The Cosmopolitan City

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The inhabitants of the contemporary world's largest cities share the experience of diversity and otherness in their everyday life. In an increasingly global context, great metropolises are often seen as metonyms for the world reunited in one city where racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and sexual differences can be encountered and practiced daily. While certain commentators celebrate this diversity as the very factor that makes twenty-first century cities successful, vibrant places, others assess it with concern, associating growing immigrant communities with the rise of criminality. Cities themselves generally value representations of their own cultural diversity as a staple upon which their branding strategies can be based yet in some cases they may avoid references to their multicultural neighborhoods, considering these too difficult to integrate into their marketable images. In either case, metropolises of global reach are hubs of transnational networks where diasporic people can negotiate their identities and affiliations by perpetually revisiting "old ideas of home, nation and homeland" (Ball 2004: 25). For this reason, migrants cannot see transnational metropolises such as London or Paris as simply local or national cities. These former imperial centers have always been linked to worlds of difference since their "local" places have been interfused with a "global" network of relations and regions extending far beyond them. Focusing on the idea of the city as a space of encounter between cultures, this chapter proposes to examine competing notions of the cosmopolitan, transnational, multicultural and postcolonial city in order to explore various forms of difference which are valued in or, on the contrary, excluded from contemporary urban discourses. A series of key issues linked to cosmopolitan cities such as the questions of cultural capitals, multiethnic neighborhoods, gentrification, city branding and commemorative practices will be discussed in a case study exploring various ways in which contemporary Paris is represented in scholarly and political discourses as well as literary and cinematographic narratives.

Cosmopolitan Paris

Well-known for being a cultural capital since the eighteenth century, Paris is most often referred to as a cosmopolitan metropolis. Despite the indubitably multicultural character of the city and the massive presence of postcolonial migrants, the adjective "cosmopolitan" is generally preferred to "multicultural" which is used with a certain reluctance in French political discourses. The terms "cosmopolitan" and "multicultural" are competing notions: they both describe the particularities of contemporary world cities. However, multiculturalism refers mostly to the presence of ethnic, religious or sexual difference in cities or to claims for the recognition of cultural otherness (Joppke and Lukes 1999: 1) while cosmopolitanism evokes the idea of world citizenship and promotes identities which are not territorially based (Breckenridge et al. 2002: 2). Kosnick notes that both cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism exhibit "a certain openness, eagerness, and ability to engage with different cultural traditions and orientations that are strange in their origin" (Hemelryk Donald et al. 2009: 36) and reject exclusively parochial cultural attachments with the aim to reconcile the principle of equality with the recognition of positively valued difference. Since multiculturalism is concerned with territorially limited spaces such as nations, cities or single neighborhoods, multicultural metropolises are communally defined as territories that need to integrate minority populations regardless of their transnational affiliations and mobilities. Multiculturalist urban policies are therefore expected to look at the city as a local space where minority claims can be accepted within the limits determined by the rules of liberal democratic political models. Official multiculturalism was first instituted in the 1970s in postcolonial societies such as Canada and Australia "that lacked nation-founding myths and clear breaks with their colonial past" (Joppke and Lukes 1999: 3) and defined themselves as "multiple cultures existing under the roof of a neutral state." Although this multicultural model is today predominant in North America, its popularity remains rather limited in France where natives are regarded as universal individual-citizens directly linked to the nation-state, and national-political membership requires the acceptance of French cultural values. The Republican model leaves little room for multicultural claims arising from minority groups, as it is well illustrated by the long-lasting debate about the right of Muslim girls to wear the Islamic veil in French public schools.

As a model for society, multiculturalism proposes two concurrent urban models. On the one hand, it celebrates hybridity, intermingling and mongrelization and sees the city as a fusion of cultures; on the other hand it considers the metropolis as a mosaic of distinct cultural and ethnic backgrounds that coexist within a community encouraging and welcoming difference. We will see that neither of these images plays a considerable role in French city branding strategies. While Hatziprokopiou notes that most British cities including London are promoted as multicultural sites of "branded difference" (Hemelryk Donald et al. 2009: 14), dominant images of Paris remain essentially French and evoke mainly connotations with French cultural references such as French history, fashion, art or cuisine.

The more universally oriented notion of cosmopolitanism conceptualizes cities as nodes in a global cultural network and considers them as the endpoints of migratory movements that produce cultural mosaics. Originating in ancient Greek thought and Kantian philosophy, cosmopolitanism reflects a universalistic conception of human belonging. Paris can be seen as a cosmopolitan metropolis since it is inscribed in transnational population flows which transcend the boundaries of the nation-state. Like London, New York and other world cities, Paris constitutes also a nod in cultural flows which are partly ordered by center–periphery relationships. As Hannerz (1996: 128) suggests, cosmopolitan world cities are centers to which "people from different parts of the world look, even from considerable distance and often from one continent to another, as fairly durable sources of new culture." These places are sites from which a wide variety of ideas and cultural forms might spread during a certain period of time. Although they might undergo shifting fortunes in this respect and become less significant with the time, many of these cities continue to play an important role as centers of new cultures. Most of the time, they are characterized by the presence of four social categories which have in common to develop strong ties to some other place in the world: highly skilled, mobile individuals belonging to the managerial classes, Third World populations, people specializing in expressive activities including art, design, fashion, or cuisine and tourists (Hannerz 1996: 129–31). Although cities like New York, London or Tokyo exemplify better global cities understood as the control center of global economy (Sassen 1991), Paris continues to attract a large amount of transnational people belonging to all four categories and can be considered as something more and qualitatively different than a manifestation of French national culture.

