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Migrant cities: place, power, and voice in the era of super diversity

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ABSTRACT

Immigration scholars have long considered cities to be important environments that mediate how immigrants are incorporated into receiving countries. While most scholars recognise that cities have some importance, they continue to prioritise national-level institutions, organisations, networks, and cultural dynamics. This paper introduces the special issue on 'Migrant Cities'. The special issue asserts that cities are not simply backdrops where national-level processes and mechanisms unfold. The contributing scholars reveal how cities are distinctive environments with unique constraints and opportunities. Following a basic introduction, the paper examines how to apply these general assumptions about cities to understanding the political formation of immigrants. The paper does this by urbanising Nancy Fraser's concept of 'counterpublic'. We suggest that cities possess certain qualities that enable the formation of immigrant counterpublics, which in turn become critical spaces of politicisation.

KEYWORDS

Immigration; cities; counterpublic; political formation

Introduction to special issue

In the past few decades, many countries have witnessed a substantial increase in immigration (Castles and Miller 2009). Migration flows have been precipitated by a variety of causes. On the one hand, uneven economic development, ecological change, conflict, and political instability, combined with the intensity and reach of new communication media and transport facilities, have generated supply-driven migration flows. On the other hand, demographic and economic developments all over the globe have given rise to new demand-driven flows towards a variety of countries. The mobility of people is certainly not confined to the global North. Some of the world's largest migration flows have been in the global South. Although migration occurs across a wide range of geographical terrains, cities are unique spaces that shape migration flows across and within countries (Holston and Appadurai 1999; Portes 2000; Waldinger and Lee 2001; Glick Schiller and Caglar 2009; De Graauw, Gleeson, and Bloemraad 2013; Foner et al. 2013). Some cities generate powerful pulls on immigrants because of their economic opportunities and social support systems. Just as important the global functions and communication

infrastructures of particularly large gateway cities allow migrant populations to maintain connections to their sending cities, enabling the constant flow of information, resources, and people between distant places (Sassen 1996).

The central position of some cities within global migration networks has contributed to radically altering the composition and functions of these cities within a relatively short period of time. Ongoing migration has stimulated population growth in these cities and has accelerated the rates of diversity within them. This has produced environments characterised by what Steven Vertovec has called 'super-diversity' (2007). Such diversity reflects patterns of radical heterogeneity concerning national origin, race and ethnicity, sexualities, migration status, and occupations. The changes wrought forth by international migration have therefore introduced powerful new dynamics that affect both flows of people and urban environments.

This special issue addresses the specifically urban character of large-scale migration. The contributors to this special issue believe that the city is a distinctive environment that strongly affects the ways in which immigrants settle, live, and contribute to receiving countries. Building upon contributions that view the city as a generative space instead of a mere canvas, the special issue focuses on the specifically 'urban' character of immigration by examining how cities exert a distinctive pull on immigrants, how immigrants reshape cities, and how claims and subjectivities are generated in the interplay between migrants and other players in the urban arena, including authorities. While asserting that cities are a major factor in shaping the trajectories and effects of immigration, the special issue also maintains that the complex character of immigration resuscitates a central problematic of urban sociology: Does the advanced diversity of cities accelerate fragmentation, conflict, inequality, and anomie? Or, does diversity in dense places facilitate cultural and economic exchange, enhancing tolerance, respect, and prosperity? Rather than suggest that one outcome necessarily prevails over the other, the contributors of this special issue examine how urban environments mediate immigration processes and shape immigration experiences.

There is a large body of research on cities and on migration and our aim is to bring different strands of the literature. To do this, we pose a series of general, conceptual, and integrative questions to structure and focus the contributions to this special issue: What are the impacts of migration on the demographic composition of cities and the spatial distribution of immigrant communities within them? How do urban-based networks facilitate (or block) the ability of people to settle in new urban environments? What roles do political authorities and civic organisations play in governing migrant communities and negotiating differences between immigrants and national citizens? How are discourse and sentiments of justice mobilised to enhance the rights and opportunities of migrants within cities and countries? By addressing these questions from an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective, the special issue aims at increasing our understandings of the dynamic relationship between urban environments and human mobility.

