Migrants and City-Making

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“Mardin,” said the deputy district mayor in 2015, is a “city of Jews, Yazidis, Chechens, Hungarians, Kurds, Arabs, Syriacs, and Chaldeans.” Sitting with Seda, a member of our research team, the deputy district mayor spoke about the historical significance of Mardin and its diverse population. In delineating this diversity, he clarified that he was not talking about a concept of tolerance, which would have cast populations such as the Kurds as outsiders whom Turks, defined as natives, could choose to include or exclude. The deputy district mayor’s remarks reflected his own engagement in Kurdish/Turkish politics and commitment to his city’s regeneration as a historical multifaith and multilingual city. This renewal involved forging a narrative that highlighted Mardin’s past glories and civility. In this narrative, people of diverse backgrounds, rather than contributing “difference,” constituted the local population of the city and region (interview March 23, 2015).

For the first fifteen years of the new millennium, Mardin rode a wave of urban regeneration. The reinvention of the city was the product of many intersecting networks of power—the Turkish state, the European Union, the United States, various governments in Europe and the Middle East, militaries, and commercial interests—at a historical conjuncture. These intersecting and contending forces all recognized that Syriac Christians—the city’s ancient Christian community, most of whom had fled the area decades before and were beginning to return to claim their lands—were key to Mardin’s rebirth as a multilingual city composed of many religious communities.

Nina began her interview in 2001 with Frau Haüssler, lord mayor of Halle/Saale, by explaining that she had previously studied migrants’ relationships to institutions in New York and was now interested in the role of migrants
“in a small city.” New York City at the time numbered more than 8 million people, compared to the approximately 243,000 people in Halle (City of Halle 2016). The mayor’s response was immediate and emphatic: Halle was *not* a small city, she told Nina. She also emphasized that “there were always foreigners in Halle” who “contribute to the development of the city” (interview H., November 22, 2001). Twelve years later, Nina interviewed the city’s new lord mayor, who came from a different political background and a younger generation than Frau Haüßler. Their conversation touched upon Halle’s urban regeneration progress and plans and the election of a Senegalese-born German citizen to represent Halle in the federal parliament. The mayor declared: “Every foreigner is part of Halle” (interview W., May 21, 2013).

In 2002, Nina made her way to the office of Mayor Baines in the city hall of Manchester, New Hampshire, in the United States. When asked about the role of migrants in Manchester, the mayor referred Nina to his second inaugural speech, delivered a few months earlier. As had the lord mayors of Halle and the deputy mayor of Mardin, Manchester’s mayor had spoken of his city’s regeneration by referencing its past significance and the integral role diverse populations played as city-makers, both past and present. He portrayed migrants in the past as important to making the city a global player and welcomed newcomers for their “profound and positive impact on the City’s future.” Moving beyond binaries of difference, Mayor Baines said: “They are us—or, it might be more appropriate to say that we were them—because we are all the offspring of immigrants” (Baines 2002).

**Placing Urban Narratives: A Comparative Approach**

City boosting is an age-old art. What is today called city branding can be read in archeological sites of the first cities and persistent tales of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Today, competitive city branding is the stuff of city websites and Facebook pages, of applications for government grants and loans, and of political leaders’ speeches. The urban narratives we found within each city’s cyberspaces and our interviews with city leaders and politicians sounded in many ways as if they came from a global playbook on city redevelopment within contemporary neoliberal restructuring (McCann and Ward 2011). However, when we compared the empowerment outcomes in our research cities to those of global cities such as New York, Berlin, or Istanbul, clear differences emerged that made Halle, Manchester, and Mar-
introducing three cities more similar to each other than to more powerful cities within the same country.

Deploying the variation-finding strategies we outlined in the introduction, we delineate in this chapter the domains of contemporary structural similarities brought about by processes of disempowerment in Halle/Saale, Manchester, and Mardin. The three cities differ in terms of their historical trajectories and recent population sizes: Manchester, 110,229; Halle, 238,321; Mardin center, 163,725 (greater Mardin, 796,237) (US Census 2017a; City of Halle 2016; TÜRKSTAT 2016). However, by the turn of the twenty-first century the residents of each city, including their political and economic leaders, were confronting the same structural dilemma and seeking similar solutions. The similarities among the three cities that we identify in this chapter are not timeless but reflect their shared disempowered positioning within a particular historical conjuncture of neoliberal capital accumulation through urban regeneration. Within these similarities, the leaders and migrants of each city engaged in mutually constitutive processes of displacement and emplacement that contributed to the reshaping and repositioning of their city.

We compare the three cities according to five parameters that both reflect and form the core of our research methods. These parameters require a constant dialogue between our multiple forms of inquiry: interviews; participant observation; websites; and documents and statistics culled from local, national, supranational, and global sources. They also require a form of analysis that approached each city not as a bounded unit but as a multiscalar social field of interconnection.

The five comparative parameters are:

(1) Whether there are indicators of the city’s relative declining positioning over time that can be operationalized in terms of objective and subjective factors. Objective factors include a decrease in the scope or potency of past or current multiscalar economic, political, and cultural social fields. Spaces of abandonment serve as one indicator of the loss of potency. Subjective factors include leaders’ awareness of their city’s past and its current relative loss of potency.

(2) Whether the city embarks on a strategy of rebranding and regeneration and the outcomes of such an effort in terms of private investment, public benefit, public debt, and the relative global positioning of the city at the end of our study.

(3) The way in which city leaders position migrants or minorities within their regeneration narratives.
The degree and kind of resources and services the city provides for migrant settlement and migrant and minority access to services.

Evidence of synergy between city regeneration narratives and policies, on the one hand, and the multiscalar modes of emplacement of migrants and minorities, on the other, including whether their transnational networks emerged as assets in city-making.

Comparing the Three Cities

Manchester, New Hampshire, USA

The city’s relative declining positioning over time operationalized in terms of objective and subjective factors.

Just fifty-three miles north of Boston, Manchester, by the beginning of the twentieth century, had become the largest city in the US region known as northern New England (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont). One hundred years later, it still held that distinction, although its population of 107,006 was relatively small (US Census 2000b). The city is centered in a city-region generally known as “greater Manchester,” which at the turn of the twenty-first century numbered 198,378, and in Hillsborough County, which then had a population of 380,841 (US Census 2000b; Intown Manchester 2005; New Hampshire Employment Security 2017). The city-region and Hillsborough County contained both wealthy exclusive suburbs and working-class towns, with some industrial production and unused structures marking generations of industrial labor.

Named after Manchester, England, and aiming to rival its namesake’s global reach, Manchester, New Hampshire, was economically important in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its growth as an industrial powerhouse came about through a small circle of Boston capitalists who bought up the city’s existing textile mills, incorporated them as the Amoskeag Company in 1831, and developed them into an industrial complex. They also bought land in the city center and laid out a planned company town, which directly influenced the character of the city and the growth of its paternalistic system of labor relations. At various times, the corporation also produced rifles, sewing machines, fire engines, and locomotives, augmenting Manchester’s regional reputation for the manufacture of shoes and machine tools. But it was through its textile production that the city gained worldwide fame (Eaton 2015; Blood 1975).

In 1922, responding to dramatic wage reductions, Amoskeag workers
struck. Unconstrained, since they were not local actors, the Boston-based company owners sought a more docile workforce who would be satisfied with lower wages during a conjuncture marked by both growing national and global competition, on the one hand, and depression and crisis, on the other. They sold the mills in 1936 and relocated their cotton manufacturing to newer textile mills in the nonunionized US South. From that point on, the people of Manchester faced ongoing deindustrialization. Smaller concerns took over some of the old mill buildings, but ultimately these proved unable to compete with cheaper labor and the more technologically advanced facilities located elsewhere (Hareven and Langenbach 1978).

Some discussions of deindustrialization in the United States date the end of “Fordism,” unionized, large mass production, to the 1970s (Amin 1994). However, the disempowerment of cities and regions through the loss of industry began much earlier. As the history of Manchester illustrates, deindustrialization need not be equated with the total loss of industry: the process may include downsizing, loss of unions, and periodic reinvestment and disinvestment. Greater Manchester, with its mix of machine tool and electronics shops and weapons manufacturing, continued to provide industrial employment in the post–World War II period. But by the mid-twentieth century, most textile and shoe production had shut down and the city center had become a backwater of enormous abandoned mills. The city center business district and surrounding neighborhoods were left desolate by growing postwar suburbanization and the growth of shopping malls. Failed US urban renewal attempts during the 1960s to revive and modernize Manchester’s city center were painfully evident after “some of the historic mill buildings” had been leveled, the strip mall that replaced them rapidly abandoned, and Manchester left “with the general reputation as a ‘lost city’” (Langenbach 1969).
Downtown abandonment became even more apparent in 1991, when federal authorities closed seven New Hampshire banks, four of them headquartered in Manchester, on the same day as a consequence of overextension in real estate speculation (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation nd). Peter Ramsey, an actor in the efforts to regenerate Manchester’s city center around 2000, described the situation that city leaders had faced almost a decade earlier: “There were rumors about how people wouldn’t come downtown anymore. There were empty businesses up and down the streets” (Broussard 2015).

However, despite this grim picture of Manchester’s city center, deindustrialization, accompanied by the abandonment of industrial sites and depopulation, was not linear or uniform across the city-region. In the 1990s, after a severe economic downturn, as neoliberal economic restructuring took hold regionally and nationally, the city and its surrounding region experienced a brief manufacturing effervescence. Employers were attracted to the Manchester city-region by low nonunion wage labor, inexpensive industrial space, and proximity to the belt of high-tech industries developing around Boston. The greater Boston area experienced a growth of high-tech, defense, and knowledge industries, and the Manchester area was incorporated into new, complicated, and flexible supply chains fueled by foreign investment (Gittell 2001). Unemployment that in 1993 had approached 8 percent in Manchester fell to 2.4 percent in 1999 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016).

However, at this point, the economy entered a sharp and punctuated decline, owing first to the “dot-com” downturn of 2000 and then to the financial shock waves in 2001 from the September 11 bombings that reverberated through the United States’ and world economies. Unemployment climbed, and plant layoffs and closings resumed. Increasing numbers of manufacturing sites in the Manchester area reduced their workforce or closed. The percentage of Manchester’s workforce employed in manufacturing declined. Between 2000 and 2005, when developers issued a new set of redevelopment plans, manufacturing dropped from 12.7 percent of the workforce to 9.3 percent (US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012).

Manchester was never the political capital of New Hampshire, nor were its leaders ever significant actors within regional centers of power, which remain in the neighboring city of Boston, Massachusetts. Boston has always been the residential and institutional site of a social, intellectual, and political elite who have been national actors. Yet amid the vicissitudes of ongoing economic restructuring, as regional, national, and global investors played major roles in the changing fortunes of their city, local leaders were aware that
Manchester retained a peculiar national and even global prominence. New Hampshire hosts the first US presidential primary election. As the most populous city in the state, Manchester, every four years, is repeatedly visited by all aspiring presidential candidates, and city leaders and ordinary people are consistently featured in media coverage. As a local reporter emphasized in 2015 (Hayward 2015), “We’re the crucible”; “Yes, it’s a statewide event, but . . . Manchester becomes . . . the focal point for the New Hampshire primary.”

City boosters also harkened back to the city’s former industrial glory. They claimed that by the beginning of the twentieth century, Manchester’s Amoskeag mills, including mill number 11 with its four thousand looms and seventeen thousand workers, was “the world’s largest textile mill complex” (Millyard Museum 2015; Intown Manchester 2005, 2). In Mayor Baines’s second inaugural speech, one could hear both an acknowledgment of Manchester’s lost global significance as a textile manufacturing hub and a desire to retrieve some of its past importance. The mayor looked forward to a time when, once again, “what Manchester, New Hampshire, says today, the rest of the world may indeed say tomorrow” (Baines 2002).

(2) Whether the city embarks on a strategy of rebranding and regeneration, and the outcomes of such an effort in terms of private investment, public benefit, public debt, and the relative global positioning of the city at the end of our study.

It was within an assessment of past glory and continuing episodic political importance that Manchester city leaders contemplated the possibilities of reinventing their city. In 1993, they developed a master plan through a series of projects that justified various forms of public investment. This strategy sought to convince regional, national, and international corporations to situate their production facilities and offices in Manchester. Five years later, city leaders endorsed and publicly funded 85 percent of the necessary land acquisition as well as the construction of the new civic and sports arena situated in the city center (Lincoln NE City Government 2008, 96). Investment in the arena was deemed the foundation for redevelopment. City leaders and developers saw the city’s “downtown” as a “prime area for expansion and revitalization” (City of Manchester 2006).

Between 2000 and 2015, the stance that Manchester’s leaders and the urban planners they commissioned adopted toward urban regeneration and the city’s public narrative altered several times; after 2009, no new master plan was offered (Angelou 2005; Intown Manchester 2005; Manchester Office of Economic Development 2009). The changes in part reflected the politics and
personalities of different mayors and the changing membership of the city council. But the twists and turns also reflected, and spoke to, shifts in national political trends as well as reconfigurations of the national and global economies. These conjunctural forces directly affected the possibilities of repositioning the city.

By 2000, Manchester had experienced a period of local industrial expansion as well as major regional and local bank failures that were a result of the first stage of overextension in the housing market. Local politicians, including the mayor, still saw industry as a significant component of the local economy but also began to confront the need to plan for “new economy jobs.” The initial narratives of redevelopment called on international businesses, already present in manufacturing, to invest in the city, situate head-

**FIG 1.2** View of regenerated downtown Manchester with sports and entertainment arena. Photo via Good Free Photos.
quarters there, and bring in a new highly skilled workforce for what, in 2002, the mayor called “the new economy, whatever that is” (Baines 2002; see also Angelou 2005).

As the millennium progressed, Manchester redevelopers oversaw construction of a minor-league baseball stadium on the edge of the city center and facilitated the regeneration or development of hotels, parks, high-end housing, and office buildings. They also worked to help finance the redevelopment of the historic mill buildings that had been left standing in earlier failed efforts at urban renewal.

