023) in the Greater Paris Metropolis, 37% of the population will live in one of the most mixed neighborhoods in 2019, and 21% in one of the most segregated neighborhoods (where households have high- or low-income levels very close to each other). Finally, 42% of the population lives in a neighborhood that falls into an intermediate situation, being neither one of the most segregated nor one of the most mixed (see also Oberti, 2020).

Table 3.2 Non-national residents per country of birth in the four departments corresponding to the MGP

				Country					
Dept.		Foreigners	% of the tot population	UE	Algeria	Morocco	Tunisia	Turkey	Total of the four countries
75	Paris	310 145	14.3	27.9	8.9	6.1	4.6	0.9	20.5
92	Hauts-de-Seine	204 659	12.6	25.4	13.0	13.2	5.5	0.8	32.5
93	Seine-Saint-Denis	400 051	24.5	17.9	15.4	8.4	5.0	3.9	32.7
94	Val-de-Marne	221 051	15.8	27.0	14.0	5.9	5.9	2.1	27.9

Source: Insee, Census 2018

Table 3.3 Migrants in the metropolitan region of Paris per EPT

Paris and EPTs	Total population	Migrant population %	Foreign nationals %
T1 – Ville de Paris	2,206,488	20.4	14.6
Paris Arrondissements 18, 19, 20	*574,778*	*22.7*	*NA*
T2 – Vallée Sud GrandParis (VSGP)	395,761	16.1	10.2
T3 – Grand Paris Seine Ouest (GPSO)	316,653	15.1	10.1
T4 – Paris Ouest La Défense (POLD)	559,982	17.1	11.7
T5 – Boucle Nord de Seine (BNS)	439,561	24.8	18.1
T6 – Plaine Commune (PC)	429,266	37.5	30.8
T7 – Paris Terres d'Envol (PTE)	357,568	29.9	22.6
T8 – Est Ensemble (EE)	412,972	28.7	22.2
T9 – Grand Paris - Grand Est (GPGE)	392,857	22.0	16.6
T10 – Paris-Est-Marne et Bois (PEMB)	506,882	16.2	11.3
T11 – Grand Paris Sud Est Avenir (GPSEA)	310,159	20.2	13.5
T12 – Grand-Orly Seine Bièvre (GOSB)	692,061	23.9	17.8
Total MGP	*7,020,210*	*22. 1*	*16.1*

Source: APUR 2019 on INSEE 2015 data

The shrinking working class has left the place for an increasing share of the middle class in several parts of the city, a significant aspect widely discussed in the scholarly literature on the metropolitan process of change of the major cities in Europe and France.[3] In the late 2000s, the increase of middle-class residents affected

[3] On the nature and extent of gentrification in Paris an important debate highlighted the risk of over generalisation. Critical scholars tend to adopt gentrification as the central lens (Clerval, 2016, 2020), risking however some theoretical and methodological inconsistencies (Hamnett, 2021). Accurate empirical readings tend to put at the center stage the process of social transformation of the urban region (Préteceille, 2007).

the entire capital. At the same time, the concentrations of social housing and old, run-down housing units contributed to preserving working-class neighbourhoods in the northeast sector of Paris and the peripheral belt. This transformation is part of the social reshaping of the urban region's social structure, restricting working-class residential options to inner suburbs or suburban communes far from the metropolitan center (Préteceille, 2007; Bacqué et al., 2011).

As a result, the Greater Paris area exhibits higher income inequality compared to other urban areas in France, with more significant social inequality in Paris itself. The southern eastern EPTS are more affluent, as mirrored by the lower share of migrants in Table 3.2. On the other side, the Northeast neighbourhoods experience high unemployment rates and have a high proportion of social housing. At the same time, central and western districts and most southern districts are more affluent (APUR, 2019).

The social transformations of Paris have been substantial further to the process of deindustrialization. Like all major European economic capitals, the spread of the middle class, the self-segregation of an even wealthier upper-classes and social inequality have grown together (Cousin, 2017). The spatial structure of the Paris metropolitan area remains deeply marked by these long-term trends, with the northeast fringe characterized by the presence of blue-collars and social housing estates (APUR, 2023). Consequently, the immigrant population concentrate in the same areas, as well as other less-affluent groups (APUR, 2017). However, the city of Paris, as well as suburban municipalities, especially in the northern fringe, are actively involved in social and redistributive policies. Notably, the city of Paris has nearly doubled the share of social housing in the last 8 years, which has now reached almost 25% of the housing units. It is an almost unique achievement in OECD countries (Le Galès & Pierson, 2019), although it has been less successful in rebalancing the uneven geographical distribution of social groups (Lelévrier et al., 2017; Ramond & Oberti, 2022).

3.2 Policies for Social Integration

To understand integration patterns, it is useful to consider three discursive threads: migrants, suburbs, and refugees. The reception, specifically directed toward the world of refugees, would be less comprehensible without the backdrop of social policies for the resident population in the suburbs, which is weighty in France. This population largely coincides with residents born abroad.

The integration of migrants in France is fundamentally shaped by the republican model, which is rooted in the principles of universal rights and equal treatment for all individuals, regardless of their origins. Enshrined in the constitution, these rights are upheld by the state, which actively promotes national "republican" values. This model, in contrast to the multicultural approach, forbids—at least in principle—categorising individuals based on criteria such as ethnicity and recognising them as separate communities. Instead, national immigration policy seeks to foster social

inclusion and a social mix. Over the past three decades, French policymakers have gradually moved from an "assimilationist" stance to a more "integrationist" framework in addressing immigration (Favell, 2022).

This evolution has unfolded in tandem with growing concerns about territorial cohesion, particularly during the 1990s, when the concentration of immigrants in certain peripheral housing estates was increasingly perceived as a threat to national unity. In response, France developed the *Politique de la Ville* (PV), a policy targeting socially deprived urban areas with the objective of countering social exclusion. Characterised by a place-based approach, PV combines locally available resources with external support—such as inter-institutional networks and financial assistance—to address the complex challenges of urban inequality. The implementation of PV has been decentralised, introducing a degree of variation across local contexts, and encouraging the involvement of both local stakeholders and the general public (Epstein, 2020).

During the subsequent decade, a significant shift occurred as European Union anti-discrimination directives pushed the policy focus from integration towards anti-discrimination, especially in the realm of employment (Bereni et al., 2021). Within this broader framework, French urban policy has continued to pursue the normative goal of promoting social mix, now codified as a legal obligation for all municipalities. This policy requires that each municipality contributes to the national effort to combat social and ethnic segregation by providing a proportion of social housing. The strategy involves both the development of new housing units—often middle-class and commercial in character—and the replacement of ageing, mono-functional housing estates, with efforts to control social displacement and ensure proximity-based rehousing (Bhagat, 2021). In this regard, France distinguishes itself within the European landscape for its singular, state-led approach to social housing.

While integration and housing policy evolved at the local and national levels, the institutionalisation of asylum seeker reception in France emerged relatively late (Aulanier & Bartel, 2022). The formal framework came into being with the creation of the *Dispositif National d'Accueil* (DNA), which is now administered by the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII). This scheme has its origins in the collaborative efforts of the state and NGOs that mobilised in the 1970s to respond to the needs of Chilean and Southeast Asian refugees. Initially conceived as an exceptional and temporary measure, accommodation centres provided shelter for both asylum seekers and refugees without differentiation. However, France still lacks a stable system of permanent public accommodation for asylum seekers. The support programmes that do exist are highly fragmented, with varying durations and temporalities—often shortest for those with the greatest needs (Dollet, 2024).

A pivotal shift in national immigration policy occurred in 2006, when the French government introduced quotas and stepped-up efforts to curb irregular migration. These changes were reinforced following the election of Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007, whose presidency was marked by contentious debates and a hardening of policies concerning border control and integration. The conditions for obtaining legal residency in France became increasingly stringent, with applicants required to meet

additional guarantees. At the same time, this shift in policy signalled a growing concern with territorial inequality and spatial justice.

The creation of the *Commissariat Général à l'Égalité des Territoires* (CGET) in 2014 further institutionalised this trend. A new integration framework was introduced under the banner of a "republican contract," which set out an individualised five-year path for foreign residents. In the same year, close to 40% of asylum applications—amounting to 70,052 cases—resulted in the granting of refugee status or subsidiary protection. Most applicants came from countries such as Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Haiti, and Bangladesh.

In addition to these national efforts, France has identified 1514 *quartiers prioritaires* since 2014 as focal points for urban renewal, social inclusion, and the stimulation of new economic opportunities. Local governments and municipal councils have been tasked with delivering services to refugees, while *Départements*—provincial-level administrations—retain overarching responsibilities for health, social assistance, and the management of accommodation in reception centres, as well as the administration of the *Revenu de Solidarité Active* (RSA), a minimum income scheme.

The *Politique de la Ville* continues to function in close coordination with EU structural funds designated for sustainable urban development. Within this framework, a contractual partnership has been established between the state and a wide range of actors, including local authorities, public institutions, and social housing providers. These collaborations reflect the ongoing ambition to align integration policy with territorial equity and multiscalar governance, in ways that resonate with both national principles and European directives.

In this sense, scholars agree that "governing urban diversity in France is therefore complex" (Lelévrier et al., 2017). While the national government oversees migration policy, local governments and councils oversee refugee services. The French case reveals that a better alignment between EU and national policies is beneficial but needs to be integrated more efficiently into the system. France's multilevel governance system has developed over time, with central and local institutions sharing significant responsibilities for social policies. However, France has a robust national framework for the migrants' integration, focusing on disadvantaged neighbourhoods and inspired by the republican model. While uncertainties surround the definitions of migrants and integration, local integrated strategies are becoming increasingly relevant within the decentralised French system. In the next paragraph we will see how this evolution is pushed by local contention.

3.3 The Progressive Drift of Local Socio-Spatial Strategies

From a policy analysis perspective, power is always territorialized, especially in the history of the nation-state (King et al., 2017). Beyond general references, a more intriguing form of spatial control is through the policy territorialization institutions (and their instruments). Area-based development policies are defined in a specific

territory, namely within the perimeter of a local society. These territories are shaped by social organization, constellations of actors, and their institutional memory. Beyond local communities, this memory is also carried by policy communities; in this case, the social development strategies are examined within the framework of European regional policies, revealing an interesting spillover effect of social policies towards migrants and, indirectly, refugees.

In the midst of persistent inequalities, France presents a dual narrative of successes and challenges. Emerging crises, including the impact of COVID-19, economic instability, the volatility of income from low-skilled jobs, and climate change, are affecting the framework and impact of integration policies. The parameters of integration have historically shifted, with ongoing challenges related to access to the labor market, particularly during periods of economic downturn. At the same time, discussions on cultural integration are pervasive, often generating divergent viewpoints and criticisms. Additionally, national social policies related to housing, urban renewal, and education have undergone frequent revisions and grapple with persistent resource shortages.

Integration policies for immigrant and minority communities are intended to complement this framework, yet they face their own set of challenges in the midst of evolving societal dynamics. Even in the most promising cases, these policies must contend with troubling trends. In this evolving landscape, the endorsement of localized integrated strategies is in line with the broader trend of decentralization within the French system and addresses the imperative of inclusiveness for migrants.

The French experience underlines the potential benefits of better alignment between EU and national policies, emphasizing the need for more expeditious implementation. One of the priorities of the EU Structural Funds and regional programmes is to promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, including migrants, by supporting integration measures, combating discrimination and promoting gender equality.

While various approaches address the inclusion of migrants, with a particular emphasis on Romanian Roma migrants (Cousin et al., 2021), the overarching theme is to improve access to social rights, employment, and housing stability with a mix of ordinary and targeted policy measures (Vitale, 2021).

Since 2016, the 11 Etablissements publics territoriaux (EPTs) manage with their Territorial Plans the urban policy, construction and development, sanitation, waste management, as well economic development, inclusion, training, and energy transition (Cremaschi, 2021). In addition, the Île-de-France region used Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) to address sub-regional disparities and territorial inequalities through a Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) approach. ITIs support local partnerships, project engineering, and the initiatives selection.[4]

[4] Marco Cremaschi et al. (2021) analyzed strategies in the Greater Paris metropolitan area between 2014 and 2020, targeting areas where migrants are concentrated. They have Evaluate regional and local ITI program documents and conduct interviews with local management teams for each ITI in April and May 2020.

In the northeast of Paris, both within and beyond the city limits, public policies have focused considerable investment on a densely populated and culturally diverse area marked by deep social inequalities and complex urban, economic, and environmental challenges. Within this framework, the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) strategy seeks primarily to support career development and prevent professional setbacks. A strong emphasis is placed on addressing systemic discrimination and promoting gender equality, particularly through programs that encourage access to training, employment, and community empowerment. The ITI functions as a complement to other long-standing initiatives, such as the *Politique de la Ville*, aimed at promoting social cohesion and inclusion in disadvantaged urban areas.

Although migrants are not explicitly referenced in the program's strategic objectives, their presence in Priority Neighborhoods (*Quartiers Prioritaires de la Politique de la Ville*, QPV) means that they are indirectly targeted by several interventions. However, administrative regulations and the need for formal certification may result in the exclusion of some migrant groups, especially those in irregular or precarious legal situations. To counter these exclusionary effects, other local initiatives have emerged, focusing more directly on migrants' specific needs, such as language training and personalized support for those in vulnerable socio-economic conditions.

The intercommunal structure of Plaine Commune, in particular, has historically played a central role in the reception and integration of migrant populations. Home to residents from 134 different nationalities and a total of 130,000 immigrants, this territory exemplifies both the cultural richness and the socio-economic pressures facing peri-urban France. The migrant population here is notable for its demographic profile, characterised by a high proportion of women and children—a reality that exacerbates barriers to employment due to limited childcare options and language difficulties. With an unemployment rate hovering around 18%, Plaine Commune ranks among the most economically disadvantaged areas in the country.

Even though strategic planning documents do not systematically mention migrants, a variety of targeted projects are designed to address their specific challenges. These include socio-linguistic workshops, support for navigating social welfare systems and civil rights processes, and the development of spaces such as the women's center in Saint-Denis. Furthermore, broader economic development initiatives within the area indirectly contribute to the socio-professional integration of migrants, offering pathways that—while not exclusively designed for this population—nevertheless provide critical support in advancing inclusion and mobility.

In the Paris metropolitan area, which has a particularly large immigrant population, local authorities have promoted employment, apprenticeships and vocational training for people with lower skills. This category includes many residents of foreign origin. Municipalities are also responsible for social housing, schooling, childcare, nursery and primary schools, catering and extracurricular activities. The city of Paris alone spends more than 38 million euros on the reception of foreigners, although these costs are normally the responsibility of the state. In addition, the SAMU Social de Paris, an NGO that provides emergency aid to the homeless,

contributes to the housing of asylum-seeking families. There are few territorial conflicts over reception policies, but there is no solidarity between the wealthy west side and the vulnerable northeastern municipalities.

3.4 Reception Centres Between Care and Control

Since 2015, the French government has struggled to respond to the arrival of refugees, oscillating between dismantling the informal settlements (as repeatedly in Calais, known as the 'jungle') and relocating the population to distant areas (Aguilera & Vitale, 2015). This is increasingly the case in Western countries (Agier & Lacadet, 2014) and has led to increased demands on the resources, skills, and expertise from the associations and local authorities responsible for refugee reception, even though their involvement was voluntary.

Although the refugee resettlement program is a national policy in France, the City of Paris has established temporary reception centers that work with NGOs and local organizations to provide individualized support to resettled refugees (see also Chap. 11 in this book). In addition, the city claims a strong commitment to human rights that goes beyond institutional obligations and national directives. The city of Paris wanted to explicitly challenge the central government, and position itself in the network of sanctuary cities, making a political commitment to do more than the national guidelines, justifying its action both on the basis of humanitarian reasons and on the basis of an investment policy for the purpose of reducing crime risks and insecurity for citizens.

In 2016, Paris set up a refugee reception center, inspired by the small town of Grande-Synthes in northern France. The humanitarian reception center was located at the Porte de La Chapelle (CPA: Centre de premier Accueil, also known as the "*Bulle*" (the Bubble) for its distinctive yellow and white bubble design) and provided temporary reception for refugees living in camps. It closed in 2018. The mayor emphasized the need for a quick but careful response that "embodies aesthetic sensibility" and "conveys a sense of humanity" (on the role of mayors, see also Chap. 1 in this book).

The Bubble was made in the greatest urgency, with the goal of making rapidie give immediate help and welcome. Urgency corresponds precisely to the rapid mobilization of resources to meet immediate and temporary needs. Observation of the organization and internal social relations confronted us with a paradox. While the relationships observed were peaceful and rather welcoming for asylum seekers, the mechanisms of selection at entry, collection of fingerprints at the prefecture, and geographical distribution of people were soundely contested by associations.[5]

[5] Critics denounced police violence in its vicinity against migrant·e·s, queuing problems, expulsions following fingerprinting, and unguaranteed asylum rights (France24, January 13, 2017; La Cimade, March 9, 2017).

The entrance to the site featured a unique inflatable structure that encompassed designated waiting areas. The Bubble was notable for its tall and wide structure adorned with intersecting yellow and gray stripes; the structure aimed to be a guidepost for refugees and migrants, directing them to the designated location. The yellow bubble was intended to give residents a glimpse of a less bleak landscape and convey a positive message, contributing to a sense of development and improvement in the neighborhood (Scott-Smith, 2020).

In addition, two floors of repurposed shipping containers served as multifunctional spaces, housing both offices and reception areas. The health center, strategically located in 14 containers, includes a waiting area accessible to guests of the central facility. The restored industrial hall housed facilities exclusively for male guests, with expected stays ranging from 5 to 10 days. This space was equipped with eight sections of chipboard cabins, each with its own common areas, shower facilities, dining area, and recreation zone. Women and children were redirected to alternative reception centers to meet their specific needs (see also Chap. 5 in this book). Critics have arguably seen the architectural implications of these buildings as "a recent move towards larger, aesthetically influential and highly emblematic interventions" (Scott-Smith, 2020).

The centre was established in response to the increasing number of resettled refugees arriving in Paris. Over the following year and half, the centre continued to support to resettled refugees, by providing services such as language training, legal assistance, and health care.

Strategically located on the northern outskirts of La Chapelle, the center provided access to essential services and transportation, but it was far from the center of Paris, and for asylum seekers, distance hinders connections with groups and associations. It was equipped with dormitory-style living quarters, sanitary facilities and common areas for social activities. With an initial capacity of 400 places, to be increased to 600, it was expected that 50 to 80 migrants would stay for 5 to 10 days before being transferred to other places, depending on their situation.

The shelter was established in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide individualised assistance to resettled refugees. A diverse team of professionals and volunteers, including social workers, translators, and health care providers, ensured that refugees received comprehensive care. The CPA was reserved for men only, was run by Emmaus Solidarité association. However, the bubble was more of a spectacle than a practical solution, leading shelter managers to express concerns about issues such as heat, noise, and smell (Scott-Smith, 2020).

The original concept aimed to provide an "unconditional welcome" in Paris. However, the city had to reconcile with the Ministry of the Interior, which did not endorse the notion of an unconditional welcome. As a result, the bubble was transformed into a space where residents entered into a contractual agreement, exchanging their shelter for obligations such as police visits, information registration, and integration into the formal asylum system. According to critics, this led to denying the promised hospitality (Macé, 2017); one of the NGOs challenged the management and subsequently withdrew from the shelter.

One of the difficulties was that the number of arrivals was much higher than expected. However, only asylum seekers were admitted, and many of them could remain in an illegal situation for several months. There is a gap between these measures and the reality on the ground, which combines a weak and sporadic political will on the part of the public authorities with a rather fragmented network of associations and support organisations.

Due to its limited capacity, the Chapelle Center quickly reached its saturation point, and the ad hoc camps, which were promptly reestablished, were repeatedly evacuated - often by force - only to be immediately reestablished. Moreover, both scholars and activists criticized the operational modalities of the shelter, which were modeled on state practices of sorting and controlling displaced populations (Gardesse et al., 2022).

This conclusion may seem uncharitable, given Paris efforts, however inadequate: the city offered shelter to 47,000 people, with 21,400 spaces available year-round for homeless individuals between 2015 and 2020. In addition, 4000 beds have been set aside for migrants and refugees, more than 1600 of which have been made possible by the budget of the City of Paris. This is a recurring conclusion for local governments, whose actions must adhere to the framework of national policy, even though they may pursue different goals. The argument could be reformulated to indicate which specific mechanisms, cognitive resources, coalitions of actors, and policy instruments produce a particular outcome at a particular time.

3.5 The Repressive Policing of Space

The policing of public space is an important and often contentious aspect of urban governance. The policing of public space in urban environments is a multifaceted and complex issue with significant implications for responsible reception policies, public perception, and indivudual rights.

In accordance with government directives, local prefects often ordered the use of police forces to dismantle squatting camps and unauthorized settlements. In one specific case, the prefect of Paris also ordered the erection of physical barriers between two neighborhoods in the city. These camps were repeatedly subjected to repressive measures.

Paris has seen the rise of several informal settlements, known as ‘camps’, mainly in the northern districts of the neighbourhoods north of the capital. These settlements bring together thousands of people from Afghanistan, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. The health conditions led to an increase in scabies epidemics, and the physical impact on the urban landscape of Paris motivated the decision to systematically demolish the shantytowns: a politics of eviction (Vitale, 2009).

Here is how independent media[6] described one of these makeshift camps:

[6] *InfoMigrants* is a collaborative project involving three major European media organizations: France Médias Monde, Deutsche Welle, and ANSA. The project operates across various platforms and is co-financed by the European Union.

> Between 300 and 400 migrants, mostly Afghans, are living in a camp under an overhead metro …Waiting to lodge their asylum applications, they have no choice but to sleep there, in temperatures that are sometimes below freezing. They brave the cold around campfires made from objects found in the street (Oberti, 2022).

Policing is often brutal, and the increase in the use of the police forces deployment sometimes surprises the responsible reception policies. The demolition of squatter camps, often made up of temporary tents, is a regular feature of Paris Region policy. As recently as October 2023, the Paris prefecture announced the evacuation of a large migrant camp in the north of the capital that housed 400 people, mostly single men from Afghanistan, Eritrea and Sudan; some had travelled via the Italian island of Lampedusa. Once identified, three-quarters were sent to temporary reception facilities in the Paris region and one-quarter outside (see also Chap. 5 in this book). A few days later, 200 unaccompanied minors were taken to an abandoned school but continued to spend the night in the open air in the north of Paris (Dumont, 2023).

In France, the police operate under the command of prefects, who are responsible for maintaining public order and security. The relationship between the government and law enforcement agencies is crucial in shaping the nature of policing in public spaces. Prefects play a central role in determining police strategies and tactics, which vary widely from region to region and situation to situation.

These operations are planned directly by the prefects in contact with the Ministry of the Interior but they also result in the daily patrolling of police officers, who can stop for checks or urge the occupants of public spaces to move (Aguilera et al., 2018). The incremental nature of these policies became evident through a few events that marked the political debate. One noteworthy event was the occupation of riverbanks by the ‘Les Enfants de Don Quichotte association and homeless individuals following the enactment of the DALO law in 2007, which mandated prefects to provide housing or shelter to those without it (Aguilera, 2020). Quietly, activists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been organising local protests and demonstrations for Eastern European migrants and homeless families and against shantytowns for about two decades (Vacca et al., 2022).

3.6 Exclusionary Urban Design

Space is also regulated through temporary urban design—via the positioning of objects, street furniture, or physical barriers—which can subtly shape behaviours and patterns of use. These spatial arrangements often produce regulatory effects, influencing how people move, gather, or rest in the city. The management of public space therefore plays a crucial role not only in everyday urban life (see also Chap. 7 in this book), but also in shaping access, visibility, and rights—particularly for those who are marginalised or vulnerable (see Chap. 9 in this book). In this sense, the design and policing of public space can be seen as a form of city-making, where institutions, residents, and users alike participate—intentionally or not—in producing the lived urban environment (see also Chap. 1 and the conclusions in this book).

The strategies adopted reflect broader visions of urban order and inclusion, and contribute to defining who belongs, and under what conditions.

The management of space can be emancipatory or violent. The city often selects repressive models of urban furniture or spatial arrangements, such as benches designed to prevent people experiencing homelessness from lying down. All in all, this may seem like a negligible example. It is all the more significant when one considers the importance given to the furnishing of public spaces in the city and the experimentation supported by the city. For example, in the same period, large wooden benches suitable for relaxing and lying down were placed in the central square of the Pantheon, as part of a project on gender equality. According to the city, the cozy benches make women more comfortable in public spaces.

The furnishing of metro stations or public spaces has highlighted countless examples of "defensible space," the analytical approach that underlines the normative aspect of physical design and its potential to regulate social behaviour (Newman, 1972). A blatant case are the seats and benches designed by the city's metro company to prevent anyone from lying down and sleeping.

Indirect effects are not unintentional (Vitale, 2015). The control of public space takes place through active interventions (see also Chap. 9 in this book), above all through the direct control and patrolling of the police. In France, the police depend on the government through the prefects who command and regulate public order. Recently, the police built a wall between two neighborhoods in order to drive out drug traffickers: the prefect of Paris ordered the construction of a wall to close an underpass between Paris and the neighboring town of Pantin to prevent the transit of drug users and traffickers.

Local governments implemented a range of spatial interventions to protect open spaces from occupation by migrants using makeshift tents. The municipality undertook the installation of approximately 4 km of fencing and boulder fields during the construction of the shelter. Despite the shortcomings of the shelter, these measures were stigmatized in the public debate as inhospitable (Couvelaire, 2016).

The episode examined is a stark reminder of the often-brutal methods used in policing public spaces and the need for a more balanced and humane approach to urban management. It also highlights the importance of local government institutions, multilevel governance contention, and the regulating role of governance modes in the use of force and maintaining public order. Further research and policy development is needed to strike a more equitable balance between public safety and individual rights within public spaces.

3.7 The Governance of Local Reception Policies

The governance of local reception policies is increasingly ensured by enabling processes that take place in 'the shadow of the state' but with consistent input from non-state actors. We suggest that a process of regulation-in-progress is occurring, in which rule-making and decision-making are slowly allocating resources and

adopting operating criteria thanks mainly to the activity of the government *Délégation interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement* (DIHAL).[7] However, like many other areas of public policy, refugee reception is a sector under strain and evolution, especially due to austerity policies and the state's recurrent repressive inclinations. At the same time, it serves as a field of experimentation, where agenda-setting and implementation are ongoing processes.

These processes are open to non-governmental and grassroots associative actors, who are sometimes capable to anticipate, correct, and influence public policy. In the best cases, some local and national agencies have taken up and expanded these experiments. In other cases, a framework of compliance and, often, repression has prevailed. This *chiaroscuro* clearly allows for different conclusions but should not hinder an empirical analysis of the common formulation of solutions.

A first minimal conclusion is that reception policy in the Paris region lacks a coherent framework (Cremaschi, 2021; see also Artioli & Le Galès, 2025). Both the more established integration policy and the relatively recent reception of refugees are resonating and producing adaptations and innovations, but without achieving satisfactory results. The overall picture is rather contradictory, though not surprising given that it is the result of the crises of the last two decades and depends on actors with different legitimacies, purposes and functions. Critical assessments of the actions of the City of Paris overlook the fact that the 2015 shelter responded in part to political rhetoric and in part to innovative spontaneity without aspiring to change national rules and power dynamics. Advocating for a more systematic approach and a solid rationale in these cases is neither original nor sufficient. In addition, they face the typical challenges of newly established policy areas and difficulties in implementing policies at different scales.

A second conclusion concerns the possibility of a local response that contradicts national policies. The dispersal policy contradicts the commitments of the city of Paris, which has claimed the sanctuary since October 2015. The challenging question of the freedom of a local administration to act differently from the national government deserves an answer. Much academic research concludes with the scandalous statement that the results of local action are inadequate. While this is undoubtedly a politically and morally relevant response, the question itself may be misguided. The limitations of local action, and by extension of public policy in general, should not be ignored, but acknowledged considering its structural limitations. It may not be necessary to reaffirm them; instead, it is more useful to ask what mechanisms and tools can make public action more useful what mechanisms and tools can make public action more effective and sustainable.

Third, the cyclical dismantling of refugee camps after 2015, justified by national and local authorities as exceptional measures, deliberately confuses the "crisis" of migration with the crisis of the reception system. Scholars argue that this crisis has

[7] Created in 2010, it is responsible for implementing public policy on accommodation, access to housing and the maintenance of housing for people who are homeless or poorly housed, inspired by the principle of "housing first" with the aim of significantly reducing the number of homeless people.

become a routinized argument, with dispersal becoming the main instrument for the "governance of exiled populations", undermining the claimed innovative character of the city's welcoming policies (Gardesse et al., 2022: 22). The concept of integration is under review, in the light of current crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, economic challenges, and climate change. Access to the labor market remains a significant problem (limited opportunities for migrants and restrictions for refugees), and cultural integration is a subject of ongoing debate. National social policies on housing, urban renewal and education have been repeatedly revised and need to be improved with limited resources. In this evolving context, local integrated strategies respond to the trend towards decentralization in the French system and the need to address the integration of migrants.

In the intricate fabric of metropolitan life in Paris, the nexus of diversity, integration, and security plays a structuring role, as local governance is not merely the outcome of administrative procedure, but the product of constant negotiation—through compromises, tensions, and political mediation—between political parties, NGOs, associations, interest groups, utilities, and institutions at national, regional, and municipal levels. City-making, in this sense, is a collective and contested process, shaped by formal policies, everyday actions, citizen practices, acts of solidarity, and personalised care, as well as by contentious interactions between public actors and grassroots organisations. These interactions allow urban reception policies to evolve and adapt, but they also generate fragmentation, organisational instability, and incomplete or discontinuous forms of governance (Le Galès & Vitale, 2015).

Welcoming refugees, asylum seekers, and other marginalised groups is not only a question of policy design or resource allocation—it is made concrete and visible in the public space. Streets, squares, and parks are not passive backdrops, but active arenas where the tensions and contradictions of reception take shape. City-making, therefore, cannot be reduced to technical competence or rule enforcement alone; it relies on the ability to act swiftly, contextually, and responsively, especially when faced with conflicting claims to space and belonging.

In this chapter, we show that the governance of local reception policies is more than the allocation of resources and the coordination of actors. The governance of refugee reception in Paris illustrates both the challenges and the potentials of city-making through conflict and compromise. While institutional arrangements often lack stability and consistency, efforts to maintain focus, coordination, and resource mobilisation have emerged—albeit unevenly. The boundaries between local, regional, and national responsibilities remain porous, requiring continuous effort to ensure coherence. In public space, design logics and normative injunctions frequently clash with emergent social needs, leading to conflictual yet productive encounters between actors who alternately whisper welcome or shout rejection.

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Chapter 4
Cosmopolitan Diversity, Tech Migrants and Everyday Racisms in Singapore

Daniel P. S. Goh and Shai-Ann Koh

4.1 Introduction

In May 2017, a massive fire broke out at the construction site of the Global Indian International School in Punggol town. The school was planned as a Smart Campus to fit into the growing digital corridor in the northeast of Singapore. Punggol was a sleepy corner of rural farms flanked by two rivers. Today, Punggol is a model public housing town of the Twenty-First Century popular with tech migrants and their families from India. The town will soon house a digital district complete with a technological university, innovation enterprises and sustainable town services to showcase integrated master planning for Singapore's Smart Nation initiative. The Punggol Digital District will also boast civic facilities to bring diverse communities together and promote cosmopolitan multiculturalism for a global tech economy. Public reaction to the Global Indian International School fire was anything but multicultural. Comments tinged with racism and xenophobia on a video post of the fire on the Facebook page of the popular news media outlet, Mothership, stood out: "Now the school also black black", "School Not for Sinkaporeans [sic]. Nothing to see here", "Slum".[1]

[1] https://www.facebook.com/MothershipSG/videos/1513625122010468/, accessed 17 May 2022.

We would like to claim equal authorship. Daniel conceptualized the research project and theoretical questions, while Shai-Ann contributed to the theorizing and conducted the bulk of the empirical data collection. Both Daniel and Shai-Ann wrote equal parts of the paper, iteratively building up the argumentation through analysis and discussion.

D. P. S. Goh (✉) · S.-A. Koh
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: socgohd@nus.edu.sg

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This chapter seeks to understand how the post-industrial developmental state is layering a new cosmopolitan diversity unto the old postcolonial multiracialism in Singapore and why it is believed this is necessary for urban transformation to an innovative high-tech smart city. As the above vignette on the school fire suggests, it is important to discuss public reactions to the state project and the experiences of migrants, and how these could undermine cosmopolitan diversity. Based on findings of our research into the experiences of professional migrant families living in Punggol and the neighbouring Seng Kang town, we argue that the urban planning for cosmopolitan diversity is inadequate. It is not "smart" enough to tackle the deep-seated social relationships between the high-tech migrants and locals emergent in the everyday life of ethnic relations and multiculturalism in the public housing milieu.

In the next section, we discuss the scholarship on the value of diversity to migrant professionals and the making of tech districts to situate our work in a comparative approach to studying the politics of urban diversity of tech cities across East Asia and the West. We posit that there is a need to question the conceptual valorization of diversity in academic studies and policy analyses of the decisions of professionals to move to work and stay to live in tech districts. Crucial to this questioning is, we argue, the actual experience of everyday interactions, neighborliness, provision of daily life and the grounded imaginations of urban futures by migrant families. In the second section, we discuss the evolution of the state's urban planning for Punggol, from its construction as a model estate in the New Town planning tradition to the up-class waterfront living iteration and now to its cosmopolitan digital district future. We observe the state's aspirational imagination of urban futures to shape multiracial and multicultural social life and argue that the spatial logic of state planning neglects the complex texture of everyday life and grounded imaginations.

We conducted interviews with the mothers of migrant families living in the area. We chose to speak to the mothers because, whether they are working or not, they are the ones who closely manage the everyday interactions of their households in the town and narrate and express their families' grounded imaginations of urban futures in Punggol and Singapore. The mothers are the ones making daily schooling, marketing, transport, leisure, religious and socializing decisions and organizing and doing these activities. All the spouses of the mothers we interviewed were employees in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, most of them working as computer engineers in the northeast region where the sector is clustered in business parks in Changi and Tampines. The common figure in studies of tech migrants is the young male professional. Our focus on mothers acknowledges instead that the migrant professional *families* should be the unit of analysis and that *familial* migrant experience should be the matter for research. Instead of privileging the work and play experience of young male professionals, we place the everyday life experience of the migrant families in the town they live in as central.

There is a caveat to our methodology, though. At face value, our study appears to be reproducing the modern patriarchal stereotype of the male breadwinner and the female homemaker. Importantly, the women we interviewed for this study were as highly educated as their spouses and a good number were also employed as

professionals in the ICT sector, but they made decisions with their spouses to be primarily homemakers so as to adapt familial needs to the migration and work circumstances they found in Singapore.[2] There were two key factors. First, the ICT sector is heavily male dominated, and the male spouse was favoured for the coveted employment pass in the sector. Second, the lack of extended family networks and thus social support for childcare meant that some of the women had to fall back on their traditional role as homemaker. However, as we indicate here, and stress in our analysis, the women were at the forefront of making critical life-course and everyday life decisions, including employment decisions, affecting the family. Our study, against the grain of studies of tech professional migration, is emphasizing the agency of the women in this migration to Singapore, which takes place primarily through the family unit and not merely as individual professionals.

In the third section of everyday multiculturalisms and racisms, we discuss the aspirational realities that migrant professional families face in their everyday interactions with neighbors and fellow denizens in the town, as they try to acculturate and integrate in a local society that is itself engaging complexly with state urban planning and social policies. It is important to note that the migrant professional spouses of the mothers we interviewed were not yet working in Punggol Digital District, as the District was just starting to be built. They chose Punggol and Seng Kang towns to live in because of their high livability value and only discovered that the District was planned after they moved in. However, the families have hopes regarding the District, including the spouses finding work and children studying there in the future. In the penultimate section before the conclusion, we discuss how the aspirational realities shape different grounded imaginations of the migrant families' future lives in the Punggol Digital District and their agency as smart city-makers.

4.2 Tech Districts, Migrant Professionals and the Question of Diversity

Studies on the planning and development of high-tech districts have suggested that skilled migrants of ethnic minority backgrounds play a large part in their success, and cultural diversity is therefore a key attribute to be valued (English-Lueck, 2017). Scholars have emphasized migrant placemaking processes, observed the preference for immigrants to co-locate to form ethnic neighbourhoods, questioned the need for their assimilation into white majority society, and highlighted the value of urban cultural diversity in Silicon Valley (Baxter, 2010; Lung-Amam, 2015), as well as high-tech districts in the UK (Nathan, 2015). Others have pointed to enduring prejudices and discriminations, cutting across race and gender, which minority migrants

[2] We spoke to a total of 10 women aged 35 to 40 years old between January to November 2022, and conducted full interviews lasting up to 2 h with seven of the women. Of the 10 women, four were working in the ICT sector as analysts or engineers, three were full-time homemakers, and the rest worked in part-time jobs to supplement family income.

could navigate and mitigate using their ethnic networks in Silicon Valley (Shih, 2006), but not black women (Twine, 2018).

The rise of smart urbanism approaches and smart city discourses has seen the increasing informatization of urban development. Burrows and Ellison (2004) were among the first to warn that data-driven virtual decision making about neighbourhood choice could produce new forms of social exclusion. Recent scholarship highlight the inability of digital infrastructures to account for marginalised groups in the city (Kitchin, 2014) or create socially sustainable cities (Aurigi & Odendaal, 2021). Smart city technologies have the potential to not only reproduce and entrench existing inequalities, but—perhaps more insidiously—also mask them under the guise of individual preferences that remain highly stratified along race, ethnic and class lines. This splintering urbanism (Graham & Marvin, 2001) is both a function and result of smart citizenship participation. Using data to compress the city into urban derivatives risks reflecting existing splintered urbanisms and inequalities and then projecting them forward in time within the anticipatory logic of surveillance and location-based applications (Leszczynski, 2016). Apart from what data is being collected, it also matters *who* produces the data, and thus whose interests they ultimately protect. Data unevenness remains a concern for smart citizenship engagement. Instead, large private companies tend to dominate the discourse as key players, which skews the data being collected (Lee et al., 2020).

Outside of the developed West, the Silicon Valley model and the informatization of urban planning and development of high-tech districts in rapidly developing cities, for example in Bangalore (Stallmeyer, 2010), should raise similar concerns, albeit with different migratory and diversity features. Singapore has its own smart city aspirations and the Punggol Digital District is part of the grand experiment for smart urbanism that would transform the city-state into a high-tech powerhouse in Asia. The District is a natural draw for migrant professionals from India, many of whom have settled in the Punggol area and are heavily represented in the ICT sector. This comes on the heels of rising anti-foreigner sentiment, a persistent social and political issue that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Job anxiety has fuelled resentment towards Indian migrants and outrage over the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), a free-trade deal Singapore signed with India in 2005 (Kok & Sim, 2020). Amidst this social and political backdrop, the District's goals of cosmopolitan diversity, harmony and inclusion could be undermined by xenophobia and racism. Punggol is thus an interesting case study for understanding how the urban planning for diversity, belonging and inclusion interacts with local class politics and racial superstructures, which might influence migrant professionals' decisions to stay or leave and the success of high-tech district development.

Scholarship on liveability has shown that the strongest predictors of migrants' likelihood to stay are community-level characteristics such as beauty or physical setting, the ability to meet and make friends, and the ease of travel in the city (Mellander & Florida, 2011). Integration into a community, as measured through informal and formal social ties and interactions between residents in a neighbourhood, is also found to have a positive effect on residential satisfaction (Özkan &

Yilmaz, 2019). These ties may even extend to their dependents and become intergenerational, as observed in talent worker housing apartments in Shen Zhen (MacLachlan & Yue, 2022). Residents who are satisfied with public spaces are also more likely to spend time in parks and spaces of leisure and recreation, thus increasing the frequency of and opportunities for contact with other residents (Cho & Lee, 2011).

However, as much as recreational spaces can facilitate integration, migrants may remain outsiders to locals even as they live, work and play amongst them. Migrant professionals may be welcomed in the labour market, but face barriers in attaining residency status, which then affects their ability to secure subsidies in key areas like housing and healthcare, or fully participate politically or culturally. Exclusionary policies may even extend to the types of schools migrants can send their children to, which impacts their children's experiences of everyday cosmopolitanisms, leaving the onus on migrants themselves to engineer opportunities for exposure to these values and practices (Horst, 2015). This specific logic of inclusions and exclusions further marginalise migrants and results in a precarity that was previously attributed to low-skilled workers but is now also emerging within skilled migrant workers who face varying degrees of employment insecurity and settlement uncertainty driven by neoliberal economic pressures and their legal statuses (Zhan & Zhou, 2020).

Migrants to Singapore no longer fit neatly into the Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others racial grid of the old nation-building multiracialism instituted from the 1960's. Migrants now come from a variety of origin countries, holding various legal statuses and whose ethnicities combine with a range of other variables, a phenomenon that could be described as super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007). A key feature of super-diversity is that differences may vary even within co-ethnics, a finding that Ho & Kathiravelu (2022) specifies as migrants' polysemic identities. These variations lead to hierarchies within Indian migrants who come to Singapore. Their social positions within Singapore and their own communities are shaped by notions of personhood intersecting with one's skills, class, legal statuses, civilisational/development discourses, performances of cultural 'authenticity' and even length of stay in Singapore.

Apart from a culture that organises life around work, a belief in meritocracy, discourses of self-agency and hard work have been found to enable the suspension of judgement and promotion of diversity as a virtue itself, particularly in workplaces in high-tech districts (English-Lueck, 2011). Yet, while workplaces may encourage diversity, scholarship on diversity suggests that outside of the boardroom, latent racism and xenophobia still characterise neighbourhoods undergoing intense demographic and social change (Jimenez, 2007). This "reverse xenophobia", where Singaporeans fear being left out and feeling like a foreigner in their own country, is evident too in a study of high-skilled Indian migrants in Singapore conducted by Chacko (2017). Many perceive that the increasing number of Indian migrants are crowding the job market, threatening social cohesion and increasing competition. This forms a backdrop for the everyday racisms Indian migrant professionals encounter which create and reinforce racist structures through everyday practices

(Essed, 1991) that escape institutional perception and oversight. In response to everyday racisms, we utilise the term everyday anti-racism—which describes how individuals respond to racism in their daily lives—to describe respondents' strategies in navigating racialised inequality. We find that Indian migrant professionals focus on acquiring resources that enable social mobility in an attempt to confer upon themselves respectability, status and a type of 'equality' with the dominant group (Aquino, 2016).

Furthermore, there is an implicit hierarchy to migrants which complicates discourse around xenophobia. White, high-skilled migrants are welcomed as transferring valuable skills and knowledge while similarly-skilled Indian migrants are demonised as opportunistic job-hoppers, a kind of Pinkerton syndrome writ large (Yeoh, 2004). Race and ethnicity are not the only identity markers that separate locals from foreigners, as socioeconomic class is also central to understanding these dynamics. Scholars have pointed to a middling class of migrants, known as the "mobile middle". These migrants are neither low-skilled work permit holders nor the highly mobile expatriates associated with high-end condominiums and generous salary packages. Instead, they make up a spectrum that comprise of "E" Pass holders to "S" Pass holders who live in the heartlands among locals, blending in successfully while simultaneously being more visible as targets of xenophobic rhetoric (Baas, 2017; Yang, 2022). In a study of xenophobia online, Gomes (2013) notes that online criticism of foreigners could in fact be a proxy of other government policies affecting the existence and lifestyle of Singaporeans, leaving them feeling economically abandoned. In short, xenophobia in Singapore is multifaceted and complex. This strongly suggests a need to understand the granularity of interaction between locals and migrants, especially with regards to the everyday multiculturalisms and racisms of public housing living.

4.3 Appreciating Liveability and Diversity in Punggol

In 1996, just as the Singapore developmental state's embrace of globalization was at the peak, the urban authorities announced the Punggol 21 initiative to turn the rural north-eastern corner of the island into a model new town for the 21st Century. The compact suburban town was to be served by new Mass Rapid Transit and Light Rail Transit train networks and would house a quarter million residents when completed. Construction began in 1998. The highest quality building materials, innovative construction methods, advanced architectural designs and the latest urban planning methodologies were used to realize a residential utopia of the future. Beyond the physical civilization that Punggol 21 offered, it was also to be a place of social belonging and harmony. The government had implemented ethnic quotas for public housing blocks and estates just a decade before, determined to prevent the formation of ethnic enclaves in the city and foster multiracial harmony from the urban grassroots up. Punggol 21 gave the state *carte blanche* to plan, engineer and adapt this residential multiracialism to the new era of globalization.

The Asian Financial Crisis and the tech bubble recession slowed down the development of Punggol 21, as the take-up rate for the suburban town evaporated. Thousands of empty flats stalled construction and kept the town as a rustic peri-urban space; the model new town was a veritable kampung of quiet harmony and neighbourliness. In 2007, the government launched Punggol 21-plus to revitalize the development. The two rivers flanking the town was dammed up to form freshwater lakes, while a large canal was dug through the town linking the two rivers. Punggol 21-plus was resold as prestigious waterfront living for public housing, the first of its kind for affordable housing in a global city. Waterfront and waterborne recreational activities offered a unique, resort-like lifestyle for young families. Park and open spaces promised cultural activities for the worlding residents of the global city. More than multiracialism, Punggol 21-plus was to provide for the multiculturalism of the globalizing classes, which included newly arrived migrant professionals from Asian countries seeking to settle into Singapore. Worried about the integration of these migrant families, as the state sought to layer a worlding multiculturalism unto the old multiracialism, the government introduced permanent resident ownership quotas in 2010 and non-citizen subletting quotas in 2014.

In 2020, work began on the Punggol Digital District, sited at the northern part of the town. Developed by Jurong Town Corporation, designed by the world-acclaimed architectural firm WOHA, it is to be a digitally integrated and car-lite smart business park complete with a university, the Singapore Institute of Technology, a market village and a heritage trail. The district is to be the technological showcase for Singapore's ambition to become a smart city. A district-wide sensor network collects anonymized technical and social data for the test-bedding of innovations. Beyond the district, Punggol 21-plus is being transformed into a smart town test-bedding many new urban technologies from waste recycling to smart energy grids. Beyond the town, Punggol 21-plus now lies centrally in the new north-eastern post-industrial corridor stretching from Seletar Airport to Changi Airport.

With and beyond the new Punggol Digital District, the state seeks to layer a new cosmopolitan diversity unto the old multiracialism in Punggol. This cosmopolitan diversity is seen as productive of cross-cultural innovativeness and creativity and undergirding harmonious relationships between migrant professionals and citizens. For this reason, the Global Indian International School set up a sprawling next-generation smart campus in Punggol to serve the migrant professionals concentrating in the area. In our interviews with the mothers of migrant professional families residing in Punggol and Seng Kang, we found that although migrants may initially be attracted to Singapore by hard factors such as job opportunities, standards of living and the quality of education in Singapore, what ultimately makes them stay are softer factors associated with quality of life and subjective well-being, broadly categorised as liveability (Lee, 2021). Belonging, community, the physical beauty of their living environment and their aspirations for their children play decisive roles in framing their desire to remain in their neighbourhood.

Every participant in our study chronicled the beginning of their life in Singapore as starting from a work-motivated shift. Having accompanied their spouse to Singapore, they either found work here or took on the fulltime role of raising and

caring for their children. They remarked on the accessibility of public transport, the pleasantness of the urban environment and the abundance of shops, malls and recreational activities all a stone's throw away from their houses. In short, participants revealed Punggol and Seng Kang to be neighbourhoods with high levels of liveability in that they met most, if not all, of their needs and interests. For example, Rani explained that she liked the area, "because it's quite happening and near to the airport. This area actually I found the amenities are also very good. We have a stadium nearby our house. It's a hockey stadium even though, not for us (laughs) but at least have some badminton courts and some other facilities here. And for us, we can easily go to Mustafa Centre because we like to do shopping there. Indian stuff we can find there." Meera also said, "Best is the playground and then... lot of things is near. Like you have 24 hours supermarket, so when you have baby... it's much needed right? Sometimes you need something emergency. So we quickly go and buy. Nearby we have some clinics also for anything. You can quickly go and check. … Now we got a new gym also nearby."

Participants who lived in Punggol tended to bring up the lack of facilities like a swimming pool and public library within Punggol, necessitating their travel to neighbouring Seng Kang. They placed emphasis on qualities like the greenness of Punggol and the centrality of playgrounds to their children's lives compared to residents from Seng Kang. These refer to measures of pleasantness, which we take to mean satisfaction with the natural environment (Lee, 2021). As we spoke, it became obvious why this was their focus, as their weekly routines greatly involve engaging with their outdoor environment. The various playgrounds peppered around their housing estate were their children's daily haunts, where they meet their friends and spend much of their time after school. As both parents typically worked, playgrounds served a form of 'informal daycare' for their children while they were away at work. One of the participants, Daksha, specifically mentioned a spacious walking path opposite her block where she goes on her daily walks. On the weekends, they used easily accessed cycling paths to parks like Coney Island to spend quality time with the family. They remarked on the peacefulness of open spaces and how easy it was to get from one place to another via bicycles. They formed their own communities with other Indian migrant professionals in the area and held gatherings in public places like multipurpose halls and the various rooftop gardens to be found in Punggol's housing estates. Through their descriptions of their routines, they revealed Punggol and Seng Kang to be highly liveable neighbourhoods.

In fact, for Deepika, satisfaction with the urban environment was of such paramount importance that it almost became a dealbreaker for her, as she was even willing to give up living in Singapore when they looked for apartments prior to settling on one in Punggol. She explained that when she first saw the flats in older districts east of Punggol, she was very disappointed that they were dark and dingy, but was happy to have found the flats in Punggol to be well-ventilated and the district had more open areas despite being more densely populated.

Undergirding professional migrants' satisfaction with Punggol and Seng Kang were neighbourhood relations, which involved the ability to form and maintain social ties with others. These relations can be further specified into two forms: with

the Indian migrant professional community in Punggol/Seng Kang and with the locals via their immediate neighbours. Existing migrant networks, professional or otherwise, created a virtuous cycle that encouraged other Indian migrants professionals to move to that area; such as in the case of Meera, who initially stayed in Punggol with her brother's family before moving her own family permanently to the same neighbourhood a few blocks away. Even though her brother had since moved back to India, she stayed on. These social networks further embedded migrants in the neighbourhood and strengthened their desire to stay. The impact of social ties on migrants' decisions to remain are illustrated by Sneha, who shared that even as increasing rental prices had led them to consider moving, they were determined to remain in Punggol until they could not afford to do so anymore, because they"became friends with lots of people".

This community they built and became part of not only applied to them, but also their children, who had fostered ties with other children in the neighbourhood and their schools. In various anecdotes, participants shared how their children frequently served as a bridge for neighbourly encounters. They often recounted their initial interactions with fellow neighbours and co-ethnics as being an outcome of minding their children. For instance, Priya became friends with another Telugu-speaking migrant who turned out to be her block neighbour while she was fetching her son from school. She said, "Yeah we were just walking casually, and at that time she asked me 'do you speak Telugu' since I was speaking [the] Telugu language. And coincidentally her husband used to be my sister's classmate. So that's how we came to know [each other]."

Neighbourhood relations with the locals via their immediate neighbours were often also mediated by their children. Many participants recalled how interactions with their neighbours began when neighbours ask about or greet their children in common areas like the lifts and corridors. Meera and Daksha's children were good friends with their next-door neighbour's children, even celebrating birthday parties altogether and visiting each other's houses daily. These small interactions, fleeting as they were, were essential in generating feelings of neighbourly goodwill. At the very least, they contributed to a sense of belonging as neighbours made an effort to look out for each other. Apart from the physical environment of Punggol and Seng Kang, the ability to integrate into a community and to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion were essential qualities that contributed to migrants' overall satisfaction and happiness with the neighbourhoods.

4.4 Everyday Multiculturalisms and Racisms

Having previously established Singapore's multicultural model as a postcolonial 'old' multiculturalism, what can be observed is a form of everyday multiculturalism: unproblematic and positive daily encounters between residents of different ethnic backgrounds. Yet, the coexistence of this everyday multiculturalism with everyday racism (as will be demonstrated) is an apparent paradox that has been

observed in another study in Sydney (Bloch & Dreher, 2009) where Arab and Muslim residents in a small local community are seen as a threat to harmonious community relations despite enjoying high levels of cross-cultural mixing and appreciation of diversity.

The multiracial model of public housing enables and encourages getting along and 'rubbing shoulders' with neighbours through simple gestures, greetings and light-hearted banter, thus building an awareness of cultural differences and codes of various groups. In contrast to the top-down multiculturalism policies of the state, 'everyday multiculturalism' can be found in these various mundane interactions and more, such as the practice of cooking for or trading foodstuff from residents' own traditions, and especially during cultural festivities. Some participants recalled their local neighbours gifting them food during Chinese New Year and in return, they shared their home-cooked recipes during Diwali. Beyond once-a-year events, Meera and Deepika recalled frequently cooking Indian food for their neighbours who eagerly accepted their tasty dishes. These spontaneous acts of care and goodwill, especially when tied to culturally significant rituals such as food sharing, fostered a deeper appreciation of cultural differences.

