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URBAN SOCIOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Identifying critical issues confronting an urban sociology of the twenty-first century entails a decision and a judgment, both in turn inevitably derived from an interpretation of history in the making. The enterprise is, thus, partial and positioned. Developing analytical and empirical elements (and I emphasize elements) for an urban sociology focused on the early twenty-first century does not override existing sociological tools nor the rich scholarship on cities. Indeed, the trends this chapter focuses on do not necessarily encompass the prevailing features of the urban condition today. Most of social life in cities probably still corresponds to older continuing and familiar trends. That is why much of urban sociology's traditions and well-established subfields will remain important and continue to constitute the heart of this discipline. At the same time, if one were confined to traditional concepts of urban sociology, one would overlook or underestimate critical aspects of major new trends coming together in a growing number of cities. And while there are good reasons why most of urban sociology has not quite engaged these issues, notably the deficiencies of current data sets to address trends at the level of the city, we need to push forward. Already in the 1980s and 1990s, we have seen important contributions to this forward-looking task in the field of sociology (e.g., Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Sassen-Koob 1982; Gottdiener 1985; Rodriguez and Feagin 1986; Castells 1989; King 1990; Zukin 1991; Abu-Lughod 1994; Lash and Urry 1994; Smith 1995, to cite but a few) as well as in other disciplines. But current trends also signal the beginning of a whole new research and theorization agenda.[1]

Large cities around the world are today the terrain where some of the novel conditions marking the twenty-first century hit the ground: Multiple globalization processes assume concrete localized forms, electronic networks intersect with thick environments (whether financial centers or activist meetings), and new subjectivities arise from the encounters of people from all around the world. Thus, today's large cities have emerged as a strategic site for a whole range of new types of operations, some pertaining to the global economy (e.g., Globalization and World Cities Study Group and Network [GaWC]; Fainstein and Judd 1999; Scott 2001; Abrahamson 2004; Gugler 2004; Rutherford 2004; Amen, Archer, and Bosman 2006; Harvey, forthcoming) and others to political, cultural, and subjective domains (e.g., Abu-Lughod 1994; Clark and Hoffman-Martinot 1998; Allen, Massey, and Pryke 1999; Watson and Bridges 1999; Glaeser 2000; Cordero-Guzman, Smith, and Grosfoguel 2001; Krause and Petro 2003; Lloyd 2005; Brenner and Keil 2006).

Some of these trends are urban, but others are not and merely find in the city one of the sites for their enactment. Either way, it suggests that cities are a type of place where we can carry out detailed ethnographies, surveys, or other types of empirical studies about several of today's major processes that are global at least in some of their dimensions. It is one of the nexuses where the new types of trends materialize and assume concrete forms that can be constituted as objects of study.

The effort in this chapter is to discuss the scholarship that has sought to capture these trends in their urban shape. The chapter is thus not a comprehensive examination of the vast scholarship on urban sociology, mostly focused on more familiar conditions, but an attempt to detect novel trends becoming evident in cities as we enter

the twenty-first century. Following a brief introduction, the first half of this chapter examines a series of major economic dynamics that carry significant urban implications and hence call for the development of novel analytic elements. The second half follows the same logic but in this case focuses on a variety of transnational political and cultural processes.

THE CITY AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY

As an object of study, the city has long been a debatable construct in sociology and in the social sciences generally, whether in earlier writings (Castells 1972; Harvey 1985; Timberlake 1985; Logan and Molotch 1987; Lefebvre [1974] 1991) or in more recent ones (Taylor 1995; Brenner 1998; Dear 2001; Thrift and Amin 2002; Ascher 2004; Veltz 2005; Short 2006). The concept of the city is complex, imprecise, and charged with specific historical and thereby variable meanings (e.g., Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1967; Castells 1972; Harvey 1985; Sennett 1994; Wellman 1999; Paddison 2001). Today's major trends further add to these debates and complexity.

We can identify two major trends that lie behind this variety of conditions and that organize this chapter. One is a major shift in state policy toward targeting particular subnational spaces for development and resource allocation—and away from the promotion of convergence in national territorial development. Particular types of cities and advanced high-tech industrial districts are two of the main targets, with global cities and "silicon valleys" the most extreme instances. This shift toward privileging particular subnational spaces partly arises from globalization and the new information technologies. To this we can add a second critical trend associated and enabled by globalization and the expanding presence of the new information technologies in all domains of social life: the emergence of new cultural forms that cannot be contained exclusively within national framings, such as global imaginaries and cultural transnationalisms. Cities have turned out to be important spaces for enacting some of these novel cultural elements. These two major trends have significant implications for our analysis and theorization of cities at the dawn of the twenty-first century. While these trends today may hold especially for major cities, they are directly or indirectly affecting a rapidly growing range of diverse types of cities.

Today's conditions bring to the fore the fact that major cities are nodes, where a variety of economic, political, and subjective processes intersect in particularly pronounced concentrations. In the context of globalization, many of these processes are not only operate at a global scale but also materialize in the concrete environments of cities. Thus, cities emerge as one territorial or scalar moment in a variety of transurban dynamics. This is, however, not the city as a bounded unit, but the city as a complex location in a grid of cross-boundary processes. Furthermore, this type of city is not simply one step in the ladder of the traditional scalar hierarchy that puts cities above the neighborhood and below the national, regional, and global levels. Rather, it is one of the spaces of the global, and it engages the global directly, often bypassing the national (Sassen 2006a, chaps. 5–7**[AU: No ref.]**). Some cities may have had this capacity long before the current era (e.g., King 1990; several chapters in Gugler 2004) but today these conditions extend to a growing number of cities and to a growing number of sectors within cities. This can be read as a qualitatively different phase. Furthermore, insofar as the national as container of social process and power is cracked (Taylor 1995; Wellman 1999; Abu-Lughod 2000; Beck 2000; Brenner 2004; Orum and Chen 2004), it opens up possibilities for a geography of politics that links subnational spaces across borders. This points to the formation of a new type of transnational politics that localizes in these cities (e.g., Bhachu 1985; Valle and Torres 2000; Chinchilla and Hamilton 2001; Cordero-Guzman et al. 2001), and to the possibility that the emergent global civil society posited by a growing number of scholars (e.g., see chapters in Glasius, Kaldor, and Anheier 2002; Beck 2006; Bartlett, forthcoming; Nashashibi, forthcoming **[AU: No ref.]**) is actually partly enacted in a network of cities.