Bolstered by growing public investment and loan capital, industrial investment, especially in the defense industry, did grow for a time regionally as well as in city center districts. Some increases in employment followed from the regeneration strategies, although most were temporary. As we traced the presence of national and international corporate offices and production facilities in the city center and in greater Manchester over our fifteen-year study, the transience of much of this development became apparent. Many firms initially established in Manchester with the assistance of tax breaks, loans, and public expenditures, which were heralded in the press, downsized or left a few years later. The international military industrial complex proved to be a significant partner of rapid investment and disinvestment in the city, region, and State of New Hampshire (Anderson 2012; Donahue Institute 2015; Cousineau 2015).

City leaders developed a trajectory of redevelopment and a local institutional structure to facilitate it. In 2005, the master plan was revised and expanded with funding from a key local player in redevelopment, the Manchester Development Corporation, and two US federal agencies, the Economic Development Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (Hillier Architecture 2006). The planning was facilitated by a new transnational actor, Hillier Architecture. Based in Princeton, New Jersey, and promoting itself as the “third largest architectural firm in the United States” with an international clientele and ties to key public-funding institutions in Washington, DC (Studio Hillier nd.), Hillier Architecture was hired to revise Manchester’s redevelopment plan. Its Downtown Strategic Development Plan for Manchester noted that the city had “successfully guided development” to become “consistently rated one of the most livable cities in the country for the past decade” and worked to “foster its transition from a struggling post-industrial community into the ‘place to go’ in New England” (Hillier Architecture 2006).

City branding and planning reports described a thriving city center with
high-end businesses whose employees would occupy new high-rise condominium apartment buildings and fuel a vibrant consumer economy. A 2005 report of Intown Manchester, an agency tasked with leading central city development and funded by a tax on commercial property, heralded the city’s “economic renaissance” (Intown Manchester 2005). By this time, the city center was portrayed as a vibrant area of recreation and entertainment. The goal of such portrayals was attracting and retaining the youthful, highly educated workers, who were considered necessary to draw new “creative” technology industries to the city.

By 2014, leaders had moved from the hope of attracting high-paying new economy employment to targeting the logistics industry as a way to boost the city-region. They tried to attract “hundreds of jobs . . . including truck driver and warehouse worker positions” to new shipping and processing facilities at the airport tax-free zone. As did the various corporate offices and high-tech facilities attracted to the city, these logistics industries also came and went. Moreover, as part of a foreign trade zone and as an economic recovery area, none of these facilities were within the boundaries of the city and therefore did not directly contribute money to local coffers (Guilmet 2014; Delay 2014).

After they invested in the new civic and sports arena and rehabilitated a historic theater, Manchester leaders continued to rebuild the city center using a combination of public and private financing. However, the bulk of the regeneration, including support for corporate facilities relocating to Manchester, was fueled by public monies. The city auditor’s 2013 report of the Manchester Economic Development Office (MEDO) provides a revealing list of Manchester’s financial “resources for Economic Development” (Office of the Independent City Auditor 2013, 4, 6). This list included five federal programs, eight State of New Hampshire programs, two city programs, and three bank-facilitated programs (one through a state program). The financing mechanisms and other subsequent related problems with these projects suggest the contradictions that emerged from rebuilding efforts.

Public money was channeled into the regeneration process in a host of ways: US Government Housing and Urban Development grants and loans were provided to redevelop housing; city funding was backed by guaranteed tax revenues; city purchases of land were sold to private developers at below market prices; the city made provisions of infrastructure for private development; and state tax abatements were offered for corporations located in the city center. Private developers reaped benefits from the public financing of projects that they subsequently owned or managed. Privately owned
construction companies profited as well from related demolition and construction costs (Applied Economic Research 2010; City of Manchester 2012; Guinta 2009; US Department of Housing and Urban Development Archives 2011).

Housing redevelopment and construction in Manchester was imbricated in this transfer of funds to corporate pockets. In 2006, the city leadership used refugee flows to justify further regeneration activities and the need for expanding the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, funded by HUD (City of Manchester 2010a). Refugees, together with low-income residents of the city, became an asset that facilitated access to federal funds. Applications for funding claimed that the public programs would provide housing and services both for the impoverished local population and for refugees who were concentrated in the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. The public housing authority, which had been reconfigured as the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority (MHRA), worked closely with private developers to obtain massive amounts of federal money. Much of this money served as a tranche of capital for city center regeneration. The MHRA invested public funds in private development projects, calling its activities “instrumental in shaping the skyline of the city” (2016). They invested public money in an arena, office buildings, a shopping mall, a bank building, two industrial parks, a business park, and a hotel and convention center.

At the same time, various federal programs reached out to low-income clients to assist them in obtaining flexible rate mortgages, many of which were subprime and fed into global financial industries’ mortgage packaging and sales (Buchannan 2002). In the years leading up to the subprime mortgage crisis, housing prices were dramatically inflated, housing became scarce, and Manchester’s working- and middle-class were squeezed by high rents or mortgage payments, low wages, and periodic job loss or layoffs linked to dramatic fluctuations in defense-related industries. After the crash, rates of impoverishment increased, and city applications referenced this poverty in applications to federal authorities for additional development funding from the Community Development Block Grant Program. In 2013, 52.2 percent of the city’s households earned less than 80 percent of the median income as compared to 43 percent in 1990 (City of Manchester Planning and Community Development Department 2014). The poverty rate increased from 10.6 percent in 2000 to 13.7 percent in 2007 (before the subprime crisis) and reached 19.5 percent in 2016 (City Data 2018).

Tax policy was central to the “business-friendly” regeneration strategy. Neither the State of New Hampshire nor the City of Manchester have in-
come or sales taxes. City planning documents in the first decade of the mil-
lewnium advised marketing Manchester by emphasizing its attractiveness to
high-tech industries and professionals. These documents highlighted that
“moving your business here is a non-taxing decision. Our state has no per-
sonal income tax, no sales tax, and very low business taxes” (City of Man-
chester 2014). Municipalities collected only property and commercial taxes
so, unless corporations or individuals physically resided within the city, they
paid no taxes to it.

In effect, regeneration did little to maintain a steady base or growth in
employment, and this redevelopment strategy did not expand Manchester’s
tax base. The city center streets and storefronts were gentrified, the popu-
lation grew, and a small stratum of young professionals settled in the rebuilt
city center. The redeveloped mill yards were occupied by small businesses, a
few corporate headquarters, a branch of the public university, and a museum
dedicated to the city’s industrial and immigrant history. There were efforts to
jump-start high-tech through fostering start-ups (Solomon 2012). However,
postmillennium development projects generally were not successful in sub-
stantively improving the local economy.

After 2007, the failure of subprime loans and associated banks and finan-
cial institutions dramatically disrupted whatever progress had been achieved.
The worldwide capitalist crisis heralded a new conjunctural configuration
and a new wave of unemployment and dispossession in the city.

(3) The way in which city leaders position migrants or minorities
within their regeneration narratives.

Immediately after the attacks on September 11, 2001, federal authorities
used them and the subsequent Patriot Act⁶ as justifications for the increased
surveillance of all migrants. Houses were entered without warrants and mi-
grant individuals and their families were scrutinized. However, in Man-
chester, local authorities and community-based organizations took various
measures to counter anti-immigrant currents and protect residents from un-
warranted policing (field notes, 2001–2). Manchester’s general narrative re-
mained one of welcome. As the city took its first steps toward regeneration,
various leaders coupled their welcoming greetings with efforts to recover
Manchester’s immigrant past, a theme they emphasized in numerous ways
after 2000. The welcoming narrative was present in city politicians’ public
statements, in documents, on websites, and in interviews we conducted with
the mayor, police chief, head of city welfare, city planning officials, aldermen,
social and medical service workers, and clergy in 2001 and 2002.⁷
References to new immigrants on websites and in speeches in those years are interesting in light of the relatively few migrants who had settled in Manchester. The foreign born numbered 2 percent in 1990 and 8 percent at the millennium (US Census 2000a). Although the percentage was greater than in the rest of the state, the “foreign born” constituted a relatively small sector of the city’s population, and some had arrived in the United States decades earlier. In the 1980s, Vietnamese refugees settled there; in the 1990s, the largest group of refugees came from the former Yugoslavia. However, toward the end of the twentieth century, Manchester began to welcome a diverse settlement of migrants from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America (New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies 2015, 8). At the same time, energetic international recruiting by a local private university brought a scattering of students from the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa, some of whom settled in the city after their studies. By 2015, 13.1 percent of the population were foreign-born (US Census 2017b).

As the mayor and city council sought to retain and attract industrial investments, migrants, including refugees, came to be valued as part of the workforce. Major Baines summarized how migrants were seen at the millennium: “Their presence will have both a profound and positive impact on the City’s future” (Baines 2002). City officials publicly acknowledged that low wages might prove an incentive to employers and saw migrant newcomers as keeping wages low in times of low unemployment. A section of Manchester’s website that addressed businesspeople looking to relocate listed the presence of immigrants and refugees in the city as a positive aspect of the city’s profile (City of Manchester 2004).

In 2006, city planners saw immigrants as vital to increasing the density and diversity of the downtown population: “The vibrancy of the downtown core is enhanced by the density and diversity of the local community. Manchester is an immigration center, which is increasing the ethnic and racial composition” (City of Manchester 2006). This narrative was part of an effort to rebrand the city in order to reposition it as a competitor for multinational investment. By this time, city officials supported the celebration of past waves of immigrants as well as contemporary cultural diversity. The city’s immigrant heritage was highlighted and past assimilationist trends repudiated. Local leaders more readily claimed their Greek, Irish, and French Canadian ancestry, and the Millyard Museum, founded in 2001, profiled workers from all over Europe whose labor had made Manchester’s mills internationally significant.

City marketing employed various public events that featured the migrant
roots of the population—from St. Patrick’s Day parades and Greek Glendi to Caribbean and Latino festivals—to give Manchester a multicultural ambiance. But on occasion, and strategically, migrants were also depicted as part of the urban poor. As we have already noted, federal housing and redevelopment grants and loans could be accessed by crafting a narrative in which migrants, especially new impoverished refugees, were in urgent need of public services.

By 2009, Manchester’s political and corporate leaders, and the urban developers with whom they worked, had been pulled in different directions by competing sets of interests. Consequently, two different narratives about the city’s relationship to migrants emerged. City business leaders continued to support diversity celebrations to create an urban lifestyle attractive to investors and the “creative classes,” whose presence was felt necessary to gentrify and reinvent the city. These festivals have always served as a place of political networking for local politicians and those aspiring to office, both with and without migrant backgrounds.

In 2011, a newspaper article noted, “Manchester embraces its diversity on [the] city website” (Tuohy 2011). The story features “a smiling Mayor Ted Gatsas,” who, with “a mouse click turns the script into Chinese, or Spanish, or any of 59 languages on the Google Translate toolbar atop the City of Manchester’s website.” The article quoted the city’s director of information systems, who announced, “We are a city of diverse backgrounds and cultures.”

However by 2009, the only reference to immigrants in the city budget was an item of $48,000 from federal Community Development Block Grant funds to “facilitate assimilation of Manchester’s newest immigrants and refugees into the community” (Guinta 2009, table 2, 3). An increasing number of public officials had begun to portray refugees as a burden on local public and social services, which came under increasing pressure as federal monies receded and tax monies increasingly were channeled into public–private partnerships that were used to develop entertainment, hotels, and office complexes. Efforts by the local Islamic Society to build a mosque in Greater Manchester were blocked by people in a local township in the city-region. By 2012, local and state-level Republican Party members who served as aldermen, the mayor, and state representatives were taking increasingly anti-immigrant stands.

By 2014, as regeneration faltered and federal and state funding for urban programs dried up, the city faced debt, a reduced tax base, and public services they could not fund. Manchester’s poverty rate stood at 15 percent, which was higher than the New Hampshire average, 8.9 percent (US Cen-
sus 2014). When a local movement against refugees, spearheaded by a city council member, came to dominate the city’s political leadership, Mayor Gatsas joined other elected officials in targeting migrants as a drain on the city: “These are not immigrants like I remember my grandfather sponsoring from Greece, where they had to have a job to come. We have 1,000 homeless in Manchester” (Siefer 2014).

Yet voices of welcome still could be heard. Saying that the mayor was sending “the wrong message about Manchester,” Alderman Long supported efforts to settle unaccompanied minor children in the city, including children from Syria. He noted, “They’re coming to the United States as a million people have, as refugees” (Siefer 2014). In 2015, despite growing political polarization in which US national and New Hampshire political parties sought legislation barring the entry of Syrian refugees or Muslims, the Manchester city council rejected a resolution banning the settlement of Syrian refugees (Feely 2015).

(4) The degree and kind of resources and services the city provides for migrant settlement and migrant and minority access to services.

At best, the city government of Manchester provided token amounts of money to organizations that highlighted diversity or celebrated cultural heritage and offered very little institutional support for services specific to migrants. At a time when the city was promoting its immigrant past and diverse present, funding for a cultural diversity coalition that promoted celebrating immigrant roots through commemorating national holidays received only several hundred dollars a year (field notes, 2004). For many years, the city partially funded a Latin American Center, which functioned as the preeminent association providing services to new immigrants and refugees. Finally, the center became attached to Southern New Hampshire Services, originally a federally funded community action program to empower the poor that became a private nonprofit organization.

The lack of institutional resources to sustain ethnic associations and organizations that highlight ethnic communities was apparent in the trajectories of these organizations over time. Organizations claiming ethnic specificity were ephemeral and tended to be the personal projects of aspiring educated migrants with political ambitions, locally and transnationally. Founded by migrants, ethnically specific organizations at best received very small amounts of public or charitable funding. Most either became umbrella organizations for refugees and immigrants from very different parts of the world or made it their mission to provide services to low-income groups. For ex-
ample, the Somali Bantu Community Association, founded in 2006, transformed in 2011 into the Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS 2017).

The city did not fund services specifically for refugees, and city welfare funds appropriated for refugees were insignificant. By and large, while federal grants, as we noted, referenced the poor in the city center and areas designated for redevelopment, urban regeneration, including federal housing money, benefited wealthier populations. From 2000 to 2015, the poor, in whose name the money had been raised, were gradually pushed out of the city center as housing in that area became increasingly expensive. Because city regeneration was fueled by various forms of public investment and debt, amassing money for city center development led to increasing city impoverishment and reductions in public services. Manchester failed not only to provide transportation, affordable housing, and institutional support for impoverished populations but also to provide these services for the majority of its residents, who faced reduced possibilities in terms of education and health and whose lives became more precarious.