This appeared to smooth over any differences they might have, culturally, religiously or nationally. However, differences were acutely felt and exaggerated when conflict arose, or in some cases, were (mis)attributed to be the cause of conflict. For instance, Rani related a time when her youngest son mistakenly parked his bicycle outside of their neighbour's flat, provoking their neighbour to confront them saying "Oh we are Chinese, we don't like people put[ting] anything in front of our house." She remarked that the neighbour could have simply asked them to remove their bicycle without pointing out their ethnic difference. Xenophobic or racist sentiments can bleed into simple interactions, highlighting the tensions of cosmopolitan diversity as it attempts to be layered onto the existing multiracial model public housing has been designed around.

Hence, although participants generally reported positive or at least cordial relationships with their neighbours, every person we spoke to related at least one incident that suggested an underlying ambivalence or outright hostility towards them. Yet, they were quick to brush off these incidents of racism or xenophobia as unimportant or tended to attribute them to the fleeting bad moods people experience. Many of them were reluctant to elaborate on these encounters with microaggressions or racist behaviour. However minor, they have larger effects than mere discomfort. These racial realities that Indian migrant professionals face not only highlight the complications with the layering of cosmopolitan diversity unto multiracialism, but also shape their interactions with and paths through the neighbourhood. Although this section seeks to highlight the xenophobia that characterises Indian migrant professionals' experiences in Punggol, we use the concept of everyday racism to illustrate the specific and situated nature of these individual interactions. Specifically, by highlighting the 'everyday', we draw attention to the microstructures that, when taken together, make up the macro fabric of diversity governance and implementation in Singapore. In doing so, the tension between the state's cosmopolitan aspirations and the quotidian aspirations of Indian migrant

professionals under a public housing model that was designed for an older—potentially outdated—form of multiracialism is revealed.

Everyday racisms often do not take extreme forms but are found instead in mundane and routine practices (Essed, 1991). These may take the form of offhand comments or remarks suggesting inferiority, undesirability, racial stereotyping and prejudices against minorities in Singapore. Due to strict laws that protect and enshrine multiculturalism as a national value, racism is thus covert and difficult to pinpoint but is felt and experienced persistently (Velayutham, 2017).

Priya, Rani and Sheela recounted how children at the playground would make racist remarks to their children. Priya and Rani each recalled how their sons were told to 'go back to India' or had children refuse to play with them and Sheela's daughter was made to feel self-conscious about her skin tone being darker than her peers. Participants recognised that these were problematic interactions but were limited in their ability to stop or manage them. Sheela shared that she was at a loss as to how to counsel her daughter after and Priya said she felt uneasy when it happened. There is a profound sense of disempowerment that accompanies such encounters and lingers long after. Daksha recounted an incident that took place during a night walk on her favourite walking path opposite her block.

> That day no one was there, I don't know what I was thinking, I was walking on the cycling path. This person maybe he was cycling and maybe—I don't know he said before anything—he mentioned anything or anything like that. Maybe he called me? Because I didn't listen, so he came like this [cycled in front of her] and then he turned back and he looked at me in a very angry way... I mean, it's a little scary. So he said, "It's not your country, you can't walk in the middle of the road. Go back to your country," he said. And then he left. I was like... "I didn't see, sorry". ... I cried actually, that day. I came back home and I told my husband this person so rude to me and I never felt so rude before in my life.

In this case, a xenophobic remark made was thinly veiled by an admonishment to adhere to road rules. It tied undesirable behaviour to undesirable bodies through the implication that migrants were only to remain within certain permitted boundaries but not stray beyond. This exclusion took on a literal form in the insistence that the cycling path (Singapore) was meant for cyclists (him, locals) but not pedestrians (Daksha, migrants). The remark demonstrates how space is productive of differences and not merely reflective of them (Clayton, 2009). In a way, this also mirrors how various state policies grant migrants certain inclusions only under clearly delineated circumstances and spheres. The cyclist attempted to assert authority over migrants, in the same way the state retains the ultimate authority over migrants' mobility and residency.

Notably, this incident occurred during the extended Circuit Breaker, a country-wide lockdown that was instated between 23 July 2021 to 9 August 2021. Apart from the increased tension and frustration to be expected in high-density living arrangements, emotions were running high due to anxieties about COVID-19 and unemployment, which fuelled debates over immigration controls and policies. There was increased anti-foreigner sentiment and hostility towards migrant professionals who were perceived to be enjoying cushier lives and high levels of renumeration compared to the local populace. While immigration policy in Singapore

has been a hot-button topic, the increasing visibility of migrants in public spaces has forced Singaporeans to reckon with diversity in a way that the older state model of multiracialism did not account for. This is similar to Bloch and Dreher's study which found that concerns about the Muslim and Arab immigrants in their community were linked to wider demographic changes in their neighbourhood composition and that scapegoating the Other is a convenient means of expressing discontentment. This fear of being left behind and alienated is also connected to the increasing social and physical isolation which accompanies old age for elderly residents (Wise, 2002).

The hostile and mistrustful attitudes of some elderly residents in Punggol is a prime example of how everyday racism manifests in ways both routine and continuous. These often manifest in glares or unfriendly expressions directed at migrant professionals as they go about in public. Deepika shared that some store owners at the wet markets 'don't receive us properly' and related an incident where an elderly seller shouted at her not to touch the onions that were on display. When Deepika explained that she needed to be able to check the produce to purchase it, the seller replied, "Go away if you buy or not, I don't care." Deepika mentioned that she has never gone back to that stall and that her friends, who were her co-ethnics, had similar experiences with that particular seller, indicating that this discriminatory behaviour was consistent and not a one-off event.

Sheela recounted an incident where a group of people who were drinking shouted at them to remove their water bottles from the bench they had placed it at, not knowing that it was where the group had been sitting previously. She related that "One guy came back and he started shouting at us, 'Why did you keep your water bottles here' and 'You came from that place [speaker clarified he meant India]' and 'You are occupying me.'" The same group also harassed her young daughter, "Sometimes they're drunk and they come behind and they [say] 'Hey girl, girl, give me $2.'" Although Sheela herself brushed this incident off, she revealed that her children were offended. Her daughter was especially fearful of the man in the group who heckled her and avoided that area when she sees them there. These encounters shaped the way migrants like Deepika and Sheela go about their everyday routines and determine their paths through the neighbourhood in which they are welcome or deemed unwelcome.

Apart from marketing itself as a modern, cosmopolitan city, Singapore also discursively reproduces itself as a meritocratic society, where individuals can improve themselves and experience social mobility through hard work, ability and talent. Some participants also reiterate this narrative in their praise of Singapore's abundance of opportunities. In this context, diversity in the workplace is seen as both necessary for and an outcome of economic progress and skills transfer and is a hallmark of a globalised economy. A diverse workplace is thus consistent with expectations, which may explain why, with the exception of Rani, none of the participants claimed to have experienced discriminatory behaviour in the workplace. However, Rani's account suggests that racial-class dynamics are at play. Rani said at length,

> But he used to hate me so sometimes he will teach me, other times he will be angry with me and he say 'You guys, you Indian, you're coming from foreign and you're taking over everything'. So even though I found the two other guys there, they never talk like this, but this senior he used to talk like this, he used to hate Indians. […] Yeah he say 'You don't know anything.' Whatever I do, like if I do any changes—because we have some request to do the changes in the configuration in the device—if I do any changes every time he will check back. All my work he will check back. That was like... he don't trust me. So most of the time he say 'You don't know how to work, so I don't know these guys why they hire you'. And sometimes he say 'You Indians, you're trying to capture everywhere, you're coming from India and you're getting job here'.

By labelling Rani incompetent for needing guidance, her colleague thus produced a justification for his anger and impatience towards and mistrust of her. Yet, his other remarks that ostensibly criticised her work reveal that this was actually an indirect means of expressing his criticism of and resentment towards immigration policies that he perceived to be overly liberal and favouring Indian professional migrants. Her "incompetence" further intensified his ire as he believed her—and by extension, Indian migrant professionals—to be undeserving of the position. Relevant to this account was the heightened xenophobic climate present during Rani's stint at this company. At the time of this job, the COVID-19 pandemic had recently emerged and social media debates about CECA were stoking anti-foreigner sentiment. Within this interaction, we thus see how the narrative of meritocracy, when combined with intense xenophobia, can have the opposite effect in affecting attitudes towards diversity, as any perceived shortcomings in colleagues can fuel existing prejudices instead of normalising diverse workplaces.

Daksha's story about her interaction with her neighbour shows another racial-class dynamic in play,

> When we bought this house, we were shifting everything so he came to us and he said 'You bought this house?' We said yes. 'How much it cost?' We said 455 [thousand]. 'Wah you have so much money,' he said (laughs). That's how it all started. […] Yeah even if we buy something they deliver us, if he is outside, because you need to sign the slip, the payment right, one day we bought fridge and he saw the slip, 'You bought this fridge, it's so much money,' he said. … I'm not saying about him, but outside also I think financial things making a lot more disturbance than what it used to be. In terms of racial harmony. Especially after lockdown. Because in the lockdown, one day my husband was picking up my kids from the school. So he was coming from his work. So he asked my husband—I opened the door—and he was coming, and my husband was coming with the kids. He asked my husband 'Are you working today?' then he [her husband] said 'I'm working from home'. 'Oh you can work from home? Even so many [COVID-19] cases are outside, I need to go and work every day. Yeah, your life is good,' he said.

By bringing up the costliness of their houses and the items they purchased, their neighbour continuously underscored the socio-economic differences between him and Daksha. While Daksha considered them to be friendly and his tone and demeanour also reflected that, these interactions not only represent the tensions between locals and foreigners in a competitive job market but also demonstrate that these tensions become highly visible under a housing model that is engineered to produce intercultural encounters. It is no longer simply a matter of cultural differences, but socio-economic inequality also contributes to feelings of racial division. The

'everyday' here is not simply referring to the quality of this interaction; it behoves us to grasp that everyday forms of racism becomes constitutive of the conditions for a belief in 'race' (Smith, 2016) and thus any advantages or disadvantages accrued by different racial groups become complicit with existing structures of inequality.

4.5 Urban Futures and Migrant Agency

When asked about the Punggol Digital District, the overall response was ambivalent. For many, the District is an anticipated gateway to more job opportunities, especially in the ICT field, where most of them are employed. One participant mentioned that her husband was enthusiastic about the university being built as he felt it would be an ideal one for their son to attend when he is older. Others expressed reservations about the increased crowds it would draw and the resultant density of urban development to be expected in Punggol. They were sceptical and saw it as economically advantageous for the government but not actually beneficial for the people, suggesting that smart city initiatives are simply fancy re-brandings but ultimately an empty signifier (Cardullo & Kitchin, 2019). From the range of responses, we observe several grounded imaginations for their future in Singapore.

Migrant professionals are concerned with liveability. Their imagination of Punggol as clean, green and spacious is part of their continued satisfaction with the area. Almost all participants in our study demonstrated a deep concern about 'eco-qualities' in Punggol. To raise an example, Daksha lamented the excessive use of plastic in packaging fruits in the supermarkets, comparing it to fruits she picked up in the wet market at her former location in Tampines. They were also worried that increasing population density within Punggol put pressure not just on rental prices, but also the quality of urban spaces. Some participants recounted conflict with their neighbours, usually over noise complaints, during the lockdown when many were cooped up in their homes. These fraught encounters heightened awareness and experience of the density of public housing arrangements.

Job opportunities and education were also at the forefront of participants' minds when imagining their futures. For these professionals, their ability to remain in Singapore was entirely contingent upon their ability to secure employment. This was in part due to their visa requirements but also the financial cost of living here without the privileges citizens receive. At least two participants mentioned the high cost of living in Singapore in conjunction with their plans for retirement. They expected their children to remain in Singapore but did not foresee themselves living here when they no longer work. This was due to several financial disadvantages they face as migrants—their rented apartments were susceptible to price hikes, healthcare was not subsidised and school fees for their children to attend Global Indian International School were much higher than it would be if their children attended local schools.

Apart from financial considerations, they also brought up the social ties that bound them to the neighbourhood: their children formed bonds with other children

in their neighbourhood and schools, and participants themselves established routines around family and friend gatherings. The existence and preservation of these bonds were crucial to their ability to envision a future for themselves here. When speaking about retirement, a core reason for their desire to return to India was the presence of family ties and a greater sense of community. However, according to participants, some of their friends changed their mind about retiring in India and stayed after attaining citizenship because of infrastructural considerations like a good healthcare system, convenience of commute (includes walkability) and a high standard of living here. Naturally, this was predicated on the ability to comfortably finance their retirement. From these responses and our earlier observations about the reasons for migrants selecting Punggol and Seng Kang, we see the potential for a cosmopolitan diversity that is not comprised merely of superficial multicultural ties but one that is tightly knit and intricately linked to the everyday lives of its residents.

What stands out in every interview is the centrality of their children to their lives and aspirations. When asked what they hope to see changes in, participants inevitably talked about issues that directly impact their children's lives and futures. They were worried about their children facing disadvantages in language acquisition, attaining citizenship and the stressful educational and workplace environment. Like Singaporeans, they were highly involved in their children's education, debating the pros and cons of tuition, worrying about school rankings and placements and even going so far as to pursue English proficiency certifications in order to help their children with the language. Unfamiliarity with English was a common cause for their anxiety. Although their struggles with navigating a changing educational and employment landscape were not unique to them, they had specific obstacles that Singaporean families faced to a lesser degree, namely, their unfamiliarity with the main medium of instruction and lack of resources or support for niche Mother Tongue languages like Hindi. However, generally, as a result of socialisation with their English-speaking peers in the parks and at school, participants said that their children were better than they were at English, once again demonstrating the importance of public spaces like playgrounds to liveability and highlighting its role in supporting language acquisition.

Participants also tended to mention their preferences for flexible work arrangements and better work-life balance, especially if they worked for local companies. Unpaid overtime, crushing workloads and a high level of stress were recurring pain points in our conversations. Hence, the idea of the Punggol Digital District as an all-in-one, work-study-play concept was very appealing to participants, especially those who enjoyed the autonomy that work from home arrangements during the pandemic provided. Less time spent on commuting to work and leisure attractions on the weekends was the biggest draw for them, rather than the smart features touted. We can thus see that residents were not particularly responsive to the ICT features of smart cities—despite themselves being in the ICT sector—and tended to react favourably towards features like walkability, accessibility by cycling and multi-use spaces.

Despite the xenophobic incidents the migrant professionals experienced in their everyday life and the wider racisms that emerged at the national level during the pandemic, our respondents tended to dismiss these as factors that may affect their aspirations to settle in Singapore. Those who experienced xenophobia downplayed the severity by attributing them to the perpetrator's unhappiness, dissatisfaction, or frustration about something else in their lives. Their responses tended to redirect focus onto their main reasons for wishing to remain in Singapore. These primarily involved retaining or acquiring the means to social mobility such as education, financial security, and Permanent Resident (PR) status. These anti-racist responses allowed migrant professionals to manage xenophobia and racism and reflected the agency that migrant professionals retain even in the face of hostility. They pointed to a conscious aspiration to integrate into local society and their neighbourhood communities, with a view towards bettering their children's futures.

In this way, migrant professionals themselves become everyday agents of cosmopolitan diversity. An illustrative example comes from Rani's eldest son; she said, "Actually I didn't have many bad experience [sic] because, as I told you, my Harish was quite stubborn so he—if he wants something, he wants something. He will make other people. He will convince other kids it's good to play with him […] He keep going to the same kids again and again and slowly they start playing with him." In this example, her son actively grappled with and overcame barriers to diversity through sheer force of will, by inserting himself into interactions with other children. In highlighting this seemingly insignificant event, we call attention to the pivotal role our subjects play in cultivating everyday cosmopolitan diversity, which may provide a potential model for the rest of the city. The future realisation of the cosmopolitan diversity of the Punggol Digital District depends on whether the aspirations of the migrant professional families are not undermined by the deterioration of urban livability, escalating differential costs of living for migrants, and bad xenophobic experiences. Apart from efforts by the state to spearhead diversity, our paper presents how Indian migrant professionals navigate the everyday racisms to contribute to cosmopolitan diversity in Singapore. In doing so, we bring attention to their integral, yet taken-for-granted, role in making the cosmopolitan city and outline how their day-to-day experiences could be instructive for the planning of diverse neighbourhoods and the city.

4.6 Conclusion

The planning for diversity in Punggol from model new town to smart digital district has shifted from the nation-building framework of multiracialism to a new model of cosmopolitan multiculturalism. Harmonious inter-cultural interactions between residents and migrant professionals in public and neighborhood spaces are envisioned as underpinning creative and innovative relationships embedded in everyday life. The township becomes an integrated mixed-use high-tech park nestled in the public housing milieu, where boundaries of work, rest, and play are blurred and combined for a convivial urbanism of the future. In line with the literature on the

urbanism of high-tech parks, the Singapore case is at the cutting edge of contemporary urban planning. Instead of exclusive middle-class precincts housing gated migrant communities as scholars have found in high-tech parks around the world, the Singapore model integrates the migrant professionals in the public housing estates to create greater diversities across generations, ethnicities, nationalities, occupations, and socio-economic classes.

However, we have indicated that a pernicious thread of xenophobia and racism against the largely Indian migrant professionals in the ICT sector exists today in the transition to the cosmopolitan multiculturalism of the Punggol Digital District. This xenophobia interacts with the envisioned urbanism, in which shared concerns with escalating costs of living and persistent socio-economic inequality squeezing the middle-classes are inflected differently in the responses of the migrant professionals and local residents toward the District. The migrant professionals aspire for their children to settle in Singapore and thus try to integrate into society and their local communities but worry about being accepted as fellow denizens of the city. On the other hand, locals frustrated with labor market competition and socio-economic inequality find a convenient figure in the migrant professionals living amongst them to blame for their predicament. This is a familiar story all over the world, where migrants are scapegoated for socio-economic problems, except that in the Singapore case, even the tightly knitted and planned spaces for encouraging harmony can barely keep the lid on xenophobia.

The efforts to build the smart city have not been matched by the investment of similar attention and energy into developing information and communications feedback loops to enable deeper relationships of diversity. The attention of urban planning to promote cosmopolitan multiculturalism has been on the physical quality and openness of public and neighborhood spaces, where everyone can be united in a high quality of life and consumption lifestyles provided by the state. The burden of integration is placed on migrants, but little attention is given to actual relationships and interactions between locals and migrants, and the complexities of xenophobia, that pervade everyday life. So, while the smart city tracks energy and even carbon flows that could account for individual streetlights and their relationship to lighting conditions and needs, there is no equivalent attention to the granular relationships between locals and migrants that would make for a successful enabling of deep diversity and authentic intercultural interactions. In this regard, as our findings show, we believe we need to focus on the mothers in migrant professional families as critical smart city-makers, as they have been instrumental in navigating the social and cultural alleyways of the urban milieu.

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Chapter 5
Entrepreneurial Urbanism Meets Migrant Businesses: Critical Perspectives from Silk Road Paris (Tremblay-en-France)

Marie Gibert-Flutre

5.1 Introduction

Throughout the twentieth century, France emerged as a key destination for the Chinese diaspora in Europe. Today, Paris—closely followed by London—is widely regarded as the home to the largest Chinese population in Europe[1] (Chuang & Trémon, 2020: 9). This migration has been primarily driven by economic motivations. A significant proportion of Chinese migrants are categorized as 'migrant entrepreneurs' (Liu, 2021) and are associated with various economic clusters across the Paris region.

This study takes as its starting point the opening of the "Silk Road Paris" wholesale market in 2018. Located near the Charles de Gaulle international airport in Tremblay-en-France, this market is touted as the largest business-to-business commercial center in Europe, with a planned surface area of 200,000 m^2 and 400 counters (expected to increase to 1000). Currently, 90% of the entrepreneurs working in the market are Chinese. Unlike earlier Chinese wholesale markets in Paris, which were essentially scattered ethnic enclaves (Li et al., 2025), Silk Road Paris is the result of a project-based urban development initiative funded by an international public–private partnership. The local government views Silk Road Paris as a

[1] As Chuang and Trémon (2020: 9) point out, it is not easy to determine the exact size of the Chinese population in France. Many people who came to France as of the late 1980s were of Chinese origin but had been living in Southeast Asia. Additionally, official statistics fail to account for many undocumented immigrants. The 2018 INSEE census identified 107,000 individuals from the People's Republic of China (PRC) living in France, but this figure is considered conservative. Other sources offer estimates of 400,000 to 600,000 (Lucchini, 2012).

M. Gibert-Flutre (✉)
Department of East Asia Studies, Université Paris Cité, Paris, France
e-mail: marie.gibert@u-paris.fr

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strategic asset for fostering local economic growth and enhancing integration into global markets. In this chapter, I conduct a place-based case study of this market with a view to understanding the recent changes in Chinese migrant entrepreneurship in Paris. This approach highlights the role of Chinese entrepreneurs as city-makers embedded within a broader institutional, regulatory, and sociocultural context (Kloosterman & Rath, 2018) involving urban players such as policymakers and developers.

I propose that, through the formation of new "growth coalitions" promoting the Chinese way of doing business, Silk Road Paris plays a pivotal role in transforming the Chinese commercial marketplace into a valuable metropolitan asset. This process of entrepreneurialization, reflected in both urban discourse and the physical transformation of the city, is driven by the combined entrepreneurial efforts of local governments, private developers, and Chinese entrepreneurs themselves. It exemplifies what Nina Glick-Schiller (2011:212) describes as "multiculturalism (…) endorsed by political and economic city leaders in their initial efforts to reinvent their city within an agenda of neoliberal restructuring." At Silk Road Paris, the migrants' commercial space is produced and managed through an unprecedented top-down approach, aligning with the entrepreneurial urbanism described by Harvey (1989). This approach relies on project-based urban development funded through public–private partnerships, where strategic communication and marketing promote a positive vision of urban diversity and Chinese business in France.

The case study combines a spatial analysis of the historical implementation of Chinese entrepreneurship in Paris with an ethnographic study of Silk Road Paris. The methodological approach was qualitative in nature and encompassed a critical analysis of official narratives around the Silk Road Paris project, plus repeated site visits over a number of months in 2021/22 to understand the site as both a real and branded space. Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 18 local Chinese entrepreneurs and official stakeholders to examine their interactions within a multi-level governance framework and their role in shaping urban diversity governance in contemporary France.

5.2 Chinese Migration, Entrepreneurship and City-Making

5.2.1 Migrants as Entrepreneurs in Global Cities

Entrepreneurship can be understood in various ways. In this chapter, I define an entrepreneur in line with Wennekers and Thurik (1999: 46) as a social actor who "perceives and creates new economic opportunities" and "introduces their ideas into the market, despite uncertainty and other obstacles." This definition encompasses both individuals who are self-employed and business creators who employ others. It emphasizes ambition and risk-taking rather than a specific education level or skillset. The authors also highlight the competitive aspect of entrepreneurship (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999: 31).

Transnational entrepreneurs are a growing sub-category in the entrepreneurship literature (Zhou, 2004; Miera, 2008; Drori et al., 2009; Portes & Yiu, 2013; Liu, 2021). The term refers to entrepreneurs who engage in business activities "in a cross-national context" and are "connected to at least two different social and economic areas" (Drori et al., 2009: 1001). While the connection between the global phenomenon of transnational migration and its local socio-spatial impact on cities seems obvious, the relationship between migrant entrepreneurs and cities has long been under-researched. Early empirical work primarily focused on "ethnic enclaves" (Portes & Manning, 1986; Zhou, 1992; Ma Mung, 1994) in which migrants mobilize networks of capital, suppliers, or customers within their own communities. In recent decades, the liberalization of trade and the increased circulation of goods and capital have created new opportunities for migrant entrepreneurs, who—by travelling back and forth between their country of origin and their host city—have become significant contributors to transnational trade (Dahinden, 2010). While discussions on global city-makers have mainly concentrated on global economic actors, recent research has turned the spotlight on those who play a role in shaping cities locally, including migrant entrepreneurs and their motivations, strategies, and challenges (Dheer, 2018; Liu, 2021; Yamamura, 2022). In particular, interest is growing in the neighborhood-level dynamics of migrant entrepreneurs, especially when they contribute directly to the economic development of disadvantaged neighborhoods (Liu et al., 2010; Rath & Aytar, 2011; Parzer & Huber, 2015). In France, however, migrant entrepreneurship has long been neglected in favor of the historical focus on foreign workers in large-scale industries (Rainhorn & Zalc, 2000).

Drawing on pioneering works in migration studies, we identify several characteristics of migrant entrepreneurs. First, migrants in most global cities engage in entrepreneurship at higher rates than native-born residents (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009; Desiderio, 2014; Dheer, 2018). This trend suggests that self-employment often serves as an alternative pathway for migrants to enhance their social mobility, particularly in view of their limited qualifications and linguistic barriers. Second, migrant entrepreneurs are often deeply embedded in transnational business networks (Maas, 2005; Ojo, 2012; Portes & Yiu, 2013; Wang & Liu, 2015). Diasporic entrepreneurs, in particular, play a pivotal role in fostering global connections. Third, while first-generation migrant entrepreneurs frequently cluster in co-ethnic enclave communities upon arrival in host cities, subsequent generations tend to branch out into higher-skilled sectors and more profitable businesses (Liu, 2021). Lastly, the experiences and socioeconomic characteristics of migrant entrepreneurs are highly diverse, influenced by factors such as the size and formal or informal nature of their activities, as well as the qualifications required. Despite this diversity, migrant entrepreneurs commonly face structural and cultural barriers when starting and growing their businesses.

The interactive theoretical model developed by Waldinger et al. (1990) provides insight into how migrants engage in self-employment. It posits that the interaction between the host society's opportunity structure and the social characteristics of migrant groups shapes their involvement in entrepreneurship. Contextual factors such as market conditions, public policy support, and access to property and

markets influence entrepreneurial outcomes. Additionally, migrants can leverage the unique characteristics of their community as assets in the labor market. The history of Chinese entrepreneurs in the Paris region effectively exemplifies these dynamics.

5.2.2 First Steps of Chinese Migrant Entrepreneurs in the Paris Region

Chinese entrepreneurs began establishing themselves in Paris in the early twentieth century, driven by immigration predominantly from Qingtian and Wenzhou in Zhejiang province. Initially, they set up businesses in the underutilized interstices of the city, particularly in the Gare de Lyon neighborhood, where they sold products that showcased their ethnicity (Ma Mung, 2015). As new waves of migrants arrived, the locations of Chinese entrepreneurial activity shifted. In the 1940s, the Arts et Métiers area in the third arrondissement emerged as a hub for leather goods production and trade (Archaimbault, 1952; Live, 1992: 61). The district became home to workshops and wholesale shops, forming an integrated production and retail network. By the 1980s, Ma Mung (2020) noted the presence of approximately 100 Chinese leather-goods wholesalers in the area, supplied by hundreds of local workshops. This cluster became Paris's first example of a Chinese business "ethnic enclave" (Portes & Manning, 1986) or "ethnic niche" (Logan et al., 2003). Portes and Manning (1986) define an ethnic enclave as a spatial concentration of immigrant groups who establish a network of similar ethnic enterprises, often employing a significant immigrant workforce.

During the 1980s, the activities of Chinese migrants in Paris became closely linked to China's economic reforms and development. During this period, migration from mainland China increased substantially, primarily from Zhejiang province, followed by Fujian, with additional migrants arriving from northeastern provinces (Chuang & Trémon, 2020: 10). These migrants developed transnational careers as "mobile entrepreneurs" with ties to both China and France (Trémon, 2019). The focus of their entrepreneurial activities shifted from production to trade, with many businesses importing "made in China" goods into Paris. As a result, wholesale Chinese businesses formed distinct clusters in and around Paris, including in Le Sentier, Sedaine-Popincourt, and later Aubervilliers. By the early 2000s, many former workshop owners had transitioned to textile import-export businesses. In Le Sentier alone, Chinese wholesale companies accounted for 82.2% of all enterprises in the district (Ma Mung, 2020). At the same time, however, urban changes began to disrupt this local development. Rising property prices have since transformed Le Sentier into a hub for high-tech and electronic media startups, displacing the wholesalers.

Chinese entrepreneurs turned to another central district of Paris—the Sedaine-Popincourt neighborhood in the 11th arrondissement—to replicate the business model previously established in Le Sentier. This district spans approximately 34

hectares and is bordered by five streets: rue de la Roquette, avenue Parmentier, rue Lacharrière, boulevard Richard Lenoir, and rue St. Sabin. Over a decade, the number of Chinese wholesale shops in this area doubled (Chuang, 2020: 106). In 2001, there were 332 such outlets, accounting for 52% of all local shops. By 2010, this number had grown to 621 (Li, 2017: 164). The primary attraction of this new economic cluster was its competitive pricing. However, as the ethnic business community flourished, it faced mounting opposition from local residents. Between 2004 and 2007, a series of protests against wholesale shops was organized by the 11th arrondissement town hall and a local residents' association, *Agir solidairement pour le quartier Popincourt*. Following years of tensions, demonstrations, and public meetings, George Sarre, the mayor of the 11th arrondissement, implemented measures to curb the expansion of wholesale trade in the neighborhood. Using legal tools such as pre-emptive rights, wholesale shops were replaced with small retail establishments. In response, Chinese wholesalers began a large-scale relocation to Aubervilliers.

The wholesale markets of Aubervilliers, located in the northern suburbs of Paris beyond the ring road, have seen rapid growth, far surpassing that of the Sedaine-Popincourt neighborhood. This expansion is largely due to the availability of space in former warehouses, which have been transformed into showrooms. Initially, the area comprised warehouses owned by a public company alongside several old metallurgical plants. However, deindustrialization led to the repurposing of urban land, creating an abundance of vacant spaces that facilitated the development of wholesale markets.

From the mid-1990s, Chinese wholesalers began investing in the zone in three stages. First, entrepreneurs were primarily engaged in import-export activities that required frequent trips to the Yiwu market in China (Chuang, 2020: 113). Second, Chinese real-estate developers began systematically renting out the old warehouses. These developers, many of whom were second-generation Chinese-French citizens, acted as intermediaries between non-Chinese property owners and Chinese tenants. An innovative economic strategy emerged: subdividing large warehouses into smaller sales spaces. A notable example is Eurasia, a company that holds subleases for 188,772 m^2 of business premises in Aubervilliers (Chuang, 2020: 114). Third, the transformation of Chinese wholesale trade in Aubervilliers culminated in the establishment of purpose-built trade centers. The opening of the France–Asia International Wholesale Center (CIFA) in 2006 was a key milestone, followed by the creation of the Fashion Center in 2015. Both centers are owned by a combination of Chinese and non-Chinese companies and provide rental spaces exclusively for entrepreneurs, primarily from Wenzhou.

These vast trade centers represent an unprecedented collaboration with the municipal authorities of Aubervilliers, who actively supported their establishment as part of an urban redevelopment strategy. Although these trade centers stem from the gradual transformation initiated by the Wenzhou community, they mark a significant shift in the creation of ethnic marketplaces, involving new, non-Chinese actors and the construction of purpose-built facilities. For the local authorities, the ethnic economic activity offers an opportunity to enhance the image of the suburb,

integrate more fully into the global economy, and generate substantial revenue. In contrast to Paris, which imposed restrictions on wholesale trade in the Sedaine-Popincourt neighborhood, Aubervilliers adopted a more pragmatic approach, positioning itself as a prime entry point for Chinese capital by creating rental spaces tailored to the needs of entrepreneurial migrants. By forming partnerships with prominent Chinese entrepreneurs, the Aubervilliers authorities took a pivotal step in establishing a marketplace for entrepreneurial migrants in their pursuit of an "urban growth machine" (Harvey, 1989).

5.2.3 Envisioning Chinese Migrants as City-Makers in the Entrepreneurial City

David Harvey's (1989) article on the transition from "managerialism" to "entrepreneurialism" in urban governance is widely regarded as a groundbreaking analysis of how cities were transformed by the rise of neoliberalism in Western societies starting in the 1970s (Peck, 2014; Rossi & Vanolo, 2015; Rossi, 2017). Entrepreneurialism represented a new approach to fostering local development and economic growth. Unlike managerialism, which framed the government as a provider of welfare for its citizens, the "entrepreneurial city" involves active government participation in promoting urban growth (Chan & Li, 2017). Urban authorities now incentivize the development of new projects, often characterized by large-scale initiatives in the real estate and commercial sectors. This includes taking unprecedented risks and reshaping the "production" (Lefebvre, 1974) and management of urban spaces through project-based urbanism and public–private partnerships.

The "entrepreneurial city," as defined by Harvey (1989), leads to the commodification of assets, with four key implications. First, entrepreneurial project-based urbanism results in fragmented management of urban issues. Second, the public–private investments involved often stem from unequal negotiations between international financial capital and local government authorities. Coalitions vie to promote the city, often for speculative purposes, significantly transforming urban governance and establishing market rationality as the dominant framework for urban action (Harvey, 1989: 7; Jokela, 2020). Third, this process leads to the production of the city by consensus, where urban issues are depoliticized, and political confrontation is viewed as detrimental to the city's image and efficiency. Finally, as urban projects aim to enhance the city's symbolic capital, marketing and communication assume a central role. Entrepreneurial governance inherently involves the "imaging" of the city, in terms of both its material space and its marketing rhetoric (Vale & Warner, 2001; Prytherch, 2002; Jokela, 2020).

With new stakeholders involved and a subtle reshuffling of public–private partnerships, I propose that the flourishing of new Chinese commercial centers in large European cities expands the theoretical framework of urban entrepreneurialism—envisioned by Brenner et al. (2010) as a perpetual, "variegated," and self-reinventing process—into new spheres. Municipal governments are now adopting unprecedented policies to create and foster a "welcoming" economic environment aimed at

attracting migrant entrepreneurs to regenerate post-industrial neighborhoods or develop new global commercial hubs (Desiderio, 2014; Marchand & Siegel, 2015). As Peck (2014) points out, the strategies employed by entrepreneurial cities invariably involve the commodification of social artifacts, including tolerance itself, be it directed toward impoverished others (Burnett, 2014) or, as in our case study, ethnically others. These interactions are often framed as valuable symbols of cosmopolitanism and global openness. Like any other commodity, the inclusion of migrant communities becomes a product to be "themed" (Sorkin, 1992) within designated, branded, and—crucially—delimited spaces, as in the case of Silk Road Paris.

By integrating migration studies with the literature on the entrepreneurial city, my research seeks to address the following questions: What specific drivers have led to the entrepreneurialization of Chinese migrants' commercial spaces in Tremblay-en-France? And, consequently, how have Chinese migrant entrepreneurs become central to local city-making processes?

5.3 Evidence from Silk Road Paris

The Silk Road Paris wholesale market, which opened in November 2018 in Tremblay-en-France, is located a few kilometers from Charles de Gaulle International Airport and about 20 km northeast of Aubervilliers. To explore the complexity of this new type of ethnic wholesale market, I adopted a two-pronged approach, combining discourse and urban marketing analysis with site visits, observations, and qualitative interviews. Specifically, I conducted 18 in-depth interviews with wholesalers in 2021 and 2022 to examine their negotiation practices within a multilevel governance framework. Together with a master's student, I also engaged with key informants involved in developing and managing the new Silk Road Paris trade center to gather first-hand insights.

Silk Road Paris functions both as an idealized space shaped by urban imaginaries and as a practical site of everyday activity. My goal was to better understand how these two functions overlap and where they come into conflict. To achieve this, I draw on Henri Lefebvre's conceptualization of the "spatial triad" and analyze Silk Road Paris through three distinct lenses.

First, I interpret this new wholesale market as a "conceived space" where political power dynamics are enacted (Lefebvre, 1974: 222). This analysis focuses on the unprecedented growth coalition involved in the creation of the market and the evolving relationships between migrant entrepreneurs, private developers, and local government authorities. According to Lefebvre (1974), capitalism is characterized by a tension between the abstract organization of conceived space and the lived spaces of everyday life. Therefore, second, I examine Silk Road Paris as a "perceived" and branded space that represents a new perception of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in France. Finally, I analyze Silk Road Paris as a more ambivalent "lived space," focusing on the daily experiences of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs within the market. This approach underscores the dialectical relationship between the conceived, perceived, and lived spaces within this triad.

5.3.1 Silk Road Paris as a "conceived space" (Lefebvre, 1974)

Unlike the earlier Chinese wholesale clusters in Paris and Aubervilliers, Silk Road Paris was created from the ground up rather than emerging from the incremental efforts of migrant communities. Formerly known as the Paris Asia Business Center, it is now part of the Aerolians development project zone. The development of Silk Road Paris is particularly notable for its reliance on a public–private partnership that involves multiple ethnic groups and three key actors: the Chinese business community in the Paris area, Portuguese private developers and project managers, and the French public sector, represented by municipal authorities and various public bodies. Each of these parties brings its own interests and ambitions to the project.

Aerolians Paris is the commercial name for the ZAC (*Zone d'Aménagement Concerté,* meaning joint development zone) "South Charles de Gaulle," established in 2008. It has three main objectives: constructing the new Aerolians Paris business park (which includes Silk Road Paris), expanding the Villepinte exhibition center, and creating the Colisée, an entertainment and sports venue with a capacity of 7000 people. This public project is designed to support the economic development of the areas south of Charles de Gaulle airport. Aerolians Paris is a major planning initiative aimed at creating thousands of jobs. Among the various municipalities involved, Tremblay-en-France plays a leading role. Its mayor since 1991, François Asensi—who also served as a member of Parliament for Seine-Saint-Denis from 1988 to 2017—has spoken at each key event for the Silk Road project, including the groundbreaking ceremony of the Paris Asia Business Center in 2014, the project's relaunch in 2015, and the opening of the Chinese wholesale complex in 2018. In the latter speech, he quoted Chinese proverbs and praised China's industrial achievements, expressing goodwill and respect toward Chinese partners. At the same time, he referred to the wholesale market as a "new manifestation of Chinese dynamism" and emphasized its role in "opening his territory to the world," not only for its economic development but also for its broader urban impact (Veillon, 2014).

In this fast-paced land development project, two public bodies played key roles: Grand Paris Aménagement and Paris Terres d'Envol. Grand Paris Aménagement is the land operator and urban developer for the Île-de-France region, assisting municipalities in carrying out their urban projects from conception to completion. It initiated the ZAC Aerolians Paris and aims to transform 198 hectares of land between Charles de Gaulle airport and the Expo Park into an international business hub. Paris Terres d'Envol, on the other hand, is an intercommunal body established in 2016, bringing together eight cities in Seine-Saint-Denis[2] to support local economic development.

The Chinese community played an early and important role in the development of the project, led by Zheng Xuefen. A former wholesaler in textiles and ready-to-wear clothing, Mrs. Zheng transitioned into real estate and founded her own

[2] Aulnay-sous-Bois, Drancy, Dugny, Le Bourget, Le Blanc-Mesnil, Sevran, Tremblay-en-France, and Villepinte.

company, Secom Tremblay.[3] From the beginning, she advocated for the creation of a central commercial hub dedicated to the Chinese wholesale clothing community. Drawing on her extensive experience in the wholesale textile import-export trade since the 1990s, as well as her active involvement in Chinese residents' associations in France, she leveraged her reputation and close connections with Chinese traders community to encourage their participation in establishing a specialized wholesale market in Tremblay-en-France. Mrs. Zheng herself owns two counters in the new center. Additionally, Chinese traders' associations played a key role in promoting the new center. For example, Mr. Su Rongwu, former president of the Franco-Chinese Trade Association of Aubervilliers (2013–2018), was among the first buyers.

The Silk Road Paris market was developed by two international private real-estate companies: the St Germain Group and Alves Ribeiro France Invest. The St Germain Group is a family business founded by Carlos de Matos in 1995. It is based in Ferrières-en-Brie in the Île-de-France region, but has, through its founder, Portuguese origins. According to an interview with Mrs. Zheng, she knew Carlos de Matos for several years prior to the project's inception and had shared with him the idea of building a commercial center for importing Chinese goods. This led to their close collaboration in launching the Paris Asia Business Center project, renamed Silk Road Paris in 2015.

Initially, the St Germain Group was the majority shareholder, while AR France Invest held a minority stake. However, the St Germain Group withdrew the project in 2015, leaving AR France Invest to take over as the sole developer when the project was relaunched later that year. AR France Invest is the French subsidiary of the Alves Ribeiro group, a family-owned company founded in Portugal in 1941. The group is a prominent player in international construction and real estate; Silk Road Paris is its first investment in France. In December 2015, AR France Invest renamed the project Silk Road Paris. The CEO of the Alves Ribeiro group attended the relaunch ceremony in 2015 and the inauguration ceremony in 2018. In addition to overseeing construction, AR France Invest is responsible for promoting and managing the wholesale market, as well as providing services to retailers within the center. Currently, the company is preparing for the second phase of the project: a shopping center called Paris Fashion Mart. This new center, located on a 220,000 m^2 site north of Silk Road Paris, is intended to accommodate traders of Tunisian origin.

Despite the St Germain Group's departure in 2015, the collaborative origins of Silk Road Paris have endured. The partnership continues to involve the French government, which provides land and policy support; Portuguese construction companies, which manage development and construction; and Chinese real estate companies and entrepreneurs' associations, which oversee sales.

The opening of this new Chinese wholesale market underscores the evolving roles of public and private actors in urban development, as well as the rise of power

[3] Mrs. Zheng Xuefen followed a typical path for an immigrant from Wenzhou in France. She arrived in 1983 and initially worked with her parents in the garment and catering business. In the 1990s, she shifted from catering to running a wholesale clothing shop in the 11th arrondissement (Popincourt). Following the protests in Sedaine-Popincourt, she relocated to Aubervilliers in 1999.

coalitions that involve the cooptation of entrepreneurial planners (Brenner, 2004; Halbert, 2013). In recent decades, this trend has become increasingly common in global urban development—but it is striking that it now extends to the creation of ethnically diverse business establishments, as demonstrated by Silk Road Paris. This marks a shift from the traditional model, where such spaces were typically established and managed by migrant communities themselves. With Silk Road Paris, the migrant wholesale market has, for the first time, become a "conceived space" in the sense described by Lefebvre (1974).

5.3.2 Silk Road Paris as a Branded Space

Unlike earlier Chinese wholesale sites in the Paris area, the name "Silk Road Paris" explicitly references the Chinese government's official "New Silk Roads" or "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI), launched by Xi Jinping in 2013. The use of this official label for a business center serving the Chinese migrant community in Paris represents a departure from the earlier grassroots, migrant-led business spaces. This symbolic naming underscores the project's global economic ambitions. The economic and diplomatic importance of the initiative was further highlighted by visits to the construction site by ambassadors from seven countries, including Singapore, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Jordan.

Beyond its global ambitions, the narratives on the official website of Silk Road Paris focus on addressing the shortcomings of previous Chinese commercial marketplaces in the Paris area. Emphasis is placed on its connectivity with France's primary international airport, Charles de Gaulle airport, described as being at "the heart of Europe"; with the high-speed train station (TGV Aéroport Charles de Gaulle); with major highways such as the A1, A3, and A104 (linking to the Benelux, England, and Central Europe); with the RER B line (serving the key business station "Parc des expositions"); and with and other bus and road networks. The planned opening of the Grand Paris Express network, particularly metro line 17, is expected to further enhance this prime connectivity.

The website also highlights the "native aptitude" of Silk Road Paris for business, exemplified by features such as direct parking access for every shop. This design feature specifically addresses a major limitation of trade spaces in inner Paris and Aubervilliers, where marketplaces were not originally built for wholesale activities, resulting in traffic congestion and urban disruption that negatively affected both residents and businesses.

The urban layout of Silk Road Paris differs from that of earlier Chinese marketplaces in Paris. Profiled as a high-end development, it features open-air galleries within the newly established logistics and commercial zone Aerolians Paris. Each trading counter is equipped with not only private parking directly connected to the shop or showroom, but also a storage area on the first floor, a freight elevator, and an office space. As a formal mega-project, Silk Road Paris offers a coherent architectural vision, ensuring consistency across all storefronts. At the same time, traders

can create larger shops by purchasing two or even three counters, and are free to customize their shop space as they see fit.

Another notable feature emphasized in the official narratives is that each trader owns their counter outright, with no leasing option. This policy is explicitly designed to address—and stands in direct contrast to—the counter-renting system in Aubervilliers. Most of the traders we interviewed highlighted promise of affordable ownership as a deciding factor in relocating their businesses to Tremblay-en-France. They frequently pointed out that rising land prices in inner Paris, such as is Sedaine-Popincourt, have made property ownership unattainable, while rental costs in Aubervilliers have likewise become prohibitively expensive. Owning their premises provides traders, particularly those of migrant origins, with an unprecedented opportunity to plan for long-term business development. Marketing materials available online present this ownership model as both a hallmark of quality and a premium business opportunity. Although the wholesale centers in Aubervilliers are never explicitly named, the marketing discourse of Silk Road Paris clearly positions itself as an alternative to Aubervilliers. Indeed, every feature promoted on the website addresses a specific issue associated with daily operations in Aubervilliers.

The website places particular emphasis on security, highlighting a privately managed system of 200 surveillance cameras operating 24/7. This directly addresses the persistent insecurity in Aubervilliers, another concern frequently raised in local narratives. The project site is self-contained and separate from its surrounding area, which facilitates surveillance and management. During our visits, shopkeepers and management representatives repeatedly approached us to inquire about the purpose of our visit, underscoring the focus on security and controlled access.

The marketing narratives surrounding Silk Road Paris portray this Chinese marketplace as a global, high-end business hub situated in a well-connected commercial area. This marks a significant shift in the perception of Chinese-run marketplaces. Previously, such marketplaces were located in ill-regarded urban interstices and faced suspicion from local residents and authorities. Indeed, these spaces were occasionally stigmatized as "organized mafia-type systems," as was the case in Sedaine-Popincourt (Chuang, 2013). In contrast, Silk Road Paris represents a reimagining of these marketplaces, elevating their status to that of prestigious showrooms that foster the globalization of the Paris region.

5.3.3 Silk Road Paris as a Lived Space: An Ambivalent Reality

Despite its ambitions, Silk Road Paris has yet to achieve its objectives. Only half of the counters have been sold, and many of these remain vacant or have been converted into storage spaces. Our repeated site visits throughout 2021 and 2022 consistently revealed low levels of activity, regardless of the day or time. Shops were often closed, displaying only a telephone number for contacting the shopkeeper. Most notably, very few visitors or potential clients were present. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed our observations.

These findings can be attributed to three key factors. First, in the public imagination, Chinese wholesale in the Paris region is still strongly associated with Aubervilliers, where clients have access to the full range of suppliers they are accustomed to working with. Relocating to Tremblay-en-France to follow a specific supplier is perceived as both risky and time-consuming: the Aerolians economic zone remains incomplete and customers are accustomed to the efficiency of the established Aubervilliers trade ecosystem. Moreover, the significant distance between the two locations further discourages customers from visiting or conducting business at both sites. According to the managers of Silk Road Paris and the traders we interviewed, rebuilding an integrated trade ecosystem in a new location will take time.

Second, Silk Road Paris opened in late 2018, just over a year before the COVID-19 crisis. This timing partly explains its "false start." Beyond the disruption to economic activity caused by the lockdowns, the crisis accelerated the rapid growth of e-commerce, rendering physical showrooms increasingly outdated and underscoring the crucial importance of building trust in business relationships (Guiheux, 2022).

Third, the entire economic sector has undergone significant transformation with the rise of direct sales in China, bypassing local intermediaries in Chinese emporiums. Many traders pointed out this deeper shift within the clothing import-export industry. Chinese digital companies, in particular, have emerged as disruptive forces in the ready-to-wear market. By leveraging technological advancements and artificial intelligence, producers now have direct access to a global consumer base. Instead of physical stores, products are marketed online, produced locally on demand using sophisticated algorithms, and shipped directly to consumers worldwide. This transition from physical to digital marketplaces poses a challenge to the viability of wholesale markets distributing Chinese goods in Europe and all over the world.

In this evolving context, the Silk Road Paris business model risks appearing outdated before even becoming fully operational. Nonetheless, it remains too early to draw definitive conclusions about the economic success of this new type of marketplace in the Paris region.

5.4 When Migrant Businesses Fuel Urban Entrepreneurialism: Conclusion and Theoretical Implications

This place-based analysis of the recently opened Silk Road Paris Chinese marketplace in Tremblay-en-France sheds light on the evolving role of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in shaping urban development within the French context. Marketplaces are deeply rooted in their local economic and political contexts while remaining intricately connected to global networks. This multiscalar perspective mirrors the transnational nature of migrant entrepreneurs themselves.

Historically, Chinese wholesale markets have been largely overlooked by local residents and the French authorities, existing in the hidden corners of the city. Today, however, they have been transformed into prominent showcases that bolster Paris's image as a global city. This shift, not only in location but also in visibility and perception; is shaped by multiple factors across various scales. At the city level, it reflects the increasing recognition of Chinese entrepreneurs as valuable assets by local authorities. Our case study of Silk Road Paris highlights the pivotal role played by Chinese traders' associations in this transformation.

With successive generations of Chinese migrants establishing businesses in Paris, contemporary entrepreneurs possess a deep understanding of national systems and have forged strong professional networks with local authorities and investors. As a result, they now actively participate in reshaping the urban governance landscape. This transformation is facilitated by the global rise and expansion of Chinese wholesale markets, in tandem with China's integration into the global economy. Chinese migrant marketplaces can thus be viewed as an integral part of the "urban spectre of global China" (Shin et al., 2022: 1465). As described by the mayor of Tremblay-en-France, they symbolize China's economic vitality and global reach; therefore, studying such marketplaces in France also reveals how China's global influence is reshaping urban spaces in profound ways.

Moreover, our case study raises critical questions about the role of the Chinese migrant community in the entrepreneurialization of urban spaces. Ceccagno (2017: 87) describes Chinese migrants involved in wholesale activities in Prato, Italy, as "agents of neoliberal restructuring." In this light, examining the recent opening of Silk Road Paris allows us to revisit four key dimensions of entrepreneurial urbanism (Harvey, 1989).

First, the case highlights the fragmentation of urban governance through the proliferation of project-based urbanism. Silk Road Paris is a distinct, self-contained space, detached from residential areas and historic city centers. Second, it reflects the increasing prevalence of public–private development arrangements and privately owned public spaces in global metropolises, with the emergence of "growth coalitions" (Molotch, 1976; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Zhang et al., 2022) that promote the Chinese business model while coopting Chinese entrepreneurial actors.

Third, communication and marketing play a central role in shaping a positive narrative around Chinese business in France. Despite its mixed economic success thus far, Silk Road Paris serves as a symbol of Tremblay-en-France's international business ambitions. As mentioned above, during its construction, ambassadors from seven countries—including Singapore, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Jordan—were given tours, illustrating the project's economic and diplomatic aspirations.

Lastly, the depoliticization of urban "production" (Lefebvre, 1974) is a defining characteristic of this entrepreneurial approach. Addressing ethnic inclusion through a purely economic lens fosters consensus while sidestepping broader debates and potential political conflicts, as seen in Sedaine-Popincourt. This new model of urban production and governance gives rise to an apolitical—even "post-political" (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2015)—entrepreneurial city, where social and economic challenges are addressed through technical ("smart") solutions.

In short, while Silk Road Paris accommodates the economic needs of the Chinese community in France, it does so within the confines of the project. Chinese businesses are primarily positioned as contributors to government-led land development policies rather than as independent agents actively shaping urban space. This prevents Silk Road Paris from serving as a site of protest or political advocacy for Chinese migrants. Instead, it reflects a carefully managed, apolitical urban project that addresses the functional needs of the Chinese community without providing them with political representation.

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Chapter 6
A Refuge for Whom? Orders of Legitimacy, Contradictions and Paradoxes of a Self-Labeled 'welcoming city'

Camille Schmoll and Catherine Lejeune

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the place and role of the city of Paris in contrasting dynamics of solidarity and hostility at the urban level. With more than 12 million inhabitants, the Paris metropolitan region is the largest and by far the most populated French urban area representing one sixth of the total population of the country. The city is home to a large part of the foreign-born population (38%). As a major European economic power, France has long been a country of immigration, and the French capital has steadily concentrated an important share of the overall immigrant population. Combined with the fact that the Paris region has one of the highest GDP in the European union making it a major global hub across several fields, these factors have made the inner and outer city a strategic pole of attraction for migrants and refugees (see Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity, 2020).

Our intent here is to critically evaluate the place that can be assigned to Paris, wondering whether it can be considered a welcoming city or not. Recent literature in Europe and North America has extensively discussed the role of municipalities in a new governance of asylum and solidarity through the "local turn" (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017; Dimitriadis et al., 2021; Bazurli et al., 2022). Drawing from most of the literature on the local turn, we wish to investigate into the ways the municipality acts, sometimes in alignment, sometimes in opposition with both institutional and non-institutional actors such as, for instance, the local administration in charge of governmental functions, NGOs, migrant and refugee networks and civil society.

