Migrants and City-Making

Published by Duke University Press


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Between the steady ebb and flow of customers buying fresh herbs, staples such as rice, and dried, frozen, bottled, and canned cooking ingredients from Vietnam, Korea, Thailand, China, and various regions of Africa and Europe, Nina spoke with Lan, the woman who owned the store. It was 2016, and the store seemed to be in an excellent location, on a traffic circle in a busy area intersected by three tramlines. The traffic circle had recently been redeveloped as part of Halle’s new light-rail program at a cost of more than 4.7 million euro. It was a sleepy August afternoon. Other storefronts on the circle—including a Mediterranean-style restaurant, a sports team clothing shop, and a cosmetics and sundry shop (the latter two owned by large multinational corporations)—had inviting renovated storefronts but infrequent customers. In contrast, in Lan’s shop business was brisk, despite its location in the only unregenerated building on the circle and its makeshift appearance. Numerous men and women of all ages and from many countries made their way through her doors. Some were Vietnamese, like Lan, but others were from China, Syria, and various countries in Africa. There also was a steady flow of Germans. They came for a snack, ingredients for evening meals, or to pick up restaurant supplies.

But despite the pace of her sales that day and the strategic location of her business, enhanced by the multi-million-euro urban regeneration project literally at her doorstep, Lan said that her business had gotten much worse over the past five years. Some of the slowdown could be attributed to disruption caused by the recent infrastructure upgrade. However, Lan focused on other factors, and her account of the difficulties confronting her business resonated with the struggles small businesses were facing in many areas of the city.

From Lan’s perspective, “Halle was going downhill,” and therefore younger
and more economically active people, including Vietnamese migrants, were leaving for the west of Germany. Compared to five years earlier, her business was down 50 percent and, although the shop looked busy, she was “just making ends meet.” In addition to a loss of customers, her business faced competition from the increasing number of supermarkets located in the city. Though official statistics reported that Halle grew between 2008 and 2015 (City of Halle 2015), Lan’s discussion of her shrinking customer base highlighted the out-migration from Halle of more educated young people, including people of migrant background, and the impoverished state of those who remained. Lan maintained her business by undercutting supermarket prices. Even though she relied on family labor—herself, her husband, and two sisters—profit margins were getting slim.

Lan’s negative assessment of the state of Halle’s economy after more than two decades of urban regeneration echoed frank assessments we heard in discussions with city officials between 2013 and 2015. What made her voice particularly interesting was that Lan and her small immigrant business represented exactly the economic sector that urban policy makers and journalists in Europe and the United States had been hailing as the savior of failing cities (Echikson 2000; Hesson 2015a; Wirtschaftsstandort Dortmund 2014; European Commission 2008). In the first decades of the twenty-first century, small businesses of migrant entrepreneurs were judged to be important contributors to the process of regenerating and reinventing cities.

This chapter connects emplacement and displacement processes evident within the rise, the struggles, and the demise of migrants’ small businesses to efforts by urban leaders and redevelopers to neoliberally reconstruct, rebrand, and reposition cities globally. We find fault with the migration scholarship over several decades in both Europe and the United States that categorizes migrant businesspeople like Lan as “ethnic entrepreneurs” who build ethnic economies and “ethnic colonies.” Instead, we offer a multiscalar conjunctural analysis of relationships between migrant businesses and city restructuring. Our approach not only sets aside the concept of ethnic entrepreneurs but also situates and critiques the celebration of migrant businesses within urban regeneration policies. Our analysis builds on authors who speak of “mixed embeddedness” to situate migrant businesses within national and local policy, regulatory and institutional structures, and the demographic and economic profiles of specific places (Kloosterman, Leun, and Rath 1999; Nonini 2012). Our work also resonates with those who situate migrant businesses within transnational flows of capital, location-specific opportunity structures and
small migrant businesses possibilities, and processes of globalization (Hsing 1998; Yeung and Olds 2000).

We conclude by developing the concept of emplacement, which we present in the introduction, and considering the differential positioning of a city in relation to national and supranational institutions, regulations, and policies in global fields of power. We demonstrate the utility of viewing migrant businesses as multiscalar modes of emplacement. This approach sheds light on efforts of both migrants and those considered non-migrants to build meaningful lives within reconfigured urban terrains. The chapter examines trajectories of migrant businesses in Halle/Saale, but insights came also from our research on migrant businesses in Manchester, New Hampshire, in the United States, and on minority businessmen and their relationship to the restructuring and destruction of Mardin.

**Neoliberal Celebrations of Migrant Entrepreneurs**

In 2000, the respected magazine *Business Week* called migrant business-people the “unsung heroes” of urban regeneration, a phrase taken up a decade later by the Cities for Local Integration Policy (CLIP) network (CLIP 2010; Echikson 2000), a coalition of research centers and local authorities. The CLIP network (2010, 5) regarded these entrepreneurs “as active agents, shaping their own destinies as well as revitalizing economic sectors especially in neoliberal times” (CLIP 2010, 5). In 2015, journalist Ted Hesson wrote an article in the *Atlantic*, a magazine featuring news and analysis, titled “Why American Cities Are Fighting to Attract Immigrants” (Hesson 2015b, 1). According to Hesson, “many metro areas with large foreign-born populations have thriving local economies. And now local governments all over the U.S. are trying to replicate their successes.” His observations that “immigrants helped save Main Street” in Nashville, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis–Saint Paul “were substantiated by an Americas Society/Council of the Americas and the Fiscal Policy Institute study that found that nationally immigrants make up 16 percent of the population, but represent an outsized 28 percent of Main Street business owners” (Kallick 2015, 2).

These findings were reflected in a series of urban policy initiatives in Europe that looked to migrant businesses as instruments of urban neoliberal redevelopment, including strategies of self-employment (Ülker 2016). Migrant businesses were seen as contributing to the diverse ambience necessary to give cities a competitive edge in attracting a high-income workforce with
“cosmopolitan” consumption patterns (Şahin, Nijkamp, and Rietdijk 2009). Meanwhile, the National League of Cities (2011), an organization of US cities, articulated a similar understanding of the synergies that develop between migrant businesses and urban growth and worked to develop similar policies at the local level. A report of the US Small Business Administration (Fairlie 2012) spoke to the national profile of these businesses and summarized what had become received knowledge: “The importance of immigrant entrepreneurs to the U.S. economy has been very well documented. . . . They contribute greatly to the economy, have high business formation rates, and create successful businesses that hire employees and export goods and services.” The report also asked whether such entrepreneurs had distinctive culturally inflected forms of accessing capital and concluded: “Overall, the sources of startup capital used by immigrant businesses do not differ substantially from those used by non-immigrant firms” (Fairlie 2012, 1).