This type of perspective reintroduces place in the analysis of major nonurban dynamics, more precisely, the challenge of recovering place in the context of globalization, the new information technologies, and the intensifying of transnational and translocal dynamics. But it also reintroduces place in the study of cities. One obvious tradition of scholarship that comes to mind in this regard is the old school of ecological analysis (Park et al. 1967; Suttles 1968; see also Duncan 1959; Anderson 1990). One might ask if their methods could be particularly useful in recovering the category place under current conditions. Robert Park and the Chicago School conceived of "natural areas" as geographic areas determined by unplanned, subcultural forces. Some of the best studies in urban sociology were produced using fieldwork within a framework of human ecology—mapping detailed distributions and assuming functional complementarity among the diverse "natural areas" identified in Chicago.[2]

I would argue that detailed fieldwork is a necessary step in capturing many of the new aspects in the urban condition, including those having to do with the major trends focused on in this article. But assuming complementarity brings us back to the notion of the city as a bounded space and to notions of functional ecologies. Instead, today we need to see the city as one site, albeit a strategic one, where multiple transboundary processes intersect and produce distinct sociospatial formations. So one could say that recovering place can only partly be met through the techniques of research of the old Chicago School of urban sociology. I do think that we need to go back to the school's depth of engagement with urban areas and the effort toward detailed mappings. The type of ethnographies done by Duneier (1999), the scholars Burawoy et al. (1991),

Klinenberg (2003), Lloyd (2005), McRoberts (2005) are excellent examples, using many of the techniques yet working within a different set of assumptions.

To some extent, it is the major cities in the highly developed world that most clearly display the processes discussed here, or best lend themselves to the heuristics deployed. However, increasingly these processes are present in cities in developing countries as well (Santos, De Souze, and Silveira 1994; Knox and Taylor 1995; Cohen et al. 1996; Stren 1996; Parnreiter 2002; Parsa and Keivani 2002; Schiffer Ramos 2002; Gugler 2004; several chapters in Amen et al. 2006). Their lesser visibility is often due to the fact they are submerged in the megacity syndrome. Sheer population size and urban sprawl create their own orders of magnitude (e.g., Dogan and Kasarda 1988; Gugler 2004; Kerbo 2005); and while they may not alter much the power equation that I describe, they do change the weight, and the legibility, of some of these properties (e.g., Portes and Lungo 1992a, 1992b; Cohen et al. 1996; Stren 1996; Marcuse and van Kempen 2000; Roberts and Portes 2006).

In the next few sections, we examine these issues through the lens of the urban economy in a global digital age. In the second half of the chapter, we do so through the lens of politics and culture.

CITIES IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

The meaning of cities in a global and increasingly digitized age is one of the subjects we confront as we enter the new century (Friedmann 1986; Castells 1989; Short and Kim 1999; Torres and Valle 1999**[AU: No ref.]**; Sassen [1991] 2001, 2006a, chaps. 5, 7; Thrift and Amin 2002; Drainville 2004). Yet the understandings and the categories that still dominate mainstream discussions about the future of advanced economies imply that in a global digital age, the city has become obsolete for leading economic actors; this would also imply the obsoleteness of the city as a site for researching major nonurban dynamics (for an appraisal of this problem, see National Academy of Sciences 2003). We need to subject these notions to critical examination. There are at least two sets of issues that need to be teased out if we are to understand the role of cities in a global information economy and, further, the capacity of urban research to produce knowledge about that economy. One of these concerns the extent to which these new types of electronic formations, such as electronic financial markets, are indeed disembedded from social contexts. The second set of issues concerns the role of place for global firms and global markets.

In the late twentieth century, massive developments in telecommunications and the ascendance of information industries led analysts and politicians to proclaim the end of cities. Cities, they told us, would become obsolete as economic entities. The growth of information industries allows firms and workers to remain connected no matter where they are located. The digitizing of services and trade shifts many economic transactions to electronic networks, where they can move instantaneously around the globe or within a country. Indeed from the 1970s onward, we saw large-scale relocations of offices and factories to less congested and lower-cost areas than central cities, and we saw the growth of computerized workplaces that could be located anywhere—in a clerical "factory" in the Bahamas or in a home in the suburbs. Finally, the emergent globalization of economic activity seemed to suggest that place—particularly the type of place represented by cities—no longer mattered.

All these trends are happening, and they are becoming more intense. But they are only half of the story of today's global and digital age. Alongside the well-documented spatial dispersal of economic activities and the digitizing of growing parts of the sphere of consumption and entertainment, we are seeing in a growing number of cities a growing concentration of a wide range of highly specialized professional activities, top-level management and control operations, and perhaps most unexpectedly, a multiplication of low-wage jobs and low-profit economic sectors. More analytically, we might think of these trends as the development of novel forms of territorial centralization amidst rapidly expanding economic and social networks with global span.

Given the generalized trends toward dispersal—whether at the metropolitan or global level—and the widespread conviction that this is the future, what requires explaining is that at the same time we see this growth of centralized territorial nodes. What the evidence is increasingly showing is that firms and markets that operate in multisited national and global settings require central places where the top-level work of running global systems gets done. Furthermore, information technologies and industries designed to span the globe actually require a vast physical infrastructure containing strategic nodes with hyperconcentrations of very material facilities. Finally, even the most advanced information industries, such as global finance and the specialized corporate legal and accounting services, have a "production" process that is partly place bound (see, generally, Sassen 2006b**[AU: No ref.]**).

