

the stage setting for their abiding happiness. What we have is the space of horror, of the primacy of the abstractly political converted into absolute dominion.

The second image is that of Alexanderplatz in 1945, after its sustained bombing by the Allied air forces. The urban made ruin, the disfigured city, the dislocated space, the void, imprecision, difference. Through the violence of war an urban space becomes a *terrain vague*, the contradiction of war bringing to the surface the strange, the indescribable, the uninhabitable.

The third image, which is the first in time but the last in this sequence intentionally established in anti-chronological form, is that of the project for Alexanderplatz by Mies van der Rohe for the 1928 competition.

No intention of exemplifying the new city. No hypothesis that would signify discontinuity with the existing city. Action; production of an event in a strange territory; casual unfolding of a particular proposal which is superimposed on the already existing; repeated void on the void of the city; silent artificial landscape touching the historical time of the city yet neither cancelling it nor imitating it. Flow, force, incorporation, independence of the forms, expression of the lines that cross it. Beyond the art that unveils new freedoms. From nomadism to eroticism.

Published in Cynthia Davidson (ed.): *Anyplace*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995, pp. 118-123.

The Global City: Strategic Site, New Frontier **Saskia Sassen**

The master images in the currently dominant account of economic globalization emphasize hypermobility, global communications and the neutralization of place and distance. There is a tendency to take the existence of a global economic system as a given, a function of the power of transnational corporations and global communications.

But the capabilities for global operation, coordination and control contained in the new information technologies and in the power of transnational corporations need to be produced. By focusing on the production of these capabilities, we add a neglected dimension to the familiar issue of the power of large corporations and the new technologies. The emphasis shifts to the practices that constitute what we call 'economic globalization' and 'global control': the work of producing and reproducing, the organization and management of a global production system and a global marketplace for finance, both under conditions of economic concentration. A focus on practices draws the categories of place and production process into the analysis of economic globalization. These are two categories easily overlooked in accounts centered on the hypermobility of capital and the power of transnationals. Developing categories such as place and production process does not negate the centrality of hypermobility and

power. Rather, they bring to the fore the fact that many of the resources necessary for global economic activities are not hypermobile and are, indeed, deeply embedded in place, notably often global cities and export processing zones.

Why is it important to recover place and production in analyses of the global economy, particularly as these are constituted in major cities? Because they allow us to see the multiplicity of economies and work cultures in which the global information economy is embedded. They also allow us to recover the concrete, localized processes through which globalization exists and to argue that much of the multiculturalism in large cities is as much a part of globalization as is international finance. Finally, focusing on cities allows us to specify a geography of strategic places at the global scale, places bound to each other by the dynamics of economic globalization. I refer to this as a 'new geography of centrality', and one of the questions it engenders is whether this new transnational geography also is the space for new transnational politics. Insofar as my economic analysis of the global city recovers the broad array of jobs and work cultures that are part of the global economy, though typically not marked as such, it allows me to examine the possibility of a new politics of traditionally disadvantaged actors operating in this transnational economic geography. This is a politics that lies at the intersection of economic participation in the global economy and the politics of the disadvantaged, and in that sense would add an economic dimension, specifically through those who hold the other jobs in the global economy – whether factory workers in export processing zones in Asia, garment sweatshop workers in Los Angeles or janitors on Wall Street.

These are the subjects addressed in this essay. The first section examines the role of production and place in analyses of the global economy. The second section posits the formation of new geographies of centrality and marginality constituted by these processes of globalization. The third section discusses some of the elements that suggest the formation of a new socio-spatial order in global cities. The fourth section discusses some of the localizations of the global by focusing particularly on immigrant women in global cities. In the final section I discuss the global city as a nexus where these various trends come together and produce new political alignments.

Place and Production in the Global Economy

Globalization can be deconstructed in terms of the strategic sites where global processes and the linkages that bind them materialize. Among these sites are export processing zones, offshore banking centers and on a far more complex level, global cities. This produces a specific geography of globalization and underlines the extent to which it is not a planetary event encompassing the entire world.¹ It is, furthermore, a changing geography, one that has transformed over the last few centuries and over the last few decades.² Most recently, this changing geography has come to include electronic space.