Migrant cities: politicising immigrants and making counter publics

This introductory paper addresses some of the special issue's central questions by examining how urban environments contribute to the constitution of immigrants as political subjects. Migrant cities have long been places where marginalised newcomers first

encounter established groups and therefore become a frontline in struggles for recognition and equality. Facing restrictions and impediments, new immigrants turn to their own networks and organisations to pool resources, share information, and construct new identities within receiving communities. This is by no means a smooth process of constructing bounded and harmonious communities (Brubaker 2002; Çağlar, this volume). Depending on the resources of specific migrant groups, degrees of restrictions and discrimination, and density of organisational support networks, group making varies dramatically across national immigrant groups, countries, and cities (Chaudhary and Guarnizo, *forthcoming*).

The aim of this paper is to explore the links between cities and immigrant political subjectivities by employing and reworking Nancy Fraser's concept of 'counterpublics'. Fraser (1990) conceptualised 'counterpublics' as 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs' (1990, 68). Counterpublics enable people to construct critical political imaginaries and identities. While Fraser's analysis remains important and fresh 25 years after its original publication, she provides little discussion concerning the urban underpinnings of such counterpublics. We therefore need to reveal the 'urban' component of counterpublics and, following from this, how these counterpublics make it possible for immigrants to generate political discourses, identities, and subjectivities.

Building on the work of Bloemraad, de Graauw, and Hamlin concerning the effects of local context in shaping media representations of immigrants (2015), this paper outlines one theoretical approach for understanding how localities serve as propitious environments that enable marginalised immigrants to become active voices in public debate.

Publics and counterpublics

Nancy Fraser provides a sympathetic yet forceful critique of Jürgen Habermas's concept of the 'public sphere'. The concept made an important contribution to Marxist literature, she argued, because it provided the conceptual tools to examine a sphere that exists between the economy and state:

The idea of 'the public sphere' in Habermas's ... designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas's sense is also conceptually distinct from the official-economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theater for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling. Thus, this concept of the public sphere permits us to keep in view the distinctions between state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations, distinctions that are essential to democratic theory. (1990, 57)

The public sphere is an institutional space that permits the production and exchange of discourses. It is a relatively autonomous arena consisting of associations, newspapers, salons, and so on. These institutions permit people to step out of their individualised worlds and debate issues of general interest: '[T]he idea of a public sphere is that of a

body of “private persons” assembled to discuss matters of “public concern” or “common interest” (1990, 58).

Fraser welcomes this intervention, but she also develops an important critique. She shows that the public sphere was made possible in the nineteenth century by excluding multiple others (women, non-property owners, immigrants, minorities, etc.). To engage in ‘public matters’, citizens needed to suspend private concerns and be capable of turning their attention to the general interest. Protecting the ‘public’ nature of the public sphere therefore required the exclusion of groups unable to shed their particularisms. The elites partaking in the nineteenth-century public sphere (bourgeois white male nationals) produced an institutional arena of debate *for themselves*, using lofty values (rationality, public spiritedness, and so on) to legitimate the banishment of multiple others to their private worlds. The exclusionary character of the public sphere defined the major points of conflict in modern society. Exclusion and conflict were not accidental, contingent, or a reflection of decline, as Habermas suggested. They were instead constituted by the exclusionary nature of the public sphere.

The exclusions and conflicts that appeared as accidental trappings from his [Habermas] perspective, in this view become constitutive. The result is a gestalt switch that alters the very meaning of the public sphere. We can no longer assume that the bourgeois conception of the public sphere was simply an unrealized utopian ideal; it was also a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule. (Fraser 1990, 62)

The exclusionary nature of the dominant public did not result in passive subjects who quietly assumed their place on the margins of society. Echoing Foucault (1978, 1982) on the productive side of repressive powers, Fraser argues that exclusion contributed to the production of ‘subaltern counterpublics’. These counterpublics were made up of different marginalised groups like women, immigrants, working class, etc. Paralleling the dominant public sphere, excluded groups (‘subalterns’) developed their own institutions like associations, newspapers, cafes, and salons. This counterpublic sphere enabled marginalised groups to express and debate their common grievances. Drawing from observations of the feminist movement, Fraser remarks that:

feminist women have invented new terms for describing social reality, including ‘sexism,’ ‘the double shift,’ ‘sexual harassment,’ and ‘marital, date, and acquaintance rape.’ Armed with such language, we have recast *our needs and identities*, thereby reducing, although not eliminating, the extent of our disadvantage in official public spheres. (1990, 67, emphasis added)

The counter public sphere therefore helps generate ideas and discourses that are then used by excluded groups to analyse their subordination and exclusion and develop strategies and tactics to right these wrongs through collective struggle.

