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# Introduction - Memory on my doorstep. Chronicles of the Bataclan neighborhood. Paris 2015-2016

Sarah Gensburger

► **To cite this version:**

Sarah Gensburger. Introduction - Memory on my doorstep. Chronicles of the Bataclan neighborhood. Paris 2015-2016. Memory on my doorstep. Chronicles of the Bataclan neighborhood. Paris 2015-2016, Leuven University Press, pp.13-26, 2019, 9789462701342. halshs-02075002

**HAL Id: halshs-02075002**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-02075002>**

Submitted on 2 Sep 2021

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# Memory on my doorstep

Chronicles of the  
Bataclan neighborhood  
Paris 2015—2016

Sarah Gensburger

Leuven University Press

Memory on My Doorstep  
Chronicles of the Bataclan Neighborhood, Paris 2015–2016



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The book was published with the support of



The Institute for Social  
sciences of Politics, UMR  
7220 – CNRS – Paris  
Nanterre University –  
ENS Paris Saclay



The French National  
Center for Scientific  
Research and its  
special cluster on  
“Researching terrorism”



The research cluster  
Labex Past in Present,  
ANR-11-LABX-0026-01

This book project won a French Voices Award 2017 (Face Foundation)

The photos and chronicles which constitute the central part of this book were first published in French in 2017 by Anamosa who authorized the reproduction of the maps designed by Aurélie Boissière in the present case.

Translation into English: Katharine Throssell

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ISBN 978 94 6270 134 2

e-ISBN 978 94 6166 279 8

D / 2019/ 1869 / 9

NUR: 756

Book Design: DOGMA



*To my children, Norah and Jacob,  
who have been two great research assistants here  
in so many ways, and to their father Renaud,  
for his constant support and love.*



## **In Memoriam**

On January 7, 2015, at noon, two terrorists broke into the offices of French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, at 10 Rue Nicolas Appert in the 11th arrondissement of Paris. They killed eleven people. A few minutes later, as they fled the scene, they shot down a police officer named Ahmed Merabet at close range, in cold blood, outside number 62 Boulevard Richard Lenoir, two blocks away from the Bataclan concert hall.

Barely ten months later, on the night of November 13, 2015, three gunmen rushed toward the Bataclan. They began by shooting the people sitting outside the Bataclan Café at number 50 Boulevard Voltaire before going inside the concert hall itself and opening fire on the crowd. On this same night, other gunmen shot people in several other cafés and restaurants in and around the 11th arrondissement, as well as in the nearby 10th arrondissement, leaving a total of 130 people dead and almost 500 wounded.

These events all took place in the same neighborhood.



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▲ November 14, 2016, Bataclan café. While taking a picture of the new tag, I accidentally realized a self-portrait.

# Introduction

## Between Research and Everyday Life: Photography, Family and Ordinary Conversations

Memory studies is a flourishing field of research that is driven by trauma (Alexander, 2012). Several of the core concepts of the field are built upon the study of the memory of events labeled as “traumatic.” Widespread notions such as “postmemory” (Hirsch, 2012) or “flashbulb memory” (Curci & Luminet, 2017) largely rely, for example, on the conviction that the collective memory dynamics under investigation were first generated by an original trauma. From this perspective, empirical research in the field was initially largely focused on the memory of the Holocaust, although the scope has more recently been broadened to study the memory of other genocides and mass violence. Since 2001, and particularly following 9/11, this approach has also structured several studies on the memorialization of terrorist attacks in contemporary societies.

As a result, a large portion of scholarly work in memory studies considers “traumatic memory” as ontologically distinct from everyday memory (Edkins, 2003). Using psychological concepts developed to treat individual pathologies, this approach seeks to understand the relationships between collective memory and collective trauma, and in so doing pays particular attention to the dynamics of resilience that mean societies do not collapse when they are confronted with mass crimes (Foucault, 2016). They therefore emphasize the historical rupture brought about by the event, rather than the social continuity that exists alongside it.