Nonetheless, some policy makers, in tandem with scholars committed to capitalizing on what they saw as the productive role of migrant businesses, have categorized migrant businesspeople as ethnic entrepreneurs, continuing a widespread tendency among scholars of migration research (CLIP 2010; Lüken-Klaßen and Pohl 2011; Rath 2011). In 2003, the UK government provided funding under the rubric “minority ethnic business support” (Dhaliwala 2008). Migrant businesses in various regions of Germany received support within policies that spoke of the “locational development of the regional potentials of the ethnic economy” [Standortentwicklung Untersuchung zu den regionalen Potenzialen der ethnischen Ökonomie] (Kayser 2008; Ülker 2016). Meanwhile, whether scholars call migrant businesspeople “ethnic entrepreneurs” or insist that a migrant business is just like any other business, they have generally failed to critically situate the celebration of migrant businesses by urban developers and city leaders within the multiscalar efforts and challenges of city making.

A Migrant Business Is a Business: A Critical Overview of the Concept of Ethnic Entrepreneurship

The concept of “ethnic entrepreneur” has been critiqued extensively over the years (Pieterse 2003; Pecoud 2000, 2004a, 2004b; Razin and Langlois 1996). As Rath and Kloosterman (2000, 666), summarizing research in the Netherlands but aptly critiquing much of the literature on ethnic businesses, argue, “Exactly what distinguishes ethnic entrepreneurship from entrepreneurship in general is seldom or never (theoretically) made explicit: does this adjective
refer to the origins of the entrepreneur, his or her management strategies, personnel, clientele, products, or a combination of these? Most researchers just assume without any further reflection that there are real differences, just because they are dealing with immigrants. Explanations for every aspect of immigrant entrepreneurial behavior are directly related to ethno-cultural traditions, ethnic moral frameworks and ethnic behavior patterns, ethnic loyalties or ethnic markets.”

Despite this potent critique, over several decades many migration scholars developed an analytical category of ethnic entrepreneurship and routinely conflated the terms “migrant business,” “small business,” and “ethnic entrepreneurship” without ever specifying what made migrant entrepreneurs different from other small businesspeople. These scholars continue to distinguish the activities, networks, and outlook of businesses and entrepreneurs they designate as “ethnic” from all others in the neighborhood, city, or national economy being studied (Eckstein and Nguyen 2011; Deakins et al. 2009; Kitching, Smallbone, and Athayde 2009; Laurence 2011).

Beginning with Ivan Light’s (1972) seminal discussion of “ethnic enterprises,” scholars debated for several decades which factors led to the cause and success of what they termed “ethnic small businesses.” Light, and those who adopted his categorization of migrant businesses as “ethnic,” initially stressed that migrant businesses were the products of entrepreneurial cultural histories or the cultural skill set of specific ethnic groups (Masurel and Nijkam 2004; Kaplan and Li 2006; Constant, Shachmurove, and Zimmerman 2007). Others argued that migrants succeeded in business, whatever their cultural background, because of their ability to accrue ethnically based social capital (Bonacich and Modell 1980). They spoke of ethnically bounded networks of trust and solidarity from which migrants obtain access to goods, services, capital, and markets. In some cases, a migrant community was portrayed as an actor that gave ethnic businesses a competitive edge against native competitors. Roger Waldinger, for example, argued this position noting, “(a) they provide a mechanism of organizing an otherwise unstructured labor market; and (b) they provide a mechanism for mediating the strains in the workplace and providing a normative basis on which the rules of the workplace can be established” (Waldinger 1986, 269; see also Portes and Stepick’s 1993 discussion of ethnic economies).

In response to critiques of the concept, Min Zhou (2004, 1043) argued that “the ethnic economy concept, with its dual aspects of co-ethnic ownership and employment network, is thus a neutral designation for every enterprise that is either owned, or supervised, or staffed by racial/ethnic minority group
members regardless of size, type, and locational clustering” (see also Min and Bozorgmehr 2000). In fact, this designation of “ethnic” moves out of the domain of cultural difference and communal networks of solidarity and into an implicit structural category, situating the term “ethnic” as well as “minority” within racializing and differentiating structures of power. Yet the literature on ethnic businesses, while making reference to discrimination in terms of employment opportunities as a motivating force in migrants’ decisions to establish their own business, continued to provide insufficient analytical tools to locate these entrepreneurs within multiscalar institutional constraints and the racialized structuring of opportunity. In short, the literature on immigrant businesspeople as “ethnic entrepreneurs” situated the actors “within an economic and institutional vacuum” (Rath and Kloosterman 2000, 666). Because of their assumption that migrant businesses are differentiated and shaped by the ethnicity of their owners or workers, many of the scholars who contribute to the ethnic entrepreneurship literature proved unable to connect their research either to the literature on the dynamics of small businesses, including sectoral dynamics (Nonini 2012), or to analyses of neoliberal urban restructuring.

Although researchers of the ethnic economy often conducted their research in cities, many have continued to approach cities simply as geographical locations (Dabringer and Trupp 2011), without a systematic examination of these cities’ political economies, including structures of discrimination and class, ongoing multiscalar reconstructions, and changing configurations of power, within which all small businesspeople act and to which they contribute. On the other hand, even some of the scholars who framed their research in terms of an “ethnic economy” (Portes and Stepick 1993, Light and Gold 2000), “ethnic enclave” (Wilson and Portes 1980), or “ethnische Kolonie” (Heckmann 1998) repeatedly documented how migrants are part of larger economic and often transnational processes that reconfigure the places in which they settle. In many cases, without abandoning their references to terms such as “ethnic entrepreneurs,” these scholars have specifically acknowledged the “changing opportunity structures confronting immigrants in Western capitalist societies as well as the distribution of resources and the terms on which they are available” (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990, 14).