City, immigrant groups, and counterpublics

The concept of counterpublic is analytically useful in stressing the generative aspects of exclusion and identifying the mechanisms involved in constructing subaltern identities. We would add that the formation of counterpublics has a distinct, and distinctly urban, geography. We highlight three processes that influence the formation of immigrant groups and counterpublics in cities. First, cities facilitate the institutions spawning oppositional subjectivities because they allow economies of scale and scope. Second, competition

and hostility with dominant adversaries sharpen symbolic and social boundaries and crystallise identities. Third, cities offer a comparatively wide array of oppositional networks and institutions that can flank and reinforce immigrants' counterpublics.

Institutions and immigrant group formation

A central precept of classical urban sociology is that cities are propitious environments for marginal groups to settle and flourish (Park and Burgess 1921; Wirth 1938; Saunders 1986). Drawing on this classical literature, Fischer (1975) argues there are destructive aspects of cities that lead to social disorganisation. But, he argues, disorganisation also results in the *reorganisation* of new social groups. Large numbers in cities facilitate anonymity, weaken general collective norms, and favour tolerant or at least indifferent dispositions among residents. These conditions create a particularly good environment for the emergence of new and different 'subcultures'. Migrants bearing a stigma or engaged in 'deviant' conduct may face greater restrictions in small towns because a smaller number and greater homogeneity of residents permit greater social control and sanctioning capacities by established groups. The large number and diversity of residents in big cities breaks down social control mechanisms and provides more space for new immigrants to form into new groups. Fischer does not suggest that cities are spaces of total freedom but simply that large numbers make it more difficult for established groups to police the conduct and lives of outsiders, providing the latter more breathing room to settle, cluster, and grow.

When cities attract larger numbers of immigrants, economies of scale develop, which can then sustain more group-specific institutions like religious organisations, civic associations, media, socialising venues, and other organisations. Institutions provide social and emotional support for newly emerging groups (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Menjívar 1997; Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001; Coutin 2003; De Graauw, Gleeson, and Bloemraad 2013; Vermeulen 2013). For example, Hamilton and Chinchilla (2001) show how a dense concentration of supportive religious and humanitarian organisations played an instrumental role in assisting Central American refugees to settle in Los Angeles during the 1980s. These and similar organisations also enabled new immigrants, most of whom were denied refugee status, to create their own organisations concerning social, cultural, health, political, and communicative needs. The high numbers of Central American immigrants and the growing density of interconnected organisations resulted in 'institutionally complete' worlds, facilitating the formation of parallel social, political, and cultural worlds to mainstream Los Angeles society. Institutional completeness is a fundamental condition that makes it possible for outsiders to construct cultural and political worlds apart from dominant society. Fischer expresses this formulation in the following way:

The larger a subculture's population, the greater its 'institutional completeness'. That is, given basic market mechanisms, arrival at certain critical levels of size enables a social subsystem to create and support institutions which structure, envelop, protect, and foster its subculture. These institutions (e.g., dress styles, newspapers, associations) establish sources of authority and points of congregation and delimit social boundaries. In addition to the simple fact of the numbers themselves, they make possible and encourage keeping social ties within the group. (1975, 1325–26)

Small towns may also be recipients of immigrant newcomers but strong social controls by established groups and low numbers of immigrants may deprive the newcomers the room and economies of scale needed to develop robust institutions and organisations of their own.

Cities and neighbourhoods with strong institutions create strong ‘pull effects’ as people are drawn to them for support and protection. As cities attract more co-nationals, the group grows in size, complexity, and institutional strength. This bolsters the reputation of these cities and the neighbourhoods inside them as thriving and attractive hubs of immigrant cultural and social life. The emerging local counterpublic then becomes a node in a network that connects cities and traverses national boundaries. The influx of more immigrants increases group numbers, which in turn spurs internal heterogeneity. Expanding counterpublics are spaces of increasing heterogeneity as they spur competition between discourses and organisations (Kloosterman, Rath, and van der Leun 1999; McQuarrie and Marwell 2009; Vermeulen 2013). Competition encourages people to seek out niches and develop innovative ways to survive and thrive in dense urban environments. Such a process produces a greater variety of institutions (businesses, associations, political organisations, denominations, newspapers, etc.) to provide the immigrant group with services and support, and a more robust discursive space to support the circulation of different ideas.