These studies, which are often rich and productive, and in which I participate, are often conducted using interviews with “witnesses,” as was the case following the 9/11 attacks in America (Clark, Bearman, Ellis & Smith, 2011), and after the Bataclan attacks in France in 2015 (Peschanski & Eustache, 2016). They also draw on the analysis of messages written by citizens anxious to express their concern, whether these are posted on social

media (Oksanen et al., 2018) or left in the streets (Truc, 2018). Terrorist attacks tend to produce an immediate memorialization,<sup>1</sup> in particular through grassroots memorials that develop “spontaneously” at the site of the events (Santino, 2006). The extent of the collective trauma is thus seen as explaining the mountains of messages, flowers, candles, and other objects that then occupy the public space. Conversely, and not without a certain tautology, the amount of tributes (or tweets sent and retweeted) is also seen as an indication of the level of trauma.

However, some of these studies have underlined the importance of the ordinary and everyday memory dynamics that are at the very core of remembering events considered as “traumatic.” Even the flashbulb memory phenomenon itself seems best explained by taking into account everyday interactions and social factors (Talarico & Rubin, 2017; Hirst et al., 2015). Some researchers go one step further and plead for a more ordinary approach to memory dynamics, even in “traumatic contexts” and beyond the sometimes exclusive “resilience approach” (Brown & Hoskins, 2010; Heath-Kelly, 2017). In so doing, these studies do not seek to assess the intensity or the impact of traumatic experience as such, but rather to constitute a heuristic perspective on the ordinary social dynamics that may be at stake in the places and social groups where the event occurred. How can we grasp the social frameworks of memory around a “traumatic event?” How can we learn about the way people remember terrorist attacks through everyday conversations?

There are two main methodological approaches that have been used to try to answer these questions. Part of the existing literature relies on the study of social networks (Browning, 2018), on the organization of focus groups, and on conversation analysis techniques, which are unfortunately “unable to employ a pure form of conversation analysis (which normally involves recording everyday conversations without a researcher present)” (Jackson & Hall, 2016, p. 295). Other studies have dealt with the aftermath of terrorist

1 Immediate memorialization is not, as such, a specificity of social reactions to terrorist attacks. Recent studies have shown that the Holocaust itself gave rise to a similar dynamic (Diner, 2009; Cesarani & Sundquist, 2011), including in France (Perego, 2016; Azouvi, 2012). However, this has only very rarely taken the form of a grassroots memorial, notably because of the geographic dispersal of survivors, and their social marginalization in the post-war period.

attacks from a spatial perspective and through the lens of the neighborhoods where people live (Heath-Kelly, 2016; Tota, 2004). Once again, 9/11 is the focus of most of the studies. Just four days after the attacks, sociologist Randal Collins and his team chose sites for geographical observation, at some geographical distance from the attack,<sup>2</sup> from which they could map and document the demonstrations of national solidarity, particularly the display of American flags (Collins, 2004). This research has demonstrated that the social practices in “reaction” to terrorist attacks cannot be best explained by the differential exposure of individuals to the “trauma,” nor by their different political positions, but rather by their social and geographic situations.<sup>3</sup> There is an imitation effect too; individuals in isolated houses may not fly the flag as readily as those in high-density areas where flags are everywhere and there is an incitation to add one’s own. Other studies have focused more specifically on the towns and neighborhoods that were physically targeted by the attacks, as was the case in Nancy Foner’s investigation of several neighborhoods and social groups in New York, conducted between 2001 and 2003. Although it is entitled *Wounded City* (2005), the book that resulted from this research in fact distances itself from an exclusive approach in terms of collective trauma. Instead, it reveals the different ways in which the attacks have marked people depending on their sociological characteristics and social resources, with a tendency to reinforce pre-existing social differentiation.<sup>4</sup> In the wake of this collective research, Greg Smithsimon single-handedly conducted an in-depth three-year long study of the Battery Park City neighborhood near the World Trade Center, which was physically marked by