(5) Evidence of synergy between city regeneration narratives and policies, on the one hand, and the multiscalar modes of emplacement of migrants and minorities, on the other, including whether their transnational networks emerged as assets in city-making.

Responding to, as well as acting to expand, the opportunity structures they found in Manchester, migrants were engaged in the multiscalar social fields within which the city’s regeneration efforts were situated. Often, they served as unacknowledged assets in rebuilding and rebranding the city by creating institutions and personal networks of support and emplacement in close relationship to people considered natives within this setting. In a subsequent chapter, we highlight the migrant leadership of born-again Christian religious and political networks that engaged mostly white non-migrants in transnational, born-again Christian networks that extended to centers of power, including the Bush White House and the Republican Party.

At the same time, these organizations and networks created national and transnational linkages for the city. These included not only Christian organizations but also a Buddhist temple and a mosque. The Buddhist temple brought transnational connections through a Buddhist network that stretched to headquarters in San Francisco and another that connected hundreds of cities around the globe (interview T., July 21, 2003). Similarly, the Islamic Society of Greater Manchester not only functioned as a mosque but
also linked immigrants, refugees, and local professionals to the private university, to a range of business activities in the city and region, and to aspiring professionals inserting themselves in politics on the city and state levels (field notes, January–April 2004)

Local, national, and transnational connections not only linked local migrants and non-migrants to employment, politics, and needed services but also provided them with a sense of empowerment in the face of continuing precarity (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Gulbrandsen 2006). Migrants emerged as actors in the economic dimensions of multiscalar city-making. They were actors in processes of regeneration—as city residents who redeveloped property, stabilized neighborhoods, took out subprime mortgages, and suffered foreclosure and as members of a workforce in the rapid rise and fall of dot-com bubbles and fluctuations of the defense industry. They became owners and workers in businesses filling city center storefronts, worked as social workers and city planners, and became political representatives of Manchester who celebrated the urban regeneration narrative through public–private ventures and participation within both the Democratic and the Republican Parties. While city leaders searched for high-power transborder connections to bring investments and new businesses and profiled their city to attract global talent, migrants of various legal statuses quietly engaged in transnational city-making. Only occasionally and peripherally were these processes apparent to various urban developers and political officials.

By 2015, businesses established by a range of migrants helped fill regenerated city center storefronts with needed services for the entire population, including for the new, richer inhabitants of the city center: tailoring, shoe-making, and hair and nail styling. Some businesses in the city center and the larger city-region connected Manchester to transnational business suppliers.

Migrants also became part of transnational processes of real estate development, the international banking industry, and the subsequent foreclosure wave and collapse of the property market between 2007 and 2012. They filled the roles of real estate agents, bankers, and mortgage brokers and served as employees of local community-based, federally funded organizations that provided support and loans to first-time home buyers. Others, by purchasing houses, contributed to the spiral of rising prices for the city’s aging housing stock, including in impoverished neighborhoods. Migrants bought inflated real estate because of the lack of affordable rentals, the need to house large families, and the discrimination they faced as renters in the housing market. That is to say, migrants in Manchester stabilized neighborhoods and created
value even as they contributed to a mortgage crisis of unsustainable, inflated property values with national and global ramifications.

Refugee resettlement and the personal activism and crossborder ties of specific migrants who sometimes acted as “community” leaders also linked the city to broader networks of national and global power. Some refugees whose emplacement in Manchester linked them to federal refugee resettlement agencies and the United Nations used their institutional and crossborder ties to become agents of social and political activism as part of various organizations based in Manchester and elsewhere (field notes, 2015). For example, Manchester’s narrative, which linked the “rebirth” of the city to its being a place “where people from all ethnicities and religious background come together to form a new and exciting community” (Baines 2004), created opportunities for migrants who were educated, ambitious, and eager to participate in the local political process.

As the city launched its regeneration efforts, the local Republican Party welcomed two new activists who went on to become members of the New Hampshire State Legislature: Carlos Gonzalez, born and educated in the Dominican Republic, and Saghir Tahir, born and educated in Pakistan. Both men gained a degree of local prominence from migrant-based organizing, but careful examination of their networks reveals that each man had political and economic connections that linked Manchester to elite US institutions, to the US federal government, transnationally to their homelands, and to powerful corporate actors.

When Gonzalez joined the local Republican Party in the 1990s and was warmly welcomed by Manchester’s Republican mayor, Ray Wieczorek, he was not a political novice. He began his political career in the Dominican Republic, where he grew up, working for the Dominican president and for the US Embassy (Ballotpedia 2017). After he settled in Manchester, Wieczorek encouraged him to become politically active, saying, “Carlos, I’m of Polish descent. And this city is a city of immigrants. And you might very well be tomorrow the next mayor of the city” (Fabian 2012). Gonzalez was affiliated with several Hispanic local and regional organizations. But as he noted in an interview with UniVision, a major Spanish-language media company, “I represent a very big district and there are hardly any Hispanics. That means I am very accepted and respected. It’s not about being Hispanic. It’s about the quality of my personality, as a professional and a politician” (Fabian 2012). Gonzalez was not only a political professional but also a mortgage specialist trained at Harvard under a Fannie Mae fellowship that was organized to im-
prove “affordable housing opportunities in communities across the country” (PR Newswire 2001).

When Saghir Tahir was elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives in 2000, he became the second Muslim in the United States to be elected to a state legislature. In Manchester, he had been a real estate investor and an independent construction contractor for Fortune 500 firms (Dutt 2006). He was also a civic leader, chair of the Manchester Republican Committee, a member of the local Elks club and Kiwanis club, and president of the New Hampshire chapter of the American Muslim Alliance (AMA). Although the war on terror and the growth of the US national surveillance regime focused on Muslims, Tahir continued to be re-elected, serving until 2011. His activism and advocacy through transnational organizations such as the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, which he also headed, linked Manchester and New Hampshire to national and international debates over Islam, the US relation to Pakistan, and the Kashmir conflict. After September 11, 2001, Tahir led a delegation to Pakistan to promote better relations between the United States and Pakistan. The US State Department and the Pakistani government both offered to fund his work. In 2003, as a result of Tahir’s advocacy and networking, the NH legislature became the first state government in the United States to ask Congress to open an inquiry into the situation in Kashmir.

The careers of these two Manchester activists were not unique. During this period, several other people of migrant background gained political positions in situations in which regeneration processes focused on housing and urban redevelopment intersected with the city’s migrant-friendly narrative. Through this organizing, migrants entered into political networks that helped launch their political careers as elected officials or political party activists who represented Manchester. Meetings held to organize cultural festivals—Latino, Caribbean, and African—were often central to this emplacement process.

At the same time, migrants joined with natives in different struggles for social justice. At times, these struggles resonated throughout the city, whose iconic role in the national US political process potentially gave them broader significance. As the conjuncture began to change, so did the goals of organizations that highlighted festivals of cultural diversity. Many activists and organizations increasingly embraced a social justice agenda, emphasizing civil rights, anti-racism, and social justice rather than cultural diversity. Commonalities, not cultural differences, came to dominate the narratives of most of these organizations (field notes, 2010, 2013).
The city had hosted Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations at a time when the State of New Hampshire refused to recognize the official holiday. After the state legislature adopted the holiday in 2000, these celebrations continued. At one such celebration in 2003 attended by the city’s mayor and held at a Greek Orthodox Church, the keynote speaker, Reverend Canon Edward Rodman, a black Episcopalian pastor noted, “The stories of different groups in America should be told, so that we all understand each other’s suffering, which will give a basis for common compassion and allow us to live in harmony” (field notes, January 20, 2003). This theme of addressing particular injustices while maintaining a position of opposition to all injustices was highlighted by the Ujima Collective, an organization that aimed to “combat the social isolation and cultural alienation” of people of African descent. By 2016, members of the collective had developed an explicitly anti-racist stance (field notes, 2002; Ujima Collective 2016). Meanwhile, Latinos Unidos de New Hampshire, which initially sponsored a Latino Festival, by 2013 had reimagined the African/Caribbean Celebration and the Latino Festival as the “We Are One Festival” (Union Leader 2015) with the purpose of bringing “together cultures and communities.”

In 2002, activists established the Immigrants Rights Task Force, which rallied for the rights of and opportunities for all migrants and saw this struggle as everyone’s concern. The task force brought together peace advocates, union organizers, lawyers, health-care activists, and representatives of faith communities, some of migrant background and some not, to organize on city and state levels and take on national issues. The task force was part of a coalition of state forces that successfully opposed state-level anti-immigrant measures to limit drivers’ license access and impose racial profiling. In 2007, the organization became the statewide New Hampshire Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees. In 2015, they won a $25,000 grant from the prestigious New Hampshire Charitable Fund “to strengthen efforts to welcome immigrants and refugees to their neighborhoods” (Robidoux 2015) in a clear rejection of regional and national calls to halt refugee resettlement and of the increasing targeting and criminalization of migrants.

HALLE / SAALE, SAXONY-ANHALT, GERMANY

(1) The city’s relative declining positioning over time operationalized in terms of objective and subjective factors.

A historic center of economic activity and learning, Halle was a powerful presence in regional and transnational networks from medieval times.
through the German Democratic Republic (GDR) period. As in Manchester, the efforts of Halle’s leaders to improve its competitive position drew from and referenced its past. The mayor’s statement that Halle was not a small city, and the city’s regeneration plans and narratives, recalled its greater historical significance and influence. Located on the river Saale in central Germany, Halle/Saale now combines remnants of castles and a medieval walled city with a modernist, prefabricated socialist era “new city” (Halle-Neustadt). In 2013, its population numbered 233,552 (Löbner 2013); after years of depopulation, the city registered small population increases beginning in 2010. As with Manchester, the region around the city also has a significant but much older history of trade networks. They originated in a medieval salt industry and later were fostered by Halle’s membership in the Hanseatic League. In the nineteenth century, as a result of Prussia’s, then Germany’s, growing industrialization and the development of coal mining in the region, Halle became the center of significant chemical and machine tool industries. Its historic university, founded in 1694, had for centuries been part of intellectual and scientific movements in Europe. In the industrial era, the university facilitated Halle’s rise to scientific and technical prominence.10

In the postwar GDR, Halle continued as a petrochemical and intellectual center that fostered transnational connection through trade networks and international student recruitment with socialist and nonaligned states. In the
first years of our research, some of the political leaders we interviewed had worked in scientific fields before unification. Some of the taxi drivers born in Halle spoke of their previous employment as international sales representatives of local petrochemical factories and of Halle’s links with the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Many older migrants noted that they had arrived in Halle as students during the GDR period.

Halle lost its importance and many of these transnational connections as a result of the 1990 German unification, a process of disempowerment that affected all of the city’s residents. In the first years after unification, the city witnessed dramatic deindustrialization, massive unemployment, and out-migration as factories were privatized, downsized, or abandoned. In 2002, 19.8 percent of the city’s apartments were vacant (City of Halle Stadtplanungsamt 2011, 31). When people speak of the abandoned and desolate landscape that areas of the city presented in the early twenty-first century, they continually harken back to massive layoffs at the nearby Leuna and Buna oil refineries and petrochemical plants. These facilities employed forty thousand workers at the time of unification. After the subsequent privatizations, technological upgradings, and automation, the local petrochemical industry and refineries once more provided some employment possibilities for workers from the region but not on the same scale.

A decade after unification, Halle continued to face high levels of unemployment. In 2000, 11 percent of its residents (27,378 of 246,450) were officially unemployed, youth unemployment was much greater, and there was intense competition among residents even for low-paid work (Löbner 2013). Disempowered, Halle offered few opportunities for employment or social mobility either for those seen as natives or those described as foreigners or of migrant background. Large numbers of city inhabitants sought employment in western Germany or elsewhere in Europe, where they were often treated as low-wage labor, whatever their education or experience. Even after the unification of Halle-Neustadt and the historic city, Halle suffered an ongoing population loss; eighty thousand people left between 1990 and 2005.

In the wake of the political reorganization of administrative structures that accompanied unification, neighboring Magdeburg became the political capital of the newly formed state of Saxony-Anhalt. Only twenty-two miles away from Halle, Leipzig, the largest city and an administrative center in the neighboring state of Saxony, had strategic advantages in the competition to become the region’s economic and cultural hub. Among these advantages was its strategic position adjoining the Leipzig/Halle Airport.

In evaluating the need for urban regeneration, city leaders confronted not
only their political disadvantages but also the city’s negative national and international reputation. The penchant of urban planners, scholars, and artists to highlight the deserted landscapes of “shrinking cities” was a significant global phenomena after the millennium and Halle was singled out as a prominent example for “post socialist” eastern Germany (Endres 2010; Richardson and Nam 2014). People elsewhere in Germany spoke of Halle as an undesirable place to live or work. It was envisioned as despoiled by past industrialization and by a current landscape of crumbling factory structures and abandoned, rotting buildings (Postkult 2015). This bleak image persisted, despite renewed historic and Art Deco neighborhoods and green foliage-filled vistas that replaced much of the brown industrial film that once coated trees, rivers, and buildings. The narrative of abandonment created a perception of Halle that city leaders had to challenge if the city was to be marketed in Germany, Europe, or globally, and thus attract private capital.

Even more damaging was the national and international reputation that Halle gained in the media as a racist city where migrants, whether well-paid professionals or impoverished asylum seekers, faced the threat of attack from neo-Nazi youth. As a result, few migrants voluntarily came to Halle; however, German authorities sent asylum seekers to the city and region. The migrants who remained included asylum seekers whose mobility in Germany was legally limited, students, migrants who married or had children with members of the local German population, and the elderly who came as refugees, Jewish settlers, and “ethnic Germans” mostly from the Soviet Union and who didn’t believe they would be employable elsewhere in Germany. In 2000, migrants constituted 3.1 percent of Halle’s population (City of Halle 2015), with the largest number of migrants coming from the European Union.

In point of fact, neo-Nazis periodically attempted to organize in Halle and attacked people racialized as different. However, these attacks were neither concentrated in nor peculiar to Halle but were part of a broader phenomenon of racist, anti-refugee assaults that turned murderous in a number of German cities beginning in the early 1990s.12

(2) Whether the city embarks on a strategy of rebranding and regeneration and the outcomes of such an effort in terms of private investment, public benefit, public debt, and the relative global positioning of the city at the end of our study.