The geography of globalization contains both a dynamic of dispersal and of centralization, a condition that is only now beginning to receive recognition.³ The massive trends towards the spatial dispersal of economic activities at the metropolitan,

national and global level that we associate with globalization have contributed to a demand for new forms of territorial centralization of top-level management and control operations. The spatial dispersal of economic activity made possible by telematics contributes to an expansion of central functions if this dispersal is to take place under the continuing concentration in control, ownership and profit appropriation that characterizes the current economic system.⁴

National and global markets as well as globally integrated organizations require central places where the work of globalization gets done.⁵ Furthermore, information industries also require a vast physical infrastructure containing strategic nodes with a hyperconcentration of facilities; we need to distinguish between the capacity for global transmission and communication and the material conditions that make this possible. Finally, even the most advanced information industries have a production process that is at least partly bound to place because of the combination of resources it requires even when the outputs are hypermobile.

The vast new economic topography that is being implemented through electronic space is one moment, one fragment, of an even more vast economic chain that is in good part embedded in non-electronic spaces. There is no fully dematerialized firm or industry. Even the most advanced information industries, such as finance, are installed only partly in electronic space. And so are industries that produce digital products, such as software designers. The growing digitalization of economic activities has not eliminated the need for major international business and financial centers and all the material resources they concentrate, from state of the art telematics infrastructure to brain talent.⁶

In my research, I have conceptualized cities as production sites for the leading information industries of our time in order to recover the infrastructure of activities, firms and jobs that is necessary to run the advanced corporate economy, including its globalized sectors.⁷ These industries are typically conceptualized in terms of the hypermobility of their outputs and the high levels of expertise of their professionals, rather than the production process involved and the requisite infrastructure of facilities and non-expert jobs that are also part of these industries. A detailed analysis of service-based urban economies shows that there is a considerable articulation of firms, sectors, and workers who may appear as though they have little connection to an urban economy dominated by finance and specialized services but, in fact, fulfill a series of functions that are an integral part of that economy. They do so, however, under conditions of sharp social, earnings, and often racial/ethnic segmentation.

In the day-to-day work of the leading services complex dominated by finance, a large share of the jobs involved is low paid and manual, many held by women and immigrants. Although these types of workers and jobs are never represented as part of the global economy, they are in fact part of the infrastructure of jobs involved in running and implementing the global economic system, including such an advanced form as international finance.⁸ The top end of the corporate economy – the corporate

towers that project engineering expertise, precision, ‘techne’ – is far easier to mark as necessary for an advanced economic system than are truckers and other industrial service workers, even though these are a necessary ingredient.⁹ We see here a dynamic of valorization at work that has sharply increased the distance between the devalorized and the valorized, indeed overvalorized, sectors of the economy.

As a political economist, addressing these issues has meant working in several systems of representation and constructing spaces of intersection. There are analytic moments when two systems of representation intersect. Such analytic moments are easily experienced as spaces of silence, of absence. One challenge is to see what happens in those spaces or what operations – analytic, of power, of meaning – take place there.

One version of these spaces of intersection is what I have called ‘analytic borderlands’. Why borderlands? Because they are spaces that are constituted in terms of discontinuities – discontinuities given a terrain rather than reduced to a dividing line. Perhaps Can Ricart, if not destroyed, might function as one of such spaces of intersection, between an older history and a new possibility.¹⁰ Much of my work on economic globalization and cities has focused on these discontinuities and has sought to reconstitute them analytically as borderlands rather than dividing lines. This produces a terrain within which these discontinuities can be reconstituted in terms of economic operations whose properties are not merely a function of the spaces on each side (i.e. a reduction to the condition of dividing line), but also, and most centrally, of the discontinuity itself, the argument being that discontinuities are an integral part, a component, of the economic system.

A New Geography of Centers and Margins

The ascendance of information industries and the growth of a global economy, both inextricably linked, have contributed to a new geography of centrality and marginality. This new geography partly reproduces existing inequalities, but also is the outcome of a dynamic specific to current forms of economic growth. It assumes many forms and operates in many arenas, from the distribution of telecommunications facilities to the structure of the economy and of employment. Global cities accumulate immense concentrations of economic power, while cities that were once major manufacturing centers suffer inordinate declines; the downtowns of cities and business centers in metropolitan areas receive massive investments in real estate and telecommunications, while low-income urban and metropolitan areas are starved for resources; highly educated workers in the corporate sector see their incomes rise to unusually high levels, while low- or medium-skilled workers see theirs sink. Financial services produce superprofits, while industrial services barely survive.

