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Ethnic Entrepreneurs: the Identity-Enhancing Tactics of Global City Consumption

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Ethnic entrepreneurship – an underrepresented mode of global city consumption – is described, developed, compared across three global cities (Toronto, Pisa, and Berlin), and contrasted with the standard view that migrant consumers are less empowered than their sedentary counterparts.

Globalcityscapes: Re-Reading Ethnicity in Movement

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EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

"Cityscapes and Migration: Encapsulating Acculturation in the Urban Collective Space"

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Migration is structurally connected with the idea of movement. People leave a country, their houses, family members, and beloved objects to start elsewhere a new life and thus redefine their extended self (Belk 1988). Also, the employers in the countries of destination frequently appreciate migrant workers for their openness to geographical mobility given their weaker ties to a given place (Visconti 2007). Such flexibility better fits companies' territorial fast-moving needs and grants competitive advantage.

Despite the centrality of space in the construction of the migration experience, consumer acculturation studies have mostly interrogated migration in static fashion. The country of origin and of destination, as well as the cultures embedded in such loci, are crystallized, frozen, captured in a Polaroid snapshot, where they can be contrasted, scrutinized, mixed (Laroche, Kim, and Tomiuk 1998; Padilla 1980; Peñaloza 1994; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983).

From this perspective, it is arguable that migration studies have been so far dominated by the category of *time*. Time is surely a relevant dimension to capture the ongoing processes of cultural adaptation (Berry 1980), the learning of new languages and their symbolic nuances, the establishment of new social linkages, consumption practices, and meaningful experiences (Peñaloza and Gilly 1999).

Nonetheless, migration can be fruitfully understood also in the light of the category of *space*. Migrants enter territories, homes, marketplaces. They cross regions to settle down and reconnect with family members. The relevance of space in understanding culture and the relationships migrants establish with it are crystal clear in a world where cultural dynamicity and its deterritorialization are increasing (Craig and Douglas 2006).

However, a bunch of consumer studies dealing with migration and space is noteworthy. Transnationalism has come to the edge (Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999). Sometimes, transnational consumption experiences are mediated by the brands and remain within the sphere of imagination (Cayla and Eckhardt 2008). Other times, and more easily, transnationalism relates to real migration paths (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994) and openly interrogates the issue of place (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Hannerz 1992).

Second, consumer researchers have documented the impact of globalization on the shaping of consumers' global identity (Üçok and Kjeldgaard 2006). Among others, Thompson and Tambyah (1999) highlight the tensions expatriates meet during their migratory process, in which nomadism and cultural adaptability contrast their loss of home.

In this paper, I look at space as *collective space*. Immigrants reach a new country, and their encounter is objectified through the encounter with a new city. Also, the city is a "shared land" in which migrants overcome the invisibility that the market and media sometimes generate. Being visible, they can reclaim a subject position and become active agents in/of their context of living. As noted by Kostof (1992, 123), public space is actually "a destination, a purpose-built stage for ritual and interaction." The city is a collector of rival ideologies about the role that different dwellers have to express (Visconti et al., forthcoming).

From this viewpoint, understanding the way migrants live the city holds a terrific explanatory power about the processes of social inclusion, justice and equity, market and civic legitimation, and the power migrants have to cope with the contradictory stances posed by migration and the hosting culture.

This research is an ethnographic inquiry conducted in the city of Milan, Italy. The project is at an early stage of data collection. Three main typologies of neighbourhoods have been selected: i) areas dominated by migrant's dwellers belonging to a single ethnicity (mono-ethnic ghettoes); ii) areas appropriated by a prevalence of migrants from different ethnicities (multi-ethnic ghettoes); and, iii) areas of coexistence between autochthonous dwellers and migrants (dialogical areas). Sites of investigation span from citizens' dwellings (homes) to commercial spaces, and from profane recreational areas (e.g., parks, gardens, etc.) to sacred religious sites. Informants are involved both individually and jointly, in the form of families, religious communities, or associational groups.

This project aims at answering to a list of relevant questions. Do migrants feel part of the city they inhabit? How do they establish geographical, symbolic and emotional rooting in their cities? How do they feel about ethnic ghettoes or dialogical areas? Do they get involved in confrontations with other members of their neighbourhood? But also, how do they envision urban changes and to what extent do they feel legitimized to or interested in being part of this change?