When Halle’s political leaders looked to rebuild the economy and reputation of their city, their aspirations intersected with a range of institutional actors in Germany, the European Union, and around the world who saw eco-
nomic opportunity in the city’s terrains of abandonment. As in Manchester, in Halle many city leaders—political, economic, cultural, and academic—embraced a vision of regenerating the city through building new economy industries fueled by international investment. They were convinced that a critical factor in this new urban growth would be highly skilled international personnel, including “foreign scientists,” who would repopulate the city and provide the necessary workforce and critical mass of consumers to support new high-tech industries, research institutions, upscale businesses, and gentrified inner-city districts.

Rather than one comprehensive plan, different plans were devised for redeveloping Halle’s different territorial spaces and economic sectors. Vast amounts of public monies were channeled into these projects from several sources, including EU structural funds, German federal and local state (Länder) funds, and, in some cases, matching funds or loans from the city itself. One thrust of redevelopment centered on rebuilding housing stock, infrastructure, and storefronts with the retail ambience of urban shopping districts. Between 2000 and 2013, the EU Structural Fund allocated €55,492,926 for urban redevelopment in Halle (IBA 2010, 5). A large investment for reconfiguring Halle-Neustadt came from federal and Länder funding through the framework of Urban Redevelopment East (Stadtumbau Ost). This program funded the demolition of large numbers of long-abandoned buildings, many of them prefabricated socialist housing (Plattenbauen), and at the same time supported the renovation of buildings and reconstruction of housing. It provided funds to both private landlords and publicly owned housing companies for renovating their properties and substantially reconfiguring urban districts in terms of value. These rebuilding projects were framed within a narrative that vast public investment in rebuilding could help Halle overcome its reputation of abandonment and attract international investors.

In fact, rebuilding enhanced the social spatial inequalities of the city. Areas of the city began to differ markedly in rates of unemployment, income levels, and youth gangs and crime, and they gained very different reputations (Baum, Vondroušová, and Tichá 2014). As property was redeveloped, rents rose for renovated apartments while the stock of unregenerated and more affordable apartments was reduced. As the city was transformed, sectors of the population continued to lose not only their jobs but also their neighborhoods, local institutions, social spaces, and spatially situated networks of support. Meanwhile, social agencies placed concentrations of refugees and troubled families in the former workers’ districts of Halle-Neustadt and Silberhöhe. These former socialist residential districts were then stig-
matized as places of poverty, unemployment, crime, and youth gangs (field notes, 2014). As Halle’s city center and neighboring districts, with their gracious early-twentieth-century apartment buildings and storefronts, were renovated and its historic churches, towers, and public buildings were restored with EU, federal, and Saxony-Anhalt funds, these districts attracted a small, new middle class.

Over time, the visible dispossession of residents who hadn’t migrated and yet were being physically displaced justified a further round of rebuilding within the city, which generated additional processes of dispossession and displacement. The links between displacement and gentrification were made clear in a report evaluating regeneration: “In Halle urban redevelopment means the demolition of housing. However, as specified by the program Urban Redevelopment East, this always takes place in conjunction with urban gentrification in other districts” (IBA 2010, 15). When Länder, federal, and EU funding for disadvantaged city areas could be raised by acknowledging interconnections between regeneration and impoverishment, applications followed suit and highlighted the growing disparities. For example, a report assessing some of the city’s regeneration projects, “Balancing Act: Dual City,” described the “old city” as “stabilized” and as having “secured its
future” and argued that redevelopment was now needed in outlying areas to achieve “a new balance in the ratios between the two poles of the dual city” (IBA 2010).

At the same time, city leaders sought economic development in multiple directions. From the millennium to 2015, they persistently referred to “business, science and culture” as “the basis for the success of Halle (Saale)—the ‘City of Handel.’” They claimed that “as Germany’s greenest city, Halle’s potential is demonstrated by its flexible and adaptable economic development which profits from state-of-the-art infrastructure and transport links to Europe’s major cities and economic centers” (Business and Science Support Centre 2015, 2). Each of these claims accompanied considerable public investment, but the outcome in terms of repositioning Halle and developing a vibrant local economy was, as we show below, negligible.

After 2000, as cities around the world began to compete to become centers of science, Halle’s city leaders believed they could reposition their city by emphasizing its former international prominence in science. The federal government helped initiate these efforts by locating two Max Planck Institutes, a Max Planck International Research School and the Leopoldina, the German National Academy of Sciences, in Halle. City leaders built on this momentum by investing in a new urban zone, the Weinberg campus, dedicated to attracting profitable science and technology corporations. The European Union principally funded construction of cutting-edge research facilities and necessary infrastructure (interview May 24, 2015). However, as a member of the Business and Science Support Centre of Halle (Dienstleistungszentrum Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft) noted, land was sold to corporations at below market rates, leaving Halle’s impoverished taxpayers to pay the difference between the sale and market price (interview May 24, 2015).

At the same time, Halle looked to attract various forms of industry by constructing and promoting seven industrial parks and upgrading tram, rail, and roadway infrastructure—further incentives for businesses to locate their headquarters, personnel, and research, development, and production facilities in the city (Business and Science Support Centre 2015). Investors were promised “an entire city to support your economic potential” (Business and Science Support Centre 2015, 2). Halle’s leaders also spoke of development through culture industries and tourism. Its art school was celebrated as a center of design. Drawing on its past, Halle called itself “the City of Handel,” because George Fideric Handel was born in Halle, in 1685. Looking to its future, the city funded a state-of-the-art multimedia center and marketed its facilities for “film sound mixing” worldwide (Business and Science Sup-
A city report in 2015 claimed, “Around 1,000 companies in the dynamic industry of information and media technology operate here, employing around 4,500 people” (Business and Science Support Centre 2015, 14).

In fact, the results of all this redevelopment were decidedly mixed. According to a city official charged with economic development, many projects brought prestige rather than significant private investment (field notes, July 12, 2015). The Weinberg Center, for example, attracted many start-ups, but most were small and provided relatively little employment given the sums invested. The petrochemical works nearby in Leuna once again became significant, employing nine thousand people by 2015 (Werkfeuerwehrverbandes Saxony-Anhalt e.V. 2015). While, in a 2015 report, the mayor claimed to have secured investment from Russia, China, and Norway, many corporate investors initiated projects that proved transient, despite receiving public subsidies (Halle Saale INVESTVISION Entwicklungs- und Verwaltungsgesellschaft Halle-Saalkreis GmbH. 2015). The largest industrial park, the “Star Park,” was so underutilized that in a 2015 speech the mayor hailed as a great achievement the opening of a logistics center there, which paid its 130 workers only slightly more than the minimum wage (Pohlgeers 2015). The head of Saxony-Anhalt also noted that “Halle had recognized the trend of online trade quickly and provides an important locational advantage of the good transport links via the motorway and the airport Leipzig-Halle” (Pohlgeers 2015).

In fact, in a trajectory such as that of Manchester, the city was more successful in attracting low-wage logistics and call centers than “new economy” high-wage industries. Drawing on Halle’s nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century history as a rail transshipment point for central Germany, Deutsche Bahn, the German railroad corporation, invested 700 million euros in 2014 to develop a rail transshipment facility next to Halle’s central train station. However, Leipzig, with its proximity to the airport, also worked to establish its reputation as a logistics center.

Saxony-Anhalt, including Halle, emerged in 2013 as a significant location for call centers. According to the Federal Employment Agency (Budesagentur für Arbeit) in 2013, of all federal states, Saxony-Anhalt had the second highest percentage of its population employed in call centers—1.6 percent, compared to the national average of 0.4 percent (Bendick and Tempel 2014). The Länder had six thousand call center jobs in 2013. Call centers in Saxony-Anhalt paid the lowest wages of all federal states in Germany (Call-Center-Agent 2015). Nonetheless, by 2015 these centers were cutting jobs or closing down and moving to locations with even lower wages.
Regeneration projects produced neither the increased tax revenue nor the greatly diminished unemployment that were the goals of the redevelopment. Unemployment, while lower than in 2000, was still sizeable in 2013, at 12.5 percent (Business and Science Support Centre 2015, 6). Figures for the long-term unemployed and the increasing rate of unemployment among people over fifty-five are significant in that regard. In 2013, 21 percent of the unemployed had been unemployed for two or more years and, although unemployment in the city was dropping, an increase (1.6 percent) in the long-term unemployed occurred between 2012 and 2013 (City of Halle 2013, 121). Until 2015, wage rates in the east were legally maintained below those of western Germany and there was no national minimum wage. Moreover, during the period of urban regeneration we are considering, residents’ standard of living was also reduced because of the introduction of the euro in 2002 that drastically increased the daily cost of living. The dispossession and impoverishment of the city and region’s workforce, working below their qualifications and experience, were then used to attract industries in search of tractable low-paid labor such as call and logistics centers. While there was some influx of highly paid professionals and young people into the region, it was obvious by 2015 that Leipzig was attracting more of them. They preferred the shopping and housing possibilities established in Leipzig’s regenerated city center and

![Regeneration of Marktplatz Halle and promotion of short-lived Dell call center. Photograph by Nina Glick Schiller.](image)
neighboring districts. Rail and tram investments made commuting between the two cities easier. Even high-income people who settled in Halle began to shop in Leipzig.

By 2015, the most significant demographic change in Halle was the growth of its student population. With these students came a kind of economic regeneration. Students created a market for bars and inexpensive restaurants. Rather than attracting large-scale private investment as a center of science and industry, Halle, through its research and university core, gained a reputation as a university city. Yet even this form of redevelopment was constrained by the city’s lack of political and economic power. Halle faced ongoing disinvestment by the Länder in various departments of the university, and between 2010 and 2015 the university’s international ranking fell precipitously (Center for World-Class Universities 2015).

At the same time, Halle faced the debt repayment incurred during redevelopment, which placed significant strains on funding public services such as education. What has become clear is that the national and EU projects of reclaiming the eastern region of Germany through large-scale investment of public funds initiated processes of capital accumulation in Halle. These accumulation processes proved lucrative for national and international construction companies and multiscalar corporate and financial interests. However, these processes dispossessed and displaced significant sectors of the local population and put future city development at risk. As in Manchester, the implementation of urban regeneration in Halle obscured the complex intertwined processes of regeneration, dispossession, and displacement taking place in the city. Inequality increased, and the city as a financial actor became more impoverished, even as some transnational corporate actors and local public–private partnerships continued to generate private profits from their activities in the city.

(3) The way in which the city leaders position migrants or minorities within their regeneration narrative.

Halle city leaders of different political outlooks repeatedly worked to craft a migrant-friendly narrative as part of the city’s regeneration profile. They were aware of the city’s reputation as racist and sought to combat this notion by emphasizing migrants as an integral part of the city. In interviews in 2001, city council members of various political parties and local religious and civic leaders all stressed that, whatever their legal status, migrants belonged in the city. At the time of our interviews, half of the newcomers had some form of asylum-related status, but only 10 percent had full asylum with the right
to stay permanently and work. In the context of Halle’s competition with other cities and its need to combat its racist reputation, these migrants, along with highly educated professionals and technicians, became members of the same team, so to speak. The thirty-one leaders we interviewed in 2001 were committed to changing the city’s image not only in Germany but worldwide. The mayor, officials, and organizational leaders we spoke to between 2013 and 2015 were equally concerned and continued to emphasize Halle’s embrace of foreigners as integral to its character.

Although after German unification many city residents and some leaders spoke of minority religions and migration as new to Halle, efforts to rebrand the city sometimes acknowledged certain aspects of the city’s diverse past. For example, an online magazine about Halle noted that “the history of Jews in Halle is as old as the city” (Seppelt 2014). Other sources traced Halle’s transnational industrial ties to the seventeenth century, when French Huguenot refugees arrived (Halle Spektrum 2014). In 2002 and for several years afterward, a wreath was ceremoniously laid at the statue of an African couple in front of a university administration building to honor Anton Wilhelm Amo, an African who studied law and became a university professor in the eighteenth century. Representing the city in 2003, the vice mayor spoke at this ceremony. In 2013, Lord Mayor Bernd Wiegand supported a city council resolution to name a street after Amo. The resolution read: “This renaming connects the university with the future history of this cosmopolitan city of science” (Prasse 2013). These activities highlighted and celebrated the historic African presence in the city.

The actual historical diversity of Halle was broader and grimmer than the dimensions acknowledged by city boosters. The city’s historic population included people displaced by various wars (Vertriebene), people coming as labor migrants, and people brought there as forced labor. Toward the end of World War II, Halle’s population included forced factory laborers confined in an offshoot of the Buchenwald concentration camp (van der Zanden 2014). All contributed to Halle’s wealth, to the rich cultural and intellectual mix of the city, and to its regional, national, and transnational networks.

Under the leadership of Dagmar Szabados, lord mayor from 2006 to 2013, the city officially addressed all newcomers, including asylum seekers, as “new residents of Halle.” In the “Door-opener” section of the city website, Lord Mayor Szabados invited all newcomers “to use the possibilities that Halle (Saale) has to offer”: “Halle is a cosmopolitan, family-friendly city. It has a rich history with many traditions. For example, the first African student to receive a doctorate in Europe was awarded this degree at the University of
Halle in 1727. The city loves its traditions, but is also glad to accept changes and improvements. I sincerely invite you to work with us towards the goal of enriching our city’s social, cultural and community life with new ideas and thoughts” (City of Halle 2015).

In 2013, under the tenure of the next mayor, who positioned himself politically as more business-minded than his predecessors, the open-door policy continued under the rubric of “a welcoming culture.” However, by 2016, the city website had scaled back its inclusive welcome of all newcomers (City of Halle 2016). No longer were “foreign citizens/ asylum seekers” among the welcome newcomers. The page on the website devoted to them merely listed the three weekdays during which the relevant office was open, without providing interactive links to actual sources of information.

(4) The degree and kind of resources and services the city provides for migrant settlement and migrant and minority access to services.