The most powerful of these new geographies of centrality at the global level binds the major international financial and business centers: New York, London, Tokyo, Paris, Frankfurt, Zurich, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, Sydney, Hong Kong, Barcelona, among others. But this geography now also includes cities such as Bangkok, Taipei, São Paulo and

Mexico City. The intensity of transactions among these cities, particularly through the financial markets, services and investment has increased sharply, and so have the orders of magnitude involved.¹¹ At the same time, there has been a sharpening inequality in the concentration of strategic resources and activities in each of these cities compared to that of other cities in the same country.¹²

Alongside these new global and regional hierarchies of cities is a vast territory that has become increasingly peripheral and increasingly excluded from the major economic processes that are seen as fueling economic growth in the new global economy. Formerly important manufacturing centers and port cities have lost functions and are in decline, not only in the less developed countries but also in the most advanced economies. Similarly in the valuation of labor inputs: the overvalorization of specialized services and professional workers has marked many of the 'other' types of economic activities and workers as unnecessary or irrelevant to an advanced economy.

There are other forms of this segmented marking of what is and what is not an instance of the new global economy. For example, the mainstream account of globalization recognizes that there is an international professional class of workers and highly internationalized business environments due to the presence of foreign firms and personnel. What has not been recognized is the possibility that we are seeing an internationalized labor market for low-wage manual and service workers; or that there is an internationalized business environment in many immigrant communities. These processes continue to be couched in terms of immigration, a narrative rooted in an earlier historical period.

This signals that there are representations of the global or the transnational that have not been recognized as such or are contested. Among these is the question of immigration, as well as the multiplicity of work environments it contributes in large cities, often subsumed under the notion of the ethnic economy and the informal economy. Much of what we still narrate in the language of immigration and ethnicity I would argue is actually a series of processes having to do with (1) the globalization of economic activity, of cultural activity, of identity formation, and (2) the increasingly marked racialization of labor market segmentation, so that the components of the production process in the advanced global information economy taking place in immigrant work environments are components not recognized as part of that global information economy. Immigration and ethnicity are constituted as otherness. Understanding them as a set of processes whereby global elements are localized, international labor markets are constituted and cultures from all over the world are de- and re-territorialized, puts them right there at the center along with the internationalization of capital as a fundamental aspect of globalization. How have these new processes of valorization and devalorization and the inequalities they produce come about? This is the subject addressed in the next section.

Elements of a New Socio-Spatial Order

The implantation of global processes and markets in major cities has meant that the internationalized sector of the urban economy has expanded sharply and has imposed

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. It is not simply a quantitative transformation; we see here the elements for a new economic regime.

These tendencies towards polarization assume distinct forms in (1) the spatial organization of the urban economy, (2) the structures for social reproduction, and (3) the organization of the labor process. In these trends towards multiple forms of polarization lie conditions for the creation of employment-centered urban poverty and marginality, and for new class formations.

The ascendance of the specialized services-led economy, particularly the new finance and services complex, engenders what could be regarded as a new economic regime, because although this sector may account for only a fraction of the economy of a city, it imposes itself on that larger economy. One of these pressures is towards polarization, as is the case with the possibility for superprofits in finance, which contributes to devalorize manufacturing and low-value-added services insofar as these sectors cannot generate the superprofits typical of much financial activity. The superprofit making capacity of many of the leading industries is embedded in a complex combination of new trends: technologies that make possible the hypermobility of capital at a global scale and the deregulation of multiple markets that allows for implementing that hypermobility; financial inventions such as securitization, which liquefy hitherto illiquid capital and allow it to circulate and hence make additional profits, the growing demand for services in all industries along with the increasing complexity and specialization of many of these inputs, which has contributed to their valorization – and often overvalorization – as illustrated in the unusually high salary increases beginning in the 1980s for top level professionals and CEOs. Globalization further adds to the complexity of these services, their strategic character, their glamour and therewith to their overvalorization.

