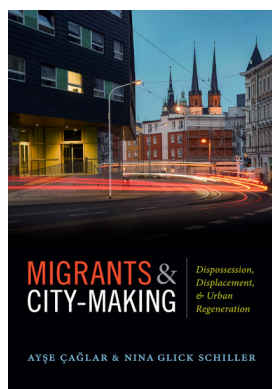


Book Reviews

Ayşe Çağlar and Nina Glick Schiller 2018: *Migrants and City-Making: Dispossession, Displacement, and Urban Regeneration*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press



Migrants and City-Making is a path-breaking study of some of the key components of contemporary social science research. It provides a robust assessment of the analytic, methodological and comparative aspects of urban social life that residents construct, arguing that natives and migrants make cities together and therefore need to be located within the same analytic framework. In developing this argument, the book stands much previous work on its head. It focuses its assessment on three marginal ‘disempowered’ cities, namely: Mardin in Turkey on the border with Syria; Manchester, New Hampshire, in the northeastern United States; and Halle/Saale in eastern Germany. In revealing how these three cities surged and declined, how their

narratives of growth contradict their political economies, the book’s analysis has broad relevance to the study of all cities.

Ayşe Çağlar and Nina Glick Schiller argue that migrants are as integral to city-making—and to society-making generally—as those who define themselves as natives. In advancing this argument, the authors aim to demolish what they call ‘the ethnic lens of methodological nationalism’ (p. 3). This approach considers the concept of society as coterminous with individual nation states. It assumes that members of these states share a founding ethnic homogeneity, that this foundation produces social and cultural cohesion, and that migrants are culturally and socially discrete from these ‘national societies’ and therefore require ‘integration’. The book’s exposition of this approach mostly focuses on Europe and offers a strong critique.

The authors develop four analytic frames to constitute their alternative of studying migrants and natives as close collaborators in city-making. The first of these is to utilize methods of multiscale research and to reject notions of levels and nested scales of bounded territorial units. Hence they study ‘multiscale social fields’ in which social relations are constituted simultaneously at many scales, nodes, levels and networks, all marked by uneven distributions of power and force. They also apply the frame of ‘emplacement’ in order to consider how all individuals live within a nexus of unequal power distribution, comprising everyone with whom they interact in relations of accumulation, dispossession and displacement. This analysis generates a complex choreography of urban sociabilities. Third, the authors situate their cities within ‘historical conjunctures’, arguing that social fields can best be studied as

specific historical configurations of social relations emplaced within webs of power. These webs range from the local to the global, passing through the urban, regional, national and planetary, and involving many different kinds of institutions. Finally, they frame urban life in terms of 'domains of commonality'. Rather than focusing on difference in social relations, they instead emphasize the generation of commonalities, of what brings migrants and non-migrants together, of what they share in terms of solidarity and mutual support.

A good example of this four-frame approach comes in the chapters 'Small Migrant Businesses' and 'They Are Us', in which the authors examine migrant families, enterprises and institutions in the three cities. They study them not as spaces of ethnic differences to be overcome or mediated; rather, they analyse their entanglements in vast networks of relations as multiple sites of sociability for both migrant and native alike. This density of analysis makes visible processes of dis- and em-placement, shaped by the structural positioning of a city within both the local and the global political economies. Consequently, their ethnography considers the Vietnamese food store owner in Halle/Saale not as an ethnic entrepreneur but as a business woman struggling with the ebb and flow of structural forces (such as capitalism and German reunification) that she is unable to control—in just the same way as all small business owners in the city with whom she shares these multiscale social fields at various historical conjunctures.

Çağlar and Glick Schiller are unusually precise in developing their analytic concepts and vocabulary. This is a significant achievement. They set out five parameters through which cities can be studied comparatively in terms of their similarities and despite their differences in national history and geography, namely: 'disempowered positioning, plans and projects for urban restructuring, references to migrants within rebranding narratives, the degree of investment in services for migrants, and opportunities for migrant emplacement within multiscale regeneration processes' (p. 26).

They use these parameters, for example, to show that the three disempowered cities were all seduced by similar regeneration strategies that subsequently failed. The cities each proposed to attract high-paying jobs in science, tech and industry through private corporate investments that they subsidized through public giveaways (such as tax incentives and/or land). These strategies were disastrous. Moreover, they all failed to acknowledge and support the city-making activities of migrants even as they welcomed them (mostly as tokens of diversity that would attract investment). These cities are not the first to embark on such strategies for regeneration (which have a long and predictable history of failure), but it is striking that cities do not seem to learn from each other, and it would be important to investigate why this is the case.

The authors deploy their parameters of comparative analysis as a critique of methodological nationalism. However, one cannot help but think of Latin America, where there is very little assumption of foundational ethnic homogeneity or any sense that it would produce social cohesion, yet this is something which the authors do not consider. Latin American urbanism and nationalism emerged in the nineteenth century as an explicit counter-formulation to European assumptions about homogeneity. Hence, throughout Latin America, the basic problem of state- and city-building has been one of producing a public which fits the conceptual frame of nation and city out of a diversity of populations. State-building elites fabricated various

solutions—mostly racist and genocidal (for example, whitening through race mixing)—and developed enduring ideologies of inclusion (i.e. developmentalism and racial democracy). These ideologies obfuscate the necropolitics through which systematic violence and repression characterize the multiscale social fields for most Latin Americans. This is a very different societal foundation from that of European ethnic homogeneity. Might it suggest to the authors a different (though related) analytic framework that could be developed, thus avoiding the contention that the book's foundational criticism may itself be Eurocentric?

Migrants and City-Making develops a brilliant analysis of the 'social citizenship' (p. 147) of born-again Christians, demonstrating how their beliefs, practices and organizations foster local and global networks of church members. These networks produce structures of power that collapse standard categories of public and private or state and civil society. They link local prayer groups to the global expansion of right-wing fundamentalism, anti-democratic politics, war (military and cultural), and imperialism. Çağlar and Glick Schiller use the concept of social citizenship to contrast against that of cultural citizenship, which they criticize as advocating a politics of difference for its own sake. They also use it to counter a state-centric notion of membership that is limited to strictly legal rights. When we realize, as the authors do, that state citizenship is only one kind of belonging, with its attendant relations to others, we may then wonder whether using 'social citizenship' to describe the sum of membership in churches elides potentially significant analytic distinctions between the civil, political and socio-economic aspects of citizenship. For example, the civil reveals fundamentalist conceptions of foetal life and of fetuses as members while the political refers to rights-claiming within a specific constitution of the faithful in relation to the non-faithful. Deploying an analytic frame that distinguishes these aspects of membership would enhance the precision of the powerful study of the social fields of born-again churches that *Migrants and City-Making* develops with such great insight.

James Holston, University of California, Berkeley