On the other hand, the cosmopolitan city is predominantly associated with transnational elites able to navigate between and within different cultures thanks to their education, confidence, cultural capital and money. Friedmann and Wolff (1982: 322) note that "transnational elites are the dominant class in the world city, and the city is arranged to cater to their life styles and occupational necessities." For Binnie et al. (2006: 7), cosmopolitanism is founded on "an openness to, desire for and appreciation of, social and cultural difference" which is associated with gentrification and urban formations of the "new middle class" and bound up with notions of knowledge, cultural capital and education. Hannerz (1996: 103) describes the cosmopolitan mindset as "an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other" which entails an intellectual and esthetic openness toward divergent cultural experiences and requires a "state of readiness, a personal ability to make one's way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting, and reflecting."

Unlike multiculturalism which, based on the anthropological concept of culture as a specific form of life, inherited a comprehensive and anti-elitist notion of cultures in the plural, the cosmopolitan ideal implies less an absence of belonging to a nation-state than "the possibility of belonging to more than one ethnic and social localism simultaneously" (Werbner 2008: 34). As Hannerz (1996: 204) points out, the cosmopolitan may embrace an alien culture, but he does not become committed to it. Mobility that may constitute a key aspect of the cosmopolitan

stance doesn't suffice to turn one into a cosmopolitan. Labor migrants, tourists who tend to be more spectators than participants or exiles who wish to preserve a threatened, uprooted sense of self are less likely to develop a cosmopolitan attitude than expatriates who have chosen to live abroad for some period and who know that they can go home when it suits them. Associated to the city, cosmopolitanism is understood as a series of practices linked with the production deployment of cultural capital, mainly by the new middle and gentrifying classes who consider themselves as "globally oriented, particularly through artistic and intellectual pursuits which draw them into international cultural circuits" (Binnie et al. 2006: 15). As Binnie et al. (2006: 15) argue, cosmopolitan urban identities find physical expression in gentrified urban settings through local territory and encounters commodified through ethnic restaurants, import stores, international media and architectural forms: "Thus the socialization of cosmopolitan global identities and the generation of encounters with difference and diversity find their locus in particular 'consumptionscapes' in the city." In a similar way, Cohen (1997: 167) sees global cities as international and cosmopolitan, partly because they are more integrated to other global cities than to their original national context, but also because prevalent "tastes, consumption patterns and forms of entertainment are drawn more from an emerging global culture than from the national culture."

The term cosmopolitanism is frequently used in tandem with two other notions: transnationalism and postcolonialism, both referring to massive population displacement which had occurred in the context of globalization since the era of decolonization. In his study of postcolonial London, John Clement Ball (2004) uses interchangeably both terms that appear simultaneously in the title of his book *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis*. Focusing on the experience of colonial or postcolonial migrants who have come to live in London, Ball (2004: 31) describes everyday life in the British metropolis as one that involves "a dynamic inhabitation and negotiation of a spatial spectrum that extends from the most local inhabited space, the body, outwards through the home, the neighborhood, the community, the city, the nation, and beyond the most global inhabited space, the world." Building on Michael Peter Smith's theory of transnational urbanism, the author argues that inhabitants of transnational cities develop interstitial identities which go beyond such binary oppositions as local and global insofar as their everyday local experience is informed by phenomena and networks that "defy easy boundary-setting" (Smith 2001: 117). In *Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis*, John McLeod (2004) pursues a similar goal to the one set by Ball. He studies London's postcolonial re-writing in narratives by African, Asian and Caribbean writers and explores different attitudes to the metropolis' diasporic transformation resulting from migration and emerging hybrid communities and the heterogeneous, diverse and transnational character of the city's society and culture. The adjective "transnational" which appears regularly in critical work dealing with the multiethnic population of cosmopolitan London, also refers to a recent shift in migration which since the 1980s has become less a directed movement with a point of departure and a point of arrival than an ongoing flow between several locations. In this sense, transnational cities can

be equated to postcolonial metropolises which cannot be seen as simply local or national entities because of their past and present overseas linkages.

While London's role in postcolonial imagery is widely studied in the Anglophone world, postcolonial re-writings of Paris trigger little interest in France. Even if the transition from Paris as a French metropolis and Western intellectual capital to a globalized and transcultural world city is as frequently represented in film and novels as London's transnational change, until recently critics in the Hexagon have devoted little attention to postcolonial Paris. This denial of the city's historical, cultural and ethnic diversity started to change in the 1990s with the publication of a series of work concerned with North- and Sub-Saharan African cultural and literary production in France, published mostly by scholars working at American universities such as Michel Laronde, Benetta Jules-Rosette, Odile Cazenave, Mireille Rosello, Alec Hargreaves or Dominic Thomas. In their introduction to the volume *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*, Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (2003) argue that, although Paris' status as a postcolonial city is striking, the predominantly nation-centered concept of Frenchness and the only fleeting recognition of the role played by colonial expansion in the formation of national and Republican identity led not only to an active suppression of colonial memory but also to a strong reluctance in the French academia to engage with postcolonial theory. As a result of this legacy, majority cultural gatekeepers in France tend to consider multiculturalism and postcolonial theory as Anglo-Saxon inventions alien to France's Universalist traditions and often refuse recognition to artists of immigrant origin who produce diasporic or multicultural representations of Paris that contradict dominant narratives of the French capital. As Hargreaves argues, the literature, films and other art forms produced by France's postcolonial minority's have been studied and valorized far more extensively outside France – especially in the English-speaking world – than within the country in which their creators live (Forsdick and Murphy 2003, Hargreaves 2007).

