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MIGRANT INCORPORATION AND CITY SCALE: TOWARDS A THEORY OF LOCALITY IN MIGRATION STUDIES

The impacts of migration on the restructuring of locality remains neglected by both migration scholars and urban geographers, although the importance of global forces in structuring the flows of people, identities, subjectivities, and cultural production and consequent alterations in a time/space continuum is widely acknowledged. Yet migrants both experience and contribute to the forces of integration and fragmentation, as they participate in the rescaling of urban economies, politics and governance and the reshaping of geographies of representation. Consequently any analysis of the restructuring of urban social fabrics will be incomplete without considering the impact of migration and migrants.

Keywords: migration, incorporation, cities, rescaling, transnational social fields

In this paper, we call on scholars who study the departure, settlement, and transnational incorporation of migrants to theorize locality. For migration scholars to theorize locality, they must do much more than acknowledge the social construction of space. They must address the unequal global processes including migration that are transforming economies, institutions of power, and the patterning of social life in specific places. Migration scholars such as Castles and Miller (2003) and Massey et al. (1998) have noted the relationships between the global penetration of capital, and concomitant economic restructuring and movements of people. However, researchers have paid too little attention to just how specific localities are differentially affected. And they have failed to explore the implications for migrants of the continuing reconfiguration of the wealth and power of different cities.
in relationship to global restructuring. To understand the contexts of settlement, migration scholars must examine the situating of each locality of settlement within rapid flows of capital and changing hierarchies of power.

There is a scholarship on which to draw. A set of urban researchers has been studying and debating the contemporary restructuring of localities within global hierarchies of power. However, they have yet to address the role that migration plays in the constitution of place. To understand the local dynamics through which each city responds to the ongoing global processes of rescaling, scholars of urban rescaling must examine the role of migrants in each city. Neither migration or urban studies has had much to say about the relationship of specific places to migrant experiences and identities and the way the different positioning of locality contributes to variations in migrant experience.

Consequently, this paper calls for a new research focus that joins together migration and urban studies. This new focus would rectify the failure of scholars of migrant incorporation to describe the restructuring and reinventing of urban life through transnational processes. It would also redress the failure of urban studies scholars to assess the role played by migrants and their local and transnational practices of incorporation in the rescaling and restructuring of cities. In this particular paper, we contribute to this much needed field of scholarship by reviewing the issues at hand, including the conceptual barriers that have impeded the theorization of locality in migration studies. We also highlight the theories of scale, rescaling, and urban restructuring that can be invaluable in the reconstitution of migration studies that we advocate. The concept of scale, as developed by political geographers, refers to the processual embedding of urban structures, lives, and policies in a range of political economic hierarchies. It allows us to theorize the dynamic contemporary restructuring of capital as it takes place within space and constantly reconstructs importance and global reach of specific places.

**Conceptual Barriers**
There are several conceptual barriers that stand in the way of theorizing location in migration studies. Among them are:

1. the long standing tendency of migration researchers to build theories about migrant settlement and incorporation from research about migration in specific paradigmatic cities;
2. the channeling of discussion about global processes and urban restructuring into a scholarship of global and gateway cities;
3. the pervasive use of the ethnic group as the basic unit of analysis and object of study.
We will examine each of these barriers in turn. Each in their own way reflects a methodological nationalism that is deeply embedded in migration studies and in most urban studies. Methodological nationalism is an orientation that approaches the study of social processes and historical processes as if they are contained within the borders of individual nation states (Martins 1974; Smith 1983; Light et al. 1999; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002 a, b; Beck 2000). Nation states are conflated with societies. Some writers prefer to label this approach a “container” theory of society to highlight the fact that most social theorists, including Durkheim, Weber, and Parsons, have contained their concept of society within the territorial and institutional boundaries of the nation-state (Beck 2000; Urry 2000). However, we prefer the term methodological nationalism because it emphasizes the political implications of the container notion of society and makes clear why an affinity for the nation-state is so deeply embedded in migration scholarship.

The very problematic of migration studies is shaped by the conflation of the nation-state with society. Much of migration scholarship has developed to address the threat that migrants are believed to bring to their new country of settlement, which is defined as “the host society”. Because the nation-state is equated with society for methodological nationalists, the social fabric and the integrity of social institutions and the cultural norms that support them are seen as contained within state borders. Through this logic, the fundamental social division becomes the opposition between natives, who are assumed to uniformly share common social norms, and foreigners. Coming from what are thought not only as distinctively different states but also societies, foreigners are portrayed as carrying with them the particular distinctive common national norms. In this paradigm, migrants are intruders on the shared and homogenous cultural and social space contained within the borders of the nation-state in which they are settling. Much of mainstream migration theory consistently disregards both the social and cultural divisions within each nation-state and the experiences, norms, and values migrants and natives share because they are embedded in social, economic, and political processes, networks, movement and institutions that extend across state borders (Gordon 1964).

Not all currents of social science theory reflected the orientation of methodological nationalism; Marxist, world system, and world society theorists have argued differently. However, it was not until the 1990s that mainstream social science presented an alternative paradigm in the form of globalization studies. The word globalization took on many meanings and represented both a paradigmatic change in units of analysis in many disciplines and a particular narrative on world history. At the heart of the new scholarship was a concern for a process of global economic and
institutional restructuring that began in the 1970s and had implications for people’s lives everywhere. Of central importance in this restructuring was the emergence of flexible processes of capital accumulation that were less dependent on national economic structures (Harvey 1989). Not surprisingly, given that its basic paradigm was rooted in methodological nationalism, most scholars studying migrant settlement in European or US cities did not do more than give lip service to the new globalization studies. One exception was the growth of the research on transnational migration. But even these researchers did not address the local/global nexus in a way that contributed to a theory of locality and its contemporary transformations.