While Halle maintained a welcoming narrative from 2000 to 2015, few resources or services were allocated to newcomers, whatever their legal status or education. We were told in the interviews we conducted with city council members in 2001, as well as during interviews and informal discussions with city officials and economic development experts in 2013 and 2015, that the city had little or no resources to invest in services to attract, emplace, or retain newcomers or to assist refugees. When it could, Halle accessed various bits of funding from the EU, the federal state, and the Länder to assist new residents. For example, the “Door-opener” on the city website, which provided information about settling in the city and its available health, education, and social services, was partially funded by the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and the Youth Action Program of the European Commission.

The massive amounts of public funding for regeneration provided resources or services to newcomers only when their needs were linked to impoverished neighborhoods that required restructuring. For example, public funding designated to address the growing “social polarization” in the city (IBA 2010, Löhner 2013) included migrant services. In 2008, the city council decided to expand the scope of its Social City (Soziale Stadt) program by working to provide employment opportunities on the periphery of Halle-Neustadt and support “quartier management” there. Programs were developed in the areas of “economy, culture, education, and sports.” As in Manchester, public and charitable funding was generally made available to clients in terms of their “special needs” rather than their cultural difference. Integration programs geared toward newcomers, including asylum seek-
ers, remained relatively small scale and dependent on small and short-term grants and volunteer services, compared to the much greater institutional support available to the impoverished. While the “Door-Opener” offered information in German, English, French, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Russian, most organizations provided services and information only in German, with no translators or translations available.

The city council’s welcome to newcomers included the appointment of an official, the commissioner for integration and immigration, who was responsible for addressing the needs of migrants. In 2000, this commissioner had little public credibility with migrants, the city council, or the public. Later on, a new commissioner played a more visible role as a liaison between the city government and an ever-growing number of local organizations that interacted with migrants, including asylum seekers. The commissioner was also tasked with consolidating the Advisory Committee for Foreigners of the City of Halle, which represented “the interests of all foreign residents of Halle and rouse[d] public understanding for their needs and problems” (City of Halle, Door-Opener n.d.). From 2006 to 2013, Karamba Diaby, a German citizen of Senegalese background, led this committee. Without adequate staffing or resources, neither the commissioner nor the Advisory Committee could offer much to migrants. Most available programs were funded by short-term grants and many were staffed partially or entirely by volunteers. Only in 2015 did the city hire a coordinator to assist the commissioner for migration and integration with the task of bringing together the many volunteers who provided services to newcomers, including asylum seekers.

After a relative hiatus in refugee settlement, by 2013 a new wave of asylum seekers were arriving in Halle, part of an increase in displaced people fleeing war, disruption, and political upheavals in Syria, the horn of Africa, Iraq, and elsewhere. Several new, privately owned asylum homes were organized with the understanding that, after a short period, newcomers could seek private apartments in the city. The city’s Office for Migration and Integration mobilized local institutions, including some long involved in service provision for asylum seekers and refugees and others newly or more intensively engaged with the recent influx of asylum seekers. While a broader network of institutions was seemingly involved in the provision of services for migrants, once again much apparent support was simply the continued regular function of local institutions. Many of these institutions organized volunteer services with the limited funds the city provided.

By 2015, the number of organizations providing services to migrants had grown. Their efforts were nominally coordinated, or at least connected, by the
Office for Migration and Integration. However, the services provided by these organizations still came from specific short-term grants. Often services were situated within larger organizations that provided counseling, education, or health care to impoverished residents of the city. Generally, neither staff nor volunteers were knowledgeable about migration law and entitlements.

Nonetheless, in their efforts to be migrant friendly and demonstrate that people of all backgrounds were part of the city, Halle defied national policies and provided services to migrants, including asylum seekers. The city contributed to minimal salaries for teachers giving German lessons to asylum seekers and supported programs of volunteer teachers. In some years the city gave asylum seekers access to apartments, rather than insisting they remain in shelters or refugee camps (field notes, 2005, 2015). For many years, the city also funded the One World House (Eine Welt Haus), a center that provided migrant-specific services as well as cultural programs, and supported a community center dedicated to foreign-native interaction. However, Halle could fund very few migrant-based and migrant-led organizations of the kind that serve as a base for socially mobile migrants to emerge as “community” leaders.

As a result, most migrant organizations that were initiated and primarily funded by the migrants were generally short-lived. These organizations, identified in terms of the nationality of the members, appeared only on festive occasions when funding or support for public events was available. These organizations lacked the political clout and professionalism that could attract support from public or charitable sources. Although in 2006, there was a push to create an umbrella organization that would bring the various migrant-based groups into an Association of Immigrant Organizations, little enduring organizing ensued. Halle’s Door-Opener website listed eighteen members, but the lack of ethnic organizing in the city at that time was evident in the fact that members of the Association included “clubs, initiatives and individuals.” Member associations participated in local activities and celebrations, such as Intercultural Week, African Week, International Week against Racism, and the Human Rights Conference, and were invited to discussions, celebrations, and exhibits. Despite this prominence, the trend of providing at best token support for immigrant organizations continued.

(5) Evidence of synergy between city regeneration narratives and policies, on the one hand, and the multiscalar modes of emplacement of migrants and minorities, on the other, including whether their transnational networks emerged as assets in city-making.
As in the case of Manchester, the ongoing regeneration of Halle, including the city’s migrant-friendly narratives, both created opportunities for migrant emplacement and posed new hazards and barriers as conditions changed. In the swirling currents of city-making, migrants’ transnational networks served to create new multiscalar connections for various city residents and organizations. Some connections, such as those of transnational scholars and students contributing to the city’s research and intellectual capacity, were recognized and encouraged by city leaders and developers, while others, such as born-again Christian networks organized by migrant religious leaders, contributed to efforts to reposition the city and rebuild its reputation but were not publicly acknowledged or fully understood.

Urban developers and the city leaders publicly acknowledged their desire to rebuild Halle and its university as an international hub of science. They noted that scholars working in various research institutes foster valuable transnational connections. Through well-funded academic conferences, hiring, and research collaborations, individual scholars and research institutions brought international researchers to Halle, inserting the city in transnational networks of intellectuals and institutions and making it visible on the international academic landscape. Halle’s academic institutions not only benefited from but also, to a limited extent, contributed to reconstituting its tourist-oriented restaurant and hotel industries.

However, these transnational networks did not meet expectations that science and academic institutions would change Halle’s demographic and consumption patterns by attracting permanent residents drawn from a global pool of “creative talent” and high-tech workers. The city center did begin to fill with highly skilled international migrants working in various start-up and other international businesses, but these businesses and their workforces were transient. Their increased presence in the city and relatively high salaries of their employees provided a market for upscale rentals, restaurants, travel, and services and contributed to the gentrification of the old city center. Described by urban planners as “project workers” (van Win- den 2010), these newcomers constituted a mobile workforce. Flexible and precarious employment conditions made it difficult for many highly skilled workers to settle in Halle.

The student body of the university and the Burg Giebichenstein art school added to an increasingly mobile mix of residents. By 2015, university enrollment had reached twenty thousand, double its number in 2010, and included more than one thousand international students as well as students from all over Germany. During the years of our research, students contributed to a
countercultural, transnationally connected ambience that included a changing musical scene, often staged in unregenerated buildings. They also participated in anti-racist movements that worked with asylum seekers. A more urbane mix of bars and restaurants developed rapidly in the regenerated streets of the old city, reflecting changes in the student body. While the student presence connected Halle to political, social, and cultural movements, the city had difficulty retaining educated youth. Its relatively inexpensive cost of living attracted students initially but characterized a faltering local economy and limited local job market that could not provide sufficient employment and career opportunities (interview R., 2015).

Even academics and highly skilled professionals with long-term, well-paid employment often encountered barriers to settling in the city, and their discontent detracted from urban branding efforts. While Halle offered excellent childcare, it did not offer migrant professionals and technicians other desirable services, such as an international school for their children, public services accessible in English, or sufficient entertainment and shopping. Consequently, some professionals commuted from Berlin or further afield, as they had before regeneration, while others chose to live in Leipzig.

Meanwhile, and generally unremarked by Halle’s leadership and urban developers, some asylum seekers and members of refugee populations responded to city narratives and became city-makers as they found opportunities for emplacement locally. They built multiscalar networks of local and transnational actors, which engaged in a range of economic, political, and social activities. For example, during the first fifteen years after unification, migrant businesses begun by individuals who were not defined by the city as desirable for the “new economy” nevertheless became part of the central city street scene.

Political leaders interviewed in 2001 observed that migrant businesses were one way that migrants settled in the city. The migrant-inclusive narrative certainly facilitated businesses founded by new Vietnamese, Kurdish, and Nigerian residents. By the time Halle’s “Door-Opener” guide to newcomers was posted on the city website (shortly after 2006), an array of local migrant businesses were listed as a matter of course among shopping opportunities in the city. While in their regeneration plans political leaders and redevelopers saw migrant businesspeople as an asset in their overall efforts to develop a new image for Halle and reposition the city globally, they did not consider the multiple ways migrants contributed to remaking the city.

As we note in chapter 2, the first stages of city center regeneration featured
small retail migrant businesses selling clothing, fresh food and vegetables, and fast food to financially weakened city populations. They occupied empty spaces or newly rehabilitated but empty storefronts in the city center. At a critical point in regeneration efforts, these businesses brought commercial life to city center streets that otherwise would have seemed abandoned. Thus, they played a crucial role in maintaining and restoring value to this property at a time when the city was struggling against its shrinking image.

Migrant businesspeople, sometimes with local German partners or staff, reached out to transnational networks to access inexpensive goods, drawing on a combination of personal and regional wholesale networks that connected Halle to Leipzig, Dessau, Berlin, and a range of crossborder locations such as the Netherlands, Vietnam, and China. These businesses were built on multiscalar networks that included ethnic ties but were often multiethnic. China emerged as an important production and distribution location for packaged goods and inexpensive household items. In subsequent years, as the student population grew, clusters of inexpensive migrant-owned restaurants near the university also grew. However, after 2005 as the city center entered a second stage of rebuilding, expanding gentrification and increasing rent for storefronts and housing displaced the small businesses that served the poorer populations of the city. These businesses, both migrant and non-migrant, were replaced by international chain stores and department stores and other small businesses such as nail parlors oriented to higher-end clientele (Tempel 2014).

Migrant businesses that served the poor became increasingly concentrated in Neustadt, increasing the sense of street life in this region of the city. Thus migrant-owned small businesses continued to contribute to the city’s economic life and international connections, even after many were pushed out of the city center during the gentrification process.

Similarly, in the first years of the millennium, a range of newcomers to Halle, including asylum seekers, refugees, students, and professionals, built religious networks that connected the city nationally and transnationally in ways that raised its visibility and prestige. However, Halle’s leaders and developers did not acknowledge city-making through religious networks, even as city boosters worked to win international prominence by obtaining global recognition as a historic center of the Protestant Enlightenment. In 1998, applicants initiated the process for the Franckesche Stiftungen, the origin of Halle’s Pietist movement in 1698, to become a World Heritage Site. Despite intensive efforts in 2015, in which Halle invested more than 100,000 euro and
Saxony-Anhalt provided 230,000 euro, the city’s application was criticized so severely that the bid was withdrawn (Eger 2016).

Such religious emplacement in Halle, as we note in chapter 4, constituted a form of social citizenship that engaged migrants and natives within the city and around the world. These networks placed the city within multiscalar social movements and institutional connections that supported refugees and asylum seekers as well as globe-spanning born-again Christian networks. Pastors originally from Nigeria and the Congo led congregations of African and German believers to develop born-again networks that became increasingly present in the city, in the region, and in the lives of its inhabitants. These networks connected those experiencing different forms of dispossession—refugees, East Germans who had lost their country and economic position due to German unification and “postsocialist” reforms, and German youth facing precarious employment—with powerful, globe-spanning Christian networks that extended into US imperial projects and European missionary activities.

By placing Halle as a node on the global mapping of cities claimed for Jesus, migrant believers not only made claims to belonging to the city but also contributed to raising the city’s visibility and prestige. A young white German from Bavaria active in organizing one of the born-again congregations explained this dynamic in an interview in 2015. After researching the matter, she moved to eastern Germany to join the Miracle Healing Church in Halle because of its reputation for sincere religiosity. However, we note that both she and that congregation’s pastor, a migrant from Nigeria, lived in Leipzig.

The political ambience of Halle after unification, which continued into the turn of the century, also contributed to an opportunity structure that facilitated forms of migrant emplacement in the city. At the same time, migrants’ entry into mainstream politics and progressive political movements connected the city to broader audiences in a way that countered Halle’s negative racist image. After German unification, the same political forces in Halle, which during the GDR period had opposed repression from the secret police through a left-wing Christian social movement, continued to give the city a core of left political activism. Migrants with histories of political activism in their homelands felt more at home in this setting. Several became German citizens and party activists. When we began our research, two were members of the city council and one held a city office. They became public representatives through gaining seniority and influence in their political parties, not through serving as representatives of ethnic populations.
At the same time, several other individuals of migrant background became public actors, occupying a niche in the city of a “public foreigner.” These people also had histories of being active in Halle’s public life. They found themselves drawn into a series of activities that conflated the city leaders’ need to forge an anti-racist image with broader anti-racist or multicultural representations emerging on the national scene in debates about changing Germany’s migration laws and policies. Halle’s “public foreigners” were prominent in annual festivities, leading discussions, participating on panels, and sitting at information tables that celebrated Intercultural Week and African Week.  

Karamba Diaby emerged as one of the most prominent of these personalities and began to occupy a changing role within the city and its narratives. Born in Senegal, he arrived in Germany in 1985 to study for an advanced degree and obtained a PhD in chemistry (interview D., December 18, 2001; Cottrell 2013). A longtime resident of Halle and a German citizen married to a white German, for many years Diaby functioned as a public foreigner in discussions of migration and integration and as a political actor within multiple German venues. For example, as an employee of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, the Green Party Foundation, Diaby linked the Green Party to activities such as African Week in Halle. As Halle’s regeneration proceeded, Diaby’s role changed, and he became a Social Democratic Party (SPD) activist. As a mem-
ber of its electoral lists, he was elected in 2013 as one of the first black German members of parliament.