The presence of a critical mass of firms with extremely high profit-making capabilities contributes to bid up the prices of commercial space, industrial services and other business needs, thereby making survival for firms with moderate profitmaking capabilities increasingly precarious. And while the latter are essential to the operation of the urban economy and the daily needs of residents, their economic viability is threatened in a situation where finance and specialized services can earn superprofits. High prices and profit levels in the internationalized sector and its ancillary activities, such as top-of-the-line restaurants and hotels, make 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, the replacement of neighborhood shops tailored to local needs by upscale boutiques and restaurants catering to new high-income urban élites.

Inequality in the profit-making capabilities of different sectors of the economy has always existed. But what we see happening today takes place on another order of magnitude and is engendering massive distortions in the operations of various markets, from housing to labor. For example, the polarization of firms and households in the

spatial organization of the economy contribute, in my reading, towards the informalization of a growing array of economic activities in advanced urban economies. When firms with low or modest profit-making capacities experience an ongoing and even increasing demand for their goods and services from households and other firms in a context where a significant sector of the economy makes superprofits, they often cannot compete even though there is an effective demand for what they produce. Operating informally is often one of the few ways in which such firms can survive, for example, using spaces not zoned for commercial or manufacturing uses, such as basements in residential areas, or space that is not up to code in terms of health, fire and other such standards. Similarly, new firms in low-profit industries entering a strong market for their goods and services may only be able to do so informally. Another option for firms with limited profitmaking capabilities is to subcontract part of their work to informal operations.

The recomposition of the sources of growth and profit-making entailed by these transformations also contribute to a reorganization of some components of social reproduction or consumption. While the middle strata still constitute the majority, the conditions that contributed to their expansion and politico-economic power in the postwar decades – the centrality of mass production and mass consumption in economic growth and profit realization – have been displaced by new sources of growth.

The rapid growth of industries with strong concentrations of high and low-income jobs has assumed distinct forms in the consumption structure, which, in turn, has a feedback effect on the organization of work and the types of jobs being created. The expansion of the high-income work force in conjunction with the emergence of new cultural forms has led to a process of high-income gentrification that rests, in the last analysis, on the availability of a vast supply of low-wage workers.

In good part, the consumption needs of the low income population in large cities are met by manufacturing and retail establishments, which are small, rely on family labor, and often fall below minimum safety and health standards. Cheap, locally produced sweatshop garments, for example, can compete with low-cost Asian imports. A growing range of products and services, from low-cost furniture made in basements to ‘gypsy cabs’ and family daycare is available to meet the demand for the growing low-income population.

One way of conceptualizing informalization in advanced urban economies today is to posit it as the systemic equivalent of what we call deregulation at the top of the economy. Both the deregulation of a growing number of leading information industries and the informalization of a growing number of sectors with low profit-making capacities can be conceptualized as adjustments under conditions where new economic developments and old regulations enter in growing tension.¹³ ‘Regulatory fractures’ is one concept I have used to capture this condition.

We can think of these developments as constituting new geographies of centrality and marginality that cut across the old divide between poor and rich countries, and new geographies of marginality that have become increasingly evident not only in the

less developed world but within highly developed countries. Inside major cities in both the developed and developing world we see a new geography of centers and margins that not only contributes to strengthen existing inequalities but also sets in motion a whole series of new dynamics of inequality.

The Localizations of the Global

Economic globalization, then, needs to be understood also in its multiple localizations, rather than only in terms of the broad, overarching macro-level processes that dominate the mainstream account. Further, we need to see that some of these localizations do not generally get coded as having anything to do with the global economy. The global city can be seen as one strategic instantiation of such multiple localizations.

Here I want to focus on localizations of the global marked by these two features. Many of these localizations are embedded in the demographic transition evident in such cities, where a majority of resident workers today are immigrants and women, often women of color. These cities are seeing an expansion of low-wage jobs that do not fit the master images about globalization yet are part of it. Their being embedded in the demographic transition evident in all these cities, and their consequent invisibility, contribute to the devalorization of these types of workers and work cultures and to the ‘legitimacy’ of that devalorization.