- 2 In neighborhoods in Philadelphia, San Diego, and Iowa city and rural towns in Maryland, Iowa and Virginia.
- 3 In addition to the chronicle “Seeing and being seen” in this book, a similar study was conducted in the French town of Brest in the wake of November 13, 2015 (Lagadec & *al.*, 2019).
- 4 For a summary of the results of this research see (Truc, 2019).

the collapse of the towers.<sup>5</sup> This neighborhood is home to a very socio-economically privileged population. As an urban sociologist, Smithsimon thus emphasizes the way in which the confrontation with “traumatic events” ultimately reinforced the community’s existing closure onto itself, and thus intensified opposition against “others” (Smithsimon, 2011).

This book does not discuss 9/11, an extreme case if ever there was one (Tilly, 2004), if only because of the extent of urban destruction it involved (Sagalyn, 2016; Goldberger, 2005). It does however combine a focus on ordinary conversations and geographical observations to constitute a unique and unprecedented perspective on the memorialization of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. It chronicles the day by day evolution of this memorialization in and around the Place de la République in Paris over the year that followed. This public square is a key site in both the history and geography of Paris; even today, this is where many popular demonstrations in the capital begin. At the center of the square there is a 9.5 m high bronze statue of Marianne, the female symbol of the French Republic, built in the 1880s. In her right hand, the statue holds aloft an olive branch, in her left, a tablet engraved with the declaration of human rights. The surrounding Place covers nearly 30,000 square meters and was renovated to be pedestrian-only in 2013. On January 7, 2015, the afternoon of the Charlie Hebdo shootings, the square was filled with people who came together to mourn the events that happened only a few blocks away. The base of the statue was immediately transformed into a gigantic grassroots memorial, that would remain in place until August 2016.

5 As I put the final touches to the manuscript of this book in November 2018, a mass-shooting has left 11 people dead at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. The media documented the state of shock produced by this anti-Semitic attack, not just of the families and the religious community, but also of the residents in the neighborhood of Squirrel Hill, where the synagogue was. See, Bari Weiss, “When a Terrorist Comes to Your Hometown. The Jewish community center became a mourning tent. The synagogue, a crime scene” and “A massacre in the heart of Mr. Rogers’s Neighborhood”, *The New York Times*, respectively, November 2, and October 27, 2018. The community’s struggle with this tragic event will undoubtedly give rise to future research.

Just ten months after January 2015, Paris was attacked again. The cafés targeted by the terrorists in the shootings on November 13, 2015 were in the 10th and 11th districts of the French capital and the Place de la République lies between these two areas. Once again it became the epicenter of commemorative events. The Bataclan concert hall, where ninety people were killed, is situated at number 50 Boulevard Voltaire, almost precisely between the Place and the Charlie Hebdo offices. I live on that same road with my partner and our two children, who were aged seven and four at the time of the attacks.

I am a sociologist of memory, specializing in qualitative and ethnographic research (Gensburger, 2020) and studying public policies of remembrance and their appropriations (Gensburger, 2016; Gensburger & Dybris McQuaid, 2019). By 2015, I had recently begun working on social memory and its localizations, using Paris as a site for my ethnographic fieldwork. One of my research projects at the time was studying the social uses of the more than 2000 commemorative plaques on display on the walls of the city, most of which refer to World War Two events (Gensburger & Lefranc, 2017). After the events of January, and especially November 2015, the phenomena that I was accustomed to studying in places and periods removed from my everyday life, were now unfolding in my own neighborhood, in the places that I visit every day. These places that my family and I passed on a daily basis became the stage for memorialization, for tributes and homages to the victims.