Dominant French discourses which tend to ignore Paris' colonial legacy and multicultural diversity generally favor images of the city as the world's unique cultural capital. In *The World Republic of Letters* Pascale Casanova (2004: 24) attempts to demonstrate that just in the same way as the eighteenth-century London became the center of the world economy, nineteenth-century Paris imposed its cultural hegemony as the undisputed capital of Western painting and literature and maintained its unique position as "the city endowed with the greatest literary prestige on earth" until the recent emergence of a polycentric globalized space. In the international literary space which was formed in the sixteenth century as the result of long-lasting rivalries between emerging national states and their languages, France's central position was based on the greatness of its national literary past, its historical and literary legitimacy, and the universal recognition of its greatest authors. The exceptional status of Paris as the world's leading literary capital, argues Casanova, was due to the city's "non-national" and "ahistorical" character corresponding both to the timeless nature of works of art recognized as "classics" and to the universal, cosmopolitan values associated with literary legitimacy. The emergence of Paris as a literary and cultural capital was made manifest on the one

hand by the city's countless descriptions in novels and poems and, on the other hand, by its universally acknowledged power of conferring literary recognition to writers of immigrant origins such as Octavio Paz, Samuel Beckett, Danilo Kiš or Cioran. For Casanova, Paris' uniqueness as a literary capital lies precisely in the cosmopolitan stance of its literary population and the city's relatively strong emancipation from national politics:

> *Because France was the least national of literary nations, it was able to manufacture a universal literature while consecrating works produced by outlying territories – impressing the stamp of littérarité upon texts that came from farflung lands, thereby denationalizing and departicularizing them, declaring them to be acceptable as legal tender in all the law of universality in the world of letters against the ordinary political laws of nations, France became an alternative model for writers from every part of the literary world who aspired to autonomy. (Casanova 2004: 87)*

Casanova (2004: 29) sees the only shortcoming of the universality which made Paris "the homeland of [all] those free spirits who have not found a homeland" in the ongoing domination of Francophone writers who have been the only authors unable to look to Paris for consecration and liberation. Unlike London, another literary center that successfully rallied under the British banner a wide range of postcolonial Commonwealth authors from various countries, Paris "never took an interest in writers from its colonial territories; or more precisely, it long despised and mistreated them as a species of extreme provincials, too similar to be celebrated as exotic foreigners but too remote to be considered worthy of interest" (Casanova 2004: 122).

Celebrating Paris as a global capital of culture and literature, Casanova asserts that cosmopolitan attitudes played a central role in the recognition of literary work produced by transnational avant-gardes. Intellectual elites concentrated in the French capital tended to favor universal values against territorial ones, thereby contributing to the emergence of a universal literary modernity. However, they remained curiously indifferent toward the expressions of cultural otherness within the Francophone literary space and the emergence of new, alternative images of Paris, produced by postcolonial migrants. Today, in an era described as "a transitional phase, passing from a world dominated by Paris to polycentric and plural world" (Casanova 2004: 164) these attitudes are evolving, due as much to interurban rivalry to seize literary and cultural power, as to the increasing globalization and commercialization of the publishing industry.

Diasporic Communities and Multicultural Neighborhoods

With a territory of 8,700 hectares, Paris is a relatively small capital city compared to other European metropolises such as London (32,100 ha) or Madrid (60,700 ha).

Another notable difference that distinguishes Paris from most European capitals is an unusually sharp divide separating the densely populated inner city from the surrounding suburbs that feature looser settlements (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot 2004: 8). The city's boundaries are composed by social housing estates, sport establishments and the Boulevard Périphérique composed of two concentric carriageways: an inner and an outer ring. Constructed in 1958 on the former site of the last remaining city walls, this orbital motorway separates a relatively homogeneous inner city containing only a limited number of ethnic enclaves and multiethnic neighborhoods and demographically diverse suburbs known as "banlieues." Most peripheral areas are marked by concentrations of large-scale, predominantly high-rise social housing projects and problems usually associated with inner-city areas in the UK and North America. Suburban neighborhoods in France evoke the negative connotations of social exclusion and geographic segregation. As the etymologic origin of the term suggests, "banlieues" are places of banishment and exclusion, located on the outskirts of the city and separated from the center by rigid boundaries that emphasize their non-belonging to the system.