This can be read as a rupture of the traditional dynamic whereby membership in leading economic sectors contributes conditions towards the formation of a labor aristocracy – a process long evident in western industrialized economies. ‘Women and immigrants’ come to replace the Fordist/family-wage category of ‘women and children’. One of the localizations of the dynamics of globalization is the process of economic restructuring in global cities. The associated socioeconomic polarization has generated a large growth in the demand for low-wage workers and for jobs that offer few advancement possibilities. This, amidst an explosion in the wealth and power concentrated in these cities – that is to say, in conditions where there is also a visible expansion in high-income jobs and high-priced urban space.

‘Women and immigrants’ emerge as the labor supply that facilitates the imposition of low-wages and powerlessness under conditions of high demand for those workers and the location of those jobs in high-growth sectors. It breaks the historic nexus that would have led to empowering workers, and legitimates this break culturally. Another localization which is rarely associated with globalization, informalization, re-introduces the community and the household as an important economic space in global cities. I see informalization in this setting as the low-cost – and often feminized – equivalent of deregulation at the top of the system. As with deregulation (e.g. financial deregulation), informalization introduces flexibility, reduces the ‘burdens’ of regulation and lowers costs, in this case, especially the costs of labor. Informalization in major cities of highly developed countries – whether New York, London, Paris, Barcelona or Berlin – can be seen as a downgrading of a variety of activities for which there is an effective demand

in these cities, but also a devaluing and enormous competition, given low entry costs and few alternative forms of employment. Going informal is one way of producing and distributing goods and services at a lower cost and with greater flexibility. This further devalues these types of activities. Immigrants and women are important actors in the new informal economies of these cities. They absorb the costs of informalizing these activities.

The reconfiguration of economic spaces associated with globalization in major cities has had differential impacts on women and men, on male and female work cultures, on male and female centered forms of power and empowerment. The restructuring of the labor market brings with it a shift of labor market functions to the household or community. Women and households emerge as sites that should be part of the theorization of the particular forms that these elements in labor market dynamics assume today.

The Global City: A Nexus for New Politico-Economic Alignments

What makes the localization of the processes described above strategic, even though they involve powerless and often invisible workers, potentially constitutive of a new kind of transnational politics, is that these same cities are also the strategic sites for the valorization of the new forms of global corporate capital as described in the first section of this essay.

Typically, the analysis about the globalization of the economy privileges the reconstitution of capital as an internationalized presence; it emphasizes the vanguard character of this reconstitution. At the same time it remains absolutely silent about another crucial element of this transnationalization, one that some, like myself, see as the counterpart of that capital, this is, the transnationalization of labor. We are still using the language of immigration to describe this process. Secondly, that analysis overlooks the transnationalization in the formation of identities and loyalties among various population segments that explicitly reject the imagined community of the nation. With this come new solidarities and notions of membership. Major cities have emerged as a strategic site for both the transnationalization of labor and the formation of transnational identities. In this regard, they form a site for new types of political operations.

Cities are the terrain where people from many different countries are most likely to meet and a multiplicity of cultures can come together. The international character of major cities lies not only in their telecommunication infrastructure and international firms: it lies also in the many different cultural environments in which these workers exist. One can no longer think of centers for international business and finance simply in terms of the corporate towers and corporate culture at its center. Today's global cities are in part the spaces of post-colonialism and indeed contain conditions for the formation of a post-colonialist discourse.

The large western city of today concentrates diversity. Its spaces are inscribed with the dominant corporate culture but also with a multiplicity of other cultures and identities. The slippage is evident: the dominant culture can encompass only part of the city.¹⁴ And

while corporate power inscribes these cultures and identities with 'otherness', thereby devaluing them, they are present everywhere. For example, through immigration a proliferation of originally highly localized cultures have now become presences in many large cities, cities whose élites think of themselves as 'cosmopolitan', or transcending any locality. An immense array of cultures from around the world, each rooted in a particular country or village, now are reterritorialized in a few single places, places such as New York, Los Angeles, Paris, London, and most recently also cities such as Barcelona or Tokyo.