Overall, my work extends our understanding of acculturation by reading it through the lens of collective space since the city should not be meant as a physical space only but also as a mental space (Park and Burgess 1984). As such, the city and the way dwellers live it mirror the existing social tensions, the identity projects of its inhabitants (Minowa, Visconti, and Maclaran, 2010), and the very fabric of acculturative practices.

"Mobile Ethnicities In Global Cities"

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Moving beyond the traditional concept of ethnic migration and acculturation, our study aims to highlight the fluidity and mobility of ethnic representation in global cities (Bauman 2000). New forms of governance and market competition, along with the ever-increasing interaction between ethnic groups and ideologies alter the concept of nation and cities under the globalization discourse (Bhabha 1994; Appadurai 1996). The de-territorialization and re-territorialization of culturally diverse migrants not only challenges the traditional conceptualization of ethnicity which is associated with its geographic origin and historical roots,   but also create a new order of global cities such as Toronto, New York, London, and Sydney (Sassen 1991). The construction of ethnic ghettos and expatriate regions illustrate the concept of multiplicity, diversity and complexity of the global city landscape. The co-existence of different groups from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds not only problematizes the form of and space for ethnic representations, but also forces different policy makers and cultural agents to create new strategies to ensure and maintain the harmony of the marketplace. Through comparing the commonalities and differences

among mobile groups' experiences in different socio-cultural settings (expatriates in Sydney and immigrants in Toronto) our current study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) what is the role of global cities in organizing market-mediated ethnic relations and (2) how do ethnicities become resources for mobile consumers' identity projects in culturally diverse global cities? In order words, we are interested in studying the power relationships among different cultural agents in the construction of the "imagined" global cities (Anderson 1983; Pieterse 2007) and how individuals re-perform ethnicities within the global cultural supermarket (Mathews 2000).

Prior research on the movement of ethnic groups primarily focuses on acculturation and identity negotiation issues (e.g., Peñaloza 1994, Oswald 1999, Askegaard, Arnould and Kjeldgaard 2005; Üstüner and Holt 2007) but the impact of the mobilized group on the local cultures as well as the power relationships in facilitating the ethnic relations have been under-researched. The movement of ethnic groups, in many cases, challenges the structure and order of the city in a different way than they do in other contexts. In addition, the multiplicity and friction (Tsing 2005) of the various populations generate issues that related to market representation, ethnic identification and public policy. Also, literature on acculturation overlooks the creative and productive aspect of adaptation and representation in culturally diverse landscapes and the power of these landscapes in shaping consumption. Therefore research on the mutually constitutive inter-relationships between cultural practices in the construction of global cities and mobile identities is necessary.

In this study we adopted the multi-sited ethnographic method (Marcus 1998) to extend our understanding of the construction of "global cities" and the pattern of identity projects among mobile consumers (immigrants and expatriates) in two multi-ethnic global cities: Sydney and Toronto. The choice of cities was based on the fact that both rank among the top ten in ethnic diversity and welcome factor (Florida 2008). Moreover, both share public policies that openly aim to attract skilled labor (Salt 1997). By comparing the historical and socio-cultural development of these global cities we identified how a colonial past and government policies shape the construction of global city markets, and how different waves of immigration and migration re-construct the order and dynamic of the city. We also conducted participation observations, photographs and long interviews in order to have a better understanding of the identity projects and ethnic-related consumption practices among mobile groups in a naturalistic setting (Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf 1988). The multicultural background of the researchers together with the diversified cultural experiences of our informants allows us to triangulate our data from multiple sources and points of view.

Both Sydney and Toronto have experienced British colonial rule as well as successive waves of immigration in the past century, and the significant population changes underway in each means there is no numerically "dominant" group in either city. Our findings suggest that global cities provide a "stage" for performing multiplicity and diversity. Under the influence of multicultural policies and the organization of ethnicized space as well as the encouragement in preserving cultural uniqueness and mutual accommodation, consumers in Sydney and Toronto learn tolerance and open themselves to diversity, and are encouraged to preserve, display and exhibit their cultural practices. Ethnic-themed festivals, public policies that celebrate special ethnic holidays, the organization of neighborhoods, and ethnic-themed businesses highlight cultural differences within global city spaces and our findings demonstrate that the very meaning of ethnicity also undergoes a series of preservation, authentication, transformation and reinvention processes. As a result, ethnicity itself becomes a dynamic resource for mobile members

of all ethnic backgrounds. At the same time, different motilities use these resources in different ways according to their intention to stay and cultural knowledge. In order words, the structure and order of global cities, although different from one another, embody ideologies of mobility, of difference, and of multiple identities. This ideology becomes an important enabler of alternative identities (e.g. cosmopolitans) and alternative representations of the existing ones (e.g. diverse market-mediated representations of Chineseness).