French urban policies are radically different from the British or American ones insofar as their main object is not community but space. As Mustafa Dikeç (2007: 4) observes, "this is almost necessary so since the French Republican tradition emphasizes a common culture and identity, and any reference to communities is deliberately avoided because they imply separatism, which is unacceptable under the principle of the 'one and indivisible' republic." Although in French media and political discourses "banlieues" are usually considered as a threat to security and largely associated with ethnic minority population by the amalgamation of urban immigration and delinquency, inner city neighborhoods are evolving under the principle of "mixité sociale." This means that since the renovation program commissioned by Napoleon III and led by Haussmann between 1852 and 1870, social classes considered as "dangerous" have been continuously rejected on the city's periphery, while the inner city continued to evolve as a space of encounter, exchange and cohabitation between various social, professional or demographic categories. In their sociological analysis of Paris, Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot (2004) note the existence of various axes dividing the urban space into economically privileged quarters in the West and predominantly working-class neighborhoods situated in the East or quarters marked by a higher density of cultural institutions and intellectual life on the left bank of the city of the Seine and to commerce on the right bank. Despite their attempt to list major divides, the authors of this major monograph only evoke a few diasporic or multiethnic neighborhoods such as the "Goutte d'Or," the Tamil quarter and the neighbourhood known as "les Abbesses." Located near the underground station Barbès-Rochechouard, the "Goutte d'Or" is described as a quarter shaped by several successive waves of immigration starting in the 1860s with the rural exodus depicted in Emile Zola's novel *The Dram-Shop* (1877), followed by the arrival of workers from Eastern Europe, Spain, Italy, North and Sub-Saharan Africa and most recently from Asia. Resulting from the intermingling of populations coming from a multitude of geographic locations, the neighborhood is described as a colorful mix of ethnic groups whose

peaceful cohabitation is illustrated by the undisturbed coexistence of their shops and restaurants in the same neighborhood. As opposed to the Goutte d'Or's ethnic hotchpotch, the Tamil quarter is depicted as an apparently homogeneous ethnic neighbourhood located between the railway stations Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est, in the 10th district of Paris. Yet the Tamils who arrived in France in the 1970s to escape civil war in Sri Lanka live in the suburbs and not in this neighborhood where their shops, restaurants and two temples are located, therefore their presence doesn't change considerably the social composition of the district which remains predominantly French. Finally, the description of the quarter known as "les Abesses" is mainly based on Jean-Pierre Jeunet's film, *Amélie* (2001) that is set in the village-like neighborhood located around the eponymous underground station and depicted in a strongly idealized way as an example of the intermingling of various demographic and ethnic categories. For Michel and Monique Pinçon, "les Abesses" represents at the same time demographic change, the survival of traditional forms of sociability and solidarity threatened by rising property prices and gentrification as well as an emerging new myth of Paris triggered by the success of the movie worldwide.

In this sociological study, the above-mentioned Parisian quarters appear as the perfect embodiments of the harmonious cohabitation of different ethnic and social groups in the French capital. This idea of social and demographic mix has been a constant preoccupation of urban planners and administrators in Paris since the end of the nineteenth century. The term "mixité" was used for the first time in 1973 by the Minister of Public Works Olivier Guichard to designate the aim of making different social classes cohabit in the same communes, neighborhoods or even buildings in order to prevent spatial segregation. As a result of ongoing processes of gentrification and demographic change, Paris' population is today younger than the national average (36 percent aged between 20 and 39 in Paris against only 28 percent in France) and more strongly marked by the presence of people of immigrant origins. As the percentage of immigrants is generally slightly higher in working-class neighborhoods, the intermingling of social and ethnic categories is strongly interlinked. Pinçon notes that in 1994, 9.4 percent of France's immigrants lived in Paris, although Parisians only represented 3.6 percent of the country's population. Foreigners represented 14.5 percent of the city's inhabitants and they were not evenly distributed: their concentration was higher in the North-Eastern and Eastern districts (18th, 19th and 20th; 2nd, 3rd, 10th and 11th) as well as in the wealthy 8th and 16th districts. However, these differences remained relatively insignificant, ranging from 10 percent to 22 percent, which illustrates the relative success of urban policies aiming to avoid the emergence of predominantly diasporic enclaves.

Cosmopolitan City Branding in Paris and Elsewhere

On July 6, 2005, Paris lost the bidding race for holding the 2012 Summer Olympic Games against London after a 54–50 vote of the International Olympic Committee. By deploying the slogan "the world in one city," London put forward its cosmopolitanism as a captivating diversity to attract the major sporting event while Paris relied on its typical French qualities and placed a great emphasis on France's passion for sport and the city's rich cultural heritage with regard to Olympism. This strategic difference exemplifies as much the popular adoption of cosmopolitanism as place branding cultural disposition in Britain as the French reluctance to hold out new urban differences and alternative cultural forms to attract investment or tourism. Doreen Massey (2007: 4) assesses the British Olympic bid as a claiming of a place identity based on the city's cultural and ethnic diversity a "mixity of lived practices," the "criss-crossing of multiple allegiances," a "convivial demotic cosmpopolitanism" rather than a multiculturalism consisting in the mere "juxtaposition of, and negotiated relations between, mutually boxed-in communities."