Meanwhile, urban developers (Wirtschaftsstandort Dortmund 2014) in impoverished cities became increasingly interested in migrant business as contributing to urban regeneration without necessarily adopting an “ethnic lens” (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Gulbrandsen 2006). Ironically, despite the flurry of interest among urban developers in the importance of migrant
businesses to urban regeneration, with few exceptions (Aytar and Rath 2012), scholars of gentrification and urban restructuring in Europe and North America may have described but did not theorize the role of migrants (Holm 2006, 2010; Häußermann, Holm, and Zunzer 2002). Migrants as economic actors, including entrepreneurs, were at best marginally visible, remaining outside discussions and critiques of urban regeneration and research on urban social movements in relation to neoliberal globalization and the reconfiguration of state territoriality (Bodnár 2014; Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2009; Mayer and Künkel 2012; Leitner, Peck, and Sheppard 2007; Mayer 2010). 4

Those few urban researchers who included migrant businesses within their discussions of urban rebranding and “entrepreneurial cities” (Hall and Hubbard 1998) saw migrants as ethnic actors (Hackworth and Rekers 2005). In this literature, migrant businesses have generally been examined only within descriptions of “ethnic neighborhoods,” which are viewed as destinations for tourism because of the availability of ethnic restaurants and shops selling “exotic goods” (Clarke and Gaile 1998; Novy 2011). As Barabantseva (2016) notes in her critique, when urban researchers have included migrant businesses in discussions of urban culture industries, they expect them to be confined to ethnic neighborhoods such as Chinatowns and Koreatowns (Zukin 1995; Pethe, Hafner, and Lawton 2010).

In contrast, an increasing number of migration researchers have begun to delineate an array of structural factors that foster or inhibit the growth of small businesses, including those of migrants, and shape the location and nature of entrepreneurial activity. Some ethnographies document the relationship between urban restructuring and neighborhood-based migrant businesses (Salzbrunn 2011; Aytar and Rath 2012). Taking the exploration of structural factors further, Kloosterman (2010, 167) has argued that “entrepreneurship and self-employment cannot be solely understood by focusing on the micro-level but [must] include the larger macro and meso structures that impact on these actors’ choices.” Many who address structural factors when examining migrant businesses use a concept of “multiple embeddedness” to highlight the significance of varying urban opportunity structures in the trajectories of migrant businesses (Kloosterman, Leun, and Rath 1999).

According to this perspective, migrant business dynamics are “the product of the inter-action of structural factors such as migration history and processes of social, economic and political incorporation in the mainstream, as well as their spatial variations” (Rath 2006, 5; see also Rath, Kloosterman, and Razin 2002). Without using the term “mixed embeddedness,” other authors
have analyzed the structural and sectorial factors that produce variations in migrant businesses in specific cities (Morokvasic 1993). More recently, Rath (2011) has highlighted the significance of city-making process, noting that local policies, histories, demographics, and the relative cultural and political power of a specific locality and economic sector structure business and employment possibilities for everyone living there.

However, these discussions of the factors that structure migrant businesses very rarely address the multiscalar networked institutions and actors that form part of the mutual construction of local, regional, national, and global institutional power. Scholarship on migrant entrepreneurs has often not adequately examined how the local economy and the opportunity structures available to residents are part and parcel of the movements of capital, people, and ideas. These scholars pay insufficient attention to the constant reconstitution of national, regional, supranational, and global institutions in which local people play a part.

Differences in national and local jurisdictions and shared cross-border regulations, such as those of the European Union (EU) and World Trade Organization (WTO), affect the economic insertion of all residents, including migrants, the availability of employment, the degree to which wages can be locally modified, and the regulations that confront small entrepreneurs. Therefore, as scholars of globalization have long noted, it is important to address the global reach and power of processes and actors that restructure various forms of capital (Rothstein and Blim 1992; Harvey 2012). Those interested in migrant small businesses must address urban variations within the multiscalar processes that affect a migrant’s project of local emplacement through the development of a small business. At the same time, as small entrepreneurs are reconstituted as actors within these varying social fields, the positionality of a city matters.

To address and critique neoliberal celebrations of the power of migrant entrepreneurs to revitalize “failing cities,” we provide a multiscalar example in a disempowered city. With this multiscalar perspective, we can understand why at the beginning of the twenty-first century urban planners began to acknowledge migrant businesspeople such as Lan as heroes in their narratives of urban regeneration and why such narratives are flawed. To fully appreciate Lan’s challenges, we must assess the possibilities and limitations of her actions as she makes her way within intersecting networks of power. Our assessment must speak to changing historical conjunctures and their local configurations.
To understand the positioning of migrant businesses, we must revisit the nature of the multiscalar networks of economic, political, and cultural restructuring that have reshaped the landscape and daily life of Halle. As we note in chapter 1, from the time of the 1990 Wende (unification of Germany), Halle/Saale has experienced a rapid process of first disempowerment and then ongoing urban regeneration. The first decade led to a massive political, economic, and cultural disempowerment of the city. It lost much of its industry and a significant proportion of its population, suffered defeat in the struggle for political power within Saxony-Anhalt, and gained the reputation of an undesirable wasteland (IBA 2010).

Consequently, in a dramatic contrast to other German cities with more economic, political, or cultural resources, at the millennium migrants constituted only 3.1 percent of Halle (City of Halle 2016). Neither natives nor migrants from within or without the European Union saw much of a future for themselves in Halle. The small number of migrants included a visible minority of people from several countries in Africa and the Middle East and from Vietnam. Paradoxically, however, as we will show, how processes of urban regeneration were configured in Halle, within the possibilities, stipulations, and program specifications of funding sources set by the EU, the German federal state, and Saxony-Anhalt, initially not only created conditions for displacing much of the local population from employment but also made it possible for migrants to become emplaced. Some migrants, especially those from outside the European Union, responded to the opportunity structures created through the restructuring of the local economy by establishing businesses. In subsequent years, these same multiscalar institutional forces, through the massive flow of reconstruction funds to Halle, displaced local Germans and migrants from their housing and from their business locations and were part of the development of new forms of emplacement and contestation.

As we indicate in chapter 1, the urban regeneration process in Halle was uneven across time and space. Plans and funding for regeneration focused on different parts of the city and different aspects of rebuilding between 1990 and 2016. Initial plans for regeneration included science institutes and parks that sought to bring world-class researchers together to create a local “new economy” powered by innovation and new technology. Although Frau
Haüssler, the lord mayor we interviewed in 2001, was clear that not all migrants were poor or uneducated, planners ignored the fact that the migrant population included multilingual people with professional degrees and international students who wanted to settle in Halle after graduation because they had local ties. Instead, planners focused on attracting desirable technologically skilled newcomers who could help rebuild the city. The city center (Mitte) was refurbished with new storefronts to make it more attractive for these newcomers, to meet their consumption needs, and to provide adequate frontage for German and international retail firms. Our review of plans to redevelop various districts in Halle indicated that even though development was undertaken with public monies, impoverished unemployed residents and migrants already living in Halle were, to a large extent, disregarded until an opportunity for further reconstruction presented itself, such as the one at the end of the 2000s, to combat inequalities in the “dual city” that urban regeneration had itself produced (IBA 2010).