There is an irony here because from its origins in the Chicago School so much of scholarship of migrant incorporation in both Europe and the United States has been situated in a particular city and enmeshed in a study of locality. Because of this history, the scholarship on migrants in cities, which crosses many disciplines, does offer a rich foundation on which to build the theorization of locality. US historiography offers plentiful material on the settlement of immigrants in a particular city (Cinel 1985; Handlin 1972; Lamphere 1992; Warner and Srole 1945). Recently revisionist historians in Europe have documented the migration histories that built European cities and industries (Moch 2003). Most of this research has focused on cities of settlement but some historians have examined why certain localities became significant sending areas, while others sent few people abroad (Cinel 1991; Chen 1990). Through historical studies of the broad economic, social, and political processes glossed as the industrial revolution, we have come to understand the growth and transformation of particular cities from Birmingham, England to Mumbai, India. Both our knowledge of the local and its global production is enhanced (Henry et al. 2002; Chattopadhyay 2006).

Yet when used for theory building about migrant incorporation, the specificity of the local has been set aside. Instead studies of migrant settlement in specific cities have been used to build general theories of migrant incorporation. These theories are then applied to migration processes in an entire country or even worldwide. This problem is as old as US migration studies. Although researchers of the Chicago school mapped the specific urban ecology of Chicago and placed their discussion of stages of ethnic ghettoization and linear assimilation in that context, their place-based concepts were used as a general theory of migrant incorporation. In subsequent generations of research, concepts developed from research in specific places was used by others without regard to the initial context.

In another tradition of urban migration research, researchers reduced their scrutiny of local context to a limited set of variables such as unemployment
rate, the “regulatory regime”, or the degree of “spatial segregation” (Koopmans and Stratham 2000; Musterd and Ostendorf 2005). Studies conducted with locality-specific variables developed in particular cities have been used to build concepts of ethnic enclaves or ethnic entrepreneurship, which have become foundational to more general theories about migrant settlement (Portes and Böröcz 1989). For example, Logan, Alba, and Zhang (2002) tell us that “studies of European immigrant groups have long emphasized the importance of occupational niches in which newcomers could find ready, if poorly paid, employment in businesses run by their compatriots”. They then use historical data from three studies of migrant settlement to argue for a concept of ethnic niche as a mode of settlement. On the basis of their examples – all describing research in New York City – they proceed to make sweeping generalities about patterns of migrant incorporation.

Some scholars both in Europe and the United States have responded to this failure to note the significance of locality by specifically raising the question of the “city as context” (Bretell 2003; see also Çağlar 2001, 2005 a, b, 2006; Ellis 2001; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Goode and Schneider 1994; Leeds 1980; Soysal 2001; Straßburger et al. 2000; Yalçın-Heckmann 1997). By the 1990s, a handful of migration researchers in Europe had begun to trace relationships between the size, significance, or political configuration of particular cities in which migrants were settling and the pattern of incorporation of these migrants (Bommes and Radke 1996; Koopmans and Stratham 2000; Rex 1996; Schiffauer 1999; Schmitter Heisler 1998). This work complemented the increasing number of ethnographies, especially in the United States, that describe migrants settling in suburban, rural, or non-gateway cities (Lamphere 1992; Holtzmann 2000; Koltyk 1997; Mahler 1995; Bretell 2005). However, many of these ethnographies do not address the dynamic restructuring of capital that is repositioning localities of settlement within fields of power and bringing migrants to settle in increasing numbers outside major cities. Migrant settlement outside of gateways cities is generally referred to as a new development, ignoring the earlier periods of globalization in which migrants in industrializing countries settled in mill and mining towns, as well as in major urban centers. With the exception of the global cities literature and a very few scholars of transnational migration, studies of particular cities have rarely examined the relationship between the positioning of the city within broader domains of financial, political, and cultural power and the trajectories of migrant departure and settlement (for the global cities approach see for example Sassen 1991, 2000; Eade 1997; Knox and Taylor 1995; for transnational migration see Glick Schiller 2005b; Rouse 1992; Smith 2001).
In short, while passing mention of globalization has become fashionable, with a few exceptions such as Jan Rath’s (2000) call to heed the broader context, there still is little attention paid to the synergy between the global processes that are restructuring cities and the incorporative processes linking migrants to localities. Instead, migration scholars left the study of the intersection of migrant incorporation and globalization to those writing specifically under the rubric of global cities.

The global cities perspective had its roots in research conducted in the 1980s on the international division of labor, the mobility of labor and capital in response to the global dynamics of industrial financing, and the growth of informal sector of urban employment (Nash and Fernandez Kelly 1983; Sassen-Koob 1984). From this base, scholars turned to the study of migrant settlement and transnational connection within the restructured labor markets of global cities (Sassen 1988; Eade 1997). Researchers noted the growth of an hour glass urban economy with an affluent set of businesses based on the facilitation of knowledge, fashion, culture, marketing, and financial industries and a low wage sector of non-unionized service workers and small sweat-shops. The low wage sector, it was generally agreed, attracted and depended on immigrant labor. Mesmerized by global cities, researchers failed to study the participation of migrants in the dynamics of other cities, whose economies, governance, and cultural life were also being affected by global reconstitution of capital.