   In an article published in 2009, Kira Kosnick observes the important role that urban cultural diversity has come to play in the branding efforts of metropolitan centers across the globe: "The 'rich mix' that many cities can offer figures prominently in contemporary place marketing, most important against the background of growing interurban competition for tourism, creative talent, and investment. In many locations, ethnocultural diversity has come to be accepted as a key asset and requirement for urban development by city officials, business executives and planners alike" (Hemelryk Donald et al. 2009: 28). As Richard Florida and other influential urban studies theorists have argued, economic growth depends today on the cities' ability to share in the flow of the creative classes (Florida 2002) and urban diversity is a key component for the creation of a climate of tolerance and openness in which innovation can flourish. The cosmopolitan qualities of world-openness, creativity and diversity play a strategic role in marketing experts' efforts to reposition cities successfully in the global arena. London's multicultural neighborhoods such as Chinatown or Brick Lane have been not only powerful elements in the successful Olympic bid but also examples of the general trend of transforming ethnic quarters into "sites of branded difference," "places of leisure and consumption" and signifiers of "acceptable" and "packaged" difference (Hemelryk Donald et al. 2009: 14). Neoliberal and entrepreneurial forms of urban governance creating deep inequalities are often criticized for displaying visible loci of ethnic diversity as celebratory emblems of London's diversity while the unofficial counterparts of these branded, ideal places remain largely unnoticed and unvalued. On the other hand, the emergent multicultural Paris has little or no role to play in official branding efforts in contemporary France. Ethnic enclaves such as the Turkish quarter at Strasbourg-Saint-Denis or the Asian quarter near the underground station Porte d'Ivry do not feature at a central place either in official city guides or in the failed Olympic bid that favored Parisian landmarks representing traditional ideas of Frenchness such as the Eiffel Tower, Champ de

Mars and the Palace of Versailles. Marked by a strong attachment to the Republican tradition, the contemporary restructuring of the French state goes hand-in-hand with a strong emphasis on a common culture and identity, the fragmentation of which would be seen as a threat to the social and political integrity of France.

Rosemary Sales describes London's Chinatown as a branded urban place where "Chinese culture can be consumed as part of a 'global ethnic supermarket'" (Hemelryk Donald et al. 2009: 45). This central-London neighborhood, which was once a ghetto for underprivileged migrants, has become institutionalized by the city's authorities. Although it remains important to Chinese migrants whom it provides with material resources such as food and information, it features prominently on London's tourist maps and welcomes visitors who constitute henceforth the majority of the New Year celebrations' audience. In a study published in 2009, Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot describe the Parisian "Chinatown" of Porte d'Ivry as the successful fusion of a former working-class neighborhood with a high percentage of Jewish, Algerian, Portuguese, Uruguayan and Chilean migrant population and a very heterogeneous population arriving in the mid-1970s from South-East Asia. Less central than London's Chinatown, the Parisian Asian quarter is dominated by a series of tower blocks constructed in the 1960s as part of an urban regeneration project which aimed to attract a middle-class population, thereby promoting social cohesion. Despite the failure of this plan, the neighborhood is far from being an Asian ghetto: it is inhabited not only by Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian people but also by important African and Caribbean populations. Unlike London's Chinatown, the neighborhood's ethnic shops, restaurants and temples are mainly frequented by the Asian community but the New Year celebrations attract also Parisians. In 2004, in the framework of the Year of Chinese Culture in France, the parade was exceptionally staged in central Paris, on the Avenue of Champs-Elysées. The event, featuring more than 7,000 costumed performers, drew a crowd of 200,000 spectators and was assessed by the media as the first non-French cultural event to be held at a key Parisian landmark location, with municipal authorities covering more than one-third of the costs. We can see in this unprecedented event a sign that the Republic is slowly coming to terms with an emerging mongrel Paris which encapsulates otherness, fragmentation and heterogeneity; as well as a new place granted to cosmopolitan features in Paris's urban branding strategies.

Images of an Emerging Mongrel Paris

In parallel with the gradual recognition of ethnic minority artists who have been "making inroads to the cultural mainstream" (Forsdick and Murphy 2003: 146), images of a multicultural and mongrel Paris have emerged in documentary cinema as well as in cinematographic and literary narratives. We can see a recent example of this trend in *La Goutte d'Or: vivre ensemble* (*The Goutte d'Or: Living Together*, 2010), a documentary movie directed by Bruno Lemesle. The film is

an attempt to put forward ideas of solidarity and diversity in one of Paris' most significant multicultural neighbourhoods. Located in the 18th district, between the underground stations Barbès-Rochechouart and Château-Rouge, La Goutte d'Or encompasses the biggest African food market of the capital as well as numerous North and Sub-Saharan African ethnic shops, restaurants and various places of worship such as the mosque Polonceau and the Church Saint-Bernard. The latter is an important Parisian landmark associated with the struggle of "Sans-Papier" since the eviction in 1996 by police of 300 undocumented immigrants who had taken sanctuary in the church for several months. Lemesle's aim is to rehabilitate the image of the quarter, better known by the Parisians for its drug dealers, illegal street market and African prostitutes than for its numerous cultural associations and unique multiethnic community who miraculously survived the 1983 restructuration as well as the actual urban regeneration plan. The film shows problems linked to poverty, insalubrious housing conditions and illegal immigration through the prism of various inhabitants ranging from Maghrebi immigrant workers to a young female academic of Algerian descent specialized in the history of immigration, and from African housewives raising several children in unhygienic conditions to social activists who fight for the creation of appropriate social housing in the neighborhood.