This article supports a conceptualization of ethnicity and locality not in opposition to the global, but in relation to social, political, and cultural relationships that operate within and beyond these particular spaces. More specifically, our research extends current understanding on the role of global cities not only as culturally diverse landscapes, but as enablers of ethnic negotiations. It suggests that global cities are important arenas for revising and reinventing ethnic relations and ethnic symbols. Moreover, the history and organization of the city play defining roles in the identity construction of mobile ethnic groups. Thus, in an important extension to the consumer acculturation literature, this article shows that global cities are structured in a way that highlights mobility and integration and downplays assimilation.

"The Role Of The Marketplace In The Immigrant Women's Negotiation Of Place Within The Dominated Space"

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Most of the research regarding immigrant consumer acculturation has been carried out in environments with a long history and experience with immigration, such as the United States (Peñaloza 1994, Oswald 1999), United Kingdom (Jamal 2000, Lindridge, Hogg and Shah 2004), or Denmark (Askegaard, Arnould and Kjeldgaard 2005). However influential and important these studies, they concentrated on the immigrants' creative ethnic identity construction through the marketplace offerings in the contexts, in which the studied minority's culture was, in one way or another, commodified and marketed also to the mainstream. Such situation, then, creates a specific climate, in which there are certain legitimate ethnic identity positions created for the immigrants in and by the marketplace. It was, in fact, illustrated how, with time, the same marketers become influenced and changed by marketing to the ethnic minorities (and therefore more receptive and open towards the catered ethnic group), and how, for instance, English/Spanish bilingual advertisement legitimizes the Hispanics' presence in the American marketplace (Peñaloza and Gilly 1999). In such contexts, therefore, the space of the multicultural city can be seen as co-created by the dominant group and the ethnic minorities.

However, the immigration phenomenon is not confined to countries with a long tradition of accommodating differences. On the contrary, with the process of globalization, more First World countries become the destination of migrants from developing parts of the world. Given this premise, it becomes crucial to study the underlying conditions that allow for the accommodation of differences and the minimization of "otherness" within the multicultural spaces. One possible way to advance such knowledge is to study contexts in which the construction of such spaces is in its embryonic stage. In empirical contexts, in fact, in which the marketplace (and the society) is immature due to the recency of the immigration phenomenon, legitimate ethnic identity positions may not be offered. The common space, then, is not co-constructed, but rather constituted by the dominant group, as is the immigrants' place within the space. It is a question, then, if the immigrants in such setting still use the marketplace offerings to construct their hybrid ethnic identities, or if they are constrained to their "place"

by the dominating discourses in a similar manner as proposed by Üstüner and Holt (2007).

The empirical context of the current study mirrors the above considerations, as it focuses on the Romanian female immigrants to Italy. Italy, traditionally a country of emigration and the source of workers for other European economies has not yet quite recovered from the "shock" of becoming the country of immigration some twenty years ago. As a result, multiculturalism or ethnic marketplace is still in diapers, especially outside the few big cities that could be considered as global. Italian companies, convinced by the media representation of immigrants as victims or delinquents (more than eighty percent of television and newspaper coverage on immigration in 2002) (Napolitano and Visconti 2007), do not consider them as feasible market segments. As a consequence, certain subjectivities are constructed in and by the marketplace. In the specific case of the food market serving the Romanian immigrants in Italy, for instance, the same organization of the marketplace where it is the small shops of Romanian propriety that cater to the Romanian community, but none of the mainstream distribution channels, creates a sort of subjectivity that evidently favors the self-perception of an "immigrant", rather than an integrated part of a multiethnic culture.

Yet, through the marketplace, the immigrant women also come into contact with the consumer culture representation of the modern woman, a woman that, through her consumption choices, can be whoever she wants to be (McDonald 2000). The representation of women in the consumer culture can be seen, and indeed has been criticized, as another discursive apparatus that constitutes female subjectivity in a certain way, more precisely as a gendered version of the neoliberal "enterprising consumer" (Catterall, Maclaren and Stevens 2005). The notion of the "enterprising self" is based on the economic and political liberalism that sees in a subject a self-defined, self-motivated individual that is free and able to decide what he wants and does what he can to reach it, assuming the responsibility for his own life (Slater 1997).