This personal and private experience prompted a new development in my memory research, which included a new form of sociological and public writing. For almost a year, I kept records and took notes on this memory process in the district. I decided to move away from the, then dominant, trauma-driven perspective by instead considering my neighborhood as a living place from which it was possible to pay attention to the social relationships people build with their environment, and to the role that environment plays in memory dynamics. In other words, I wanted to observe the streets and talk with people I met there, considering them as visitors and residents, rather than exclusively as victims confronted by the events. I began to write a sociological chronicle of my neighborhood, first on a daily basis and then weekly, paying attention to the urban and social spaces and linking my everyday life with my ethnographic work. I documented these chronicles with photographs I took of the area and the spaces people were investing with their memory. These sixty chronicles and more than one thousand

pictures chart the impact of the events and the changes it provoked in the neighborhood from a perspective that is both personal and sociological. I published these texts and some of the photos, in French, on a blog which would become the core material of this book.<sup>6</sup> In this introduction, I want to briefly return to the experiment from a methodological perspective and to take stock of this day-to-day ethnographic field work.<sup>7</sup>

Part of this work can be described as autoethnographic. This technique was notably used by Carolyne Ellis to document the post-9/11 experiences of women in similar social positions to herself (2002). It is also worth noting that most autoethnographic studies have been conducted by female researchers, both on this theme and on others.<sup>8</sup> Following the pioneering work of Elizabeth Ettorre, I consider the idea of the self as an object of epistemological intrigue (2016). I therefore decided to situate a large part of my work within my everyday life, both as a Parisian and a mother. I also draw on the situationist methodology of John Urry (2007), and use notes from “genuine” ordinary conversations gleaned in my everyday interactions with family and friends, children’s friends, neighbors, parents at school, teachers and shopkeepers, among others. Over the course of the year, I paid particular attention to when, and in which social situations, people from my life remembered and spoke, in one way or another, of and about the attacks. This methodology enabled me to grasp the vernacular memory of 11/13, at least in this particular group of residents of this area.

This epistemological choice also had ethical implications. Unlike what happens in the anglophone world, social science research in France does not have to be approved by a university ethics committee to proceed. However, I was attentive to two points in particular. Firstly, I made sure that the

6 The blog can be accessed at <https://quartierdubataclan.wordpress.com>. The photos and chronicles were published in the form of a book, in French (Gensburger, 2017). This English edition is the translation of these texts with a new introductory chapter and conclusion.

7 For an initial methodological review, of which this introduction is an additional step, see Gensburger, 2018a.

8 John Tulloch, media specialist, and victim of the 2005 London bombings, whose photograph was printed on the front page of the *Sun*, is an exception to this (2006).

anonymity of anyone I spoke with was protected, even blurring faces in photos when necessary. Secondly, I tried hard to find writing style that was as free as possible from any moral or judgmental perspectives, in order to really give a voice to everyone I interviewed, encountered, interacted with, or simply observed.

Beyond these ethical considerations, my methodological choices also had logistic implications. As Bernadette Barton (yet another female researcher) has clearly stated in relation to her autoethnographic research on her experience among the “Bible Belt gays,” “almost every element of my life became ‘data.’ By this, I mean not only my daily lived experiences with my partner and [in her case gay] friends, but also my interactions with neighbors, students and colleagues. Among the many issues that have emerged during the course of this study is managing the volume of data I have collected” (2011, p. 432). This reflex of collecting conversations — even at the dinner table — has never left me. Since then it has spread to other themes, for example the experience of school groups (that my children are part of) participating in state commemorations for the centenary of the First World War, which, as I write in 2018, is now at its height.

However, the sociological chronicles published here do not rely exclusively on this autoethnographic approach. They also draw on more traditional methodologies. Between December 2015 and September 2016, I conducted around ninety field interviews with people at the site of grassroots memorials. When trying to engage people who stopped close to the site of the attacks, I often began with the introductory question “Do you often come to this part of Paris?” This question is slightly different from the ones regularly used by journalists and some colleagues studying these topics, such as “do you often come to mourn here?” or “did you lose someone in the attacks?”, and this alternative formulation allowed me to collect slightly different material. This methodological framing meant that I could identify some of the commemorative practices I was observing as ordinary, often embedded in mundane acts of professional, economic and social mobility. Moreover, this methodological choice enabled the expression of multiple narratives around the event. These narratives were no longer limited to trauma and suffering, but also exposed how the site of a tragic event continued to function in its everyday, and socially differentiated, capacity (Heath-Kelly, 2016).