C. Schmoll (✉)
EHESS, Paris, France
e-mail: camille.schmoll@ehess.fr

C. Lejeune
Université Paris Cité, Paris, France

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In this chapter, we examine the intricate relationship between welcoming policies and the role of refugees and migrants as city-makers. To elucidate their differing impacts on urban spaces, we distinguish between the concepts of "city users" and "city makers". The term "city-users" introduced by Guido Martinotti in the early 1990s encompasses a diverse population that consumes the city without necessarily residing or working in it (Martinotti, 1996). This category includes tourists, second-home owners, non-resident students, nomadic professionals and migrants. City-users interact with the urban environment in a transitory manner, often engaging with city services and amenities without contributing to its structural or socio-economic transformation in the long run. In contrast, and following the editors' introduction, we propose the concept of "city-makers" to describe individuals or groups who establish a more dynamic and transformative relationship with the city in the long term. City-makers actively engage in shaping the urban landscape, influencing its socio-economic fabric through their presence and activities. This distinction underscores the capacity of certain groups of migrants to effectuate significant changes within the city, thereby altering its socio-economic dynamics and contributing to its development. Our analysis reveals that while some groups may be deemed legitimate city-users, they do not necessarily qualify as city-makers. City-users, by definition, only pass through the city, consuming its resources without inducing substantial change. Conversely, even when lacking formal public legitimacy, other migrants and refugees often engage more profoundly in the transformation of urban spaces.

Our approach leads us to raise the following question: to what extent may migrants and refugees living in Paris be viewed as city makers? To address this question, we suggest for consideration of three significant paradoxes and contradictions.

- The first paradox pertains to the gap between the municipality's rhetoric and the reality of local practices in both national and European contexts predominantly characterized by hostile policies towards irregular migration. Despite an official and symbolic discourse promoting support and integration, the implementation of accommodating policies can be hindered by institutional obstacles, budgetary constraints and political pressures in an overall inhospitable context, thus delineating a disjunction between stated intentions and tangible outcomes.
- The second paradox pertains to the disparity between the institutional reception granted to recently arrived Ukrainian forced migrants since 2022 and that previously accorded to other migrant groups. This discrepancy reveals the influence of the geopolitical landscape on local refugee-oriented policies, highlighting how global events shape local responses and underscoring the selective nature of refugee reception based on geographical origin. In France, as in many European countries, Ukrainian refugees have accessed sustainable assistance for secure living conditions, and the considerable outpouring of protective measures has notably surpassed that extended to other refugee cohorts. Without a doubt, the widespread and sustained support for Ukraine from most European states, coupled with the perception of shared values between Ukrainians and Europeans, explains this disparate treatment.

- The third paradox revolves around the discrepancy between the limited initiatives undertaken by the Paris municipality and the lived experiences of migrants and refugees within the urban environment. Despite institutional challenges and restrictive policies at the national level, combined with a lack of support from local authorities, many migrants and refugees decide to settle and live in Paris where they find opportunities in terms of employment as well as support from non-governmental organizations, volunteer associations and migrant networks. Alternative solidarities offer a counterweight to the institutional hostility they may encounter, sometimes proving unexpected effectiveness. Migrants and refugees actively contribute to the transformation of the city, thus acting as mere city makers.

The findings presented in this chapter stem from an on-going research endeavor grounded on observations and interviews conducted with migrants, refugees and institutional and non-institutional actors at the primary reception facilities in Paris, spanning from 2015 onwards.

Following the massive arrivals of exiles from Syria, Afghanistan, Tunisia and Sudan in 2015 and 2016, we started to inquire into the development of emergency schemes by the French government. Given the lack of places in regular reception centers, we were curious to examine the responses provided at both local and national levels to address the urgent need for assistance exiles found themselves in.

In the early months of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, we decided to investigate into the way emergency reception was organized in the city of Paris with the primary intent to understand how the reception system actually worked on the ground. The setting-up of a dedicated facility for displaced Ukrainians at *Porte de Versailles* in Paris made our research work possible. With the assistance of *France Terre d'Asile* (the NGO offering social and legal support to asylum seekers and refugees in France and serving as an approved operator regarding the management of asylum facilities), we were able to access the site between March and June 2022, witness the organization of reception and conduct preliminary interviews with Ukrainian families and individuals during the surge of arrivals.

6.2 Between Local Branding and National Policies: The Difficulties of a Welcoming Posture

6.2.1 An Unwelcoming Event in a Self-Labelled Welcoming City

Let us first examine the disparity between the municipality's official rhetoric of hospitality and the actual local practices, beginning with a brief vignette: on the evening of November 23rd, 2020, the police used tear gas and containment grenades to evacuate people who had set up their tents in the emblematic square of *Place de la République* in Paris. After being abruptly displaced from a tent city in suburban

Aubervilliers, they had sought refuge in this Parisian square with a view to raising awareness on the criminalization of migration and homelessness in the city. That evening, one could witness the brutal dispersal by the police of a collective of nearly 500 Afghan exiles, whose visible presence in this major and newly redesigned public space, was deemed particularly undesirable and disturbing.

The evacuation of the square brought two rationales into conflict: on the one side, the collectives that orchestrated and supported the occupation with, at the forefront, such NGOs as "Utopia 56" and "Solidarité Wilson" for whom humanitarian dignity and the right to housing justify protest movement; on the other side, the French government preparing to vote on a law for global security in parliament, asserting that a public square cannot be used as a space for actions as radical as occupations.

Since 2015 evacuations of makeshift camps in the Paris region - often euphemistically called "sheltering" – have occurred almost daily (Piva, 2021). Such practices are embedded in a long colonial and postcolonial history of precarious and unsanitary housing, and in the moral concerns and processes of forced displacement that accompany them (see Delon, 2019).

But occupying *Place de la République* revealed a special aspect: by their presence in the heart of Paris, in a square long dedicated to the circulation and leisure of Parisians, the migrants' tents challenged ordinary citizens to legitimately access - and use - the city center.

The forced removal of migrants and refugees occurred in a context of recurring occupations of symbolic places whose visibility and centrality leverage the sense of social injustice. It activated a mechanism that goes against the ordinary geographies of residents from the domestic space, 'home', represented by the Quechua tent planted in the middle of public spaces, to the hypercenter of a capital city where real estate prices continue to rise. From homeless individuals who have used tents as a tool of action since the 2000s to irregular migrants and the collectives of exiles who have been expelled from Parisian and Calais camps since 2015 occupations have aimed to make visible what is hidden from the view: an injustice often concentrated in the margins and outskirts of the city.

On that evening, at *Place de la République*, alongside the collectives involved in the protest, numerous public and political figures spoke out to question the authorities on the brutality inflicted upon the occupiers: "we do not respond to misery with a baton," reacted Delphine Rouilleault, CEO of *France Terre d'Asile*. "The only response from the French authorities is force," pointed out Corinne Torre, head of *Médecins sans Frontières* in France. "And force, in times of health crisis, is not acceptable."

The day after the eviction took place, Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo fiercely criticized the operation which she described in a press conference of the *Association for the Mayors of France* as "deeply shocking". In a letter to the Interior Minister, she expressed her strong concern: "For months we have been warning the authorities about the lack of appropriate measures to provide migrants and refugees

accommodation. We have suggested solutions to this pressing need for shelter but the State has not responded to our call. Dismantling makeshift camps is no solution. It only generates violence: violence against vulnerable individuals and tensions with elected officials from all sides who stand by associations and refugees."

The mayor's statement brings to light the following realities: first, local authorities have limited capacity to make decisions in a migration emergency context, even when the incidents occur in central Paris; second, the city hall - composed of left-leaning elected officials since the early 2000s - wants to voice its clear opposition to the national government's migration policy.

Clearly, two conflicting perspectives on urban legitimacy are at stake here: one, aligned with activists and the Paris mayor, views migrants as legitimate urban inhabitants. Conversely, the opposing viewpoint, backed by the government, asserts that migrants have no entitlement to the city.

In the months following the *Place de la République* event, similar actions of occupation backed by NGOs and civil society were staged in highly symbolic Parisian spaces (including the City Hall court, *Place du Palais Royal* and the French Council of State esplanade) while the pace of evictions persisted, constituting a routine of Parisian life. Overtime, the clearing of migrant makeshift camps in Paris has taken the form of a strange ballet featuring daily police interventions.

It is necessary at this point to provide some background information that may explain political tensions. As mentioned above, the incident occurred in a context of growingly repressive migration policy in France. In the last decades, several European states have adopted similar restrictive policies towards migrants and refugees, and France is no exception.[1] Consequently, the situations of migrants and refugees have become more precarious and unstable, particularly amidst a housing crisis. Homelessness and makeshift camps have proliferated, with French authorities primarily responding by attempting to expand the number of housing facilities designated for asylum seekers. However, these facilities only cater to a portion of the migrant and refugee population in need of accommodation, that is, asylum seekers, and more particularly those considered the most vulnerable. Spread across the country rather than concentrated in urban areas like Paris, the objective has been to redistribute them nationwide through relocation initiatives. Yet, these efforts have faced criticism from researchers and activists as they merely displace vulnerable individuals without effectively addressing their needs. By relocating individuals far from city centers, thereby complicating their access to vital resources such as employment opportunities for instance, operations of dispersal only create new barriers (Berthomière et al., 2020; Slama, 2020).

[1] Not to mention, the highly-disputed immigration law recently passed in early 2024, which reflects this trend. It is even seen by advocacy and human rights groups as "the most regressive reform of the past 40 years". By imposing additional restrictions and limiting access to welfare, the law aims to discourage migration, but ultimately exacerbates the daily challenges faced by migrants.

6.2.2 *The Ambivalent Position of Paris*

In recent decades, cities have emerged as significant entities in the governance of international migration and in the management of migration emergencies on the ground (Garcia Agustin & Bak Jorgensen, 2019). Various terms such as "solidarity cities", "cities of refuge" and "sanctuary cities," as well as "rebel" "fearless" or "resilient" have surfaced to refer to the increasing role of cities in addressing the challenge of hospitality in a context of migration crisis and lack of solidarity. These labels reflect diverse situations and policies, each subject to varying interpretations, illustrating distinct stakes and positions. Such terminology encapsulates institutional, political, scholarly, and intellectual changes, sometimes intersecting and at other times diverging Léa Réville's.

In France, a stark dichotomy exists in approaches adopted by cities towards refugees and migrants. Some municipalities have openly voiced their opposition by developing hostile practices. The case of Calais in Northern France is a good example of such a defiant attitude: Mayor Natacha Bouchard has consistently opposed the use (or construction) of emergency facilities in her municipality and has actively campaigned against the presence of migrants and refugees. In contrast, many French cities have implemented friendly policies thus acting as cities of refuge. In 2018, the National Association ANVITA, a coalition of welcoming cities and regions, was formed to unify existing local initiatives and advocate "for a policy of unconditional hospitality".[2] The municipality of Paris joined the association in 2019 and has held the position of being a "welcoming city" since then.

Even before Anvita was created, Paris took part in several international events aimed at promoting migrant/refugee-friendly policies. For instance, in September 2015 Anne Hidalgo, Paris mayor since 2014, co-signed the now famous statement drafted by Barcelona mayor Ada Colau along with mayors from other European cities such as Spyros Galinos (Mytilene) and Giusi Nicolini (Lampedusa). Entitled "We, the cities of Europe" the call has widely circulated since and has been published in several European newspapers. It advocates the urge of cities to become places of refuge for migrants arriving in Europe via the central Mediterranean route (Hombert, 2023).

> *We, the cities of Europe, are ready to become places of refuge. We want to welcome these refugees. States grant asylum status, but cities provide shelter. Border towns, such as Lampedusa, or the islands of Kos and Lesbos, are the first to receive the flow of people seeking asylum, and European municipalities will have to take these people in and ensure they can start a new life, safe from the dangers from which they have escaped. We have the space, services and, most importantly, the support of our citizens to do so. Our municipal services are already working on refugee reception plans to ensure food, a roof, and dignity for anyone fleeing war and hunger. The only thing missing is state support.*[3]

[2] https://www.anvita.fr/en/who-are-we/notre-charte2/#:~:text=The%20association%20promotes%20hospitality%20as,social%20cohesion%20and%20individual%20emancipation.

[3] Colau, Ada/Hidalgo, Anne/Galinos, Spyros (2015): we, cities of Europe Ada Colau-Blog, 17/9/2015, available at https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/alcaldessa/en/blog/we-cities-Europe

The Paris city hall has launched symbolic initiatives such as the organization of so-called "republican sponsorships". Although these ceremonies hold no legal value, they send a symbolic message. Like other French municipalities who have adopted this practice, Paris aims to contribute to the building of public opinion in favor of restoring the rights of exiled individuals to citizenship through sponsorship, paving the way for an alternative hospitality policy.[4] In addition, the city has implemented some specific programs supporting, for example, artists in exile.

Paris has also made facilities and properties available to the *Préfecture* and associations in charge of emergency housing or day reception of exiles. As an example of how the city responded to the massive arrival of migrants and refugees in 2016, two emergency shelters were opened at *Porte de la Chapelle* in northern Paris (the so-called bubble; see Vitale and Cremaschi in this book) and in Ivry-sur-Seine, a southern Parisian suburb. One center was soon closed but another facility, the "halte humanitaire", opened in downtown Paris to guarantee access to basic welfare and rights to asylum seekers (see Réville, n.d., in this book). However, even though it has occasionally advocated for a more generous support of vulnerable populations, Paris has not been at the forefront of supportive actions towards them. The positions of Mayor Hidalgo are received with mixed feelings by many local actors who have strongly disapproved of her lack of commitment to effectively implement emergency reception policies for refugees on the streets. Overall, her absence of dialogue with activists and associative actors has been pointed out, so has her inability to establish alternative forms of local citizenship that could truly protect and empower individuals.

Such criticisms have been supported by recent research: in a recent comparative study of urban solidarity in Europe, Gülce Özdemir shows how Paris, unlike other European global cities such as Vienna, Milan or Barcelona, has failed to create a supportive environment for vulnerable individuals since 2015 (Özdemir, 2022). Özdemir argues that solidarity in the city has stemmed not from the mayor's office but from the commitment of civil society actors, local activists and NGOs. Some studies have even documented the active contribution of the City Hall to strategic urban planning policies aimed at discouraging people from settling in the city (Gardesse et al., 2022).

In sum, while actively branding itself as a "welcoming" or a "refuge city" (see also Réville, n.d., in this book), Paris is highly criticized by activists and scholars and is considered as having done very little to promote a different model of inclusion. To be fair, it should be acknowledged that the French governance system does not grant municipalities significant autonomy in migration and asylum policies. France is a very centralized state and, when it comes to migration, the action of the local *Préfecture* supersedes that of the mayor. Officially, the only prerogative of Paris is the protection and support of unaccompanied minors; consequently, it is the responsibility of the city to provide them with shelter. However, in other fields such as the reception of populations excluded from asylum and assistance in accessing

[4] https://cdn.paris.fr/paris/2019/07/24/856fa3619b64bcab0e7cc7378dea032a.pdf

rights, we argue that the city's policy could have been more ambitious and, more importantly, less ambivalent.

Of course, implementing accommodating local policies can be hindered by institutional obstacles and budgetary constraints. As an example, the preparation of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris became an obstacle to the conception (and management) of truly welcoming policies. The increasing need to make the city "safer" and to get rid of its most undesirable inhabitants became prominent in the months preceding the games. Policies were designed to forcibly remove such residents to far away camps and relocate the homeless in remote places or in neighboring cities such as Orléans,[5] while the city of Paris simultaneously boasted about the presence of a team of refugee athletes for the Olympics.[6] City branding, it seems, is not lacking in contradictions...

6.3 When Solidarity Works: The Example of Welcoming Ukrainians

In the second part of our chapter, we shift our focus to the contrast between the reception granted to recently arrived Ukrainian populations and that reserved for other migrants and refugee groups. Let us start this development with another vignette, this one describing a major event in Paris following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

6.3.1 Reception in the Turmoil of the Ukrainian Crisis, and the Role of Local Authorities

In late February 2022, Ukrainians had to flee their homes in an emergency, leaving behind the men who would engage in fighting against the enemy and the elderly who could not come along. Mostly women embarked on the journey with their children, their pets and sometimes with their parents. International students and foreign-born residents (spouses of Ukrainian nationals) had to leave too. Within days of Russia's invasion, European states decided to activate the - hitherto unused - Temporary Protection Directive that grants Ukrainian nationals the right to live and work in the EU for up to 3 years without having to claim for asylum.

[5] https://www.liberation.fr/politique/jo-de-paris-le-maire-dorleans-denonce-le-deplacement-dans-sa-ville-de-migrants-exclus-de-paris-20240326_EVD7U4UWVJESHPL5IAT7YMG5CQ/

[6] Actually, the establishment of a team of refugees supported by both UNHCR and the International Olympic Committee is not a new development, given that a similar team participated in the Tokyo and Rio Games. https://olympics.com/cio/equipe-olympique-des-refugies-du-cio-paris-2024

As in many other EU states, the responsiveness of the French authorities was admittedly exceptional and unprecedented. In France, the rights granted by the status included residence permits, medical assistance, access to education and housing, employment aid and some social benefits. Each region was to provide provisional shelter combined with adapted social support. Offering displaced Ukrainians open sanctuary caused no friction, no controversy. It should be noted that, in the context of upcoming presidential election in France, all institutional actors had communicated somehow on the issue: some staging solidarity to their profit, others jumping aboard the train of hospitality to take the credit of being at the forefront of action.

Hosting Ukrainian exiles in France remains the responsibility of the government via local *Préfecture*s but other actors took part such as associations, municipalities and NGOs, notably *France Terre d'Asile* and *La Croix Rouge*. A temporary housing scheme was implemented in March 2022 giving shelter to approximately 100,000 persons.

In Paris, the reception of refugees was very well organized. Most of those who ended up in France arrived by train. In the Paris railway station of *Gare de l'Est,* they were dispatched by *La Croix Rouge* whose expertise and experience were instrumental and comforting, especially for those who had no relatives or contact persons in France. Refugees were transported by coach to a *Porte de Versailles* center that was repurposed as a large processing facility where institutions, associations, support groups and volunteers could provide the necessary assistance. Those who wished to apply for a provisional residence permit were assisted by the *Préfecture* which had opened an office in that same facility. Paris was not the only institutional actor in charge, but it managed to increase its reception capacity, making temporary shelter available in the city by turning sports centers into dormitories. Also, at the *Porte de Versailles* facility, a playground for children was staged and municipal agents were sent to provide for their needs in terms of welfare and protection (Fig. 6.1).

Following the principle described above of distributing exiled populations across the national territory, Ukrainian refugees were rapidly dispersed and relocated. Many French city mayors were prompt in making accommodation available for them by turning holiday resorts, boarding schools and vacant units into temporary housing. Clearly, the process of relocation was much smoother than with previous migratory inflows, though the overall number of refugees reaching Paris was higher than in 2015 or 2016. From local authorities, public institutions to NGOs and private organizations, all entities actively worked together to ensure an effective and tailored response to the needs of displaced individuals and families.

However, while the collective and enthusiastic goodwill proved helpful for most refugees, some encountered obstacles. As an example, foreign students residing in Ukraine were not included in the Temporary Protection scheme. Associations and civil society actors voiced their concern about the exclusion of non-nationals in the directive (Fig. 6.2).

Fig. 6.1 Some of the support services provided by the municipality in Porte de Versailles reception facility

Fig. 6.2 Children drawings in the Paris reception centre

6.3.2 Ukrainians as Legitimate City Users

For us, researchers specializing in the reception of migrants and asylum seekers, the welcoming of Ukrainians has functioned as a quasi-natural experiment providing insight into what an immediate and adequate implementation of asylum and reception policies could be like in a hospitable and favorable context. Some scholars and activists have contended that the positive reception and institutional legitimacy afforded to Ukrainian migrants can be attributed to factors such as race, gender, and religion. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to fully explore the underlying reasons for such positioning, it is undeniable that the above-mentioned factors - along with broader geopolitical reasons - have played a significant role in shaping the favorable institutional responses toward Ukrainians.

In terms of migration management, the joint response by local and national actors also illustrates the potential application of a perfect model of multi-level governance, articulating both horizontal and vertical structures and dynamics, functioning quite well when all the structures work in a good spirit of cooperation with a common goal (Özdemir, 2022). It represents a form of perfect territorial balancing of reception across different regions, as the Ministry of the Interior ensures an even distribution among territories, starting from the capital city. The reception of displaced Ukrainians serves as a notable example of how, from the local to the European level and in coordination with private and associative actors, various institutions and local stakeholders have facilitated the functioning of a solidarity network in response to the emergency. When all actors act in concert, the system tends to operate effectively, unlike situations discussed previously which notably strained the relationship between the French government and the Paris municipality.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the way the Ukrainian refugee crisis was handled in Paris. Compared to the way institutional actors have responded to migration emergency since 2015–2016, we can only be impressed by the near perfect management of the emergency scheme put in place for Ukrainians. The most striking elements in the response lie with the fact that not one single refugee went without shelter in the weeks and months following their arrival in Paris, and no camps were formed in the streets of the city. The immediate and collective protection provided by local and national authorities to Ukrainian exiles has made them undisputed city users who can access resources and services and seize opportunities they would not have had otherwise. The difference between Ukrainians and other migrants and refugees thus largely lies in the legitimacy that policies have decided to grant them in accessing urban and social services. Yet we argue that the city cannot take the whole credit for it: the city of Paris coordinated its actions with other actors without demonstrating a leadership role in managing emergency reception. In

Fig. 6.3 At the entrance of the Porte de Versailles facility, the presence of highly visible signposts exemplifies the misleading message that the city of Paris alone manages support and reception

fact, the same ambivalences and inadequacies between implementation and branding (as those we evidenced in the case of other refugees) can be observed. Through public displays and online platforms, the city hall strongly communicated on the issue of refugee reception and its active role in it, sometimes bordering on exaggeration (Fig. 6.3).

Another paradox emerges from our investigation. A gap exists between the enthusiasm expressed in France toward Ukrainian exiles since the beginning of the war, and the fact that most of them have not formed a wish to settle in France. Today, numerous Ukrainians who passed through Paris are to be found in German, Spanish and Italian cities. Some have even returned to Ukraine. Others have settled temporarily in France but continue to express a strong determination to go back. Sometimes they manage to do so, for a short period of time and when the security situation allows it. For all these reasons, the number of Ukrainians in France has constantly decreased, from 110,000 in 2022 to 68,000 in 2024. The application of the temporary protection directive being set until March 4, 2026, their condition remains unpredictable beyond that date. As the war continues, displaced Ukrainians are faced with the challenges of an uncertain status, strained resources coupled with a difficult worldwide economic situation.

6.4 Illegitimate City Users, Yet City Makers

Let us now shift our focus to the third contradiction we have identified in the current situation of migrants and refugees in Paris. While most of the Ukrainians who were welcomed in the French capital have expressed no intention to settle in the city or even in France, Paris and its metropolitan region remains an important destination for several other vulnerable populations escaping poverty or persecution and seeking economic opportunities. The majority of these migrants and refugees are not offered protection or assistance by the French government, especially when they fall outside categories of vulnerability and protection such as the asylum system. Yet, they live, work and consume in the city. In Paris, like in many global cities, a significant portion of irregular migrants contribute to the development of the urban economy. They frequently fulfill short-term and precarious jobs, particularly within the gig economy, thus helping to meet the demand for labor in various sectors. In other words, though they are not legitimate city users, they are in many respects city makers who contribute to everyday life and urban change in Paris.

6.4.1 The Responsiveness of Association and Civil Society Actors

Paris is home to a large population of irregular migrants. Because they are not allowed to apply for asylum or their application has been rejected, many remain in limbo (Fig. 6.4). National and local authorities devalue and delegitimize these individuals whom they do not consider vulnerable. Those who suffer most are rejected asylum seekers and migrant adult youths who are deemed too old to be placed in the protective category of unaccompanied minors. Yet, in some cases, they may have lived in the Paris region for several years sleeping in the street, in makeshift camps or in temporary accommodation. Their daily lives are most often met with obstacles - they are regularly forced out of their tents by police raids - but they manage somehow. Occasionally, some of them find more permanent, though shared or precarious, accommodation.

Despite institutional oppositions, local initiatives by non-governmental organizations and volunteer associations emerge to provide for their everyday needs. Such alternative solidarity initiatives act as a counterweight to the hostility migrants may encounter at the institutional level, sometimes proving unexpected effectiveness.

First, the role of associations and collectives is instrumental in providing refugees emergency reception. In Paris, many solidarity collectives provide night and day assistance, working as mobile relief teams (*maraudes)* and reaching out for those who live in tents and sleep on the street. Food and clothes are distributed and support with administrative processes and paperwork is provided. NGOs are at the forefront of such supportive actions as the temporary protection granted to unaccompanied minors by MSF (*Doctors without borders*). Local engagement is also

Fig. 6.4 "Ordinary" homeless individuals set up their Quechua tents outside the Porte de Versailles facility exclusively reserved for Ukrainian people

determinant in hosting vulnerable migrants. A shelter system supported by private individuals has emerged across the country (further underscoring the lack of commitment from the French state). Many mobilized citizens regularly open their homes to host migrants and refugees for a couple of nights, weeks and sometimes longer stays (Gardesse et al., 2022).

These collectives most often do not benefit from institutional support. Such models of solidarity stem from civil society actors and function autonomously. Sometimes they even organize actions in opposition to municipalities (example here: https://18dumois.info/jardins-d-eole-le-reve-se-referme.html) thus exemplifying what Garcia Agustin and Jorgensen have named 'autonomous' and 'civic' solidarity, that is a form of solidarity that acts despite the lack of support from the State (Garcia Agustin & Bak Jorgensen, 2019).

6.4.2 Ethnic and Transnational Solidarity Networks

The other main provider of solidarity in Paris and its region is the migrant and refugee population itself. By tradition, France is a country in which only the relationship between the state and individuals is valued compared to that between immigrant

groups. Yet, the existing relations between migrants themselves play a central role in the reception of newly arrived populations. In recent years, the basic needs of vulnerable individuals and families were mostly met by «long-term» migrants, such as co-ethnics or family members, whose commitment and capacity to navigate the system have made it possible for the recently arrived to survive in the city (Fogel, 2019).

While it has increased France's population for many generations, immigration has come from a much more diverse set of origins over the last 25 or 30 years. In Paris, numerous communities have settled, and the diversification of origins in the French capital has intensified in the last two centuries. Alongside the previous waves of migration that populated the city, more recent arrivals from Sudan, Afghanistan, and Syria have joined in. Paris has become increasingly diverse and multiethnic, particularly in its northeastern part which includes the most deprived and working-class neighborhoods (albeit undergoing gentrification, thus somewhat showcasing these transformations). Specific and ethnic centralities have formed in the northern Paris neighborhoods of *Château d'Eau, Château Rouge, la Goutte d'Or, Barbès, and Porte de la Chapelle.* These areas serve as both consumption spaces, through the presence of numerous ethnic shops, and social hubs for African, Asian, and Middle Eastern migrants and refugees. They also provide employment opportunities within community economies (such as hairdressers, or bakers). Additionally, they are located close to the various makeshift camps described earlier in northeastern Paris, serving as places of congregation and urban landmarks for many precarious foreigners in Paris.

While the role of diasporic, transnational, and ethnic networks in the reception and integration of numerous migrants in large cities is documented by research (Silhouette-Dercourt, 2014), it is still not widely accepted by political actors, since public policies in France do not acknowledge the presence of individuals possessing a relatively autonomous capacity for action and adaptation to the city.

As a conclusion, it can be argued that irregular migrants are not considered as legitimate city users, even less city makers. Yet, despite their irregular status, they work and consume and, sometimes, even manage to raise a family. As such, they are city makers. They admittedly run most of the services inhabitants use and rely on daily. Hence, they are essential workers but they only exist in the shadows. While their workforce is instrumental, they are invisible in the official city. The city makers we describe here are largely invisible to those who see migrants and refugees only as recipients of public aid.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shown that the question of whether Paris is - or is not - a welcoming city cannot be conclusively answered due to the three paradoxes and contradictions above-discussed. Neither can it be reduced to the single position of the municipality which is one among the many actors at play in providing welcome.

The complex and nuanced reality of migrant reception in the city reflects existing tensions between official discourses, national and European policies, and local and transnational dynamics of solidarity; as well as the different actors involved in welcoming and local incorporation. Our intent here has been to offer an in-depth analysis of these issues and stakes to highlight Paris's ambivalent position in the face of contemporary migrations. This scenario uncovers the complexity of managing migration flows in times of crises, emphasizing how significant the collaboration between the different actors is.

Furthermore, we have attempted to demonstrate that public actors such as the Paris municipality, by welcoming certain new residents and rejecting or neglecting others, contribute to establishing distinct orders of legitimacy in accessing the city. These orders of legitimacy have nothing to do with the relationship that migrants and refugees may forge with the city in their everyday life. Consequently, even the most undesirable migrants can be genuine city makers through the way they transform and inhabit the city. Their contributions can lead to the revitalization of neighborhoods, the establishment of new businesses, and the enrichment of the city's cultural landscape.

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Part II
The Migrant as City Maker

Chapter 7
International Student Diversity Experiences in Their Host Cities

Rochelle Yun Ge and Kong Chong Ho

7.1 Introduction: International Students as City Makers

The central argument we are making in this chapter is that students as migrants are also contributors to the cities where they are hosted. As a complementary concept to place-making, the term "city-makers" is useful because it focuses on the agents and not just on places in the city. And while Hoyler et al. (2018) use of city-makers is deployed in the context of the economically powerful producer services firms in global cities, shifting the focus to migrants allows an understanding of the roles of city makers with a view towards city-making as migrants participate in the daily life of the city (Yamamura, 2022; Çaglar & Glick Schiller, 2018).

There are three notable distinctions between international students and other migrant categories in the context of their potential role as city makers. The first pertains to the unique characteristics of international students. International students as young migrants are often welcomed because their student status is not seen by locals as a direct threat competing for jobs in the city. As students, they are expected to learn not only about their specific disciplines, but also about the culture and everyday lives of the city. Their longer stay covering the duration of their study creates opportunities for a deeper understanding of their host city and country.

The second relates to the specific locations where they are hosted and integrated. International students are a highly valued group within the realm of migration, whose value is validated by higher education institutions (HEIs) and positively

R. Y. Ge (✉)
School of Education, University of Saint Joseph, Macau, China
e-mail: rochelle.ge@usj.edu.mo

K. C. Ho
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: ho_kc@yale-nus.edu.sg

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perceived by host societies due to the belief that they can enhance educational and social environments, thereby contributing to innovation and a knowledge-based economy (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017; Ge & Ho, 2018). The triple helix perspective on the ecology of innovation stresses the role of the research university in playing a critical role in the building of a country's innovaton infrastructure (Ranga & Etzkowitz, 2013). And graduate studies and the training of graduate students, especially in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences, play a critical role in the cultivation of research labour (Ge & Ho, 2018b).

A third and perhaps the most significant difference is the possibility of their city maker role in both host and home cities. While some international students stay on in their host cities or move on to the cities of other countries, the majority return to their home countries. For this group who return, a significant number continue to maintain ties with their host country friends. This return to home group are also integrated into formal and informal alumni groups which function to maintain ties through a shared memory of overseas student life in the host country, city and university. It is this group that can play an important role becoming bridges between home and host cities/countries through establishing and facilitating socio-economic ties (Liu-Farrer, 2009; Ge & Ho, 2018). This possibility of positive involvements by international students with host univeristies, cities and countries has led countries like China to devote resources to the education of large numbers of foreign students in the hope that they graduate to have a strong understanding of their host country and be in a position to foster positive bilateral country ties (Wu, 2019:90).

7.2 International Students as Educational Migrants

The potential impact of international students in their host cities can be gauged from their statistics. Globally mobile students predominantly possess non-resident visa statuses as they embark on their pursuit of higher education, particularly tertiary degrees, in their chosen destination nations. The population of these educational migrants has experienced substantial growth over the last two decades. According to data published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the international student cohort numbered over 5.3 million in 2017, marking a significant increase from the two million recorded in 2000 (OECD, 2020) (Fig. 7.1).

The process of international students adapting to their host society bears resemblance to the experiences of other migrant groups. These individuals often grapple with challenges related to housing, financial stability, cultural disparities, the establishment of social networks, homesickness, and the integration into a new university and society (Lee & Rice, 2007; Calder et al., 2016). The act of relocating and encountering distinct cultural norms can generate feelings of insecurity among these students. While they naturally turn to co-nationals for social support, they must also forge connections within the host society as they advance academically. The impact of culture and relocation on security is significant. These two factors

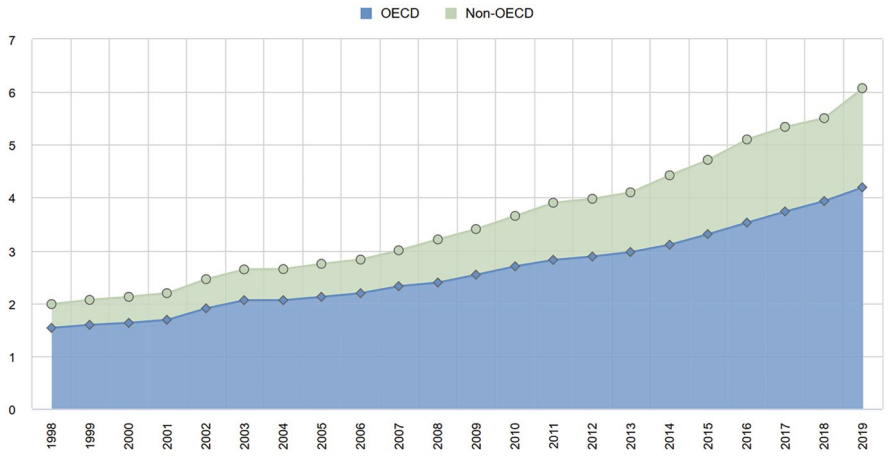

Fig. 7.1 Growth in International or Foreign Enrolment in Tertiary Education Worldwide (1998 to 2019). Number of international or foreign students enrolled in OECD and non-OECD countries, in millions. **Note**: The data sources use similar definitions, thus making their combination possible. Missing data were imputed with the closest data reports to ensure that breaks in data coverage do not result in breaks in time series. **Source**: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2021). See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes: https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterB.pdf

intertwine to create a composite of cultural elements that shape perceptions of insecurity and define responsibilities for community and individual safety.

7.3 Research Data: Student Housing and Social Networks

HEIs often adopt progressive diversity management policies, placing a significant emphasis on housing as a central component of their strategies (Gaisch et al., 2020). Within this framework, residential campuses play a pivotal role in the accommodation and integration of diverse ethnic groups. Student housing presents opportunities for cross-cultural interactions, facilitated not only by its convenience but also by the presence of on-campus dormitories equipped with dining facilities, sports amenities, as well as a wide array of student-led interest groups and events. It is imperative to gain a comprehensive understanding of university housing policies designed to cater to international students, encompassing various types of residential arrangements and their availability.

Extensive research has consistently highlighted the pivotal role of housing in the settlement, sense of security, and adaptation of international students (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008; Obeng-Odoom, 2012). The majority of studies have demonstrated the favorable impact of accommodating international students on campus. Specifically, students residing on campus have reported heightened satisfaction with their environmental and financial security (Long, 2014). Moreover, on-campus

living has proven to bolster students' academic performance and foster meaningful interactions among individuals from diverse backgrounds (Pike & Kuh, 2006). The implementation of mixed ethnic residency policies has been found to contribute to a more positive attitude towards minorities among students, and this influence persists even after their graduation. For example, individuals who reside in racially diverse neighborhoods tend to exhibit greater prosocial behavior compared to those in less diverse neighborhoods, attributed to their identification with the broader human community (Nai et al., 2018).

The provision of on-campus accommodations for international students typically falls into two categories: mixed and enclave arrangements. In a mixed arrangement, international students are placed randomly alongside local students in on-campus halls or dormitories. Conversely, in an enclave situation, the host university designates a specific building for all international students, separate from the on-campus accommodations of local students. Research has yielded varying results regarding the efficacy of enclave housing arrangements. Some studies have suggested that international students perceive such housing arrangements as being not conducive to their integration into the local community. Conversely, other research has indicated that the provision of designated on-campus spaces for ethnic minorities makes these students feel more welcome and supported (Kirby et al., 2020; See & Wade, 2022).

Diversity management is a research area that has garnered increasing attention in tandem with the process of internationalization (Morrison et al., 2006). Research within higher education studies often adopts an inclusive education perspective when examining curricular and pedagogical aspects related to multicultural education (Taras & Rowney, 2007). However, not enough emphasis has been placed on addressing the needs of student populations and how to effectively manage diverse student groups, especially when considering students from social minorities (Gaisch et al., 2020). Managing diversity among student migrants necessitates considering the characteristics of both the student group and the host institutions. It requires a comprehensive understanding of the implications for students' social interactions and their future plans, including the socio-economic effects of educational migration.

In this chapter, we seek to understand more deeply the role residential arrangements play in the composition of international students' social networks and how they engage with others on and off campus. We use such relationships and engagements to estimate the potential role of international students as city makers in their host cities.

The research data was sourced from a multinational research project titled "Globalizing Universities and International Student Mobilities in East Asia." We conducted surveys and interviews with more than 4500 international students who were enrolled at 9 universities across five countries from 2009 to 2012. The project's primary focus revolved around the decision-making processes of international students before their arrival, their adjustment experiences while studying and living in host countries, and their post-graduation plans. To demonstrate the housing arrangements and the impact of experiences of diversity in each case, we employed both survey and interview data.

Table 7.1 Student diversity of on-campus housing

	NUS n = 219	SNU n = 258	RUC n = 235
Number of nationalities of int'l students	13	43	55
Percentage of Asian students	99.5%	80.6%	55.8%
Top 3 largest groups	Malaysian 30.0% Chinese 29.5% Indian ·15.0%	Chinese 46.9% Malaysian 4.7% Japanese 4.7%	Korean 34.9% American 7.6% Vietnamese 6.1%

To fulfill the research objectives of the current chapter, three universities in East and Southeast Asia have been selected as case studies: the National University of Singapore (NUS), Renmin University of China (RUC), and Seoul National University (SNU). These universities were chosen based on several factors, including city-specific influences, types of housing arrangements, and the diversity of their international student populations. All three universities are public institutions situated in the respective capital cities of their host countries: Singapore, Beijing in China, and Seoul in South Korea. In this context, NUS serves as a regional hub primarily composed of Asian students, whereas SNU and RUC host a sizable contingent of international students from neighboring countries, alongside a diverse mix of students from various backgrounds outside of East and Southeast Asia.

The international student communities at these universities exhibit significant diversity, as illustrated in Table 7.1. To a large extent, students' profiles for the selected cases reflects the reality of the host city's attractions for student migrants. Singapore, being a global city-state, harbors a substantial presence of transnational corporations with regional headquarters and sales offices serving Southeast Asia. One of the key draws for international students is the use of English as the medium of instruction in educational institutions and as a prominent working language. Seoul stands as the epicenter of the Korean Wave. In 2016, the capital region contributed an astonishing 87% of the total revenue generated by Korean culture and creative industries, employing 76% of the workforce (Huh & Lee, 2020). For young people across the globe, Korea's influence in movies and music serves as a compelling motivation to pursue studies in Korea. Beijing is the capital of a country with the world's second-largest economy, and its international influence continues to grow, notably with the rapid expansion of Chinese as a regional and global language.

More importantly, the selected cases exemplify three prevalent types of on-campus housing arrangements in Asia:

(a) Mixed Housing at NUS: In this arrangement, on-campus residential facilities cater to both local and international students. NUS, as a prominent regional education hub in Asia, boasts a substantial international student population. To promote interaction between local and international students, the university employs a randomized approach, housing students from different backgrounds together in dormitories and halls.
(b) Enclaves at RUC: International students are accommodated in on-campus dormitories exclusively dedicated to them. Most dormitories in Chinese universi-

ties are designed to accommodate a large number of local students, typically four or more students per room. Recognizing the distinct housing expectations of international students, universities like RUC often allocate them to specific buildings with enhanced amenities, such as single and double rooms, and provide more lenient regulations compared to those governing local students' dormitories.

(c) Free-Choice Housing at SNU: International students have the flexibility to opt for either an international enclave dormitory or a mixed dormitory with local students. SNU offers two types of dormitory buildings for international students: mixed dormitories, where local and international students share the same building or room, and enclave dormitories where international students reside separately.

7.4 Housing Arrangements, Social Mixing and Students' Future Plans

In this chapter, we assert that international students as city makers serve as outstanding ambassadors of cultural diversity, and residential campuses play a pivotal role in fostering social integration. Research findings here reveal three distinct effects of such integration, primarily based on the variance in on-campus housing arrangements for international students: on-campus integration, off-campus integration, and the influence of diversity experiences on students' post-graduation plans.

Heggins and Jackson (2003) found Asian students often place great importance on informal networks as opposed to utilizing the host country's formal structural procedures when in need. Therefore, when looking at the effects of on-campus mixing, we analyze the profile of international students' top 7 close friends. Research results show that housing arrangements have a clear impact on international students' friendship formation. We found that students from all three universities indicated that most of their close friends were met on-campus (see Table 7.2). This indicates that university residential campus is the major location where international students form their social networks in the host country.

It is not surprising that students tend to form friendships with individuals from their home country. Across all three housing arrangements, students consistently reported that their closest friends were those from their home country, with whom they would often study, dine, and engage in various activities (see Table 7.3). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced at NUS. Among international students

Table 7.2 Location where the close friendship formed

	NUS Mean	SNU Mean	RUC Mean	F	Sig.
Friends made on-campus	5.47 a	4.69 b	4.27 c	20.40	<.001
Friends made outside	1.25 b	1.93 a	1.45 b	10.50	<.001

Table 7.3 ANOVA result of Top-7 close friends' nationality of int'l students

	NUS	SNU	RUC		
	Mean	Mean	Mean	F	Sig.
Number of home country friends	3.64 a	3.13 b	2.42 c	32.56	<.001
Number of host country friends	1.65 b	2.08 a	1.26 c	17.69	<.001
Number of third country friends	1.17 c	1.51 b	2.05 a	17.47	<.001

Table 7.4 Activities on- and outside campus

	On-campus			Outside campus		
	NUS	SNU	RUC	NUS	SNU	RUC
Clubs and associations	71.6%	32.3%	26.3%	10.6%	21.0%	21.8%
Religious organization	12.4%	13.2%	3.4%	13.8%	21.8%	20.9%
Hobby and sports group	74.8%	49.4%	39.9%	15.1%	25.3%	24.0%

residing on campus, the top three ethnic groups were Malaysian, Chinese, and Indian. Living in a mixed dormitory facilitated the ease of connecting with fellow countrymen, potentially impacting their inclination to cultivate friendships with individuals from third countries or explore social interactions beyond the campus, as they found a comfortable social network within the university. Here, a "third country friend" is defined as a residual category, distinct from co-national friends from the home country and host country friends from the nation where the international student is pursuing their studies. The statistics in Table 7.4 illustrate that international students at NUS actively participated in various on-campus activities and had the highest number of friends from their home country when compared to their counterparts at the other two universities.

In the context of international students residing at RUC, they tended to form friendships with one another. The significance of the "3rd country network" is particularly noteworthy. Among their seven closest friends, on average, at least two friends originated from third countries, as depicted in Table 7.3. In contrast, in the other two universities, the average number of friends from the host country exceeded that of friends from third countries. However, international students at RUC generally had more friends from third countries than from the host country. This may be attributed to the influence of enclaves, where international students had fewer opportunities to interact with local students. During one of the interviews, a Vietnamese undergraduate student recounted her experiences of staying with four different roommates over the years while studying at RUC. These roommates were from various countries, including Japan, Korea, the United States, and Italy. She had this to share:

> Before coming, the university asks about preferences or special requirements, such as the location, preference of roommates. Some people do not want to stay with someone from their own country, because they want to learn Chinese, some people do not like to stay with the students from western countries. …… We are foreign students in China, but if you want to find a good local friend, it may not be easy. …… We do not have many chances to contact with each other. …… And we also live separately, we really do not have too much communication. …… Some local students welcome foreign students, while some of the local students do not really like to go out with foreign students. The places the local students

> usually go, maybe we find them boring. And the places we go to, they also do not like them. And some of the foreign students, their learning ability, including language ability may not be that strong. (Interview from a Vietnamese student majoring international relations at RUC)

International students at SNU reported having the highest number of host country friends among the three selected cases, as shown in Table 7.3. Since students have the option to choose different types of housing, it is likely that they consider their intention to form networks when making their choice. Students who were inclined to establish more connections with host country residents tended to opt for mixed housing conditions, while others may prefer residing in enclaves with fellow international students.

The social interaction among international students extends beyond dormitories and also occurs during their participation in various regular activities. Our research revealed that 82.7% of international students indicated regular involvement in different groups and activities. Among them, 64.5% of students took part in on-campus activities, while 40.6% attended regular off-campus groups, as detailed in Table 7.4.

By combining the data from Tables 7.3 and 7.4, it becomes evident that international students hosted by the NUS displayed a proclivity for participating in on-campus activities and forging friendships. The composition of ethnic groups among local students paralleled that of international students. This similarity may have contributed to international students' ease in integrating into the host society and experiencing positive interactions with diversity. The government of Singapore considers international students as a valuable source of foreign talents, and they are thus warmly welcomed as migrants. While there are social media posts reflecting this sentiment, international students are not perceived as direct competitors with locals for job opportunities. This concept of "foreign talent" is actively promoted by the government and is widely propagated in everyday conversations and the media (Ng, 2013). Consequently, this positive image has led to the general acceptance of international students and has augmented their positive experiences when engaging with the broader community beyond the campus.

Table 7.5 presents the students' satisfaction with their interactions within the host society. There is no statistical difference regarding how international students perceived local people's attitudes towards them. In general, international students

Table 7.5 International students' satisfaction towards mixing at host society (ANOVA test)

		NUS Mean	SNU Mean	RUC Mean	F	Sig.
a	Local people are friendly	2.75 a	2.84 a	2.75 a	0.42	.661
b	Easy to find a social group to share interest	2.72 a	2.51 b	2.74 a	6.39	<.005
c	Easy to mix in host society	2.69 a	2.47 b	2.66 a	5.54	<.005
d	Tolerance towards ethnic/religious differences in host society	3.09 a	2.59 c	2.72 b	26.53	<.001

Note: For the Likert scale used in the measurement: 1 = least satisfied and 4 = most satisfied

reported that local people were amicable and welcoming. Students in Singapore and Beijing found it comparatively easier to establish social connections based on shared interests and to assimilate into the host society when compared to their counterparts in Seoul. In terms of ethnic and religious tolerance, students studying in Singapore reported the highest levels of satisfaction, followed by those in Beijing and then Seoul.

Students hosted by RUC reported high satisfaction with social mixing and tolerance towards diversity. They attended a lot of outside campus activities with 3rd country friends and sensed that Beijing welcomes foreigners like them. One American student who studied at RUC shared an episode about his involvement with two police cases. He worked at a school teaching English and then another service company without a work permit. However, because he was an international student then, he was helped by the local police and even became a friend with the policeman:

> I was working and I got called to the police station a couple of times yea, got a lot of experiences here. I was teaching English here in a primary school. …… I told them I was working since I got here. …… And actually, the employment visa was the main reason… they held me with some other stuff afterwards. I'm still friends with the police officer. (Interview from an American student who studied International Relations at RUC)

The social networks and diversity experiences students had during their stay in the host universities are likely to have an impact on their plans after graduation. Both our survey and alumni interview data suggested the effects. The number of home country friends does not have significant correlation pattern with intention of work location in the future. But the social networks and diversity experiences are likely to increase their intention in working at host and 3rd countries: students with more 3rd country friends have higher intention in working in another country ($p < .05$); and students who have more host country friends also have higher intention in working at host country ($p < .001$).They build up cultural skills while studying in the host country, form networks with other international students, and gain information about opportunities and develop confidence in adaptation (Table 7.6).

Even for those graduates who went back to work at home countries, they are likely to keep visiting host cities and maintain relations with their local friends. These social networks could also benefit work (see interview extraction from a

Table 7.6 Correlation between number of friends and intention of work location

	Intention of working at home country	Intention of working at host country	Intention of working at 3rd country
Number of close home country friends	.05	.03	−.06
Number of close Host country friends	−.05	+.12*** p < .001	+.05
Number of close 3rd country friends	−.004	−.06** p < .005	.08* P < .05

Japanese alumnus who studied MBA at NUS and now working at Japan). Furthermore, graduates from NUS are likely to have higher internationally mobility. For instance, one Indonesian graduate told in the interview that he worked first at Singapore and then moved to Hong Kong and travels frequently to visit his friends made during university time and relocated to other countries (see from an Indonesian alumnus who studied Civil Engineering at NUS and working at Hong Kong).

> Two years in Singapore. I made a lot of good friends, Singaporeans, or some other people from mainland China, basically the students, they are from Asian countries. There are three students from Japan, including me. One person from Nomura Security, Securities, and one person from NTT, it's a communication company. …… I'm still you know, keeping in touch with some of my classmates, friends. When I do business, how can I utilize such – because we have the… Hay Group Singapore in Singapore, and I have colleagues there, and they can do business, and they can help me. (Interview from a Japanese alumnus who studied MBA at NUS and working at Japan)

> I did sales job in Singapore, actually, before I came to Cathay. …… Because I recently just moved to Hong Kong. But my hangout friends in Singapore were normally Indonesian. …… I keep in touch with two good Singaporean friends. One very good Mauritius friend, and the other one is obviously Indonesian. Surabaya. So still keep in touch until now, very very close. Even the Mauritius, move to London, and every time I visited London, I would definitely look for her. (Interview from an Indonesian alumnus who studied Civil Engineering at NUS and working at Hong Kong)

7.5 Concluding Remarks

With our analysis of the survey data from three universities in China, South Korea and Singapore, we argue that being youths and young adults, international students can play a positive informal role in facilitating a better understanding between hosts and guests. Their role as international students in their host society is a label which finds wide acceptance among residents of the city. And being youths, they presence adds to the vibrancy of the city. Within the framework of everyday cosmopolitan practices, these students, through their multicultural attitudes developed on campus and their involvements in host societies, they contribute informally to urban lifestyles and practices.

In closing, we make three points with regard to international students in terms of their diversity experiences and their roles as city makers.

Firstly, Beijing and Seoul are capital cities with Singapore being a city-state and global city. These cities have some of the largest urban populations in Pacific Asia, with dynamic city regions that hold significant shares of manufacturing and trade with the rest of the world and are home to innovation and creative companies (Ho, 2014). Besides a vibrant urban economy, these cities also have a wide range of leisure and recreational amenities and nightlife. As capital and global cities, they host a large foreign population working there or studying in a number of large and reputable metropolitan universities. This multinational residential mix create an openness to foreigners and increased opportunities for diversity encounters (see

Table 7.5). Thus, the combination of economic, social and multicultural opportunities creates an irresistible pull for students looking to Asia for their study.

Within this urban context, student housing arrangements are critical as social spaces for mixing, blending co-living arrangements with dormitory led social and recreational events. In this regard, we note from Table 7.3 that when housing arrangements are planned to have wide choices (as in the case of SNU), relations with home country students are high. When choice is restricted to only international student dormitories (as in the case of RUC), international students look to outside their campus to make friends. Within a mixed housing arrangements with large numbers of international students are co-residing with local students (the NUS case), the highest home country friends are found. The RUC model of finding friends outside the campus is particularly significant for diversity management efforts. Because of the large number of universities in Beijing, the presence of a significant number of young international students and their friendship networks mean that such students are visible and important bridges to intercultural understanding and awareness of the other, giving traction to Iris Marion Young's (1990) notion of city life affirming social difference. Such forms of encounters therefore importantly act as an impetus towards everyday forms of multiculturism.

Lastly, we need to recognize that diversity experiences work differently for different migrant groups. Indeed, we have argued that international students are generally welcomed by city residents. Although there are university differences, Table 7.5 reported high mean scores from international students of the three universities when they reported that local people are friendly. They continue to play significant roles as city makers through the crossing of different socio-economic boundaries and through their host friendships. For a smaller group who return home and continue to maintain strong ties with their host friends, this bridging role creates the potential for city-making across two cities. We cannot say the same for other migrant groups. Indeed, writing about Singapore, Aihwa Ong highlighted the differences in reception between the welcome extended to "nomadic professionals" see as the foreign talent, and the "laboring classes" who have more restrictive residency rights. As Ong (2007: 92) noted, this is a global city problem. By their employment policies, they generate inequality "sharpening and concentrating divisions between the highly educated and the less so, between global managers and migrant maids, professors and janitors, human capital and manual labour". Diversity management and the associated positive potential for city making and everyday forms of multiculturalism indeed must be a critical strategy involving not only the state, but NGOs as advocates, and employers in opening up the space for appreciating differences in the city.

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Chapter 8
Janitors of Portuguese Origin in Paris: A Specific Mode of Incorporation into a European Metropolis

Dominique Vidal

This chapter analyzes a specific mode of incorporation of immigrants and children of immigrants in a European metropolis, based on the specific case of janitors (in French, *concierge*) of Portuguese origin in Paris.[1] Nowadays, concierges of Portuguese origin, either immigrants or children of Portuguese immigrants, account for around 75% of the 10,000 janitors in the private housing sector in Paris. It is one of the many changes the French capital has undergone over the last 60 years. Although the occupation of concierge has always been an occupation of migrants in the French capital, there were no Portuguese concierges until the early 1960s. Previously, the occupation had been exercised by French internal migrants from small towns and rural areas, then, increasingly from the 1950s onwards, by Italian and Spanish migrants (De Villanova & Bonnin, 2006).