Based on depth interviews and video-registered cooking sessions with Romanian immigrants, I studied the way immigrant women use marketplace-originated symbolic resources to negotiate the subjectivities (places) ascribed to them within the dominant spaces. I concentrated on the practices of everyday life, namely cooking, as a means of resistance. Drawing on De Certeau's notion of consumption practices as "tactics" through which the "weak" appropriate the dominant "spaces" much as the reader appropriates the written text with his/her own imagination, I show how the immigrant women draw on the discourse of the "enterprising consumer" in its gendered alternative of the "modern just-do-it woman" and by doing so, they re-interpret the subject position of immigrant assigned to them.

The research shows that even when the "space" and the immigrants' "place" within it are constituted as a hegemonic structure by the dominating group, consumers are still able to make use of the symbolic resources offered by the marketplace to negotiate such identity positions. Further, it is illustrated how, with a growing cultural capital based on consumer culture knowledge and education, the immigrants make benefit of the marketplace symbolic resources in a more nuanced way, primarily by making use of what little multiethnic offerings the market provides in the construction of a cosmopolitan identity that allows them to take a reflexive distance from the dominated subjectivity assigned to them.

"Ethnic Entrepreneurs: The Identity-Enhancing Tactics of Global City Consumption"

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How has consumer culture theory constructed migrant consumers? Below is a short collection of voices. Following the standard view, migrant consumers must

"not only cope with foreign languages, diverging cultural habits, and alternative markets, but also with multiple "ascriptive identities" (Horowitz 1975) and multifaceted national discourses and practices" (Luedicke and Giesler 2009)

"live in a society that undermines the building blocks of their identities: their ethnicities" (Özçaglar-Toulouse and Üstüner 2009)

"grapple with an alien mass-produced culture" (Üstüner and Holt 2007)

"struggle to extract a sense of real identity from acculturative experiences that are often anxiety provoking" (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005)

"[be] fearful of being pigeonholed into stereotypes or fetishized into objects of curiosity" (Oswald 1999)

"confront a myriad of frustrating and seemingly intractable sociocultural barriers to getting inside the local culture" (Thompson and Tambyah 1999)

"[deal with] conflict and pressure to adjust to the way of life in the United States" (Peñaloza 1994)

Furthermore, migrant consumers are

"unable to engage with, let alone negotiate through the use of product consumption, daily interactions between South Asian and British White cultures (Lindridge and Dhillon 2005)

To conclude, migration is

"the emergency situation (economical crisis or the experience of the unknown upon arrival) (Chytkova and Özçaglar-Toulouse, 2010)

"not a simple process of integration but one that is highly contested and characterized by conflict" (Wamwara-Mbugua and Cornwell 2006)

"disempowering" (Chytkova and Özçaglar-Toulouse, 2010)

The existing theoretical picture on migrant consumption can be summarized as follows: Migrant consumers are suffering from adverse social circumstances due to the overwhelming challenge of negotiating competing identities and cultural practices in an unfamiliar sociocultural and market environment. Sedentary consumers, on the other hand, are generally more empowered due to their familiarity with the national context's sociocultural norms and market system. We characterize this view as the "struggling migrant" model.

To engage this dominant theoretical perspective, we studied migrant consumers of Roma ethnicity in three global cities. The Roma are commonly portrayed as a victimized ethnicity whose culture has been under constant threat by nation-state norms through centuries of official persecution, slavery, forced assimilation and attempted integration in all the countries that they migrated to (Belton 2005; Liégeois 1994; Petrova 2003). As a consequence, these migrant consumers should struggle the most.

As we interviewed the Roma consumers, we came to believe that the "struggling migrant" model fails to capture some of the most powerful identity-enhancing consumer tactics that are enabled in the context of global cities. Sociologist Saskia Sassen (2006, 316) has argued that "current conditions in global cities are creating not only new structurations of power but also operational and rhetorical openings for new types of political actors that may have been submerged, invisible, or without voice." Unlike other cities, the global city consists of a complicated and powerful nexus of economic, political, sociocultural, and infrastructural resources and structures that, when used effectively, enables citizens to establish a meaningful presence. Our consumer cultural addendum to this definition is that these resources and structures become the subject of consumption, and that this agentic consumption takes the shape of what we define as ethnic entrepreneurship.