Sharpening group identities through the fires of hostility

The increased presence of subgroups like stigmatised immigrants can and often does trigger hostility by dominant groups. Hostility is often directed at an outside group because it is viewed as morally ‘unclean’ (Elias 1994, xxx; also, Landau and Freemantle, *forthcoming*) or because it is seen as a threat to the power, privilege, and opportunities of dominant groups (Massey 2008). Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) argue that when immigrant groups in cities are faced with great hostility and few exit options, there is a stronger likelihood that in-group solidarity develops (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, 1329).¹ Illustrating the dynamic with Nathan Glazer’s well-known study of New York Italians, they point out that, ‘These immigrants learned *to think of themselves as Italian and to band together* on that basis after the native population began to treat them in the same manner and to apply to them the same derogatory labels’ (1993, 1328, emphasis in original). Parallel institutions make an emergent identity possible but hostility spurs solidarity and brightens group boundaries (Alba 2005). This helps solidify the common identity of disparate people while making their principal adversaries an important and constituting element of how they thought, talked, and felt in a stratified and conflict-ridden world.

Discriminatory public policies can further sharpen the oppositional edge of emerging immigrant groups. The local is a generative space of exclusionary government policies, with both national and local authorities developing measures designed to deter immigrants from settling in cities (Varsanyi 2008; Walker and Leitner 2011; Nicholls and Vermeulen 2012; Theodore and Habans, *forthcoming*). For example, between 2005 and 2010, Walker and Leitner (2011, 157) report that 370 local laws in the USA were passed that specifically addressed the issue of undocumented immigrants. Paralleling local restrictive laws, the central government initiated national programmes (287[g], Secure Communities) that aimed to strengthen cooperation between local law enforcement and national

immigration agencies (Theodore and Habans, *forthcoming*). As immigrants contend with police checkpoints, random police stops, and housing and job discrimination, they encounter discrimination in their life worlds, compelling many to develop micro-level tactics of circumvention and transgression (Menjívar and Abrego 2012; Derby 2014).

Confronting small and large aggressions throughout the course of a normal day can serve as a springboard for considering principles of social justice. For example, exclusionary laws passed in Arizona were directed at the efforts of some immigrant men to find day work on open street corners. These restrictive laws helped solidify an identity among the immigrant day labourers and spurred some of them to mobilise against the general effort to banish migrants to the margins of society. In this and countless other examples, identities of marginalised immigrant groups emerge from the fires of everyday hostility.

Organic intellectuals and crafting an oppositional identity

Gramsci (1971) argued many years ago that marginalised groups have implicit cultures and discourses about their positioning in the social world. They draw upon this thick cultural reservoir to frame their thoughts and talk about the injustices they encounter in their daily lives. The ‘popular’ or ‘folk’ culture of marginalised groups contained, according to him, reactionary elements, but these elements:

are juxtaposed in popular consciousness with progressive elements which as ‘that mass of beliefs and opinions on the subject of one’s ‘own’ rights which are in continual circulation amongst the popular masses, and are forever being revived under the pressure of the real conditions of life and the *spontaneous comparison between the ways in which the various classes live*’. (Gramsci, in Billings 1990, 8, emphasis added)

People have an implicit, if not always articulate, understanding of equal rights and such understandings bubble up through everyday *interactions* with dominant groups or social classes (what Dwight Billings called, ‘spontaneous comparison’). Their implicit ideas of equality serve as the raw material and building blocks for constructing a more robust oppositional identity, an identity that resonates directly with the feelings, experiences, and ethics of the group.

Crafting a coherent oppositional identity from this unprocessed, mishmash of ‘folk’ culture requires, according to Gramsci, the intervention of ‘organic intellectuals’. The formation of parallel institutions facilitates the emergence of diverse organic intellectuals (Gramsci 1971). They can be teachers, artists, activists, musicians, writers, religious leaders, radio announcers, and so on. These are everyday intellectuals (as opposed to the ‘traditional intellectuals’ who operate in the mainstream public sphere and claim to speak on behalf of ‘the public’) rooted in the lives of the people they work with and serve. Their specialised work in producing and managing discourse, narratives, rituals, and symbols allows the organic intellectual to use pre-existing folk ideas about rights and justice as building blocks for overarching discourses and mobilising frames. The organic intellectual therefore helps produce social justice talk through the stories, accounts, and sentiments of the people they live with. People in these groups do not experience the ideas of social justice as an abstraction: organic intellectuals in their midst use the language and concrete experiences of the ‘people’ to highlight how the

identities and practices cultivated within counterpublics are marginalised within the wider society.