In the months before the election, Diaby’s blackness was highlighted and his candidacy scrutinized in the national press. In evaluating Diaby’s chances, Der Spiegel, a prominent German national news magazine, portrayed Halle as so racist that Diaby was unable to campaign in certain neighborhoods of the city (Hengst 2011). In response, various sections of city leadership defended Diaby. It was in reference to Karamba Diaby and the Der Spiegel story that the mayor told Nina in 2013: “Every foreigner is a part of Halle” (interview W., May 21, 2013).

By 2015, in the context of intensifying new conjectural crises that brought increased numbers of refugees into Halle, the networks that linked local migrant activists with city institutions, including mainstream Protestant and Catholic churches and institutions, grew in extent and density. Increasing numbers of citizen volunteers were drawn into the nexus of multiscalar connections. Ironically, while city developers had stressed connecting Halle through networks formed by academic and research institutions, the city’s international connections were intensified within broader networks of humanitarian aid, refugee support, and anti-racist struggle. For instance, Catholic institutions forged links within the sanctuary movement that offered protection to migrants without legal papers.

Anti-racist social movements that involved an array of ordinary citizens and local political leaders were not new to Halle. In 1998, Halle was among the first German cities to formulate a civil courage initiative to halt the election of neo-Nazis to the Saxony-Anhalt parliament. Later, this initiative organized citizens to act against neo-Nazi activities and to protect migrants under attack. Over the years, many anti-racist projects were supported by federal funding and supplemented with volunteer staff.

In 2015, Halle continued to have its share of racist attacks, including a major arson attack on asylum seekers in a neighboring village and racist demonstrations in the city center. At the same time, within the changing historical conjuncture of increased racism globally and in Germany, Halle’s anti-racist movement participated in the Federation Against the Right/Halle Alliance for Diversity (Bündnis gegen Rechts/Hallianz fuer Vielfalt), a well-funded federal initiative that included political leaders such as Halle’s mayor. In Halle, as in Manchester, some city leaders struggled to maintain a welcoming profile for the city in the face of strong anti-immigrant currents. But disparities of wealth and power, heightened by intensified processes of accumulation
by dispossession, also made political polarization an aspect of life for all the city’s residents.

MARDIN, SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY

(1) The city’s relative declining positioning over time operationalized in terms of objective and subjective factors.

Mardin is an ancient hilltop city in southeastern Turkey overlooking the Tigris and the flat Mesopotamian plains. Located at the crossroads of the historic (eastern) Silk Road connecting India and China to Europe, it was a powerful center of trade, commerce, and the arts and of religious learning and education. Unlike Manchester and Halle, Mardin has never been an industrial center. Its disempowerment processes, while not indexed to the loss of industries, have been related to the loss of power and wealth. This loss extended across a much longer time frame than the disempowerment processes we addressed in Manchester and Halle. Mardin’s loss of significance and power started in the seventeenth century with the clear peripheralization of the Silk Road, the rise of the Atlantic economy, and the emergence of a European world economy (Wallerstein 2011). As trade routes and transportation systems were restructured beginning in eighteenth century, the situation worsened. Mardin declined further when it was not incorporated into Europe’s international nineteenth-century division of labor (Özçoşar 2006, 2009). However, until World War I, Mardin was still a key regional node of commercial and economic networks to Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Mosul, and Bagdad.

Before the twentieth century, Mardin had a religiously, linguistically, and ethnically diverse population. Its Christian population was composed mainly of Armenians, Syriacs, and Chaldeans. However, in the early twentieth century, massacres and displacements within the Ottoman Empire began to transform the population. Beginning in 1915, genocides of local Armenian and Syriac Christians decimated their numbers in the city, depriving Mardin of valuable human capital and skilled labor. Following the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, and the establishment of national borders with Iraq and Syria, Mardin was cut off from important regional economic, social, and cultural connections, including its Aleppo-centered economy and Caucasian networks. Mardin was reduced to a marginal border city between Turkey and Syria.

Although illegal border trading replaced the commercial activities that once generated wealth in the city, Mardin continued to be impoverished and
MAP 1.3 AND MAP 1.4 Maps showing the boundaries of the Mardin city-region and the location of Mardin on the Turkish border and border-crossing routes to Syria and Iraq.
Introducing three cities

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disempowered throughout most of the twentieth century. Despite inclusion in a large-scale irrigation and energy production development project (the Southeastern Development Project [GAP] in the 1970s [Yüksel 2014]) at the end of the twentieth century, Mardin remained one of the least developed cities and regions in Turkey, with a growth rate of less than half of Turkey’s average. Mardin’s loss of power and underdevelopment became more striking when compared to the city of Gaziantep (202 miles away), which, after the founding of the Turkish Republic, emerged as a crucial regional center in Southeast Anatolia, with flourishing textile, food, and machinery industries.

Mardin’s historical strength had been based on its position as a crucial node within several Christian and Islamic religious networks. The province was home to monasteries, churches, religious missions, mosques, and influential madrassas and educational institutions of Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant Syriac, Armenian, and Chaldean Churches. Like many cities on the Silk Road, Mardin was a crossroads of intellectual and religious exchange and learning and a hub for science, languages, art, and crafts. From the thirteenth century to the 1930s, the seat of Syriac Orthodox Patriarchs was in Mardin.17

Early in the twentieth century, Mardin also began to lose this source of power. The genocides of the Armenian and Syriac populations in 1915 left churches without congregations. After the departure of the Patriarchate, many of the Eastern Orthodox churches and monasteries were shut down and left to decay.18 In their abandoned condition, the unique and world-renowned architecture of these religious sites, together with the forsaken vineyards of monasteries and the ruins of Syriac Christian villages, stood as an epitaph to the massacres, displacements, lootings, and confiscations of property that took place in Mardin province. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, these remains of displaced Christian populations were vividly present in the collective memory of the Syriac minority in and from Mardin. Defined as “abandoned property” by the Enval-i-Metruke law, this property, including houses, ateliers, and churches of the massacred and displaced Armenian and Syriac Christian populations, was appropriated by the state and often was left to decay (Polatel 2010; Biner 2007).

The demographic composition of Mardin continued to change during the Republican period. After successive discriminatory measures and attacks, the remaining Christian population left in successive waves, including significant emigrations in the 1940s and in 1974, after Turkey’s invasion of Cyprus (Biner 2007). In the 1950s, while local elites of all religious backgrounds left the city center, migrants from nearby towns and villages settled in the
Beginning in the 1980s and extending over several decades, Mardin increasingly functioned as a home and an important gateway for internally displaced people (IDP), mainly dispossessed Kurdish peasants from the countryside who fled their villages. Population fluctuations continued, spurred by conflicts between the Turkish armed forces and Kurdish Labor Party (PKK). These conflicts led to massive village evictions enforced by the Turkish state. For a decade (1987–96), and for the third time in the twentieth century, Mardin fell under martial law (State of Emergency Governorship). As a result, by 2000 the city was strongly associated with political instability, poverty, and terror.

Although Mardin's population reached 705,098 in 2000 (TÜİK 2013), in the previous decade, the number of people migrating from Mardin had almost doubled the number of people immigrating into the city. The high rates of out-migration slowed only after 2009. Still, according to projections of the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2012 (TÜİK 2013) Mardin's population was expected to grow at a slower rate than that of neighboring cities.

In Mardin, the depopulation of the city-region, out-migration from the city center, and economic stagnation went hand in hand. Throughout the history of the Republic, an important part of Mardin’s local economy had been built upon the agricultural production of cereals. When the central government deregulated agriculture and disrupted this production, it was not replaced by the growth of industry. Although Mardin’s governorship established an Organized Industrial Zone (OIZ) in 1976, which offered attractive infrastructure and lucrative business conditions such as tax rebates, subsidized electricity, and services, it failed to attract investments for three decades after its establishment. In its president’s words, despite all efforts, the OIZ “only took off after 2007” (interview F., March 1, 2015).

In the face of Mardin’s centuries of decline, including the violent disruptions and economic stagnation of the twentieth century, city leaders sought to re-empower their city. Beginning in 2000, they embarked on an organized effort to change Mardin’s reputation from a place of terror and poverty to a prosperous, peaceful, multifaith, multiethnic, multilingual center of historical culture, tourism, and industry. Despite different historic and geopolitical circumstances, Mardin’s city leaders resembled their peers in Halle and Man-
chester in their struggle to reposition their city more competitively within regional, national, and global networks of power by attracting flows of capital and skilled labor.

As the political and economic conjuncture in the Middle East began to change after the Gulf War (1991), Mardin’s leaders saw new opportunities for their city. The unilateral truce between the Kurdish PKK and Turkish armed forces beginning in 1999 and the so-called democratization process in 2009, which entailed settling the “Kurdish issue” (the escalated conflict between the Turkish State and Kurdish groups), provided a period of relative stability and enabled the city to set aside its conflict-ridden image. City leaders agreed that a conflict-free and safe environment was crucial if they were to attract capital to re-empower the city. In the words of the president of Chamber of Industry and Commerce, “For the development of Mardin, and for attracting investments by foreign or by Turkish industrialists and businessmen in the osb [oiz], the region should be primarily peaceful and safe” (Avuka 2015).

Speaking about the terror-filled years of the 1980s and 1990s, the president of the oiz stated during an interview that, in those days, the region’s association with armed conflict was so strong that Mardinites were not even trusted as businessmen. Often their checks were not accepted because Mardin businesspeople were seen as terrorists (interview F, March 1, 2015). To change this image and attract private investments, Mardinite businessmen “invited journalists, people from the media and from the two biggest newspapers to Mardin . . . and asked them to write about Mardin” (interview F, March 1, 2015).24 Similarly, Mardin’s businessmen paid the production costs of a tv series popularizing Mardin and its unique architecture, sponsored cultural activities and cinema festivals, and invited powerful businessmen to Mardin from Istanbul and Ankara, including the president of the most powerful business association in Turkey, the Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association (TÜSİAD). They organized important annual meetings of business federations and associations in Mardin and hosted leaders of major holdings in Turkey (interview F, March 1, 2015).

A campaign to revive and restore memories of Mardin’s past glories and historical connections was a key component of this effort at repositioning the city. City leaders sought to brand Mardin as a multireligious, multilingual city marked by a historical legacy of the peaceful coexistence of “civilizations.” Beginning in the 2000s, city leaders and developers sought to address the city’s lost power, placing the motto “Searching its Future in its Past” on the city website (a theme that we explore further in chapter 5). They framed projects of urban restructuring and regeneration as attempts to “retrieve” the
city’s prestigious former economic and cultural power (Biner 2007). By using a “renaissance of Mardin” narrative, city leaders highlighted the city’s multi-faceted cross-border economic, cultural, and historic trade and commercial ties to regional markets. These narratives highlighted the city’s locational advantage in relationship to Middle Eastern markets, which were important for seeking industrial and logistics investment in the city. References to the city’s history also served to emphasize its diversity of languages and cultures, underscoring Mardinites’ linguistic competency in Arabic and Kurdish, which was useful for intensified cross-border commerce.

In the context of the new regional dynamics and investment and trade opportunities unleashed by the Iraq War, projects to restructure and rebuild Mardin gained ground (Tepav 2011). Meanwhile, starting in 2001, the prospect that the Turkish Ministry of Culture would nominate Mardin as a candidate for the UNESCO World Heritage list further incentivized city leaders to embark on city branding and urban regeneration projects. Companies were hired, grants were acquired, travel guides were commissioned and written, and the entangled processes of rebranding Mardin began with programs to restore the historical built environment and projects to restructure urban spaces (interview P., February 24, 2015).

Urban restructuring in Mardin embraced several intertwined regeneration projects. All these projects (Mardinar, the Mardin Urban Regeneration and Rehabilitation Project, the Historical transformation Project, and the Mardin Sustainable Tourism Project) focused on rehabilitating the historical texture of the city and regenerating the old town, the city center. While leaders spoke of “re-establishing the honor and dignity” (iade-i itibar) of the city, a project representative of the governorship stated, “The aim here [with these projects] is not to simply develop the cultural heritage. These are not renovation projects. . . . In fact, at the core of this project lies economics, which will also serve for social development” (interview T., February 23, 2015).

The city’s leadership first focused on development of the “old town” and on the abandoned or decaying historical core of the city. According to Mardin’s governor, the plan was to restore “the historic city of Mardin to the way it looked around a century ago.” Restoring the city’s historical profile entailed demolishing (completely or partly) 1,430 buildings in the old town and large numbers of buildings on its outskirts (Ana-Mardelli 2011).

These buildings had been primarily inhabited by peasants who had been evicted and/or had fled from their villages. Since their dispossession and displacement, these people had been living in buildings constructed after 1969 in the old town at a time the area had been declared an Urban Conservation
Site (sı́r Alanı), which prohibited new construction. Proclaiming such buildings “illegal,” or “risky,” the regeneration process dispossessed and displaced this former rural population once again. Some of the displaced were offered apartments in buildings constructed on the fringes of the old town, while others were provided with places in newly built mass housing areas outside the old town, in the new city (Edis 2012).

The twenty-first-century regeneration of Mardin was a significant multiscalar transformation in which displacement and emplacement involved multiple, differentially powerful actors. A national Turkish agency, the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ), was a major force in the city’s massive urban regeneration project. Under direct rule of the prime minister, TOKİ was empowered to seize public lands, transform them into private property, enforce evictions and demolitions, and develop profit-oriented housing as well as infrastructure projects. It established companies for this purpose. Beginning in the 2000s, TOKİ worked closely with Mardin’s municipality and governorship. The European Union also provided funding, including 85 percent of a 9 million euro Mardin Sustainable Tourism Project (2013–15), for which the central government provided the remaining funding. The Sustainable Tourism Project sought to increase the city’s competitiveness by rebranding and increasing tourism. City leaders and all involved in this project saw it as part of an effort to enhance Mardin’s chances at being included on the UNESCO World Heritage list, which was important for the global repositioning of the city.

In addition to the rebranding and publicity campaigns, the Turkish state offered a broad range of subsidies and tax incentives to encourage national and transnational corporate investment in Mardin. Extensive incentives (some linked to listing Mardin among the least developed Turkish cities) included customs duty and value-added tax exemptions, tax rebates (reaching up to 90 percent), interest rate support, income tax rebates, and social insurance premium support for investing companies. These incentives lowered an investor’s cost of labor to 38 percent of what it would have been in the most developed region of the country (DİKA, Mardin Yatırım Destek Ofisi 2014, 15–16). As did urban developers in Manchester and Halle, promoters attracting capital investment to Mardin highlighted the low cost of labor, achieved in Mardin through subsidies and incentives that public money provided to corporate capital (DİKA, Mardin Yatırım Destek Ofisi 2014).