Moreover, the number of concierges is one of the specificities of Paris (one-third of the concierges currently working in the private housing sector in France work in the city, with a population of just over two million inhabitants in a country of almost 68 million people). It is largely due to the history of Paris. Indeed, the job of concierges appeared from the 1820s during the accelerated urbanization and the construction of many buildings (Deaucourt, 1992). Since then, concierges have

[1] Our article is based on repeated in-depth interviews (N = 66 in Decembrer 2022; 12 men and 54 women, 3 men and 22 women were born in Portugal,) during the working hours (which allows observations of the work), the analysis of concierges' Facebook groups, the analysis of the corporate and union press since the 1930s, interviews with trade unionists, representatives of owners' organizations, as well as on the use of statistical data from public agencies through a secondary analysis carried out by Lucas Tranchant.

D. Vidal (✉)
Université Paris Cité, Paris, France
e-mail: dominique.vidal@u-paris.fr

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been a well-known popular figure. These men and women (almost 90% in the occupation) were portrayed in the novels of the second half of the nineteenth century, such as those by Honoré de Balzac and Émile Zola, the famous drawings by caricaturist Honoré Daumier, and, in the twentieth century, they were the subject of a photo album by the world-famous photographer Raymond Depardon. Yet their working conditions have changed considerably over the last two centuries. From the early days to the 1930s, Parisian concierges were responsible for collecting rent from tenants (most building owners did not live in the buildings they had built to rent small rooms and apartments), as well as maintaining the building and opening its main door. At the time, they enjoyed virtually no protection under labor law. Their situation has since improved gradually and considerably with the adoption of legal provisions regulating working hours and determining their remuneration. Working conditions have also been partly transformed by new cleaning tools, the widespread use of cell phones and the Internet. But today, as yesterday, Parisian concierges are mainly responsible for monitoring the building, taking out the garbage, cleaning the common areas and distributing the mail. They are also frequently called upon for small services (receiving packages from Amazon delivery drivers, keeping a spare key, running small errands for the elderly, etc.). But what makes this occupation significant is that French concierges live in the building where they work, allowing them to make an impact in the neighborhood. Such working conditions make them and their family frequently experience cramped conditions in a small apartment (one or two rooms) on the first floor with little air flow and light.

In Paris, the predominance of concierges of Portuguese origin means that, today, the Portuguese group is identified with the occupation, even if the vast majority of Portuguese immigrants and descendants of Portuguese immigrants (about 1,200,000 in France) are not janitors.[2] For this reason, the character of the Portuguese concierge has become part of the stereotypes about the city. However, these concierges are part of migrants who are true city makers. In addition to their activities in the buildings, they also take part in public health operations, urban violence prevention, real estate agent information and election campaigns. Unlike other migrant groups, they are not professionally integrated into work collectives as workers are in factories and on construction sites. On the contrary, concierges of Portuguese origin are often the only inhabitants of Portuguese origin in the Parisian buildings where they work. So it is worth investigating what it means to live and work in a building without co-ethnics.

To do so, I first describe the way in which, from the beginning of the 1960s (i.e. shortly after the beginning of the great wave of emigration from Portugal to France) the Portuguese gradually established themselves in this sector of activity. Second, I examine the type of ethnic niche the concierges of Portuguese origin form in Paris. Third, I try to distinguish what relates to ethnicity in migration, in the sense of a shared reference to a common origin, and what relates to cultural characteristics

[2] According to public statistics, in 2021 France has a population of seven million immigrants out of a total population of almost 68 million. 2.5 million immigrants (36%) have acquired French nationality. 12.7% of immigrants were born in Algeria, 12% in Morocco, 8.6% in Portugal, 4.5% in Tunisia, 4.1% in Italy, 3.6% in Turkey and 3.5% in Spain.

prior to the migration experience. Fourth, I focus on the class relations in which janitors of Portuguese origin participate. I ask if their importance is due to the fact that they constitute an intermediate category between the majority population and the immigrants from the former French colonies. This allows to highlight the difference between Portuguese immigrants and their children.

8.1 Why Are There So Many Concierges of Portuguese Origin in Paris?

Between 1957 and 1974, some 900,000 Portuguese emigrated to France to escape poverty, Salazar's dictatorship and conscription into an army fighting independence movements in Portugal's African colonies (Charbit, Hily & Poinard, 1997; Pereira, 2012). They were primarily men, often joined later by their wives and children. Most of these immigrants came from the countryside in the north of the country, where they usually worked in agriculture. More than half of them settled in the Paris region, where they worked mainly in the construction, industrial, cleaning and domestic sectors. From the first half of the 1960s onwards, these Portuguese made their appearance in Parisian buildings.

Five factors have contributed to the fact that concierges of Portuguese origin have become a large majority in the private housing stock in Paris: the housing transformations, the changes in the economy, the preference given to European immigrants available on the Parisian concierge labor market, the forms of access to a job of concierge and the patrimonial strategies of Portuguese households.

8.1.1 The Housing Transformations

For a long time, the concierges of Paris were mainly French from rural areas and provincial towns, looking for a home that their income did not allow them to rent. However, the proportion of French concierges gradually decreased after the Second World War. Italian and Spanish women then gradually entered the profession. Many of these Italian and Spanish families, consisting of a female concierge and a male industrial worker, nevertheless left to live in public housing when, starting in the mid-1950s, State support for housing policy allowed these families to better afford housing (Fijalkow, 2016). These departures were a godsend for Portuguese women who, alone, as couples, or as a family, lived in the Paris region in even more dilapidated housing (one room or small apartments crammed with two or three households). Like the French people who preceded them in the Parisian buildings, getting a job of concierge is primarily a response to the difficulty of finding housing in Paris. However, unlike the concierges of French descent or those from other migratory movements, the Portuguese and their descendants settled in the area for a long time, even if, for many, this job was initially seen as only a stage in their migratory journey.

8.1.2 The Changes in the Economy

How can we explain the fact that there are so many descendants of Portuguese immigrants working as concierge in Paris and that, for many of them as well as for many Portuguese who came to France with the crisis of 2008, to become a concierge remains a goal? The permanence of Portuguese concierges over several generations raises questions, especially when one notes that there are almost no children of French-born individuals or other foreign groups in this profession.

The changes in the economy since 1973 also explain the high proportion of descendants of Portuguese immigrants among Parisian concierges. The vast majority of the descendants of Portuguese immigrants came of age in a context of high unemployment. But while the children of concierges of other national origins were generally able to escape their parents' working conditions by getting a job in other economic sectors, the children of Portuguese concierges more often than not had no choice but to remain in this sector. Becoming a concierge has allowed them not only to have a job, but also to have a disposable income, after housing expenses, that is higher than that of most other working class jobs. It was never a vocation, however, so much so that the children of concierges who became concierges agree that they first hoped to avoid the cramped conditions of living in a small space and the constant disturbance in which they grew up. It is in fact the limits that restricted the space of their professional possibilities that led them to prefer to be concierges as well rather than to occupy jobs considered less economically advantageous. This is an example of counter-mobility, in the sense that Roger Girod has given to this term, i.e. of a type of movement that brings individuals back to the category they had left (Girod, 1971).

The brutality of the 2008 economic crisis in Portugal finally pushed Portuguese people to emigrate to France to become a concierge in Paris. The information I have gathered suggests that the majority of them are also children of Portuguese immigrants who lived in a Parisian building as children or teenagers before leaving to live and work in Portugal.

8.1.3 The Preference Given to European Immigrants Available on the Parisian Concierge Labor Market

Parisian buildings in the private sector have very few concierges from former French colonies, a notable difference from what is observed in social housing. If we consider the nationality at birth, there are only 0.7% Algerians, 1.4% Moroccans, 1% Tunisians, and the "other African nationalities", which include nationals of other countries of the African continent, are only 2.5%, whereas immigrants from Former French colonies represent 11.2% of the concierges in social housing in Paris.

This fact invites us to consider the preference given to European immigrants as a third factor explaining the important place occupied today by concierges of

Portuguese origin. In fact, everything indicates that their access to the job was also facilitated by the refusal of the owners to replace the French who left the job with non-European immigrants. In a France marked by the Algerian war, where racism and suspicion stigmatized the North Africans, the Portuguese women, the latest arrivals to occupy this little sought-after job in a period of economic expansion, took advantage of the situation. In other words, to use Albano Cordeiro's expression to describe the less unfavorable conditions that the Portuguese encountered in France when the Portuguese immigrants massively arrived, the Portuguese benefited from the "Maghrebi lightning rod" (Cordeiro, 1999). This relative advantage of the Portuguese in the immigrant labor market is not only the result of ordinary French prejudices. It is also the result of institutional choices that have imposed a representation of Portuguese immigrants as tireless, docile workers who are not very demanding (Santo, 2013). A large majority of concierges of Portuguese origin today still recognize themselves in the representations associated in France with this migratory flow, namely the images of a "hard-working", "honest" and "docile" population. The condominium managers do not hide the preference they give to the Portuguese. All those I interviewed insisted on their specific qualities, using stereotyped expressions such as "We know we can count on the Portuguese", "They are not afraid of work", "They are people who don't make trouble".

The observation of a predominance of white concierges of Portuguese origin (a small minority of Portuguese settled in France are from the Cape Verde Islands and therefore have African phenotypes) must be placed in the generally color-blind framework of the French context. Unlike what we observe in a city like New York City where the doormen of high-end buildings frequently come from racialized immigration (Bearman, 2005; Williams, 2016), the concierges in the Paris private Housing sector, also at the interface of the private sphere and the public space, have essentially a European origin, the obvious sign of a distrust towards people of color.

8.1.4 The Forms of Access to a Job of Concierge

Concierges are mainly recruited through informal mechanisms. Since employers have little time to devote to recruitment, they most often trust the recommendations of concierges they have known for a long time, even if it means terminating the contract during the probationary period in case of dissatisfaction. This method of recruitment is another factor explaining how concierges of Portuguese origin have gradually occupied the majority of Parisian buildings. Gradually, but obviously continuously until today, jobs of concierges have been passed on within this population. Most often, a Portuguese concierge would recommend to her employer someone she knew who was related to her or who came from the same village. In the 1960s and up to the mid-1970s, when Parisian apartments' owners were looking for people willing to accept even harder working conditions than today (the maximum working hours were 55 h at the time, as opposed to 47.5 h now), it was not uncommon for a Portuguese concierge to be asked if she could bring a female relative from Portugal.

However, the access to a job of concierge for people of Portuguese origin today concerns above all the children and grandchildren of Portuguese immigrants in the Parisian private housing sector. Whether they see the job as a temporary occupation before getting a job in another sector, or whether they resign themselves to it in the face of the closure of their professional horizons, they have at least three decisive advantages in common when looking for a job of concierge. First of all, they enjoy the favorable reputation of the Portuguese with employers. These sons and daughters of Portuguese concierges were also socialized early on to the tasks to be performed and the behavior expected of them, having helped their parents, often from childhood, to take out the garbage and clean the common areas, or having taken the mail to the residents. Finally, the descendants of Portuguese immigrants benefit from information about job openings that concierges of Portuguese origin probably know better than anyone else in their networks of relations.

In this respect, the case of the Parisian concierges of Portuguese origin corresponds to what Raymond Gold called the "buddy system" in his master'thesis on Chicagoan janitors (Gold, 1950: 114) and what Peter Bearman had noted for the New York doormen: like socially valued professions, the fact of having inside information is useful to both the job seeker and the employer (Bearman, 2005: 48). The access to this information, which facilitates the acess of Portuguese and their descendants to the job of concierge, has nothing to do with the representation of a community of solidarity that is often associated with this population. If this community is crisscrossed by numerous networks and a rich associative life, it is nevertheless organized mainly around natives of the same village and, even more so, around kinship groups (Leandro, 1995a, 1995b; De Villanova, 1988).

8.2 The Patrimonial Strategies of Portuguese Households

Regardless of their age, concierges of Portuguese origin share a common interest in building up real estate assets. This is a trait shared with other Portuguese immigrants and their descendants, as Margot Delon has shown using data from the Trajectories and Origins survey (Delon, 2019). Indeed, the Portuguese immigrants are much more likely than other immigrant populations to be home-owners, and they often own property abroad. Most importantly, despite belonging primarily to the working class, they are nearly as likely to be homeowners in France (51% versus 60%) as the majority population, across all social categories.

The desire of concierges to own property is generally explained by the desire to have a place where they can spend their weekends without being solicited by the residents and, later, to live out their retirement. However, in the case of Portuguese-origin concierges, this is also rooted in the migration patterns of Portuguese immigrants who arrived in France between 1957 and 1974. This generation is very homogeneous. These emigrants from the North share the same desire to escape the misery of the countryside and to return home with their families as soon as they have saved enough money to have better living conditions. Saving is at the heart of

the economic behavior of this generation, whose numerous studies have shown the importance of time spent at work, characterized by the constant search for overtime in the building industry and in cleaning jobs (Rocha-Trindade, 1973; Moulier, 1981; Leandro, 1995a). The money earned in migration is used to buy land and build often lavish houses in the village of origin, ostentatiously displaying the signs of success (De Villanova et al., 1994; Portela & Nobre, 2001).

Concierges who are children of Portuguese immigrants are no exception, and it is likely that homeownership is an even more desirable goal for them than for other Portuguese descendants. In addition to the desire to enjoy a private space away from the workplace that is found among concierges of all origins, there is a desire to build up an estate that was already observed among the first generation. Unlike their parents or grandparents, however, the intention is not to acquire a house in Portugal to spend their summer vacations and their old age. The descendants of Portuguese immigrants plan to live in France, even if their desire to live in Portugal is not exceptional, and, on the other hand, they can usually stay in Portugal in their parents' house. For this reason, these concierges aim to acquire property in Paris or, more often, in the outer suburbs. The strong endogamy of Portuguese descendants - which seems even more marked when the wife is a concierge - makes this intention particularly strong in couples where both spouses are of Portuguese origin. In this case, they have a patrimonial strategy very close to that of their parents, even though they willingly ironize the intensive work, the penny-pinching and the deprivations that the latter have imposed on the family.

8.3 What Type of Ethnic Niche?

The massive presence of concierges of Portuguese origin in Paris invites us to characterize this group or, more precisely, to examine what it tells us by contrast about the work of immigrants and their descendants in France. First of all, it is worth emphasizing that the Portuguese immigrants have a rich associative life, but they are not spatially concentrated in specific spaces. For this reason, the models of the ethnic neighborhood, the ghetto, the ethnoburb or the ethnic enclave do not correspond to this population. There is no Portuguese neighborhood in Paris or any other French city, unlike in Toronto, which has a neighborhood called Little Portugal (Takahashi, 2017). The Portuguese, in general, do not experience strong spatial segregation in France (Préteceille, 2011; McAvay & Safi, 2018). Distributed throughout Paris, they constitute neither a ghetto nor an ethnic enclave.

Can concierges of Portuguese origin be conceptualized as an ethnic niche? As we know, the sociology of immigration has proposed numerous theories to explain the concentration of ethnic minorities in certain sectors of the labor market (Kushnirovich, 2010). This is not the place to rehash them. It suffices to highlight what they reveal about this case. In particular, research on the subject shows that, in addition to the existence of ethnic networks that facilitate entry and settlement in an economic sector, the domination suffered by immigrants is a factor that drives them

towards specific segments of the world of work. As we saw above, the Portuguese were preferred to immigrants from the Maghreb. Yet this has not meant that these women and men have escaped discrimination and ordinary racism in France, nor that they have enjoyed good working conditions. Data on the health of immigrants show that the Portuguese, along with the Turks, are the two groups most concerned by a deteriorated state of health, given an equivalent social background (Hamel & Moisy, 2015). The arduous life of concierges in small and sometimes insalubrious rooms, coupled with constant solicitations from residents and, in some cases, moral harassment, are the main causes. In employment surveys carried out between 2013 and 2017, concierges of both sexes report significantly poorer health than members of related professions (home helps, domestic workers, cleaners, security guards) and the working classes as a whole.

Basically, the question that should be asked about the high over-representation of people of Portuguese origin among the concierges of privately-owned buildings in Paris is not whether or not this is an ethnic niche, but rather what we mean by an ethnic niche. In our view, this can only be assessed through Roger Waldinger's definition, which highlights an ethnic minority's ability to expand its presence in a sector due to socio-economic changes and favorable recruitment mechanisms. (Waldinger, 1996). In the formation of the ethnic niche studied here, cultural elements, such as the patrimonial strategies of the households, are less important than the context of reception of Portuguese immigration, the transformations of the economy and the obvious reservations of the owners to hire janitors from postcolonial immigrations. Moreover, while concierge jobs in Paris form an ethnic niche for people of Portuguese origin, this does not mean they have a monopoly or are close to obtaining one. In fact, there are still 25% of concierges of other origins, with a growing number of immigrants from Eastern Europe, particularly Romania, and French nationals who are retraining in this job sector. Added to this is the increasingly strong identification with French society of the descendants of Portuguese immigrants, which means that while they may be categorized as concierges of Portuguese origin, they tend to have a lifestyle and values closer to the native French than their immigrant parents. Nonetheless, the predominance of Portuguese-identified concierges has solidified the image of the female Portuguese concierge as an established figure in Paris, making her the primary stereotype for Portuguese working women.

8.4 Ethnicity, Cultural Resources and Migratory Status

For those who are interested in the experience of immigrant workers or descendants of immigrants in diverse cities, the case of Portuguese-origin concierges in Paris is also interesting because it invites us to analytically distinguish between ethnicity, understood as a reference to a common origin, and cultural resources linked to socialization. As we know, the difference between ethnic and cultural elements is tenuous in many contexts and, sometimes, even impossible to make. However, there are two main reasons for considering them separately and then showing how closely

they are intertwined and overlap. The practices of concierges of Portuguese origin reveal, on the other hand, how much cultural elements often prior to migration contribute to the construction of an ethnicity in migration, even if the latter is also largely the result of the social relations in which immigrants and descendants of immigrants are engaged.

To do this, we will adopt the perspective of Fredrik Barth's seminal work, which considers that ethnicity is constructed and transformed in interactions between groups (Barth, 1969). Indeed, the ethnicity of the Portuguese and their descendants in France was largely constructed in a migratory situation. Albano Cordeiro, as we have seen before, speaks of the "Maghreb lightning rod" to explain the more favorable employment conditions that Portuguese immigrants encountered when they arrived at the very moment of the independence of the former French colonies in the Maghreb (Cordeiro, 1999). Today, despite having lower average education levels, their descendants still enjoy significantly better access to the labor market than postcolonial immigrants' descendants (Brinbaum et al., 2015). In addition to securing a job of concierge, ethnicity also plays a key role in the mutual support among concierges without which it is much more difficult to perform the tasks required (taking out the trash, heavy cleaning or occasional replacements). In all cases, the concierges of Portuguese origin agree that they prefer to help each other on these occasions, even though this support is not exclusive. In this case, we are in a context where ethnicity manifests itself as, in the words of Ivan Light and Carolyn Rosenstein, an "ideology of solidarity" (Light & Rosenstein, 1995: 19).

However, the ethnicity of the Portuguese and their descendants in France is not solely a result of their social relations. It also derives from cultural elements that predate migration, but to which the migratory situation and the circulation between the two countries give a particular dimension. This was first established by Michel Oriol in seminal yet underappreciated works. (Oriol, 1984, 1985; Oriol & Hily, 1993). Based on a survey conducted in the late 1980s on young Portuguese living in the Paris suburbs and the Pau region (southwestern France), Oriol showed that the latter relied on what he called "cultural resources" to claim their belonging, referring to "a set of traits that are not always strongly systematized insofar as they come from successive social learning, often not very well controlled, or even totally unconscious" (Oriol, 1985: 177). Drawing on the thinking of Herbert Marcuse, for whom a dominated group can project itself into a future other than the one assigned to it by the dominant group, he emphasizes that the young Portuguese he studied draw on Portugal's prestigious national past to express themselves. Far from a culturalist perspective that attributes behaviors to a shared, reified culture, he emphasizes the diversity of connections to France, Portugal, or both simultaneously. Nevertheless, Oriol insists, the discourses of belonging of these Portuguese do not express the will to set up as emblems what stigmatize, as it is the case among populations more exposed to racism and discrimination in France. This is why, according to him, contrary to what Pierre Bourdieu maintains, for whom any claim to identity results from a desire to reverse a stigma (Bourdieu, 1980: 69), drawing on cultural resources helps maintain solidarities that hold intrinsic meaning for those who mobilize them (Oriol, 1985: 173).

It is in this perspective opened by Michel Oriol that I would like to engage in order to go further in the understanding of the representations and practices of concierges of Portuguese origin in Paris. For their ethnicity is also based on the type of cultural resources that Oriol first identified. Like the young Portuguese people Oriol studied 40 years ago, these women and men commonly refer to Portugal's prestigious past, mentioning, for example, its great navigators. Let us return, for example, to the particularly high homeownership rate among Portuguese-origin respondents, as revealed by the TeO survey (Delon, 2019). This strong inclination toward homeownership can certainly be interpreted as a manifestation of an ethnicity shaped by adversity in France. It is also possible to assume that the desire to become a homeowner is even more pronounced among concierges who like to enjoy a home far from their place of work and know that they are not safe from a layoff that would make them homeless. But this desire for home ownership is also an economic behavior that has its origins in the strategies for building a family home and accessing land observed in the villages of northern Portugal. In these rural areas, the *casa*, which can be translated as "household", is the basic unit of peasant social organization, as many social anthropological studies have shown (Pina-Cabral, 1986; Callier-Boisvert, 1999). It is what needs to be protected and strengthened to allow the reproduction of a kinship group. There is certainly a long way to go between the world of the *casa* in the north of Portugal and that of the descendants of immigrants in the Paris region, but in each case, there is the same concern to ensure the family's future through property.

Obviously, emigration has brought about new behaviors. With the mass emigration that took place in northern Portugal from the late 1950s onwards, the countryside experienced monetization. The ostentation of goods by returning emigrants is a well-known aspect of this. The first immigrants liked to show off their success by building luxurious villas, and their descendants often like to acquire expensive objects, especially cars. Without completely blurring the attachment to rural values among migrants from the countryside, the monetization of the economy, like everywhere else,, has stimulated a process of individualization, allowing individuals to escape the grip of personal ties that characterizes groups bound by moral obligations (De Blic & Lazarus, 2007). This is one of the reasons why in Portugal, then as now, emigrants are the object of all kinds of jealousy and accusations of greed.

Moreover, as it has been observed in general among immigrant populations, Portuguese-origin concierges are undergoing a process where, without necessarily severing ties with their country of origin, they gradually distance and differentiate themselves from it (Waldinger, 2015). This desire to differentiate is reflected in particular in the use of what, drawing on Goffman, Hervé Marchal called in his survey of low-income social housing concierges' "rhetoric of disidentification" to describe how they reject certain images associated with the profession (Marchal, 2006). The concierges in question also make an effort to avoid being seen in their work coats or holding a broom, as these are perceived as stigmatizing symbols of their status. They also do so, notably, by insisting that they are nothing like the Portuguese concierges of the past, what they call the "old Portuguese concierges".

8.5 Specific Class Relations

Using data from the TeO survey, Margot Delon has highlighted the specific position of Portuguese immigrants and their descendants in relation to the majority population and people from former French colonies and the Caribbean (Delon, 2019). She builds her argument on the theory of the American sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva for whom the United States today cannot be described as a bi-racial country, consisting of "whites" and "blacks," but as a society composed of three main groups along a hierarchical axis (Bonilla-Silva, 2004). Bonilla-Silva distinguishes between "Whites" at the top, "Honorary Whites" - an intermediate category of increasing size that brings together former immigrants engaged in a process of "whitening" - and a group at the bottom, formed by African-Americans. Similarly, Delon argues that the cultural characteristics attributed to Portuguese origin people ("good workers", "well-integrated community", "honest people", etc.) position them as a "model minority," much like how various groups such as the Irish, Eastern Europeans or Asians have been labeled in the U.S.

Whatever the difficulties of comparing France and the United States in terms of ethno-racial stratification, Margot Delon offers a stimulating analysis by transposing a theoretical framework to very different empirical data. Without completely adhering to the division she proposes, we must recognize that she opens up interesting avenues for understanding concierges of Portuguese origin in Paris. This allows us to revisit the class dynamics that these men and women frequently perceive as forming a distinct group.

Portuguese ethnicity may lead to an externally imposed identity that concierges perceive as dismissive, yet it also often mitigates the harshness of hierarchical class relations. First of all, Portuguese immigrants frequently situate themselves as much in relation to the social stratification that exists in Paris as to that which prevails in Portugal and, more precisely, in the villages from which they originate. They are not unaware of the contempt that their low-skilled job can inspire and know that their situation is eminently vulnerable in the buildings where they work. This does not prevent some of them, perfectly aware of the status/income dilemma highlighted in a famous article by Raymond Gold (1952), from making fun of penniless residents by pointing out what their hard work and concern for saving has enabled them to acquire. However, their main pride is often to have escaped the great poverty they generally experienced in Portugal and to have been able to show off to the better-off villagers who looked down on them. Referring to a group of reference where their position has changed completely allows these immigrant women to limit the weight of the domination suffered in France.

On the other hand, the social hierarchy weighs more heavily on concierges who are descendants of Portuguese immigrants. Social distance and ethnic difference often combine to produce a double feeling of inferiority and discrimination.[3] Many

[3] According to the Trajectories and Origins (TeO) survey, 29% of descendants of Portuguese immigrants say they have been exposed to racism at least once in their lives, a figure that is twice as low as those with a sub-Saharan origin but nonetheless significant (Brinbaum et al., 2015).

of them also have good memories of their schooling or of the affection shown to them by the residents, but their friendly sociability, from adolescence onwards, was generally organized with peers from the same social milieu. The fact of not having a room of one's own made it difficult to receive friends, for lack of space or for social shame. Many of the Portuguese concierges spoke to me about the academic support or guidance provided by the residents, but I could not measure the effectiveness of this. What is certain, however, is that the academic success of these children does not leave anyone indifferent.[4] Many of their mothers told me about receiving congratulations when one of their children earned a diploma but also described strained relationships with certain residents whose children, sometimes of the same age and even in the same class, were struggling academically.

8.6 Portuguese Concierges as City Makers

As live-in concierges, Portuguese concierges are spread throughout the city rather than being concentrated in ethnic enclaves. In some ways, this makes them more impactful in the city. In their work, they interact not only with tenants of the building but also frequently develop good relations with the residents of the neighbourhood. Many concierges are also what Jane Jacobs calls "public characters" with "eyes on the street" (Jacobs, 1992).

Every day, they interact with a wide circle of people on the sidewalk. Being known, even superficially, contributes to the security of the street. When they look out from their window, they primarily help maintain public peace, which, as Jacobs writes, depends on "an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves" (Jacobs, 1992: 31). Although they are often accused of being police informers (it is a stereotype that has always stigmatized them), they prevent crime in the locality and they play a role in the organization of rescue operations. And it's no coincidence that four Portuguese concierges were decorated for their help to police and firefighters during the attacks of November 13, 2015, when 130 people were killed and 432 injured. As a general rule, the police regularly organize briefings with concierges on public safety issues, whether to be kept abreast of developments on the streets or to inform them of the measures to be taken in the event of attacks or violent demonstrations. For example, the authorities demand that concierges quickly remove garbage cans from sidewalks to prevent rioters from setting fire to them, using them to build barricades or planting bombs.

Portuguese concierges are also heavily involved in public health activities. During hot summer spells, Paris City Hall calls on them to report isolated elderly people. Concierges often visit them to ensure they are well hydrated and do not need

[4] Pierre Bourdieu pointed this out in his own way when he mentioned as a counter-example to those who refuse to admit the strong correlation between social origin and educational trajectory in the statement "My concierge's son studies literature at university" (Bourdieu, 1997: 274).

anything. They also played an essential role during the Covid-19 pandemic, scrupulously cleaning the buildings. Alongside healthcare workers, shopkeepers and refuse collectors, they were on the front line in the fight against the virus, even if recognition of their contribution came later (Vidal, 2020). In fact, several of them contracted the virus and died in the early weeks following the arrival of Covid-19 in Paris. In this respect, Portuguese concierges were among the immigrant workers who helped slow the spread of the pandemic. By redoubling their attention to building maintenance, they helped limit the risk of the virus spreading. By providing supplies to residents who were afraid to go out during the lockdown period, they forged essential links. By sounding the alarm or guiding emergency services when they learned that an isolated resident was showing acute symptoms of Covid-19, they also saved lives.

Concierges also play their part in the real estate market. Although they no longer collect rents, as they did until the early 1980s, they are frequently approached by real estate agents, who ask them about properties that may be for sale in the near future (Bernard, 2017). As a result, they are regularly visited by real estate agents, who ask them about the condition of elderly residents who are likely to move into retirement homes or die. As a token of appreciation, agents give them calendars and boxes of chocolates during end-of-year celebrations, and sometimes concierges even receive a small fee for helping a real estate agent close a deal in the building.

Concierges are also involved in local politics. As municipal election candidates increasingly communicate via television and social networks, concierges no longer have the same influence as they did until the 1970s, when they served as electoral agents in city politics. Nevertheless, concierges are still highly sought-after by elected officials. Every year, the Mayor of Paris organizes a big party to celebrate the city's concierges. Similarly, every district mayor receives them at least once a year (Paris has 20 districts). All elected officials know that the way city dwellers see the city is partly determined by what concierges have to say about it. Some concierges are even sometimes candidates to arrondissement municipal councils, as is currently the case with a concierge of Portuguese origin, naturalized French, elected in 2022 and deputy mayor of the 17th arrondissement.

8.7 Concluding Remarks

Portuguese concierges in Paris allow us to reflect on the questions raised by the incorporation of immigrants in diverse cities. In particular, the study of these men and women is directly linked to the debates on the relationship between ethnicity and work. The high number of immigrants in this trade risks overestimating the importance of ethnic origin in this sector. As regularly mentioned in migration studies, it is often difficult to distinguish precisely between economic, ethnic and cultural variables. As Nancy Green has rightly pointed out, these variables are often analytical categories constructed by researchers, shifting over time and across national contexts, yet used in a polysemous way by the actors (Green, 1995: 248). The growing interest in ethnicity in work and economic activities has also fueled a

tendency to "over-ethnicize" explanations for the presence of immigrant populations in certain sectors of the economy (Pécoud, 2010). It is therefore important to appreciate the effects of ethnicity in order to explain the strong overrepresentation of people of Portuguese origin among the janitors in the Paris private housing sector. We have shown that this predominance had its main causes in socio-economic changes and recruitment mechanisms.

The presence of concierges of Portuguese origin in the daily lives of Parisians, as well as the requests they are regularly subjected to by public authorities, also show one of the aspects through which immigrants and their descendants are true city makers.

In the micro-areas of the building where they live and work, they are a reassuring presence, especially for elderly people who feel lonely and frequently need somebody to talk to. They provide multiple services to building residents who can no longer travel to the pharmacy or go shopping. They also frequently help resolve tensions between next-door neighbors by asking them to make less noise or not leave trash bags in front of the doors. In doing so, they help to create a sense of urbanity in buildings whose inhabitants generally know little about each other and are unable to agree by themselves on common rules and regulations.

In the neighborhoods where they live, concierges also contribute to street safety. As previously mentioned, they are regularly called upon by public authorities to report and prevent potential dangers, such as burglaries, burning trash cans, or the use of trash bins to plant bombs. They are, on the other hand, well-known figures on the sidewalks that they clean and where they place the trash containers. In this respect, they are also those "public characters" who, as "eyes on the street", contribute to safer public spaces for sidewalkers, as it has been observed at different times in New York's Greenwich Village (Jacobs, 1992; Duneier, 1999).

Given the strong racism against immigrants from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, the Portuguese occupy an intermediate position in the ethno-stratification of the French labor market. This intermediate position between the majority population and postcolonial immigrants plays a fundamental role in their incorporation into Paris, without making them invisible and sheltered from prejudice. This serves as a reminder that while whiteness is rarely explicitly acknowledged in a so-called color-blind society like France, not all white people are treated equally. In this regard, the unique case of Portuguese-origin concierges in Paris underscores the importance of continuing to study this migratory flow, which, like other European migration streams to France, remains understudied in the social sciences.

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Chapter 9
Becoming an Urban Citizen? Social Relationships and the Self-Development of Internal Migrants in Guangzhou, China

Samantha Shu Fang Lim and Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho

9.1 Introduction

Cities are spaces where differences are created and urban politics arise through governance and counter-governance over different groups of people who take up varying positions with or against each other to stake claims in urban spaces (Samara et al., 2013; Isin, 2002). This paper examines the intersection of government policies that govern urban diversity and how individuals navigate constraints and opportunities in their social lives. Different social groups may hold multiple identities tied to their place of origin, race, or religion, particularly in the case of migrants. In particular, migration is one reason for increasing diversity in the region of Asia. From 2000 to 2020, Asia experienced the largest growth in international migration compared to regions such as Europe, Africa, and North America (International Organisation for Migration, 2021). An even greater number of migrants moved within their own countries (internal migration) rather than across international borders. In 2009, there were an estimated of 740 million internal migrants in the world (ibid.).

In this paper, we focus on urban diversity arising from the movements of people internally, within a country. One example of a government policy that aims to manage internal migration into urban spaces is the *hukou* system (or the household registration system) that is implemented in China.[1] In China, internal migrants

[1] The *hukou* system also affects the lives of individuals who are not living in the cities (for example, the rural areas). However, this paper focuses only on the *hukou* system and its effects on internal migration in an urban setting.

S. S. F. Lim · E. L.-E. Ho (✉)
Department of Geography, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: elaine.ho@nus.edu.sg

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without the *hukou* status of their destination cities would have fewer social benefits there (e.g. schooling and medical insurance) as compared to individuals who have the *hukou* of the city (Tao, 2009; Chan, 1996). Hence, in the case of urban China, diversity also arises from the different backgrounds of each individual as indicated by the *hukou* registration that they hold. Whilst it is possible to change the *hukou* to that of their destination cities, internal migrants have to meet the different requirements of each city that involve considerations such as age, education levels and residences.

This paper examines the lived experiences of rural-to-urban migrants in China and how they navigate constraints and opportunities in their social worlds. The lived experiences of internal migrants are studied through their aspirations and how they navigate in the city to achieve their hopes and dreams. In other words, we analyse how urban diversity is governed in China, particularly through the *hukou* system, by examining how rural migrants respond to the policy. We situate our research on the lived experiences of internal migrants in Guangzhou, China, who were living in or had previously lived in Shipai village. We also examine the lived experiences of these internal migrants in relation to other informal urban settlements in Guangzhou and other parts of Asia.

Since the reform and opening of China's economy in the late 1970s, Guangdong province has flourished and become a successful trading province for imports and exports (Yang, 2010). Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong province, was one of the earlier cities in China to benefit from the economic reformation and it progressed ahead of many other cities. It was the political, economic, educational and cultural centre and a dominant city of the region (southern China), and has remained so, whilst the population in the city grew as its economy expanded (Xu & Yeh, 2003). Large numbers of migrants moved into Guangdong province for work, either in labour-intensive enterprises or in commerce, from the mid-1980s. These migrant workers were distributed primarily in the Pearl River Delta region, with most of them located in Guangzhou, Dongguan and Shenzhen (Yang, 2010).

In general, China is often perceived as a country where collective action is discouraged and citizens are disempowered (lack of agency) because of the tight control of the Chinese government (Ren, 2012; Nielsen, 2014). Despite these limitations, internal migrants enhance their navigational capacity in cities, by overcoming barriers and increasing their resources, through their social networks and kin relationships. This paper draws out the types of social networks that internal migrants in China mobilise and the actions they take (thereby acting as 'city-makers') in order to achieve their aspirations and, in the process, become recognised as an urban citizen. We argue that the internal migrants in our study viewed social networks and kin relations as expedient solutions and springboards, and were less likely to limit their movements by over-focusing on the restrictions arising from the *hukou* system or the strong control of the state. This paper suggests that focusing on the lived experiences of people helps bring to view how individuals empower themselves by forming and maintaining social networks and kinships. They also make changes to their lives so that they are able to seek upward mobility along social hierarchies, in

other words, to effect their aspirations. Specifically, the idea of aspirations refers to individual or collective hopes about the future, and these aspirations are formed in relation to the beliefs and values of people's local cultures (Appadurai, 2013). While the tenure of the internal migrants' stay in cities are limited, we show that they contribute as city-makers through influencing the spatial development of the urban village where they live and thus the city more broadly.

The rest of the paper is divided into six sections. Section Two reviews the theoretical discussions on aspirations, social relations and urban citizenship. Section Three discusses qualitative research methods, fieldwork, the *hukou* system, and the field site's contextual background. We examine the empirical findings from the fieldwork in Sections Four to Six, highlighting the extensive social relations of internal migrants, their self-development and finally, their (future) migratory journeys. This paper concludes in Section Seven.

9.2 Literature Review

The term "diversity" has been used intensively in academic and policy discussions, and used synonymously to describe differences in ethnicity, class or lifestyles (for example) between groups. Hence, in the Anglophone sphere, the term "diversity" has become interchangeable with ideas such as multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and pluralism (Raco, 2018). In examining the management of diversity in urban settings, many discussions have focused on the implications or effects of government policies that affect certain groups of people[2] or ideas of alternative urban politics/futures.[3] In the context of urban China, many scholars have reviewed the implications of the *hukou* system on the lives of rural migrants,[4] but few have looked at the experiences of rural migrants through their hopes and navigations towards their aspirations in the city, which are in turn affected by the opportunities and constraints brought about by the *hukou* system. In some instances, these internal migrants managed to convert their *hukou* and achieved recognition as urban citizens. We refer to Appadurai's discussions on "aspiration" to contextualise our study on the lived experiences and aspirations of internal migrants. The idea of aspirations concerns hopes for the future that "*are part of some sort of system of ideas… … that locates them in a larger map of local ideas and beliefs*" (Appadurai, 2013, p. 187). In other words, aspirations are ideas which are formed within and derived from the larger norms of a culture (Appadurai, 2013). Hence, the futures which an internal migrant in China envisions for himself or herself are likely to be based on how specific local contexts affect them (such as the political, social and

[2] See Harvey (2006) on discussions of neoliberalism and inequalities for example.

[3] Conceptual discussions relating to Lefebvre's right to the city (see Purcell, 2013; Attoh, 2011 who examined this topic) or collaborative planning for an inclusive and just governance (see Healey, 2006) are a few examples of debates concerning building alternative urban futures or politics.

[4] See Afridi et al. (2015), Zhou and Cheung (2017), for example.

economic conditions in the hometown or the destination city). Even in cases where individuals have similar aspirations, the local ideas and beliefs of individuals would influence the way they cope with the challenges in navigating their aspirations and perceptions of success (see Camfield et al., 2013, on the aspirations of communities in rural, pan-urban and urban areas in Northeast and South Thailand for example).

In the context of urban China, the lived experiences of internal migrants are affected by the policies around urban citizenship.[5] Specifically, discussions on urban citizenship arise when the "*city becomes the basis both for new citizenship mobilisation and for a conception of citizenship based on urban residence*" (Holston, 2001, p. 327). Not to be confused with the idea of a national citizenship (specifically, the Chinese citizenship), the policies around urban citizenship in urban China concerns the idea of being a *shimin*[6] (urban citizen) of a particular city and the distribution of rights based on the *hukou* system. In this respect, the value of transforming into a *shimin* of larger cities, such as Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing, is higher since the rights in these cities or social security entitlements in these urban areas are perceived to be superior to those in other cities in China (Ho, 2011). Over the years, reforms to the *hukou* system to recognise more individuals as *shimin* enabled a greater number of rural migrants to gain access to different types of urban benefits. For instance, the State Council in 2003 had issued a directive which affirmed the rights of rural migrants to gain employment in cities, although they may not hold the official urban *hukou* of the city (Fan, n.d.). However, individual city governments retain discretion over their adherence to these directives (ibid.). The idea of "*suzhi*" is used to justify social hierarchies (see Kipnis, 2006).

The term *suzhi* relates to the idea of "quality" and, in the case of urban China, it refers to the idea of the "human quality" determined by factors such as the level of education of each individual. In China, different sets of regulations reflect the types of qualities each local government envisions to see in a *shimin*. Whilst there is no specific set of qualities or factors that an individual should have to be recognised as a person with *suzhi*, an individual is generally assessed based on his or her behaviour, level of education and moral ethics (Yan, 2003). The lack of defined characteristics of *suzhi* also meant that individuals are able to (re)negotiate and (re)define the idea of "human quality" to legitimise their decisions, expectations and desires. Representing good character and personal development, *suzhi* is also an indicator of the value of an individual in the market economy, thereby codifying an internal migrant in terms of what he or she lacks (ibid.).

As internal migrants settle in cities and strive for socioeconomic mobility, understanding their navigational processes is crucial, as it reflects their agency and diverse

[5] It is also important to note that the policies around urban citizenship vary from city to city. We will explore these policies further in the later part of this paper.

[6] Although the term *shimin* also translates literally to "city people", we will refer to *shimin* as urban citizen (since we refer to the term in relation to the rights of internal migrants in cities) and not its literal translation to avoid confusion.

aspirations. Internal migrants review the social-political environments that they are in (the "*presentia*") and imagine the future (the "potential"), as they move over geographical spaces and across spatial boundaries and improve their lives with their imaginations of their possible futures elsewhere (Nielsen & Vigh, 2012; see Vigh, 2009, on discussions of migrations and migrant imaginary). An individual's ability to navigate opportunities and challenges reflects their capacity to aspire—a form of agency that enables change. The capacity to aspire is a navigational capacity and it is dependent on the resources an individual has such as power and material resources, which are not evenly distributed (Appadurai, 2013). For instance, the more resources an individual has, the greater navigational capacity or capacity to aspire he or her has. Along the same line, the empowerment of an individual also nurtures his or her capacity to aspire. For example, Boonyabancha (2005) argued that it was difficult for an urban poor individual to work on and resolve housing issues alone. However, the urban poor can empower themselves by working collaboratively as a community (ibid.). As they increase their success in resolving more issues, in the process, they also increase their capacity to aspire further. In this respect, empowerment and the capacity to aspire are reciprocally linked (Appadurai, 2013).

Boonyabancha's arguments on the importance of collaborative actions in enabling the transformation of the community have also shown that social capital is an important component in collective efficacy. Central to the idea of social capital is social networks, including bonding and bridging networks, and reciprocities between individuals who are part of the social networks (Putnam, 2000). Whilst bonding networks are inward-looking and reinforce identities and homogeneity in a group, bridging networks are outward looking and more inclusive of people who belong to diverse social groups such as race and gender. The social networks that are important to different people depend on the scales of the problems and the types of issues that they are experiencing (ibid.). New internal migrants in the cities in China, for example, may rely on social networks across varying social groups in their hometowns to receive information and recommendations on possible accommodations as they move into the city.

Finally, drawing from the conceptual discussions above, we build an analytical framework that consists of two parts which focus on the navigations of internal migrants in response to the governance of internal migrants in the city through the *hukou* system. The first part of the analytical framework discusses how internal migrants seek to develop themselves to fit into the vision of the local government of who is considered a desirable *shimin*. The second part concerns how they navigate the constraints and opportunities found it the city and beyond through leveraging on their social relations (social capital). Reviewing the aspirations of internal migrants shed light on their lived experiences in the city and beyond (such as their hometowns). Aspirations also reveal the implications of the social, economic and political contexts of the city since the futures envisioned by internal migrants are affected by the specific local contexts that they are situated in. Before we focus on the empirical data analysis, however, we first look at the background of the *hukou* system and the field site in Guangzhou.

9.3 The *Hukou* System, Background of the Field Site and Research Method

In China, when Chinese citizens relocate and successfully change their hukou registration, it is seen as a migration that is recognised by the local government. These government-endorsed movements are also known as *qianyi*. Conversely, migration without a *hukou* registration change is deemed unofficial and remains unrecognised by local authorities. Migrants whose movements are outside the purview of the local government are also known as "floaters" and they form the "floating population" (or *liudong renkou*). Without the relevant *hukou* of the city where they are living in, they are not seen as true residents of the city by the government and, hence, do not have access to many social benefits that true residents have (Wong & Huen, 1998; Tao, 2009; Chan, 1996, 1999). As such, many migrants with low incomes may find access to affordable housing in the urban areas challenging as a result of residency control through the *hukou* system (Wang, 2004). Over the years, formal and permanent hukou registration changes have become increasingly feasible. There are also different forms of registration, depending on the needs of the local government. Nonetheless, conversions in the 1960s and 1970s were tightly controlled by a system of quotas (Chan, 1996).

China's late-1970s economic reforms relaxed rural-to-urban mobility restrictions, triggering a surge in migration by the mid-1980s, which supplied urban centres with inexpensive rural labourers. Migration was further encouraged with changes such as the introduction of temporary residential permits in 1985 to migrants with a legitimate job or business in the destination city. With these temporary residential permits, the movements of rural to urban migrants were recognised by the government. However, they remained ineligible for key social benefits, including affordable housing (Wong & Huen, 1998). With inflated housing prices in the cities, as a result of the "*shift from work-unit-based collected consumption to market-oriented consumption based on commodity housing*" (p. 428), internal migrants with low income could find settling into accommodation a challenge in the urban areas (Wu, 2009). Many of them would (first) stay in the numerous urban villages that are located in different parts of the cities. Urban villages, controlled by original residents and their families, operate outside state regulations and are therefore not officially recognized as part of the city. As such, these urban villages have no formal institutions that provide services essential for its residents such as social welfare and infrastructure (He et al., 2010).

The inequality in access to affordable housing from the control of residency through the *hukou* system exacerbated housing issues for many internal migrants in the urban areas (Wang, 2004). However, urban areas remain attractive places to work and live in. More than 70% of the Chinese population is estimated to live in urban areas within the next 15 years. In response to the expected increase in urban population, the government issued its first official plan on urbanisation in March 2014, titled "National New-Type Urbanisation Plan" (*guojia xinxing chengzhen hua guihua*). The plan aims to ensure that urbanisation in China will be people-centred

and environmentally-friendly (Taylor, 2015). Amongst the guiding principles for the new national urbanisation plan is the recognition that the *hukou* system was an obstacle to development and reformation to the system should be accelerated (Chan, 2014).

The field site in this study, Shipai village, is an urban village (*chengzhongcun*[7]) that is located in Tianhe district in Guangzhou (Fig. 9.1). Urban villages are generally formed when villagers build one-story or multi-storied high-density homes, without permits or official planning approvals, after they have lost their farmland when their agricultural land was taken over for development (Liu & Wong, 2018; Wang, 2004). Without the traditional resources for agriculture, villagers turn to building "illegally" constructed homes to house migrants who move into the city. These "illegally" constructed houses, which are also dense and compact spatial

Fig. 9.1 One of the entrances into Shipai village

[7] *Chengzhongcun* translates directly to *village in the city*. In our paper, we use the term "urban village" to refer to these villages in the city.

structures, become a characteristic of urban villages (Lin et al., 2012). Shipai village is one such informal housing settlement, which provides low-cost housing primarily to internal migrants. Through their residential choices, internal migrants have transformed Shipai Village into one of Guangzhou's densest urban villages, with buildings separated by narrow alleys. There are more than 3300 houses that provided accommodation for more than 70,000 internal migrants (as compared to 10,000 villagers), on a land area of about 0.7 square kilometres (ibid.). With only a tiny distance between apartments of neighbouring blocks, these buildings are also known as "handshake buildings" or "kissing buildings" and many apartments do not receive sufficient sunlight and ventilation. Beyond its residential function, urban villages also host commercial activities catering to internal migrants' economic and social needs (Wang, 2016).

This research draws on primary data collected in Guangzhou through urban ethnography (January–June 2017 and November 2018) to examine internal migrants' perspectives and lived experiences (Jackson, 1985). The first author conducted informal interviews with 21 participants who had previously lived in or were living in Shipai village at the time of the interviews. Participant observations were also carried out in Shipai village and its vicinity where the internal migrants stayed to make sense of the data generated (ibid.). The observations made supported the information and responses given during the informal interviews. The first author also visited other urban villages, which are located near to Shipai village, to observe (and compare) the everyday lives and developments in these urban villages.[8]

The following three sections examine how internal migrants in Guangzhou navigate challenges to achieve their aspirations, offering insights into the governance of internal migration in urban China. The names of the participants are represented by their pseudonyms in the discussions of the empirical findings below.

9.4 Empowerment through Self-Development

Although internal migrants are subject to hukou regulations, they have limited influence over policymaking and little time or inclination to collaborate with others—whether fellow migrants or local residents—to mitigate constraints on their agency in the city. Instead, they pursue alternative strategies for upward mobility, such as enhancing their social standing to gain full recognition as a *shimin* or urban citizen. In other words, they take actions to transform themselves into the *right* type of citizen as expected by the local city government and to be recognised by other urban citizens in the city. We discuss the case of Jia to illustrate how internal migrants incrementally seek self-development to empower themselves as aspiring urban citizens.

The first author met Jia in early 2017; he had moved from the province of Hunan (north of Guangdong province) and "came to Guangzhou to study [for] my Master's

[8] The first author visited Tangxia village and Xian village. The first author also visited Liede village, an urban village that has been demolished and redeveloped.

degree" more than 10 years ago. When he first moved to Guangzhou, Jia had a Hunan rural *hukou* but his enrolment into a university in Guangzhou for a Master's degree programme enabled him to make a temporary switch to a Guangzhou *hukou.* The admission into a higher education programme in the city was a step that allowed Jia to navigate further, and manoeuvre towards other opportunities, in the city. University admission is highly competitive, and internal migrants who enroll in urban universities receive a temporary *hukou* (Fan, n.d.). However, in Guangzhou, this arrangement is only temporary. After they have completed their studies, internal migrants have to find a job quickly to maintain the *hukou* of the city where they have studied in. These policies have been set to attract "talents" (*rencai*), but the internal migrants are considered "talents" only if they have at least a university Bachelor's degree. They came from places of origin outside of the Guangzhou city and may not be keen to transfer their *hukou* back to their places of origin after they graduate. Under the scheme to "suspend for employment" (*zhanhuan jiuye*), they may apply to hold the *hukou* for 2 years under the locality of their university while they look for employment (Guangdong Province Online Registration Hall (GPORH) n.d.). The two-year grace period offers temporary migrants an opportunity to secure permanent residency and its associated benefits. Nonetheless, the expansion of rights in the city under the *hukou* system is not intended to be equal. Rather, the internal migration system in China protects the rights of migrant who are deemed to be suitable as urban citizens for the city through policies at the local city and national levels. The restrictions on internal migrants vary in different cities, based on the socio-development in the city and the capacity of the city to manage its populations.

Recounting his migratory experiences, Jia felt a sense of achievement for overcoming difficulties and challenges, and viewed his migratory journey as a success. In his opinion, having 'greater wealth' since he left his hometown in Hunan was an indication that his migratory journey had been worthwhile. At the time of our conversation, Jia had successfully applied the urban *hukou* for Guangzhou after spending many years there during which he continuously engaged in "self-development" of his personal *suzhi*. In Guangzhou, as in other large cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, the urban population is encouraged to improve their *suzhi* so as to strengthen the competitiveness of the city (Zhang, 2018). In turn, internal migrants need to demonstrate their capabilities to transform themselves into urban citizens with *suzhi*. As with the case of Jia, these internal migrants increased their *suzhi* by obtaining higher education and employment in Guangzhou. Their self-development empowered them and ensured that they had more opportunities to be recognised as a *shimin* in the city they were living in.

9.5 Extensive Social Relations and Increasing Agency in the City

As highlighted earlier on, due to the control or governance of internal migration through the *hukou* system, internal migrants receive limited benefits and assistance from the local government if they do not hold the urban *hukou* of their destination cities. In facing constraints in a city that they may be unfamiliar with or restrictions

arising from government policies such as the *hukou* system, internal migrants shape their navigational pathways by looking to their social relations that are not limited to the geographical boundaries of their hometowns.

Jia's experiences in Guangzhou, for example, reveal different forms of social networks and the roles that these networks play in enabling the adaptation of internal migrants to life in Guangzhou when they move to city. Firstly, when Jia was studying for his Master's degree programme in Guangzhou, his relations with the university as an enrolled student meant that he was able to live in the hostel provided by the university. His enrolment in university in Guangzhou ensured that he had accommodation when he first moved to Guangzhou. After completing his postgraduate degree programme, Jia moved to Shipai village. Secondly, Jia served as a point of contact for a longtime friend from his school days. His friend did not have accommodation and Jia helped his friend by allowing him to stay with him temporarily at his home outside Shipai village.[9] Subsequently, his friend rented an apartment at Shipai village. In this respect, through bridging networks, Jia assumed the role of a springboard that facilitated his friend's migration.

Like Jia, Tan also migrated from Hunan province with a rural *hukou*. He has been living in Guangzhou for more than 15 years and he has obtained the Guangzhou urban *hukou*. Tan played a central role in his family's migration to Guangzhou. He moved to Guangzhou to pursue his education and was motivated to remain in the city after he completed his education. He hoped to bring his mother to Guangzhou and to purchase his own house in the city. Subsequently, Tan facilitated his mother's and younger brother's migrations into the city. Since he moved to Guangzhou before his family, Tan was able to help his family to adapt to life in the city. To make a living in the city with his family, in 2004, Tan opened a snacks shop with his mother and younger brother in Shipai village. However, the long working hours took a toll on the family and they closed the business about 4 months later. Even though the business did not last long, Tan explained that his initial plan was to work and live in Shipai village for only a short period of time.