Once these place-centered processes are brought into the analysis of the new global and electronic economy, funny things happen. It turns out to be not only the world of top-level transnational managers and professionals but also that of their secretaries and that of the janitors cleaning the buildings where the new class works. Furthermore, it also turns out to be the world of a whole new workforce, often increasingly immigrant and minoritized citizens, who take on the functions once performed by the mother or wife of the older middle classes: Nannies, domestic cleaners, and dog walkers also hold jobs in the new globalized sectors of the economy. So do truck drivers and industrial service workers. We see the emergence of an economic configuration very different from that suggested by the concept of information economy. We recover the material conditions, production sites, and place boundedness that are also part of globalization and the

information economy. To understand the new globalized economic sectors, we actually need detailed examinations of a broad range of urban activities, firms, markets, and physical infrastructures that go beyond the images of global electronic networks and the new globally circulating professional classes. (See, e.g., Samers 2002; Ehrenreich and Hocschild 2003; but see also, e.g., Ruggiero and South 1997; Hagedorn 2006.)

These types of detailed examinations allow us to see the actual role played by cities in a global economy. They help us understand why when the new information technologies and telecommunications infrastructures were introduced on a large scale in all advanced industries beginning in the 1980s, we saw sharp growth in the central business districts of the leading cities and international business centers of the world—New York, Los Angeles, London, Tokyo, Paris, Frankfurt, Sao Paulo, Hong Kong, Sydney, Toronto, among others. For some cities, this took off in the 1980s and for others, in the 1990s. But all experienced some of their highest growth in decades in the actual area covered by state-of-the-art office districts, the related high-end shopping, hotel, and entertainment districts, high-income residential neighborhoods, and the numbers of firms located and opening up in these downtown areas (Sassen 2006b, chap. 4). These trends in major cities go against what should have been expected according to models emphasizing territorial dispersal; this is especially true when one considers the high cost of locating in a major downtown area. Complicating understanding and often getting most of the attention from the media and commentators was the considerable number of large banks and insurance firms and the administrative headquarters of large firms moving out in the 1980s even as the number of smaller, highly specialized and high-profit firms was beginning to grow rapidly in the downtowns of major cities. This shows us that the growth trends taking shape in central cities beneath the aggregate data about losses were part of a new type of economic configuration that could not be captured through standard categories.

THE INTERSECTION OF
GLOBAL PROCESSES AND CITIES

These trends raise a series of questions about cities that begin with larger, not necessarily urban issues. How are the management, financing, and servicing processes of internationalization actually constituted in cities that function as regional or global nodes in the world economy? And what is the actual part of the larger work of running the global operations of firms and markets that gets done in these cities?

The answers to these two questions help us understand the new or sharply expanded role of a particular kind of city in the world economy that took off in the mid-1980s. At the heart of this development lie two intersecting processes that are critical to the current economic phase

and have received little attention—either empirical or conceptual—from urban sociology, except in the scholarship on world and global cities.

The first process is the sharp growth in the globalization of economic activity. Economic globalization has raised the scale and the complexity of international transactions, thereby feeding the growth of top-level multinational headquarter functions and the growth of services for firms, particularly advanced corporate services. It is important to note that even though globalization raises the scale and complexity of these central functions, these trends are also evident at smaller geographic scales and lower orders of complexity, as would be the case with firms that operate regionally or nationally; central functions also become more complex in these firms as they run increasingly dispersed operations, even though not global, notably setting up chains (often by buying up the traditional single-owner shops) to sell flowers, food, fuel, or run chains of hotels and a growing range of service facilities. Although operating in simpler contexts, these firms also need to centralize their control, management, and specialized servicing functions. National and regional market firms need not negotiate the complexities of international borders and the regulations and accounting rules of different countries, but they do create a growing demand for corporate services of all kinds, feeding economic growth in second-order cities.

The second process we need to consider, and one that has received little if any attention from urban sociology, is the growing service intensity in the organization of all industries (see Sassen [1991] 2001,chap. 5; for a comprehensive overview, see Bryson and Daniels 2006). While it partly overlaps with the first process, it is important to recognize that this development has contributed to a massive growth in the demand for services by firms in all industries, from mining and manufacturing to finance and consumer services. Cities are key sites for the production of services for firms. Hence, the increase in service intensity in the organization of all industries has had a significant growth effect on cities beginning in the 1980s. It is important to recognize that this growth in services for firms is evident in cities at different levels of a nation's urban system. Some of these cities cater to regional or subnational markets, others cater to national markets, and yet others cater to global markets. In this context, the specific effect of globalization can be conceived of as one of scale and added complexity.

The key process from the perspective of the urban economy is the growing demand for services by firms in all industries and across market scale—global, national, or regional.

As a result of these two intersecting processes, we see in cities the formation of a new urban economic core of high-level management and specialized service activities that comes to replace the older, typically manufacturing-oriented office core. In the case of cities that are major international business centers, the scale, power, and profit levels of this new core suggest that we are seeing the formation of a new urban economy. This is so in at least two

regards. First, even though many of these cities have long been centers for business and finance, since the mid-1980s there have been dramatic changes in the structure of their business and financial sectors, as well as sharp increases in the overall magnitude and weight of these sectors in the urban economy (Sassen [1991] 2001, chaps. 5–7; Abrahamson 2004; Madigan 2004; Bryson and Daniels 2006). Second, the ascendance of the new finance and services complex, particularly in international finance, engenders what may be regarded as a new economic regime; that is, although this sector may account for only a fraction of the economy of a city, it imposes itself on that larger economy. Most notably, the possibility for superprofits in finance has the effect of devalorizing manufacturing insofar as the latter cannot generate the superprofits typical in much financial activity.