Not until several initial redevelopment plans failed to produce or retain sufficient so-called high-end new residents did city policy makers take note of and reevaluate migrants’ technical skills and eventually utilize them to some extent. For example, by 2015, refugees with medical training began to be integrated into Saxony-Anhalt’s health-care system (field notes, 2015). However, from the beginning of the regeneration process, city leaders recognized that negative images of Halle as a racist stronghold were a major hindrance in attracting the global talent, corporate offices, and large-scale capital investment that were central to their redevelopment plans.

HALLE, THE WELCOMING

Consequently, faced with the necessity of rebranding and marketing Halle as open for business and open to the world, both within Germany and globally, city leaders began to forge a migrant-friendly narrative. The leaders we interviewed in 2001—city officials and members of political, economic, religious, and social service organizations with very different political affiliations—spoke about migrants through the lens of city positioning. Whatever their personal and party politics, our interviews revealed that these leaders included the migrant population as part of the city. Even when interviewees used the term “foreigner,” they included these foreigners as part of the locality and emphasized how residents’ provincialism could be overcome through interaction with these newcomers. That is, these leaders saw migrants from outside Germany as allies in their goal of repositioning Halle as a city of the
world. City leaders also embraced migrants as an indication of Halle’s openness. This public stance was badly needed to improve Halle’s competitiveness, especially in attracting knowledge industries. As a city councilor commented when discussing the struggle of city leaders to reposition their city, “there are too few foreigners living here” (interview C.1, August 24, 2001).

Within a population that ranged from migrant professionals to failed asylum seekers, migrant businesspeople were singled out as helpful to developing the local economy. In 2001, the narrative highlighting the significance of migrant businesses for urban regeneration was just beginning to be developed in Europe and the United States. However, Halle’s leaders recognized migrant businesspeople as economic actors who could become agents of city redevelopment. In discussing efforts to revive its small business sector, most city leaders included migrant entrepreneurs. They acknowledged that, after unification, empty storefronts would have lined the rebuilt city center without the shops and restaurants opened by migrants.

A representative of the Employment Bureau explained, “Foreigners who want to open a shop here . . . help the employment situation if they come here and also employ people who already live in Halle” (interview E., August 8, 2002). A city councilor stated that he was “comfortable with migrants who had made a place in the city through the establishment of small businesses” (interview C.2, August 30, 2001). These leaders emphasized migrants as businesspeople rather than as contributors of exotic marketable difference to the city’s rebranding efforts. As urban regeneration continued and many migrant and other small businesses were displaced from the city center, Halle continued its migrant-friendly narrative, emphasizing that all newcomers should be considered part of the city. In the “Door-opener” offered on the city website from 2005 to 2013, Lord Mayor Szabados, who was married to a migrant, welcomed all newcomers, whether tourists or migrants, and provided information, including a list of shopping locations ranging from large supermarket chains to various small migrant businesses.

However, in the initial periods of redevelopment, the city gave no assistance to migrants who wished to set up businesses. There was no official source of advice or support in navigating the regulatory regime, nor were financial incentives offered. This changed only decades later when the Jobs Office offered unemployed people, including legal migrants, small business grants.
Opportunity in the Context of Dispossession: The Paradoxical Development of Migrant Small Businesses in Halle

When we started our research, migrant small businesses were visible, even crucial, components of retail business in several areas of the city, including the center of the old city. Migrants from Vietnam, Nigeria, Ghana, Greece, India, Bosnia, Iraq, Sudan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon (including migrants from the last three countries who identified primarily as Kurds) started, or were employed in, these businesses. In all the cases we observed, the networks within which these businesses functioned comprised people from multiple backgrounds, migrant and non-migrant. Sometimes spouses native to Germany became partners in these businesses. Wholesale networks extended elsewhere in Germany, to several European countries, and to Vietnam, China, Thailand, and Nigeria.

As with many cities in Germany during the same period, migrant businesses lined the street from the railroad station to the city center. In Halle, their presence extended far beyond the neighborhood of the train station. Our 2001 survey identified seventy-five businesses owned by or employing migrant workers within streets that, over the next sixteen years, were absorbed into regeneration plans for the city center and its immediate periphery. Although only 3.5 percent of Halle's population had migrant backgrounds, 12 percent of the businesses in this sample were owned or operated by migrants. These numbers indicate only that migrants filled storefronts in key parts of the city. They do not account for the total number of migrant businesses in the city center or elsewhere in the city. In addition, imbisses (kiosks) did business in mobile trailers on empty lots or on unused land around the city center's periphery.

These businesses found fertile ground not because of official assistance but through the conditions that the city and its residents faced after unification. Local contexts included both a niche for the kinds of businesses that migrants could provide and conditions within which they could establish small retail shops. The city’s official narrative welcomed migrant enterprises, and storefronts, many of them renovated, stood empty. Initially, rents were low. At the time of unification and the reintroduction of a local capitalist economy, migrants could compete with natives who also had little retail experience or access to wholesale networks. At that moment, all aspiring retail merchants faced the challenge of developing wholesale networks.

The legal regime immediately after German unification also encouraged
the establishment of migrant businesses. Many migrants who had come to the GDR as workers or students were able to maintain legal residency if they opened a business. This was true in other eastern German cities, but Halle had specific opportunity structures, including a city leadership that fostered a migrant-friendly narrative and policies. As a result, Halle offered opportunities to budding businesspeople. These included Kurdish refugees who lacked entrepreneurial backgrounds but could access wholesale networks (initially in nearby Berlin), migrants from Vietnam who had come to the GDR to study or work in factories and who had little retail experience and few commercial connections but some ties to Halle, and migrants from West Africa who brought some history of small-scale trading and long-distance trading networks in their homelands but no knowledge of retail sales in Germany.