Saskia Sassen’s book *The Global City* (1991), which used the examples of New York, London, and Tokyo, became the most cited example of a wave of global cities scholarship. Those who adopted the term argued that a small set of cities had begun to operate in domains that were in many ways unmoored from the nation-states in which they were geographically located. This transformation reflected the processes of restructuring of capitalism in the context of contemporary globalization, the mobility of labor and the dynamics of global capital flows. The global cities approach highlighted the entanglements and structural similarities of particular kind of cities among themselves rather than the nations in which they are located (Abu-Lughod and Lipman 1995; Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Friedmann 1986, 1995; King 1991, 1996; Sassen 2000). The global cities hypothesis and the literature it generated had many strengths and weaknesses and it is not our purpose here to add to the debate about the utility of the concept (Samers 2002). Instead, we assess the contribution of the global cities literature – and the related concept of gateway city – to migration studies.

The global cities hypothesis countered the two equally unsustainable premises of the first wave of globalization scholars. In one approach, global flows of capital, media, ideas, technology, and people transformed
the local into a single homogenous world-wide domain (Friedman 2000). In the other, local factors shaped the penetration of global forces so that the outcome produced only a multitude of heterogeneous local responses rather than any global trends (Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1992).² The global cities perspective intervened and disrupted this flattened local – global view by emphasizing that the intensification of flexible capital accumulation was accompanied by the continuation and heightening of the uneven and localized character of capitalist investment. By emphasizing the uneven spatialization of global capitalism, the global cities perspective made clear that much more was at stake than a diversity of experiences of the local. It analyzed the restructuring of nation-state’s relationships to territory and initiated discussions of the ways the global production of economic disparity was experienced locally.

The global cities scholars made the discontinuity of spaces within the nation-state the focal point of their analysis. They argued that despite their different national contexts, certain metropoles occupied a particular and shared positioning within the hierarchies of power and the circuits of global capital flow. This positioning made these metropoles closer to each other in terms of their socio-economic and financial structures, functions and institutional capabilities than to other cities within the same national territory. Global cities scholars hypothesized that the growing disjuncture between geographical and social spaces and the changing landscape of social, economic, and cultural proximities were all outcomes of the uneven spatiality of globalization (Friedmann and Wolf 1982; Friedmann 1986; King 1991, 1996; Knox and Taylor 1995; Sassen 1991). They emphasized that global forces take particular forms in particular places and affect the dynamic configuration of specific localities, including processes of migrant settlement and transnational connection. However, only the effect of global forces in certain cities designated global were researched from this perspective. The perspective that the global cities researchers brought to the study of spatialization and the configuration of localities was never extended to other urban contexts including the many cities world wide that were marginalized and forced to fiercely compete for capital investment on a very uneven playing field. Consequently, despite its contributions, global cities research impeded the systematic development of a theorization of locality in migration studies and a comparative perspective on migrant incorporation in cities.

In fact, when urban researchers in the 1990s initiated a discourse about capital and industrial restructuring, they failed to connect the changes that they acknowledged were taking place in cities in relationship to global forces to an analysis of modes of migrant incorporation. Hence a genre of urban
research developed that tended to categorize cities rather than analyze of
the relationship between restructuring and variations in migrant settlement
and transnational connection. Certain cities were called “post-industrial”
(Waldinger 1996:4), “cities of high finance” (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr
“capitalist” (Smith and Feagin 1987), or “new global” (Sassen and Portes
1993). The categories had little actual analytical strength. Just which cities
were encompassed by these terms or why was not clear. Sometimes the
researchers applied their categories to contemporary cities everywhere,
other times to US cities to highlight a US wide restructuring, while on
other occasions the units of analysis were cities that had been designated
global by other authors. Many of the categorizers noted the emergence of
a dual labor economy as a result of the restructuring of cities and noted
the synergy between migration flows and emergence of high and low wage
urban sectors.

For example, Scott and Soja (1996:vii–viii) argued:

In contrast to the classical case of Chicago or Detroit in the interwar
years, the structure of Los Angeles is no longer characterized in term of
a (numerically) dominant and relatively affluent blue-collar working
class but is deeply divided into two distinctive segments, as represented
on the one side by an upper tier of highly paid managers, professionals,
and technician and on the other side by a lower tier composed of low-
skill, low wage workers, the majority of whom are immigrants, many
of them undocumented.

They also acknowledged:

The restructuring of Los Angeles is part of a global restructuring
process affecting everyone, everywhere in the world, albeit unevenly,
during the closing decade of the twentieth century during the closing
decade of the twentieth century ... [LA is a] particularly revealing
place from which to understand and interpret global phenomena of
urbanization and regional development in relation to broadly based
transformations of contemporary capitalist society (Scott and Soja
1996:2–3).