Unlike Lemesle's modest documentary, scarcely sponsored by the SCAM, a French association supporting multimedia creation, *9/3, Mémoire d'un territoire* (*9/3, Memories of a Territory*, 2008) was produced for the French television channel Canal+ which broadcasted it on September 29, 2008. Directed by renowned French Algerian filmmaker Yamina Benguigui, the film benefitted from exceptional media coverage and triggered vehement reactions from historians who accused Benguigui of distorting the history of Seine-Saint-Denis. Recalling three periods of the administrative region located in the North-East of Paris, the documentary investigates the industrial fabric, the housing considerations and the successive waves of immigration from 1860 to today, with a special focus on the Spanish, Italian, Algerian and Caribbean communities. Although the region is often associated with urban violence and the riots that occurred in 2005, these don't constitute a central element in the film. Benguigui is more interested in denouncing two centuries of segregation which started with the relocation of dangerous industries to the North-East of Paris. Due to the pollution, the lack of hygiene and successive epidemics, workers were rapidly decimated and replaced by migrants, coming first from the French countryside and European countries and later from the former colonies. The industrial pollution of this period created waste including lead, arsenic, or hydrocarbon which has polluted the ground waters and soils to the present day. By revealing the shortcomings of large-scale housing projects constructed on industrial grounds at the lowest possible cost, the documentary accuses urban planners and authorities of having planned or accepted the predictable emergence of today's ghettos. The elegiac musical background associated with a series of interviews with disenchanted inhabitants of the stigmatized region contributed to a melodramatic effect that has been seriously criticized as manipulative by

historians who reproach the filmmaker that she censored their contribution by cutting elements that contradicted the intended message of the film.

While the documentary shows the region known as 9-3 as a multicultural area where immigrants from various origins live together, in her more recent TV film *Aïcha* (2009) located in the same area, Benguigui proposes to focus exclusively on the daily life of the Algerian community. The Boumazza family lives in the Eastern part of Bobigny, in a high-rise housing project, separated from Paris only by the orbital motorway. The film's main character, the family's 23-year-old daughter, suffers from the stifling cultural traditions and yearns for independence. This young Parisian of Algerian descent who is reluctant to break away from her family, balances between two cultures and two worlds. The film evokes most of the ethnic stereotypes associated with Muslim communities in France: it conveys images of Islamists recruiting followers in the tower blocks, shows bright law school graduates who struggle to find work because of their ethnic origins and young girls who undergo virginity tests or accept arranged marriages as their only way to escape parental control. Yet, despite its sometimes reductive portraiture of the French-Algerian characters, this ethnic comedy honored at the La Rochelle film festival is the first French telefilm dedicated to multicultural neighborhood in the greater Paris area to be broadcasted on a French TV channel prime time.

Unlike *Aïcha* that features little interaction between the native French and the Algerian ethnic minority populations apart from the protagonist's timid flirt with a young French architect in charge of the regeneration of the neighborhood, Cédric Klapish's *When the Cat's Away* (*Chacun cherche son chat*, 1996) exemplifies the much valued French principle of "mixité sociale." Set in the Bastille neighborhood, a recently gentrified former working-class area in Eastern Paris, the film shows massive solidarity between inhabitants belonging to various age groups, social classes, occupational and gender categories and ethnic groups. The main character is a young make-up artist, Chloe, who shares an apartment with her homosexual friend, Michel. When she goes on holiday for one week, she leaves her cat Gris-gris with an old neighbor who lets the animal escape. On Chloe's return, the whole neighborhood is mobilized to find the missing cat, including the African workers of the neighboring cabinet-making workshop, the mentally retarded Maghrebi youth Djamel, the painter Belcanto, the regular costumers of the nearby bistro and a network of old ladies who find their unique entertainment in this hilarious quest. Searching the neighborhood for the cat becomes a pretext for the exploration of a Parisian quarter which has an exceptionally rich history of immigration, mongrelization and working-class solidarity. Marked by the high concentration of craft industry, the quarter formerly known as "Faubourg Saint-Antoine" had attracted workers from the French provinces and overseas since the seventeenth century until it became in the 1960s a quarter valued by artists and bohemians who converted the former industrial workshops into painters' studios. The subsequent gentrification of the quarter is well illustrated by Klapish's movie which shows the Bastille area's vibrant nightlife attracting young people from all over the capital, the urban regeneration signified by numerous construction sites omnipresent in the film and the departure of elderly inhabitants and artists who cannot afford

the rising rents and property prices. Chloe, who initially likes to hang out in the trendy "Pause Café" with a young drummer living in the neighborhood, gradually develops a preference for the old-fashioned working-class bistro and the painter Belcanto. Klapish uses this metaphor to show that in this truly cosmopolitan Parisian neighborhood the solidarity between inhabitants prevails over boundaries of age, gender or ethnicity. Although racial difference is less central in this movie than in Benguigui's film, Djamel's figure is conceived to demonstrate the inhabitants' ability to accept ethnic otherness, in the same way as Michel's character illustrates their tolerant attitudes toward sexual difference.

In a more recent film, *Paris* (2008), Cédric Klapish offers another cosmopolitan vision of the French capital, depicted this time in its entirety as a complex network of human relations and a node in global population flows. This idea is mainly illustrated by two immigrant characters, Khadija, a student of North-African background, and Benoit, the Cameroonian clandestine who risks his life by attempting the dangerous crossing of the Straits of Gibraltar to enter France illegally. Born and bred in France, Khadija is a Parisian, yet she encounters prejudices because of her ethnic otherness when she tries to find employment in a bakery. Eventually hired for the job, she proves exceptionally hard-working, thereby earning the respect of her racist employer. Benoit is the only character in the movie whose story is partly set in another location than Paris. We encounter him for the first time at a holiday resort in Cameroon where he works as a swimming instructor. Despite not having legal paperwork to immigrate, he decides to make his way to Paris to join his brother who works there as a cleaner, but also to respond to the invitation of Marjolaine, a Parisian model with whom he made acquaintance at the resort hotel. The destinies of these immigrant characters inscribe Paris in the global network of population displacement and depict the postcolonial metropolis as a much-coveted destination which both attracts and resists immigrants from the former colonies.