As well as engaging with people, both visitors and inhabitants, I also silently observed their behavior and above all listened to their conversations,

because most of the people who stopped by the sites were not alone. These shared visits were silent at first, in keeping with ritualized mourning practices such as the “minute of silence” (Brown, 2012; Sánchez-Carretero, 2011). But observers also talked together, sometimes about what message they would write. Taking notes, and photos of these ordinary group interactions while observing the sites of the terrorist attacks enabled me to inscribe the messages left there within the group dynamics that led to their writing. Most of the written messages denounce the “horror” and express the writer’s “pain” in an apparently consensual way. However, when we observe and listen to the group conversations that prompted these writings, it appears that the initial intentions were often far more controversial, political, and hotly debated (Antichan, 2016). For example, some writers may have at first planned to leave a message denouncing the participation of the French state in wars in the Middle East, or on the contrary, to stigmatize Muslims as an ethnic group. However, in most cases, the group dynamics I observed eventually led people to write a far more consensual message. They focused on praising peaceful coexistence or celebrating Paris. Here paying attention to ordinary conversations in the city allowed me to go far beyond the consensual surface of memorialization and its conceptualization as “resilient.”

It quickly became apparent that what was at stake in most of the scenes I was observing were the differing interpretations of the events on the one hand, and the multiple pretensions of ownership over public space, on the other. In the chronicles that follow, the readers will discover many observations of this struggle over the appropriation of sites related to the attacks, their memorialization and the public reactions to them in the Parisian urban space.

One reason I was able to document this dimension was because, in addition to listening to conversations, drawing on field interviews and observations of memorial sites, I also used photography as a research tool (Fraenkel, 2002; Sturken, 2007). Since I was trying to pay attention to the mundane traces of memory in the public space, I immediately decided to take pictures of what I was seeing. This field practice provided the possibility to postpone the description and analysis of what I was seeing, and to return to it long after it had occurred. Using this method, I was able to document the tributes and commemorative material that had an ephemeral life in the streetscape. Moreover, the use of photography enabled me to construct a situated gaze on the memorialization of these attacks. As many colleagues

have demonstrated (Pink, Sumartojo, Lupton & LaBond, 2017; Tolia-Kelly & Rose, 2012), photographs clearly constitute a very relevant material in working from a topographic perspective. Over the course of one year I took more than one thousand pictures. They helped me to keep track of things and served as a data resource through which I could filter my critical ethnographic analysis.

Indeed, overlapping with this analysis of memorialization was the progression of the Occupy movement in Paris. From March 31, 2016, the Place de la République was no longer exclusively a place for grassroots memorialization. It also became the hub of the social movement of occupation against the reform of labor laws in France; a movement that called itself “Nuit Debout” (the Night Rises). “Nuit Debout” marked a new stage in the dispute over public space, and it also revealed more broadly the fragmentation of the memory of the Paris attacks. Thanks to the photos I had taken, I was able to put this new protest movement over labor laws into a perspective with a topography of memory, “between social activism and commemoration” (Santino, 2011, p. 97). My use of photography as a research tool enabled me to trace a strong continuity between the memorialization of the attacks and the “Nuit Debout” movement, documenting how each social activity occupied different parts of the Place de la République, their temporal use of the space through the day, and the types of people involved. The side of the Place closest to the 11th district was always occupied by the protesters, from left-wing activists to advocates for international causes, and the other side, by representatives of state and its power, from policemen to the official “Memory Oak” inaugurated by the President in January 2016.