This is not to say that everything in the economy of these cities has changed. On the contrary, they still show a great deal of continuity and many similarities with cities that are not global. Rather, the implantation of global processes and markets has meant that the internationalized sector of the economy has expanded sharply and has imposed a new valorization dynamic—that is, a new set of criteria for valuing or pricing various economic activities and outcomes. This has had devastating effects on large sectors of the urban economy. High prices and profit levels in the internationalized sector and its ancillary activities, such as top-of-the-line restaurants and hotels, have made it increasingly difficult for other sectors to compete for space and investments. Many of these other sectors have experienced considerable downgrading and/or displacement; for example, neighborhood shops tailored to local needs are replaced by upscale boutiques and restaurants catering to the new high-income urban elite.

Although at a different order of magnitude, these trends also took off in the early 1990s in a number of major cities in the developing world that have become integrated into various world markets: Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Bangkok, Taipei, and Mexico City are only a few examples. Also in these cities, the new urban core was fed by the deregulation of financial markets, the ascendance of finance and specialized services, and integration into the world markets. The opening of stock markets to foreign investors and the privatization of what were once public sector firms have been crucial institutional arenas for this articulation. Given the vast size of some of these cities, the impact of this new core on their larger urban area is not always as evident as in central London or Frankfurt, but the transformation is still very real.

NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL URBAN SYSTEMS

The trends described in the preceding sections point to the emergence of a new kind of urban system, one operating at the global and transnational regional levels. This is a system wherein cities are crucial nodes for the international coordination and servicing of firms, markets, and even whole economies that are increasingly transnational. And these cities emerge as strategic places in an emergent transnational political and cultural geography. Most cities, however, including most large cities, are not part of these new transnational urban systems, a subject I address briefly in the next section. Typically, urban systems are coterminous with nation-states, and most cities exist within these national geographies. Correspondingly, with rare exceptions (Chase-Dunn 1984; Timberlake 1985; GaWC 1998; Sassen [1991] 2001), studies of city systems have until recently assumed that the nation-state is the unit of analysis. While this is still the most common view, there is now a growing scholarship that allows for the possibility that intercity networks can cross national borders directly, bypassing the interstate system. This novel focus is partly a function of actual changes in the international sphere, notably the formation of global economic processes discussed in the preceding section and the accompanying deregulation and opening up of national systems.

A rapidly growing and highly specialized research literature began to focus in the 1980s on different types of economic linkages binding cities across national borders (Noyelle and Dutka 1988; Castells 1989; Daniels 1991). Today, this has emerged as a major issue of interest to a variety of disciplines (see, e.g., the growing number of entries in the GaWC Web site (www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc); Graham and Marvin 1996; Simmonds and Hack 2000; Scott 2001; Smith and Timberlake 2002; Gugler 2004; Amen et al. 2006), even though the data are partial and often problematic. Prime examples of such linkages are the multinational networks of affiliates and subsidiaries typical of major firms in manufacturing and specialized services. The internationalization and deregulation of various financial markets is yet another, very recent development that binds cities across borders. An increasing number of stock markets around the world now participate in a global equities market. There are also a growing number of less directly economic linkages, notable among which are a variety of initiatives launched by urban governments that amount to a type of foreign policy by and for cities. In this context, the long-standing tradition of designating sister cities (Zelinsky 1991) has been reactivated since the 1980s, taking on a whole new meaning in the case of cities eager to operate internationally without going through their national governments. (For empirical data on some of these linkages, see Sassen 2006b,**[AU: No ref.]** chaps. 2, 4, 5.)

There is good evidence that the development of transnational corporate service firms was associated with the needs of transnational firms for global servicing capabilities (Sassen [1991] 2001, chap. 5; Ernst 2005). One of the best data sets at this time on the global networks of affiliates of leading firms in finance, accounting, law, and advertising is the Globalization and World Cities Study

Group and Network, usually referred to as GaWC, included in this book. Recent GaWC research shows that the network of affiliates in banking/finance and law firms closely follows the relative importance of world cities in those two sectors. The transnational banking/finance or law firm, therefore, can offer global finance and legal services to a specific segment of potential customers worldwide. Furthermore, global integration of affiliates and markets requires making use of advanced information and telecommunications technology that can come to account for a significant share of costs—not just operational costs but also, and perhaps most important, research and development costs for new products or advances on existing products.

So much of social science is profoundly rooted in the nation-state as the ultimate unit for analysis that conceptualizing processes and systems as transnational is bound to create much controversy (Giddens 1990; Beck 2000; Abu-Lughod 2001**[AU: No ref]**). Even much of the literature on world or global cities does not necessarily proclaim the existence of a transnational urban system: In its narrowest form, this literature posits that global cities perform central place functions at a transnational level. But that leaves open the question of the nature of the articulation among global cities. If we accept that they basically compete with each other for global business, then they do not constitute a transnational system, and studying several global cities simply falls into the category of traditional comparative analysis. If, on the other hand, we posit that in addition to competing with each other, global cities are also the sites for transnational processes with multiple locations, then we can begin to explore the possibility of a systemic dynamic binding these cities.