Following the crisis in 2008, demand in Europe stagnated and European corporations sought opportunities in expanding Middle Eastern markets, especially in Iraq. As a result, trade through Mardin flourished. The only route
to Iraq and Syria (in fact, to the Middle East) from Europe went through the Mardin city-region (see Map 1.3, p. 74). Thus, the volume of trade in Mardin increased 46 percent between 2008 and 2009 (DİKA 2010b, 2010c; interview F., March 1, 2015). Incentives over time produced some new corporate investment in Mardin, including by international companies. While the manufacturing sector started to grow in Mardin in the early 2000s, the main increase came in the next decade.

Between 2004 and 2012, the number of workers doubled, with the largest growth coming from construction-related production, such as cement, and from food industries, such as flour processing (DİKA Mardin Destek Ofisi 2010; Tepav 2012). Because of regeneration activity, construction became the third most important employment sector, according to the president of the Organized Industrial Zone (interview, March 1, 2015). The major Istanbul-Çanakkale-based industrial holding company (Kale Group) made a substantial investment in the city-region. In 2013, it opened a $2.5 million factory (Kalekim) to produce thermal insulation material for the construction sector (Kale 2013). In 2014, 30 of the 160 investors in OIZ were from outside Mardin. Meanwhile, in 2013, Hewlett Packard (HP), which aimed to “enter the Middle Eastern and European advertising markets and make Mardin one of the digital printing centers of the world,” announced a $100 million investment in a digital advertising printing facility in Mardin city-region. Despite the projected large investment in the project, only two hundred jobs were promised (Today’s Zaman 2013). The discrepancy between the large investment and the small number of jobs anticipated highlights the problematic nature of this urban regeneration strategy. Overall, the number of jobs created in the new facilities was often modest. For example, in 2011, a Turkish flour factory employed thirty-five workers (İlhan 2011).

The volume of trade also increased dramatically, so much so that Mardin ranked eighteenth out of eighty-one city-regions in Turkey in 2010 (interview F., March 1, 2015). Because the cost of transportation from Mardin to economic centers in the Middle East was lower than shipping initiated from other places in the region, Mardin increasingly acquired importance in the logistic and transportation sector. Reflecting Turkey’s desire to become an economic and political player in the Middle East, Mardin was chosen as a site for one of the nineteen planned Turkey-wide logistics centers. In Mardin, the logistics center was envisaged as the storage and distribution depot for iron, steel, construction material, and military equipment (Erkeskin 2013; DİKA, Mardin Yatırım Destek Ofisi 2014).

If one looks at the flow of investment into the Mardin city-region in the
form of production and logistic facilities, the increased volume of exports (150 percent between 2003 and 2015), and the redevelopment of housing and infrastructure in the city center and surrounding districts, the city leaders’ project to rebrand and regenerate Mardin would seem to have been a success in the years between the millennium and 2015 (DİKA 2010b; interview F. March 1, 2015). However, less than half (43 percent) of the exported goods and none of the iron and steel were produced in Mardin (DİKA 2013). While a Free Trade Zone was established in 1995 and located within Mardin OIZ, it had only a 30 percent occupancy rate (DİKA 2010d). Overall, the rate of industrial employment in 2006 was only 20 percent, and most of the workers were unskilled and working in food-processing industries (DİKA 2010b).

As we have seen in Manchester and Halle, public monies and multiscalar regeneration funds went primarily to public–private partnerships, construction firms, and real estate interests. Public subsidies and tax breaks led to a reduction of public wealth, including lower revenue for the city. This process was intensified through the sale of public and/or treasury land to private developers and companies at below market prices and through public subsidies to private corporations from land redevelopment.

Although Mardin was celebrated as a hotspot of tourism—with increasing tourism-based development between 2011 and 2014, some world-class hotels, a shopping mall, and plans for an aqua park by the US-based Bridgestone Corporation—tourism did not bring high-paying jobs or greatly expand employment. Nor did the city’s emergence as a globally prominent tourist destination reassure well-paid professionals employed in these new industries that the city was a safe or attractive place to live. Some firms active in Mardin remained reluctant to relocate their headquarters there, and many employees chose to reside nearby in economically stronger Gaziantep, staying in Mardin from Monday to Thursday (field notes, 2015). Similarly, some of the relatively high-income faculty of the newly established university in Mardin commuted from major cities in Turkey rather than have their primary residence in Mardin.

Regeneration did little to stimulate growth in employment, and most of the jobs created were in the low-wage sector. More than half of the jobs in 2008 (54.5 percent) were in the service sector, especially tourism-related services like hotels, restaurants, and transportation. In 2012, the share of the service sector in Mardin’s economy increased to 64.9 percent (İŞKUR 2011, 2014; Mardin Tourism Strategic Plan 2014). At the same time, rates of labor force participation and employment generally remained lower than Turkey’s average. Unemployment rates fluctuated. While they decreased between 2008 and
2010 and the 2010 rate of 9.1 percent situated Mardin’s unemployment below that of the other cities in similar socioeconomic regions (TRC3) and in Turkey (11.9 percent), in 2012, Mardin’s unemployment increased (Tepav 2012).

Meanwhile, redevelopment not only displaced the urban poor but also inflated housing and real estate prices and the overall cost of living in the city. Livelihoods of people whom TOKİ evicted from the outskirts of the old town and irregular settlements became more precarious once they lost their spatially situated networks of support. The IDP in the city, together with the local impoverished population, became a cheap labor pool. Furthermore, the tourism sector (which failed to deliver anticipated profits and public benefits) increased the demand for historical buildings in old town, which tripled real estate prices.27

Despite private sector investments, per capita income in Mardin (DİKA 2010a) remained at almost half the average in Turkey. In its 2010 report, the Tigris Development Agency (DİKA) highlighted the increasing poverty and the income gap as the most important threats to the region (DİKA 2010c). In 2013, an organization to fight poverty, established in Mardin, voiced concern about the large numbers of IDPs and argued that unrestrained, neoliberal urban regeneration projects were the major causes of the increasing impoverishment. The entangled dynamic processes of urban restructuring, capital accumulation, the strengthening of private corporations and their profits, es-

**FIG 1.6** Mardin old town viewed from the outskirt settlements. Photograph by Seda Yuksel.
pecially in construction and real estate businesses and service sectors, and
the dispossession, displacement, and increasing impoverishment were very
clear in Mardin, as they were in Halle and Manchester. In 2011, despite a mas-
sive influx of capital and city boosterism, Mardin remained disempowered.
It ranked seventy-second out of eighty-one provinces in Turkey in terms of
socioeconomic development (Özceylan and Coşkun 2012).

(3) The way in which city leaders position migrants or minorities
within their regeneration narratives.

Mardin’s religious and ethnic minorities came to the fore in multifarious
ways in narratives that reinvented Mardin as a peaceful, multifaith, multi-
ethnic, and multilingual city. Despite their small numbers (altogether three
thousand people), Mardin’s remaining Syriac Christians occupied a central
place in discourses, projects, and imaginaries about Mardin’s past and future
and in city renewal narratives circulating in several media outlets. Between
2000 and 2015, media presentations constantly underscored the presence and
heritage of Syriac Christians in Mardin as proof of the city’s unique multi-
faith and multilingual heritage and as a future asset.

Given Syriac Christians’ long history of persecution since the turn of the
twentieth century, the sudden revaluation and the disproportionate weight
they were accorded in city narratives was striking. In 2001, the prime minis-
ter’s office reached out to Syriac Christians primarily from Mardin in Europe
and to their religious leaders in and outside of Turkey. The prime minister in-
vited those in Europe to return to their ancestral homeland, promising that
they would be welcomed.

The welcome of religious minorities was not presented within a multi-
culturalist framework centered on questions of accessing resources through
collective cultural and/or religious rights. Nor were welcoming narratives of
the city leadership about identity politics. Instead, the new foregrounding of
persecuted Syriac Christian minorities (and returnees) in city narratives was
very closely tied to the conjunctural moment of Turkey’s EU accession nego-
tiations. Minority governance and the protection of minority rights play an
important role in EU institutions’ understanding of its political space and the
verification of democracy within that space (Cowan 2007a). EU policies and
organizations monitor applicant states’ efforts and programs for evidence of
the democratization process. They search for indicators of the installation
and implementation of democratic political and legal frameworks to secure
and guarantee minority rights.

Following recognition of its candidacy, Turkey increasingly came under
pressure to demonstrate progress in securing human rights. Christian minorities, particularly persecuted Christian minorities such as the Syriacs, acquired a special importance in the evaluation of Turkey’s observance of minority rights. Thus, Syriac Christians’ presence in and return to their ancestral home of Mardin and improvements in Mardin’s safety and stability became an index of Turkey’s observation of minority rights. While public enactment of the first was crucial for accessing supranational, including EU, funds and institutional programs, the second was crucial for attracting capital and investment to the city, as we have shown. Both performances were very closely related to Mardin’s urban regeneration and repositioning within multiscalar networks of power.

Multifaith heritage and a narrative welcoming to religious minorities found its expression in the city’s built environment and contributed to its revaluation. As Mardin came to be promoted as the City of Stone and Faith, architecture that proclaimed this centuries-old multifaith legacy and the built environment signifying this heritage gained prominence in branding narratives and the promotion of tourism. The presence of monasteries and churches next to mosques and medrassas became a critical asset for urban regeneration narratives and projects. Mardin’s built environment became crucial for accessing the supranational funds (such as those from the EU, UNESCO, and UNDP) required for large-scale urban regeneration projects aimed at facilitating the growth of tourism.

The remarks of the deputy of Mardin’s co-mayor, which we referred to at the beginning of this chapter, indicated that returning Syriac Christians were greeted not as members of the labor force or as newcomers in city narratives but as the “original” inhabitants of the city. However, although Kurds made up the majority of Mardin’s inhabitants and despite an emphasis on the equal significance of all city inhabitants’ heritage in constituting the city’s culture, Mardin’s branding and urban regeneration narratives and projects did not acknowledge the Kurdish legacy in the city. They were strikingly absent in these accounts and redevelopment activities.

A set of new institutions, including Mardin City Museum, Artuklu University, and the Mardin Biennial (whose development we examine in chapter 5), was closely entangled with city leaders’ regeneration efforts. These institutions not only helped revive the cultural sector but also played an important role in the revaluation of Christian minorities. They portrayed the various religious and cultural heritages as integral to the city and visible within its built environment and everyday life. “Syriac wine” made its way onto the refashioned menus of new cafes and restaurants that opened around the university
campus as part of the regeneration of the area and added an “ambience” of this heritage (interview L., May 19, 2015). The new city museum displayed, celebrated, and popularized the city’s acclaimed tolerant cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage and its minorities (interview E., February 21, 2015).

Mardin’s minorities, especially its Syriac Christians, were accorded prominence in international events such as the Mardin Biennials (Mardin Biennial 2010, 2012, 2015), which sought to situate Mardin within the global contemporary art world, a crucial element of the campaign to reposition the city.\(^\text{30}\) As one of its first organizers recalled, “Aiming to be like Venice, we wanted to start a Biennial tourism” (interview B. and CM., June 6, 2015). Two of the most prominent culture/heritage tourism agencies in Turkey contributed to this goal by organizing Biennial tours to Mardin (interview CM., June 6, 2015).

While churches from different denominations, monasteries, medrassas, and old mansions hosted the three Mardin Biennials, restored, functioning, or abandoned Syriac Christian churches and historic Syriac mansions (such as Tokmakçılar Konaği) took central stage in these events. According to one member of the Biennial team, “If you enter the name of this mansion, or the monastery of Mor Efrem [a Catholic Syriac Monastery abandoned for about seventy years] into Google now, the first things that appear are about the Mardin Bienniale” (interview B., June 6, 2015).

Thus, Syriac Christians, whether they had remained or returned, became part of the value-creation processes in Mardin in multiple ways. Sites of daily life and real estate associated with Syriacs increased in value. As a deputy from Mardin, who was also the first Syriac in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, put it, “People once fled and left the land, now they are returning, and the land is regaining value. . . . In fact Syriacs themselves became a value” (Dora 2011).

(4) The degree and kind of resources and services the city provides for migrant settlement and migrant and minority access to services.

While Mardin maintained a welcoming narrative for returning Syriac Christian emigrants starting in the early 2000s, very few services were allocated to resettling these returnees. In fact, the discrepancy between Syriac Christians’ concentrated presence in Mardin’s city narratives and the actual emigrant/minorities-specific resources and services that city government offered was striking. All Syriac Christians in Mardin (returnee or not) and the Syriac religious and community leaders with whom we spoke complained about the lack of community-specific funds. Given the official invitations and the promises made to them, returnees were especially disappointed with the
lack of funds for basic infrastructure in their settlements, including roads, sewage, electricity, and Internet connection (field notes, 2015). They also demanded institutional support for teaching Aramaic in Mardin. Resettled Syriac Christians from Europe repeated these complaints to endless foreign delegations, ambassadors, and EU and human rights representatives who visited Syriacs in Mardin (field notes, 2015). The city provided no services to minorities as religious or ethnic communities. Although Aramaic was hailed as part of the city’s multilingual and multifaith linguistic heritage, there was no support for teaching Aramaic in schools.

In fact, Mardin offered few resources or services to any of its inhabitants. In 2014, Mardin, a disempowered city, ranked very low among Turkish cities in terms of funds available for education and health (DİKA 2013; Yüksek 2014; DİKA 2011). The massive allocation of public funding, tax rebates, sales of public lands at below market prices, and other forms of financial support, which were central to Mardin’s urban regeneration projects, resulted in a high level of city debt and limited financial resources. In 2009, Mardin ranked among the top 10 cities in Turkey for Social Security Insurance debt (Memurlarnet 2009). In 2004, 2007, 2012, and 2016, municipal property was subjected to processes of debt-related sequestration, through which public property was sold to pay the city’s debts. The city owed money to its employees; it even owed a large sum to its soccer team (Mardinspor) players (Haberlermardinimiz 2010).

