

## CITIES IN HISTORY: A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE AND IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON CITIES



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### Abstract

Cities have played an important role in human life throughout history. For example, they have served various social and cultural needs of their residents. Cities also have served important economic needs such as providing a source of jobs so that people can earn a living. This research is about how cities are formulated and transformed from ancient time to our global time. As we know that the world is in the information age and localizing can be regarded as well-structured to build networks for economic growth and in that point it is also important to figure out the act of globalization on cities through urbanization. Increasing industrialization creates job opportunities and leads to global immigration waves from rural to urban, and this increasing population also stimulates the economic mobility in the cities and all these circulation and urbanization led the city to become more powerful, The effect of globalization on cities is the main aspect in order to conclude and give result for this study.

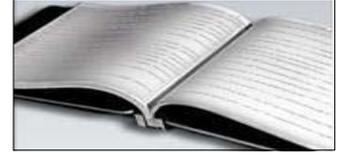
**Key Words:** Cities, History, Urbanization, Politics, Globalization

## TARİHSEL OLARAK ŞEHİRLER: KÜRESELLEŞME VE ŞEHİRLER ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİNE SİYASİ AÇIDAN BAKIŞ

### Öz

Tarih boyunca şehirler insan hayatında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Bu araştırma, şehirlerin nasıl oluştuğu ve antik çağdan günümüze nasıl dönüştüğünü ele almaktadır. Bildiğimiz gibi, dünya bilgi çağındadır ve yerel politikaların uygulama alanı olan şehirler, bir ülkenin ekonomik büyümesine etkileyen uluslar arası aktörler haline gelmeye başlamışlardır. Bununla birlikte şehirleşme sürecinde küreselleşmenin şehirler üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymak önemlidir. Sanayileşmenin artması, iş olanaklarını yaratmakla birlikte kırsaldan kente gerek

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küresel gerek ulusal göç dalgalarına yol açmıştır; ve artan bu nüfus şehirlerdeki ekonomik hareketliliği canlandırmakta ve tüm bu sirkülasyon ve şehirleşme şehrin daha güçlü olmasına olanak sağlamaktadır. Farklı ülke şehirlerinin kendi aralarındaki ilişkiler yerelin uluslararasılaşması olarak karşımıza çıkmakta, bu durum hızla ilerlemektedir. Bu çalışmanın sonunda çıkarılacak sonuç olarak küreselleşmenin şehirler üzerindeki etkisi ele alınarak aynı zamanda şehirlerin nasıl birer politik aktör haline geldikleri üzerinde durulmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Şehirler, Tarih, Şehirleşme, Politika, Küreselleşme,

### 1. Introduction

In this paper, the concept, the formation, the forms and functions of city will be discussed with a particular emphasis on politics and the political significance of city. Considering the needs and the further discussions of this research, such an investigation as the beginning of this study is a requirement. Only by such an investigation one can understand the political significance of cities now and throughout the history. Besides, to acquire future prospects it is as well imperative to take into account the historical background of the cities in terms of politics. Since this study examines the cities as political entities and in the context of international politics, the politics and political formations of the city and the political relations between cities would be the focus of this paper. In sum, this research will give us an idea about the political city in a historical perspective with regard to political analysis.

To achieve this, one should go through the history and make a thorough analysis of the present situation coherently. In this manner, starting with the conceptualization and formation of the cities as political entities, the city shall be taken into account as a ‘world’ in a Heideggereansense. Briefly, it can be said that city would be first of all understood as ‘world’ not only in geographical terms but also as one of the ultimate ‘home’ of the human beings, particularly for the moderns. Secondly, the concept of the city will be examined in terms of abstract geographical conceptions such as space and place to give a start to understand the city with recourse to political geography. Later on, it would be possible to understand what P. J. Taylor calls the “city-ness” of the city.

The city is a geographical plexus, acting as a focus for exchanges of all different kinds ... a way of life, a social drama that plays out differently for different people.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>S. Pile, “What is a City,” p. 19.



Following this fundamental and necessary conceptualization as well as a brief account of the historical origins of city, a further step will be taken into what one may call more well-formed, advanced or progressive cities. Certainly, this period of time that can be subject of a bunch of books will only be summarized in accordance with the requirement of this study. Interestingly, after the original formation of city we will then meet with the cities which come into existence and lives in a hierarchical order. This is nothing but the differentiation of center and periphery and the order is always protected by complex limits and boundaries.<sup>2</sup> This would also create capitals in nation-states, which are the privileged centers, center of the centers, if you will, of the nation-states in terms of politics specifically.