In these statements, the failures of the 1990s wave of urban typology are
visible. There is an acknowledgement of uneven global restructuring and
yet a claim that somehow Los Angeles is paradigmatic of the “post-modern
metropolis” (Scott and Soja 1996:viii). Within this effort to generate a new urban paradigm migration remains undertheorized and the relationship between the scalar positioning of the city globally and the pathways of incorporation of migrants was not addressed.3

In short, the urban research of the 1990s, whether it was based in a global cities hypothesis or simply described aspects of migrant life in “post-industrial cities” had significant weaknesses that prevented scholars from theorizing the relationship between locality and migrant incorporation. Global city studies, by focusing on economic and political restructuring in one small set of cities, left a research void in the null category of non-global city. Consequently, many scholars assumed that global cities were the only type of cities that were increasingly decoupled from the nation-state and experienced a consequent altered relationship to their respective states. Without comparisons to other cities, global cities researchers assumed that their observations about the institutions and practices of migrants applied only to the cities they had designated as global. For example, Dürrschmidt (1997), working in London, argued that the transnational networks of residents can be understood as a mark of a global city, without addressing the comparative data that described transnational networks as a common feature of migrant settlement everywhere. Similarly, Sassen (1991) underscored the crucial links between cities as key players in global networks of finance capital and the development of a low-wage service sector dependent on low-paid migrants. But low-wage sectors dependent on migrant labor are part of the economies of cities of different scalar positioning including those with little economic or political power. In their founding assumptions, global cities researchers left no conceptual space for the exploration of relationships between cities’ differential positioning within global hierarchies of power and variations in the opportunity structure that particular cities present to migrants.

Meanwhile, researchers exploring cities that were not classified as global continued to frame their findings only within the parameters of national policies. The global forces that were restructuring all localities were ignored. Only occasionally did researchers working in cities of smaller scale examine variations in local opportunity structures as they affected migrant incorporation (Bommes and Radtke 1996). In the few cases in which the opportunity structures of different cities were examined in efforts to link different structures to different pathways of migrant incorporation, the cities compared were situated within a single nation-state.4

In addition, methodological nationalism continued to be a problem, despite the global cities literature and the acknowledgement of global forces by most urban researchers. Aside from the global cities researchers, urban
scholars continued to use particular cities to generalize to the nation-state in which they were located. By assuming that the nation-state functioned as a homogenous society, urban researchers were free to generalize from their study situated in a specific “post-Fordist, post-industrial city” to urban life in an entire nation-state. The relationship between the city and the nation-state was conceptualized as a metonymic one with the locality viewed simply as a container of national processes. The city could serve as both object of study and sample of national life.5

Using the same logic, migrants’ experiences in a particular city have become exemplary of processes of migrant incorporation throughout the nation-state. Cities within one national territory have been treated as interchangeable from the perspective of migrants. Migrants were studied in a particular urban context, but the contextual factors shaping the practices and social ties of migrants in that specific locality were assumed to be similar throughout the state. Consequently, migrants – and usually it is migrants approached as a specific ethnic group (say Turks, Pakistanis, Cubans) – have been studied in a particular city and most often in a city in which the concentration of this particular ethnic group has been the highest (such as Berlin, Manchester, or Miami respectively), but the study becomes the study of Turks in Germany or the study of Pakistanis in Britain (Çaglar 1995; Heckmann 2003; Mandell 1990; Stepick and Portes 1993; White 1999; Werbner 1990, 2002).

This kind of spatial indifference to other than the national scale in migration scholarship extends into comparative studies. The study of migrant settlement in particular cities has been utilized to compare settlement processes and social ties of migrants in different states. Studies of Turkish migrants in specific cities – namely Berlin and Paris – have entered the literature as representing differences between the Turkish experience in the entire nation-states of Germany and France (Amiraux 2001; Kastoryano 2002).

Although it is totally contradictory, this homogenization of specific localities as representative of a uniform and bounded national terrain can be found in the “gateway cities” research. The term gateway is applied to cities containing a combination of historical and opportunity factors that attract a large proportions of new migrants (Clark 2004; Ley 2003). Yet despite their particular features, migration scholars often have used data from gateway cities to discuss patterns of migrant settlement in various nation-states. The list of gateway cities also included cities such as Berlin, Amsterdam, and Miami, which entered the rank of cities used to study migrant incorporation and to test theories about urban enclaves, ethnic businesses, and ethnic and “transnational communities”. Findings from research in these cities were
taken as generally applicable for understanding processes of immigrant settlement in the entire nation-state, disregarding the unique factors that make these cities gateways. In this approach, the urban context ceased to be a variable in migration scholarship. For example, Berlin, which is not a global city, but definitely a city of initial migrant settlement and clustering – a gateway city – acquired a stable place within this scholarship (Kaya 2002; Soysal 2001; Baumann et al. 2004). The way migrants organized their lives, their economic, religious and cultural activities and practices in Berlin became the model to conceptualize migrant economic, social, religious and cultural incorporation in Germany.

Sometimes gateway cities are the same cities that other researchers prefer to call global – London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles. When using data from these cities gateway cities scholars have studiously ignored the fact that other researchers have argued that global cities were relatively disarticulated from the nation-state in which they were geographically located. In all these studies, locality is first highlighted and then put aside in matters of theory.

A disregard for the significance of locality is also present in then new transnational migration literature that developed as part of globalization studies (Basch et al. 1994; Portes et al. 1999; Levitt 2001; Vertovec 1999; Faist 2000). While lip service is paid to the uneven character of globalization, most transnational migration scholars have remained strikingly indifferent to specific locations within the state territory. They have not addressed the global – local nexus as it constitutes and transforms specific localities of departure, settlement, and connection through migration. Much of transnational migration research disregards rescaling processes and fails to theorize either the changing nature of the localities of departure or settlement. From this perspective transnational migration scholars and the migration scholarship, which they have criticized, share a common ground. In much of the literature there is a ready and unnoted transition in the narrative between research done in specific sending localities or cities of settlement to generalities about the entire sending or receiving state. The networks of migrants that actually link people in specific localities are transformed through this narrative into a bounded transnational community that stretches between homeland and new land. This bounded social space is often conceptualized as uniformly linked by migrant networks. The way in which different opportunity structures within the space may shape the possibilities for transnational connection, their type, saliency, or frequency is not explored. In addition, the place-specific character of migrant networks and the way in which specific locality may shape relationships beyond the national have been neglected to a great extent.