Elsewhere (Sassen [1991] 2001, chaps. 1, 7, 2006b**[AU: No ref. 2006b]**), I have argued that in addition to the central place functions performed by these cities at the global level as posited by Hall (1966), Friedmann and Wolff (1982), and Sassen-Koob (1982), these cities relate to one another in distinct systemic ways. For example, already in the 1980s I found that the interactions between New York, London, and Tokyo, particularly in terms of finance and investment, consisted partly of a series of processes that can be thought of as the "chain of production" in finance. Thus, in the mid-1980s, Tokyo was the main exporter of the raw material we call money, while New York was the leading processing center in the world. It was in New York that many of the new financial instruments were invented and that money either in its raw form or in the form of debt was transformed into instruments aimed at maximizing the returns on that money. London, on the other hand, was a major *entrepôt* that had the network to centralize and concentrate small amounts of capital available in a large number of smaller financial markets around the world, partly as a function of its older network for the administration of the British Empire. This is just one example suggesting that these cities do not simply compete with each other for the same business. There is an economic system

that rests on the distinct types of locations and specializations each city represents. Furthermore, it seems likely that the strengthening of transnational ties among the leading financial and business centers is accompanied by a weakening of the linkages between each of these cities and its hinterland and national urban system. Cities such as Detroit, Liverpool, Manchester, Marseilles, the cities of the Ruhr, and now increasingly Nagoya and Osaka have been affected by the territorial decentralization of many of their key manufacturing industries at the domestic and international level.

Finally, one of the major trends globally is the growth of megacities in the developing world. The figures and the trends are familiar.

GLOBALIZATION AND NATIONAL URBAN SYSTEMS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

What is the impact of economic globalization on national urban systems? Does the globalization of major industries, from auto manufacturing to finance, have distinct effects on different types of national urban systems? Many regions in the world—Latin America, the Caribbean, large parts of Asia, and (to some extent) Africa—have long been characterized by urban primacy as an older scholarship has established (Hardoy 1975; Linn 1983; Dogan and Kasarda 1988; Stren and White 1989; Feldbauer et al. 1993). Primate cities account for a disproportionate share of population, employment, and gross national product (GNP).

Primacy is not simply a matter of absolute size, nor is large size a marker of primacy. Primacy is a relative condition that holds within a national urban system. Some of the largest urban agglomerations in the world do not necessarily entail primacy: New York, for example, is among the 20 largest cities in the world, but it is not a primate city, given the multipolar nature of the urban system in the United States. Furthermore, primacy is not an exclusive trait of developing countries, even though its most extreme forms are to be found in the developing world: Tokyo and London are primate cities. Finally, the emergence of the so-called megacities may or may not be associated with primacy. The 20 largest urban agglomerations by 2003 (and the foreseeable future) include some cities that are not necessarily primate, such as New York, Los Angeles, Tianjin, Osaka, Calcutta, and Shanghai, and others that can be characterized as having low levels of primacy, such as Paris and Buenos Aires.

Primacy and megacity status are clearly fed by urban population growth, a process that is expected to continue. But they combine in multiple patterns; there is no single model. The evidence worldwide points to the ongoing urbanization of the population, especially in developing countries. As in the developed countries, one component of urban growth in those countries is the suburbanization of growing sectors of the population. The higher the level of development, the higher the urbanization rate is likely to

be. Thus, a country like Argentina had an urbanization rate of 90.1% by 2003, which is quite similar to that of highly developed countries, although it is to some extent a function of the primacy of Buenos Aires in the national urban system. In contrast, Algeria's urbanization rate of 59% and Kenya's 39% differ sharply from the urbanization level in developed countries. Finally, there are countries such as India and China that have vast urban agglomerations, notwithstanding their very low rate of urbanization; they are, clearly, among the most populous countries in the world. As a result, the information conveyed by an indicator such as the urbanization rate in these countries differs from that of countries with more average population sizes.

Given the considerable variability across the global south, in what follows the focus is especially on Latin America and the Caribbean, areas that have received much attention in the scholarship and have also been profoundly affected by the world economy. On the subject of primacy, the literature about Latin America shows considerable convergence in the identification of major patterns, along with multiple interpretations of these patterns. Many studies in the late 1970s and early 1980s found sharper primacy rather than the emergence of the more balanced national urban systems forecast by *modernization* theory (for critical evaluations, see El-Shakhs 1972; Roberts 1976; Smith 1985; Walters 1985). The disintegration of rural economies, including the displacement of small landholders by expanding large-scale commercial agriculture, and the continuing inequalities in the spatial distribution of institutional resources are generally recognized as key factors strengthening primacy (Regional Employment Program for Latin America and the Caribbean [PREALC] 1987; Kowarick, Campos, and de Mello 1991; for an examination of current conditions generally in the global South, see Kerbo 2005).

Less widely known and documented is that in the 1980s there was a deceleration in primacy in several, although not all, countries in Latin America. This trend will not eliminate the growth of megacities, but it is worth discussing in some detail because it resulted in part from specific aspects of economic globalization—concrete ways in which global processes implant themselves in particular localities. The overall shift in growth strategies toward export-oriented development and large-scale tourism enclaves created growth poles that emerged as alternatives to the primate cities for rural to urban migrations (Landell-Mills, Agarwala, and Please 1989; Portes and Lungo 1992a, 1992b; Gilbert 1996; Roberts and Portes 2006). This shift was substantially promoted by the expansion of world markets for commodities and the foreign direct investments of transnational corporations, both in turn often stimulated by World Bank and International Monetary Fund programs.

One of the best sources of information on the emergence of these patterns in the 1980s is a large, collective, multicity study directed by Portes and Lungo (1992a, 1992b) that focused on the Caribbean region, including

Central America. The Caribbean has a long history of urban primacy. Portes and Lungo studied the urban systems of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, and Jamaica, countries that clearly reflect the immense variety of cultures and languages in this region. These countries represent a wide range of colonization patterns, ethnic compositions, economic development, and political stability. In the 1980s, export-oriented development, a cornerstone of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, and the intense promotion of tourism began to draw workers and firms. Expanded suburbanization has also had the effect of decentralizing population in the primate cities of the Caribbean, while adding to the larger metropolitan areas of these cities. The effect of these trends can be seen clearly in Jamaica, for example, where the primacy index declined from 7.2 in 1960 to 2.2 in 1990, largely as a result of the development of the tourist industry on the northern coast of the island, the revival of bauxite production for export in the interior, and the growth of satellite cities at the edges of the broader Kingston metropolitan area.