As to the contemporary developments, leaving behind the conceptual and historical summary of the forms and functions of city, the term globalization will be a definitive term. In this period, comparing and contrasting a world founded upon nation-states politically with another, new globalized world, the city would have another place and significance in terms of politics and policy. Specifically focusing on the world as a globe and a space where the locality has a distinctive role, one can clearly see that globalization have created an-other city type called “Global Cities”. The term “global city” has been defined in various ways. One of the most often used definitions is a city that has an influence on “global markets, culture, and innovation”<sup>3</sup> Knox describes the influence of global cities in terms of the cities being sites of international financial institutions, multinational corporations, leading international organizations, and international media groups.<sup>4</sup> Sassen emphasizes the importance of global cities being centers of command and control over the forces of the world economy.<sup>5</sup>

Without recognizing the traditional boundaries, this new city type has new, particularly new limits not only in terms of politics but also of culture and economy.

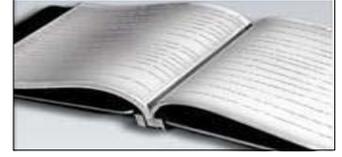
In this world, the new privileged cities are not the capitals but metropolises which can also be called “world cities” which are new actors in the realm of politics. Bruggmann refers to this idea by noting that a “global city system” has emerged in recent times. Bruggmann also argues that this system has displaced the international system of nation-

<sup>2</sup> E.F.Guarini, “Center and periphery,” p.1.

<sup>3</sup> “The Global Cities Index” p.124

<sup>4</sup> Paul L. Knox, “Globalization and Urban Economic Change” p.22

<sup>5</sup> Saskia Sassen, “The Global City” p.3-4



states that dominated in the past<sup>6</sup>. In other words, global competitiveness today is related more to the interactions of cities than the interactions of states. Other writer agree with this assessment of the situation. Forexample, Abrahams on claims that the world today is characterized by the fact “that the key nodes in the international system are (global) cities, not nations.”<sup>7</sup>

The last part of this reserach is devoted to the “metropolis and cosmopolis” in reference to cosmopolitanism and world citizenship in the times we are questioning the nation-states and the new role of cities in the world politics. In this manner, this study will be concluded with the city-based resistance movements in the example of World Social Forum launched in Porto Allegre since 2001.

## 2. City Formation and Cities in a Historical Context

It is obvious that the city will have a more significant role than it has played in the past, particularly in terms of politics. Nevertheless, the direction and implications of this change is not determined yet. Although this change has much to do with the new forms and functions of the city as well as the new possibilities of a globalized world, no one can deny the fact that it is almost impossible to predict the future of city. All we have is some signs, historical perspectives and theoretical insights that are to be examined to have an idea about the political future of the city. Some inevitable questions arise at this point: What is the city? How did it come to existence? What functions does it perform and what purposes does it fulfill? Though neither single definition nor explanation enlightens all the aspects of the question of the city it would be worth trying in order to explicate the issue.

To achieve this, the historic nature of the city, its original functions and the functions emerged from earlier forms should be analyzed further. In his monumental book, *The City in History*, Lewis Mumford detects the origins of the city in the early settlements such as the village, the hamlet and the shrine<sup>8</sup>. But before that, one should underline the fact that a city is not only symbolically but also practically a world for the human beings, which encompasses his/her all kinds of worldly activity. It definitely does not only consist of a physical world, a place, but also becomes a home, a space for the all

<sup>6</sup>J.Brugman, “Welcome to the urban revolution: How cities are changing the world” p.10

<sup>7</sup>M. Abrahamson, “Global Cities” p.2

<sup>8</sup>Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, p.13.



social, cultural and political interaction. In this sense, it should be emphasized that as the human being shaped the city, he/she is shaped by the city molded by him/her.

There are some questions that should be asked in order to acquire a further understanding of the city's specific role and functions in the human world. Here, the phrase human world does not only designate the world as a geographical environment as in "the earth", but also a world of life reminding the concept of Lebenswelt of Edmund Husserl. City is the new world of human beings.