Immigration and ethnicity are too often constituted as 'otherness'. Understanding them as a set of processes whereby global elements are localized, international labor markets are constituted and cultures from all over the world are deterritorialized, puts them right there at the center of the stage along with the internationalization of capital as a fundamental aspect of globalization today. Further, this way of narrating the migration events of the postwar era captures the ongoing weight of colonialism and post-colonial forms of empire on major processes of globalization today, and specifically those binding emigration and immigration countries. While the specific genesis and contents of their responsibility will vary from case to case and period to period, none of the major immigration countries are innocent bystanders. The centrality of place in a context of global processes engenders a transnational economic and political opening in the formation of new claims and hence in the constitution of entitlements, notably rights to place and, at the limit, in the constitution of 'citizenship'. The city has indeed emerged as a site for new claims: by global capital which uses the city as an 'organizational commodity', but also by disadvantaged sectors of the urban population, frequently as internationalized a presence in large cities as capital.

I see this as a type of political opening that contains unifying capacities across national boundaries and sharpening conflicts within such boundaries. Global capital and the new immigrant workforce are two major instances of transnationalized categories that have unifying properties internally and find themselves in contestation with each other in global cities. Global cities are the sites for the overvalorization of corporate capital and the devalorization of disadvantaged workers. The leading sectors of corporate capital are now global in both their organization and operations. And many of the disadvantaged workers in global cities are women, immigrants and people of color. Both groups find in the global city a strategic site for their economic and political operations.

The linkage of people to territory as constituted in global cities is far less likely to be intermediated by the national state or 'national culture'. We are seeing a loosening of identities from what have been traditional sources of identity, such as the nation or the village. This unmooring in the process of identity formation engenders new notions of community of membership and of entitlement. Yet another way of thinking about the political implications of this strategic transnational space is the notion of the formation of new claims on that space. Has economic globalization at least partly shaped the formation of claims? There are indeed major new actors making claims on these cities, notably foreign firms who have been increasingly entitled to do business through

progressive deregulation of national economies, and the large increase over the last decade in international businesspeople. These are among the new 'city users'. They have profoundly marked the urban landscape. 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, and to claim their rights to the city.¹⁵ There is something to be captured here – a distinction between powerlessness and a condition of being an actor or political subject even though one lacks power. I use the term 'presence' to name this condition. In the context of a strategic space such as the global city, the types of disadvantaged people described here are not simply marginal; they acquire presence in a broader political process that escapes the boundaries of the formal polity. This presence signals the possibility of a politics. What this politics will be will depend on the specific projects and practices of various communities. Insofar as the sense of membership of these communities is not subsumed under the national, it may well signal the possibility of a transnational politics centered in concrete localities.

Conclusion

Large cities around the world are the terrain where a multiplicity of globalization processes assume concrete, localized forms. These localized forms are, in good part, what globalization is about. On one hand, they concentrate a disproportionate share of corporate power and are one of the key sites for the overvalorization of the corporate economy; on the other hand, they concentrate a disproportionate share of the disadvantaged and are one of the key sites for their devalorization. This joint presence happens in a context where (1) the transnationalization of economies has grown sharply and cities have become increasingly strategic for global capital, and (2) marginalized people have found their voice and are making claims on the city as well. This joint presence is further brought into focus by the sharpening of the distance between the two.

These joint presences have made cities a contested terrain. The global city concentrates diversity. Its spaces are inscribed with the dominant corporate culture but also with a multiplicity of other cultures and identities, notably through immigration. The slippage is evident: the dominant culture can encompass only part of the city. And while corporate power inscribes non-corporate cultures and identities with 'otherness', thereby devaluing them, they are present everywhere. The immigrant communities and informal economy in cities such as New York and Los Angeles are only two instances.

The space constituted by the global grid of global cities, a space with new economic and political potentialities, is perhaps one of the most strategic spaces for the formation of new types of identities and communities, including transnational ones. This is a space that is both place-centered in that it is embedded in particular and strategic sites, and it is transterritorial because it connects sites that are not geographically proximate yet are intensely connected to each other. 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, or the reterritorialization of 'local' subcultures. An important question is whether it is also a space for a new politics, one going beyond the politics of culture and identity, though likely to be at least partly embedded in these. The analysis presented in this essay suggests that it is.

The centrality of place in a context of global processes engenders a transnational economic and political opening in the formation of new claims and hence in the constitution of entitlements, notably rights to place and ultimately, in the constitution of new forms of 'citizenship' and a diversity of citizenship practices. The global city has emerged as a site for new claims: by global capital which uses the city as an 'organizational commodity', but also by disadvantaged sectors of the urban population, frequently as internationalized a presence in large cities as capital. The denationalizing of urban space and the formation of new claims centered in transnational actors and involving contestation constitute the global city as a frontier zone for a new type of engagement.