The niche these migrants filled was certainly not an ethnic one, although local people might refer to these businesses in ethnic terms. In Halle, fruit and vegetable and döner (kebab) businesses were publicly identified as “Kurdish” (although in German cities such as Berlin they might be identified as Turkish) and in at least one instance included workers from Azerbaijan. So-called Vietnamese shops included stores selling fruits and vegetables and textile shops that sold inexpensive clothing and gifts.

With a large percentage of the local population receiving social benefits
or reduced to low-paid employment, migrant businesses provided inexpensive food and clothing—an important service. In addition to factory closures, massive downsizing, and loss of jobs in government and public institutions, people were impoverished by currency transformations. First, for some people, savings accounts shrank in value when the West German deutsche mark replaced the GDR’s currency. Then, in 2002, when the euro replaced the deutsche mark, local prices for food and other living essentials rose dramatically.\(^5\)

In the first years after unification, migrant businesses supplied low-cost fruit, vegetables, and staples such as milk, bread, and salt; inexpensive clothing and household items; and affordable fast food in the form of *döner* kebabs and noodle dishes. Only during a second regeneration phase, when the migrant population had become larger and more diversified and German desire for “ethnic foods” had grown, could a handful of specialized businesses become well established, such as Lan’s, which began in 2004.

The success of migrants’ businesses in the first ten or fifteen years after unification can be contrasted to the failure of many businesses operated by West German or powerful international chain stores, which briefly filled the city with relatively expensive consumer goods. Shoe stores were common. At that time, most city center consumers enjoyed window-shopping but had little money for high-end consumption.

Migrants established businesses in Halle within a conjuncture in which multiscalar forces had dramatically restructured the local cityscape, residents’ livelihoods, and the business environment. We have highlighted the impoverishment of the local population after the Wende, the presence of renovated empty storefronts, and the challenge of linking local retail businesses to multiple and geographically dispersed wholesale networks. From the beginning of the restructuring, the local context was not simply the product of local or even national conditions.

**MULTISCALAR EMPLOYEMENTS OF MIGRANT SMALL BUSINESSES**

By examining the history of several businesses established by migrants within the first wave of urban regeneration, we can gain insight into the dynamics at play, which first made these businesses possible and then led to their displacement. Subsequent cycles followed in which migrant business again responded to reconstruction and its aftermath. It is important to note that multiscalar social fields—networks of networks within which displacement and emplacement processes were situated—included not only fields of interaction forged
by the institutional actors reconstituting Halle but also networks forged by ordinary residents, both migrant and non-migrant.

We begin our analysis of the social fields constituted by migrant businesspeople in Halle by tracing the pathways through which Phuong Schmidt, a migrant from Vietnam, became a shopkeeper in Halle. Phuong Schmidt’s network-building practices illustrate how migrants’ efforts to obtain emplacement by building businesses intersected with the city leaders’ project to improve the national and global positioning of the city in which they all lived. Migrants’ transnational networks included people of multiple backgrounds. Stretching between other cities in Germany as well as cities in Europe and other regions of the world, including their homelands, migrants’ family ties were entangled with multiscalar networks that contributed to the establishment of small businesses in Halle and linked the city to many other places. The small business sector in Halle, and the social fields within which it was constituted, helped recruit newcomers to a city that was generally deemed undesirable by Germans from the west and unwelcoming to foreigners, including “foreign scientists,” whom city leaders were eager to attract.

Phuong Schmidt founded her clothing store soon after unification. Trained in law and pedagogy in Hanoi and the child of a university professor, Phuong Schmidt came to Halle after unification to visit her sister, who had a university degree but owned and worked in a clothing shop. This sister used distribution networks that stretched from nearby Leipzig back to China, initially the source of many of the inexpensive items sold in the shop. Through a Vietnamese woman who had studied in an elite graduate program in Halle, Phuong met Bernd, her future husband, a native of the city and of Germany. Their courtship took place in the meetings and conferences of an Esperanto club they both had joined.

Bernd was unable to find a job in the depressed local economy, so the couple decided to open a women’s clothing shop. Bernd and Phuong drew on her sister and brother-in-law’s entrepreneurial experience and networks and obtained a loan from Bernd’s father, who had some savings. The shop also provided part-time employment for an experienced German shop assistant. Through her marriage and her business, Phuong started to identify with Halle and Germany as well as with Hanoi and Vietnam. She said that she “felt like a German because Halle was her ‘second home’” (interview P., October 16, 2003). At the same time, she maintained strong family ties in Vietnam. However, the social field Phuong lived in cannot be encompassed by two national identities. Her Esperanto networks stretched to several countries, as did the networks she used to supply her stores. At the time of the
interview, wholesale networks connected her not only to Leipzig but also to China through Budapest.

Phoung’s pathway of emplacement, through a business built on her marriage to a man born in Germany and on the skills of a German shop assistant, was not typical of migrants of Vietnamese background or of migrants who began businesses in Halle. She also was not unique. Among the twenty-three business owners we interviewed during our research, five told us about their intermarriages. Moreover, we found German employees in businesses owned by people of Nigerian, Vietnamese, and Indian backgrounds. All these businesses were transnationally connected in different ways, but each contributed to and reflected the struggles of Halle’s leadership to reposition the city within multiple networks of power. None of these businesses, in terms of clientele or multiscalar networks, could be understood as ethnic businesses, nor could their successes or failures be understood in terms of cultural background or ethnic networks. Rather, we suggest that the dynamics of these businesses must be understood within the configuration of the multiscalar structural forces shaping Halle’s economy and the opportunities for and constraints on emplacement the city offered to all its residents.

The two businesses we consider next were begun by African migrants and located in unregenerated storefronts in two different districts that bordered the city center. Examining the history of businesses begun by African migrants highlights the utility of setting aside the ethnic lens in order to see the relationship between migrant businesses and multiscalar urban restructuring in disempowered cities. These migrants remained in business, with different degrees of success, until a new wave of regeneration affected their customer base and storefront locations.

Flora’s business success was a product of the timing of her emplacement in Halle, the location she chose for her business, and the force of her personality. Arriving from Ghana as an asylum seeker, Flora gained permanent legal status by wending her way through the bureaucratic procedures necessary to open a legal business, with the help of her “best friend,” a women migrant from Russia who spoke German (interview F., November 18, 2001). Her business was located on the edge of the redeveloped area near run-down housing blocks and abandoned or demolished factories. From conversations with Flora, as well as through participant observation in her shop, it became clear that her business served not only African asylum seekers and refugees but also local German residents in the neighborhood. There were no other Ghanaians in the city, but there were other English-speaking migrants, and Flora expanded her multilingual competence to include some German. At
the same time, she skillfully marketed her diverse stock to her various clienteles. Impoverished Germans in the area came to her shop for soft drinks, beer, cigarettes, and snacks that she kept close to the checkout counter. In the bleak surrounds, Flora’s shop was the closest source of these products for locals, and Flora sold them cheaply.

