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Suzanne Hall

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“Super-diverse street: a ‘trans-ethnography’ across migrant localities”



Suzanne Hall is an urban ethnographer, and has practised as an architect in South Africa. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Researcher at LSE Cities, London School of Economics and Political Science. Her research and teaching interests are foregrounded in local formations of global urbanisation, particularly, urban migration and migrant micro-economies, urban multiculturalism and civility, ethnography and visual methods. She currently leads a research project on ‘Ordinary Streets’, focusing on migrant economies and urban space.

Abstract This paper emerges from an ethnography of the economic and cultural life of Rye Lane, an intensely multi-ethnic street in Peckham, south London. The effects of accelerated migration into London are explored through the reshaping and diversification of its interior, street and city spaces. A ‘trans-ethnography’ is pursued across the compendium of micro, meso and macro urban spaces, without reifying one above the other. The ethnographic stretch across intimate, collective and symbolic city spaces serves to connect how the restrictions and circuits of urban migration have different impacts and expressions in these distinctive but interrelated urban localities. The paper argues for a ‘trans-ethnography’ that engages within and across a compendium of urban localities, to understand how accelerated migration and urban ‘super-diversity’ transform the contemporary global city.