For internal migrants like Jia and Tan, Shipai Village provided affordable and convenient housing. They viewed it as a temporary residence until they could secure better accommodation. Jia explained that "Shipai village was one of the better-known places where many people went to if they were looking for a place to stay". The informal housing market in an urban village allows renters to move in quickly without working on official documentations, such as a rental contract, that are often associated with renting in the formal property market. Furthermore, Jia commented that "the location [of Shipai village] is good". As such, the low-cost rentals in urban villages could be seen as the point from which internal migrants launch into or make their forays into the city and to facilitate the movements of internal migrants through the city. As highlighted earlier, the nature of the urban village functions as a springboard for internal migrants to develop their lives in the new city, and they in turn shape the urban landscape of Shipai village. Nonetheless, internal migrants are

[9] By the time his friend moved to Guangzhou, Jia has moved out of Shipai village.

often seen as outsiders (*waidiren*) in the cities and the urban villages where they reside (Fan, 2002; He et al., 2010). Hence, they do not participate in the community activities in the urban villages. As shown in the cases of Jia and Tan, they did not feel a strong sense of attachment to Shipai village and they were more focused on the opportunities that they could find in the wider city to live, to receive an education and to work. It was evident that Jia, for example, did not feel a sense of connection with, or relied on, his neighbours. He worked every day of the week and for long hours, returning home in the wee hours of the morning at times only to walk up and leave for work again early in the morning. He did not have time to build social networks with his neighbours. Furthermore, Jia had no intention to develop social relations in the vicinity of his accommodation in Shipai village.

The perceptions of Jia and Tan on Shipai village are similar to those of the internal migrants who stay in other urban villages. Xian village, for example, is an urban village near to Shipai village. It is also located in the Tianhe district in Guangzhou, southwest of Shipai village and close to Leide Avenue and Jinsui Road. The government had intended to complete the demolition of the urban village in time for the 2010 Asian Games; however, the demolition process was halted due to the disagreements on the compensations for local owners (Andersson, 2014). When the first author visited Xian village in early 2017, there were tall walls around the boundary of the urban village with huge banners celebrating the imagined future which the re-developed Xian village would be (Fig. 9.2).[10] Despite the threat of a loss of accommodation with the demolition, the migrants who lived in the urban village were not worried. For them, the improvements to Xian village would be good for the future and they argued that it would not be difficult to find another cheap accommodation if they needed to. They expressed that they "*came to live in the city and not to live in a certain urban village*" (Andersson, 2014, p. 38). Highly educated internal migrants like Jia increase their *suzhi*, moved out of the urban village and became a *shimin*. However, in larger and more economically developed cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, it remains difficult for many internal migrants to convert their *hukou* status due to the stricter regulations or higher requirements of the local governments.

Even though many internal migrants, especially low-skilled labourers, do not fit the requirements of the local government in these cities to be able to convert their *hukou* status, they remain essential and important to the living standards and functioning of great cities (Ong, 2007). Many of the low-skilled migrants, for example, work in the factories or construction. Hence, many city governments (including Guangzhou) have demonstrated high levels of tolerance for the presence of urban villages although they are considered informal housing and lie outside planning regulations. The urban villages are needed to house these low-cost migrant labourers who move into the cities (He et al., 2010). The urban villages are a form of immediate and temporary accommodation and their attractiveness as a housing

[10] Even though fieldwork was planned for Shipai village, the first author also made a visit to Xian village (located near Shipai village) in 2017 to observe the development at Xian village.

Fig. 9.2 A large banner on the wall around Xian village which reads "new journey for Xian village, happiness is around the corner"

option for internal migrants highlight the role of internal migrants as city-makers. Firstly, as a popular choice of housing amongst the internal migrants, they have impacted the density of urban villages. Furthermore, as renters in the urban villages, these internal migrants also play a role in influencing the type of economic activities in urban villages (see Sect. 8.3). Thirdly, as internal migrants navigate to and through the city, with the help of the social connections that they have in the city, their migration and economic contribution shape the urban policies of the city and influence the spatial development of the city. However, lacking strong ties to urban villages or local residents, internal migrants are generally unmotivated to enhance their built environment. Furthermore, as an informal housing market, the local residents have little impetus to enhance the quality of housing in the urban villages.

9.6 Not an Ideal Urban Citizen: Circulatory Migration and Returning Home

As highlighted earlier, the ability to develop one's *suzhi* to be recognised as a *shimin* is limited to internal migrants who meet certain criteria that are beneficial for the cities. Obtaining higher educational levels (or to be considered a talent or *rencai*) is one such criterion. On the other hand, internal migrants who fail to demonstrate higher levels of self-development, including migrants with lower educational levels, are considered by the local governments and other urban residents as "less ideal" urban citizens, and thus likely continue to experience exclusion. Despite the support they receive from their social relations, their inability to convert their *hukou* status

has led some to engage in circular migration, shuttling between cities and their hometowns.

One participant who expressed a possibility of migrating home was Lin. By the beginning of 2017, Lin had been living in Shipai village with her husband and her toddler daughter for about 3 to 4 years. Although the family held the rural *hukou*, her husband had employment in Guangzhou. The family chose to stay in Shipai village because the urban village provided accommodation for the family at a lower cost as compared to apartments in a private residential area (*xiaoqu*). Whilst conversing with Lin, she shared her concerns of living in Guangzhou and spoke about the possibility of returning to her rural hometown if "it does not work [out] in Guangzhou". As Lin explained, one challenge that she might experience in the city was that the cost of education in Guangzhou could be expensive since the family did not have the Guangzhou urban *hukou*. When the first author clarified with her if she has plans to register her daughter in a local school, she exclaimed, "cannot; it is too expensive!" Hence, Lin suggested that the migration back to her hometown might be an end-point in her migration trajectory if it becomes difficult for her family and herself to remain in the city.

For Lin, as for many other internal migrants in urban areas, circular migration presented a potential strategy to overcome difficulties in the city (Guangzhou or elsewhere). Although Lin referred to returning to her hometown as an option if she meets an impasse in navigating her aspirations in the city, her opinion suggested that the spaces for future-making between her destination city and her hometown overlapped to give her a sense of flexibility. In other words, Lin and her family thought that it was possible to navigate towards a form of envisioned future in their rural hometown, although it is unlikely to be the same future she imagined for her family in the city. Hence, even though Lin shared the problems and issues that she had, she did not express despair or desperation for the challenges and difficulties that she experienced as a migrant in Guangzhou.

Migration projects, in this instance, are circulatory movements for various reasons (such as work and education) rather than a one-way movement from the hometowns of migrants to their destination cities (Zheng et al., 2009). These circulatory movements and obstacles to permanent settlement in the city, such as policies that limit accessibility of migrants to affordable housing, are characteristics of internal migrations in China (ibid.).

9.7 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has examined the navigations of internal migrants who were living in, or had previously stayed in, Shipai village to understand how they managed or responded to the constraints and challenges that arise from the *hukou* system. In China, the *hukou* system is one of the many government policies that manage urban diversity in the cities of China, by directly regulating internal migrations The experiences of the internal migrants in our study revealed that they focused on

empowering themselves to improve their navigational capacity as they progressed towards the futures that they envisioned for themselves and their immediate family members in Guangzhou. This research does not seek to downplay disparities in rights and access to social benefits between internal migrants and local residents. Rather, it highlights migrants' agency, focusing on how they navigate disadvantageous urban conditions.

There are three key points in this study. Firstly, internal migration is a means for upward social mobility in the city and, through the city, elsewhere. Despite the restrictions that the internal migrants may experience, they seek self-development to achieve personal transformation in the city. They look to higher education and employments to increase their *suzhi* and transform themselves to become the *shimin* that the city expects. Secondly, social relations play an important role in enabling internal migrants to navigate the constraints and opportunities they encounter and, at times, act as springboards for their movements into the city. Thirdly, internal migrants who cannot convert their hukou status continue to receive less government support than local residents and often engage in circular migration, moving between cities or returning home.

By focusing on the lived experiences of the internal migrants and their self-fashioning projects to increase their individual agencies in the city, we show that they are city-makers and they shape the landscapes of the urban villages and cities. The informal housing market in the urban villages makes it a popular option for many internal migrants. As internal migrants move into the city and look for accommodation, local residents build high density housing in the urban villages to cater to their need. Furthermore, as residents, these internal migrants influence the types of economic and social activities in the urban villages. However, the opinion that many internal migrants have of the urban village as a temporary accommodation also means that there is little impetus for the internal migrants or local residents to improve the housing quality of the urban villages. Despite their exclusion from formal urban planning, internal migrants contribute significantly to the city's economy through labour and entrepreneurship. Hence, the local government in cities such as Guangzhou has shown a greater degree of tolerance for the presence of urban villages that house these migrants even though these urban villages do not comply with the planning regulations of the city and do not fit with the image of the city that the local government is keen to portray.

We close this chapter by contextualising the case of the internal migrants in *Shipai* village with examples of city-makers in other parts of Asia and how they shape their urban landscapes in the cities where they live in. In Dharavi, a slum community in Mumbai, for example, residents mobilised together to resist against evictions from their homes and the commoditisation of the land into real estate. They negotiated for a greater stake and claim for Dharavi slum area through community-based activism (Appadurai, 2013). In Thailand, the Baan Mankong programme supports individuals from low-income households to improve their living and housing environment. The process of upgrading requires housing communities to form collaborative partnerships between different actors to facilitate self-development (Boonyabancha, 2005). The city-makers in these examples work

collectively to bring about transformation in their housing communities and, consequentially, the urban landscapes of the cities where they live in. In this respect, the examples above seem like a contrast to our discussions on the internal migrants who live in the urban villages in China and are more focused on their individual aspirations than forming collaborative partnerships with the local residents.

Prior experiences shape how residents in Dharavi and Thailand respond to the challenges they encounter. In the cases of Dharavi, for example, earlier successes in claiming rights increased hope amongst the residents and encouraged them to trust one another and share the risk collectively to jointly resist eviction (Appadurai, 2013). In contrast, the internal migrants in our study focused primarily on their (individual) aspirations and personal empowerment. Together with having only a weak sense of attachment to the urban village and superficial social relations with the local residents, the internal migrants did not feel the need to promote or undertake collective action with their housing communities. Nonetheless, as internal migrants navigate their aspirations, their presence and actions gradually reshape urban landscapes. These cases underscore that there is room for future research to map transformation across multiple spatialities and to delve further into the impact of complex social relations and the geographies of local contexts on city-making and effecting spatial transformation.

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Chapter 10
Garment Wholesale Markets in Contemporary Global Cities: Urban Spaces to Build Personalised Business Relationships: Paris (France) vs Guangzhou (China)

Gilles Guiheux and Lulu Fan

The garment industry is one of the last manufacturing sectors with a visible presence in urban spaces. While most garment sales occur in retail shops, a portion of manufacturing persists in small urban workshops. This has been shown in studies of the major cities of the fashion industry, such as New York and Paris; even though these two cities are no longer major manufacturing centres, there are still workshops dedicated to high-end fashion production. Another significant feature of the industry is the importance of migrant labour. The garment industry is characterised by seasonal variations and constant changes in fashion, and entrepreneurs have to combine flexibility and standardisation. These constraints have created particular conditions for labour recruitment and working conditions - low qualifications and low wages - and have favoured extensive subcontracting. Research has shown that globally, the sector's dynamism relies on recruiting first-time international or internal migrants, often women, who accept flexible and precarious working conditions (Green, 1997; Chin, 2005). They have also highlighted how the garment sector is a source of opportunity for less-skilled immigrants, with upward career trajectories more likely than in other sectors. Ready-made clothing is a sector where it is easy to acquire professional skills - mastery of know-how and of a network of suppliers or customers. In the context of constantly changing subcontracting networks and when the capital required to set up a business is minimal, this allows for upward socio-professional careers (Waldinger, 1984; 1986; Guiheux, 2012). Studies on ethnic entrepreneurship in the garment industry highlight how business owners

G. Guiheux (✉)
Université Paris Cité, Paris, France
e-mail: gilles.guiheux@u-paris.fr

L. Fan
South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China

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integrate relatives or migrants from the same community into their enterprises (Waldinger, 1986; Zhou, 1992).

This chapter examines Paris and Guangzhou, focusing not on financial markets—the primary marker of global cities according to Saskia Sassen (1991)—but on the fashion and ready-to-wear industries, which operate on a global scale. The French capital is a world fashion mecca with its yearly catwalk shows and fashion houses, but less well-known is the fact that it is still a major trading centre for mid to low-range ready-to-wear. If local production has almost completely ceased, distribution, in the form of wholesale markets, is still very active in areas such as Aubervilliers, where business owners from Chinese origins are predominant. The Chinese Southern metropolis is also a major global trading centre in garment products, with many wholesale markets, coupled with production still partly carried out locally.

This chapter addresses a gap in the literature. While sociological studies examine trade fairs (Lecler, 2020; Maskell et al., 2004; Moeran, 2011) and international fashion fairs (Skov, 2006), research on low-end garment wholesale markets primarily focuses on the Global South (Choplin & Pliez, 2015, 2018). The originality of our perspective is that we are simultaneously looking at two geographically very distant configurations, in both the South (Guangzhou) and the North (Paris). This comparative analysis develops a sociological explanatory model of wholesale marketplaces. It draws on reports, press articles, and existing literature—mainly by geographers and anthropologists—supplemented by field observations and interviews conducted in both cities from 2020 to 2023.

The chapter first explores the spatial dimension of the wholesale markets. In both cities, garment markets form clear urban enclaves with their own dynamics. How have these specialised clusters progressively developed? Which private and public actors were involved? What is the future of the markets in densely populated neighbourhoods? In the second part of the chapter, we address a paradox: why do buyers and sellers still need a meeting place in a global and digitalized economy? Why is a face-to-face meeting still required? One might assume that trading companies and mass marketing would eventually replace physical wholesale markets. Using an economic sociology perspective, we argue that these markets need social encounters to function properly. We will also address the issue of ethnicity in the context of the markets.

10.1 The Spatial Dimension of the Garment Industry

In Paris and Guangzhou, there are specific urban spaces devoted to the ready-to-wear industry in its cheapest fraction. These are spaces where low-end products are traded at low selling prices. The buyers are partly national and partly international in both cities. National buyers sell the products to the poorest populations of France and China, primarily low-income rural populations. International buyers come from Europe, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa in France, from all over the world in

China, notably South Asia. Both Paris and Guangzhou's wholesale garment districts exemplify 'globalization from below' (Portes, 1997; Tarrius, 2002; Mathews, 2011).

10.1.1 Paris Garment Districts: From the City Centre to a Formally Industrial Suburb

After the Second World War, Paris's garment district was initially located in central Paris, the Sentier, in the 2nd arrondissement, and operated by businesspeople of Jewish origin. However, the area gradually declined in the 1980s as rents increased and Chinese workers and small entrepreneurs entered the sector. The garment district then moved to Paris's 11th arrondissement on rue Sedaine et rue Popincourt. In the late 1990s, owing to the continued gentrification of the city centre, a few individual business operators started to settle in Aubervilliers, attracted by the low cost of land and premises (Fig. 10.1).

In the mid-2000s, a few bold real-estate investors bought empty warehouses and converted them into collections of showrooms. Garment operators followed and rented these shops. The convenience of the new location compared to the congested streets of inner Paris contributed to the project's success. Aubervilliers provided a more efficient location for a sector reliant on frequent loading and unloading of goods from suppliers to customers. There was also an obvious interest in concentrating all supply and demand in one location to enhance competition and reduce transport, packaging and handling costs. The third phase consisted of real-estate developers, including wealthy Chinese business people, deciding to develop brand-new commercial centres dedicated to wholesale. In 2006, the CIFA Centre opened

Fig. 10.1 Paris successive garment districts

with 250 shops, while the Fashion Centre was inaugurated in 2015, boasting 310 shops on three levels and spanning 55,000 square meters, promoting itself as Europe's largest commercial platform for imported products from China (Chuang, 2013, 2018).

In Aubervilliers, customers are French and European retailers from Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal. They operate small stores competing with chain stores owned by international brands such as Zara and H&M, companies that source directly from producers in China and South Asia. These retailers sell small quantities and don't have any knowledge of the production site. Some of these buyers in Aubervilliers are ethnic Chinese, where business transactions occur in Chinese. There are also African buyers for whom coming to the Paris wholesale markets is easier than travelling to China.

Until the 1980s, much of the manufacturing still occurred in the French capital. The Parisian hub is now mostly a marketplace, with garments mainly manufactured in China. The market professionals we interviewed are intermediaries between manufacturers and retailers. The manufacturers are, in most cases, based in mainland China but also in the Prato region of Italy, where there is a cluster of Chinese textile factories, most business owners have come from Wenzhou and flocking to Prato in the mid-1990s to work in Italian-owned textile factories, where they quickly mastered the entire production chain (Ceccagno, 2017). A number of wholesalers also source from Turkey. There are still a few businesses manufacturing in Paris but they are marginal. On the wholesale market, several generations of entrepreneurs coexist. For the oldest of them, who are over 50 in the early 2020s, and who migrated from China to France nearly three decades ago, they started out as workers in a garment factory, then opened their own production workshop, and finally became exclusively wholesalers of imported products. Here's how one entrepreneur describes his experience: "I arrived in Paris in 1996. I first started studying how to make clothes. Then, I opened a workshop. And now I operate a wholesale shop. I slowly moved along that road. Today, for garment, almost everything is imported from China" (interview).

Wholesale traders travel to China twice to four times a year - once per season - to visit their suppliers for several weeks at a time. Those sourcing in Italy visit on a much more regular basis, sometimes as often as once a month on weekends, when the Aubervilliers shops are closed. Orders placed in China are much larger (thousands of pieces) than those placed in Italy (sometimes less than 100 pieces); in the case of the former, goods take several weeks to arrive, whereas it takes only a few days from Prato. While Chinese products are cheaper, the risk is higher for the wholesaler, who has to place a large order before knowing if the products will meet the demand on the market. With Italian products, the products can be first tested on the market and if the product is successful, restocking takes only 24 to 48 h, thus minimising the risk through small orders and low stock levels (interviews).

A former industrial city, Aubervilliers is now home to more than 1000 wholesale dealers, most originating from the Wenzhou region of China's Zhejiang province. Investors and business operators were not the only players facilitating this transformation. The city's local government decided to actively promote Aubervilliers as a

Sino-French commercial platform and more generally, as a global city. The local government aimed to raise the international profile of the city, capitalising on its history of immigration (Chuang & Trémon, 2013: 190). The development of wholesale activity gave rise to a growth alliance between garment business operators, real estate investors, developers and local government, all sharing a common interest in promoting urban renewal and the integration of Aubervilliers into the global economy (Chuang, 2018). Over the decades, Chinese garment wholesale markets evolved from marginal ethnic economic enclaves scattered in the city's interstices into strategic assets sought after by local authorities for the purpose of economic development (Li et al., 2024).

10.1.2 Guangzhou: Multiple Clusters and a Close Integration of Trading and Manufacturing

In China, the garment industry is concentrated in three clusters: the eastern region around Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Zhejiang province; the northern region in Shandong and Hebei provinces; and the southern region around Guangzhou (Guangdong province). Historically, the textile industry first emerged around Hangzhou and Shaoxing, a region with a centuries-old textile tradition due to the cultivation of cotton and silkworms; it is also historically the country's richest region. The second cluster is in the South, around Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong. The industry developed during the economic reforms of the 1980s, driven by the relocation of the Hong Kong textile industry. Since then, the region has served as a major manufacturing site for Hong Kong-based contracting companies. For decades now, Guangdong has been a large province in China's textile and garment production, and its garment export output has always ranked among the top three in the country.

The textile and garment industry in Guangzhou is mainly based on wholesale. Wholesale sales accounted for 78% of total sales in 2017, 73% in 2018, 71% in 2019, 72% in 2020, and 78% in 2021 (Guangzhou Statistical Yearbooks, 2018–2022). In fact, with the rapid development of the clothing industry, various comprehensive and professional wholesale markets have emerged in Guangzhou. The city has built one of the densest wholesale market clusters and has become the largest clothing marketplace in the world. Wholesale markets in Guangzhou are mainly located in Liuhua commercial district in the North West of city centre, Shahe commercial district in the North East and Shisanhang commercial district in the South (see Table 10.1).

The Shisanhang commercial district is the oldest clothing wholesale distribution center in Guangzhou, with about 10 clothing wholesale markets and more than 15,000 stalls. Liuhua clothing business district has more than 30 professional clothing markets of different grades and types, with more than 20,000 merchants. Shahe business district offers lower prices and a wide range of products, with 17 clothing wholesale markets and 20,000 shops (Fig. 10.2).

Table 10.1 Guangzhou textile and clothing wholesale market business districts

	Shisanhang (十三行) commercial district	Liuhua (流花) commercial district	Shahe (沙河) commercial district
Business model	Mostly wholesale	Wholesale and retail	Mostly wholesale
Market positioning	Mid-range clothing	Mid- to high-end clothing and accessories	Mid- to low-end clothing
Traffic conditions	Average	Extremely convenient (buses, railways and airport)	Convenient (buses, and highways)
Customers	Secondary wholesalers and retailers, large flow of people	Secondary distributors, retailers and many final consumers, large flow of people	Secondary wholesalers and retailers, large flow of people

Source: Qianzhan Industry Research Institute (2021)

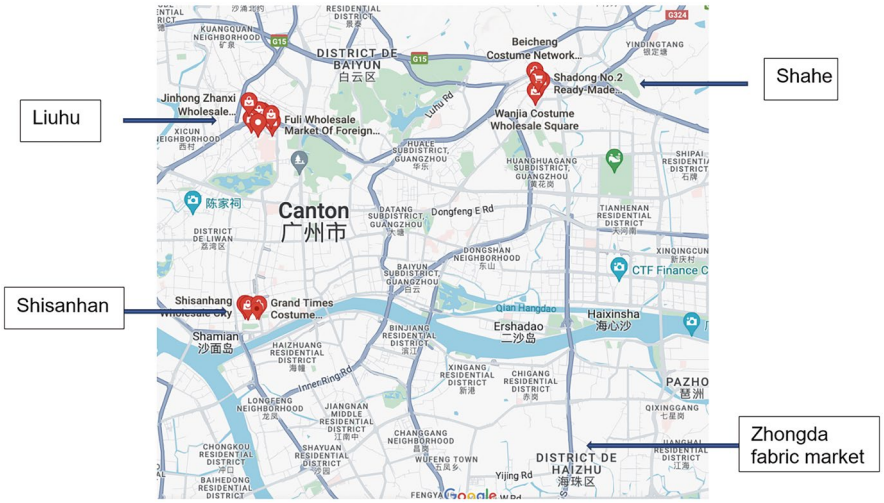

Fig. 10.2 Guangzhou 3 major garment wholesale markets districts

Beyond its vast product offerings, Guangzhou's key advantage is its seamless integration of distribution and production. Garment production is still carried out in close geographical proximity, notably in Haizhu, Baiyun and Panyu Districts. South of the Pearl River, the Haizhu district boasts several markets where manufacturers can source fabrics (notably the Zhongda fabric market) and all needed items for garment manufacturing (buttons, zippers, patches to stick on, embroidery to sew on, ribbons, but also materials for packaging etc.) and all kinds of machines (sewing machines, dyeing machines, ironing machines, washing machines etc.); and the nearby urban villages -former villages that have been gradually incorporated within the city- house thousands of large and small factories and workshops. This allows for highly flexible production that lives up to the slogan "purchase in the morning,

production in the afternoon and dispatch the next day". Between order and delivery, they are less than 3 days (Chu, 2018).

Informal factories operate with flexible management and payment structures. Workers are typically paid on a piecework basis, and unlike large, formal factories that comply with labor laws, these factories have no maximum working hours. Working 14 h a day and 7 days a week is common. Factories are flexible in work schedules and products, which enables them to promptly respond to the market (Liu et al., 2015). Along the last few years, the growing role of e-commerce – garment accounting for the largest share of internet retail transactions in China – has led to an increasing flexibility in the organisation of production; product life cycles have shortened, initial production orders have been reduced, labour relations have become more informal, all to reduce production costs and improve responsiveness to uncertain market demands (Fan, 2021).

Kangle Village in Haizhu District, with a registered population of 2565 and a migrant population of 48,084, is the area of Guangzhou with the highest concentration of small garment factories. The alleyways between the buildings, less than 1 m wide, are always bustling with activity, and electric trolleys laden with bundles of fabric weave their way through. The low-rise buildings conceal all sorts of pressing and folding, embroidery and clothing factories, with machines that whistle incessantly. Though space is scarce, the industrial chain is very complete (Yang, 2021). Many workshops hire mostly women; adjustment to flexible working hours depending on the orders is made possible by the blurred boundaries between productive and reproductive labour since the workshop is both a place of manufacturing and the place where female workers take care of their children; women employees are at the same time wage workers and domestic caretakers (Chu, 2019).

10.1.3 Stakeholders in Developing Garment Industry Clusters in the Two Metropolises

As in Paris, Guangzhou's garment industry clusters are shaped by individual entrepreneurs, real estate investors, and local authorities. In the case of Haizhu District for instance, in the 1990s, urban villages that were gradually deprived of agricultural land (because of urban development) were eager to attract small factories. Villagers, because of their specific land rights, could build, on the land of their place of residence, several stories houses and then buildings that would accommodate workshops on the ground-floor and workers' dormitories on the upper floors. As seen in Le Sentier, Sedaine-Popincourt, and Aubervilliers, the garment cluster initially developed spontaneously and with little formal regulation (Schröder et al., 2010; Zielke & Waibel, 2014).

Then, in a second step, starting in the mid-2000s, district authorities took the lead on villages committees. To reduce pollution and security risks related to the high density of workshops, to improve transport accessibility, they decided to build new

roads and upgrade the markets. Plots of land were cleared for private investors to develop modern shopping malls and exhibition centres (Zielke & Waibel, 2014). In other parts of Guangzhou, the same process of upgrading through demolition of small-scale facilities and, spatial expansion and densification of wholesale markets took place under the leadership of local authorities.

Since the late 2010s, Guangdong's garment industry has faced increasing pressure to create more value. As a result, production has gradually shifted out of Guangzhou, which is evolving into a distribution hub. Urban villages often combine residential, production, storage, and business functions within the same space, increasing fire hazards and casualty risks. Informal forms of employment are also prone to unmanageable labour problems, such as child labour and unpaid wages. At the same time, this type of informal economy contributes little to the tax revenue of the area where it is located. As a result, Guangzhou has implemented measures to regulate production-oriented urban villages.

Specific policies have been designed to encourage garment factories and workshops in Haizhu District urban villages to relocate to formal industrial zones such as Qingyuan, 80 kilometers north of the metropolis. Provincial, Guangzhou and Qingyuan municipal authorities have launched policies to promote the orderly transfer of the textile and clothing industry. In order to encourage a number of textile processing and manufacturing enterprises to take the lead, relocation subsidies are being offered; direct public transportation between the two cities is also being improved (Chang & Wu, 2023). However, our research on the Haizhu odd-job market and interviews with garment workers in September 2023 indicate that these initiatives have had limited success. Here is one worker testimony: "Garment workshop owners are reluctant to move there because the upstream and downstream industrial chain in Kangle area is very smooth. It is next to the fabric market, so they can directly take fabrics and auxiliary materials for production, and after production, they can directly ship to the garment wholesale market, and it only takes a few minutes' drive from the fabric market and the garment wholesale market. The whole process is very smooth. Qingyuan side is too remote whereas the fabric market and customers are still on this side, so garment factories are not willing to move over" (interview).

Paris and Guangzhou wholesale markets share several common features. They supply low-end products for final customers who are mostly low purchasing power households, both nationally and internationally. In both cities, over the years, the same stakeholders have played a key role shaping the markets. Markets were initially formed spontaneously on the initiative of small entrepreneurs; their development then aroused the interest of authorities who wished both to seize the opportunity that these markets create in terms of economic attractiveness and to resolve problems caused by the lack of safety and transportation accessibility. At the same time real-estate developers, public and private, also entered the game to take advantage of the business opportunities induced by the upgrading public policy.

The major difference between the two markets is that production has almost completely disappeared in the Paris case, whereas production is still very much integrated in the Guangzhou case - and it is the case in many other garment cities in China. Next to wholesalers selling manufactured garments are other markets where

manufacturers can source fabric and accessories. In the Guangzhou case, it is truly an industrial cluster where products are both manufactured and distributed. Next to the markets are hundreds of family-run workshops, notably operated by Hubei migrants. These workshops employ a few workers, sometimes around 10. The orders are a few hundred pieces at most. The low volumes are linked to the rapid renewal cycle of fashion and existing chains of subcontracting relationships. Flexibility of this mode of production is adapted to the industry's requirements. But successive crises in the industry, including the recent Covid-19 epidemic, and public policies could well see Guangzhou become solely a marketplace, while production relocates to the distant outskirts of the city and inland provinces.

10.2 Garment Markets Needing Personal Business Relationships

In this second part, we analyze wholesale markets through the lens of economic sociology, examining both their economic and social functions. We argue that markets are not only economic devices but also social devices. In the supply chain involving manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers, wholesalers bear most of the financial risk. They purchase garments ahead of the season, facing the possibility of unsold stock. In order to minimize their risks, they need to have a number of regular clients whose preferences they know. The aim of wholesalers is therefore to develop long-term relationships of trust with as many customers as possible. In this context, relationships of common ethnic origin are an asset.

10.2.1 A Wide Variety of Market Professionals

Today, as global trade centres, wholesale markets host all kinds of market professionals "whose task is to 'work on the market', i.e. construct it, move it, organise it, manage and control it, in short 'agencing' transactions" (Cochoy and Dubuisson-Quellier, 2013, 4). In addition to shop operators, who typically rent their premises, there are employees, including sales staff and logistics workers handling goods. Most shops are actually operated by married couples. There are freight companies in charge of transporting the goods. There are insurance companies. There are banks and currency exchange businesses targeting foreign customers. There are packaging companies. There are design companies for those operators who would like to have their products designed in Paris or Guangzhou while the goods are produced elsewhere. There are employment agencies. There are traders' associations. There are also hotels and restaurants serving the continuous flow of people visiting the markets. In Guangzhou, as in many other Chinese trade centres, there are companies serving as intermediaries between non-Chinese speaking foreign visitors and local traders.

10.2.2 The Wholesale Market: A Classified Trading System

In both cities, there are different types of wholesale markets. Some are housed in former industrial buildings and warehouses, while others, as mentioned, are located in brand-new buildings built for this purpose. In the latter case, showrooms are arranged by product type, which makes it easier for customers to compare quality and prices. Since they shape economic exchanges, the markets can be considered devices for constructing and organising transactions.

In Guangzhou, most malls follow a standardized design, typically spanning multiple floors. Commercial stalls are on lower levels, whereas storage and delivery areas are located on the top. Goods are typically loaded and unloaded from trucks on the rooftop, which is accessible via side ramps. In many malls, goods are classified by type: men, women, children, accessories, etc. As a result, in one section, products are often very similar (or even identical) from one stall to another, a device that very obviously enhances competition.

But there is also a diversity of products regarding quality and prices that can easily be identified due to different types of display. Malls' lower floors house simple stalls of a few square meters (2 or 3, sometimes double when the trader occupies a double stall) with the clothes hanging on the walls from floor to ceiling next to each other. The clothes are the best bargains there. Most often, there is no branding. Traders put the buyer's label on the products after the transaction, if requested. The orders range from a few dozen to a few hundred items; these are small orders. The traders often stand on stools outside the stand in the corridor to maximize the commercial part of the space. The upper floors contain real shops that are set up as such with an entrance marked by doorways, shop windows, and fancy display. Significant effort is invested in product presentation. The rent costs can reach several 10,000 yuans per year. There, shopkeepers have employees. Even though, some of the stock is stored in the shop and, all along the day, employees are seen preparing packages for dispatch. The shop has a brand name, and a logo, which is found on the clothes. Shops' decoration changes very quickly, following the cycles of fashion.

10.2.3 The Need for Trust and Personal Relationships[1]

Wholesale garment markets closely align with the three features of perfect competition outlined in neoclassical economic theory. First, there is atomicity on both the supply and demand sides. The number of buyers and sellers is huge, and none of the agents has sufficient weight to influence prices. For buyers, the size of the markets makes it possible to consult a wide variety of product offerings in a very concise space of time. There is also atomicity on the supply side since a given wholesaler will specialise in one type of clothing - ladies'/men's/kids' wear, dresses, trousers or blouses, etc. - and will not be able to meet all of the needs of one particular

[1] The argument here developed about both Paris and Guangzhou was first crafted in a text about Aubervilliers (Guiheux, 2022).

customer. Secondly, products are largely homogenous. Garments sold on the market are very similar in quality and characteristics and therefore almost interchangeable. These are cheap, low-end clothes often replaced because of fast-changing fashions. Markets are the home of affordable fast fashion bought in small quantities – whereas large international retailers buy directly from their suppliers. Finally, there is fluidity, with free entry into and exit from the market. There are continuous incoming and outgoing traders. It is very easy to enter the market because of low barriers; a wholesaler needs to rent premises and have a few contacts with garment manufacturers in China. And there are also many traders leaving the market simultaneously because of the high level of competition.

Supply and demand are regulated not only by pricing but also by social relationships. As Simmel highlights, trust mitigates uncertainty by bridging the gap between complete knowledge and total ignorance: "someone who knows all need not trust, someone who knows nothing cannot reasonably trust at all" (Simmel, 2009, 315).

In the wholesale market, sellers control information, creating an asymmetry between buyers and sellers. Garments are simple products, and the possibilities for withholding information are limited as defects are visible, provided that you can see and touch the product, which has not been possible during the pandemic. Still, the wholesaler can choose, in their own interest, not to reveal certain information regarding the production process to the potential buyer. The multitude of operators selling comparable products for would-be buyers is also a puzzle. In such cases, to help deal with the market's opacity, Lucien Karpik (1996) has shown that there are usually "arrangements for judgments". Trade names, product rankings and shopping guides are all examples of impersonal arrangements. There are none of them either in Paris or Guangzhou. When it comes to labels, products carry the name of either the original producer, the local wholesaler or the end retailer. Products change several times a year and are not ranked, and there are neither published guides to the hundreds of operators. One way for retailers to reduce uncertainty is to rely on personal arrangements.

For wholesalers, a key risk is opportunistic buyers who place an order but never return. Trust is "a type of expectation that alleviates the fear that one's exchange partner will act opportunistically" (Bradach & Eccles, 1989: 104). The products are largely homogeneous, and competition is therefore very tough, so the development of personalised social relations is a way of limiting competition between wholesalers when it comes to attracting clients. Garment production is also a business where copying is the rule, so personalised relationships is also essential when it comes to business transactions between wholesalers and their suppliers; they need to trust each other (Chu, 2019).

There is evidence that these relationships of trust exist. Wholesalers have both old regular customers and new occasional ones. Because the long-term nature of the wholesaler-retailer contractual relationship creates a reassuring familiarity and predictable behaviour among exchange partners, they aim to increase the former (interviews in Paris). It should also be underlined that the wholesalers have a limited number of regular suppliers for the same reasons. Besides maintaining a consistent level of product quality, the only way to develop a long-term relationship with clients is by using social skills. Customer loyalty, which requires special care to ensure that the bond of trust created is never damaged – for fear of the lasting negative impact this could have – is a strategy that can help stabilise the market.

Analysing relationships between wholesalers and manufacturers in Guangzhou, Nellie Chu (2019) talks about "quasi-family relationships" and intense "affective ties across the supply chain". To meet tight deadlines, some manufacturers require employees to work overnight, sometimes consecutively—a practice facilitated by strong personal ties. Looking at business relations among small firms in Dongfeng village in Haizhu district, Liu et al. (2015) talk about horizontal family-based relations along the supply chain. Most garment producers have several long-term and stable subcontractors. Once their productive capacity cannot fulfil the demand from their customers within the required time, they will outsource work to their subcontractors, and outsourcing relationships normally occur between factories owned by relatives, entrepreneurs with the same local origins, or entrepreneurs who were previously employers and employees. In Guangzhou, many traders and garment manufacturers are from Hubei origins and they draw on native-place based resources such as labour and financial capital; they also form alliances looking for business opportunities.

In Aubervilliers, wholesalers of Chinese origins have a unique capacity to develop personal relationships with their Chinese suppliers, and one wholesaler has only very few of them at a time. And the transaction has to be done on-site, mostly in Guangzhou: "we don't look for suppliers online. Basically, we travel to Guangzhou" commented one trader visiting the Chinese metropolis three to four times a year (interview). Relationships with retailers also have a strong personal dimension, but customers are from various origins, so being Chinese (or from Wenzhou) is a resource that can only occasionally mobilized to build long-lasting mutual obligations.

Advancements in technology and pandemic-related restrictions have accelerated the digitalization of business relationships. However, in online transactions, retailers rely heavily on wholesalers' claims without direct product verification. Since textile products are appraised in a sensory way by sight and touch, traders have argued that there will still be a need for a place and time where sellers and buyers can meet. Here is how a Paris based garment wholesaler comments his own experience: "You can't lie when you meet for real. Face to face, you can't lie. I can't say the fit is good or the fabric is soft if it isn't. This is how we build a relationship, through the quality of our exchanges (…) The digital world cannot replace a real meeting" (Paris interview). If commercial relationships will be based on both in-person encounters and virtual exchanges, there will be still a need for a physical marketplace.

10.3 Conclusion

Paris and Guangzhou garment wholesale markets are marketplaces where wholesalers and retailers from various parts of the world come to source products. They are places where products are displayed and marketed, and commercial transactions are carried out. In these urban spaces, there are also multiple actors, public and private, big and small, who intersect various functions - related to production, distribution, storage, design etc. - overlap. These markets are also embedded in a production system that spreads internationally.

Over the years, in both metropolises, the same city makers have played a role in shaping the markets: small entrepreneurs, private and public real estate investors, and local authorities. Wholesale markets first emerged spontaneously, initiated by traders. Investors then seized opportunities for expansion, followed by local authorities addressing safety and logistical concerns. The interplay of players explains markets' transformations, the moving from one area to an another and the upgrading of the physical infrastructures. In Guangzhou, for example, the local government is accelerating its efforts to transform urban villages, the areas those contain much of the informal economy. On January 26, 2024, *the Special Plan for Urban Renewal of Guangzhou (2021–2035)* was officially announced. This plan proposes that by 2035, 272 urban villages (administrative villages) will be transformed, involving 289 projects. Among them, the renovation of Kangle Village and Lujiang Village is scheduled to be completed in 2025, and the area will be fully transformed into part of Sun Yat-sen University's International Innovation Ecological Valley. The roles and responses of various parties in the process of transformation deserve further research.

A successful wholesaler has a portfolio of regular clients whose preferences they are familiar with; retailers have skills inherent in their human capital – knowing their customers' requirements. Our main argument is that in a highly competitive market, business owners sustain success by cultivating long-term customer relationships. Garment wholesale markets are also social devices where mutual trust regulates exchanges. While it may appear to be a free, highly competitive and opportunistic market, players in the market actually aim to limit the number of partners they trade with. In order to develop a network of clients (and also of suppliers), a common ethnic origin is an asset. This is true for Wenzhou wholesalers in Paris or Hubei entrepreneurs in Guangzhou. But this argument should not be overestimated in markets where customers come from all over the world.

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Part III
Civil Societies: Imagining New Forms of Urban Diversity Management

Chapter 11
Ethnic Exclusion Through Inclusive Cultural Policies: Hui Muslims and the Silk Road-Based Urban Development in Xi'an, China

Yang Yang

> Historic sites including the City Wall, Bell Tower, and the Great Wild Goose Pagoda all reflect the marriage of thousands of years of Chinese civilizations and technological advancement in modern cities. As a city, Xi'an tells the ongoing stories of the Silk Road where civilizations across the world exchange and co-exist. (The Shaanxi Tourism Board, 2022)

> The Silk Road is essentially the paths followed by Muslims for their pilgrimage to Mecca. Do you know why? All these important Muslim sites such as shrines are covered on the map of the Silk Road. Therefore, Chinese Muslims like us [the Hui people in Xi'an] are especially important. We are the living evidence of cultural and religious exchanges between China and other countries. (Interview, Imam Wang, 2017)

11.1 Introduction

These two quotes reveal deep connections between the ancient Silk Road and Xi'an, the capital city of Shaanxi in northwestern China. Both quotes highlight the history of exchanges between cultures and communities, but these accounts anchored the basis of interactions differently. The Shaanxi province's official narratives in tourism promotion address the role of Xi'an as a key city reflecting the history of the Silk Road and also guiding the city's future as a global city to facilitate cultural exchanges. In contrast, Imam Wang's claims of Xi'an as a crucial Silk Road city prioritize the impact of religion and religious communities in keeping China relevant to the Silk Road's geographies. Both narratives engage the Silk Road as a repertoire of diverse cultural and religious influences from different parts of Asia and their encounters in China. Therefore, despite these rationales being distinct,

Y. Yang (✉)
Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: yang-yang@nus.edu.sg

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they contribute to making Xi'an a global city of the Silk Road by imagining the Silk Road-based heritage in ways that address their different priorities such as city branding and promoting the minority groups' interest that has been neglected by the state authorities.

This chapter focuses on a wide range of city makers, such as the city government and various members of the Hui community and how they co-produce an image of a multicultural Silk Road in urban spaces in Xi'an. In this context, city makers are not limited to policymakers with authority from the local and central governments or transnational organizations. Minority populations such as the Hui Muslims also become actively involved in reinforcing the Silk Road's centrality in urban development in Xi'an. Their experiences and aspirations as ethno-religious minorities offer different perceptions that define the meanings of diversity. Within the Hui community, members with various degrees of affinity with the local state authorities also have their own ways of engaging the Silk Road discourse. Thus, members of the Hui community adopt various approaches in response to the state's use of diversity as a strategy to exclude ethnic and religious minorities through ostensibly inclusive urban development policies. By comparing the diverse implications of Silk Road-based urban development policies with the Hui community's experiences, this chapter interrogates the interplay between exclusion and inclusion in urban governance. Specifically, it considers how the Hui experience both marginalization and symbolic inclusion as ethnic and religious minorities within cultural heritage development programs. City making thus becomes a space of encounters wherein an array of actors within marginalized groups and local state authorities makes the discourse of multiculturalism relevant to their own interests in ethno-religious identity politics. In Xi'an, the city government utilizes Silk Road-based heritage in urban development projects to emphasize a multicultural discourse of diversity in the historic contexts of the Tang Dynasty (618 — 907 CE). Moreover, the city's past was primarily engaged to perform diversity to serve the needs of the present and the future. Thus, city makers, including the nation state, the city government, and the Hui community, draw on the ambiguity of the Silk Road's history to reimagine multiple versions of the cultural diversity and inclusivity on the historic Silk Road. These different imaginations of the Silk Road's temporalities thus reflect the power dynamics between these different city makers, particularly the exclusionary nature of promoting minority communities as heritage within cultural diversity narratives.

This chapter engages scholarship on urban diversity to show how it is translated to development policies in authoritarian contexts in Asian cities. In particular, multiculturalism's definitions and implications manifest differently in authoritarian contexts whereby liberal democracy is not involved in promoting ethnocultural diversity. This scenario is in contrast to that in European and North American liberal states. Urban diversity is thus important for understanding multiculturalism in both contexts, as urban policies and diversity-related projects reflect the state's vision by materializing it in urban spaces. In European cities, it predominantly underscores the centrality of diversity and identity politics in the European Union (Arapoglou, 2012; Raco, 2018). Raco claims that urban diversity has been predominantly used as a strategy to improve socio-cultural diversity as a response to the changing

demographics caused by new waves of migration like refugees in European cities (2018). Although diversity is a priority in policymaking, less is known about how it is represented, mobilized, and implemented by various governing institutions. Moreover, the scale of these processes has received less attention. This chapter thus addresses the importance of the multi-scalar approach of understanding diversity as governance through looking at the discourses of the Silk Road-based heritage at the scales of transnational, national, and local. Rather than simply examining heritage-based diversity discourses from the perspective of the majority communities, this chapter highlights the complexity in the governance of urban diversity within minority communities. Specifically, by comparing different responses to the Silk Road within the Hui community, this chapter examines the connections between China's transnational Silk Road-based diplomacy in Muslim-majority countries and the local urban development projects that target minority communities.

China's connections with the Muslim world, particularly its selective representation of certain Muslim populations in diplomacy, are crucial components of its official discourse on both the historic and the new Silk Roads (Bianchi, 2017). However, China's Muslim-friendly image, curated in the official discourse of the Silk Road, is in contrast to its domestic politics on governing ethnic minorities. While China's narratives about Silk Road-based cultural heritage at the transnational scale shape the direction of local-scale urban policies, they do not fit seamlessly with how the Silk Road and its implications for diversity manifest locally. Hence, a multi-scalar approach emphasizes the similarities and differences between narratives at different scales and their mutual influence on each other.

Urban policies that manage ethno-religious communities are often closely aligned with state efforts to promote multiculturalism, especially acknowledging how ethnic minorities are crucial in fostering ethnic integration through cultural heritage. State authorities also celebrate minority communities as evidence of past cultural exchanges in urban heritage conservation. Therefore, the histories of ethno-religious minorities have become instrumental for state authorities in endorsing existing policies that govern ethnic and religious diversities. In addition, heritage sites related to ethnic and religious minorities have economic incentives to be developed as tourist attractions. They have made valuable contributions to the local economy, especially through heritage tourism-led urban development (Zhu, 2021). Meanwhile, the participation of ethno-religious minority communities in heritage conservation and tourism-based activities is also framed as part of urban policies to improve the livelihood of minority communities, especially for poverty alleviation (Oakes, 2019). Therefore, cultural heritage is central to urban policies that focus on diversity as it is closely connected to ethnic and religious minorities, especially in how it can be used to promote minority cultures as assets of a city's multicultural heritage.

In the context of Asian cities, policymakers not only consider successful examples of culture-led urban development from North America and Europe but also cities within Asia which have pioneered implementing cultural cities locally (Wang et al., 2016). Cultural cities in Asia not only provide capital accumulation through gentrification but also offer tools of governance. Culture-led urban development in

China has mushroomed as a successful model of generating new opportunities for real estate-based development. Consequently, marginalized communities such as migrant laborers have become deeply involved in the development of cultural districts through displacement (He & Wang, 2019). Within cities, the Chinese government can realize its vision of rendering ethnic minorities visible and hence governable through spatial practices. Urban housing projects have become a tool to "fix" nomadic minorities in place as a solution for poverty alleviation (Yeh, 2016). In other cases, urban theming engages culture to feature the "uniqueness" of ethnic minorities to reinforce the differences between the Han and non-Han minorities (Oakes, 2019). Visualizing "cultural" differences hence consolidates ethnic hierarchies that center the Han majority as the key reference for other minority groups. Alongside urban theming, public space in these newly developed ethnic cities are the new site where the degree of being "civilized" as urban citizens is equated to the degree of non-Han minorities' integration into the Han-dominant society.

The following sections examine the relationship between cultural heritage and multiculturalism in city making. Notably, a wide range of city makers, ranging from the city government to elite members of the Hui community, interpret the Silk Road's multicultural discourse in myriad ways. These different interpretations of diversity in the Silk Road's context reflect their political and economic interests concerning other related issues such as expressions of the Hui's Muslim identity. By analyzing how diversity is translated into urban policies at different scales, this chapter argues that discrepancies in diversity narratives create a space where various city makers pursue competing and conflicting objectives. Specifically, multicultural Silk Road-based heritage enables state authorities to assert their power in limiting the mobility of ethno-religious minorities. Meanwhile, the Hui community's different members use the diversity discourse to articulate their interests in expressing their ethnic and religious identities, which are beyond the Chinese state-centered framing of ethnicity and religion. Diversity is hence mobilized to reinforce inclusion and exclusion at the same time.

This chapter draws on ethnographic accounts from long-term fieldwork conducted in Xi'an's Hui community since 2013. Participant observations and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a wide range of actors, including members of the Hui community, the city government's officials, and other interlocutors such as scholars and practitioners in the tourism industry. This chapter also draws on archival references on the Silk Road in the local urban policies, especially projects on building historical cultural cities.

11.2 Xi'an as a Silk Road City

Located in northwestern China, Xi'an is the capital city of Shaanxi province and was known as the imperial capital of ancient dynasties such as the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) and the Tang (618–907 CE). Xi'an has been central to the Chinese government's development plans for the northwestern region. Prior to

2013, when China officially launched its most recent transnational infrastructure-based development plans known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Xi'an played a crucial role in the Communist government's development campaigns, including the First Five Year Plan (1953–1957), the Third Front (1964–1980), and the 'Open Up the West' campaign (2000–present). While these campaigns focused on different aims during the socialist and post-socialist eras, Xi'an and the Northwest were fantasized as a 'virgin land' crucial for national defense and as a promising land for future economic development due to their connection to the Silk Road (Tai, 2015). Because the Silk Road has long been part of the Communist government's development discourse, the local Xi'an government also began to utilize the myth of the Silk Road in the late 1980s.

When the BRI was first introduced as the New Silk Road in 2013 by the Chinese government, in the domestic and transnational contexts, infrastructure development ranging from power plants to railways were planned or implemented within the maps of the historic Silk Roads in Asia and Europe (Miao, 2021; Tritto & Camba, 2022). China's global economic and political influences have expanded alongside these infrastructure projects beyond the territorial and maritime routes of the historic Silk Road, reaching countries in South America and Africa (Oliveira & Myers, 2020; Xiao, 2022). The Silk Road in Xi'an has had a long history before the Belt and Road Initiatives. During the late 1980s and 1990s, the Silk Road was primarily packaged by the provincial government of Shaanxi and the city government of Xi'an as a key theme in its promotion of domestic and international tourism. The Tang Dynasty capital Chang'an was a major feature in promotional videos and brochures. The Silk Road, especially the image of desert-crossing camel-riding caravans from Arabia and Persia, was mostly a secondary theme to the branding of Xi'an as an "ancient capital with a rich history and culture" (*lishi wenhua gudu*) that preserved evidence of cultural exchanges between the Tang and other empires. During the 1990s and early 2000s, local academics and tourism professionals criticized the outdated approach to tourism development, arguing that it lacked innovation in marketing Xi'an's history. This critique can be summarized with a commonly circulated joke mocking the itineraries of local historic and cultural-oriented tours as "nothing fun but visiting the ancient temples during the day and dozing off at night" (*baitian kan gumiao, wanshang shui dajiao*) (Interview 2016).

Since the early 2000s, as a consequence of cultural cities' popularity in China, the Silk Road has already expanded beyond tourism development to urban development policies. The historic Silk Road and its related policy were not directly linked to Xi Jinping's new Silk Road project until the initiation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013. The Xi'an city government transitioned to BRI-based cultural projects after the central government launched the new national initiatives. Xi'an has gained recognition internationally through its designation as UNESCO heritage site pertaining to its central location on the historic Silk Road. Notably, Xi'an has multiple heritage sites included in the collaborative list "Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor." More importantly, the reference to Chang'an in the project's title also has significantly endorsed Xi'an as an important anchor point on the historic Silk Road. Thus, to build on the momentum of

UNESCO's recognition, the city government of Xi'an has started incorporating Silk Road-based cultural narratives and symbols in local urban planning. From the campaign of "building a reputable historical and cultural city" (*jianshe lishi wenhua mingcheng*) to the BRI development plan (2017–2050), Xi'an has been showcased as the posterchild of both historical and contemporary versions of the Silk Road. For example, the legacy of the Tang capital Chang'an—the vibrant hubs of trade and cultural changes on the historic Silk Road—has been referenced to prove that Xi'an is capable of developing into an economically and culturally competitive global city (National Development and Reform Commission, 2021).

Among different sites associated with the historic Silk Road, the Muslim Quarter and its history of culture-based urban development have been especially crucial for understanding different types of city makers within the minority community and their involvement in creating the multicultural discourse of the Silk Road in Xi'an. Located in the historic downtown, the Muslim Quarter is not only the home of roughly 30,000 Hui residents, the densely populated area of approximately one square mile is also frequented by an increasing number of non-local and local visitors that peak at 100,000 during holidays. Due to its popularity with tourists and prime location, the Muslim Quarter has long been the target of the Xi'an city government's urban renewal plans. Since the early 1990s, urban renewal plans in the historic downtown have been aimed at featuring a consistent architectural style, including representative elements such as maroon façades and golden roof tiles that invoke visual characteristics suggesting the landscape of the Tang capital Chang'an. The city government, especially the urban planning and tourism development bureaus, has long seen the Muslim Quarter as an "eyesore" for its "unhygienic, disorderly, and less developed" environment (*zang, luan, cha*) (Gillette, 2000). Notably, government authorities find the Muslim Quarter incompatible with the vision of beautifying the historic downtown in the Tang style, especially the mix of low-rise residential buildings and shops built in various architectural styles. The Muslim Quarter's 'disorderly' look, along with the lack of infrastructure, including running water and electricity, has made it a constant target for demolition. The city government in Xi'an has already demolished and replaced some of the streets in the Muslim Quarter regardless of its popularity with tourists and locals due to the affordable and flavorful halal food and the unique Chinese-Islamic architectural style. For instance, in 2005, the original food street, Barley Market Street (*damaishi jie*), was replaced by an officially designated food street in another part of the Muslim Quarter. Residential and commercial networks surrounding the original food street were disrupted due to the demolition and relocating of residents in the renewed areas. The new food street was created by demolishing older houses and shops, with new design features such as light grey tiled roofing and walls as well as crimson wood-like pillars. This redevelopment aligned well with the city government's vision of the Tang capital's architectural landscape. Despite echoing the historic downtown's overall theming, the Muslim Quarter has not been included by the city government as part of the city's official narratives of the Silk Road. This was partially due to the lack of official recognition by UNESCO in the Chang'an-Tianshan project. Given the ongoing tensions between the Hui community and the

local government over urban renewal issues, local government authorities have been wary of their delicate relationship between the Hui community and hence intentionally shying away from featuring Islam and the Muslim community as a primary component of the Silk Road-based heritage. However, the Hui community does not avoid the Silk Road discourse but actively engages it to promote the Hui's crucial significance to the Silk Road's heritage making.