*Cities are physical artifacts inserted into a preexisting world, and natural constraints must be respected if a settlement is to survive and prosper<sup>9</sup>.*

Indeed, people began to change their world by massive interventions to the city. Cliff Ellis says that "although city planning as an organized profession has existed less than a century, all cities display a various degrees of forethought and conscious design in their lay out and functioning." This is one of the nexuses binding the city and civilization or madinah (medine, city) and madaniyah (medeniyet, civilization). LeGates puts it directly as "Cities are civilization".<sup>10</sup> As it is stated by Ellis, the cities constitute the 'world' of human beings just like human beings build and develop the cities.

In this manner, cities are the examples of the relationship between nature and culture as well as cities and civilization. Cities, as exact examples of cultural artifacts can only come into existence harmoniously with the nature; they are as well shaped and conditioned by nature. Cities are also the transformed natures, that is, cultural entities revealing the relationship between cities and human beings. This is nothing but an inevitable interaction manifested and still manifesting since centuries.

As to constitution of cities as the world for human species, one can count many aspects of human life which are shaped in the cities. Indeed, from economy to religion and from security needs to politics cities have become the very center of life in many ways. "Cities serve as centers of storage, trade and manufacture,<sup>11</sup>" centers of religious life and the site of protection for human beings. In transition to continuous movements of the hunters and gatherers to early statements one can see the first traces of governance and political entities. As it will be seen in our study the city will transform throughout history

<sup>9</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> R. T. LeGates, "How toStudyCities", The City Reader, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 1.



and become not only a site for politics but also a political actor in the realm of politics. The city, in this sense, is not only a place for human settlement but also the space for the worldly activities of human beings, that is, the home of the culture.

*Cities with their concentration of talent, mixture of people, and economic surplus, have provided a fertile ground for the evolution of human culture: the arts, scientific research and technical innovation. They serve as centers of communication, where new ideas and information are spread to the surrounding territory and to foreign lands.*<sup>12</sup>

At this point where we advance through the history of the formation of the cities, we should also have a thorough look to the collective life of animal species. Lewis Mumford states that “Even the technological complexity of the human town does not lack animal precedent.<sup>13</sup>” However this precedence does not indicate a biological continuity but an example of parallelism and convergence.<sup>14</sup> In his explanations Mumford give the example of ant’s empires:

*Even the division of labor, differentiation of castes, the practice of war, the institution of royalty, the domestication of other species, and the employment of slavery existed in certain ‘ant empires’ millions of years before they coalesced in the ancient city.*<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, for Mumford, human beings share the disposition to social life with many other animal species. Permanent human settlements were developed with some motives similar to animal needs for a ‘social’ life. Interestingly, Mumford also mentions the dead with the alive when it comes to the origins of human settlements. This is one of the other similar expressions of the animal precedence that occurs in the settlements and primitive city life. Reminding the term “necropolis,” Mumford claims that “In one sense, indeed, the city of the dead is the forerunner, almost the core of every living city.<sup>16</sup>”

Leaving aside the precedence of animal ‘social’ life and the city of the dead, the necropolis, we should now focus on the history of city formation which is the next stage after the times of hunting of gathering as the primitive economic activity. As it is well-known, nomadic existence precedes the beginning of settlement since the people of the age

<sup>12</sup>Cliff Ellis, History of Cities and City Planning, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, p.13.

<sup>14</sup>Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, p.14.

<sup>15</sup>Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, p.14.

<sup>16</sup>Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, p.15.



rely on hunting and gathering for survival and sustenance. After that, more than 8,000 years ago, cultivation of plants and the domestication of human species gave rise to permanent settlements. Only after 4,000 BC one can see the first traces of “urban revolution”. According to Ellis, there are some requirements to be met for urban living.<sup>17</sup>

*The production of a surplus of storable food, a system of writing, a more complex organization, and technological advances such as the plough, potter’s wheel, loom and metallurgy.*<sup>18</sup>

Cliff Ellis states that “the first urban settlements appeared around 3,000 BC in ancient Mesopotamia.<sup>19</sup> The early development of cities is related to the development of agriculture. Prior to 8000 BCE, people survived through the activities of hunting and gathering. Urban development became possible when people switched to the use of agriculture to provide them with the food that they needed to survive. In the words of Tilly the rise of agriculture meant “a shift to full-fledged, durable domestication of plants and animals as a way of life”<sup>20</sup> According to Bairoch the development of agriculture and the development of cities went hand-in-hand.<sup>21</sup>

As mentioned above that historians have determined that the “agricultural revolution” began in approximately 8000 BCE in the Middle East, in the region known as Mesopotamia<sup>22</sup> Soon afterward, agricultural techniques developed in China, India, the Americas, Egypt and Western Europe. As noted by Tilly, the use of agriculture probably spread from one location to another in many cases. However, the development of agriculture in some places, such as the Americas, must have been an “independent invention.”<sup>23</sup> The rise of the first cities followed a similar pattern to the development of agriculture. The cities began as villages along the banks of rivers<sup>24</sup> Rivers provided city dwellers with important resources as well as a way to transport goods. In addition, rivers provided the water needed for irrigation of crops. Besides, as to the conceptual differences,

<sup>17</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 3.