Empirical evidence and bibliographic sources for the various subjects discussed here can be found in the author's recently published books: *Cities in a World Economy* 3rd.Ed (Sage/Pine Forge, 2006), and *Territory, Authority, Rights* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

NOTES

1 Globalization is also a process that produces differentiation, only the alignment of differences is of a very different kind from that associated with such differentiating notions as national character, national culture and national society. For example, the corporate world today has a global geography, but it does not exist everywhere in the world: in fact, it has highly defined and structured spaces; secondly, it also is increasingly sharply differentiated from non-corporate segments in the economies of the particular locations (e.g. a city such as New York) or countries where it operates. There is homogenization along certain lines that cross national boundaries and sharp differentiation inside these boundaries.

2 We need to recognize the specific historical conditions for different conceptions of the 'international' or the 'global'. There is a tendency to see the internationalization of the economy as a process operating at the center, embedded in the power of the multinational corporations today and colonial enterprises in the past. One could note that the economies of many peripheral countries are thoroughly internationalized due to high levels of foreign investments in all economic sectors and of heavy dependence on world markets for 'hard' currency. What center countries have are strategic concentrations of firms and markets that operate globally, the capability for global control and coordination and power. This is a very different form of the international from that which we find in peripheral countries.

3 This proposition lies at the heart of my model of the global city (see Sassen, *The Global City*, 2001: Chapter 1)

4 More conceptually, we can ask whether an economic system with strong tendencies towards such concentration can have a space economy that lacks points of physical agglomeration. That is to say, does power, in this case economic power, have spatial correlates?

5 I see the producer services, and most especially finance and advanced corporate services, as industries producing the organizational commodities necessary for the implementation and management of global economic systems (Sassen, op. cit., chapters 2-5). Producer services are intermediate outputs, that is, services bought by firms. They cover financial, legal, and general management matters, innovation, development, design, administration, personnel, production technology, maintenance, transport, communications, wholesale distribution, advertising, cleaning services for firms, security and storage. Central components of the producer services category are a range of industries with mixed business and consumer markets; they are insurance, banking, financial services, real estate, legal services, accounting and professional associations.

6 Telematics and globalization have emerged as fundamental forces reshaping the organization of economic space. This reshaping ranges from the spatial virtualization of a growing number of economic activities to the

reconfiguration of the geography of the built environment for economic activity. Whether in electronic space or in the geography of the built environment, this reshaping involves organizational and structural changes.

7 Methodologically speaking, this is one way of addressing the question of the unit of analysis in studies of contemporary economic processes. 'National economy' is a problematic category when there are high levels of internationalization. And 'world economy' is a problematic category because of the impossibility of engaging in detailed empirical study at that scale. Highly internationalized cities such as New York or London offer the possibility of examining globalization processes in great detail within a bounded setting and with all their multiple, often contradictory, aspects. We need to differentiate the international and the global. In many ways the concept of the global city does that.

8 A methodological tool I find useful for this type of examination is what I call circuits for the distribution and installation of economic operations. These circuits allow me to follow economic activities into terrains that escape the increasingly narrow borders of mainstream representations of 'the advanced economy' and to negotiate the crossing of socioculturally discontinuous spaces.

9 This is illustrated by the following event. When the first acute stock market crisis happened in 1987 after years of enormous growth, there were numerous press reports about the sudden and massive unemployment crisis among high-income professionals on Wall Street. The other unemployment crisis on Wall Street, affecting secretaries and blue collar workers was never noticed nor reported upon. And yet, the stock market crash created a very concentrated unemployment crisis, for example, in the Dominican immigrant community in northern Manhattan, where a lot of the Wall Street janitors live.

10 See <http://www.salvemcanricart.org/>

11 Whether this has contributed to the formation of transnational urban systems is subject to debate. The growth of global markets for finance and specialized services, the need for transnational servicing networks due 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 – all these point to the existence of transnational economic arrangements with locations in more than one country. These cities are not merely competing with each other for market share as is often asserted or assumed; there is a division of labor which incorporates cities of multiple countries, and in this regard we can speak of a global system (e.g. in finance) as opposed to simply an international system. We can see here the incipient formation of a transnational urban system.