In some Caribbean countries, however, the new growth poles have had the opposite effect. Thus, in Costa Rica, a country with a far more balanced urban system, the promotion of export manufacturing and tourism has tended to concentrate activities in the metropolitan area of the primate city of San Jose and its immediate surrounding cities, such as Cartago. Finally, in the case of Guatemala, export manufacturing and tourism are far less developed, largely because of the extremely violent political situation until the 1990s. Development of export-oriented growth remains centered in agriculture. Guatemala has one of the highest levels of urban primacy in Latin America because alternative growth poles have been rare. Only in the 1990s did efforts to develop export agriculture promote some growth in intermediate cities, with coffee and cotton centers growing more rapidly than the capital, Guatemala City.

At the same time, deregulation and the associated sharp growth of foreign direct investment since the early 1990s has further strengthened the role of the major Latin American business centers, particularly Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Buenos Aires; Buenos Aires has had sharp ups and downs—a sharp downturn in 2001 due to Argentina's massive crisis and a resurgence in 2005. Privatization has been a key component of this growth. Foreign direct investment, via privatization and other channels, has been associated with deregulation of financial markets and other key economic institutions. Thus, the central role played by the stock market and other financial markets in these increasingly complex investment processes has raised the economic importance of the major cities where these institutions are concentrated. Because the bulk of the value of investment in privatized enterprises and other, often related, investments has been in Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil, the impact of vast capital inflows is particularly felt in the corporate and financial sectors in their primate cities—Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Sao Paulo.[3] We

see in these cities the emergence of conditions that resemble patterns evident in major Western cities: highly dynamic financial markets and specialized service sectors; the overvalorization of the output, firms, and workers in these sectors; and the devalorization of the rest of the economic system (Ciccolella and Mignaqui 2002; Parnreiter 2002; Shiffer Ramos 2002).

In brief, economic globalization has had a range of impacts on cities and urban systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. In some cases, it has contributed to the development of new growth poles outside the major urban agglomerations. In others, it has actually raised the weight of primate urban agglomerations, in that the new growth poles were developed in these areas. A third case is that represented by the major business and financial centers in the region, several of which saw a sharp strengthening in their linkages with global markets and with the major international business centers in the developed world. Production zones, centers for tourism, and major business and financial centers are three types of sites for the implantation of global processes. Beyond these sites is a vast terrain containing cities, towns, and villages that is either increasingly unhinged from this new international growth dynamic or is part of the low-profit end of long chains of production. The character of the articulation or dissociation is not simply a question of city size, since there exist long subcontracting chains connecting workers in small villages to the world markets. It is, rather, a question of how these emergent transnational economic systems are articulated, how they connect specific localities in less-developed countries with markets and localities in highly developed countries (see, e.g., Bonacich et al. 1994; Gereffi, Humphrey, and Sturgeon 2005). The implantation of global processes seems to have contributed to sharpening the separation between cities, or sectors within cities, that are articulated with the global economy and those that are not. This is a new type of interurban inequality, one not predicated on old hierarchies of city size. The new inequality differs from the long-standing forms of inequality present in cities and national urban systems because of the extent to which it results from the *implantation* of a global dynamic, be it the internationalization of production and finance or international tourism.

A NEW TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

The incorporation of cities into a new cross-border geography of centrality also signals the emergence of a parallel political geography. What we are seeing is a set of specific and partial rather than all-encompassing dynamics. It is not only the transmigration of capital that takes place in this global grid but also that of people, both rich (i.e., the new transnational professional workforce) and poor (i.e., most migrant workers); and it is a space for the transmigration of cultural forms, the reterritorialization of "local" subcultures.

Using a variety of methodologies and conceptual framings, a growing scholarship is beginning to document these trends, signaling that major cities have emerged as a strategic site not only for global capital but also for the transnationalization of labor and the formation of translocal politics, communities and identities or subjectivities (e.g., Boyd 1989; Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton 1994; Mahler 1995; Smith 1995; Bonilla et al. 1998; Skillington 1998; Body-Gendrot 1999; Yuval-Davis 1999; Cordero-Guzman et al. 2001; Levitt 2001; Smith and Guarnizo 2001; Hagedorn 2006; Bartlett, forthcoming). In this regard, cities are a site for new types of political operations. The centrality of place in a context of global processes makes possible a transnational economic and political opening for the formation of new claims and hence for the constitution of entitlements, notably rights to place. At the limit, this could be an opening for new forms of "citizenship" (e.g., Holston 1996; Dawson 1999; Torres et al. 1999; Sassen 2006a, chap. 6). The emphasis on the transnational and hypermobile character of capital has contributed to a sense of powerlessness among local actors, a sense of the futility of resistance. But an analysis that emphasizes place suggests that the new global grid of strategic sites is a terrain for politics and engagement (Abu-Lughod 1994; Dunn 1994; King 1996; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Sandercock 2003; Drainville 2004; see, generally, Brenner and Keil 2006; Bartlett, forthcoming).

If we consider that large cities concentrate both the leading sectors of global capital and a growing share of disadvantaged populations—immigrants, many of the disadvantaged women, people of color generally, and in the megacities of developing countries, masses of shanty dwellers—then we can see that cities have become a strategic terrain for a whole series of conflicts and contradictions (Sennett 1990; Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1997; Allen et al. 1999; Body-Gendrot 1999; Isin 2000; Soja 2000; Drainville 2004; Sassen 2004, 2006, chap. 6[AU: 2006a or 2006b?]). We can then think of cities also as one of the sites for the contradictions of the globalization of capital (see Katznelson 1992 on Marx and cities).