Instead, the sending and the receiving states have been approached as if
there were equality and homogeneity between regions and localities within a national territory. State policies and the related opportunity structures are often assumed to have the same affect on migrant settlement in all localities within a nation-state. Similarly, the sending state’s activities towards migrants have rarely been researched in terms of the socio-spatial characteristics of localities of departure. Yet, unless we link the opportunity structures available to migrants to the scalar positioning of their localities of departure and settlement, we can not adequately analyze migrant practices, their patterns of organization, and their strategies of participation. The nature of the neo-liberal transformations of particular localities shape the formation and dynamics of the migrant transnational social fields that link those places.

The Missing Scalar Dimension

While the urban typologists as well as the scholars working on migrant incorporation in the gateway cities or on particular aspects of migrant incorporation – economic, political, religious, transnational – failed to develop a comparative perspective with which to theorize cities in the context of unequal globalization, another set of scholars offered a very different approach to contemporary urban processes. This second approach has yet to be considered by migration scholars. These researchers – primarily geographers and political economists – began to develop a scalar perspective on restructuring (Brenner 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Brenner et al. 2003; Brenner 2004; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999; Smith 1995; Swyngedouw 1992, 1997).

The scale theorists focused on the differential impacts of global processes on different localities. That is to say they began with the premise that all cities are global but differentially positioned in terms of globe spanning hierarchies of economic and political power. They also examined the role of states within global economic restructuring and identified new ways that states – together with other actors – had a differentiated impact on particular localities. These theorists draw attention to fact that the hierarchies and structural positioning of cities could not be assumed to be nested in interstate or national-regional hierarchies but are situated within global fields of power. Hence the scalar positioning of cities reflects their relationship to global, national and regional circuits of capital. Although the scale theorists said nothing about migrant incorporation, it is evident that this perspective provides important theoretical openings with which to approach the significance of locality in migrant incorporation.

The relative positioning of a city within hierarchical fields of power may well lay the ground for the life-chances and incorporation opportunities of
migrants locally and transnationally. In order to understand the different modes and dynamics of migrant incorporation and transnationalism, we need to address the broader rescaling processes affecting the cities in which migrants are settling. A scalar perspective can bring into the analysis of migrant incorporation the missing spatial aspects of socio-economic power, which is exercised differently in different localities. The concept of scale introduces the missing socio-spatial parameters to the analysis of ‘locality’ in migration scholarship.

A scalar perspective allows us to analyze the dynamics of locality in interaction with power hierarchies. For this reason it enables us to incorporate the uneven character of globalization and its dynamics into our analysis. The concept of scale offers us a framework with which to analyze the structures and process of cities or urban zones in close relations to processes and dynamics of capital accumulation that are not necessarily confined within the states yet interact with states controlling very different degrees of wealth and power.

More specifically, this scholarship takes note of the ways in which all cities were forced to compete for investments in new economies. Rather than just categorizing cities as post-industrial or global, these scholars highlighted the implications for urban labor forces, housing stocks, entrepreneurial strategies, infrastructure development, and tax policy of cities that were no longer based on industrial production. Scale theorists noted that cities now marketed themselves globally in an effort to attract flows of investment and a mix of new economy industries and their clients and customers that would sustain growth. New economy industries were ones which produced services demanded within the global economy including the very consumption of locality in the form of tourism. To attract these new industries such as computer related technologies required that the city offer a certain mix of human capital, higher education facilities, and cultural and recreational facilities. While in the age of city development through heavy industry, cities fared differently through locational differences such as access to harbors or the ability to provide railroad or highway accessibility, now life style facilities capable of attracting and maintaining a highly skilled workforce became an issue. Boulder and Berlin benefited; Liverpool and Cleveland declined.

Scholars arguing for a scalar approach underlined not only the changing relationship between localities in the context of globalization, but also between the localities and states. According to theorists advocating a scalar approach to state policies, state activity is rescaled in the context of emergent neo-liberal market-oriented restructuring projects. State intervention and activity are institutionally and geographically differentiated (Brenner et al.)
Thus it is not possible to assume that intervention is equal and homogenous throughout the state.

However, this does not mean that states lose their role as active players; on the contrary, they contribute actively to the development of uneven geographies of urbanization and territorial inequalities within the national territory. They shape this restructuring process through their spatially selective interventions. States re-concentrate their socio-economic activity to increase the competitiveness of certain cities and zones. Through the provision of state subsidies or contracts, and support for key infrastructural facilities and public services in particular zones – such as airports or research facilities – they remain as important actors in shaping the new patterns of uneven spatial development. Of course the organization of state subsidies has historically differed between the European states with its range of welfare and public interventions and the United States where intervention has been more indirect in the form of military and police expenditures, contracts, and urban block grants. In this context, the competition among the cities to attract global capital is entangled with their competition to attract forms of state support.