Situated interactions between immigrants and organic intellectuals help sift through grievances and identify commonalities across different experiences. The construction of overarching frames and narratives is an interactional and incremental process inscribed in the everyday back-and-forth between organic intellectuals and regular people. Many immigrants seeking day labour work in Los Angeles, for instance, gather at ‘worker centres’ to search for employment. The organisers running the centres are ‘organic intellectuals’ who use the physical assembly of workers to discuss problems. They encourage the workers to identify commonalities and think about the broader structural forces (racism, poor labour market protections, lack of legal status) causing these problems. The organisers at the centres employ the tacit culture of the immigrants (manners of speech, jokes, moralities, mannerisms, music, and song) to help them construct cognitive frames to analyse and evaluate injustices.

As individuals frequently encounter critical ideas in different settings (a community centre, a workers association, social media channels), the ideas over time are assumed to be legitimate and truthful. An important example is the common use of slogans like, ‘Undocumented and Unafraid’ and ‘I am Undocumented’ in the US immigrant rights movement. The slogans emerged among undocumented youth activists in Chicago and Los Angeles (Nicholls 2013). Organic intellectuals in activist organisations helped cultivate and give meaning to these and other statements. They engaged in intense arguments for why it made sense to assert themselves in the public sphere in spite of the risks posed by their legal status. Once other activists in these spaces felt comfortable employing these slogans and associated discourses, networked organisations within and across these cities facilitated their circulation and eventual normalisation. In the past, most undocumented immigrants (activists and non-activists) viewed the public use of such terms to be dangerous. Now, many view these slogans and their associated discourses as normal and common sense ways to politically talk about their subordinate positioning. It is by no means uncommon now to find shirts printed with the slogans circulating freely in immigrant rich neighbourhoods in Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. What were once utterances that were perceived as illegitimate, unreasonable, and dangerous to substantial segments of the group have now become normal and banal. They no longer produce any sense of shock among immigrants but instead have become incorporated into the normal political imaginaries of the community.

Counterpublics do not only shape group identities but can also serve as a springboard for engagement in the public sphere. As Fraser notes:

The point is that, in stratified societies, subaltern counterpublics have a dual character. On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and *regroupment*; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics. It is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions that their emancipatory potential resides. This dialectic enables subaltern counterpublics partially to offset, although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies. (Fraser 1990, 68)

Groupness, in this instance, is a necessary condition for politicisation and engagement in the broader public sphere (Bloemraad 2007). We should perhaps note that ‘oppositional

identities' are 'emancipatory' in the sense that they empower groups to emerge but not inherently 'progressive'. While Fraser focuses on feminists and we mostly rely on research on leftist immigrants propagating a 'no border' position, the exact same mechanisms apply to all groups, whether they are leftist, rightist, fascist, religious, or ethnic. All these groups only emerge and persist if there are building blocks in the form of parallel institutions, organic intellectuals, and aggrieving interactions with mainstream society. All these different kinds of counterpublics generate and cultivate identities and discourses that can subsequently enter into the mainstream public sphere.

The dilemmas of engaging in the dominant public sphere

The rules for producing a 'subaltern' counterpublic differ from the rules that enable entry, engagement, and success in the mainstream public sphere. The language and discourses that make certain discourses legitimate and compelling for an emergent counterpublic may produce the exact opposite effects in the mainstream public sphere (Snow et al. 1986). The conflicting conditions of legitimacy are especially pronounced for immigrants whose appearances and accents can of themselves serve as stigmata within the mainstream public sphere. The collective power (social and cultural) accumulated in counterpublics is oftentimes not sufficient to offset the overwhelming symbolic power of more established adversaries. These adversaries wield their symbolic power to define the terms of acceptable and unacceptable speech in the dominant public sphere, often excluding groups that fail to speak, act, and emote in the correct ways (Bourdieu 1994). A strong counterpublic enables a marginalised group to enter the public sphere but the group does not enter as equals but as subordinates facing unfavourable 'rules' of engagement. Dominant adversaries can use their symbolic power to dismiss these discourses as nonsensical 'noises' of a radical and uncivilised mob rather than the reasonable claims of a legitimate political group (Dikeç 2004). For example, participants of massive immigrant rights demonstrations in California in 1994 proudly waved flags from different countries in the world, asserting their differences and rejecting exclusionary immigration measures. Their anti-immigrant adversaries used this act of dis-identification (to use Jacques Rancière's term) to argue that immigrants were irreducibly foreign, resistant to assimilation, and intent on reconquering America (Chavez 2008). Rather than carving open a space in the public sphere, the expression of an identity that stood in *opposition* to dominant norms resulted in closure. Thus, established members of the public sphere discourses may view and represent the emotional and motivating discourses of subordinate immigrant groups (e.g. pride in country of origin) as illegitimate. Their power to frame what is acceptable and unacceptable speech can disqualify challengers from gaining entry into the public sphere. What is productive and enabling at one stage in the politicisation process (making oppositional identities) becomes counterproductive and disabling at another (entering battles in the public sphere).