Foreign firms and international business people have increasingly been entitled to do business in whatever country and city they chose—entitled by new legal regimes, by the new economic culture, and through progressive deregulation of national economies. They are among the new city users. The new city users have made an often immense claim on the city and have reconstituted strategic spaces of the city in their image. Their claim to the city is rarely contested, even though the costs and benefits to cities have barely been examined. They have profoundly marked the urban landscape. For Martinotti (1993), they contribute to change the social morphology of the city; the new city of these city users is a fragile one, whose survival and successes are centered on an economy of high productivity, advanced technologies, and intensified exchanges (Martinotti 1993). It is a city whose space consists of airports, top-level business districts, top of

the line hotels and restaurants, in brief, a sort of urban glamour zone.

Perhaps at the other extreme are those who use urban political violence to make their claims on the city, claims that lack the de facto legitimacy enjoyed by the new "city users." These are claims made by actors struggling for recognition, entitlement, claiming their rights to the city (Fainstein 1993; Wacquant 1997; Wright 1997; Body-Gendrot 1999; Hagedorn 2006). These claims have, of course, a long history; every new epoch brings specific conditions to the manner in which the claims are made (Sassen 2006a, chap. 6). The growing weight of "delinquency" (e.g., smashing cars and shop windows; robbing and burning stores) in some of these uprisings over the last decade in major cities of the developed world is perhaps an indication of the sharpened socioeconomic zone and the urban war zone (Body-Gendrot 1993, 1999). The extreme visibility of the difference is likely to contribute to further brutalization of the conflict: the indifference and greed of the new elites versus the hopelessness and rage of the poor.

In the next two sections, I focus on two particular features of this emergent transnational political geography centered largely in intercity networks. These capture at least two important features of the larger dynamic discussed in this section that need to be addressed by an urban sociology of the early twenty-first century. They are the shift in diasporic networks away from an exclusive orientation to the homeland and toward other diasporic groups across the globe, and second, the emergence of a globally networked politics enacted by often powerless and resource-poor individuals and groups focused on issues that are deeply local but recur in localities across the globe.

GLOBAL CITIES AND DIASPORIC NETWORKS

There has been rapid growth in the variety of networks concerned with transboundary issues such as immigration, asylum, international women's agendas, antiglobalization struggles, and many others (e.g., Poster 1997; Mele 1999; Mills 2002; Yang 2003; Lustiger-Thaler and Dubet 2004). While these are not necessarily urban in their orientation or genesis, their geography of operations is partly inserted in a large number of cities (e.g., Riemens and Lovink 2002; Yang 2003). The new network technologies, especially the Internet, ironically have strengthened the urban map of these transboundary networks (for a critical examination of key features of these technologies, see, e.g. Wajcman 2002; Donk et al. 2005; Dean, Anderson, and Lovink, forthcoming). It does not have to be that way, but at this time cities and the networks that bind them function as an anchor and an enabler of cross-border transactions and struggles. Global cities, especially, already have multiple intercity transactions and immigrants from many different parts of the world. These same developments and conditions also facilitate the globalizing of terrorist and trafficking networks.

Global cities and the new strategic geographies that connect them and partly bypass national states are becoming one factor in the development of globalized diasporic networks (e.g., Ong and Nonini 1997; Axel 2002). This is a development from the ground up, connecting a diaspora's multiple groups distributed across various places. In doing so, these networks multiply the transversal transactions among these groups and destabilize the exclusive orientation to the homeland typical of the older radial pattern. Furthermore, an even partial reorientation away from national homeland politics can partly lead such a group to transact with other diasporas in a city, as well as with nondiasporic groups involved in another type of transnationalism. In such developments, in turn, lies the possibility that at least some of these networks and groups can become part of the infrastructure for global civil society rather than being confined to deeply nationalistic projects (Sassen 2004). These dynamics can then be seen as producing a shift toward globalizing diasporas by enabling transversal connections among the members of a given diaspora flung across the world, and by intensifying the transactions among diverse diasporic and nondiasporic groups within a given city.

Cities are thick enabling environments for these types of activities, even though the networks themselves are not urban per se. In this regard, these cities enable the experience of participation in global nonstate networks. We might say that global civil society gets enacted partly in the microspaces of daily life rather than on some putative global stage. Groups can experience themselves as part of a globalized diaspora even when they are in a place where there might be few conationals and the term diaspora hardly applies. In the case of global cities, there is the added dimension of the global corporate economy and its networks and infrastructures enabling cross-border transactions and having the effect of partly denationalizing urban space.

Both globalization and the international human rights regime have contributed to create operational and legal openings for nonstate actors to enter international arenas once exclusive to national states. Various, often as yet very minor developments, signal that the state is no longer the exclusive subject for international law or the only actor in international relations. Other actors—from nongovernmental organizations and First-Nation peoples to immigrants and refugees who become subjects of adjudication in human rights decisions—are increasingly emerging as subjects of international law and actors in international relations. That is to say, these nonstate actors can gain visibility as individuals and as collectivities, and come out of the invisibility of aggregate membership in a nation-state exclusively represented by the state.

The key nexus in this configuration is that the weakening of the exclusive formal authority of states over national territory facilitates the ascendance of sub- and transnational spaces and actors in politico-civic processes. The national as container of social process and power is

cracked enabling the emergence of a geography of politics and civics that links subnational spaces. Cities are foremost in this new geography. The density of political and civic cultures in large cities and their daily practices, roots, implants, and localizes global civil society in people's lives. Insofar as the global economic system can be shown to be partly embedded in specific types of places and partly constituted through highly specialized cross-border networks connecting today's global cities, one research task for those of us who want to understand how this all intersects with immigrants and diasporas is, then, to know about the specific contents and institutional locations of this multiscalar globalization. Furthermore, it means understanding how the emergence of global imaginaries changes the meaning of processes that may be much older than the current phase of globalization, but that today are inscribed by the latter. Immigrant and diasporic communities are much older than today's globalization. But that does not mean that they are not altered by various specific forms of globalization today.