With the gradual recognition of artists belonging to various Diasporas, alternative images of Paris depicted as a postcolonial metropolis have increasingly managed to secure a place at the high table of the city's literary representations. We can see an example of this diversification of Parisian imagery in the work of Alain Mabanckou, one of the most successful contemporary African writers published in France, who offers two contradictory variants of diasporic Paris in two novels published in the space of a decade: *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge* (*Blue-White-Red*, 1998) and *Black Bazar* (2009). A common characteristic of both novels is to show Paris exclusively through the prism of West-African immigrants. In the first text, a main character called Massala Massala arrives as an illegal immigrant to Paris. The first part of the novel is set in Africa, Paris appears only in the conversations and phantasms of the characters as an idealized city where luxury items, high-brow cultural products and Parisian landmarks associated with emblematic notions of French identity are easily available for everyone. This portraiture of city contrasts singularly with the images of marginalization and spatial and social exclusion encountered in the second part set in Paris which ends with the eviction of the protagonist by the French authorities. Images of Paris are exploited in the novel to show the capital as a lure that attracts migrants but remains beyond their reach, with the noticeable

exception of a few segregated places such as an overpopulated squat in the 14th district, the African market in the 18th district and a series of underground stations where the protagonist engages in an illegal commerce of monthly public transport passes purchased with stolen cheques under false identity.

The narrator of *Black Bazar* has a fundamentally different experience of Paris. Unlike Massala Massala, he is neither naive not disenchanted in his ways of considering the metropolis in which he seems to be perfectly in his element. His main difference with the immigrant character in the previous novel lies not in his more regular contact with the French ethnic majority population or his greater access to symbolic places of Frenchness but in his thorough knowledge of a parallel, diasporic Paris which constitutes the scene of his daily social life and professional activities. He chooses his friends and romantic partners exclusively from the African Diaspora and has only superficial contacts with members of other ethnic groups such as the Arab who runs the local shop or a racist Afro-Caribbean neighbor. Yet he belongs not only to the West-African community whose diversity is put on display at the Jip's bar, but also to a subculture of high fashion called "sape" which is practiced widely by members of the Diaspora. Purchasing expensive designer clothes in Italy and selling them in Paris to the members of the community is a lucrative activity which requires the practice of diasporic places such as the Château-Rouge area and its market, les Halles, where the protagonist regularly encounters other African migrants of diverse national and ethnic backgrounds in his favorite bar and the suburbs where members of the Diaspora come together for major social events. The protagonist of *Black Bazar* doesn't seem to be excluded from emblematic Parisian places such as the avenue of Champs-Elysées or the Eiffel Tower but these symbolic landmarks have little appeal to him. Nonetheless, the narrator of Mabanckou's novel is subject to a positive evolution: living initially in a self-sufficient ethnic enclave, he progressively develops a more cosmopolitan attitude after he discovers his vocation as a writer and shows an increasing interest in cultural difference after his encounter with a white Belgian woman.

The Postcolonial Paris and its Recent Commemorative Landmarks

Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (2003: 1) observe that the landmarks of French national memory described in the collection of essays *Lieux de mémoire* published by Pierre Nora are restricted to the geographic area of the Hexagon. According to the authors, the non-recognition of the role played by the former colonies in the shaping of national identity is symptomatic of the general amnesia concerning the immigrants' contribution to French culture. Whereas France and Great Britain are experiencing similar processes of "reverse colonization," Parisian reactions to the transformation of the former imperial center into a postcolonial metropolis are very different from the ones observed in London. Policies celebrating the multicultural

city led in London to the implementation of several commemorative places such as the Museum of London, holding collections on the impacts that immigrants have had on the city. In 2007 the exhibit "Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees" looked at the contribution which refugees have made to London. Another exhibit displayed in the Museum in Docklands entitled "Journey to the New World," presented the facts and fables behind the first European voyages to America. In 2004, a hub of four museums, the Museum of London, London's Transport Museum, Croydon Museum and Heritage Service and the Jewish Museum launched an integrated website amalgamating voice recordings and images with the aim of showcasing London's history, culture and religions. This online resource entitled "Exploring 20th Century London" dedicates an important place to the history of immigration, communities, local identities and shared experiences. Introducing the visitor to "a myriad of overlapping communities, each bound together by a sense of people having something in common and a distinct identity" (www.20thcenturylondon. org.uk), the website presents the development of bohemian neighborhoods such as Chelsea or Hampstead; ethnic quarters including the Italian, German, Chinese, Russian, East European, Jewish and French communities located in Clerkenwell, Charlotte Street, Limehouse, Whitechapel or Aldgate; and places associated with the emerging gay community such as Soho. The website extensively deals with the settlement of Caribbean workers in the areas of Notting Hill Gate and Brixton and the development of multicultural communities such as Stepney featuring Maltese, West Indian, Pakistani, Greek and Italian establishments or Whitechapel where the Bangladeshi community replaced the Jewish one.

