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Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews **May 2012** vol. 41 no. 3 364-365**Locating Migration: Rescaling Cities and Migrants**

Locating Migration: Rescaling Cities and Migrants, edited by [Nina Glick Schiller](#), [Ayşe Çağlar](#). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011. 279pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780801476877.

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Globalization impacts urban dynamics. Some cities more than others have taken advantage of globalization to become real poles of economic and cultural development or to reinforce their position as major world cities. Other cities have had more difficulties in jumping into the new global economy and are still struggling with the ghosts of their industrial pasts. Between those two extreme modes of city change, all cities are trying to secure their place in transnational networks in order to grasp the benefits of globalization. But globalization is also related to the diversification of migration patterns worldwide and to the emergence of immigrant transnational practices connecting the places of residence and the place of origin.

Urban studies have examined extensively the ways in which globalization was forcing cities to change considerably, but often they did not pay enough attention to the role of migrants as agents of urban change. They have been at best considered to be a part of the city human landscape. On the contrary, migration studies have documented at length the new migration patterns emerging as a result of globalization, and have also produced a vast empirical knowledge on immigrant transnational practices and modes of incorporation in local contexts. But generally, the city is just considered as a given, as the place or fixed framework in which integration processes and transnational practices can be observed.

According to the editors of this collection of papers, anthropologist Nina Glick Schiller and socio-anthropologist Ayşe Çağlar, a dialogue is missing between urban studies and migration studies in order to understand and explain the role of migrants as agents of city dynamics in the global era. The aim of their book is to propose a new approach to migrant transnational practices and modes of incorporation based on cities as the starting point for comparisons. To do so, they combine urban studies literature and migration studies literature to construct their theoretically-inspired comparative agenda based on the rejection of methodological nationalism.

They identify five ways in which migrants contribute to urban and regional restructuring. First, migrants as workers often play important roles in fostering the competitiveness of the city's economy. Second, migrants are historical agents of city development. An historical perspective is necessary to better understand the reciprocal links between city change and migration. Third, migrants are often in the middle of urban restructuring processes stimulated by neoliberalism. They are, for instance, key agents in the battles around "gentrification." Fourth, migrants facilitate more or less voluntary privatization of services at the local level, with self-organization. Finally, migrants also participate in the local struggles against neoliberalism and they contribute to attempts to develop alternative social visions of the city and urban life. Most of the 12 contributions to this volume deal with one or more of these ways to look at migrants as agents of urban change in the global era. The result is an exiting volume that pushed forward analysis of the links between city developments and migration.

However, the book also inspires more constructively critical remarks. First, while the idea to combine various sources of literature is excellent and promising, the added value of the "scaling" vocabulary imported from urban studies and geography is not obvious. The book would have been just as strong without entering the debate about scales and scaling. Second, the book sometimes opens an already open door. For sometime now parts of migration studies have tried to think beyond national models of incorporation by looking, as this book rightly recommends doing, at the regional and city variations. The methodological nationalism locating migrant studies in the nation-state framework remains important, but the mere idea of the existence of national models of integration has been seriously challenged in the past decade through notable city studies and comparisons. Third, focusing on the city and urban dynamics does not necessarily imply no longer paying attention to the state. Cities are part of

nation-states as well as of transnational urban networks. National legislations remain important to make sense of the city repositioning. Focusing on the city and moving beyond methodological nationalism by dropping the state level altogether is problematic and risky. That risk is often taken in the present volume. Finally, it is a pity that a volume which so strongly argues in favor of a city comparative approach does not present comparisons between cities. Most of the chapters are predominantly city or regional case-studies.

Despite these remarks, this collective volume is a valuable addition to the literature on both urban development and immigrant incorporation. It suggests a promising agenda for future research by also promoting a very positive and useful transatlantic and transdisciplinary dialogue on urban and integration issues.