Unfortunately, the richness of the perspective on locality that scalar theorists have developed is marred by their failure to address migration. Migrants simply are not on the horizon of scale theorists. With the exception to some extent of the work of Romain Garbaye (2006) and Patrick LeGales (2002), migrants have received almost no attention from within the scale scholarship, despite the fact that migrants significantly contribute to the dynamics and texture of many cities. Scale theorists have yet to investigate the contribution to urban restructuring of migrant practices, networks, and pathways of incorporation. They have not explored the ways in which migrants become part of the restructuring of the urban social fabric and the new forms of urban governance. Of course migrants’ roles in each city are themselves shaped in the context of rescaling processes.

Scalar politics also includes the changing representations of cities as each city markets itself as a brand and produces its own image based on its mix of resources including cultural diversity. These public discourses need to be addressed in placing migrant incorporation within scale theory. All the resources the cities have, including their human resources – which encompasses the migrants and their skills and qualities – acquire a new value and become assets in this competition. The ‘cultural diversity’ of migrants is an important factor in the competitive struggle between the cities. Migrants are not only part of the new just-in-time sweat shop industries that accompany the restructuring of some cities. They also provide highly skilled labor that also contributes to the human capital profile of various cities.
And they become marketable assets for the cultural industries of the cities in which they are settling (Zukin 1995).

It is important to stress that it is not only the so-called global cities that compete on a global terrain. All cities, including those that are failing, engage in this competition and those that are marginalized are part of the same global process that shape the cities acknowledged to be “global.” The place and role of migrants in this competition might differ depending on the scalar positioning of these cities. Drawing from the literature on urban rescaling, we argue that we can differentiate and understand the dynamics of migrant incorporation and transnationalism in different cities better if we relate them to the processes of restructuring political and economic space within the context of the neoliberal regulatory systems.

At the same time that migration theory would be informed and enriched by scalar theory, efforts to address rescaling processes would benefit by paying attention to migration. Addressing the histories of migration to specific localities and the contemporary relationship between migrants and the restructuring of those localities might help to address certain shortcomings in scalar theory. This theory tends to be ahistorical, projecting a dichotomous contrast between the past and the present. It envisions a past within a bounded national development. It is as if the past growth and development cities was structured solely by national economic processes and by national policies oriented towards even economic development throughout national territories. This image of a state interventionist past is then contrasted to the contemporary disruptions of neo-liberalism with its global penetration of finance capital and its globe-spanning institutional structures such as the WTO that negotiate new limitations or allocations of state powers.

However, capitalist development has from its beginning been global and accompanied by migrations of people. Capital has long been generated and flowed across borders but it is always invested somewhere. That investment requires, builds upon, and attracts certain configurations of labor and concomitant developments of infrastructure. Investments in locality, productive and synergetic at one point of time, become a drag on profitability as they age and other localities can offer new competitive advantages. Trans-state cycles of economic growth and collapse resulting in the “creative destruction” of locally situated capital have shaped place-based development, the economy and politics of particular cities, and the settlement of migrants (Harvey 2003). Globalization therefore was and continues to be a localization process (Friedman and Lash 1992). In the past as well as the present the fortunes of particular cities rise and fall. This is not new.
Past migration histories and their relationships to specific urban developments can remind scale theorists of the local outcomes of global processes. In the new period of restructuring in which projects building national economies has been subordinated to the neo-liberal free market strategies of global capitalists, the synergies between migration flows and localities continue. Migration flows contribute to local structuring and the constitution of local resources – economic, political and cultural. The dimension, origins, and human and social capital of migrant flows to a city shape the nature of its economy and politics. Therefore migration to different cities is part of the path dependency of each city’s development that must be addressed by scale theorists.

The Ethnic Lens
A related weakness in the study of the relationship between migration and the city is the persistent use of the ethnic group as the unit of analysis in migration studies (Glick Schiller, Çaglar and Gulbrandsen 2006). This is true in the old and new assimilationist literature, the study of migrant settlement in cities, as well as in transnational migration studies. In all three areas of scholarship, the heterogeneous social fabric of the city often disappears from view and the study of the city and migration is reduced to a study of the urban ethnic heterogeneity.

The inability of migration researchers to assess the impact of rescaling on different localities and on different sectors of the population within a specific city is compounded by approaching migrants as members of a homogeneous ethnic population. Starting from Barth (1969), there is a voluminous historical and ethnographic literature that details the constructed nature of ethnic identities and ethnic group boundaries (Brubaker 2004; Glick Schiller 1977; Gonzalez 1988; Hill 1989; Sollors 1989; Rath and Kloosterman 2000). Studies of what the authors see as ethnic “communities” are replete with descriptions of divisions based on class, religions, region of origin, or politics among members of the “same” group. However, even if the researcher emphasizes gender and class divisions within the ethnic groups under study, the trope of community brackets the parameters within which these division are studied (Çaglar 1997). However, neither the understanding of the problematic nature of ethnic groups as a unit of analysis nor the calls for “writing against culture” have influenced the research designs brought to bear in studies of migrant incorporation.

Scholars of migration continue to use a concept of ethnic community as both the object of study and unit of analysis in migration research, no matter how critical they are about the concept of ethnicity. Migrants’ relationships to economic, social, and political forms of urban incorporation
are approached through an ethnic lens in most of these studies and migrants from a particular nation-state or region are assumed to constitute an ethnic group before their identity, actions, social relations, and beliefs are studied. Making an ethnic lens central to a research design prioritizes one form of identification, subjectivity, basis for social interaction, and source of social capital over all others.¹⁰ Even those scholars who begin their study by critiquing the ethnic group as a unit of analysis or demonstrating the constructed nature of ethnic boundaries, present their data as the study of a population identified ethnically as Turks, Moroccans, Kurds, Haitians, Brazilians (Glick Schiller 1977; Glick Schiller et al. 1987 a, b; Østergaard-Nielsen 2001; Klosterman and Rath 2003).