She also sold telephone calling cards, fresh and frozen food, and male and female beauty products familiar to customers from other African countries, including Nigeria, Congo, and Mozambique. In the front of the shop, a migrant from Nigeria sold hip-hop fashions produced in Asia. Food on the shelves included British and European products favored in West Africa and not available elsewhere in Halle. Her back room served as a meeting place where young men from diverse African countries could purchase cooked food, exchange information about how to settle in the city, and further develop their networks and connections to cities throughout Europe and North America. Next door to her shop, Flora set up a store with phone booths for international calls, but the advent of inexpensive calling cards and cell phones rapidly made this venture a dead end.

Another business established by an African migrant on another street skirting the city center sold similar products, including cooked food, and also catered to local residents and African migrants. However, this business was less successful. Owner personality played some role in this, but the second business also faced more competition. A Kurdish migrant in a nearby storefront also served food and drinks to local residents and operated until late in the evening.

As urban regeneration spread to the streets that bordered the city center, both these businesses started by migrants closed. Buildings and storefronts in those areas were renovated, and the population changed. Poor Germans were forced to relocate, and some African migrants were deported or left for other parts of Germany and Europe as Germany, within a changing conjunctural moment, altered its immigration laws to allow for professional migration while making refugee status increasingly difficult to obtain.

**Structural Forces, Changing Times, and Business Failure**

Beginning about 2002, a series of conjunctural forces began to change the physical appearance of the city, the demographic profiles of the various city districts, and the distribution and type of large and small businesses that occupied Halle’s storefronts. The downturn in high-tech dot-com industries in the United States, including in Manchester, New Hampshire, was not directly
visible in Halle, but small merchants began to talk about a poor local economy a few years after the millennium. These business owners faced displacement from the city center and the areas immediately adjacent to it in the wake of the inflation in rents and wholesale and retail commodity prices that accompanied conversion from the deutsche mark to the euro. Soon after these disruptive forces, they were confronted with further urban regeneration focused on gentrifying central neighborhoods of the city.

As we have seen in chapter 1, this process took several different forms. Private landlords received a combination of federal, land, and city money to renovate historic buildings constructed before 1948, first in the city center and, from 2007 and 2013, in various districts in southern and northern parts of the city. The Urban Redevelopment East program provided funds to private landlords as well as to publicly owned housing companies for renovating, conserving, and revaluing their property (Baum, Vondroušová, and Tichá 2014, 22–23). Private landlords (many of whom came from the west of Germany to reclaim family property after unification or to buy real estate for investment) initially received loans, tax abatements, and other forms of public funding to reconstruct Halle’s early-twentieth-century apartment houses, town houses, and Art Deco decors. Seventy percent of the buildings in the southern district of the city center, where reconstruction was concentrated, were owned privately (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung 2015). Newly renovated buildings could charge higher rents for storefronts and apartments. Small businesses and poor people, both migrants and non-migrants, were forced out. As we note in chapter 1, a dual process of dispossession occurred here because the city of Halle provided one-third of the total funding to obtain German federal and Saxony-Anhalt monies. Poorer people, including migrants, not only lost their homes and the businesses that provided them with inexpensive goods but also were left with fewer services due to the impoverished city budget. International chains and supermarkets took the place of many local businesses, including some owned by migrants (Bendick and Tempel 2014). Kiosk businesses primarily run by migrants were pushed off the streets. Many migrant businesses in the area were unable to pay rising rents. Within a short period of time, even some of the international chains and upscale restaurants that replaced them failed.

During the first decade of the millennium, redevelopment of the city center was focused on making the city more appealing to the cosmopolitan tastes of “new economy” technical workers and scientists, the desired targets of regeneration. A gourmet food court was situated in an expanded department store in the Marktplatz and a new wave of businesses linked to international
corporations and franchises occupied storefronts in major business districts. The regeneration not only displaced the food and clothing stores of migrants that sold inexpensive goods to poorer residents (and who were increasingly displaced from regenerated housing in the area) but also forced the closure of several local businesses, migrant and non-migrant, that catered to wealthier clients.

Detailing the struggles of two businesses with wealthier clientele, Elite Foods and Beautiful Dream Gifts, makes clear that their failure did not reflect migrants’ cultural differences. Rather, the failure of these small businesses reflected the ongoing restructuring of the city economy in the face of global economic downturns, higher rents on storefronts, and the absence of the wealthier populations who were the focus of the regeneration projects. Both businesses were positioned to sell to upscale cosmopolitan customers rather than to the urban poor. Their fate paralleled that of city center businesses owned by non-migrants that sold upscale gifts made by global craftspeople and fashions crafted locally.

Elite Foods was owned by Helga, a Halle native married to Kadri, a migrant from Turkey. In terms of assessing relationships between migrant-owned

\[ \text{FIG 2.2 Renovated storefront near Halle city center, abandoned by an international retailer and upscale restaurant. Photograph by Nina Glick Schiller.} \]
businesses and Halle’s local structural context, it is important to note that, although his German was not fluent, Kadri was well emplaced within the local political and social fabric through his marriage to Helga. Helga had a fierce love of her native city and extensive local social networks. These were publicly visible when, many years after their relationship began, the couple married and wedding guests included city officials (field notes, January 2001–December 2002).

Helga and Kadri located their shop on an urban pedestrian mall, a section of a street in the city center dedicated as the “high street” by urban planners. However, when our research began in 2001, the most desirable section of the street hosted three other migrant-owned shops: two selling inexpensive clothing and cheap goods and a soft ice cream stand. In contrast to these businesses, Elite Foods met the upscale aspirations of the city planners. It featured expensive imported fruits, olives, and candies sought by consumers who desired high-end commodities. These high-quality imported goods, including those from Turkey, were priced too high to be accessible to the poor.

The second elite-oriented migrant business in our sample was Beautiful Dream Gifts, a shop filled with African jewelry and art that the owners wished to market to consumers who sought to validate their cosmopolitan tastes through such purchases. The shop’s interior, its merchandise, and even its wrapping paper catered to this market. Beautiful Dream Gifts was owned by Evelyn, a woman from Nigeria, and her husband, Stephan, a retired businessman from Germany who grew up in a village near Halle (interviews E., June 8, 2003; July 7, 2004).