The space constituted by the worldwide grid of global cities, a space with new economic and political potentialities, is perhaps one of the most strategic spaces for the formation of transnational identities and communities. This is a space that is both place-centered in that it is embedded in particular and strategic cities; and it is transterritorial because it connects sites that are not geographically proximate yet intensely connected to each other.

A POLITICS OF PLACES AND GLOBAL CIRCUITS

The crossborder network of global cities is a space where we are seeing the formation of new types of "global" politics of place. These vary considerably: They may involve contesting corporate globalization or they may involve homeland politics. The demonstrations by the antiglobalization network have signaled the potential for developing a politics centered on places understood as locations on global networks. Some of the new globalizing diasporas have become intensive and effective users of the Internet to engage in these global politics of place around issues that concern them. This is a place-specific politics with global span. It is a type of political work deeply embedded in people's actions and activities but made possible partly by the existence of global digital linkages (Meyer 1997; Espinoza 1999; Miller and Slater 2000; Riemens and Lovink 2002; Donk et al. 2005; Dean et al., forthcoming).

Furthermore, it is a form of political and institution-building work centered in cities and networks of cities and in nonformal political actors. We see here the potential transformation of a whole range of "local" conditions or institutional domains (such as the household, the community, the neighborhood, the local school, and health care entities) into localities situated on global networks. From being lived or experienced as nonpolitical, or domestic, these places are transformed into "microenvironments with global span." What I mean by this term is that technical connectivity will create a variety of links with other similar local entities in other neighborhoods in the same city, in other cities, and in neighborhoods and cities in other countries. A community of practice can emerge that creates multiple lateral, horizontal communications, collaborations, solidarities, and supports. This can enable local political or nonpolitical actors to enter into cross-border politics.

The space of the city is a far more concrete for politics than that of the national state system. It becomes a place where nonformal political actors can be part of the political scene in a way that is much more difficult at the national level. Nationally politics needs to run through existing formal systems: whether the electoral political system or the judiciary (taking state agencies to court). Nonformal political actors are rendered invisible in the space of national politics. The city accommodates a broad range of political activities—squatting, demonstrations against police brutality, fighting for the rights of immigrants and the homeless, the politics of culture and identity, gay and lesbian and queer politics, and the homeland politics that many diasporic groups engage in. Much of this becomes visible on the street. Much of urban politics is concrete, enacted by people rather than dependent on massive media technologies. Street-level politics make possible the formation of new types of political subjects that do not have to go through the formal political system. These conditions can be critical for highly politicized diasporic groups and in the context of globalization and Internet access, can easily lead to the globalizing of a diaspora. The city also enables the operations of illegal networks.

The mix of focused activism and local/global networks represented by the variety of organizations involved creates conditions for the emergence of at least partly transnational identities. The possibility of identifying with larger communities of practice or membership can bring about the partial unmooring of identities and thereby facilitate a globalizing of a diaspora and a weakened radial structure with the homeland at the center of the distribution of the groups of a given diaspora. While this does not necessarily neutralize attachments to a country or national cause, it does shift this attachment to include translocal communities of practice and/or membership.

Beyond the impact on immigrants and diasporas, the network of cities becomes a crucial building block for an architecture of global civil society that can incorporate both the micropractices and microobjectives of people's political passions without diluting the former. The possibility of transnational identities emerging as a consequence of this thickness of micropolitics is crucial for strengthening global civil society; the risk of nationalism and fundamentalism is, clearly, present in these dynamics as well.

CONCLUSION

The processes examined in this chapter call for the development of specific analytic categories. The transnationalization of economic activity is evident in a variety of the conditions examined here: the growth of global markets for finance and specialized services, the need for transnational servicing networks in response to sharp increases in international investment, the reduced role of the government in the regulation of international economic activity, and the corresponding ascendance of other institutional arenas, notably global markets and corporate headquarters. There is an emergent scholarship in urban sociology that has been focusing on these issues through the lens of global and world cities, discussed in this chapter. But there are key questions that require more research. One of these, on which there is little agreement, is whether this multiplication of intercity transactions may be contributing to the formation of transnational urban systems, which might eventually partly bypass national states, especially in a context of globalization, deregulation, and privatization.

These types of dynamics bring about a rather profound transformation in the character of the city as an object of study and in the character of the urban as a designator. For instance, the pronounced orientation to the world markets evident in such cities raises questions about the articulation with their hinterlands and nation-states. Cities typically have been and still are deeply embedded in the economies of their region, indeed often reflecting the characteristics of the latter. And urban systems are meant to be national and to secure the territorial integration of a country. But cities that are strategic sites in the global economy tend, in part, to disconnect from their region and their national

urban systems, thereby undermining a key proposition in traditional scholarship about urban systems—namely, that these systems promote the territorial integration of regional and national economies.

A second bundle of issues examined in this chapter are the tendencies contributing to new forms of inequality among cities and within cities. Both of these types of inequality have been part of the character of cities since their very beginning. But today's conditions are sharpening these cross-border geographies of centrality constituted through the growing articulation among the advanced economic sectors and high-level professional classes of an increasing number of cities. On the other hand, cities and areas outside these new geographies of centrality tend to become peripheralized, or become more so than they had been. Similarly, within cities we are seeing a sharpening of divisions and new types of conflicts.

A third set of issues concerns the emergence of a broad set of cross-border networks involving poor and generally disadvantaged or powerless actors. This is in turn producing a whole series of new and newly invigorated intercity geographies for both practices and subjective operations. This trend undermines a critical assumption about the urban poor—their lack of connection to larger networks and their lack of social capital.

These are just some of the challenges that urban sociology confronts as we enter the twenty-first century. As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, most cities and urban populations are not affected by these trends, and hence much of the rich scholarship in urban sociology can handle vast stretches of urban reality. But we do also need to recognize the emergence of new foundational dynamics that while minor in the larger urban landscape do nonetheless call for our scholarly attention.

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