The use of the word community as synonymous with the term ethnic group compounds the problem because it contributes to defining a particular mode of settlement and identification before the research has been conducted. The possibility of assessing the actual degree of heterogeneity in migrants’ identities, practices and social ties is at best made more difficult and at worst forestalled. The research design itself precludes study of non-ethnic ties, practices and bonding of the group. Conrad Arensberg’s (1961) foundational approach to community studies that defined a “community” as both “object and sample” haunts the efforts to study locality today.

New approaches to migrants in cities continue to be filtered through the ethnic lens. For example, the recent work on “superdiversity” in British cities acknowledges the internal divisions within ethnic groups in terms of language, place of origin, legal status, and stratification and the challenges this situation poses to the service providers. However, despite underlining the problems involved in using ethnic categories for analysis and as the basis for policy suggestions, this perspective does not free itself from the grip of ethnic categories (Vertovec 2005). The sources of “super diversity” are said to lie mainly in the proliferation of migrants with different ethnic origins rather than in the actual practices of migrants that contribute to the heterogeneity of the city in ways that are organized by occupation, neighborhood, religion, and new forms of insertion in the global economy and not necessarily by ethnicity.

The role of locality in shaping migrant subjectivities and pathways of incorporation is also obviated by those scholars of diaspora and transnational migration who assume that those who share an ancestry and history of dispersal also share an identity and form communal relations as they migrate and settle. Much of this research has been built on the axis of ethnic belonging and ethnically based social ties (Soysal 2000). The concept of transnational community has directed researchers towards documenting ethnically based identities and social ties. Yet migrants also build non-
ethnic transnational social fields based on religious, political professional, ideological and economic networks (Glick Schiller 2005a; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999). The ethnic lens utilized by many of these scholars obscures the diversity and the scope of migrants’ relationships to their place of settlement and to other localities around the world.

The research on migrant economic incorporation through small business ownership or employment provides a case of point in the ways in which using the ethnic group as a unit of analysis hinders the development of a theory of locality. There is a rich and valuable literature on migrant economy, migrant business and entrepreneurialism (Bonacich and Modell 1980; Light 1972; Waldinger 1986a, 1986b; Wilson and Portes 1980). The study of migrant practices in this case mostly economic activity and business practices, become very quickly the study of ethnic economy and ethnic business. Having reduced the study of the relationship of the migrant in the city to the ethnic community, researchers debate the centrality of the ethno-cultural characteristics of the migrant groups in the analysis of their economic activity and incorporation. The debate is framed by the way in which the larger factors that shape locality and all entrepreneurial activities within it have been precluded from the research. In the ethno-cultural characteristics perspective researchers emphasize factors such as the historical business experience of each ethnic group settling in the city and the cultural resources they can bring to bear in their entrepreneurial activities. Such an approach leads to investigations of the compatibility of migrants’ cultural and religious beliefs and practices to entrepreneurial activities, as well as their ability to organize themselves on the basis of social networks and trust relations particularly suitable for small business. Viewing entrepreneurship through an ethnic lens, researchers have compared Southeast Asians and the Afro-Caribbean migrants in London, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Turkish migrants in Amsterdam and Vietnamese and North African migrants in Paris. The contextual and historical structuring of the city that shape the dynamics of business growth and expansion are assessed only in terms of their contributions to the growth of ethnic enclaves, the relations between ethnic groups, or the discrimination faced by an ethnic group.

This remains the case despite the fact that recently a growing number of researchers of ethnic businesses have developed their own critique of the use and conceptualization of ethnic categories (Rath and Kloosterman 2000). These studies correctly ask what makes migrant economic practices and migrant entrepreneurs ethnic? Is it the ethnic origin of the entrepreneurs and the owners of the business place? Is it characteristics of migrants’ networks and their use of strategies in conducting business? Those who
advocate a critical position urge scholars to pay more attention to the general economic, sociological and geographic contexts of these economic activities and to consider the migrant entrepreneurs primarily as socially embedded economic actors in the Schumpeterian sense (Rath 2000; Light et al. 1999; Portes 1995; Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996). These scholars correctly plea for concentrating on the economic environment and on the institutional context of the migrant business practices.

However, despite the relevant questions about the ownership and control in migrant business activities and the critique of the criteria used to differentiate the ethnic and the non-ethnic bases of business activity in particular places, most of these researchers have not developed a theory of locality. Their discussions have remained at the level of national welfare states and the opportunities they provide to migrant business and entrepreneurs at that scale.

Little attention is paid to the fact that migrants as economic actors share the possibilities of economic success or failure with other entrepreneurs within the economy of a particular locality. The study of migrants’ non-ethnic forms of economic incorporation are rarely pursued or non-ethnic networks are framed as networks that bridge migrant ethnically based communities (Jacobs et al. 2004). As a consequence of their ethnic lens and the tendency of analysts of migrant economic incorporation to use studies of migrants in “gateway” cities to build migration theory, a particular pathway of migrant incorporation and form of business organization is taken to be representative of an entire nation-state or of migrant economic incorporation everywhere.