Unfortunately, at the turn of the millennium, businesses in Halle faced the ramifying effects of economic restructuring, currency transformations, and related speculations. In this climate, it was increasingly difficult for small businesses to compete with well-capitalized, corporate-owned businesses targeting upscale consumers, which, at the time, was a diminishing rather than a growing population in Halle. While Helga and Kadri held on to their valuable corner high street location for a few years after the downturn, eventually they were unable to compete with the gourmet food court of the upscale department store located down the street and on the square. Concurrently, their profit margin was destroyed by currency conversion; even their relatively upscale customer base could not support higher retail prices. Some migrant businesses in the city center selling inexpensive goods found new locations with cheaper rents on the city periphery. But Elite Foods and Beautiful Dream Gifts, poised for Halle’s new cosmopolitan market in a central location, went out of business.
During the last days of their gift shop, Evelyn and Stephan sought new markets by participating in what they thought was an open-air crafts fair. To Evelyn’s dismay, when they arrived they found that the event was a multicultural project funded by the Saxony-Anhalt office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation of the Green Party to celebrate migrants’ cultural difference. The foundation’s efforts reflected the German national policy of approaching migrant integration through multiculturalism and intercultural understanding. Evelyn and Stephen found themselves among booths sponsored by the few small migrant organizations in Halle, which were generally active only at such events. Some migrant families also had been contacted to display goods, foods, or crafts such as hair braiding that were seen as ethnic and exotic. Evelyn was discomforted by such marketing. She did not want to position her business or herself within an ethnic niche and vowed to avoid participation in such events.

While most inexpensive clothing stores and many inexpensive fruit and vegetable markets had been displaced from the regenerated streets near the city center and university buildings, a few migrant businesses continued, including small grocery stores that stayed open long hours and some of the long-established Asian and döner fast-food shops. Other migrant businesses, pushed out by growing disparities in the city, increasingly concentrated in Halle-Neustadt. They joined migrant businesses that had already made inexpensive retail commerce and restaurants part of the profile of that district’s main thoroughfares, and they brought an intensified sense of street life to that region of the city. This contribution was slowly acknowledged in assessments of urban regeneration in Neustadt.

By 2010, the city center and surrounding districts became populated to some degree with offices and businesses linked to new economy industries that were becoming established in Halle, although not to the extent envisioned in the various redevelopment plans. Property management and small, struggling start-ups in technical and financial services became part of the commercial mix. Those benefiting from the new opportunities primarily represented an influx of people from other parts of Germany. The increased number of real estate sales offices reflected the growing tendency for Halle to become the residential base of a workforce who worked and often shopped in Leipzig. New types of small businesses catering to different, more affluent interests, such as nail parlors or restaurants with trendy menus, became part of the entrepreneurial profile in regenerated areas of the city center. Several Vietnamese restaurants added sushi to their menus.

While unemployment in Halle dropped to just under 12 percent in 2015
(City of Halle 2016), the city still had a higher unemployment rate than did other eastern cities. Employees generally earned lower wages than in other regions of Germany or even in nearby cities in eastern Germany. In response to the continuing disempowerment of the city and its people, by 2016 many upscale businesses, including fancier restaurants and bars established after the second wave of regeneration, had closed. Once more, many storefronts were empty despite having been renovated. Streets in regenerated areas reverted to marketing to low-income consumers, but now the customer base included increasing numbers of students as Halle became less a center of advanced science and more a university city, hosting twenty thousand students in 2015 (Federal Ministry of Education and Research 2015). Some new businesses were outlets of international chains, which had corporate headquarters based in Germany or the Netherlands and thousands of retail stores in a range of countries. These retail businesses, some known for low wages and long working hours, marketed inexpensive household goods and novelties.

Nonetheless, migrants began once again to initiate new fast-food restaurants, primarily Asian noodle shops, *döner* shops, and small grocery stores specializing in soft drinks, beer, and snacks. These businesses continued to be pressured by the scarcity of affordable storefronts in regenerated city districts. The owner of an Asian market noted the contradiction he faced in establishing a business in Halle. This man had begun his business during the second wave of storefront regeneration and found a customer base among the university students who had come in increasing numbers to the city. “Halle,” he said, “is a good city for foreigners but it is hard to get a shop in the center.”

The Halle of 2016, when our research ended, was not the Halle of 2000, when our research began and when we first became aware of the engagement of small business owners—migrant and non-migrant—in city-making. Conditions for all small businesses, including those begun by migrants, altered because of city restructuring, the dynamics of capital flows, the partial success of the city’s knowledge industries, and the revaluation of urban spaces. These transformations and the reconstruction of some research and industrial facilities offered new possibilities and benefits for some people. However, by 2016, it also had become clear that despite massive EU and public redevelopment funding, public money would not be able to leverage private corporate investment in Halle’s industrial, scientific research and technology parks and create well-paying jobs and prosperity in the city. This idea had been discredited in the eyes of many residents, including some city leaders. Yet new regeneration schemes continued in the city.
One such program had begun to rebuild key intersections, with light-rail federal, Saxony-Anhalt, and Halle funding. This was the program that had rebuilt the traffic circle in front of Lan’s shop. The relationship between migrant businesspeople and city leaders and developers who wished to reposition Halle contributed to and reflected the realignment of trajectories of multiscalar institutional power after the reverberations of 2007–8 banking and loan debacle. This realignment exacerbated the city’s difficulty in attracting private capital.

While migrant businesses in Halle remained prominent among small businesses that were not franchises or chains, and by 2016 their number had once again grown in Halle’s regenerated districts, they, too, were drawn into the corporate networks through their supply chains. As had the initial migrant businesses in Halle, including the so-called Afro-shops, the newer or persisting migrant businesses in Halle were not “ethnic businesses” that marketed exclusively to or drew from the supply networks of migrants of the same national or regional backgrounds. However, the array of nationalities living and cooking in Halle became much wider, and local German clientele over time came to include not only bargain shoppers but also, as our description of Lan’s customers indicated, a more internationally oriented consumer population seeking fresh ingredients and new flavors. In response, Lan included among her services cooking guidance and instructions for her German and diverse international clientele.