12 Further, the pronounced orientation to the world markets evident in such cities raises questions about the articulation with their nation-states, their regions, and the larger economic and social structure in such cities. Cities have typically been deeply embedded in the economies of their region, indeed often reflecting the characteristics of the latter – and they still do. But cities that are strategic sites in the global economy tend, in part, to disconnect from their region. This conflicts with a key proposition in traditional scholarship about urban systems, namely, that these systems promote the territorial integration of regional and national economies.

13 Linking informalization and growth takes the analysis beyond the notion that the emergence of informal sectors in cities like New York and Los Angeles is caused by the presence of immigrants and their propensities to replicate survival strategies typical of Third World countries. Linking informalization and growth also takes the analysis beyond the notion that unemployment and recession generally may be the key factors promoting informalization in the current phase of highly industrialized economies. It may point to characteristics of advanced capitalism that are not typically noted.

14 There are many different forms such contestation and 'slippage' can assume. Global mass culture homogenizes and is capable of absorbing an immense variety of local cultural elements. But this process is never complete. The opposite is the case in my analysis of data on electronic manufacturing, which shows that employment in lead sectors no longer inevitably constitutes membership in a labor aristocracy. Thus Third World women working in Export Processing Zones are not empowered: capitalism can work through difference. Yet another case is that of 'illegal' immigrants; here we see that national boundaries have the effect of creating and criminalizing difference. These kinds of differentiations are central to the formation of a world economic system.

15 The city remains a terrain for contest, characterized by the emergence of new actors, often younger and younger. It is a terrain where the constraints and the institutional limitations of governments to address the demands for equity engender social disorders. Urban political violence should not be interpreted as a coherent ideology but rather as an element of temporary political tactics, which permits vulnerable actors to enter in interaction with the holders of power on terms that will be somewhat more favorable to the weak.

Marginal Comments

Manolo Laguillo

The photographs in this book were taken gradually over three decades, the result of a stylistic thrust that existed from the very start. It is an oeuvre permeated by the quest for internal coherence, so it can be viewed from a variety of different vantage points: in addition to being a document related to what was in front of the camera, the history of Barcelona, which is what first stands out, it also talks about the person behind the camera.

The notes below succinctly explain certain technical aspects of the 'métier', which after all these years do not seem to me superfluous to mention. They also argue for and suggest an order to the photographs that is more closely tied to the author's biography, which complements that of the curator, Jorge Ribalta, without contradicting it.

1978-1984

The photographs in the first group quite accurately represent what interested me during my early years. The external motivation – or better still the pretext – for some of the photographs taken between 1978 and 1979 was that I had promised Cristina Zelich to hold an exhibition in early 1980 at the Galeria Fotomania.

Two-thirds of all these photographs were made on outings that Humberto Rivas and I took together, usually on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

We shared a fascination with the outskirts of the city. And whenever we did focus on something in the centre, it was unfailingly because its *cutre* (tacky) personality attracted us, even though *cutre* as a word had not yet gained currency back then.

Although the 1982 football World Cup was a major boost to Barcelona's morale (the photographs of Banco de España and the monument to Columbus portray this), the city was still far from being aware of the changes it was to undergo starting in the mid-1980s, and it was not difficult to find in the city centre this marginal character that so drew our attention.

The photograph of a village house in the middle of the Sant Andreu apartment buildings; the demolition of a house located at the end of Carrer Entença to connect it with Avinguda Diagonal; the pictures of the inside of an abandoned glass factory in the middle of the Les Corts neighbourhood between Carrers Europa and Numància, just a stone's throw from where the Illa Diagonal shopping centre is today; yet mainly the one portraying the row of houses located across from the eastern façade of the Sagrada Família – they all serve as examples of this.

The reasons why we cultivated this preference for certain parts of the city were different for each of us. With almost thirty years' distance, that is, in light of what he has done since, I think that for Humberto the meaning of all this consisted, to state it in just a few words, of the fact that it reminded him of Buenos Aires. In my case, the goal was more to temper my forces with a subject matter that at the time was rare or even absent, although I soon acknowledged Walker Evans as a kindred spirit.