Conclusion
To conclude, in this paper we have called for a dialogue between migration scholars and scholars of scale that can theorize locality in the study of migrant settlement. Such an enterprise will require a new comparative perspective in urban studies and migration scholarship. This new perspective must build on the intersection of migration studies and the scholarship of scale. Despite the “transnational and urban turn” in migration research, the analysis of migrant incorporation in cities still remains nested in national welfare regimes and their opportunity structures. The significance of the different localities for migration, settlement, and transnational connection, as cities are structured through changing scalar positioning, must be addressed. Attention to the scalar dimension of different cities becomes more necessary and possible for migration scholars as increasingly migrants are settling in cities of different scalar dimensions and a growing number of migration
scholars are working in these cities. Similarly, scholars of urban scale have the possibility of examining migration and city scale in a situation of the dispersion of migrant settlement.

Moreover, it is important to note that neo-liberal rescaling projects trigger social processes, social resistance, and new forms of power struggles and articulations of interests among the existing social groups, including migrants in the localities in which they are grounded. No matter how similar cities are in terms of scale, their complex layers of social history and social structure result in differential localizations of these projects with different representations, legacies, and expectations. By paying attention to the place of migrants within the social fabric of specific cities, scholars of scale may be better able to explore the differential outcomes of rescaling processes even in places of similar scale. The intersection between the historical path-dependency of each locality and its relationship to the global forces, which shape the city’s scalar positioning, will become accessible to analysis.

Migration studies has to move beyond its very selective engagement with political economy to address the global restructuring of the local in this perspective local actors include migrants. If globalization is at the same time a localization process and one that profits from uneven spatiality, migration studies must acknowledge and analyze these processes in relationship to variation in migrant incorporation. Migration scholarship can not be built separately from an analysis of the past and present restructuring of the localities from which migrants depart and settle. There is an urgent need to theorize locality and spatiality.

Ironically, this paper is a call for bringing socio-spatial considerations into the analysis of migration, which is a process that is itself primarily about spatial mobility. It is noteworthy that although scholars of migration and scalar researchers both recognize the importance of global forces in structuring the flows of people, identities, subjectivities, and cultural production and consequent alterations in a time/space continuum, the spatial impacts of migration on locality remain neglected by both fields of scholarship. Migrants are part of the social fabric of the cities in which they are settling. Migrant ties, activities and practices – in short, migrants as forces of integration as well as fragmentation – are parts of the changing urban politics and new geographies of urban governance and representation. Consequently any analysis of the restructuring of this social fabric will be incomplete without considering the impact of migration and migrants.
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NOTES

1 The pioneers of this perspective were the World System theorists and those who built upon this perspective (Wallerstein 1979).

2 Studies of globalization in anthropology to a large extent took the form of exploring the local resistance to the homogenizing forces of globalization and how these forces were transformed by the local forces.

3 Allen Scott and Edward Soja (1996) did mention of the presence of migrants in their description of the postmodern city. Their edited volume on Los Angles includes an article by Evelyn Blumenberg and Paul Ong who document the continuation of racial and ethnic divides. Roger Waldinger (1996:4), while speaking of New York as the “first post-industrial city,” questioned the dual city hypothesis based on his research in New York City. He argued that “occupational polarization mischaracterizes the job trajectory in New York” and that high end employment grew but “blue collar” jobs shrunk in the 1980s. Recently Romain Garbaye (2006) has addressed the link between the positioning of a city – Paris – and forms of migrant political incorporation.

4 For example, the English cities of Birmingham and Bradford were compared to each other, as were the Austrian cities of Vienna and Graz (Rex and Samad 1996; Betz 1996). In Koopmans’ and Stratham’s research (1999), specific cities are identified as having differentiated policies because of differing configurations of political forces within a specific nation-state.
This approach was the basis of the development of community studies in anthropology with Conrad Arensberg (1961) arguing for a methodology in which “the community” could be taken “as both object and sample.”

Occasionally research on specific forms of incorporation in a city designated both gateway and global city has been compared to a city of smaller scale and differences pathways of incorporation. See for example Itzigsohn (2000) and Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002), comparing New York and Providence. But even in these instances, the researchers did not build from their observations of differences in pathways of incorporation in the two localities to a theory of locality and migration.

For a history of the development of transnational migration studies see Glick Schiller 1999, 2003, 2005b. For an extension of the transnational perspective into the scholarship on local struggles see Glick Schiller 2006.

There were only a few counter-narratives such as Sarah Mahler’s (1995) documentation of women left behind with little access to communications and men isolated from ready transportation or communication because of their suburban residence.

The US does have a history of federal intervention in the form of block grants to cities, grants for research and development of research facilities, and transportation subsidies. However much government support has been channeled through military investment.

For further discussions of this point see Glick Schiller, Çaglar and Gulbrandsen (2006).
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The American anthropologist NINA GLICK SCHILLER is one of the most prominent scholars in research on transnationalism. She has published with various colleagues three important books on transnational migration: *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (1992); *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Dilemmas, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (1994); and *Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home* (2001). She has also published more than seventy articles on the topics of migration theory, migrant simultaneous incorporation, transnationalism, ethnic identity, nationalism, race, gender, globalization, fundamentalist Christianity, and transborder citizenship. The founder of the journal *Identities: Global Studies of Culture and Power*, Prof. Glick Schiller has also served on the editorial boards of the *American Ethnologist, Anthropological Theory, Focaal,* and *Social Analysis*. She is the founding Director of the Research Institute for Cosmopolitan Cultures and Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester, UK and an Associate of the Max Plank Institute of Social Anthropology, Germany.

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