11.3 The Silk Road as a Multi-Scalar Heritage on the Ground

Silk Road-based heritage, especially the visualization of the historic Silk Road, is crucial for city makers, including both local government authorities and members of the Hui Muslim community, in articulating their own definitions of diversity. For instance, a commonly used image in the discourses of the Silk Road is that of a group of traveling Arab and Persian merchants. It is widely used in not only promotional materials of governmentally sponsored cultural and tourism programs, but also in commercials where the Silk Road is packaged as a consumable version of the past. In both governmental and non-governmental narratives, Arab and Persian visitors aspire to learn more about the Chinese civilization that they admire from afar. Hence, they travel all the way from far and deserted lands to China, which highlights the imperial China's crucial role in facilitating cultural exchanges in the local narratives of the Silk Road-based heritage. In this context, diversity is largely framed through the influence of non-Han Chinese groups along the Silk Road routes. This is exemplified in the governmentally commissioned group sculpture of the Silk Road in Xi'an. The group sculpture features a caravan of three Persian and three Tang merchants in Xi'an, China (see Fig. 11.1). Compared to their Tang-era Chinese counterparts, Persian merchants are depicted with distinct physical features. Their exotic physical features— including their facial hair and deep-set eyes, accompanied by their different sartorial styles like turbans and skullcaps—are visual cues that indicate that the Silk Road is an ensemble of diverse peoples and cultures coexisting and learning from each other. As part of the Silk Road ensemble, these Arab and Persian merchants signify the inclusiveness and open-mindedness along these historic trade routes within the geographies of the Silk Road, especially cultural and economic exchanges at crucial anchors such as the Tang capital of Chang'an. These merchants' differences from Han Chinese are crucial contributions to the discourse of diversity in visual representations of the Silk Road. Rather than being potential threats to the Chinese empire, the Persian travelers and the camels—both being non-native to China—are necessary to setting the scene of adventuring in unknown and exotic lands along the Silk Road. The wide range of natural landscapes such as deserts and the incorporating of foreign men and non-native animals represent a form of tamable unfamiliarity that helps to champion China's victory in conquering the harsh terrains that constitute the Silk Road. For the Chinese artists, these figures' unfamiliarity and distance from the Han

Fig. 11.1 One of the Persian merchants featured in the group sculpture of the Silk Road in Xi'an, China

Chinese-dominant society do not imply unknown threats and dangers unless they are situated in a China-centered narrative of the historic Silk Road.

Similarly, for narratives at the national level, the Silk Road's multicultural heritage draws on the traveling Muslim merchants to specifically promote food-based heritage. Halal food, especially halal versions of regional Chinese cuisines, has become instrumental for the Chinese state to promote the diversity of regional cuisines in China. For instance, spices including cumin, cloves, and cardamon are often seen as products brought by Arab and Persian merchants to China over the Silk Road's territorial route. This imagination of the historic Silk Road, especially the romanticization of the Silk Road as peaceful routes filled with precious goods such as spices and silk, has also been translated into the contemporary context. Hui Muslim cuisine, as a part of China's halal food culture, has never been portrayed as separate from Chinese cuisine in official Silk Road discourse. In contrast, their food's differences in ingredients and flavor profiles are part and parcel of the multicultural constituents of the Silk Road that takes on cultural influences from elsewhere while being deeply rooted in the Chinese culture. The Hui Muslims, who practice these culinary traditions as part of their daily lives, have thus been included as part of China's multicultural history of the Silk Road. For the Hui Muslims, to be included as part of China's multicultural heritage of the Silk Road is to confine their differences from the Han Chinese, especially their faith in Islam, within the context of food, as an example of many forms of non-Chinese cultural influences brought by other parts of the Silk Road. Thus, among other Muslim minorities in China, the Hui can only remain "unfamiliar" and "different" from the Han majority if their

differences are expedient for the Chinese state. For many Han majorities in Xi'an, the Hui Muslims are familiar and not dangerous primarily in settings that involve preparing and consuming food. Hui Muslims thus gain visibility in curated spaces, where they are portrayed as descendants of Arab and Persian merchants, preserving cultural traditions shaped by ancient Chinese, Arabian, and Persian influences. For example, Hui Muslims in Xi'an have been featured by the Chinese Central Television in the well-received food heritage documentary *A Bite of China* (*She jian shang de zhong guo*). Hui Muslim men, in particular, have been predominantly featured as both chefs, service crew members, and patrons in some Hui-owned restaurants in the Muslim Quarter. The Hui chefs are often cast alone in the kitchen (Fig. 11.2), quietly preparing the ingredients and focusing on the craft of achieving the balanced flavors and textures in dishes such as the mutton soup with flatbread. Much like their historic counterparts from the group sculpture, the Hui Muslims as chefs are assigned with specific visual cues for their characters. Rather than being portrayed like the other urbanites such as tourists and local visitors, the Muslim Quarter's Hui Muslims tend to be less fashionable in their styles but mostly dressing in plain and practical outfits mostly for manual labor and house chores. A typical male Hui chef often appears slightly chubby, with white skullcaps and plain colored outfits covered with heavily washed aprons. Even when the Hui chefs are featured in the documentary as key protagonists, they are often part of the overarching narratives on the Halal food in the Muslim Quarter as China and the Silk Road's evidence of diversity and inclusivity. Their personal narratives predominantly surround how they find their passion for perfecting the traditional recipes of the Hui cuisine as part of their responsibilities to pass on their family traditions and preserve their Hui heritage. While the Hui Muslims do not seem to be very distant from the Han Chinese as they are Chinese speaking and well versed in the local society's protocols, they remain cast by the official narrative as being different and exotic due to their compatibility

Fig. 11.2 A Hui chef from the Muslim Quarter in Xi'an in "A Bite of China"

with presenting a multicultural heritage of the Silk Road. In addition to Hui chefs, other Hui residents in the Muslim Quarter featured in the documentary as primarily customers who enjoy their comfort food with friends and family. This portrayal overlaps with a Han-centered ethnic hierarchy, where non-Han minorities such as the Hui are often compared to the Han as being less sophisticated. It also overlaps with the local non-Muslims' gendered stereotypes of the Hui in Xi'an. In particular, Hui men are often perceived as less educated and not willing to engage in jobs beyond their "traditional" occupations in the food industry. Their expertise in cooking and running food-related business is interpreted as "backwardness" that prevents them from being more integrated into the Han-dominant society. The Hui's unfamiliarity, while being presented as assets of the Silk Road's diversity in official discourses of the Silk Road at the national and international levels, remains being predominantly shaped by the Han majority. This can thus be captured by a common derogatory saying that goes, "Their food is palatable. Their words are not quite there yet." ("*Fan haochi, hua nanting*."). The second part of the expression touches on not only the Hui words and phrases that are not easily understood by non-Hui people, but also the gap between the Hui community's interest and the Han-dominant society. Such narratives have also been prevalent in cases associated with the local city government's plan to implement urban renewal projects in the historic downtown district. Hui community's members have been resisting the city government's plan to demolish their residential area for being "dilapidated and lacking in sufficient infrastructure." These so-called "average looking" Hui Muslims and their gatherings have thus become a threat to the local government's authority in this context. In this light, in spite of the Hui community's contribution to the city's tourism development, they remain excluded from the city government's process of designing specific ways of presenting cultural diversity in a Silk Road city like Xi'an.

Lastly, the Hui community's various members participate in the city making process differently. Their varied ways of city making can be seen in their approaches to promoting cultural diversity in the Silk Road discourse. The differences lie in how much the Hui community's members engage the national and local governments' official discourses according to their own interests. For the elite members of the Hui community, they actively participate in endorsing the city government's agenda on branding diversity as part of the Silk Road city plan. Ranging from merchants to ethnically Hui civil servants in various governmental bureaus at provincial and municipal levels, the Hui community's elite members are well-versed in the official narratives of the Silk Road, especially the city government's vision of using the Silk Road as a cultural resource to stand out in its inter-urban competition with other cities. They thus approach diversity along the official lines without compromising their own interests in showcasing the Hui heritage differently from the more Han-centric perspective on the Silk Road. Rather than solely highlighting the non-Chinese origins of the Silk Road-based heritage, Hui elites anchor their own heritage, especially their distinctions from the Han-based cultural practices, in the place making of Xi'an. Notably, the Hui heritage's unique characteristics, specifically the integration of cultural influences from Muslim communities in Central and West Asia with the local Chinese cultural practices, are presented as the outcome of

"planting the seeds in the compatible soil and climate (*Tianshi dili*)" (Interview 2016). Seeing the Tang imperial capital as representing the ideal conditions where the Hui heritage started aligns well with the city government's interests of branding Xi'an as an indispensable place along the Silk Road. This approach is especially prevalent among Hui businesspeople, who engage the Silk Road's diversity discourse on cultural exchanges in the context of food and beverages industry. Emerging halal gelato-style ice cream parlors and traditional Hui pastry shops in the Muslim Quarter have heavily appropriated the notions of fusing Chinese traditions and non-Chinese influences. They not only refer to the Tang dynasty as a temporal framing of their food's diverse cultural origins, they also see the importance of highlighting the Tang capital's crucial role in shaping the unique flavors and culinary approaches. As Sulayman Ma, owner of the most popular halal ice cream shops, indicates, they were initially inspired by the history of consuming shaved ice-based desserts during summer days in the Tang dynasty. Rather than only linking ice cream, especially gelato, to Western countries such as Italy, Mr. Ma and his team decided to showcase the deep cultural roots in Xi'an, especially the culinary influences from cultures and communities outside China as the result of the Silk Road. Mr. Ma sees Hui's ancestries from Arabia and Persia as their Silk Road-based heritage, recognizing their capacity for bridging cultural differences by turning them into inspirations for culinary creativities (Interview 2016). "If our ancestors can make a classic Persian soup suitable for the local appetites back then, we can definitely see us Hui people making ice cream more suitable for those who are more comfortable with conventional Chinese desserts," Ma claimed when explaining why the Hui heritage allows for more creativity and potentially more business opportunities. His vision overlaps with the local government's portrayal of Muslims as foreign and exotic travelers. In this light, Halal ice cream owned by the Hui represents the results of cultural exchanges, specifically in the origins of the food and its exotic ingredients and techniques brought by Arab and Persian traders to Chang'an. The marketing of the Halal gelato-style ice cream also draws on the Silk Road-based framing by connecting it to the historically recorded Tang dessert called "Bing Lao." Ma's example of branding a halal ice cream as casting light on the past reflects a common approach of city making engaged by the Hui elites. Specifically, the Hui elites justify the Hui's non-Chinese ancestry as fitting in a multicultural Silk Road city like Xi'an. Diversity in their approach is primarily located in the past version of Xi'an, namely the Tang capital of Chang'an. The Hui's differences from the Han majority, in this context, have been turned into a major advantage in recreating the diverse food heritage from the historic Silk Road.

Religious leaders in the Hui community, especially those who have received state recognized credentials in conducting religious events, also actively participate in showcasing Xi'an as the essence of the Silk Road's diversity and inclusivity. Similar to the Hui businesspeople, state-recognized religious leaders see the central and regional governments' enthusiasm in sustaining hype over the Silk Road as opportunities to make more space for the Hui community's interests in Xi'an without directly confronting the Chinese state's position on managing Muslim populations and their faith in Islam. However, they are wary that the insufficient

representation of Islam in state narratives of the Silk Road cannot be changed completely. Thus, to tap into the state discourse, they need to use the government's official narratives to justify why the Hui and their faith matter to the Silk Road narratives on diversity and inclusivity. In Xi'an, religious leaders juggle securing the existing space for expressing their faith and keeping up with the local government's policies on using the Silk Road as a form of urban branding for potential financial resources. Religious leaders hence participate in the official itineraries for visitors from Muslim majority countries, especially offering guided tours for foreign officials, entrepreneurs, and scholars in mosques in the Muslim Quarter. Imams with foreign language skills in Arabic, Persian, and English often play the role of translators to partially facilitate communications across different languages. The Hui religious leaders are also used by regional governments as gestures to show their hospitality to these Muslim visitors, especially to show their capacity for understanding how to make the Muslim visitors feel at home by making local Muslims as the point of contacts. For local religious leaders like Imam Wang, the nature of hosting foreign visitors from Muslim majority countries is part of a highly curated image of the Chinese state's diversity. Yet, they choose to "play along" (*peihe*) so that they can maintain their daily religious activities. This is implicitly compared to the Uyghur's situation as hinted on the fact that "we would not want to end up like 'them'" (Interview, Imam Wang 2017).

In contrast to these more elite members of the Hui community, average Hui residents in the Muslim Quarter are less able to capitalize on the exclusionary diversity discourse of the Silk Road city. While the city government promotes the multicultural image of the Silk Road, everyday discriminations targeting the Hui remain prevalent, in spite of the Muslim Quarter's popularity among both locals and tourists for its food and architectural heritage. Since the 2000s, the city government has considered the residential buildings in the Muslim Quarter incompatible with the overall architectural style in the old downtown of Xi'an. Ongoing tensions between Muslim residents and the city government are centered on the government's agenda of renewing the Muslim Quarter's residential area to keep up with the overall theming style in the rest of the historic downtown. Due to the Hui residents' ongoing resistance to demolition, the city government has shifted the focus to lifting the look of these old buildings. As a result, the façades of these old buildings must conform to standardized city government designs, particularly regarding shop sign colors and fonts.. Given these façade improvement projects have mostly been for promoting Silk Road heritage, Hui residents whose houses face the streets have no choice but to allow the local government to send renovation teams to work on their units. As their memories of the potential demolition in the 1990s remain, the constant concerns over potential displacement are relevant to many Hui residents in the Muslim Quarter. Their ways of city making are closely related to their everyday negotiations with local state authorities in defending their residential space. The Hui community's different approaches of making Xi'an a crucial city on the Silk Road vary significantly based on these individuals' relationships with the local state authorities and their capacity to reimagine the state narratives of the Silk Road alongside the Hui community's economic and political interests. While ordinary

Hui residents in the Muslim Quarter are excluded by the local state authorities in more explicit ways, the Hui elites do not get more included in the Han-dominant Silk Road discourses because they have to perform in line with the Chinese state's expectations for ethno-religious minorities.

11.4 City Making under Conditions of Inclusive Exclusions

From the city government's perspective, differences are necessary for creating the narratives of cultural inclusivity, especially ones that can enhance the city's multicultural image. Differences, notably in non-Han Chinese cultures, are crucial for contextualizing local urban policies' emphases on diversity and inclusivity, especially in displaying the past of the Tang capital as a projection of the city's future as a cosmopolitan global city. Diversity and inclusivity, phrased as *Duoyuanbaorong*, are specifically framed as part of the Silk Road-based heritage closely linked to the Tang Dynasty. Notably, the city government of Xi'an has extensively capitalized on historical narratives of Chang'an, specifically as the Tang Dynasty's imperial capital, to develop cultural zones (*wenhua qu*). For instance, in the planning document of the historically famous cultural city (*lishi wenhua mingcheng guihua*), the preservation of the historic sites and landscape in the Muslim Quarter primarily emphasizes the surrounding area of mosques (The Xi'an Municipal Government, 2010). Preserving the 10 mosques in the Muslim Quarter as cultural heritage, according to the urban planning document, is consistent with the government's vision of preserving Hui ethnic traditions. The document specifically highlights the role of residential units surrounding the mosques as part of the Hui residential tradition of living within the proximity of mosques. In renewing and preserving the Muslim Quarter, the city government aims to provide the residents with more technical support in preserving the traditional architecture of Hui houses. To achieve the preservation of the historical city's "multicultural characteristics" (*gucheng duoyuanhua de wenhua*), the plan envisions a uniformly designed and planned renewal process to be overseen and executed by the city government while coordinating with the residents to address their needs in the process of preserving heritage (The Xi'an Municipal Government, 2010). While the city government aims to emphasize multicultural heritage in promoting a historical cultural city based on the Tang capital Chang'an, their emphasis on uniformity in urban designs imposes an exclusionary view of the diversity within the Hui community's urban landscape. In the residential spaces of the Hui, buildings constructed in different times present different architectural styles, especially modern reflecting the changing needs of the Hui in these residential compounds. A uniformly designed historical look thus reflects the city government's selective vision of how multicultural heritage should be presented. Rather than seeing the everyday lives of the Hui as being part of the historical city's multicultural assets, the city government sees the mundane everyday landscapes of the Muslim Quarter as chaotic and inconsistent with the city's overall theme. The city government's vision on diversity and inclusivity in city making echoes the central

government's approach to other cities with a significant number of Muslim populations. For instance, the central government has appointed Yinchuan, the capital city of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, to host the annual China-Arab State Forum from 2018. Since 2016, large scale urban development projects have been implemented by the city government of Yinchuan to feature a uniformly designed architecture style that took references from Taj Mahal and the Blue Mosque in Turkey (Haddad-Fonda, 2016). Most of these architectural symbols are employed in sites such as the Hui Cultural Park to attract visitors as a site of its multicultural history.

In addition to the city and central governments, other actors such as academics and artists are involved in defining diversity and inclusivity in urban policies. Specifically, academics in fields such as history and architecture are heavily involved in materializing the imagination of the imperial capital Chang'an using their expertise. Some of them are invited by the local government as consultants to come up with both cultural narratives and symbols that contribute to making a convincing image for Xi'an as a Silk Road city. As some historians from local research institutes and universities claim, they are invited to be consultants on the expert committees for the city government to offer critical perspectives on potential plans of urban development in Xi'an. Rather than just simply endorsing the city government's plans, the historians and other scholars should engage their expertise related to the Silk Road in fields including History and Cultural Studies to scrutinize whether the city government's narratives on the Silk Road are factually sound. Heated debates over issues, including symbols of the Silk Road and the portrayals of the cosmopolitan Tang capital in urban renewal projects, happen during meetings with city government officials. According to Dr. Zhang, an archaeologist who has served as the city government's consultant, recalls that the city government does indeed take constructive feedback from the academics on choices concerning visual representations of the Tang capital Chang'an, especially tourism promotional materials on social media (Interview 2016). Yet, critical voices are not received well if they touch on the fundamental narratives in the official discourse formulated by the central government. Recalling a discussion on the geography of the Silk Road at a consultation meeting, Dr. Zhang suggests that the historians and archaeologists all brought up the problematic mapping of the Silk Road with clearly defined routes, namely the maritime and territorial ones. "We all know that the Silk Road was formulated over time as the result of many different trade routes, not something clearly defined like today's highways. But it does not align with the government's vision, especially because a more diffused route undermines the role of Xi'an" (Interview 2016). Zhang's comment reflects the city government's conditional open-mindedness towards a less China-centric perspective of the Silk Road. In city making in Xi'an, while scholars are given opportunities to push for more historically nuanced representations of the Silk Road in the local urban policies, the city government's agenda to center the crucial role of Xi'an on the Silk Road remains unchallenged. Similarly, scholars involved in the discussions on the potential branding of the Muslim Quarter mention the limitation of not being able to center the role of religion in the formulation of the Hui community. This is consistent with the central government's attitude towards minority communities in promoting the Silk Road. Minority communities

are only cast in the light that favors the Chinese state's interest in imposing authority over ethnic and religious affairs. The Muslim Quarter is thus more promoted as a historical cultural district for tourists to experience the hustle and bustle of the everyday multicultural experiences since the Tang Dynasty. The Hui community's history in the Qing dynasty, especially the Hui Revolt during the Tongzhi Era (1862–1877 CE), has intentionally been left out as it directly points out the tensions between the Hui and Han residents during that time (Interview 2015).

11.5 Framing Diversity as Urban Policies in a Multiscalar Silk Road City

In summary, city making is a form of inclusive exclusion in the branding of Xi'an as a Silk Road city. Specifically, looking at how the Hui Muslim community have become cultural symbols of diversity in the discourse of the Silk Road reveals the specific forms of accepted diversity presented and endorsed by the governments at the national and regional levels. State-curated diversity is instrumental for the city government in pushing forward their agenda on promoting the multicultural aspects of the Silk Road and how Xi'an embodies the same approach after its predecessor Chang'an in the Tang Dynasty. Inclusivity in the city making presents minority communities like the Hui as evidence of the government's approach to diversity in developing a cultural city. Hence, Hui elites find opportunities to appropriate state discourses on the Silk Road as a multicultural space, in line with their interests in attracting more opportunities for their businesses and maintaining their existing space of religious expressions. Compared to other city makers involved in producing a Silk Road city in Xi'an, the Hui community's interactions with the regional government highlight the central role of diversity at the intersection between the state and society in city making, especially when marginalized communities are targeted for urban development.

In the process of making Xi'an a legitimate Silk Road city, a wide range of city makers, ranging from the city government to experts who offer consulting services for policy makers, engage a multi-scalar approach in defining diversity and inclusivity of the Silk Road in the city of Xi'an. Specifically, the central government's vision of diversity in the Muslim minorities' context largely reflects the Chinese government's strategy of fostering diplomatic relations with Muslim majority countries. This vision, alongside the national initiative on the Silk Road, was soon picked up by city makers at the regional level, specifically the city government in Xi'an. Hence, the framing the Silk Road's diversity on the city scale reflects not only the exercise of the state power but also the local state authorities' agenda of capitalizing on the Muslim Quarter as its multicultural heritage. Similarly, even local city makers, such as Hui businesspeople, incorporate the Chinese state's curation of a China-centered Silk Road into their marketing strategy to make their businesses appealing not only to tourists but also to the local government. The transnational image of a

multicultural Silk Road is thus translated into tangible aspects of locally embedded cultural heritage. Local Muslim food is a case in point. This echoes the processes of multi-scalar city making in which different scales, ranging from the local to the supranational, are mutually constitutive and interconnected through the circulation of power and expression of different city makers' agency (Çaglar & Schiller, 2018). Rather than positioning different city makers hierarchically, this multi-scalar approach of city making allows for the unpacking of the complex power dynamics within the process of city branding in Xi'an. As the Silk Road can be imagined by different city makers on a wide range of scales, a Silk Road city is thus more than just the reimagining of a city. Rather, a Silk Road city is an assemblage of different city makers' imaginations of the Silk Road's diversity in urban spaces for heritage preservation.

Furthermore, diversity, especially cultural diversity in the Silk Road context, was largely associated with the distance between the Hui Muslims and the Han Chinese. However, this has proven to be exclusionary, as the Hui Muslims have already experienced having less room for negotiations with the local government for their community's interests. While diversity has largely been visualized in not only popular culture but also the urban built environment, urban policies aimed at the Hui have not improved in spite of the national government's interest in boosting diversity as part of the Silk Road diplomacy. The exclusionary nature of the Silk Road's diversity discourse is translated into the local government's vision of unifying the architectural designs in districts such as the Muslim Quarter to convey a consistent narrative of the Silk Road. The emphasis on a top-down vision does not align with the image of the Tang capital of Chang'an as a place where different cultures interacted and integrated into new formations. The exclusionary diversity in the city making in Xi'an addresses the impact of authoritarianism in urban policy making, specifically when "fragmented authoritarianism" opens up more space for actors that used to be excluded from participating in policymaking to be involved (Mertha, 2009). In particular, the central government's policies have become much more flexible for regional-level governmental organizations and actors that have recently entered the circuit of policymaking to interpret within specific local contexts. Specifically, these new actors, ranging from non-governmental organizations to journalists and editors in state-approved media, strategically work within the Chinese government's framing without directly confronting the state authorities (*Ibid*). The fragmentation of authoritarian policy making, as illustrated in the case of Xi'an, offers some space for changes to be made, particularly in the experiences of the Hui elites. Yet, their attempts to shape Xi'an as a diverse and inclusive multicultural city remain predominantly confined to the central government's narratives of the Silk Road. Similarly, actors such as experts of Silk Road-related studies take a similar stand in participating in local urban policymaking. They carefully offer critical voices while refraining from challenging the overall framing of the Silk Road narratives envisioned by the central government. Hence, in spite of the penetrable characteristic of the local urban policy in branding the Silk Road city, the authority of the central and local governments remains significantly unchallenged. Diversity, as either the concept of multicultural heritage or the inclusion of members

from minority communities in heritage preservation, only opens a limited space for non-state city makers that are granted access to the policymaking process.

As the Hui community is simultaneously partially included and excluded from the city making process, their immediate future moving forwards remains a crucial question. As their growing economic opportunities are closely tied to the local government's interest in using the Muslim Quarter to boost the tourism economy, their participation in shaping the direction of development in the Muslim Quarter is limited to the context of cultural heritage and tourism. While the city government has promoted the Muslim Quarter and the city of Xi'an on social media, the portrayal of the Muslim Quarter and other heritage sites has been increasingly shaped by social media preferences (Zhang et al., 2022; Cao, 2024). These emerging opportunities, including live streaming and vlogging, also allow members from the Hui community to tap into the process of city making from the grassroots. Yet, the overall state surveillance over China's cyberspace remains, creating limitations in the content of live streaming and other online activities. Therefore, while the Hui community remains active in pushing boundaries by articulating their own multicultural heritage in the context of the Silk Road, the extent to which they can express a Hui ethno-religious identity distinct from the state's discourse on multiculturalism still depends on the Chinese government's national-level agenda for managing ethnic minorities.

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Chapter 12
Organising the Reception of Exiles in the Centre of Paris: Between Visible Solidarity, Temporary Arrangements, and Discretionary Policies

Léa Réville

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 Rethinking Diversity Policies at the Local Level: The Case of the Halte Humanitaire of Paris Centre

The Halte humanitaire of Paris Centre is a temporary reception structure for exiled people - asylum seekers and refugees in precarious situations. Managed by the Salvation Army Foundation (FADS), it offers medical, social, and administrative assistance and welcomes around 100 people weekly. The facility emerged from joint efforts by associations: since 2015, they have faced the reality of living conditions and the reception of exiles in Paris, who are either forced to live in camps or take refuge in the city's interstices (Agier et al., 2011), trying to avoid police controls. The main demands from the associations' network consisted of making exiled people visible in the urban space for adequate care, not only from the municipal authorities but also on the part of state institutions. When the associations declared a strike in April 2019, the city hall of Paris awarded the management of the new Halte humanitaire to the FADS in a warehouse at Porte de la Chapelle. A year later, the agreement to occupy the Halte's premises ended, and the associations continued campaigning for greater visibility and integration of exiled people in the urban space. Paris' city hall thus proposed moving the Halte humanitaire to the premises of the former town hall of the first arrondissement, which had just become vacant. On 9 November 2020, the Halte humanitaire of La Chapelle, born out of local political tensions and militant actions, was thrust into the spotlight of Paris Centre. While the project at Paris Centre was scheduled to last 1 year, it has since been extended by the Paris City Council and is still ongoing in 2024.

L. Réville (✉)
UMR 8504 Géographie-cités – Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France

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Following Anne Hidalgo's announcement on October 4, 2020, about the opening of the Halte Humanitaire in the former town hall of the first arrondissement, the project has evolved through media announcements from the responsible political bodies: Paris City Hall; the political cabinet in charge of housing, emergency accommodation, and refugee protection; and the Paris Centre borough council and its communication teams. Instead of simply acting as press releases regarding the relocation, these media displays have turned the Halte humanitaire in Paris Centre into a tool for political demonstration at local, regional, and national levels. Relocating the Halte humanitaire from Porte de la Chapelle to Paris-Centre aligned the project with broader urban policies, as political actors advocated for a new urban approach to accommodating exiled populations in Paris. The regional guidelines of the Greater Paris metropolis and the Local Urban Plan (PLU) of Paris, approved in 2018, emphasise the importance of territorial rebalancing. As this urban planning principle aims to "reduce inequalities and foster a more equitable Paris", the Halte in Paris Centre was, therefore, built as an emblem of Paris' social policies integrated into the Louvre-Rivoli district, right in the heart of the Paris Centre. It supports the concept of a well-distributed urban area accessible to everyone. The establishment of the Halte humanitaire in a public and historic building contributes to the enduring legacy of the concept of solidarity, extending beyond the temporal limits of the project. Indeed, although the future of the Halte humanitaire in these premises is not certain, the project initiated a series of solidarity initiatives within the former town hall of the first arrondissement, and the democratic function of the building merged with this new model of solidarity urbanism. The Halte has become a key element of a political program that aligns with a long-term vision for the city. This vision aims to redefine the city not merely as an administrative unit within the French territorial framework but as an inherently welcoming space. It prioritises diversity, solidarity, and hospitality as its guiding principles.

When the mayor of Paris announced the Halte opening, she declared: "In the first arrondissement's former town hall, we will relocate the Halte Humanitaire, which has been open for a few years at Porte de la Chapelle. Paris will continue to play its role as a city of refuge". Initially, the concept of the city of refuge was formulated by the International Parliament of Writers in 1993 to put reception and hospitality at the heart of urban concerns for exiled writers (Derrida, 1997). It was then institutionalised in 1995 at the European level with a Charter of Refuge Cities by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and mobilised in the 1990s by the city of Venice during the Balkan crisis. The concept re-emerged during a consultation between the mayors of Barcelona, Paris, Lesbos and Lampedusa in September 2015, calling for the creation of a refuge cities' network to guarantee the decent reception of exiled populations and asylum seekers in Europe. According to Filippo Furri (2017a, 2017b), "The notion of a city of refuge is resurfacing at a time when the notions of solidarity and hospitality are being questioned." From this perspective, the centrality of the Halte and the symbolism associated with the chosen building (a former town hall, a place of democracy) tend to promote the ideal of hospitality throughout the "refuge-city" concept. However, they have also given rise to reticence within the neighbourhood. In reaction to the opening of the Halte, the

inhabitants set up a collective to oppose the project (Collectif de riverains de Paris-centre: Coripac), associating the presence of migrants in their neighbourhood with possible disturbances and a threat to their daily lives. They also expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of consultation regarding changes to their local town hall and concerns that the new use would alter the building. How does the Halte humanitaire integrate into this popular neighbourhood, where the sense of belonging to the city of Paris is profoundly anchored in its urban heritage? Furthermore, how can external demands be reconciled with the city of Paris's political objectives and the FADS's commitments concerning solidarity and hospitality while simultaneously addressing the authentic needs of exiled populations?

This case study was conducted for a master's thesis in political studies that analysed the methods used by the association and political actors to facilitate the reception of exiles in the city. Exploratory interviews were organised with its leaders and operators (political, administrative, and associative actors) to understand the genesis of the project and its current organisation. A field study in partnership with the FADS was conducted from 26 January 2021 to 5 March 2021 within the Halte humanitaire and its neighbourhood. Interviews were conducted with all the people involved in the implementation of the project, i.e., the coordinators of the Halte, the volunteers, the mediation and logistics teams, the security guards and the maintenance staff. A participatory approach was used to engage with the people staying at the Halte without imposing on them the stressful and restrictive context of a formal interview during their downtime. Interviews were also conducted in the neighbourhood with presidents of residents' associations and a local volunteer, and media monitoring was implemented.

This work not only examines the tensions within the social representations of solidarity, hospitality, and diversity on an urban scale but also gives an account of the relational and conflictual spaces built around the figure of the exile (Nouss, 2015), propelled into the heart of the urban space. The Halte and its reception methods navigate the balance between public visibility and discretion, centrality and marginality, and integration and exclusion. Due to the diversity of actors, their practices, and their expectations of the Halte humanitaire, this reception system seems to be caught in competing priorities and influenced by conflicting interests among the political managers, the association operator, its social workers, the local population, and the public. Confronting their political ideologies of the refuge city and local practices in common property (Krikorian, 2017), the people involved in the Halte establish themselves as city makers at the institutional and street levels. The implementation of solidarity, hospitality, and diversity policies relies on compromises made by the elected politicians and the coordinators of the Halte, as well as on the management of space in the building, which varies according to the people who occupy it. To provide a synthesis of the survey conducted and the results obtained, this chapter will draw up observations and analyses about the spatial governance of diversity at the local level. It aims to show how diversity can be promoted and controlled through the organisation of space in exiles' everyday lives, locally and in the heart of the urban space. Through temporary arrangements, discreet displays, new social representations, and appropriations of the former municipal

building and its highly symbolic architecture in terms of heritage, how do the actors involved in the Halte and their socio-spatial practices enable a rethinking of urban diversity governance policies?[1]

12.2 Welcoming Exiles in the City: Adapting to the First Arrondissement and Its Town Hall

The Halte humanitaire initially had to adapt to its district: the former first arrondissement. This area is now part of the Paris Centre Arrondissement, which was formed in 2020 by merging the first four arrondissements of Paris.[2] The former first arrondissement brings together districts that are not only touristy, with the Louvre at its centre, but also have strong cultural and historical identities, such as Les Halles, which dates to the early Middle Ages and is now a major commercial attraction. As a town hall in the first arrondissement, the building fits this cultural, historical, and economical architectural environment. The Halte, as a humanitarian facility, now must find its place there. The opponents of the project argue it would be more appropriate in "less historical" neighbourhoods. This supposed historical discrepancy reflects the processes of exclusion and relegation of exiled populations in the city (Pincon-charlot et al., 2017). Indeed, while the political actors of the Paris Centre mayor's office emphasise solidarity as a tradition in the district, the Halte humanitaire is the first reception centre for exiles, asylum seekers, and refugees to be set up in the former first arrondissement. There are facilities in the area for homeless individuals. Still, the reception for exiled people and the humanitarian aspect of the project, beyond its incorporation into social action efforts, are new developments in the district. Thus, incorporating the Halte humanitaire into the urban landscape was not universally accepted by those involved, particularly the inhabitants who see the Louvre-Rivoli district as an affluent area that the Halte could devalue. Additionally, some residents expressed concern about the Halte project, perceiving it as an intrusion into their living environment where social and humanitarian efforts were unwelcome. During an informal conversation, a shopkeeper located a few steps away from the Halte explained that social or humanitarian activities were incompatible with the district's history and the local inhabitants' financial model and economic structure. He added that he did not want to live in the first arrondissement as in the nineteenth arrondissement, a more popular neighbourhood.

Thus, the managers, as well as the beneficiaries of the project, had to face a socially hostile environment. Nevertheless, rather than mobilising the very European notion of integration or even assimilation (Zapata-Barrero, 2015) highlighted by

[1] It should be noted that the data and analyses presented here correspond to a given time (the first months of the opening of the Halte in Paris-Centre in 2021) and do not reflect the current reality of the site.

[2] Regrouping that was voted with the law on the status of Paris and metropolitan planning promulgated on 28 February 2017.

political speeches from Paris City Hall, the FADS stakeholders approached the adaptation of the Halte to its environment through a vision of solidarity and diversity. They understood it as a way of crossing and living in the city rather than inhabiting it, as a movement and an encounter between the workers of the Halte, the exiled people and the local population. On the one hand, those who were reluctant within the neighbourhood expressed their rejection during interviews or via social networks passively, without any desire to interfere physically with the project. On the other hand, people initially opposed to the Halte who came to the site seemed progressively more tolerant and sometimes offered their help. For instance, during an observation, an inhabitant went to the entrance of the Halte to express his dissatisfaction. However, he gradually changed his mind when one of the coordination team members invited him to visit the Halte, and he left asking if there was a need for volunteers for the French classes. From that point forward, the paths that intersected at the entrance of the former town hall building helped establish a solidarity network in support of the Halte. This initiative transcended the basic concepts of hospitality and inhospitality within the district. The network was further strengthened by initiatives similar to the Halte project in the area. For example, the FADS organised a food distribution in partnership with La Chorba,[3] which took place in the Gaîté Lyrique[4] building from January to March 2021. While this arrangement was more temporary than the Halte, it facilitated the Halte humanitaire installation in the neighbourhood by establishing daily routes for the exiles. As the Halte does not offer meals to exiles, the food distribution at La Gaîté Lyrique has enabled exiles to live in the neighbourhood in new ways and take ownership by making Paris Centre and its public buildings a place of daily life.

In addition, the building itself had to be adapted. The former city hall is part of the city's heritage, and its architecture was designed to embody the balance between the district's cultural and religious life and its inhabitants' civil responsibilities. The building is situated on the Place du Louvre, adjacent to the church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. Designed by architect Jacques Hittorff, it was constructed between 1858 and 1863 to serve as a local town hall following the creation of the arrondissements in Paris. The residents consider the town hall in the first arrondissement to be their historical and political heritage, a communal space for local groups and a key venue for discussions with elected officials and councillors.[5] Some district residents perceive the first arrondissement's town hall as a shared property. However, they interpret this notion not in legal terms, but as a space inherently belonging to their community. This approach suggests that living in a place confers forms of privilege over the city that are taken for granted by the local population. Joan Stavo-Debauge's

[3] La Chorba is a humanitarian association that was created in 1998 and specialises in distributing food to the deprived.

[4] The Gaîté Lyrique is a cultural establishment of the city of Paris, which agreed to host this food distribution for three months due to its closure to the public during COVID-19.

[5] As we can see from the comments of the residents collected online (mainly on https://vivrelemarais.typepad.fr/blog/2020/11/halte-migrants-chasse-croise-de-plaidoiries.html) and during interviews.

comparison (2003) between the "passers-by" who pass through the city and the "residents" who are anchored in it is very useful to understand the motivations of the residents who are opposed to the project of the Halte. According to the author, living in the city entails assigning meaning to spaces and cultivating a 'sense of the neighbourhood' beyond the "fleeting and sensory experiences" of mere passers-by. Nonetheless, this appreciation serves as a justification for the fears expressed about unusual occupations of this space made by foreigners. For the association, it was, therefore, a matter of overcoming this feeling of belonging and limiting the social and racial exclusion mechanisms it could generate. It resulted in establishing a diversity policy by granting a place to the Halte actors and the district inhabitants, and diversity imposed itself as a challenge in the face of segregation and discrimination issues. In this way, the appropriation of the premises by the actors of the Halte humanitaire remained necessarily incomplete, as the space of this municipal building had to be shared to reconcile disparate social perceptions of the Halte humanitaire in Paris Centre.

To this end, the association designed the layout to define circulation zones based on the status of individuals moving around the Halte. The rooms are thus dedicated either to the exiled populations welcomed in the place, to the FADS staff, or the inhabitants of the district and the municipal services kept within the building. These distinct functions, which have evolved as the Halte has been fitted out, make it possible to distinguish two types of space: first, a space of free circulation for exiles, and second, a space with restricted circulation, accessible to asylum seekers and refugees only by reservation. The free circulation space can be accessed through the Halte entrance on the side of the building. It includes the reception area, courtyard, doctor's office, sanitary facilities, exhibition space, and resting room. A prefabricated door and wooden panels separate the restricted area, which serves as a more private space for FADS members. This area includes a library where most cultural activities and French classes take place, as well as a break room, which is also enclosed by a prefabricated door. The space extends to the first floor, where offices for the coordination team, consultation rooms for psychologists, and storage for equipment are located. These spaces coexist with the area dedicated to the municipal structure, as an identity card service remains in the building upstairs. The FADS adapted the building arrangements to the needs of each individual and to the constraints imposed by the Paris City Council by determining social and physical boundaries within the Halte. Thus, the Halte functions as an "arena" (Glick-Schiller & Çağlar, 2016) where various perspectives on diversity held by community organisations and elected officials intersect and sometimes clash. This confrontation occurs between negotiated social time and spatial hierarchy.

The existence of the identity card service for residents and its accessibility highlights the paradox in managing social interactions and the hierarchical differentiation between the practices of exiled individuals and those of residents. The "identity cards" service is located on the first floor of the building. It can be accessed via two staircases: one used by employees and managers of the Halte and another to the left of the main entrance, known as the "staircase of honour." This staircase is designated as significant for its architectural value and is reserved for certain ceremonial

occasions. At its base stands a statue inscribed "to the dead of France." The staircase is a historical element that the Commission du Vieux Paris[6] requested to be preserved during the redevelopment of the building.[7] Political administrators and managers of the Halte humanitaire state that they have respected this heritage commitment, allowing access only to the local population. Those visiting the "identity cards" department exclusively use this staircase, which maintains its "honour" significance, as it is inaccessible to individuals at the Halte humanitaire. Moreover, this exclusivity seems to justify the implementation of restricted access for individuals admitted to the Halte humanitaire. For example, exiles must first exit through the Halte's front door on the side to attend the library where activities and French courses are organised. Then, they must re-enter the building through the main entrance rather than using the prefabricated door inside, connecting unrestricted and restricted areas. When exiles use the main entrance, they are supervised by volunteers or mediators and are only permitted to pass through the space in a regulated and quick manner. Taking this route symbolises the passage from a private space that belongs to them to a public space that belongs to the general public. These circulation conditions signify their exceptional access to the community. However, they also contribute to their invisibility in the eyes of the neighbourhood. In contrast, the identity card service is an emblematic device for exercising citizenship and represents a democratic issue that is a source of privilege for the local population. The exiles only become visible when their presence is acknowledged only during scheduled meetings and planned activities, such as visits to the Halte and planned activities. This ensures that encounters are not spontaneous but rather anticipated and regulated, reinforcing dynamics of stigma and control in social interactions. Social and associative workers are responsible for implementing political decisions at a higher level, which leads them to establish boundaries for exiled individuals, effectively redefining the concept of the refuge city. In this context, it appears that diversity is often managed through mechanisms of socio-racial differentiation. This creates paradoxes at the local level, where social interactions can contrast sharply with spatial segregation.

Additionally, the appropriation of the former town hall was carried out through temporary arrangements and prefabricated, removable structures, transforming the Halte into a mobile and evolving space. The temporary and uncertain aspects of the project significantly influence the development of the site and its precarious nature (De Lamberterie, 2018; Madanipour, 2018), but also the acceptance on the part of residents. It also emphasises the uncertainties and limitations surrounding the concept of a city of refuge, revealing its inherent ambiguities. The temporary aspects of the Halte serve as a reminder that the concept of a refuge city is built around managing migration in urgent situations. This urgency takes priority and shapes both the

[6] The mission of the Commission du Vieux Paris is to study the heritage and urban planning policies of the city of Paris. It was created in 1897 and meets every month to examine applications for building permits, demolition, or urban heritage requalification in an advisory capacity.

[7] Commission du Vieux Paris, plenary session of 17/10/2019, report of the session, https://cdn.paris.fr/paris/2020/02/13/06c75cdbb0cad48611059634287eaeb8.pdf.

physical and ongoing boundaries of reception. The experience of Venice, which has been positioning itself as a refuge city since the 1990s, exemplifies this situation. According to Filippo Furri (2017a, 2017b), the term "*emergenza* refugees" has been a significant concept there since 2011. In Italian, the word *emergenza* encompasses both urgency and emergence (or resurfacing), indicating a spatial and material dimension.

Although the meeting times between the exiles and the local inhabitants are organised spatially, they ultimately raise questions about the possibility of integrating the Halte humanitaire into the urban fabric. This idea echoes the work of Camillo Boano and Giovanna Astolfo (2020) about the reception of refugees in the Italian context: "To subvert the forms of violence inevitably produced by the conditional hospitality that is at the basis of the current hosting policy, LDA[8] engages in a Derridean "ethics of hospitality," which materialises in constructing spatial opportunities for encounter and mutual recognition between refugees and host communities. Despite the limited and temporary success of such small ethical acts, LDA's practice disrupts within the exclusionary regime of control and provides a progressive template for urbanism of inhabiting". Indeed, the researchers developed the theory of urbanism as the very sign of urban hospitality when the space is organised to facilitate mutual recognition among individuals. The Halte humanitaire may also be integrated into this type of urban planning due to its various socio-spatial configurations, which cater to everyone's needs. The architectural design and layout of the building create a unique opportunity to house both the various social functions of the first arrondissement town hall and the Halte humanitaire under one roof. At the same time, this setup allows for separating different socio-professional groups and the public they serve. This arrangement aims to alleviate tensions between political authorities, community organisations, and the local population. For this reason, the association adapted the project of the Halte humanitaire to the building and the demands from all sides by concentrating initially on the intersecting itineraries of individuals rather than on the creation of shared spaces, favouring encounters and socialisation on a more occasional basis.

As the Halte installation progressed, certain rooms' functions shifted to enhance socialisation and exchanges among the various actors. The reception area, originally a counter in the room to the left of the entrance, has been relocated to the largest room overlooking the courtyard. This change has allowed more people to be accommodated than in the previous reception space and created a more inviting atmosphere. The new room's opening onto the courtyard, along with the option for people to gather around tables and sofas, serves a dual purpose as both a reception area and an exhibition room. This transformation has encouraged diverse participants to engage with the space. Furthermore, these changes have altered the purpose of the courtyard, which has transitioned from a mere passageway to a space used by various individuals and groups beyond just those being hosted. Here, cigarette

[8] LDA is "the Local Democracy Agency in Zavidovici, which, among other initiatives, manages the Sistema di Protezione Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati (System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees, or SPRAR) in Brescia, Italy".

breaks have become significant for informal conversations and establishing social connections. Besides, the members of the Halte humanitaire have transformed the former town hall of the first arrondissement with a new visual identity. The wall displays act as tools for communication and networking for the individuals welcomed while enhancing the building's decor. On their part, the political actors aimed for the historical monument to enhance the value of the Halte Humanitaire project. The columns at the front of the building and its library became symbols of a dignified welcome and the integration of exiled populations in France. The individuals received at the Halte seem to share this perspective; one person remarked that they had never attended a French course in such a "clean, beautiful" environment. Throughout this project, both political and FADS actors are reshaping their roles as "refuge city-makers" (Mescoli & Roblain, 2021) by adapting urban spaces locally and constructing a "city of refuge" through its aesthetic and spatial arrangements. They aim to create both public and private environments, ensuring diversity through various uses of buildings and modes of representation. This initiative also illustrates the associations' reliance on municipal directives. As long as the city of Paris owns the building, and since the city provides subsidies to the associations, the management of these spaces is structured as a partnership between the two entities. Associations find autonomy in their reception expertise and capacity to adapt within spatial and temporal constraints. However, this model is quite specific to Paris. For instance, in Bristol, officially recognized as a welcoming city, associations receive private funding, granting them greater flexibility in their operations (Salomon, 2021). This funding compensates for the local authority's limited actions concerning migration management due to territorial powers.

12.3 From Establishing a Refuge to Addressing Security and Control Concerns

In another way, the Halte also serves as a safe place for the people it accommodates. At the Halte humanitaire, the shelter's design primarily emphasises a calming atmosphere and creates symbolic boundaries that delineate the interior from the outside. The aim is to protect its residents from violence and precarious living conditions on the street. Their sense of safety comes from an environment intended to be peaceful and free from political or social pressure. To this end, the first choice of the FADS was to locate the resting room in the most significant space of the building. Nonetheless, according to statements made by both the associations operating onsite and the individuals staying there, rest and sociability are closely connected. Achieving a sense of calm comes not only from physical well-being but also from listening to others. Feeling heard provides relief for exiled populations, who often experience isolation, precarious living conditions, psychological trauma, and various difficulties. This dynamic can be found at the very heart of the activities offered: Although the cultural or language workshops are naturally oriented towards

dialogue, social links and encounters, they are also often a reassuring and comforting interlude. During an observation of the comic strip workshop, a volunteer explained that she used to work at the Halte of Porte de la Chapelle. She noted that the current setting made her feel more at ease with the people she was working with. According to her, this moment should be "calm and soothing," considering their backgrounds. However, it is essential "not to get too involved in their lives." Some individuals need to talk, but it is primarily about "listening and allowing them to express themselves," for instance, through drawing.

However, the principle of ambient tranquillity paradoxically limits the ability of asylum seekers and refugees to express themselves within the centre. The focus on social connections can lead the workers from the association to prioritise the overall calm atmosphere of the Halte rather than focusing on the individual well-being of those staying at the Halte. In practice, the staff at the Halte often dominates the conversation, particularly in terms of tone. When individuals raise their voices, they are frequently called out, further stifling their expression. Recognising that the individuals received are "calm" reflects a normative judgment connected to the wish for improved working conditions compared to those at Porte de la Chapelle. According to the Halte workers, the atmosphere was significantly more "chaotic" there due to the critical circumstances within the camps. The town hall of the first arrondissement, along with its symbolism and surrounding area, has encouraged the FADS, its employees, and its partners to promote the concept of a discreet refuge emphasizing tranquillity and minimizing disturbances to the surrounding community.

Thus, the peaceful atmosphere at the Halte humanitaire appears partly due to the discriminatory treatment of exiled populations. One of the mediators and logistics staff member explained that the site has been quieter since January 2021 because "we only receive individuals in difficult situations, so there are fewer people here, making it calmer." The Halte does not accept women or families, as it lacks essential personal care products for women and children. Moreover, the acceptance of exiles depends on their legal status and housing situation. This classification process, which determines whether they are in a more or less precarious circumstance, significantly impacts their integration into the city. For instance, one of the coordination team members printed out information about the other places a man could visit outside the city centre as he was not in an irregular situation. She explained that he would be able to see the doctor in the afternoon but would not be able to come back the next day or the days after. After this interaction, the man explained in an interview that it was important to be listened to because "no one has time" for him, especially in the structure where he is housed, which has only three social workers for 400 residents. Paralysed in his left arm, he also insisted that if they migrate, "it is for good reasons." According to urban studies researchers Fatiha Belmessous and Elise Roche (2018), "The legal category, presented as an objective reality, constitutes a normative framework and, as an instrument for shaping migratory reality, has a dual effect on the situation experienced by migrants. On the one hand, it assigns them a reconstituted identity. On the other hand, it allows the actors in charge of these populations to sort and classify them in all legitimacy and legality. Consequently, this categorisation in no way reflects the reality experienced by

migrants but, on the contrary, largely serves the public authority, which prioritises its action - reception, protection of persons; control of migratory movements, from selection to rejection." Moreover, this categorisation significantly limits the understanding of individuals' personal issues, as it is interwoven with considerations of race, age, and gender relations.

At the same time, it goes hand in hand with security procedures aimed at restricting access to "undesirable" individuals. Indeed, the Halte humanitaire has a security service established at the Paris City Council's request to monitor movement within the facility and screen individuals who wish to enter the building. Security is a significant topic of discussion among the various stakeholders at the Halte and serves multiple functions. It provides protection for the individuals seeking assistance while also implementing measures that can limit the autonomy of exiles who wish to access the medical and socio-legal services of the Halte. Firstly, safety is connected to the calm and reassuring approach embraced at the Halte humanitaire. FADS workers associate security with protection and inclusion. They understand safety as comforting for the people they serve, as individuals find refuge from harm once they enter the building. The role of the security guard at the entrance of the building is envisioned as that of a guardian. This position is responsible for maintaining the Halte's boundaries concerning its external environment, which is viewed as potentially threatening for the exiles. This perception arises from the heavy police presence in the neighbourhood and the potential hostility from residents opposed to the project. Consequently, if the Halte is concealed by its entrance on the side of the town hall and minimal display, security measures enhance discretion within the neighbourhood, separating the routes of exiles from locals and reinforcing social boundaries.

At the core of inclusion and exclusion mechanisms, security differentiates between ordinary people and exiled individuals, for whom access to the Halte in Paris Centre is a privilege. From this perspective, solidarity and diversity assume contradictory forms. This approach differs significantly from the hospitality extended to the neighbourhood, as it is confined to the walls of the Halte humanitaire. The individuals involved in the Halte form a cohesive group bound by solidarity, which they feel must be strengthened and safeguarded by drawing inward and establishing barriers around those they welcome, with security personnel acting as gatekeepers. The principle of security redefines solidarity within the Halte. It connects this idea to the forms of "entre-soi" (between oneself) that are especially prominent in the familial language often used by the workers. While the security guards are engaged in the solidarity enterprise, their role resembles that of mediators who ensure the space's social connection and intimacy. One of the coordinators at the Halte remarked that these security guards are the best mediators they have encountered, emphasising that the Halte is a safe place because of their presence. The coordinator appeared intent on justifying the presence of security guards by countering common societal perceptions of them, which tend to depict them as imposing or threatening figures. Simultaneously, her discourse emphasised the family and intimate model promoted at the Halte humanitaire by referring to the security guards as "big brothers" or "big teddy bears."