The city government responded to the debt crisis by continuing its policy of depleting public resources that could have been invested in services to all inhabitants, including returning Syriacs. To generate income for the indebted city, more and more city and/or treasury lands were provided to private developers and companies or sold at below market prices. As the Mardin governor said in 2010, “Mardin failed to generate the expected income from tourism and the city government continued to develop plans to repay debts by selling public land for regeneration” (NTV 2010).

While returnee’s need for services was generally ignored, in 2008 the Mardin city government held a special meeting with Mardinites, especially Syriac religious leaders and returnees, to announce a new regeneration project. TOKİ had decided to develop housing to meet the special “community needs” of potential Syriac returnees from Europe who wished to resettle in Mardin. These houses would be styled after old Syriac houses but would offer much-desired infrastructure, including electricity, sewage, and roads. This special housing project for returnees even included a church and a school (Toprak 2008). Ironically, this effort was to be done through a further wave
of dispossession. Abandoned, confiscated, or treasury-owned lands were to be allocated to private developers to deliver the promised services to the much-desired returnee Syriacs.

(5) Evidence of synergy between city regeneration narratives and policies, on the one hand, and the multiscalar modes of emplacement of migrants and minorities, on the other, including whether their transnational networks emerged as assets in city-making.

Syriac Christians in Mardin, including the returnees, were inserted into the multiscalar city-making processes in many ways beyond their symbolic presence within city branding narratives. Their multiple transnational personal, social, political, and religious networks connected Mardin to places in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Iraq, and Syria and extended into several supranational and global institutions such as the Catholic Church, Caritas, Eastern Christianity networks, the EU, and UNESCO, thus embedding them within a multiscalar social field. This social field not only enabled them to contribute significantly to the city-making processes but also opened pathways of their emplacement in the economy and in the political and religious life of the city.

The returnees themselves became part of business networks that invested in Mardin, of global Christian agendas very much centered on reconfiguring power in the Middle East, and of political networks seeking historical justice, especially in relation to the 1915 genocides. Last but not least, they found partial political emplacement in the increasing social justice claims initiated by the Kurdish social and political movement in the city and the region.

Within the opportunities opened by urban restructuring, returnee Syriacs in Mardin found possibilities for emplacement by serving as brokers between potential investors from Europe and local business interests in Mardin. Some, but not all, of these investors were Syriacs, and not all Syriac investors were emigrants from Mardin. Syriac returnees mediated between the Tigris Development Agency, part of the investment and promotion agency Invest in Mardin,33 and potential investors from Europe. According to the director of this development agency, some emigrants from Mardin who remained in Europe reached out to their former homeland to obtain business and investment opportunities. Such opportunities were a central interest of a twenty-five-person Swiss delegation that arrived in 2010. The emigrant group was interested in viniculture. However, the director’s hopes were centered on three big Mardinite European investors, whose investments in the hotel business could triple the bed capacity of the city (Hürriyet Daily News 2010).
Another Syriac returnee from Switzerland undertook wine production in partnership with a Mardin businessman who was the nephew of the metropolitan bishop of the famous Syriac monastery of Mor Gabriel in Mardin.\textsuperscript{34} In 2009, the partners invested in a wine production factory where, according to them, wine was produced following “5000–6000 years-old traditions in compliance with what was depicted in the Bible, Kuran and Old Testament.” Named after a Syriac village and meaning “peace” in Aramaic, Shiluh was the only Syriac wine produced and distributed in Mardin. Due to its historical association with Christianity in Mardin, Syriac wine produced in Mardin had a strong symbolic value for Syriac Christians as well as for Mardin. The symbolic value and contested nature of wine production in Mardin becomes clearer when one considers that before Shiluh began to be made in Mardin, the last winemaker in the city was killed in the 1990s. The new winemakers planned to export Shiluh to Europe, “to reach out to Syriac Christians there from Mardin and Mesopotamia and to give all Syriacs hope for their return to their ancient homeland” (interview L., May 19, 2015, and field notes, 2015).

Both Syriacs and Kurds, who compose the majority of the population in Mardin, had strong historical connections across the border. Before the Syrian Civil War, 70 percent of Syriacs on the Syrian side of the border were estimated to have roots in Mardin province (Altuğ 2011, 18–19). These cross-border networks of Syriac Christians in Mardin both contributed to and were themselves enhanced by the increasing volume of exports from Mardin to Iraq and Syria. These historical and political as well as cultural and linguistic cross-border networks of Mardin’s inhabitants, including Syriac Christians, became an asset for the city at a particular conjuncture of the political restructuring of the region and of the expansion of Middle East markets.

Furthermore, in the context of growing radical Islamic movements and war in the Middle East, the Christian minority in Mardin acquired renewed importance and value as part of global Orthodox and Catholic Christian networks. Given the decreasing Christian population in the Middle East and their increasing persecution, and in the face of rising radical Islam in this region, the continued presence of Syriac Christians and their well-being in the ancient homeland of Eastern Christianity\textsuperscript{35} became important for global Christian institutions. As we detail in chapter 5, their voices found resonance even at the very top levels of the Catholic Church. This multiscalar political field was strengthened by collaborations between political and religious associations of Syriacs as well as Armenians and Kurds in different parts of Europe (Biner 2010). These networks enabled these minorities to reach even to
the pope as part of the project to win international recognition of the Syriac and Armenian genocides at the beginning of twentieth century.

From 2004 to 2008, Turkey’s EU membership candidacy and the heightened attention paid to concomitant policies on minority rights, democratic participation, and antidiscrimination opened local political spaces in Mardin for a broader range of actors. Together with other excluded and/or impoverished city inhabitants, Syriac Christians became part of the political forces and social justice movements in Mardin. Returnees found emplacement within Mardin’s civic and political life in political associations with broad social justice agendas. They contributed to integrating the previously excluded Kurdish and Syriac languages into the public sphere, entered local elections, and became part of local political leadership with strong social justice claims.

In 2014, a twenty-six-year-old Syriac, Februniye Akyol, a graduate in Aramaic language and literature from the newly established Artuklu University in Mardin, ran in local elections for the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), together with a well-known veteran of Kurdish politics, Ahmet Türk. Both became co-mayors of Mardin’s metropolitan municipality with a broad antidiscriminatory agenda, rather than with a program dominated by ethnic and communal politics. The multiscalar positioning of Mardin provided Akyol with the opportunity to become the first Syriac Christian mayor in one of Turkey’s metropolitan municipalities (and the first female mayor in Mardin). After their election, the Kurdish and Syriac languages, long excluded from state institutions in Turkey, acquired a public presence in Mardin. The trilingual (Turkish, Kurdish, and Syriac) nameplate installed on the Mardin metropolitan municipality building became a clear sign of this presence.36

Several returnees as well as members of some Syriac associations joined with other groups in Mardin in shaping politics in the city beyond ethnic and/or religious community agendas. A number of minority-based organizations clearly began to speak for and represent broader constituencies. The president of the Syriac Unity Association, who was also an alderman from the Peoples’ Democratic Party37 with a pro-Kurdish, left-wing, participatory, egalitarian, and minority rights–based agenda, spoke forcefully about this political movement’s foundation in unity, emphasizing commonalities rather than differences between minorities: “What we need is to meet on our commonalities. In order to be able to live in peace, we need to set aside red lines and find our commonalities” (interview, May 19, 2015). According to him, there would be “no future for the Syriacs in Mardin outside of the future of
political and social justice movements lead by Kurds with a broader constituency” (interview, May 19, 2015).

Similarly, the president of the Federation of Syriac Associations, who returned from Switzerland after residing for twenty-three years in Europe, described the city-making politics of the moment, to which many returnees contributed. He emphasized that the Kurdish political movement, which embraced civil society organizations, trade unions, different professional organizations, and human rights organizations, made clear to the people in Mardin the importance of establishing a common future in these lands (interview H., March 23, 2015). He vehemently differentiated this political and social justice–based vision of a common future from a future projected through general communitarian multicultural politics. He said, mockingly, that “this multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious talk is just irrelevant” for understanding and fighting discrimination and injustice and for building a common future in Mardin (interview, March 23, 2015).38

With the widening of the Syrian Civil War in 2015, the Turkish state’s geopolitical desire to expand its influence in the Middle East, and the governing party’s declining popularity, the government abruptly and violently ended its so-called peace process with Kurdish population. This policy reversal changed the power contingencies of the multiscalar social and political field within which the urban restructuring of Mardin was embedded. Narratives about the peaceful multifaith, multicultural, and multipolitical heritage of the city lost their relevance. Tourists disappeared, forcing world-class hotels, internationally prominent only a year before, to shut down. The planned new wave of investments failed to materialize. A court case was opened against the Kurdish co-mayor, and for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, a Syriac association (the Syriac Unity Association) was closed by the state. Many returnees, caught in escalating violence between military forces, once again started to leave Mardin.

In the context of its changing priorities, the Turkish state seemed to set aside its EU membership aspirations, which reduced the salience of Mardin’s Christian minorities and their power to reach out to supranational institutions. With the initiation of the Syrian Civil War in 2012, a new stage of global warring was initiated in the Middle East, leading to a new phase of dispossession, displacement, and capital accumulation with altered valorizations and devaluations of people and sites. These processes changed the dynamics of emplacements, including the returning Syriac Christians in Mardin.
Comparative Analysis

This examination of our five comparative parameters revealed the following similarities between the cities:

1) Each city once had a more significant positioning, and a diverse population had been part of the networks of connection that made the city noteworthy. These connections were lost in processes of disempowerment relative to the region, the nation-state, and the world.

2) Within the recent millennial conjuncture, leaders in each city adopted a strategy of urban regeneration focused on transforming spaces of abandonment with the goal of improving their city’s relational position. A quest to obtain significant private investment configured regeneration strategies, but none of the three cities could attract significant degrees of corporate and financial capital. Instead, city regeneration was shaped by a dependence on public funds, tax strategies, and the awarding of public resources to private development interests. Public revenue streams were not increased through regeneration, leaving these cities with fewer resources for public services.

3) To rebrand the city and thereby attract transnational flows of capital and new economy workers, city leaders developed migrant- and minority-friendly narratives to alter their city’s negative reputation. City redevelopers also used the presence of migrants or minorities and impoverished residents to gain access to public funds, which were channeled into rebuilding efforts that ultimately benefited developers, multinational corporations, including construction companies, and wealthier residents. Public–private partnerships, especially in the form of housing corporations, played an important role in this process.

4) As accumulation through dispossession intensified within the conjunctural configuration that took hold after the millennium, migrants and minorities faced not only racism and exclusion but also opportunities for multiple forms of emplacement. Transnational networks of migrants or returnees, embedded in multiscalar social fields, emerged as assets in efforts to reach out to powerful global institutions, ranging from religious institutions to corporations, and rebuild competitively the city’s economic, political, and social life. Increasing polarization between rich and poor both acerbated racist currents in these cities and produced changing possibilities for emplacement for
various transnational actors, from multinational corporations and NGOs to migrants who lived their lives across borders.

5) The outcome of regeneration efforts, resulting from the initial relative disempowerment of the city, continued to be entangled with processes of dispossession, displacement, and emplacement and to drain the city’s public resources. Rapid alterations in the terrain of regeneration reflected changing regional, national, and global power configurations of the global restructuring of capital accumulation. The historical conjuncture of the millennium was one in which patterns of flexible capital accumulation became linked to neoliberal regeneration in various locations around the world, but it was also one in which disruptions reflected a new expansion of global warring and overspeculation.

Furthermore, our comparative analysis clarifies the importance of comparing processes of city-making rather than static snapshots of urban governance and policies. The relationship between migrants and minorities in each city reflected ongoing conjunctural changes that were multiscalar and processual. Our comparative research highlights the importance of drawing from a variety of sources and not simply relying on official city narratives, reports, policies, or interviews. In Mardin, the discrepancy between city leaders’ narratives of successful growth, on the one hand, and the grim realities of public debt as revealed in the reports and statistics of various development agencies, on the other, is especially striking.

In assessing the outcomes of urban restructuring, city narratives can be neither accepted as accurate descriptions of a city’s current situation nor discarded as inconsequential. These narratives affect other structural factors, even as they are affected by changes that the city experiences and by broader understandings of ways to initiate urban economic development and branding, which themselves change with the realignment of intersecting conjunctural forces. Thus, while we have utilized each city’s narrative of renewal in our analysis, we have situated these narratives in relation to a variety of multiscalar parameters.

Our comparative analysis adds depth to the term “disempowered cities” and lends substance to the claim that cities are global in various ways. As we note in the introduction, the term “disempowered” does not apply to all impoverished cities. Disempowered cities are those that once boasted greater economic, cultural, or political significance, upon which these cities now strive to build. Although these cities lacked adequate economic, political,
and cultural power, they were nonetheless global, not only in their multiscale interconnections but also in their leaders’ regeneration strategies. As we have noted, city leaderships comprise city officials as well as business leaders, chambers of commerce, bankers, real estate developers, and organizational and institutional leaders whose interests are closely linked to the restructuring and repositioning of their city. We also outlined the strategies city leaderships used to re-empower these cities and the consequences of these strategies for local and corporate coffers. In each case, we found that city leaderships are part of broader configurations of regional, national, and global power.

While in all three cities migrants and minorities were considered necessary components of urban restructuring, their agency and city-making possibilities and limitations in each case reflected the trajectories of different regional histories and the different institutional and discursive resources available for urban regeneration projects. However, this cautionary note does not reduce the significance of the fact that leaders of all three cities responded to the disempowered situation of their city and the challenge of restructuring by embracing a welcoming narrative that cast newcomers and returning minorities as crucial to urban development. Halle elected one of the first two citizens of African background to the German parliament; Manchester elected the second Muslim citizen to a US state legislature; and Mardin elected the first female and the first Syriac Christian mayor in Turkey. Moreover, the unfolding of the historical conjuncture in each city simultaneously led to, and was facilitated by, processes of political emplacement in which migrants and minorities together with non-migrants moved beyond idioms of ethnic and religious communities to participate in social justice movements. We underline this point because our comparisons demonstrate narratives of commonality that differ from widespread understandings of multiculturalism and tolerance, which urban policy discourses have highlighted. Our notion of historical conjuncture highlights the necessity for social justice movements that speak of common struggles and aspirations to confront changing configurations of power and the contradictions of violent force.