Facing these discursive restraints, new immigrant challengers oftentimes favour a strategy of 'identification' to ensure successful passage into the public sphere. Such a strategy aims to produce discourses and performances that demonstrate shared values and conformity with the dominant culture. Challengers are encouraged to stress a direct tie to the society through discourses of rootedness and assimilation. They highlight goals and aspirations in ways that resonate with dominant values. If abnormality, deviance, and

incivility were the attributes that justified their exclusion from the public sphere, it becomes more difficult to legitimate continued exclusion when the other demonstrates its cultural and legal equivalence with the dominant group. The strategy of identification facilitates entry into the public sphere but it also becomes the basis of framing a group's critique of the system. The critique is not directed at the core tenets of the system (borders, illegality, the nation-state) but that the system is not fair because it is denying a highly *deserving* group basic rights and recognition. Such arguments can resonate with broader parts of the public because it rests on hegemonic ideas of right and wrong.

While the strategy of identification helps immigrant challengers to gain legitimacy and recognition, it reinforces the idea that the 'rights of others' (Benhabib 2004) should be recognised only when outsiders are in some crucial ways essentially the same (culturally, morally, economically) as the dominant group. The case of highly assimilated and college-educated immigrant youth in the USA stands out as a primary example (Nicholls 2013). Their ability to gain broad public support largely hinged upon a concerted effort to demonstrate cultural and economic conformity. The flipside of this strategy is that those unable or unwilling to demonstrate conformity face greater difficulty justifying their claims. It is for these reasons that counterpublics can alter but do not necessarily negate the dominant identities, discourses, and values of the mainstream public sphere. This does not mean that resistance is futile. Instead, the proliferation of different immigrant groups in cities results in perpetual struggles and never ending trench warfare to modify and change the boundaries of belonging and citizenship. These fights are messy, dirty, compromised, and filled with impure power plays that do not fit neat binaries. In spite of their shortcoming, a multiplicity of small street battles can push back on exclusionary boundaries and provide marginalised immigrant groups with a larger space for asserting their own voice in the public sphere. They can expose injustices, challenge what is 'reasonable', make aggressive political moves when cracks open up, and build up on small wins in the pursuit of longer term transformations in nationally based citizenship regimes. Examining the urban grassroots can therefore shed light on these frictions and exchanges and help us to understand processes of integration and conflict within and beyond cities.

This paper thus concludes by suggesting that the scholarly focus of immigrant politics could benefit from veering away from big institutions, discourses, and outcomes and focusing more on micro- and meso-level mechanisms. The big changes in state regimes (emancipation, revolution, transnational citizenship), the kinds of changes that capture the attention of social scientists, emerge oftentimes from the small struggles fought in the urban grassroots. By starting from the grassroots, social scientists would be in a better position to understand how countless and imperceptible shifts in the local civil societies eventually shape the big institutions and discourses of contemporary nation-states.

Summary of the special issue

The contributors to the special issue may not necessarily agree with this position, but their contributions take the urban seriously and resist seeing it as a mere backdrop of broader social, cultural, and economic process. The first set of articles interrogates how migrants play a role in making cities but not under conditions of their own choosing. The papers

show how immigrants respond to and reshape their destination cities. The first paper looks to the city of Amsterdam to assess how new patterns of immigrant settlement intermingle with a city that is undergoing accelerated change and gentrification. Wouter van Gent and Sako Musterd revisit an important debate in urban theory concerning the socio-spatial inequalities found in global cities. Advocates of the 'global city' and 'dual city' thesis (Castells 1989; Sassen 1991) argued that increased incorporation into the global economy precipitated sociospatial polarisation reflected through an hourglass occupational, wage, and spatial structure. European scholars rebutted that this may have been the case in the USA because of its weak welfare state and weak labour market regulations but polarisation tendencies remained muted in Europe. However, welfare states and labour markets have undergone considerable neoliberalisation in Europe, Van Gent and Musterd ask whether this would precipitate class and ethnic polarisation. Through a careful analysis of recent data on the spatial distribution of social classes and immigrants in Amsterdam, they find that the Amsterdam region has indeed become more diverse and undergone important changes but polarisation trends remain rather muted. In particular, gentrification and suburbanisation have combined to create a migrant city-region characterised much more by a messy patchwork of residential areas more than straight polarisation.