Nevertheless, security is not limited to a mission of protection towards the people received. The defensive and intimate logic suggests practices of infantilisation and control, leading to the pacification of FADS' relations with political managers and the local population. The same coordinator acknowledged that security agents serve, to some degree, as a way to appease residents who oppose the project and view the exiled populations as a threat. Actually, the Paris City Council mandated the security service out of concern that the presence of exiled individuals might provoke unrest and draw local criticism of the municipal social policies associated with the Halte humanitaire. The security guards have a dual role: they provide security inside and outside the Halte while ensuring that exiled populations remain within its confines. This adjustment, made in response to the requests of the Paris City Council, shifts the principle of security for the individuals in the Halte to a framework that prioritises security against the exiles. As a result, the exiles are subjected to a regulatory environment that is more controlling than reassuring. Carolina Kobelinsky's work (2015) on the management of the Centres d'Accueil pour Demandeurs d'Asile (CADA, reception centres for asylum seekers) is particularly enlightening in this respect: The anthropologist shows that reception can have negative implications when it is part of the ongoing migration policies at both European and national levels. She writes that "although the CADAs offer shelter and support - material, social, legal - which is not negligible compared to wandering from hotel to hotel, the assistance provided within these structures is accompanied by a set of measures and practices of surveillance and control that limit the autonomy of the people accommodated. [...] The reception of asylum seekers is increasingly similar to the administration of immigrants as it is currently implemented in general. This administration involves deploying control and confinement structures for foreigners, who are sorted, managed, expelled." At the Halte, exiles must justify their presence by presenting an access card issued during their first visit. This requirement creates unequal power dynamics and establishes a differentiation system between the individuals being received and other actors at the Halte. This policy of control reveals the management of exiles' bodies (Fassin & Memmi, 2004) as the regulation of their movement and expression within the social space of the Halte humanitaire. Reflecting the European heritage of the refuge city concept embraced by Paris, the Halte highlights the paradoxes of this concept and acts as a mirror to European migration policies regarding security and border control.

During an interview, the security guard at the entrance outlined his responsibilities, which primarily involved controlling access to the Halte, managing entry and exit, and conducting security checks. He explained that security is maintained through automated control techniques, such as checking bags, detecting metal objects, counting the number of people, and alerting coordinators when someone does not possess an entry card. In this way, the workers at the Halte act as authorities, checking the "papers" of individuals arriving at the entrance. These processes tend to infantilise the exiles, as they find themselves placed in a so-called family environment that has a paternalistic tone. One management team member called them "kids," stating, "It's good that this doesn't get around. I'm not sure if having a security guard discourages anything, but the truth is that without a security guard,

we would never be able to know if the kids were coming or going, you know? So, it's peaceful now." The relationships between those receiving support and the staff at the Halte humanitaire—security guards, mediators, coordinators, and volunteers—seem to impose educational directives restricting the exiles' autonomy. The spatial division and avoidance strategies implemented by the managers of Halte Humanitaire aim to ensure that the exiles are "forgotten" by the neighbourhood, reinforcing the invisibility of exiled individuals in public spaces. Living in the area without drawing attention does not eliminate the stigmatisation processes at play. Instead, it strengthens the symbolic boundaries between exiles and ordinary residents. The statements made by the president of a residents' defence association clearly illustrate the symbolic boundaries and social distance between these different social groups: "I live in the Marais, where we have a building with arcades that protect people from the rain—if it ever rains. There are often individuals, some of whom are homeless and come from who knows where who have been here during the week and throughout the initial phase of Covid. Although I noticed them, I did not report anything to the police! They might have criticised me, saying, 'Why are these locals mistreating poor people who are unfortunately homeless and don't know where to go?' " In this depiction, exiles appear as wanderers, confined to the streets, in contrast to residents who are sheltered within their homes. In contrast, at the Halte humanitaire, the exiled populations are confined to an enclosed area and limited to a set route, which similarly protects them from the residents. Thus, it appears that the construction of exiled individuals as "the other" occurs not only in interpersonal interactions but also spatially within the public sphere, especially in the context of racialized social dynamics.

12.4 Conclusion

12.4.1 Diversity Paradoxes, Between Visibility and Invisibility in the Public Space

Over the past 10 years, scientific and activist works have increasingly focused on exiled populations pushed to the edges of multinational, national, or urban territories.[9] These works examine, criticise, and contest the forms of institutional violence inflicted on exiled individuals who are forced to seek refuge in informal spaces like camps. In response to the harsh realities faced in these camps—characterised by extreme precariousness—architectural and urban frameworks aimed at better reception have emerged since the 2000s. These frameworks include securing precarious neighbourhoods, constructing prefabricated reception areas, repurposing abandoned commercial and private buildings, and investing in adaptable and

[9] Huysmans (2000), Valluy (2008), Ritaine (2009), Agier et al. (2011), Basilien-gainche (2011), Andersson (2014), Roland (2015), Amar (2018), Babels (2018).

transformable structures (Hanappe, 2018). However, the temporary and precarious nature of these facilities, often built as emergency solutions, along with their locations on the outskirts of urban centres, contribute to the ongoing socio-spatial segregation of exiles at a local level (Hall, 2004). Considering this, the Halte humanitaire in Paris Centre offers a fresh perspective on the situation of exiles and the methods used to receive them. It prompts us to consider how such a "third place" can either contribute to or hinder efforts to create a contemporary and welcoming city (Besson, 2017). An analysis of the Halte highlights the complexities and ambiguities of the concept of the city of refuge. This is particularly evident in the actions of associative workers and political actors who engage with exiles. Their commitment to solidarity is contrasted with their involvement in security policies and the governance of spatial diversity.

The reconfigured public spaces, which is shared with exiled populations, often becomes a site of tension as conflicts over belonging and socio-racial discrimination emerge. Antonin Margier (2013) emphasises that understanding these conflicts "requires examining city dwellers' relationships with their living spaces, which play a crucial role in shaping public areas. Indeed, city dwellers influence this structuring through their practices and how they envision themselves within the urban environment (De Certeau, 1990; Lefebvre, 2000). However, these appropriations can also lead to exclusion. This is particularly relevant at a time when public spaces are perceived as extensions of the home. When constructed in close proximity, these spaces can inadvertently foster processes of marginalisation (Fleury, 2007)". It is, therefore, essential to explore how this "extension of the home," represented by public spaces that accommodate diverse uses and feature various symbolic architectural forms, can be socially utilised. In her study of the Goutte d'Or neighbourhood, which is a vibrant multi-ethnic area, Virginie Milliot (2013) highlights its unique characteristics. She contrasts this environment with the "normalised ideal" of a public space that is clean, safe, and carefully regulated, often found in gentrified districts of the capital. The researcher observes that public spaces in bourgeois and tourist districts, like the Louvre-Rivoli area, are frequented by an anonymous crowd, characterised by behaviours of "rubbing eyes," passing through, and employing avoidance strategies. In these environments, exiled populations and homeless individuals navigate through the area as long as they can remain invisible among the more affluent social groups. However, a sense of familiarity and culture can also develop in more enclosed public spaces within sociocultural and civic spaces, fostering more intimate social interactions. The former town hall of the first arrondissement acted as an intermediary space where the FADS and political leaders aimed to enhance diversity in the neighbourhood by transforming it into a semi-public area and a hub of movement and intersection.

In the end, the urban diversity within and around the Halte humanitaire project is regulated and facilitated yet constrained by a hierarchical structure and the specific roles assigned to each actor. In this chapter, the term "refuge" related to the Halte humanitaire carries a dual meaning. It refers to a refuge as a closed space, shielded from external threats, and also signifies a refuge open to the city's heart, engaging with its cultural and political life. In this way, the insertion of the Halte humanitaire

in this neighbourhood depends on how the place managers coordinate and bring together these two meanings, notably through their exchanges and discourse. These observations suggest that diversity is not automatic; it is constructed, defined, and promoted by those in power to implement collective practices, specific spatial arrangements and collective actions shaping and harmonising social perceptions of the space. Nonetheless, the varied demands of different actors, the temporary setting, and the broader social and health context hinder this harmonisation, resulting in numerous paradoxes.

On a larger scale, for the political leaders involved, the political appropriation of the Halte helps to legitimise Paris's role as a "city of refuge". In her speech, the Mayor of Paris made little reference to the project's temporary nature, placing the Halte in a broader political context and making it a symbolic example of the city's stance in relation to the State. In this way, the Halte humanitaire became a theatre for the political interests that the associations were trying to work around, a "laboratory" in the image of German cities (Hinger, 2017) where new ways of governing diversity with several forces were being tested. The refuge-city concept is also similar to sanctuary cities in the United States (Bagelman, 2016; Paquet, 2017) or solidarity cities in several cultural areas of Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa (Bauder, 2017), where resistance to or critique of federal and national migration and integration policies still coexists with local exclusionary practices (Houston & Morse, 2017). Nonetheless, compared with other European and international initiatives, the specificity of the Halte lies in its integration into the French sociopolitical context, where the recognition of ethno-racial inequalities in a policy of diversity remains limited (Hadj Abdou, 2019; Flamant, 2020). Analysing this reception project in relation to other contexts offers a clearer understanding of key socioadministrative categories within French and European systems. In contrast, different countries, such as China, approach the issue of migration through the lenses of citizenship and housing policies (Lynn-Ee Ho, 2019; Losavio, 2022). Ultimately, the Halte humanitaire case invites broader discussion on the impact of similar initiatives in other refuge, solidarity, and sanctuary cities. At the same time, it highlights the political constraints that shape the role of civil society actors in governing diversity.

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Chapter 13
Culture in the Global Urban Margins: Cultural Policymaking with Migrant Workers in Doha and Singapore

Jeremie Molho

13.1 Introduction

On a Sunday in early May 2022, I had the honor of participating in a storytelling festival organized by the Migrant Writers of Singapore at the Bishan Public Library. There, a highly diverse group of people took to the stage, each recounting tales of migration, identity, and human experiences: Singaporean authors followed by Bangladeshi construction worker-poets, and European scholars by Indonesian domestic workers/storytellers. The architect of this gathering, Zakir Hossain Khokan, a Bangladeshi writer and laborer who had long championed cultural activism in Singapore, had created a convivial space where individuals from disparate backgrounds converged to exchange and resonate with each other's stories. This vignette points to an emergent cultural policy directed at marginalized migrants. It is not the product of a centralized strategy but rather grassroots initiatives propelled by civic actors and cultural city-makers.

Doha and Singapore have seen the rise of an array of cultural initiatives tailored for the 'low-skilled' or 'transient' migrant workers. From photography festivals to poetry competitions and the construction of community-centric amenities like cinemas showing Bollywood movies and cricket stadiums, these endeavors have been put forward as aiming to address the specific cultural needs of these communities. Yet, these efforts juxtapose with the entrenched processes of exclusion that define their migration experience, and with the dominant narratives that confine these individuals to mere roles of physical toil. This contrast begs an inquiry into the objectives and consequences of such cultural initiatives. Do they perpetuate exclusion by reinforcing urban segmentation and otherness, or do they constitute spaces of hope,

J. Molho (✉)
Canada Excellence Chair in Migration and Integration Program, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: jeremie.molho@torontomu.ca

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empowering individuals and challenging the dominant narratives imposed upon them?

A large corpus of literature has discussed the role of the arts and culture in fostering the integration of migrants (Bennett, 2001; Saukkonen & Pyykkönen, 2008; Innocenti, 2016). This scholarship posits that the active participation of migrants and their descendants in the city's culture reflects their integration, and highlights hybridization processes that enrich local cultural landscapes (Brandellero, 2009; Salzbrunn, 2014). Traditional views of cultural policy as a conduit for nation-building and societal integration are, however, increasingly scrutinized in light of the emergent patterns of urban diversity (Aksoy, 2006; Robins, 2006; Zapata-Barrero, 2016). The increasingly complex nature of global migration flows, the diversification of origins, and the ascent of transnational identities have culminated in what Steven Vertovec (2007) describes as "superdiversity". While super-diverse cities often celebrate diversity and intercultural mixing, they are also marked by urban fragmentations that delineate communities along socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural demarcations (Wessendorf, 2014). Thus, they emerge as both arenas and agents in the reconfiguration of diversity governance (Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016; Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2018).

Superdiversity presents a challenge for cultural policy, primarily manifested in the cultural wars between those critiquing monolithic, exclusive cultural canons and conservative bastions resisting the cultural assertions of globally connected communities claiming long-denied rights (Triandafyllidou, 2017). Furthermore, another conundrum challenges the very bedrock of cultural policy: the growing contingent of transients who float on the margins of urban belonging (Pagès-El Karoui & Yeoh, 2020). These transient migrants, ever-mindful of a potential need to return or relocate, are not encapsulated within the national narrative nor the city's promotional agenda.

Set within the broader agenda to rethink urban cultural policy in this era of superdiversity, this chapter examines how cultural policies in Doha and Singapore engages with marginalized migrants who slip through the mainstream narrative's cracks. In particular, I aim to spotlight the role of precarious yet privileged migrants as cultural city-makers who shift local cultural policies by engaging with migrants on the margins of the global city imaginary.

My analysis draws from extensive fieldwork in both cities. This study encompasses interviews with key cultural policy stakeholders to analyze their influence on diversity governance. It also includes observations of cultural initiatives, integrating both on-site visits and digital platform analyses—particularly salient since the pandemic's advent in 2020. The fieldwork for this chapter, based predominantly in Doha and Singapore from 2018 onwards, featured two-week fieldtrips to Singapore in February 2015, December 2018, and May 2022, with an extended stay from November 2019 to August 2021. During this time, I conducted 55 semi-structured interviews with a diverse array of policymakers and stakeholders across multiple urban policy sectors. In Doha, my fieldwork in January 2018 and October 2022 included 53 interviews with cultural institution managers, migrant community organization representatives, and policymakers across various domains.

The ensuing discussion first addresses the ramifications of superdiversity on urban cultural policy, advocating for a comparative and transnational lens to embrace the complexities of cultural policymaking in our connected world. Subsequently, I scrutinize the cultural policies of Singapore and Doha that pertain to marginalized migrants. This analysis delineates three distinct cultural policy approaches. The first engenders socio-cultural segregation of marginalized migrants; the second seeks to integrate them into the national narrative while preserving their 'otherness'; the third aspires to reframe their place in the city, celebrating their creativity and multifaceted selves.

13.2 Cultural Policy in the Super-Diverse City

While scholarship has abundantly commented on the use of culture in city branding aiming to attract elite migrants, as well as on the exclusionary processes affecting migrant workers within aspiring global cities, the way in which cultural policies engage with marginalized migrants is seldom explored in depth. To advance this discussion, it is imperative to articulate an approach of cultural policy that transcends the conventional understanding of centralized cultural strategies. Scholars of cultural policy have long underscored that even within centralized frameworks, cultural policy is a construct of myriad actors (Bennett, 2001; Grodach & Silver, 2012). It does not follow a monolithic rationale but is rather a confluence of various interests, ideas, and the networks that bind these disparate agents. As Dubois (1998) articulates, culture represents a nebulous category within public action, stemming from the intricate practical and symbolic relationships that unfold among a multitude of institutions, groups, and social strata – from artists to civil servants, intellectuals to laborers, cultural authorities to political figures, and media to bureaucrats.

In this context, the dichotomy of 'explicit' and 'implicit' cultural policy is insightful (Aheame 2009). 'Explicit' cultural policy, or cultural policy in the narrow sense, encompasses the dedicated support for artistic creation, heritage conservation, and the expansion of cultural access. However, cultural policy also extends to a broader spectrum of policy actions. The concept of 'implicit' cultural policy is introduced to acknowledge that various policies not traditionally labeled as 'cultural'—like those concerning housing or economic development—can substantially influence culture. Consequently, an analytical approach to cultural policy must encompass actors who, though not confined to the cultural sector, play a key role in shaping culture. Vestheim (2007) posits that cultural policy is inherently instrumental: "public support of culture can only be argued for in terms of different effects it may have on or values it may have for groups of citizens and the society at large". This interdependency invariably entwines cultural policy with other sectors such as education, social welfare, or urban planning (Gray, 2007).

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, urban cultural policies have evolved through two predominant paradigms. Rather than succeeding one another, they have coalesced to form the dual foundations of contemporary urban cultural policy: the

nation-building-driven cultural democratization paradigm and the urban development-driven creative city paradigm (Evans, 2009; Molho, 2019). These paradigms have encountered profound disruptions in the face of superdiversity, which has ushered in two defining tendencies: the burgeoning of plural, transnationally connected identities that challenge the previously monolithic national narratives aimed at fostering cohesive cultural discourses, and the emergence of a substantial class of marginalized migrants, perceived neither as 'creatives' nor deemed worthy of efforts towards cultural access and representation.

The paradigm of cultural democratization, with its roots in universalist ideology, aspires to disseminate a shared national culture. Urfalino (2004) traces the genesis of cultural policy to the concept of cultural democratization, epitomized by André Malraux's policies in late 1950s France. This nexus of nationalism and universalism is a hallmark of this paradigm, championing the state's mandate to forge social cohesion and guarantee egalitarian access to a universally conceived culture. This approach has been interrogated through years of empirical analysis. Vestheim (2007) critiques the efficacy of such policies, pointing out that despite decades of state intervention, cultural participation remains largely the domain of the affluent and educated classes, leaving the democratic issue of cultural access and engagement unresolved.

Conversely, the Creative City paradigm has been forged by academics and experts and spread widely among urban policymakers eager to reimagine their cities through culture in a context of enhanced inter-city competition. Richard Florida (2002) has been instrumental in popularizing the creative city discourse, amalgamating diverse theories into compelling propositions. He posited that to foster a creative economy, cities must attract creative individuals by cultivating amenities and an environment of tolerance.

These paradigms have encountered significant challenges with the advent of superdiversity (Vertovec, 2015). The cultural democratization paradigm, lauded for its universalistic ethos, has been criticized for predominantly benefiting and accommodating the dominant elites. This nation-centric model faces scrutiny from an emergent city-centric model, which espouses a broader and more inclusive conception of culture. Superdiversity, characterized by burgeoning transnational communities and cultural rights advocacy, contests the traditional universalist cultural policies designed to enforce a homogenizing framework that often denies the existence of diverse identities.

Conversely, the creative city paradigm is frequently challenged for prioritizing economic development over aesthetic and social objectives. It has been co-opted by urban elites to recalibrate cultural policy towards attracting global 'talent' and fostering urban regeneration (Peck, 2005). This results in a selective approach to diversity, focusing on a narrow version of diversity that is advantageous for global economic competition but neglects the majority of migrants and minority groups (Bayliss, 2007; Krätke, 2010). Furthermore, culture-led urban regeneration often precipitates gentrification, displacing migrants and minorities from their communities (Ley, 2003; Pratt, 2011).

In sum, superdiversity introduces two principal disruptions. Firstly, it fosters an array of pluralistic identity claims that undercut monolithic, nation-centric cultural policy narratives. These narratives are finding new platforms for expression through transnational networks in urban spaces. Secondly, a global class of marginalized migrants have emerged, who are overlooked by traditional cultural policy narratives. They are omitted from cultural democratization efforts, not being perceived as part of the national community, nor are they acknowledged as a 'creative class' capable of driving economic innovation and growth. Consequently, these communities are often excluded from the cultural infrastructure of the city, leading to their marginalization within the city's cultural narrative.

This chapter contributes to the expanding corpus of research that interrogates the role of cultural policy in engaging with marginalized migrant populations (Çağlar, 2016; Kasinitz & Martiniello, 2019; Martiniello, 2022). Existing studies have shed light on the multifaceted roles that culture can assume, particularly in aiding newcomers to acquire skills, process the experiences of trauma and exile, and navigate their new environments (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017; Basu, 2022). These works underscore the therapeutic and integrative potential of cultural engagement, offering pathways for healing and adaptation through creative expression and cultural participation.

Moreover, a growing body of scholarship advances the conversation by exploring how culture serves as a transformative medium for reframing the identities of migrants. It allows for the articulation and sharing of their diverse narratives, fostering a dialogical space that not only mediates between migrant communities and host societies but also endeavors to shift perceptions dominated by mainstream media (Marchevska & Defrin, 2023). These perceptions are often laden with negative stereotypes and unidimensional portrayals that fail to capture the complexity of migrant experiences (Leurs et al., 2020). By highlighting migrant voices, cultural initiatives challenge and disrupt prevailing discourses, offering more nuanced and multifaceted representations (Sievers, 2021). This chapter, seeks to illuminate a dimension that has received less attention in the literature: the role of cultural city-makers (Yamamura, 2022).

13.3 Comparing Urban Diversity and Cultural Policy in Doha and Singapore

The chapter contributes to the broader endeavor of this volume of examining comparison as a mechanism for generating urban knowledge. Comparative urbanism has gained traction as scholars seek to understand the "traveling urban processes" (McFarlane & Robinson, 2012), and the global exchange of professional expertise and ideas. McFarlane (2010) suggests comparing is more than a research method, a protocol, confronting explicitly two separate case studies, but rather, a way of thinking. McFarlane proposes a conscious effort to reveal the often-subliminal points of

reference that shape our understanding of cities. This shift from methodological to theoretical comparison invites a reimagining of comparison as a central instrument for knowledge production and learning.

The intricacy of urban comparison necessitates the development of comparative tactics. Robinson (2011) underscores the pitfalls of concentrating comparisons on globally prominent cities, which can obscure a broader spectrum of urban realities. Such comparisons often align with implicit or explicit hierarchical categorizations—developed/developing, North/South—that can lead to a perception of incommensurability among cities (Robinson, 2016). The challenge is to transcend comparisons of the familiar and the similar, which tend to perpetuate existing theoretical frameworks. Hence, Robinson advocates for comparative tactics as a dynamic process, enabling a gradual illumination of the subject under study. This contrasts with the static or linear comparisons typical of analyses that juxtapose highly similar cases to highlight variations. In this more fluid approach, the research design, focus, and theoretical framing emerge organically through the process of comparison, reflecting a multisituated fieldwork. This comparative approach that is inherently dynamic and non-linear, echoes the interconnected nature of urban processes.

Hence the subject of inquiry of the present chapter is born from a dialogic engagement with the two cities. The lens through which I scrutinize cultural policies directed at marginalized migrants in this chapter has crystallized from a broader, multisited examination of diversity management in Doha and Singapore. This scrutiny has unearthed a compartmentalization within diversity governance in both cities, where labor migrants remain on the periphery of the prevailing narratives that celebrate diversity—narratives that are often championed in the quest to position these cities as emerging centers of the global knowledge economy (Molho, 2024). Such observations have steered my attention to those cultural practitioners who endeavor to cast light upon populations rendered invisible in this context.

Several aspects initially drove my intent to compare these two particular cities, as I set out to explore shifting global patterns of global urban diversity management. Both cities promoted strong state-led cultural development strategy to construct the city as regional and global cultural hub and establish attractive showcase for tourists and high skill migrants. They were both super diverse cities, with diversity inherited from their long standing positions as crossroads of trading network and strategies to attract global workforce in both low and high skill. Doha and Singapore boast impressive GDP per capita (ranking respectively 5th and 2nd globally), testament to their rapid ascent as global economic powerhouses. In Doha, the population has grown sevenfold since the 1980s, with expatriates constituting 91% of residents and 95% of the workforce, anchored in a system prioritizing temporary migration (Babar, 2015). Meanwhile, Since the early 2000s, Singapore has experienced a steady increase in its foreign-born population, which has significantly shaped its demographic landscape, with the non-resident population peaking at around 29% in the early 2020s, reflecting the city-state's reliance on a diverse, substantial low-skilled labor force as a cornerstone of its economic framework (Yeoh, 2013, Ho & Kathiravelu, 2022).

As I went back and forth in the two cities, the common points and contrasts appeared more clearly: both shared a compartmentalized diversity management approach that allow them to address different forms of diversity with different discourses and created distinct urban spaces accordingly, on the basis of both social status and degree of integration of various forms of diversity in the national narrative. Singapore's CMIO (Chinese, Malay, Indian, Other) model has spurred the creation of ethnic heritage districts, curating a multicultural facade. Conversely, Doha promulgates a singular national narrative, diluting ethnic nuances (Chua, 2007; Exell & Rico, 2013,). Both, however, face criticism for oversimplifying their inherent diversity. Cultural spaces in both cities have begun to challenge these monolithic narratives (Molho, 2020). In Singapore, institutions within ethnic districts are revealing the intricate intercultural dynamics previously obscured, whereas in Doha, urban redevelopment is unearthing a more pluralistic heritage. These narratives, enshrined in policy and national visions, balance a welcoming stance towards migration and innovation with the preservation of an idealized traditional culture. Both cities have leveraged cultural institutions to solidify their global status. Doha's Museum of Islamic Art and Singapore's Asian Civilizations Museum serve as cultural beacons, showcasing their regions' diverse cultural legacies (Levitt, 2015). These institutions illuminate a narrative of diversity, celebrating the convergence of cultures and the interplay of different belief systems.

Yet, beneath this celebration lies a shadow—the marginalization of low-wage migrant workers. This chapter, therefore, delves into the comparative governance of cultural policies toward these often-overlooked populations, revealing how each city's narrative of diversity aligns or contrasts with the lived realities of its most vulnerable residents.

13.4 Marginalized Labor Migrant Workers in Doha and Singapore

Despite their substantial contribution to the construction and maintenance of these cities, the low-wage migrants of Doha and Singapore remain largely obscured in dominant narratives that celebrate cultural diversity. Over recent decades, these groups have been incrementally displaced from urban centers to peripheries, reflecting a strategic sanitization of urban spaces.

In Singapore, the landscape of migrant accommodation has transformed significantly (Goh, 2019). Initially integrated within the urban fabric, foreign workers were accommodated in proximity to their places of work or in public housing. However, growing discontent among local residents precipitated a shift, leading to the establishment of dedicated dormitories. By 2008, plans were laid for 11 dormitories to house 65,000 workers, and existing government structures were repurposed for migrant housing. In 2013, the Urban Redevelopment Authority's guidelines advocated for the siting of dormitories in locations distanced from residential zones

to mitigate potential communal frictions. This spatial segregation accentuated the growth to what Ostertag (2016) terms "transient community hubs"—nodes like Little India, which swelled on Sundays with up to 100,000 migrant workers seeking leisure and essential services (Goh, 2014).

Doha's historical center once provided a haven for migrants, offering housing within the vacated edifices of a city undergoing a rapid process modernization and new district developments (Boussaa, 2014). Yet, the turn of the millennium marked a strategic overhaul, channeling urban regeneration efforts concurrently with the displacement of migrants to the margins (Bruslé, 2010; Gardner, 2021). The consequent social exclusion leverages a nomenclature designating migrant workers as "bachelors" (Mohammad & Sidaway, 2016). The enforcement of a 2000-dollar minimum wage prerequisite for family reunification effectively casts low-skilled migrant workers into a state of enforced bachelorhood. The 2010 family zone law further entrenched this exclusion, preventing housing these "bachelors" from the historical heart of the city. At the same time, these "bachelors" were increasingly barred from frequenting mainstream spaces such as malls on the ground of reserving them for families.

The spotlight turned to Doha with the 2022 World Cup preparations, which intensified both the exploitation of migrant workers and the global scrutiny of their conditions, leading to scathing reports by prominent international media outlets like The Guardian and The New York Times (Pattisson, 2013; Aziz & Hussain, 2014). Similarly, the December 2013 riots in Singapore's Little India, involving migrant workers, brought the city-state's treatment of its transient workforce to the international stage, with The New York Times and The Guardian calling for reforms to address the systemic marginalization and abuse (Malay, 2014).

Subsequent reactions in both cities were ambivalent. On one hand, efforts were made to ameliorate the situation: Qatar welcomed a UN Special Rapporteur for human rights who provided recommendations for migrant welfare, and the Qatar Foundation conducted its own examination of the issue (Jureidini, 2014). Singapore instituted an inquiry committee post-riots, leading to actionable recommendations to improve living conditions for migrant workers. Yet, alongside these reforms, policies to further exclude migrant workers were implemented. Doha and Singapore sought to construct modern, albeit isolated, accommodations, seemingly to improve living standards while simultaneously curtailing migrants' visibility in central urban spaces.

In Singapore, authorities imposed stringent security measures in Little India and advanced plans for vast dormitories with leisure amenities, aiming to house up to 25,000 workers. Doha's approach was more severe, with plans unveiled in 2015 for new cities designated to house a quarter of a million laborers engaged in World Cup infrastructure projects. These measures, ostensibly framed as enhancing living conditions, also served the dual purpose of controlling and concealing the migrant presence from the city's core and residential areas.

The strategy of confining migrant workers within separate urban enclosures (Yeoh & Lam, 2022) set the stage for a public health debacle during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic (Babar, 2020; Ye, 2021). These housing complexes

became focal points of the virus's proliferation, undermining efforts by both nations to curb a pathogen for which no vaccination was yet available. Given the cramped living conditions endured by migrant workers, containing the outbreak within these quarters was virtually impossible, and the sealing off of these housing spaces further intensified their sense of confinement.

Despite the ensuing crisis, the underlying policy of segregation remained unquestioned and unchanged. Leaders in both cities concluded that the architectural model was fundamentally sound but required enhanced health protocols, such as reducing occupancy rates and improving disease prevention measures. The response was not to dismantle these segregated spaces but to expand them, ostensibly to better safeguard public health (Bernhard & Ellemunt, 2022; Ewers et al., 2023).

This ongoing development in the urban management of migrant labor in Doha and Singapore underscores a broader pattern of exclusion, one that extends beyond mere spatial segregation to diminish the visibility and integration of these workers in metropolitan life. This brings us to the present inquiry regarding cultural policy: In a backdrop where migrant workers are predominantly viewed as mere instruments of labor, essential cogs in a developmental machine, does culture reinforce the prevailing perception of migrants as the 'other,' as ephemeral entities separate from the social fabric? Or does it offer a transformative lens, a means to recognize and celebrate the multifaceted identities and inherent creativity of these individuals? Is there a potential for cultural policies to carve out spaces not just of artistic expression but of awakening and liberation, enabling migrants to contest and redefine the restrictive narratives imposed upon them?

13.5 Cultural Policy Toward Marginalized Migrants in Doha and Singapore

In Doha and Singapore, cultural policies aimed at marginalized migrants manifest in three distinct forms: first, as mechanisms that inadvertently perpetuate exclusion; second, as instruments seeking to uphold and validate the established order of diversity governance; and third, as agents of change that challenge the status quo, advocating for a reimagined inclusion of migrant identities in the city's cultural and social conscience.

13.5.1 Cultural and Recreation Services Catering to Migrant Workers

As urban leaders in Doha and Singapore undertook to house migrant workers in the city peripheries, they started to create cultural amenities within the confines of these segregated enclosures. These are spaces like the purpose-built migrant dormitories

in Singapore or Doha's 'Asian city,' have been equipped with cultural centers, specialized retail outlets, and recreational activities. Such initiatives are dual-purposed: they serve as a counter-narrative to international critiques of substandard living conditions for migrants, showcasing the authorities' and developers' attention to migrant welfare, while simultaneously addressing local xenophobic discomforts triggered by migrants' presence in central urban areas.

Post-2013's Little India Riots, the Singaporean authorities embarked on the construction of vast dormitory complexes designed to house upwards of 25,000 workers. These dormitories, such as the one in Tuas South inaugurated in the summer of 2014, are not merely sleeping quarters but come equipped with a supermarket, food courts, a cinema, and even a cricket pitch. The intention behind these developments was to alleviate the crowding in Little India by providing migrants with their own recreational spaces (Goh & Lee, 2022). Furthermore, in 2016, the Ministry of Manpower in Singapore initiated commendations for dormitory designs and orchestrated a photography contest, inviting migrant workers to document and share vignettes of their day-to-day experiences (Figs. 13.1 and 13.2).

The narrative curated by the Tuas South Dormitory's online portal paints a picture of migrant workers' lives steeped in comprehensive care and recreational abundance, implying that the numerous facilities within obviates any necessity to venture into the city's heart. The communication is laden with descriptions of a self-contained world—multi-purpose halls, gyms, and communal gathering spaces—all elements that beckon the reader to see this as a microcosm of urban life in its own right. The portrayal of the National Day celebrations at Tuas South Dormitory in August 2018, showcases photographs shining a positive light on the migrant experience. One depicts a scene of festivity where a performer entertains an audience amidst a sea of colorful flags. Another one showcases workers on a festooned stage

Fig. 13.1 Tuas South Dormitory

Fig. 13.2 A recreation Center near Tuas South

under a banner of corporate affiliation. The informal dress and use of a microphone for speeches or performances aim to foster a sense of community and recognition. Yet, the prominent display of corporate branding and the very necessity of hosting such events within the dormitory's confines are emblematic of a curated facade.

In 2015, as Doha anticipated the infrastructural demands of the forthcoming 2022 World Cup and faced scrutiny over the living standards of its migrant workforce, the authorities unveiled plans for seven new residential cities. These cities, intended to accommodate 250,000 laborers engaged in World Cup projects, were touted as a significant improvement to workers' living conditions. The project known as "Labor City," later rebranded as "Asian City," encapsulates this effort. The developer's website articulates a vision of "Asian City" as a harmonious enclave designed to ensure superior living standards for workers, in alignment with Qatar's vision for the 2022 World Cup. The website heralds the inclusion of verdant spaces, recreational facilities, and a congenial atmosphere as catalysts for a contented and industrious workforce.

This urban intervention also witnessed the conception of an entertainment hub, initially called 'West End Park' and subsequently renamed "Asian Town." Tailored to the cultural preferences of South Asian workers, it boasts a sprawling hypermarket, a shopping mall, an amphitheater capable of seating 16,000, a cricket stadium for 13,000 spectators, and cinemas dedicated to Bollywood films. While ostensibly these developments are aimed at enriching the lives of migrant workers, critics argue they serve a parallel function of facilitating a spatial and social segregation. By situating entertainment and lifestyle amenities within the confines of these labor cities, there is an implicit yet potent redirection of migrant social life away from the city's core, embedding a subtle architecture of exclusion within the urban fabric of Doha (Figs. 13.3 and 13.4).

Fig. 13.3 Asian City Gate, Doha

Fig. 13.4 Asian Town on a Friday

Within Doha's urban landscape, spaces like Asian City have been crafted not just as residential zones for migrant labor but as stages for the portrayal of exemplary treatment. A telling example comes from the Peninsula Qatar's coverage of the 2018 National Day celebrations titled "Parade by expatriate communities in Asian Town." This account highlights a parade featuring teams from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, assembled in a choreographed homage to Qatar National Day, facilitated by the Ministry of Interior and the overseers of Asian Town. The event is described as a vivid display of allegiance and cultural pageantry.

Photographic depictions of the celebration reveal a tableau of migrant workers donning white attire with red accents, a procession infused with the symbolism of national and cultural pride. The imagery is dense with connotations—a flag emblazoned with India's tricolor alongside banners announcing the National Day, all set against a backdrop of corporate insignia, suggesting a narrative carefully curated for public consumption. Another image captures a parade endorsing the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, with individuals holding signs of support. A man holds a placard proclaiming "WE SUPPORT QATAR 2022," while another brandishes a large football trophy replica. This visual narrative, while meant to evoke a sense of festivity and collective anticipation for the upcoming World Cup, underscores the peripheral existence of the workers within the urban and social fabric of the city.

The conception of Asian Town with its Bollywood cinemas, and the Tuas Dormitory complete with a cricket stadium, epitomizes a deliberate architectural segregation—a separation reinforced by stringent policies limiting migrant workers' access to the civic heart of cities. In Doha, the exclusion manifests in the banning of 'bachelors' from malls, while in Singapore, migrant workers find themselves fined on the streets of Little India.

This cultural provisioning operates within a framework that perceives migrant workers predominantly as economic units, orchestrating a balance among divergent forces. We see xenophobic sentiments and Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) attitudes demanding a reduction in migrant labor, business interests advocating for the unfettered recruitment of an economical workforce, and civil society voices urging for the preservation of migrants' dignity—a call that gains resonance amid crises, such as the pandemic, when international attention spotlights migrant living and working conditions. The relocation to peripheral enclosed housing, paired with amenities and cultural service offerings, emerges as a tripartite compromise, appeasing xenophobic tensions, catering to commercial imperatives for inexpensive labor, and showcasing goodwill to address migrant welfare.

Civil society groups, often engaged in humanitarian and social endeavors, find their involvement in cultural initiatives within these new peripheral migrant concentrations to be a double-edged sword. Although these projects facilitate interaction and community contact, they are also co-opted by governmental authorities to propagate communications on public health, urban etiquette, and national celebrations—effectively channeling the communal life of migrant workers away from city centers to designated peripheries.

For instance, the Indian Cultural Center in Doha, offering activities like dance and yoga, becomes a conduit for municipal messaging on civic responsibilities.

Similarly, associations like NIDO Qatar collaborate with official committees to promote cultural engagement and volunteerism, reflecting a systematic redirection of community dynamics. "They had a campaign that was called Keep Your City. The easiest way to approach those community organizations to deliver the messages is to approach the Indian Cultural Center" (Interview with a community leader operating under the aegis of the Indian Cultural Center). In Singapore, the Migrant Worker Center, initiated by the national trade union, opens recreational spaces explicitly designed to intersect with migrants' social habitats: "to meet them in their comfort zone," as one employee describes.

Yet, for organizations like Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2), this engagement is fraught with complexity. Their participation in government-organized carnivals within migrant dormitories is a concession, particularly under movement restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Such involvement is met with ambivalence, as the intensive labor required for event organization diverts resources from pressing welfare issues: "Organising events is a lot of work. We deal with life-threatening situations," states the president of TWC2. There's a pervasive sentiment that these events can often be paternalistic and self-congratulatory.

13.5.2 Migrants in the National Heritage Narrative

While the migrant workers who help build the cities of Doha and Singapore and sustain their economies are notably absent from the core of their grand narratives of national development and urban growth, in recent years, cultural institutions have attempted to dot their displays with stories of migrant workers, advancing a timid recognition of their contributions to city.

For instance, Doha's Msheireb Museums, an institution under the aegis of the Qatar Foundation, have taken a step towards confronting historical and contemporary issues of labor exploitation with the opening of the Bin Jelmood house. This space is dedicated to the history of slavery and includes a segment on its modern manifestations. One of the exhibits shows the pictures of workers captured during a moment of respite on a construction site, with the nascent skyline of Doha looming in the background. The juxtaposition of the laborers against a milieu of architectural ambition and wealth, coupled with an explanatory note on the kafala system's abuses, strikes a chord about the stark realities of migrant life in a region synonymous with rapid growth and prosperity.

Further, the exhibition positions the Gulf's experience in a global context by drawing parallels with the exploitation of migrant agricultural workers in Western nations, as depicted in another panel. Here, the solitary figure of a worker, resting with a gaze that meets the viewer's, serves as a somber testament to the universal challenges migrant laborers face across continents. The narrative is carefully constructed to prompt reflection on the ubiquity of exploitation, subtly suggesting a shared global complicity.

The Msheireb museum's exhibition indeed breaks ground by broaching a topic often shrouded in silence, bringing the typically unseen migrant community into visibility. However, it stops short of a full-throated celebration of the migrant's integral role in the making of modern Doha, nor does it directly confront the contemporary conditions of exploitation. In effect, while the exhibit opens a dialogue on the struggles of migrant workers, it also subtly relativizes these issues within a global frame—perhaps as a means to temper critique, casting the local as one part of a worldwide phenomenon of migrant labor challenges.

Singapore's National Museum hosted an exhibition titled "Open Doors," with a narrative of the city-state's historical embrace of migration and the diversity that has become the cornerstone of its national identity. The exhibit includes stories from those who sought and built a life on its shores, portraying Singapore as not just a confluence of cultures but as a crucible where the very essence of 'home' is continually forged and redefined. Through the exhibition, visitors are encouraged to traverse the corridors of Singapore's multicultural heritage, engaging with audio installations that offer a spectrum of personal reflections.

Among the highlighted accounts is that Raj, originally from India, oversees the welfare of his compatriots at Homestay Lodge, a dormitory located in Kaki Bukit. His narrative is one of sacrifice and purpose, finding solace and satisfaction in ensuring the well-being of others despite the personal cost of familial separation. Raj's account is portrayed as emblematic of the migrant experience in Singapore—a narrative carefully curated to highlight themes of happiness and security within the context of migration. However, the exhibition's selective storytelling and its emphasis on positive individual experiences may be viewed as an attempt to sculpt a particular public image. By celebrating these specific narratives, the exhibit seeks to integrate migrant stories into Singapore's broader national identity, while subtly deflecting from the systemic challenges faced by the migrant community.

The place of migrant workers' lives is carefully situated at the periphery of national narratives within the halls of cultural institutions like the Singapore National Museum and the National Museum of Qatar. Absent from the main thrust of the national story, they are displayed in specialized segments, relegated to the basement exhibitions or the concluding sections of a museum display. This spatial and narrative positioning reflects a deliberate choice, one that serves to acknowledge their existence without fully integrating their stories into the dominant account of nationhood.

The underlying rationale is twofold, encompassing both public diplomacy and internal dynamics. Amid global scrutiny and a heightened concern for international image, particularly in cities like Singapore and Doha that rely heavily on migrant labor for their developmental ambitions, there is a palpable need to craft a positive discourse. This narrative strategy acknowledges migrants' contributions, enhancing the nation's reputation in the eyes of the global community and the migrants' countries of origin, sustaining the influx of labor critical for ongoing growth.

Simultaneously, these cultural displays are directed toward the national population, aiming to temper xenophobic attitudes and cultivate a sense of acceptance and

appreciation for the migrant community. By showcasing the indispensable yet often overlooked contributions of migrants, such exhibits tacitly promote a recognition of their value. Yet, the dialogue stops short of addressing the more profound questions of status and belonging. These policies reinforce the notion of the migrant worker as transient, an interim contributor rather than a permanent fixture, irrespective of the depth of their ties to the city.

13.5.3 Conviviality and Empowerment

Grassroots cultural movements, propelled by the migrants themselves together with local civil society organizations, have striven to create civic spaces designed to redefine the place of migrant workers in the representations of the city.

The Kerala Women's Initiative of Qatar (KWIQ) embodies a model of civic engagement, fostering convivial spaces where personal narratives and cultural expressions can flourish. KWIQ's event, 'Onnichoronam,' is a vivid illustration of such a space—a festival celebrating the cultural heritage of Kerala and providing a platform for the voices and talents of female domestic workers in Qatar. During 'Onnichoronam,' held in October 2022, KWIQ transformed an Indian School into a microcosm of Kerala, replete with the traditional Ona Sadhya feast served on banana leaves, cultural performances by KWIQ members, and spontaneous acts of song and dance by the domestic workers themselves (The Peninsula, 2022). By centering these women as special guests, KWIQ disrupted the typical narrative of domestic workers' invisibility, instead highlighting their contributions and resilience.

The distribution of gifts and the opportunity to perform and be heard transformed the event into an acknowledgment of the women's sacrifices. As one worker remarked, it was the first time in nearly two decades that she felt seen and heard in such a public and affirming manner. This moment of recognition encapsulates the transformative potential of creating civic spaces where migrant workers can emerge from the shadows of their daily toil. In an interview, KWIQ President Zareena Ahad elaborated on the initiative's objectives. The event was not just about providing a day of happiness but about recognizing and celebrating the often-overlooked segment of the community. By identifying and showcasing the diverse talents of these women, KWIQ endeavors to elevate their status within the community, potentially opening pathways to further develop and share their abilities. By providing a stage to showcase their talents, KWIQ aims to challenge the reduction of the identities of migrant workers to their assigned economic function. Instead, they are portrayed as individuals brimming with talent and aspirations, capable of enriching the cultural landscape of their host country.

The Migrant Writers of Singapore's Storytelling Festival at Bishan library in May 2022 epitomizes the transformative potential of civic spaces where the voices of migrant workers and local citizens resonate in unison. Through the art of storytelling, the festival aimed to illuminate a path towards mutual understanding and empathy, celebrating the universality of the human condition. Rahul Shah, opening

the event, emphasized the unity found in shared narratives, highlighting that despite the perceived divides of our fragmented world, there is common ground to be found in our basic human experiences of pain and love. His message set the tone for a day of connection and reflection, challenging the audience to envision a world of peaceful coexistence fostered by the shared practice of storytelling.

As diverse individuals took the stage, the multiple functions of such a space of conviviality materialized. Mary Joyce, a domestic worker and newcomer to the Migrant Writers of Singapore, shared her personal journey toward finding a sense of belonging. For her, the festival represented the realization of a dream—to publicly author and share her story, a tale of unattainable love, before a live audience. Theo Kwek, a Singaporean writer instrumental in amplifying migrant workers' voices through translation, contributed to the event, weaving a historical tale that spans both time and cultural landscapes. Ellen Laville, another domestic worker, approached the stage with humor and vulnerability. By sharing an intimate glimpse into her life and work environment, she transformed her personal space—a sleeping area that doubles as a bomb shelter—into a sanctuary of her own making, challenging the audience to confront the stark realities of domestic work. The festival culminated with a powerful account from a mother who narrated her sacrifices to secure an education for her son, culminating in his achievement as a certified teacher in the United States. Her story, laden with emotion, highlighted the often-invisible struggles and triumphs of migrant workers, providing a poignant reminder of the aspirations that transcend the labor they perform.

The grassroots activists who organized this storytelling festival, including migrant workers, local writers, and advocates, constructed a civic space where diverse backgrounds and experiences converged. Such spaces allow migrant workers to emerge as multifaceted individuals: writers, artists, activists, brimming with emotions and dreams. By presenting themselves in these capacities, they challenge the monolithic narratives often perpetuated by mainstream media and contribute to dismantling the constrictive categories imposed upon them. These spaces foster a reimagining of migrant workers' roles, allowing them to be seen as architects of a vibrant, alternative cultural landscape within the city.

These initiatives provide a platform to highlight critical issues affecting migrant workers—safety hazards on job sites, inadequate housing, and exploitative conditions tethered to employer whims. By articulating their experiences and perspectives, these workers offer a window into their realities, fostering empathy and solidarity from the broader population, and galvanizing community support.

Yet the transformative potential of these initiatives is often tempered by their material fragility. Unlike the more established, well-resourced cultural policies, these grassroots efforts are fueled by the passion and personal investment of their organizers, who operate with limited funds and scarce time. Their capacity to capture the attention of a wider audience and to effect substantial change is restricted by these constraints.

The institutional landscape plays a crucial role in shaping the visibility and sustainability of migrant cultural initiatives. In Singapore, formal NGOs actively develop and promote cultural projects with and for migrant workers, providing them

with platforms for public engagement and recognition. In contrast, Doha lacks comparable NGO structures, meaning that cultural initiatives rely on informal, community-based networks, often constrained by the absence of legal NGO status, which limits access to funding, permanent staffing, and public spaces.

13.6 Privileged Precarious Migrants as Cultural City-Makers

Cultural city-makers are at the forefront of cultural policies towards migrant workers in Doha and Singapore. These individuals are dynamic agents, inventing new cultural narratives that can have a transformative impact on the city and particularly influence how it is experienced by the most marginalized migrants. Often migrants themselves, cultural city-makers have a status that oscillates between various forms of precarity and privilege. In contrast to the migrant workers at the bottom of the social ladder, who endure demanding work schedules and the shackles of debt, cultural city-makers possess key economic and social resources that enable them to engage in civic and collective initiatives. They usually come from middle-class backgrounds and have higher education. In addition, their professional and community engagement, has enabled them to rise socially and accumulate cultural and social capital, distinguishing them from more precarious labor migrants who have limited opportunities to advance socioeconomically.

In Doha, personalities such as Victor Ikoli, a Nigerian journalist and community leader, and Zareena Ahad, head of the Kerala Woman Initiative, exemplify this role. Ikoli, leveraging his media experience and community ties, mediates between the Nigerian community and Qatari authorities, fostering a positive communal image. Ahad, alongside her association, addresses educational and welfare needs, fostering community solidarity. In Singapore, figures like Shivaji Das, a consultant and distinguished writer, and Zakir Hossain Khokan, a construction worker-turned-cultural activist, stand out. Das, through initiatives like the migrant poetry contest and the Global Migrant Festival, amplifies migrant voices in creative spheres. Khokan, utilizing his literary talents and public speaking skills, advances worker rights and cultural expression, evidenced by his contributions to Singapore's Migrant Workers Poetry Competition and his varied creative publications.

These individuals, through their respective platforms, not only bridge gaps between migrants and host societies but also reconstruct migrant identities, enabling cultural contributions that reshape urban narratives. Cultural citymakers possess a wealth of social resources, connections across institutions, and a profound ability to foster relationships with activists and migrants alike. They spearhead NGOs that leverage culture as a means to engage with migrant workers and address their plights. As orchestrators of cultural policy, they draw upon diverse sectors, drawing cultural institutions into the conversation. Their foremost goal is to redefine migrants—not merely as cogs in an economic machine but as individuals with rich identities, histories, and aspirations.

Cultural city-makers mobilize creativity as powerful means to navigate political restrictions. Through metaphor, allegory, and symbolism, creative works can convey messages that might otherwise be censored if expressed in direct political discourse. In societies where open criticism is stifled, collective creative spaces become a sanctuary for free thought, allowing for the assertion of individual and collective agency.

Nonetheless, the latitude for creativity that cultural city-makers enjoy is not without its bounds. Despite their relatively advantageous positions, cultural city-makers are often precarious. The demarcation between permissible cultural expression and that which transgresses accepted norms is often indistinct. To overstep these boundaries is to risk severe repercussions. Their efforts to weave the narratives of the marginalized into the urban culture are not immunized against sanction. This precariousness is illustrated by the case of Zakir Hossain Khokan, whose substantial cultural contributions to Singapore could not shield him from being eventually expelled from the city that he had called his home for nearly two decades.

13.7 Conclusion

Cultural policies aimed at marginalized migrants in Doha and Singapore follow two instrumental goals. Firstly, there is a concerted effort to mitigate criticism—both local and international—regarding the living and working conditions of migrant workers. Cultural amenities are strategically deployed as a counter-narrative to deflect from allegations of exploitation, presenting an image of concern for migrant dignity and welfare. Secondly, the provision of these cultural services within designated enclaves operates to minimize migrants' interactions with the broader urban community, effectively sidelining them from the city's communal life.

In this context, cultural city-makers endeavor to carve out spaces of solidarity and shared experience, countering the exclusionary currents. Their navigation through the prevailing forces of segregation can sometimes lead to compromises, where the legitimization of the status quo becomes an unintended byproduct of their efforts. The precarity of their own status often precludes these cultural actors from pushing the boundaries further.

When considering the comparative dynamics of collective cultural organization in Doha and Singapore, a notable contrast ought to be highlighted. Doha's more authoritarian leanings impose stringent restrictions on collective associations, rendering the city's cultural scene highly centralized. In contrast, Singapore's relatively more liberal political context allows for a cultural civil society with a certain degree of autonomy. This gives rise to an active network of NGOs that work towards migrant empowerment and cultivate connections that transcend their initiatives, fostering a more integrated community consciousness.

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Chapter 14
Religious City Makers and Actors of Urban Diversity Governance: Hindus in Paris and Singapore

Natalie Lang

14.1 Introduction

A late Friday morning in La Chapelle, Paris, 2022. "*Tambi,*[1] come here!", "*Tangacci,*[2] it's over here!", "*Tambi*, put your shoes here!" (my translation from Tamil). Deepa[3] is busy calling out to people who walk on the pavement in direction of where the Ganesh temple was until yesterday. Most do not know that a temporary place of worship was set up in a tiny room two buildings away yesterday that will remain for 5 weeks. During this period, the temple is being renovated before the renewal of the consecration, which usually takes place every 12 years (Tamil: *Makākumpāpiśēkam*). The temple was consecrated on the ground floor of a three-story residential building in 2010 (Fig. 14.2b). While it does not have a distinctive appearance from outside, the shrines inside the temple were installed by South Asian specialists following Hindu architectural principles. The interim temple, located in a small room within a six-story residential building two doors down, contains a few selected small statues and painted images of divinities instead of the larger statues from the temple under renovation. Deepa is not only concerned about people not finding their way to this interim temple, but also about a neighboring shop owner who had previously complained about shoes placed in front of her shop. Deepa is also aware of residents

[1] Tamil: younger brother. Address for men younger than the speaker. I write *tambi* instead of the correct transliteration (*tampi*) to facilitate pronunciation for the reader.

[2] Tamil: younger sister. Address for women younger than the speaker.

[3] All names are pseudonyms which correspond to the names' origins (Tamil/French/English).

N. Lang (✉)
Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany
e-mail: natalie.lang@cemis.uni-goettingen.de

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from the upper floors who might complain about too much noise. Furthermore, she keeps reminding devotees who stand on the pavement to leave a corridor for pedestrians to be able to pass through while they watch the ceremonies being performed in the temporary temple, which only has room for about 10 people at a time. Over the course of three weekend days, I only heard one pedestrian complain, saying "this is after all a very narrow pavement for such a crowd" (my translation from French). The "crowd" consisted of around 20 people.

A late Friday morning in Chinatown, Singapore, 2022. About 20 pairs of shoes are placed on the pavement and in the shoe rack next to the entry of the Sri Mariamman temple. It is a temple in Dravidian architecture with a high entrance tower (Tamil: *kōpuram*). The *kōpuram* is surrounded by a scaffold and green and blue sheets, which hide elaborate relief art. The temple is being renovated for the *Makākumpāpiśēkam*, which was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The temple was first built in the 1820s and is the oldest Hindu temple in Singapore. It was classified as a National Monument in 1973 and it is an important (touristic) landmark in Singapore's Chinatown (Fig. 14.4a). A large sign informs visitors to remove their foot wear, to wear clothes that cover knees and shoulders, to be quiet, and that smoking, meat and alcohol are not allowed in the temple. Inside the temple walls, a large open space surrounds the inner sacred, allowing people to sit on the stone floor or on artificial grass. Some people pray, others chat, some women buy saris, some children chase pigeons.