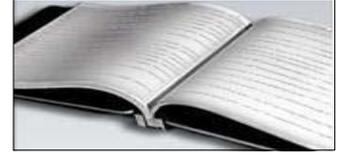
<sup>20</sup>C. Tilly, Cities, states, andtrustnetworks. TheoryandSociety, p.268

<sup>21</sup>P. Bairoch, Citiesandeconomicdevelopment: fromthedawn of historytothepresent, p.94

<sup>22</sup>K. Reilly, Thewestandtheworld: a history of civilization, p.25

<sup>23</sup>C. Tilly, Cities, states, andtrustnetworks. TheoryandSociety, p.268

<sup>24</sup>T. H Greer, A briefhistory of the western World”. p.15



the typical features of early cities such as wall and the citadel show us how boundaries are important for the construction cities as political units.

Apparently, constituting the limits of the city as a place, the political space comes into existence within the boundaries.

*The wall for defense in regions periodically swept by conquering armies, and the citadel –a large, elevated precinct within the city- devoted to religious and state functions.<sup>25</sup>*

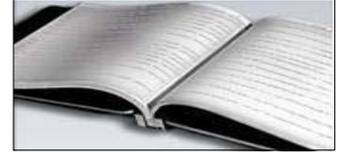
The Greek cities which were transformed from old villages generally had irregular and organic forms whereas colonial cities were planned using the system. The colonial cities are the first examples of “political” urban planning and a clear evidence of the political functions of all the urban forms. To build a place available to rapid development, the colonial powers prefer uniform rectangular units. One should also note the ideological functions of the cities and urban planning, which will reach a terrible form in Warsaw during World War II: a divided city transformed into a concentration camp. It is also interesting to note that many European cities, like London and Paris, developed from the grid system colonial cities of Roman Empire.

*Spanish colonial cities in the New World were built according to rules codified in the Laws of Indies of 1573, specifying orderly grid streets with a central plaza, defensive wall, and uniform building style.*

Also designating the political and ideological aspects of city formations and urban forms, Cliff Ellis points out that the medieval city has “narrow winding streets converging on a market square with a cathedral and city hall.<sup>26</sup>” This pattern shows us the most significant elements of the city and thus, the tree main aspects of urban life. Today, it is still true that cities are the “homes” of economics (market), religion (cathedral), and politics (city hall). At the center of the city, that is, in the human “world” these three aspects have a greater importance; these aspects constitute the center of the human life as well as of the city.

<sup>25</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 4.



### 3. Cities and Nation-States

Between 1600 and 1750, the baroque cities emerged with the great nation states. In accordance with the age's political atmosphere new palaces, courts, and bureaucratic offices were built. In particular, urban public spaces such as long avenues, street networks, parks, gardens, and monumental squares were built in order to symbolize the existence and greatness of the nation. The nations and the new values of 1789, that is, liberty, equality, and fraternity found their symbolic and practical places for themselves in these public spaces. Becoming a model for many other modernization plans, “Versailles is a clear expression of city-building model; Washington D.C. is another example from the United States.<sup>27</sup>”

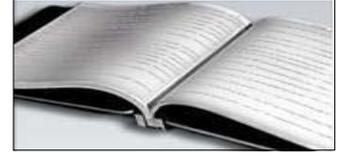
For Cliff Ellis, after the late eighteenth century, some cities had become a setting for commerce assumed primacy. In accordance with the new born capitalism of the age the buildings of bourgeoisie had become the symbols of their own prosperity. In these cities religious, political, and cultural influences were replaced by the market economy and the urban growth was determined by the economy in general. Ellis states that “New York, Philadelphia, and Boston around 1920 exemplify the commercial city of this era, with their bustling, mixed use waterfront districts.<sup>28</sup>” After the Industrial Revolution, cities had come into a new phase with the enormous rise of the population. With the new economies and city of factory, millions of rural dwellers moved to urban areas and “urban economies were being woven more rightly into the national and international economies.<sup>29</sup>”

As it is seen above, economic factors are the foremost among others in the construction of modern cities in the context of nation-states. As for the political factors, one should mention again the limits and boundaries which have a particular significance when it comes to nation-states. Before the processes of globalization, in the period when the nation-states are the dominant units for the international politics, the boundaries are the real and imaginary limits of the nation-states. It is clearly seen that these limits are what give the existence to the nation-states. In the world of inter-national, the world is divided into nation-states and there is no space left into world, which does not belong to any nation.