Robert C. Kloosterman, Katja Rusinovic, and David Yeboah keep the reader in Amsterdam with their paper, '(Super-)Diverse Migrants—Similar Trajectories?' Through a careful study of recent Ghanaian immigrants, they assess the strategies of new immigrant entrepreneurs in super-diverse European cities. Much of the classical literature on immigrant entrepreneurship focused on a particular type of population characterised either as older labour migrants turned entrepreneurs or migrants from former colonies. Recent waves of immigrants have radically diversified the immigrant pool in many European cities. This gives rise to the question whether or not these new immigrants employ similar strategies of more 'classic' immigrant groups. If they have departed from more pre-existing entrepreneurial strategies, what would this tell us about the structure of these urban economies and the role of new immigrants within them? Their case shows that these new immigrants have human and financial resources that provide them important advantages over more 'classical' immigrant groups. Just as important, they show very high rates of entrepreneurship but not necessarily in the most advanced sectors of the economy. These findings are provocative and point to interesting new directions in the literature on the trajectories of immigrant economic incorporation in post-industrial cities.

Whereas the first two papers assess new developments in Migrant Cities vis-à-vis the social, spatial and economic structures of urban areas, the second two papers of the section turn to issues of relations, identities, and cultures. Loren Landau and Iriann Freemantle do not only shift the focus of the papers but also the geography: from Europe to Africa. Their study examines how practices of belonging, tolerance, and membership are mediated through what they call 'usufruct ethics' in the peri-urban cities of Rongai, Kenya and Katlehon, South Africa. This utilitarian ethic centres on benefit extraction and support more than community membership. This results in relational exchanges that oftentimes instrumental and pragmatic, facilitating exchanges between increasingly diverse people. Nevertheless, while this ethic is prevalent in both cities, it also interacts with other norms and ethics in these, creating different modalities of interactions in these cities. By carefully documenting relational interactions between migrants and

settled populations in the African urban periphery, Landau and Freemantle reveal how distinctive values, norms, and ethics produce patterns of relational engagement.

'Still "Migrants" after all these Years' suitably rounds off the first part of the special issue by broadening the discussion and addressing more conceptual questions about the categories used to study migrant populations in receiving cities and countries. Ayse Çağlar challenges the reader to explore the fundamental limitations of ethno-national categories like 'migrants' because they assume inherent spatial, temporal, and normative differences between populations. The assumption of essential differences poses empirical problems because we produce facts that reflect and reproduce questionable concepts. But even more important, social scientists engage in the ideological project of reifying and legitimating socially constructed differences. The author goes on to examine how cultural producers in Austria have come to challenge these problems through their use of the concept of 'post migrant'. Çağlar welcomes these efforts but also points out several important shortcomings. She concludes by introducing the concept of '*migrant emplacement*' as an alternative framework that could enable us to analyse migrant agencies and sociabilities as contemporaneous to "non-migrants". This perspective begins not by the migrant group but by the city. She encourages us to examining the positioning of cities within broader economic, political, and cultural networks, and following from this, the specific practices of people to seek out lives in these very specific contexts.

The second part of the special issue examines the institutions, organisations, and politics shaping the dynamics of migrant incorporation in cities. The papers address urban governance issues by analysing changing contexts of reception, how immigrant organisations emerge and vary according to contexts, and how urban-based immigrant organisations go on to assume leading roles in broad and national struggles for immigrant rights.

The first paper, 'Policing Immigrant Communities', examines how partnerships between local law enforcement and federal immigrant agencies affect the perceptions of immigrants towards the police. Nik Theodore and Robert Habans conducted a survey of 2004 Latinos in four urban counties in the USA. While many observers have argued that local police enforcement of national immigration policies would likely affect the perceptions and behaviour of immigrants, this is the first and only large-scale study to address this issue directly. Theodore and Habans indeed find immigrants are much less likely to call police and report crimes out of fear that such activities would place them or their family members at risk of detection and deportation. These findings have very important implications for broader policies on the costs and limitations of local enforcement policies. Increased incorporation of local law enforcement agencies in national immigration measures undermines the ability of local police to gain the trust of immigrants, which limits their abilities to ensure safe neighbourhoods. While the study is based on findings from the USA, its main lessons are likely applicable to other countries as well.