The ways these two Hindu places of worship are installed and built in the global cities of Paris and Singapore respectively raise questions about how religious actors contribute to the cities and what roles they play in the governance of religious diversity. What are the possibilities and challenges they face in terms of diversity governance? What strategies do they develop to co-create the diverse city? How are they city makers? Spatial strategies of religious groups often depend on their histories and their complex social positions in the specific cities. Scholars have suggested differentiating "place keeping" strategies of more established religious institutions from "place making" strategies, such as building places of worship or repurposing existing buildings, and less permanent "place seeking" strategies, such as meditation in open spaces (Burchardt et al., 2018). Elements of all three strategies become apparent in this chapter. I focus on how Hindus in Singapore and Paris contribute to the fabric of the cities in material ways through the installation or construction of temples and through their bodies, especially during festivals and processions.

Relations between religious practices and cities are multilayered. Julia Martínez-Ariño's (2018, 2021) analysis of the governance of religious diversity in medium-sized French cities reveals governance as processes initiated not only by the state but by multiple actors as they intersect on multiple levels, notably on the level of the city. Building on the idea of multiple actors being involved in the governance of religious diversity, I consider religious practitioners themselves as city makers (Hunter, 2013). Marcus Anthony Hunter (2013) employs the term "citymakers" to address the political agency of Black city makers in Philadelphia through their practices of framing discourses, voting, mobilizing and migrating. Considering religious practitioners as city makers, I emphasize their contributions to the city rather than

presenting them as somehow fitting into the existing urban fabric. I examine how they create urban space materially and socially (Lefebvre, 1991). They actively contribute to the urban fabric through their installations of temples, the conduct of festivals, and the creation of sacred atmospheres through their bodies. Viewing religious city makers as actors of diversity governance emphasizes the mutual interactions and formations of religion and urbanity (Lanz, 2014; Rüpke & Rau, 2020) rather than one-dimensional top-down processes. Examining how religious city makers contribute to the urban fabric requires an embodied approach, which recognizes bodies as central to the construction and experience of the city.

In the following sections, I first outline the selective and purposeful comparative approach of this chapter while sketching the heterogenous cases of Hindus to Singapore and Paris. I then embed questions about city makers in the multiculturalist and laicist frameworks with regards to religion-state relations in both cities. The subsequent parts of the chapter focus on how religious actors contribute to the cities through the creation and moving of places of worship, through the conduct of festivals, and through their devotional bodies. Examples of "sidewalk religion", indoor sacred atmospheres, and meticulous crowd management illustrate subtle ways of Hindus' self-governance. These examples emphasize the importance of considering the governance of religious diversity as processes and negotiations on multiple levels by multiple actors. Bodies turn out as central in the experience and the governance of religious diversity. The chapter is based on moments of anthropological fieldwork conducted in Singapore and Paris and remotely online between 2019 and 2023, with participant observation and biographical narrative interviews as the main methods.

14.2 Tamil Hindus in Singapore and Paris: Selective Comparison

Urban comparison as a strategic way of thinking requires continuous reflection on both the process and the objects of comparison (McFarlane, 2010). Colin McFarlane encourages us to reflect on strategic comparison in terms of epistemic power relations. Katherine V. Gough (2012) emphasizes the question of *whose* city is compared. Comparing Hindus as city makers in Singapore and Paris challenges the assumption that they form directly comparable groups, given their differing migration histories and diverse regional and social backgrounds. It also challenges perspectives about principles of governing religious diversity, like multiculturalism or *laïcité*, as being solely decisive in the governance of religious diversity. Rather than systematically comparing religious actors and cities, I attempt to compare contexts and processes that shape experiences (Gough, 2012:869). My strategy of comparison involves an actor-centered approach of following actors' practices and experiences of the relation between the religious and the urban (cf. Lanz, 2014:30–34).

Small-scale ethnographic instances exemplify how the making of a diverse city can look like.

The comparative perspective in this chapter takes into account the intersection of divergences and commonalities when focusing on Tamil Hindus in both cities, with their different compositions in terms of regional backgrounds and migration circumstances. Singaporean Hindus constitute about five percent of the population,[4] with an estimated 80 percent of Tamil origin (Sinha, 2013:117). Unlike Singapore, where racial and religious categories play a key role in bureaucracy, French secularism does not permit the collection of religious or ethnic census data. In the absence of official numbers, the *Observatoire de la laïcité* estimates the number of Hindus in France at about 0,4 percent.[5] Even though the percentage might be higher in the capital than the French average, I assume it to be lower than in Singapore. Like in Singapore, the majority of Hindus in Paris have Tamil origins, though with different proportions in terms of regional background.

The Hindu presence in both nations stems from complex migration histories from India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Mauritius, spanning different periods and continuing with ongoing migration today. Hinduism was already significant in precolonial Singapore, and migration continued with convict labor, indentured labor, and free labor, primarily from South India for colonial infrastructure projects. More recently, migration flows have included both low- and high-skilled workers from South and North India (Rai, 2014; Somaiah, 2018). In Paris, the majority of Hindus are Sri Lankan Tamils who fled from the Sri Lankan civil war in the 1980s and 1990s and their descendants, who contributed much to the visibility of Hinduism in the city and its suburbs. The visibility of Hinduism is thus much more recent in Paris than in Singapore. The diverse backgrounds of Hindus in Paris also include considerable numbers of Indo-Mauritians since the 1970s; French of Indian origins from the French overseas departments La Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Guyana; Pondicherrians who chose French citizenship when the French Indian territory became part of India in 1962; Bengali and Gujarati Hindus who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s respectively (Dequirez, 2007; Goreau-Ponceaud, 2008; Trouillet & Voix, 2020).

In addition to the continuously changing social composition of the 'Hindu' community in both cities, it is important to consider that a number of Hindus in Paris and Singapore simultaneously conduct diverse religious practices. These include Taoist, Muslim and Roman Catholic elements in Singapore (Sinha, 2009) and Catholic (Bruland, 2013) and Evangelical practices in Paris.

The spatial distribution of Hindus in both cities shows both similarities and differences. Their places of worship do not always align with their residential areas. In

[4] Singapore Department of Statistics. 2015. *General Household Survey* 2015: 22. https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/publications/ghs/ghs2015/ghs2015.pdf.

[5] Observatoire de la laïcité. 2019. *Étude sur l'expression et la visibilité religieuses dans l'espace public aujourd'hui en France.* 2019: 13. https://www.info.gouv.fr/upload/media/organization/0001/01/sites_default_files_contenu_piece-jointe_2019_10_etudesurlavisibilitereligieuse.pdf.

Paris, Sri Lankan Tamil Hindus installed temples in the neighborhood La Chapelle, where they first arrived, and importantly in the suburbs, where most now live. La Chapelle, situated between the railway lines of the two important train stations Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est, continues to be the symbolic and commercial Tamil neighborhood with South Asian shops, restaurants, and currently two Hindu temples. At the same time, new concentrations of Tamil shops and more than 10 registered Hindu temples have emerged in other parts of the city and mostly in its suburbs. In Singapore, where public housing policies attempt to prevent the creation of ethnic residential neighborhoods, Hindu temples are also spread around the city. Several are located in areas where many Hindus used to live, rather than being only concentrated in the heritage neighborhood Little India. Furthermore, Hindu lives in both Paris and Singapore often stretch beyond the city borders. Many Hindus commute between La Chapelle and the outskirts of Paris or between Singapore and the Malaysian town Johor Bahru and have transnational family networks.

While focusing on Tamil Hindus in Singapore and Paris entails diverse migration backgrounds and religious practices, I take the aspect of being Hindu religious minorities in secular states as a commonality to compare how religious practitioners act as city makers and contribute to the governance of urban diversity. Comparison in the sense of a thinking exercise allows us to see how a Hindu minority can develop in different cities, in different periods, under different conditions. Examining how Hindus are city makers in the two cities reveals differences and similarities in the minorities' felt recognition and in how they contribute to the governance of religious diversity. In both cases, bodies are key actors of contributing to urban space and to urban diversity through experiences, practices and negotiations.

14.3 Multiculturalist and Laicist Approaches to Religious Diversity

Singapore and France both define themselves as secular states. Yet, their multiculturalist and laicist approaches to dealing with religious diversity create different frameworks for the making of religious minorities. In France, the state does not officially recognize any religion, in line with the principle of *laïcité*. Important steps in the laicization in France include the secularization of primary education in the 1880s, the introduction of the 1901 law of freedom of association, and the 1905 law on the separation of church and state. From the assimilationist policies of colonial France until today emerged a republican idea of French national citizenship that outranks religious identification (Trouillet & Voix, 2020). Some Hindus in Paris complained to me about Hinduism not being recognized. Their narrations included difficulties some associations faced when installing or having to move their temples or to receive authorization to hold a procession. At the same time, they felt that Hinduism was largely considered as unproblematic in Paris, especially in contrast to Islam. This resonates contemporary debates about *laïcité*, which are often directly

related to the position of Islam in the French society, which is constructed as the threatening other (Roy, 2007; Wieviorka, 2014). Several Tamil Hindus told me that the visibility of Hinduism started with ISKCON in the 1970s, which in turn enabled other Hindu associations to become more visible. ISKCON itself was listed as a cult with threat to society in 1995, which reduced its growth (Trouillet & Voix, 2020).

In Singapore, Hinduism is a recognized religion with representative members in the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony. Two secular state bodies, the Hindu Endowments Board and the Hindu Advisory Board, impact how official religion plays out in the city. The non-governmental Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) with key politicians as patrons counts council members of 10 religions. Hinduism is among them. The IRO's Harmony in Diversity Gallery exhibits these 10 religions, attributing them a particular degree of recognition (see Fig. 14.1). The IRO worked with the government to create the Harmony in Diversity Gallery in 2016, which shows how state and community levels intersect in the governance of diversity. Andy Tan (2020) perceives the governance of religious diversity in Singapore as consisting of both top-down and bottom-up approaches. The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act exemplifies a top-down approach. It allows the Minister of Home Affairs, who is reported on religious harmony issues by the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony, to issue restraining orders against leaders or members of religious groups who raise conflict with the government or other religious

Fig. 14.1 Hinduism among the 10 exhibited religions at the Harmony in Diversity Gallery, Singapore, 2022

groups. Bottom-up initiatives include Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCCs) and the Community Engagement Programme (CEP), which foster collective community organization across racial and religious differences (Tan, 2020:55–72). Religious Harmony is a key official notion of Singapore's approach of dealing with diversity, with a 2003 Declaration of Religious Harmony recited in schools on the annual Racial Harmony Day. The measures to secure religious harmony are numerous, also including the government's Broadening Religious/Racial Interaction through Dialogue and General Education (BRIDGE) initiative launched by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, which initiates inter-faith dialogues.

While such Singaporean initiatives certainly raise awareness about Hinduism and thereby recognition, I also observed insecurities about whether festivals would be permitted annually. Public Hinduism requires much negotiation with the state bureaucracy. Members of the HEB serve as intermediaries between religious practitioners and the city-state, and are sometimes regarded as standing too much on the side of the latter. Vineeta Sinha (2011, 2014) has observed multiple examples of how Singaporean Hindus successfully deal with bureaucratic frameworks and obstacles. Attempts by elites and official institutions to define 'official Hinduism' do not necessarily follow Sanskritization or Brahminization processes. They often primarily follow administrative logics and reflect the desire to create a respectable image of Hinduism since at least the mid-twentieth century (Sinha, 2008). During the COVID-19 pandemic, I observed Hindus fearing that the shortening and minimalizing of festivals and their rituals could be taken as a precedent by the state to argue that these rituals could be shrunk in general in the following years.

Furthermore, in both Paris and Singapore, religious groups need to adapt or react to categories the state prefers or prescribes. Singaporean multiculturalism works much through racial categories (Lian, 2016). Multiracialism in Singapore prioritizes racial diversity over religion, while identification as Singaporean remains key (Chua, 2017:123–56). The racial categories determined from colonial pluralism into Singapore's postcolonial multiculturalist framework (Goh, 2008) challenge Singaporean communities which do not necessarily wish to be associated under the racial categories of Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Other. For instance, Ceylon-Tamils largely ceased asserting their elevated social status through public identity politics due to the risk of being subsumed under the category of "Indian" (SelvaRaj, 2016). Tamil Muslims neither fit the category "Malay" nor "Indian", as "Indian" is closely associated with Hinduism (Singh, 2016). A stand-up comedy competition about the "best Indian" is a humorous yet serious take on the category Indian not reflecting the diversity of Singaporeans of South Asian origins and different religious orientations. In the competition between two men of Indian origin, both know all the answers to questions about Hindu religious festivals, only to clarify in the end that one is a Sikh and one a Muslim.[6]

[6] "Best Indian in SGAG Is…" https://www.facebook.com/sgag.sg/videos/389074095329426/?t=204, 2019.

Although Hinduism is not officially recognized as a religion in France, the establishment of religious associations to create temples, organize festivals, and indirectly secure financial support demonstrates a degree of adaptation to the state's prescribed religious framework (Bowen, 2008:39–43, Lang, 2021:57–86, Liogier, 2009). Creating religious associations (*associations cultuelles*) following the 1905 law demand more bureaucratic efforts than associations following the 1901 law. Furthermore, access to association status under the 1901 and 1905 laws can vary locally (Bowen, 2008:39–43). While the status of a religious association following the 1905 law has advantages for the communities, such as tax exemptions, it also comes along with more possibilities of surveillance by the state, for example of financial transactions. French laicism thus does not mean that there are no interactions between Hindus and the state. While Paris is the center of the very centralized French state administration, religious governance plays out on multiple levels, including the level of the city (eg. Berger, 2019:100–52, Bowen, 2008:39–43). For instance, the installation of temples and the conduct of religious festivals requires permission from the town hall and the prefecture. In the secular cities of Paris and Singapore with their respective approaches to pluralism, the ways Hindus create temples and hold festivals provide important insights into the making of Hindu minorities.

14.4 Temples on the Move

The creation of diasporic Hindu sacred spaces in the urban contexts of Paris and Singapore reveals aspirations to establish places where divinities reside and where they can be worshiped collectively. Singapore has more visible Hindu temples than Paris. Singapore features temples built in the Dravidian architectural style, whereas most temples in Paris are located within existing buildings. Some have a visible entrance, while others are less visible from the street, for example in a building behind a courtyard. In both cities, Hindu temples sometimes move. In Paris, the Ganesh temple in La Chapelle relocated to a new building in 2010 (Fig. 14.2a, b). The Sri Muthumariamman temple (Fig. 14.3a) disappeared from La Chapelle and a different Muthumariamman temple emerged a few years later in a suburb in 2021. The Sri Ayyappan temple moved from a suburb to La Chapelle in 2018, where it is installed in a building next to a launderette (Fig. 14.3b). In Singapore, the Sri Mariamman temple (Fig. 14.4a) and the Murugan Hill temple (Fig. 14.4b) are both built in South Indian architecture and quite impressive.

At first sight, this placative juxtaposition conveys a contrast between the precarious nature of temples in Paris and the large, long-established temples in Singapore. It reflects the historical difference between a long-established presence of Hinduism since colonial Singapore, and a rather recent place-seeking in the dense urban field of Paris. Comparing the situation of Hindu temples in both cities thus needs to consider the historical formations of the urban settings, and their respective Tamil Hindu immigrations. Since the establishment of the first Hindu temple in Paris in

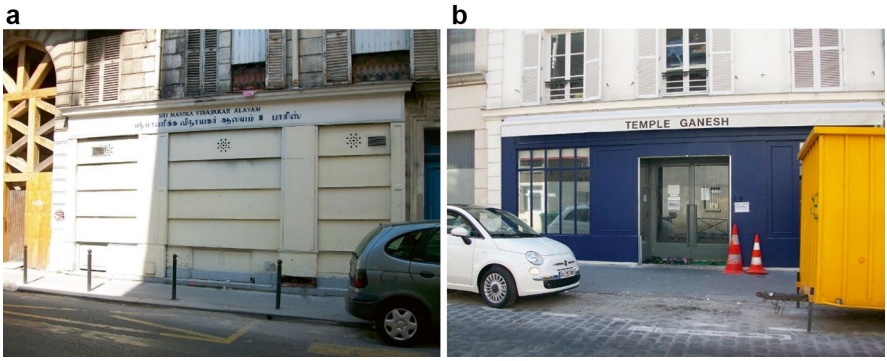

Fig. 14.2 (**a**, **b**) The previous (left) and actual (right) Ganesh temple in La Chapelle, Paris, 2010

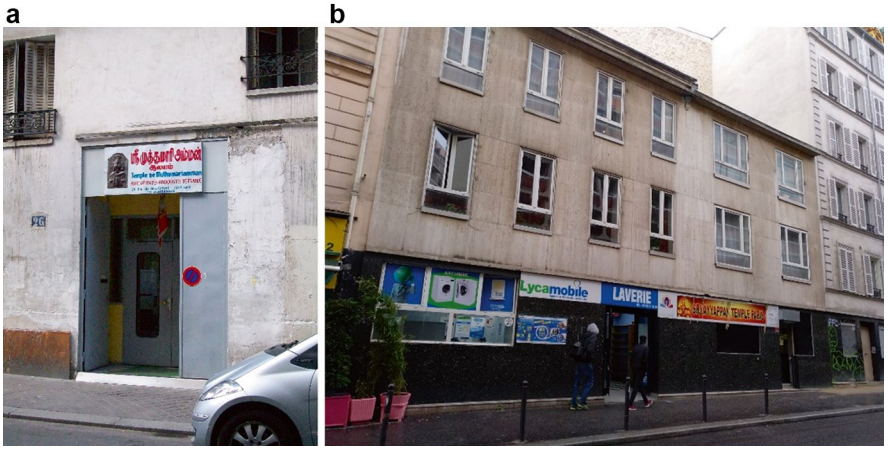

Fig. 14.3 (**a**, **b**) Sri Muthumariamman temple before its disappearance in La Chapelle, Paris, 2010 (left) and Sri Ayyappan temple in La Chapelle, Paris, 2019 (right)

Fig. 14.4 (**a**, **b**) Sri Mariamman temple in Chinatown, Singapore 2018 (left) and Murugan Hill Temple in Singapore, 2019 (right)

1985, there are now approximately 14 registered temples in Île-de-France (Goreau-Ponceaud, 2018). The temples I visited in Paris' Tamil neighborhood, La Chapelle, and in the suburbs were installed in already existing buildings rather than being constructed in South Asian architecture. Most of them already needed to change their location due to high rents, seizure of land property, or other conflicts. However, there are also more precarious or removed temples in Singapore. Four temples are under the administration of the HEB. They are sometimes called government temples, which is in turn disputed by Board members (Sinha, 2011:202). There are more than 20 other registered temples (27 registered in 2013), also including a "North Indian" temple (Lee, 2013), and numerous unofficial places of worship. At the same time, urban planning and state policy make the purchase of ground for religious purposes difficult. Especially small temples, which are not classified national monuments, face the challenge of renewing their 30-year lease, a policy to deal with limited space in Singapore. This sometimes leads to merging different temples into combined temples and pushes public religion to more private realms. The juxtaposition of installed or built temples in Paris and Singapore also neglects the importance of Hindu practices in less visible places of worship, such as in commercial spaces, parking lots, HDB open spaces, or moving jungle shrines in Singapore (Sinha, 2016, 2018:268–72), or in family temples in private courtyards in suburban Paris, and in the domestic sphere in both cities.

14.5 Creating Urban Space Through Hindu Festivals and Bodies

If the temples in Singapore and Paris could hardly look more different from outside, Hindus employ similar means to physically be present in the cities through the conduct of festivals and processions. While urban planning authorities tend to neglect the affective dimensions of urban religion, rituals, for instance during temple festivals and processions, actively contribute to the shaping of the city life (Dean, 2015). In Singapore, especially the public festivals *Taippūcam* and fire walking become moments of display of both religious identities and successful citizenship. Both festivals were largely organized by the respective temples' communities, until the HEB became involved in more detail in the organization of the festivals in the 1970s, even though only two of the three *Taippūcam* organizing temples are administered by the HEB (Sinha, 2011:222, 29). A half-blocked street, with a lane for devotees carrying *kāvaṭi* (decorated wooden structures) next to a lane for cars and buses leads from the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple in Little India about 4 km to the Sri Thendayuthapani Temple. The route includes some entirely blocked roads and

food and music stops. Compared to the focus on the procession in the *Taippūcam* festival, the culminating ritual of the fire walking takes places inside the Sri Mariamman Temple in Chinatown. In the last days of the fire walking festival, the area around the Sri Mariamman Temple is immersed into a festival atmosphere with devotees queuing in front of the temple, sitting, eating, and chatting. The fire walking festival also includes several chariot processions. These are less known than the *Taippūcam* procession and mostly conducted at night, but they present very important annual moments for the devotees. Through their embodied experiences during these moments of touring through the city with the goddess or sitting in a temporarily transformed neighborhood, religious actors create urban memory (Lang, 2024).

In Paris, the Ganesh temple has organized an annual festival since 1995, with a procession which attracts over 20,000 people (Goreau-Ponceaud & Lang, 2022). This is equally a moment when the entire neighborhood is immersed into a festival atmosphere, with the procession lasting several hours, the roads blocked, and loud music at several singing stages. La Chapelle also features the ISKCON Rath Yatra organized by a suburban ISKCON temple in Sarcelles, producing overlapping and conflicting claims about Tamil and Hindu visibility (Berger, 2019:125–32). In addition, several temples in the suburbs conduct annual processions in their respective neighborhoods. For instance, the Ganesh temple in the suburb of La Courneuve in the North of Paris, which has a significant Tamil population, has conducted a procession during its annual Ganesh festival since 2017, if not interrupted by the pandemic or for other reasons.

In all festivals, devotees' bodies visibly contribute to the fabric of the city. The processions create urban (sacred) space through human bodies and deities moving through the streets, as well as through decorations, sounds, and smells, attracting high numbers of spectators. At the same time, the conduct of Hindu processions in the streets is highly regulated and reduced in both Singapore and Paris. The *Taippūcam kāvaṭi* procession in Singapore exemplifies ongoing negotiations over religious diversity, including its removal from the list of public holidays and restrictions on playing music during the festival (Radics & Sinha, 2018). For the Ganesh procession in Paris, traffic is blocked and the festive atmosphere is amplified by voluminous sounds of Tamil live music from at least three corners of the neighborhood, which cause some non-Tamil passersby to cover their ears with their hands. However, this only lasts for a few hours. Traffic continues and the music stops even before the divinities are ritually brought back into the temple. The procession starts from the temple in the 18th arrondissement and moves through the tenth arrondissement, where many Tamil shops are located. When the Mayor did not allow it to pass through the tenth arrondissement in 1999 and 2000, this decision was condemned by the local Green party, a pastor and newspapers (Dequirez, 2002:87). Since this incident, the procession has passed through the 18th and tenth arrondissement and seems to have been integrated into the city's annual cycle of events (Berger, 2019:120).

In addition to the multilayered dimensions of the organization of these festivals, more subtle ways of diversity governance deserve equal attention. In the following sections, I describe what I call sidewalk religion and indoor sacred atmospheres in

Paris, and meticulous crowd management in Singapore as important self-governance practices of Hindus in these cities.

14.6 Sidewalk Religion and Indoor Sacred Atmospheres in Paris

Given the discrepancy between Tamil mobile engagements with the urban space of Paris while residing in the suburbs, and drawing on Henri Lefebvre's question of who has the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1972 [1968]), Nicole Berger emphasizes that "rightful subjects of urban spaces" need to be considered in light of their mobility and their mobile uses of the city rather than merely in terms of residential rights (Berger, 2019:30–31). In addition to moving between the symbolic Tamil neighborhood La Chapelle and the residential suburbs, even within La Chapelle, Hindus need to be mobile to practice their religion. For example, space is limited on the ground floor of the residential building so that the temple, the priests' residential apartments, the temple president's family's home, and several storages for ritual purposes are all located in different buildings in the surrounding streets.

At times, devotees stand on the sidewalk in front of the temple when it is too full to enter on weekends, or when the temple offers free lunch once or twice a week, forming a long queue of people waiting to be served. I call these moments of "sidewalk religion". When the temple cannot accommodate all devotees, the narrow space between the temple entrance and the street becomes an important site of religious worship. Devotees and the temple management are careful not to cause any conflicts on the sidewalks, as the following scene illustrates.

A Sunday morning in La Chapelle, Paris. Seeing Deepa so busy calling out to people in Tamil where to put their shoes, Padma decides to help her. Padma is a devotee from North India in her late 40s. She keenly tries to help in the Ganesh temple, which she regards as *seva* (service), for example by sweeping the temple floor. This does not always find appreciation among the Tamil temple volunteers, who seem content with their distribution of duties. On that day, Padma wants to help organizing the shoes and takes me along to a copy shop a few streets away in La Chapelle. Between a woman printing posters and flyers for her new henna business, and several people photocopying French forms, the shop assistants help Padma to set up a Word document. Having forgotten her glasses, she dictates me in French "Please leave your shoes here" and asks one of the assistants to type the sentence in Tamil, who writes "Please remove your shoes" in Tamil. Being the only one in this situation who understands both French and Tamil well enough to point out the mistake, I explain that it is not simply about removing foot wear before entering the temple, which most people know anyways, but about *where* to put the shoes in these special circumstances of having a small interim temple for the weeks of renovation taking place in the Ganesh temple. After 45 min of writing, discussing and formatting in the copy shop, Padma is satisfied with her result and we walk back to the

temple. There, a member of the temple management does not allow Padma to put up the printed signs. In the management member's look, I see incomprehension for Padma's initiative. The temple would probably not even have the authorization to put up such a sign. Furthermore, it would fixate a temporary situation of shoes on the pavement for a few weeks during the renovation works into a visible problem about the usage of public space. In Padma's eyes, I see disappointment. Turning to me, she emphasizes that she only wanted to help. She considered the 5 Euros she invested into printing these signs a significant contribution to the temple. I have not seen Padma in the Ganesh temple after this day. The situation reflects the heterogeneity of Hindus in Paris, with conflicting wishes of participation in the places of worship. Furthermore, this example of sidewalk religion shows how conscious practitioners are about not causing any trouble in Paris, and that temporary usages of space require subtle negotiations.

The notion of "sidewalk religion" was particularly evident during the 2023 Ganesh festival in La Courneuve, a suburb of Paris. The temple organizers were informed few days before the festival that the planned procession through the neighborhood was not allowed because of a replacement bus line passing in front of the temple due to train line repairs. The temple spontaneously conducted the festival entirely indoors and on the sidewalk in front of the temple. Festival participants managed to pull the god chariot for a few meters on the sidewalk between the temple entrance and the garage next to the temple. Instead of walking in a procession, male *kāvaṭi* carriers danced their decorated wooden arches inside the temple and on the pavement. Female fire pot carriers carried their fire pots for a few meters between the temple entrance to the garage. Devotees stood on both sidewalks of the street, leaving the street empty for the bus to pass. It was somehow ironic to see this sidewalk festival after several practitioners had told me that temples in the suburbs have more space for their festivals than those in the city centre.

In addition to moments of (attempted) public visibility, such as during the annual temple festivals, I also observed the creation of hidden, highly intensive atmospheres through the conduct of communal prayer in the Sri Ayyappan temple in La Chapelle. The temple is barely visible from the street and does not organize any procession through the neighborhood. Pedestrians sometimes try looking through the dark windows to see where the sounds of the prayer bell and chanting come from. Inside, the walls of the relatively small room are tiled black, a symbolic color of the main deity, which enhances the radiance of the golden shrines. During weekend worship, the temple is sometimes packed with devotees. They sit around the main shrine singing, drumming, playing cymbals, sweating due to the density of people. Oil lamps contribute to the atmosphere with their light and smell. At one of the culminating moments, the shutters are lowered and all electric lights are turned off, emphasizing the glow of the oil lamps. The deity and the devotees mutually see each other through the divine light. Seeing is a multisensory experience, which also includes hearing the prayer bell, smelling the oil lamps and incense, chanting prayer expressions, and experiencing the divine.

One devotee in this temple told me: "we escape the materialistic life once a week" (my translation from French). While devotees seem to escape their urban

lives, the urban remains key to their communal worship, as Sarah Pike (2017) has observed in the case of ecstatic dancers. Pike demonstrates how the ecstatic dancers' bodily practices and particular urban soundscapes can create temporary spiritual spaces to escape urban life. At the same time, the dancers remain closely connected to their urban lives and transport their spiritual experiences to other urban spaces. The hidden ways of practicing religion in the Sri Ayyappan temple, in the city center, yet invisible to the public, do not only present a weekly ritual in the devotees' experiences of the urban, but also contribute to the creation of urban neighborhood through sounds penetrating the walls of the building without the aim of public visibility. In addition, the Sri Ayyappan temple presents a door into India. It organizes an annual pilgrimage for a group of worshippers to the most important Ayyappan temple, in Sabarimala in South India, which allows them to "escape" even further.

14.7 Crowd Management in Singapore

A Sunday evening in the Sri Mariamman temple in Chinatown, Singapore. It is the culminating day of the fire walking festival. The otherwise large open space in the temple premises features a fire pit, producing an enormous heat you can feel when approaching the metal barriers surrounding it. The entire temple space is compartmentalized by metal barriers into seating areas and walking lines. Several thousand devotees enter the temple in the course of the evening. When some of the walking lines leading the moving crowds need adaptation, members of the crowd management teams quickly react and rearrange the metal barriers within seconds. Outside the temple, fire walkers queue in front of the main entrance to the temple, regulated by metal barriers and volunteers guiding them. Outside of two side entries to the temple, more metal barriers compartmentalize waiting areas for those you want to enter the temple to watch the fire walking. Volunteers allow the waiting devotees, who can sit on chairs in rows in their waiting compartments, to enter group after group. While inside the temple, the atmosphere is full of sounds, hectic movements, and excitement, the waiting areas outside the temple are impressively calm.

The fire walking festival is less visible than the big day-time processions during *Taippūcam* in Singapore and the Ganesh festival in Paris, but more visible than the prayers in the Sri Ayyappan temple in Paris. To outsiders, the fire walking festival might also be overshadowed by the grandiose Deepavali decorations in Little India and the Deepavali celebrations around that time. On the culminating evening, however, the entire neighborhood around the Sri Mariamman temple in Chinatown is full of devotees sitting, standing, walking, and queuing. The temple has several volunteer groups in charge of specific organizational aspects of the temple and its festivals. Two of the volunteer groups are responsible for crowd management. Already in the festival months preceding the culminating ritual of crossing a pit filled with glowing embers, these volunteers can be recognized by wearing T-shirts saying Crowd Management 1 and Crowd Management 2. One of my crowd

management interlocutors repeated several times that "the fire walking needs to be safe and sound".

The ways the Singaporean crowd management teams meticulously manage the participating crowds reflects Singapore's obsession with safety. The emphasis that the fire walking festival organizers lay on crowd management and the precision with which the volunteers execute the crowd management reveals an important level of self-governance of this religious minority. Such prudent forms of contributing to the governance of religious diversity also show in the examples of sidewalk religion in Paris. Devotees are apprehensive of potential conflicts with regards to waiting bodies and shoes on the pavement. During the conduct of an entire procession on a few meters of sidewalk in La Courneuve, devotees were mindful to stand behind the barriers on both sides of the street. While the instances of improvised governance of sidewalk religion in Paris and its suburbs concerned several hundred devotees at most, the conduct of meticulous crowd management by Singaporean Hindus takes the self-governance of religious diversity to a larger scale, with official crowd management teams guiding and protecting several thousands of devotees.

14.8 Material and Embodied City Making and Prudent Diversity Governance

The examples of Hindus in Singapore and Paris, with a focus on the installation of temples and the conduct of festivals, reveal how religious minorities contribute to the cities' diversities. While Hindus in Singapore are a historically older religious minority under constant negotiation from outside and inside, Hindus in Paris present a religious minority in the making with a more recent history. Despite the placative difference between large temples in Dravidian architecture in Singapore and temples installed in already existing buildings in Paris, I observed diverse levels of felt recognition in both cases. Some of my Singaporean Hindu interlocutors displayed a considerable degree of self-confidence in claiming rights and lamenting misrecognition by comparing the situation of Hindus to the Chinese majority. Others displayed great satisfaction with their possibilities to conduct religious practices, were happy to comply to the rules, and appreciated the emphasis on safety in Singapore. While some of my interlocutors in (sub)urban Paris lamented the little recognition Hinduism receives in France, most appreciated the possibilities of worship and relationsships with the respective townshalls they had. I did not come across many cases of comparison with the French Catholic majority. The sidewalk Ganesh festival in a suburb of Paris was particularly telling. Having organizing the procession during this annual festival only since a few years, which also was interrupted by the pandemic, the temple organizers quietly accepted the last-minute decision to not be able to have a procession through the neighborhood.

Even when unable to build temples or conduct elaborate street processions, Hindus contribute to the urban diversity through temporary embodied forms of

worship in public spaces, like sidewalk religion, and through indoor religion, with temple sounds permeating the streets. In addition to religious practices in temples and during festivals, religious diversity manifests itself in various aspects, such as in people's ways of dressing, in shops selling religious objects, in dance performances, music concerts, religious Sunday schools, negotiations about religious identificatory practices at work places, or in the sensory experiences of smelling or consuming charity food provided by places of worship. These practices, events and spaces contribute to a great extent to the ways Hindus experience the city, as well as to how non-Hindus perceive the city, and allow for moments of potential interreligious interactions. The invitation of political representatives as guests of honor to Hindu festivals in both Paris and Singapore is a case in point.

Hindus in both cities contribute not only to the cities' diversities but also to the governance of religious diversity, by claiming space in rather unagitated, serene and modest ways, without challenging municipal and state norms. The instances of sidewalk religion I observed during the Ganesh festivals in Paris and a suburb revealed a very prudent presence, with organizers being careful not to disturb the neighbors or violate regulations. While contributing to the neighborhood's popularity and attracting many spectators, including tourists, they make great efforts to not cause conflicts. Giving no cause for scolding emerges as important in the ways Hindus claim their "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1972 [1968]) through mobile spatial practices of installing temples and adapting their ritual practices to the traffic regulations in Paris and to the safety concerns in Singapore. The comparative approach taken in the chapter reveals how religious practitioners, as city makers, actively contribute through their temples, festivals and bodies to images and experiences of the city and to the governance of religious diversity.

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Chapter 15
Comparing Urban Diversity Governance: A Transregional and Relational Perspective

Jeremie Molho, Marie Gibert-Flutre, and Kong Chong Ho

15.1 Introduction

Why do cities that appear worlds apart, governed by different political systems and shaped by distinct migration histories, grapple with strikingly similar questions about how to govern diversity? What explains the emergence of common policy languages or parallel urban experiments in promoting diversity across such varied contexts? Answering these questions requires moving beyond explanations that rely on exoticizing difference or assuming straightforward policy diffusion and replication. A comparative approach can illuminate the diverse ways cities are reimagining diversity governance in response to shared global processes.

This volume has delved into the various ways in which city makers navigate and shape the politics of diversity. We have engaged with the material and symbolic contributions that these diverse actors make in urban space production. Through this lens, we have sought to advocate for an actor-driven approach, acknowledging the transformative power of different kinds of urban stakeholders. This book was guided by two interrelated objectives: to reconceptualize urban diversity governance through the active roles of city makers, and to advance a translocal comparative

J. Molho (✉)
Canada Excellence Chair in Migration and Integration Program, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: jeremie.molho@torontomu.ca

M. Gibert-Flutre
Department of East Asia Studies, Université Paris Cité, Paris, France
e-mail: marie.gibert@u-paris.fr

K. C. Ho
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: ho_kc@yale-nus.edu.sg

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framework that situates these processes within global networks and narratives. In this conclusive chapter, we highlight some key insights of the contributions of this book in advancing the understanding of the role of city makers in diversity governance, and draw some lessons on the use of comparison as a mode of thinking about urban diversity governance.

The comparative approach underpinning this volume is anchored in the conviction that urban diversity governance cannot be fully comprehended through a single regional lens, given the global nature of contemporary urban challenges. Our aim has been to bridge disparate contexts in Europe and Asia to contribute to a more decentered perspective. Such a comparative perspective ambitions to identify the common threads that bind the global urban experience (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009). When we examine the role of city makers, the value of comparative analysis becomes evident. These actors operate within a globalized context, shaped by the transnational flow of people, capital, and ideas. The dialectic between promoting desirable diversity as a catalyst for economic growth and exercising control through restrictions and regimentation manifests across both European and Asian urban landscapes. City makers, irrespective of their geographical settings, are bound by the global dynamics of migration, governance, and urban development, making a comparative perspective essential in understanding the complexities of urban diversity governance (Meissner & Vertovec, 2017).

Building upon the comparative approach, relational urbanism offers a more nuanced framework for analyzing urban diversity governance (Ward, 2022). This perspective conceives cities as dynamically interlinked within global networks of migration, capital, and policy transfer (Feldman & Jolivet, 2014; Söderström's, 2014). This approach challenges researchers to consider the complex, intertwined fabric of urban life that transcends geographic and cultural boundaries. By embracing relational urbanism, we can better capture the essence of how city makers navigate and shape the governance of urban diversity within a globally interconnected context.

15.2 Conceptualizing City Makers from a Global Perspective

Our book has brought to the fore an enriched understanding of city makers, emphasizing their role in the social life of the city. In Chap. 2, in the case of the Punggol district, Daniel Goh and Shai-Ann Koh move beyond the physical infrastructure crafted by elite city makers. Their work reveals the indispensable role of Indian migrant professionals in the social weaving of the district. In Chap. 10, Yang Yang illuminates the integral role of social engagement in the making of Xi'an's Silk Road narrative. This heritagization strategy gains substance through the culinary artistry of Hui chefs and the historical knowledge of scholars. Further, in Chap. 7 Vidal captures the subtle influence of Portuguese Janitors on urban life, through

their roles in their neighborhoods, which includes violence prevention, information dissemination, and political engagement.

Physical interventions are also central to the process of city-making. These interventions, however, are not merely about marking the presence of communities; they are profound expressions of values that resonate beyond the confines of any single group. In Chap. 11, Léa Réville provides a compelling case with the Halte Humanitaire in Paris, which has been projected as a manifestation of the city's commitment to the values of solidarity. For its symbolic potential to be actualized, it must be embraced by the community, requiring a delicate balance between the newcomers' needs and the existing residents' concerns. Similarly, in Chap. 3's Marie Gibert-Flutre shows that the Silk Road Paris wholesale market, is not simply a venue for commerce but a visible marker of the Chinese textile entrepreneurs' evolution from peripheral figures to prominent players in Paris's global standing.

The physical manifestations of migrants and minorities in the urban fabric are also indicative of their agency within the bounds of structural limitations. In Chap. 8, Samantha Lim and Elaine Ho present the urban villages of Guangzhou as a physical testament to the precariousness of temporary migration regimes. These high-density settlements, shaped by rural migrants under the restrictive Hukou system, are nevertheless tolerated due to the essential role these communities play in the urban economy. In Chap. 13, Natalie Lang shows how the religious expressions of Hindus in the urban space, through the establishment of temples or organization of festivals, has to be negotiated with local and national authorities, which can lead to highly contrasted visibilities in the public space. The experiences of international students in Chap. 6, studied by Rochelle Ge and Kong Chong Ho, further underscore the impact of institutional policies on urban experiences. The decisions by higher education to either segregate or integrate international students with local populations profoundly affect the students' social engagement with the city. Lastly, Chap. 12's examination of cultural city-making in Doha and Singapore by Jeremie Molho reveals how marginalized migrants navigate and sometimes subvert segregative cultural policies. Through cultural activities in enclaves that are often physically and socially segregated, migrants manage to create emancipatory spaces that serve both as a form of cultural expression and as a challenge to the structures that seek to marginalize them.

City-making extends beyond the tangible urban environment, enveloping the transnational social spaces that connect cities across the globe. In Chap. 1, Beniamino Peruzzi Castellani, brings to light how urban leaders in Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan reshape their cities' approaches to multiculturalism while actively engaging in a global discourse on intercultural city-making. By participating in city networks, these leaders are able to share policy innovations and elevate their stature as pioneers of diversity governance on the world stage. In Chap. 6, Rochelle Ge and Kong Chong Ho show that international students' movements and eventual settlement decisions enables them to build transnational friendship connections. In Chap. 9, Gilles Guiheux and Lulu Fan explores the economic and trade networks established by Chinese immigrants. These networks serve as vital linkages between cities, enabling migrant entrepreneurs to act as brokers, reinforcing the global economic position of their cities.

15.3 Comparative Urban Research as a Method to Investigate the Multi-Scalar Politics of Diversity Governance

In recent years, comparative urban research has increasingly been mobilized as a tool to trace traveling urban processes, study transnational urban activism, and analyse policies addressing global issues such as inequalities, segregation, and gentrification (Roy & Ong, 2011; McFarlane & Robinson, 2012; Le Galès & Robinson, 2023). This comparative approach can provide valuable insights into the politics of urban diversity (Dines, 2022). Comparative research can be undertaken for diverse purposes, including illuminating the unique characteristics of a particular case, situating a case within a wider context, or discerning the broader applicability of a concept (Abu-Lughod, 2007). We envision comparison not merely as a methodological tool but as an approach that underpins the conceptualization of urban diversity governance. Comparison engages with the political dimension of urban inquiry, using it as an instrument to challenge established claims in urban theory and contribute novel insights (McFarlane, 2010). Comparative thinking in urban studies has emerged as a crucial countermeasure to the pitfall of ethnocentrism, where urban researchers apply pre-conceived theoretical frameworks and methodological assumptions that preemptively dictate the significance and order of events (Qadeer, 2005; Ren, 2020).

In this book, comparison is not merely understood as a protocol to juxtapose different cities along pre-established variables but as a relational mode of urban analysis (Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2021). As McFarlane (2010) suggests, "our claims and arguments are always set against other kinds of urban possibilities or imaginaries." Thus, comparative urban research seeks to unravel the multiple implicit comparisons that underpin our reflections. Using Robinson's (2016) terminology, we advocate for various "comparative strategies," which reveal the many differentially connected processes shaping cities. Brenner (2001), building upon Charles Tilly's (1984) typology, introduces different comparative strategies, distinguishing between 'universalizing', 'variation-finding', 'individualizing', and 'encompassing' comparisons. Universalizing comparisons assert that "every instance of a phenomenon follows essentially the same rule" and emphasize commonalities across diverse territorial contexts. Individualizing comparisons highlight the uniqueness of each case, illustrating how a phenomenon can manifest in a range of particular instances. Variation-finding comparisons systematically trace differences between cases to "establish a principle of variation in the character and intensity of a phenomenon." This approach often manifests in research that contrasts two or more cities or various processes occurring within a single city. Lastly, encompassing comparisons involve situating instances within a system, explaining their variation based on their function and position within this system. This approach has been particularly influential in urban studies through work on world cities and global cities, considering urban change to be determined by a city's position in the economic world-system (Rutherford, 2004; Sassen, 2015).

Through the contributions in this book, which use comparative strategies as a means to illuminate the agency of city makers in navigating and shaping the city's diversity governance, we aim to elaborate an agenda for comparative urban research as a tool for analysing urban diversity governance. A first subset of chapters within this volume employs references to extant research on other cities as a framework for contextualizing their individual case studies. This approach integrates comparative thinking as an intellectual exercise to conceptualize and understand a singular city within the expanse of urban scholarship (Amelang, 2007). Conversely, a second suite of chapters directly engages with two or three discrete case studies, based on multi-sited fieldwork. These studies exemplify the application of comparative methodologies, wherein comparison forms an integral pillar of the research design (Nijman, 2007).

15.3.1 Situating Urban Diversity Governance in a Global Context

In the first category of chapters, invoking external cities serves to position a case study within a broader context. This can serve an analytical function: explaining a process highlighting contrasts across different cases. This can also serve a descriptive function: situating a case in relation to others. Drawing upon comparative references allows for the extrapolation of conceptual frameworks developed within different contexts. This scholarly endeavour entails applying established theoretical models to novel case studies, evaluating their relevance, and discerning whether these models maintain their explanatory power or if divergent aspects of the new context necessitate theoretical recalibration. Dominique Vidal's work in Chap. 7, for instance, exemplifies the power of comparative analysis in elucidating the unique integration patterns of Portuguese janitors within Paris. By contrasting these patterns with those observed in New York, where visible minorities occupy similar roles, Vidal casts light on the strategies of employment that privilege white European migrants in the Parisian context. This examination brings into relief the broader implications of colour-blind ideologies and their intersection with urban occupational structures.

Comparative analysis enables to establish connections with studies from varying contexts (Peck, 2015). Samantha Lim and Elaine Ho, in Chap. 8, leverage comparative thinking as a mechanism to contextualize the processes observed in their analysis of Guangzhou. The comparison contrasts the experiences of Shipai Village's internal migrants, against the collective activism witnessed in Mumbai's Dharavi and the collaborative housing efforts in Thailand's Baan Mankong program. This contrasts the individualistic aspirations of internal migrants in Guangzhou with the collective agency in Dharavi, where historic victories in securing rights have catalysed community solidarity and collaborative resistance against evictions.

The use of comparison allows contextualizing individual cases within broader transnational networks (Wood, 2020). Léa Réville, in Chap. 11, situates the case of the *Halte Humanitaire*, a temporary reception centre for exiles in Paris within the broader transnational movement of 'cities of refuge'. This positioning extends beyond the local Parisian context to engage with the global discourse on urban sanctuary, hospitality, and asylum. This comparative lens not only contextualizes the Parisian approach to asylum but also enables a critical evaluation of its distinctiveness amidst international efforts. It spotlights Paris's attempt to position itself as a city of refuge, resonant with historic initiatives in Venice and recent collaborative calls among European mayors.

Comparative thinking can serve to anchor a case study within global phenomena, identifying common urban threads manifesting across various locales (Allegra et al., 2012). An illustrative example is the exploration of digital districts and the attendant experiences of skilled migrants who populate these spaces, as expounded by Daniel Goh and Shai-Ann Koh in Chap. 3. This case study contributes to a broader comparative urban research agenda by revealing the unique patterns that materialize in non-Western, high-tech, cosmopolitan contexts. These patterns are intricately linked to global urban phenomena, such as the pursuit of 'livable' urban environments to attract international talent, as well as the burgeoning global middle class, which, despite its mobility and human capital, faces precarious living conditions.

Comparative analysis can serve to delineate the experiences of diaspora communities across various cities, as illustrated by Marie Gibert-Flutre in Chap. 4, mapping Chinese diasporic networks in Western Europe and showing the adaptation of these communities within specific urban environments. Gibert-Flutre places Paris in a comparative dialogue with other European cities, identifying unique patterns of Chinese entrepreneurship and its reception within the regional system. This approach contextualizes the expansion of Chinese entrepreneurship and traces the reactions it elicits, including conflict and hostility, in cities like Milan and Prato.

15.3.2 Comparative Methodologies Exploring the Policies and Politics of Urban Diversity

A second group of chapters in this volume compare two or three case studies. Confronting different case studies through comparative methodologies enables to trace similarities and contrasts throughout the research process and form our analysis of a case from the distance allowed by using the other case as a mirror. Such comparative methodologies can focus on overt contrasts within urban landscapes, like Natalie Lang's Chap. 13, which pinpoints visual disparities across the urban religious practices of Hindus in Paris and Singapore to prompt critical inquiry into the underlying causes of these differences. The divergent strategies of visibility and invisibility of Hindu communities in Singapore and Paris, respectively, illuminate distinct approaches to managing religious diversity. In Singapore, the acknowledgment of Hinduism as part of the national heritage is evidenced by the

prominence of monumental temples, whereas in Paris, the practices of Hindus are discreetly woven into the residential fabric, reflective of French laïcité. The spatial presence of Hindus in both cities extends beyond the symbolic ethnic neighborhoods. In Paris, the commercial and symbolic Tamil neighborhood of La Chapelle features two temples, while many other temples are installed in suburban Paris. In Singapore, Hindu temples are distributed across the city beyond the symbolic neighborhood of Little India, mirroring public housing policies aimed at preventing ethnic enclaves. Lang's inquiry into these two urban settings exposes the differing impacts of multiculturalist policies in Singapore and laicist approaches in France on religious minorities' sense of belonging and recognition. This comparative analysis, as a reflective exercise, elucidates the diverse lived experiences of Hindu minorities under varying urban conditions.

Comparative methodology can serve as an instrument for discerning patterns that emerge across contrasting urban contexts (Robinson, 2011). Jeremie Molho's Chap. 12 relies on an iterative cross-examination of two contrasted urban settings: Doha and Singapore. This approach seeks to establish a dialogue between cases, allowing each to inform the development of a common theoretical framework. Molho identifies a common pattern of compartmentalization within diversity governance, which sheds light on the paradox between an enthusiastic embrace of positive diversity management narratives in various aspects of city governance and, at the same time, the marginalization of certain categories of migrants that are excluded from such mainstream discourses. This comparison analyses the influence of such diversity management processes on cultural practitioners' actions. The confrontation of these two urban contexts, traversed by similar processes of marginalization, enables tracing how cultural city makers navigate within such constrained governance frameworks.

The application of comparative methodology can be instrumental in delineating variations across distinct case studies that exemplify specific phenomena. It has been mobilized in endeavours to discern contrasted patterns by juxtaposing societies that ostensibly share parallel characteristics and potentially analogous causal factors that hold influence over the policies and politics of diversity (Garbaye, 2011). Rochelle Ge and Kong Chong Ho, in Chap. 6, deploy a comparative lens to assess the divergent strategies employed by three key higher education hubs—Singapore, Seoul, and Beijing—in managing their international student populations. This comparative approach allows to understand how urban strategies of student housing can shape the academic and social lives of students, as well as their relationships with the host population. In Singapore's National University of Singapore (NUS), a mixed housing arrangement fosters interactions between local and international students by randomly assigning them to shared living spaces. In contrast, Renmin University of China (RUC) opts for enclave dormitories for international students, providing separate facilities with amenities aligned with their expectations. Meanwhile, Seoul National University (SNU) offers a free-choice housing arrangement, allowing international students to opt for mixed or enclave dormitories. These varied housing arrangements, whether integrated with local students or segregated within enclaves, significantly impacts the students' opportunities for cultural exchange, social networking, and developing ties with the local

community. These arrangements not only reflect the strategies of cities to position themselves as attractive education hubs but also the broader societal attitudes towards integration and multiculturalism.

The comparative method extends beyond mere juxtaposition of local phenomena; it positions local processes within the intricate web of global systems (Smith, 2017), as elucidated by Gilles Guiheux and Lulu Fan in Chap. 9. This approach allows an examination of how global industries, such as the garment sector with its distinct production and distribution centres, engender varied local configurations. By contextualizing the local within the global, comparative methods illuminate the ways in which global economic structures influence local urban dynamics, providing a scaffold for analysing the socio-economic dynamics of urban spaces. Guiheux and Fan's work critically examines the positioning of cities like Paris and Guangzhou within the global garment industry network. They contrast Paris's role as a trading hub for mid to low-range ready-to-wear fashion with Guangzhou's combined might in trading and manufacturing. By doing so, they trace the socio-economic fabric that characterizes these urban landscapes and the experience of the migrant entrepreneurs integral to these industries. This comparative analysis reveals that similar urban processes are driven by individual entrepreneurs, real-estate investors, and local authorities, regardless of geography. The case of Haizhu District in Guangzhou, paralleled with Parisian districts like Le Sentier and Aubervilliers, demonstrates spontaneous development patterns driven by specific local conditions, such as the unique land rights of villagers in Guangzhou's urban villages.

Comparative methodology offers a robust framework for examining the variations across a network of cities, as adeptly analysed by Beniamino Peruzzi Castellani in Chap. 1. His analysis brings into relief the role of city networks in shaping urban diversity governance strategies. The chapter underscores how cities within networks such as the Intercultural City network leverage comparative thinking to elaborate their approach to diversity governance and to pragmatically implement interculturalism on the ground. Castellani's chapter illustrates that intercultural cities like Barcelona, Hamamatsu, and Ansan share certain dynamics and city makers, including civic leaders, civil society associations, and business leaders. These stakeholders drive the strategic positioning of cities as leaders in global diversity policymaking, crafting legitimacy in partnership with civil society actors. Crucially, Castellani challenges the notion of non-Western cities emulating Western models. Instead, the comparative analysis reveals that cities like Hamamatsu and Ansan, despite their membership in a predominantly European network, develop specific strategies rooted in their national and local dynamics and draw upon indigenous concepts.

15.4 Conclusion

The endeavour of comparative thinking, while fraught with multiple practical and conceptual challenges is crucial to unravel the multifaceted nature of urban diversity governance. This volume thus advocates for a comparative approach that embraces interconnected global processes, enabling a more decentred understanding of

diversity governance. This can be instrumental to move away from an exclusive reliance on the national scale as the dominant framework for understanding diversity governance. Research designs and theorization efforts that recognize the embeddedness of cities within various regional, national, and global networks and narratives are key to truly appreciating the full complexities of urban diversity governance. The comparative lens allows to envisage the urban as a node in a larger network, interlaced with threads of demographic change, policy transfer, and multiscalar political dynamics. Such a perspective not only enriches our grasp of governance at the urban level but also sheds lights on the ways in which cities act laboratories for inclusionary and exclusionary practices.

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