In addition, since my methodological starting point was not the 2016 social movement, but the physical site where it took place, I was able to make sense of the way in which other past events were evoked in the place de la République, including references to other terrorist attacks around the world, from Brussels to Orlando, but also references to the Paris Commune (the 1871 revolutionary movement), the First and Second World Wars, including the Collaboration by the French state, and also the figure of Anne Frank. The massacre of October 17, 1961 (when French police threw Algerian people protesting the Algerian war into the Seine River) and May 1968 were also mentioned. This photographic gaze led me to establish that the memorialization of the attacks was possibly conflictual and political rather than consensual and informed only by the shock of trauma. In more general,

reciprocal terms, it provided a new perspective in confirming that memory issues play a significant and dynamic role in contemporary political debates and in the public forum of French contemporary society. References to resilience sometimes “conceal all the microcosms and complex politics of the event” (Heath-Kelly, 2017).

Finally, putting this research experimentation into practice was facilitated by the fact that, being the mother of two young children, my son and daughter accompanied me for much of the fieldwork. Some recent studies have taken stock of the methodological benefits and limitations of involving children in ethnography (Allerton, 2016). In my case, it was not a conscious choice but more of a secondary consequence of my decision to embed this research in my everyday life. At first, the presence of my children seemed a burden rather than a benefit. When I was in the field, I had to keep one eye on them as well as on my observations and do the “care-work” Danielle Drozdewski and Daniel F. Robinson describe in their personal reflections on their own experience with children (2015). I initially felt that I was not fully available to conduct the observation as I would have liked because they were with me. However, my children’s presence turned out to be very fruitful. They ended up participating fully in the study.

Indeed, as Greg Smithsimon experienced in his own fieldwork at Battery Park, having children can help facilitate contact with strangers (2011). But, more importantly, their views were very helpful because of the way children tend to “normalize” what they see, including when they are faced with violence (Dygregnov and al., 2016). Drawing on her experience with primary school children in Argentina, Diana Milstein says, for example, children’s “views provided distance from what one could term the ‘official conscience’ pervading adult opinion. This distance was possible, among other reasons, because the children had not completely incorporated some of the conventions that made up adult discourse in a certain time and place” (2010: 1). Indeed, children, especially young children like mine, are likely to express differently socialized and framed opinions and feelings. Refracting these everyday scenes through the eyes of my daughter and son helped me connect with the everyday setting and remove the more immediate tendency I had, as a sociologist, to focus on an exclusively traumatic reading of the attacks and their aftermath. Several of my children’s remarks and reactions resonated strongly with me. On many occasions, for them, making sense of the most dramatic events relied on very mundane social habits. My memories of

them witnessing and processing the social interactions in our neighborhood meant that the everydayness of method became even more salient for me.

References to the attacks and remembrance of it were contingent on the social situations my children were in. My son, for example, apparently considers police officers, tourists, and journalists to be ordinary figures on our streets now; this new face of our neighborhood since November 2015 has become completely “normal” for him. For example, and as the reader will discover in some of the following pages, on Saturday June 4, 2016, we were waiting for the “Tropical Carnival” parade, which is supposed to come down the Boulevard du Temple, one street away from ours coming from the Place de la République. Originally created by the Caribbean community in Paris to showcase their heritage, the carnival has in recent years included many cultures from all around the world. At the head of the parade, for security reasons that were obvious to me, there were around thirty police officers in combat uniform. My son turned toward me with a huge smile and said “*Maman*, you didn’t say there’d be a police carnival too! That’s so cool!”. In his eyes the social situation was quite distinct from and without reference to the attacks. However, a year later, in December 2017, he evoked the memory of the attack very clearly while playing Monopoly with his sister and me. He was looking for a situation where someone could leave the game without losing, so that he could keep playing with his sister (according to the rules, my bankruptcy should have brought an end to the game). He clearly mobilized the reference to the terrorist attacks, saying to me “imagine that you were killed in an attack in the street — then you would be out of the game!” (without being bankrupt). Beyond the dichotomy between trauma and resilience, and between forgetting and memory, for my kids, as well as for other people I speak with in my everyday life, there are social situations and interactions in which it is meaningful to recall the attacks and other where it is not.