To reveal ethnic entrepreneurship, we illustrate how our Roma migrants consume the available structures and resources of the global city in creative and often unexpected ways in order to support and enhance their ethnic identities. For example, the informants use the cities' advanced resources to create Roma organizations and community centers that provide an internal network of assistance, cultural solidarity and information exchange exclusively for Roma citizens. Similar to Belk and Paun's findings (1995, 2001) that "[Roma] survive by cleverness in adaptation, by finding viable economic niches," all of our informants pride themselves on being crafty businessmen, as well as highly flexible in their consumption of food, religion and clothing. However, upon closer inspection this seeming flexibility is a rhetorical device used to protect their core cultural identity from outsiders (the non-Roma), including us in the role of researchers. Furthermore they creatively integrate themselves in the global city's network in order to optimize their consumption of all available social services. We discuss these findings in detail and establish important interpretive boundary conditions by comparing Roma consumption and ethnic entrepreneurship in three different global cities.

In terms of methodological details, our study is part of a larger ethnographic and netnographic (Kozinets 2002) investigation of Roma consumers in Toronto, Pisa and Berlin. Our collection of ethnographic and consumer interview data was completed in the summer of 2009 and subsequently analyzed. The study intentionally spans three cities for the purpose of interpretive triangulation. Roma informants were solicited through Roma and activist websites, as well as Roma organizations. We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 29 Roma consumers, where everyday activities (e.g. housing, working, education, dress, religion, cooking, family and traveling) were discussed. In order to better understand the overall sociocultural and political environment of the respective global cities, we also interviewed national citizens, which were mainly solicited from anti-Roma websites and online discussion forums, as well as public officials across the social services, immigration, child welfare, and education sectors. The complete data set included 65 in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which ranged from 30 minutes to four hours in length, as well as 140 pages of online material, historical data, and media reports. A hermeneutic approach was used to analyze the data (Thompson 1997).

In conclusion, we combine our empirical findings with extant sociological research to trace the genealogy of the "struggling migrant" thesis in consumer culture research. We find that the "struggling migrant" thesis is an example of methodological nationalism. Critical sociologists define methodological nationalism as the assumption that the nation-state is the natural and necessary form of social, political and geographic organization in modernity (Beck 2000; Chernilo 2006; Wimmer and Schiller 2002). According to these scholars contemporary mainstream social theory has generally taken nationally bounded spaces and societies for granted, which overlooks other important human realities. For this reason, consumer theories on migration would not have predicted the important role of the global city as a strategic consumption resource in migrant consumers identity work. Our results offer new and important theoretical insights by presenting the empowered ethnic entrepreneur that creatively consumes the global city in order to reinforce his/her ethnic identity.

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entrepreneurs.[5][6] While definitions of entrepreneurship typically focus on the launching and running of businesses, due to the high risks involved in launching a start-up, a significant proportion of start-up businesses have to close due to "lack of funding, bad business decisions, government policies, an economic crisis, lack of market demand, or a combination of all of these. ."[7]. In the field of economics, the term entrepreneur is used for an entity which has the ability to translate inventions or technologies into products and services.[8] In this sense, entrepreneurship describes activities on the part of both established firms and new businesses. Contents. 1 Perspectives on entrepreneurship. With an increase in ethnic diversity the likelihood of being engaged in start-up activity decreases then increases. View. Show abstract. Entrepreneurship research is increasingly taking into account external factors in order to provide context for the conditions under which new firms are created. Thus, the entrepreneur is increasingly recognized as a constituent part of the ecosystems in which they operate. In addition, a strong and vibrant ecosystem should be host to diversity—the presence of migrant entrepreneurs is a sign of this diversity, contributing to the ecosystem at the city level. Entrepreneurs can be the life-blood of a city, creating new businesses, jobs, and opportunities. Social and creative entrepreneurs can add even greater value. Their motivation is not just about creating financial wealth, it's about creating beauty, social value, and environmental benefit. City authorities are not trying to tackle these challenges alone. Many of the citizens who live with these challenges day to day are also creating solutions. Some cities are still waking up to the potential of these creative and social entrepreneurs, or just beginning to explore how to facilitate their work. Some cities already embrace their contribution and are creating an environment where their talents can thrive and help build cohesive, vibrant communities.