In their paper 'Pakistani Immigrant Organizational Spaces in Toronto and New York,' Ali Chaudhary and Luis Guarnizo examine how different contexts of reception shape immigrant organisational dynamics in Toronto and New York. The paper takes issue with much of the literature on the issue because of its strong focus on government institutions in shaping the contexts of reception and its use of a local/transnational dichotomy to characterise immigrant organisations. The authors assess the context of reception (government policies, local attitudes, socioeconomic incorporation, and so on) and the extent to which different contexts precipitate different organisational dynamics (localism versus

transnationalism in particular). Based on extensive empirical work, they find that one attribute of the context of reception (multicultural government policies) has little effect on whether Pakistani organisations take transnational or local directions. Instead, the affluence of the immigrant community has a stronger role in shaping the organisational direction of these organisations. Just as important, the authors find that class combines with geographical directionality of organisations (local versus transnational) to introduce new and interesting tensions in these communities. The paper encourages the readers to think comparatively and ask whether the findings here are consistent with those of other immigrant groups in other cities and countries.

The article 'Cities and the Politics of Integration' continues to explore the issue of context of reception by examining how political authorities Berlin, Amsterdam, New York, and San Francisco devised policies immigrant integration. Through this fascinating comparison, Els de Graauw and Floris Vermeulen identify several broad factors that influence the creation of receptive immigrant integration policies. In particular, they point to three key variables that make it more likely for receptive policies: left-leaning governments, high concentrations of immigrant voters and high participation in decision-making processes, and a dense concentration of immigrant organisations. These factors, they argue, should not be analysed apart from one another but in a synergistic way, creating what we may think of as virtuous pathways of progressive integration policies in cities even when national contexts remain hostile. While national contexts are certainly important, immigrant communities can work with local allies to produce spaces of support and tolerance within these national contexts. These urban arenas can and often do become the geographical spaces where struggles for rights, recognition, and support take root and grow.

Our paper (with Sander van Haperen), 'The Networked Grassroots', addresses the role of cities in national immigrant rights movements directly. We examine an interesting paradox that characterises the US immigrant rights movement. By most measures, the movement is more national than ever. Large national organisations located mostly in Washington D.C. have captured the lion's share of revenue. They have strong connections to national political elite, dominate national media, and lead the most important coalitions driving reform debates. In spite of their overwhelming strength and power, the national organisations have failed to achieve their primary policy goal: the passage of Comprehensive Immigration Reform. On the other hand, a wide variety of non-elite activists organisations (locals, radical organisations, networks) have successfully pushed for immigrant friendly policies in local municipalities, states, courts, and the executive branch of government (through decrees). Whereas core organisations of the movement have failed to move the immigration reform ahead in any substantive way, peripheral actors rooted in cities across the country have pushed the reform envelope and inspired thousands of immigrants to become involved in the movement. We explore this paradox by examining the complex geographies of the immigrant rights movement. Our findings show that the movement has both centralising and decentralising tendencies. There have been major centralising tendencies reflected in the concentration of political and economic power by leading Washington D.C.-based organisations. We also observe decentralised and geographically organised clusters of activists and organisations (such as DREAMers and day labourers) that have worked with one another over extended periods of time in campaigns with local and national-level reach. These peripheral activists have forged ties that enable

them to collectivise resources and deploy them in a wide variety of struggles covering the gamut of immigration issues. While these peripheral activists tend to concentrate in certain hubs (Chicago, Los Angeles, and elsewhere), they also connect to one another and coordinate collective actions through a variety of networks (social media, interpersonal, inter-organizational). Whereas the big and national organisations lumber slowly and press their elite political allies in Washington D.C. to pass immigration reform, motley networks of locally situated activists have effectively hit many targets, assembled many different campaigns, and have successfully leveraged smaller wins to gain more advantages and rights to undocumented immigrant communities.

Together, the papers in this issue illustrate the strategic significance of the urban for immigrants and for researching how immigrants remake cities as well as how cities remake immigrants.

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Note

1. The more distinct a group is in terms of phenotypical or cultural characteristics from the rest of the population, the greater the level of prejudice associated with these traits, and the lower the probability of exit from the situation, then the stronger the sentiments of in-group solidarity among its members and the higher the appreciable social capital based on this solidarity. (1329)

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