Although until recently commemorative places of colonial and postcolonial history were extremely rare in Paris, the last few years witnessed a decisive change in the French attitude with regard to the creation of sites dedicated to the history, the arts and the cultures of the former colonies or to postcolonial immigration. The "Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration" opened in October 2007 with a mission to contribute to the recognition of the integration of immigrants into French society and advance the views and attitudes on immigration in France. The collection occupies the Palais de la Porte Dorée, formerly the home of the Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, designed by Albert Laprade for the Colonial Exhibition of 1931. It displays a permanent installation, "Benchmarks," which showcases the history and culture of immigration in France from the early nineteenth century to the present and contains interactive exhibits presenting immigrant stories in multimedia form.

Another museum displaying collections of indigenous art, cultures and civilizations from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas was opened in June 2006. Located close to the Eiffel Tower, the Quai Branly Museum is a new emblematic Parisian landmark which contains the exhibits of the now closed Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie and the ethnographic department of the Musée de l'Homme. The launch of this new center displaying artifacts many of which were acquired in the former colonies marks a turning point in French cultural identity and dominant attitudes toward difference. The museum not only displays exhibits dedicated to "primitive art" but also offers series of conferences and workshops. It

hosts a so-called "université populaire" which proposes discussions and debates on the notions of difference, memory, colonial history, decolonization and otherness.

Another cultural milestone in the French Republic's progressive coming to terms with ethnic and cultural diversity was the admission of tribal and aboriginal art in the prestigious Louvre which opened in 2000 a wing devoted to masterpieces from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. This event of symbolic importance was supported by President Jacques Chirac, a fervent admirer of primitive art. In November 2006 the museum hosted a series of events entitled "The Foreigner's Home," a multidisciplinary program focused on displacement, immigration and exile. Nobel Prize winner African-American writer Toni Morrison, who was invited to host a "conversation" between the arts around a theme of her choice, selected the topic of foreigners enriching countries where they settle. Featuring an installation by the American choreographer William Forsythe and the German sculptor and video artist Peter Welz, a live concert by the Malian musician Toumani Diabaté, a retrospective of movies by the African-American director Charles Burnett, debates with transnational writers Edwige Danticat, Michael Ondaatje, Fatou Diome and Boubacar Boris Diop and a poetry slam with popular rappers in front of Géricault's "Medusa," the project demonstrated the creative energy of displaced populations.

Finally, two recent exhibits at the Parisian Hôtel de Ville demonstrated the City of Light's new willingness to acknowledge diversity as well as postcolonial or transcultural memory. Inaugurated in April 2009, a series of photographs, documents and personal belongings related to the nearly 70,000 immigrants from the French West Indies in the 1960s–1980s were exhibited under the title "Mémoires d'outremer." Commemorating for the first time colonial history and slavery on an emblematic site in central Paris, a massive wall was displayed as part of the exhibit, featuring the names of slaves liberated from French colonies in 1848. In February 2010, another exhibit entitled "Paris: 150 years of immigration" was displayed outside the Hôtel de Ville, celebrating the French capital's multicultural roots and ethnically and culturally mixed population. Despite vehement public debates surrounding the creation of new commemorative sites and the sometimes controversial reception of exhibits presenting new approaches to the themes of multicultural society and colonial or postcolonial history, the launch of these new Parisian landmarks demonstrates clearly the emergence of a new cosmopolitan stance acknowledging diversity and multiculturalism as part of the contemporary French culture and Parisian identity.

Conclusion

Today's global metropolises are cosmopolitan cities where racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and sexual differences make part of the inhabitants' daily experience and practice. This feature can be assessed in different ways in urban discourses of self-representation and city branding. While certain cities such as London value representations of their own cultural diversity and use it as the main selling proposal

in their branding strategies, other metropolises like Paris conceive their multicultural aspects as contradictory with their marketable images. In the case of Paris, branding strategies predominantly emphasize traditional images of Frenchness and seek to promote a culturally homogeneous identity which correspond less and less to the city's population. These opposed marketing strategies go hand-in-hand with different ways of using the notions of "cultural capitals" versus "cosmopolitan," "transnational," "multicultural" and "postcolonial" cities in urban discourses. It is striking that French discourses describing Paris traditionally favor the first two adjectives, while the latter three more regularly feature in contemporary depictions of London.

These differences in the cities' self-representation do not result from significant differences in the metropolises' history or organic structures. Paris has performed the same role as London as a major gateway city for overseas migrants. Because of their size and the structure of their labor markets and the career opportunities and cultural assets they offer, both capitals are key migrant destinations. They also share similar patterns in post-war immigration which in both cities consisted of three main waves: the labor immigration of the 1950s attracting workers mainly from the former colonies, the family reunification of the 1970s and 1980s and today's post-industrial migration comprising a mixture of asylum seekers and highly skilled international migrants. Currently, Paris and London are both experiencing the same processes of gentrification and growing internationalization, play a comparable role as cultural capitals and constitute similar nodes in global cultural flows.

Differences in both metropolises' predominant narratives of self-representation are rather due to the importance of Republican ideology in France which advocates integration through assimilation while contemporary neoliberal Britain is more tolerant toward communities displaying their cultural difference and less uncomfortable with its colonial legacy. These fundamental differences are particularly well demonstrated by both countries' respective commemorative practices and by the reluctance in French academia to study in literature, films and other art forms diasporic or multicultural representations of Paris that contradict dominant narratives of the French capital. However, in recent years, both artists and academics seem to have been taking a growing interest in Paris' colonial legacy and multicultural diversity. A similar shift can be observed in urban policies and educative and commemorative practices which are exemplified by recent exhibits dedicated to immigrant contribution to Parisian history and French national identity.

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