In other words, researching memory on my doorstep meant shedding light on the existence of social continuity, beyond the rupture created by the violence of the event, and stressing the fact that this continuity, too, participated in the social frameworks in which the memory of the event has taken form. Ten years after 9/11, Joshua Woods used large-scale survey data to ask “was America ‘a country united’ after 9/11?” before concluding that “according to social scientists, the answer is yes and no” (2012, p. 42). However, if we were to ask, “is France a united country after November 13,” based on the research in this book, it is necessary to reformulate the question. Instead, we

should ask, “who reacted to the event, how, when, and in what situation(s)?” and “how do individuals, in their different social situations, remember and discuss it?”

Of course, autoethnography (Delamont, 2009), or even ethnography (Truc, 2019), are not enough to provide systematic answers to these questions. The results of a questionnaire-based survey on the memorialization of the November 13 attacks, conducted with a representative sample of the French population (Hoibian et al., 2018), already provides a useful perspective on the field data published in this book. It emphasizes to what extent the attacks in Paris left a mark on many people in France. But at the same time, it also shows how the most disadvantaged socio-economic categories (low income and insecure employment situations) seem to be less concerned by the memory of the events than the population as a whole, and particularly so when compared to more privileged social groups. Conversely, this study shows that young adults aged between 25 and 39 years old — the age group of most of the victims of November 13 — seem to carry their memory more than others. In addition to a reading structured around trauma, as justified and important as that is, understanding the memory of these attacks also means identifying their social frameworks (Halbwachs, 1925) and their situations of enunciation (Pollak, 1993). This must be done far from the too often sterile oppositions between memory and forgetting (Connerton, 2008, Draaisma, 2015) or between public and private space (Doss, 2010).

On Saturday January 7, 2017, my son invited a dozen of his friends to our home on Boulevard Voltaire, one block from the place de la République. It was a somewhat belated party for his fifth birthday. Several children arrived late. “So, sorry, there’s another demonstration at République,” the parents said, one by one. “The neighborhood is blocked off, I don’t know what’s going on.” “There’s something organized on the square.” It was two years to the day since the shooting at Charlie Hebdo had taken place just streets away from my house. The police had set up roadblocks so that a commemorative ceremony could be held, organized by the French Association for Victims of Terrorism. Not one of my visitors seemed to see the significance of the date or make the connection with the traffic problems — which have been systematic whenever there is an official anniversary or a state visit in this part of the 11th district over the last two years.

We might conclude that the residents of the neighborhood have repressed the events that took place on their doorsteps, extra proof of the collective

trauma produced by the attacks of January and November 2015. We might also hypothesize that there are social situations that are more conducive to reliving the emotion of this violent past, and others that are less so, or which might even make such social evocations of it impossible or insignificant, without necessarily involving repression. There is also a third hypothesis. There is no shared commemorative calendar or collective interpretation of these events. The fact that commemorations were held every day in the neighborhood between Thursday 5 and Sunday 8 January 2017, organized by various political figures or community actors, resulted in a kind of dilution of the temporal anchorage and signification of remembrance for those living in the area. For them, these repeated ceremonies came to be part of the everyday streetscape. They attended them inadvertently, on the way to the bakery, or taking the children to school.

The chronicles published in this book aim to explore the coexistence of these different dynamics at work in the construction of the memory of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris.<sup>9</sup>

- 9 I made the decision to publish the chronicles as they were written, as a way of documenting the research process as it happened, with the hope that they might be used in the teaching of sociological methods. In addition to this introductory chapter, which is both theoretical and methodological, a concluding chapter has also been added to look more closely at the book's contribution to memory studies, to engage with the most recent scientific literature as well as to retrace what has become of the memorialization of the 2015 Paris attacks since I finished writing these chronicles.