In a related development, while in 2000, the owners of the Elite Food Shop had personally bought imported and fresh produce each morning from Leipzig wholesalers, by 2016 businesses such as Lan’s looked to a variegated supply chain that included multinational corporations as direct suppliers. Indeed, by 2016, Lan ordered much of her stock online, using a computer as well as earlier technology—a massive catalogue from a Dutch firm that marketed categories of “African,” “Asian,” and Caribbean “ethnic foods.” Many “ethnic foods” in the catalogue were actually processed by US or European firms, but under labels familiar in migrants’ countries of origin. Others came from firms in Vietnam, Thailand, and Korea. Large orders could be paid for online and delivered directly to her store. At the same time, Lan stocked live fish that her family purchased in Leipzig from a German wholesaler, frozen herbs from Thailand and Vietnam in the winter from Vietnamese connections in Poland and Thailand, and fresh Vietnamese herbs supplied in summer from small gardens in Halle. She also sold snacks—spring rolls and fried dough—made in her kitchen. Businesses such as Lan’s grocery store highlight the role of migrants as multiscalar city-makers whose activities stimulate small-scale
local producers, as they link their locality to the transnational networks of multinational corporations.

In short, in a restructured Halle that now contained several districts with lovely regenerated housing, new tramlines, and refurbished historical sites, businesspeople such as Lan contributed to efforts to more favorably reposition their city, even as these shopkeepers struggled to keep afloat. Lan’s shop was not isolated in an ethnic enclave or neighborhood. Rather, through her actions, she linked her own kitchen, Halle, Leipzig, and massive multinational corporations connected through a wholesale firm in the Netherlands. However, she took these actions within the contingencies of structural forces that played out in Halle as they provided both opportunities and barriers for small retail businesses. Contrary to claims made by celebrants of migrant businesses, Lan and other migrant businesspeople could neither revitalize Halle nor be sure of secure emplacement for themselves and their families.

Conclusion

The analytical perspective on migrant small businesses that we develop in this chapter is very different from that offered within the literature on ethnic entrepreneurs. Not only do we highlight the reality that these businesses are not organized around migrants’ cultural background and ethnic networks but we link the dynamics of business emplacement and displacement to multiscalar restructuring processes that reconfigured the lives of all residents and conditioned the growth and demise of businesses.

We argue throughout this book for a concept of “emplacement,” which emphasizes that all individuals live within a nexus of unequal power comprising all with whom they connect and interact. To study how these migrants establish and maintain their businesses, migration scholars must explore the connections between businesses and the constant multiscalar conjunctural processes of restructuring a city—processes that shape all residents’ livelihood opportunities and constraints.

The relative positioning of a city within hierarchies of uneven power can enable or impede pathways of emplacement for all businesspeople residing there. From this perspective, much can be learned from our study of migrant businesses in a disempowered city such as Halle. Some of the processes we highlight can be attributed to the disempowered positioning of the city and the constraints that all residents face in trying to earn a living. Severe limitations on opportunities make challenges to migrant newcomers especially pressing, and the development of migrant businesses must be examined in
that light. Not only must our understanding of migrant emplacement examine how migrants constitute their life trajectories within the multiscalar forces through which they contribute to city-making but we must also examine how the nexus of these forces changes over time. We hope to alert researchers to the need to link specific pathways of emplacement to the varying opportunity structures of different localities, noting that both the localities and the pathways develop with, and are part of, global networks of power at a particular conjuncture.

At the same time, precarity must be understood as a widespread condition of small businesses in cities around the world. However, the ethnic lens, strengthened by researchers’ propensity to confine their attention to migrant-dense neighborhoods and ethnic social networks in more powerful cities, often obscures more general structural features in much of the research on migrant businesses in those cities. Therefore, our data can serve as a stimulus for researchers to rethink their entire approach to migrant businesses. On the other hand, we also note the paradoxical nature of disempowered cities’ opportunities and constraints for migrant businesses, which we demonstrate in relation to Halle. These cities may not provide migrant businesses with opportunities to be portrayed and emplaced as part of the “cultural” ambience of the city, which is a mixed blessing. Emplacement offered through the marketing of cultural diversity may offer business possibilities but may also impose racialized constraints.

By examining the relationship between Halle’s leaders’ efforts to reposition and re-empower the city, on the one hand, and migrants’ efforts to secure emplacement in the city through small businesses, on the other, we are able to see that, from unification until 2006, Halle provided migrants with a particularly welcoming economic niche, when there were few other opportunities for emplacement. After 2006, given spiraling regeneration and conjunctural transformations, many small businesses, including those begun by migrants, were displaced, forced to close, or relocated. At the same time, regeneration created possibilities for businesses that could serve the gentrified city center or the outer margins to which impoverished residents had been pushed. That is to say, migrants’ emplacement and displacement in Halle through small businesses were shaped by the city’s restructuring over time and within circumstances constituted by political and economic actors and institutions in Germany, in Europe, and around the world.

The ethnic entrepreneurship literature often provides examples of success or failure without reference to changing economic structures and conditions locally or, when reference is made to such local sectorial dynamics, then
without sensitivity to the temporal dimensions of global economic structures and corporate and financial actors that shape these dynamics. The variable of time, within ongoing globe-spanning processes, has proven central to an understanding of migrant businesses in Halle. Depending on the city’s relative political, economic, and cultural positioning and its response to the global neoliberal agenda, migrant businesses can play different roles at different times not only in terms of emplacing migrants in the city but also in terms of the city’s efforts to situate itself competitively within a global market. Migrants who initiate small businesses find themselves simultaneously positioned as active agents of neoliberal urban regeneration and among those dispossessed by these processes. However, in all cases, and often within networks of emplacement that are not visible through an ethnic lens, migrants participate in reshaping urban fortunes and in repositioning the city together with all those who confront and participate in processes of accumulation by dispossession.

In Lan’s case, Halle’s leaders’ quest to regain their city’s cultural prestige by confronting its racist reputation may have provided a supportive ambiance. But this ambiance did not extend a political voice to more than a handful of migrants. For Lan, Karamba Diaby, one of the first two people of African background to be elected to the German federal parliament, was neither a political representative nor a symbol of the struggle against racism. Rather, he was a frequent customer who appreciated her stock of yams, okra, and chilies. She had no relationship with local politics or social movements. In chapter 5, we look at how other migrants joined with local people to use Christian churches and networks to make social citizenship claims in the face of their multiple displacements.