<sup>27</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup>CliffEllis, History of Citiesand City Planning, p. 5.



Boundaries, in this sense, have also conceptual significance since they also define the nation-states. Besides, the cities are also the divisions within the nation-states, which constitute the legal and governmental units. Therefore, one can claim that cities have somewhat autonomy in themselves. Particularly, in the system of municipalities, cities have the chance to govern the space and the inhabitants within the relevant boundaries locally. Nevertheless, although cities are autonomous to a certain degree in this order, they are inter-dependent to each other in terms of economy and polity. Before the globalization, however, this interdependency and interaction is limited within the boundaries of nation-states.

In this picture, one can observe that cities are more self-enclosed than the cities that we will see in the globalization period. Most significantly, it is to be emphasized that there is a strict hierarchy between cities. In the period of what we can call “all powerful nation-states” this hierarchy can be depicted with the terms of “center” and “periphery.” The most significant and privileged city in nation-states are capitals. Capitals are mostly legal, economical and political centers of the nation-states. Cities in the periphery are not only far from the capital geographically but also in terms of power and efficiency. Capitals, as the absolute centers of the country and state, are also the centers of communication with other nation-states. In a world divided to nation-states, only the capitals have the privilege to host the representatives, embassies of other states.

What is told in this section can be more tangible after the next study’s comparative perspective of a globalized/globalizing world and a world politically and geographically founded upon nation-states. This is because what is offered here is still true for the period of globalization to a certain degree since the period defined by globalization is not an age that we observe the ultimate dissolution of nation-states. Exactly for that reason, a comparative, historical perspective is necessary and will be offered in the later studies.

#### **4. Cities in a Global Context**

Though it is obvious that the processes of globalization are also at work in the social and cultural spheres, most of the influential scholars of what we can call “globalization studies” typically pursue a politico-economic perspective, such as Manuel Castells, Saskia Sassen and David Harvey. Indeed, in the age of globalization we observe the emergence of (explicitly global) new political processes and institutions, and global



financial markets. From World Trade Organization to The War Crimes Tribunals the realms of politics and economy are under the influence of these institutions which are clear evidences for globalization. However globalization defined by most academicians as “dissemination, transmission, and dispersal of goods, persons, images and ideas across national boundaries”<sup>30</sup>

As Cabigon noted that cities are the important units in the states and they are the center of trade, commerce, business, advanced culture, technology, and employment.<sup>31</sup> The significance of boundaries and limits above in the context of nation-states, the transformations of the period of globalization, which are still at work, can be depicted with recourse to these real and symbolic boundaries. Briefly, one can state that globalization is a process in which the boundaries of the nation-states become more transparent and pervious. That is, more and more open to entry and influence of what is once called “external” forces. These forces include international organizations, multi- or transnational corporations, and activist foundations. In any case, with the weakening of these boundaries that define, delimit and demarcate, the nation-state, the decline of the power of nation-states comes to the fore.

As for the economical factors, perhaps the starters and most accelerating forces for globalization, with the formation of a global capital market, a global trade regime and the internationalization of production, it is evident that it is now impossible to understand a national economy without recourse to these new economic powers. Although there are undeniable economic relations between the nation-states before globalization, one witnesses the emergence of “trans-national corporations” that operate without recognizing the old boundaries of nation-states. The United Nations founded “The United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations” in 1974. In accordance with the new age of globalization, the centre advocated a terminological shift from “Multinational Corporation” to “transnational corporation”<sup>32</sup>.

This is the very sign of the new economical age which is dominated by “Northern” companies which own and considerably control the economic activities in “Southern” countries. This also reveals the asymmetry of the processes of globalization and hegemonic

<sup>30</sup>YishaiBlank, “The City and the World” p.882

<sup>31</sup>JosefinaCabigon, “Cities in Globalization” p. 1

<sup>32</sup> C. Parnreiter, Global City Formation and Transnationalization of Urban Spaces: Conceptual Considerations and Empirical Findings, p.1.



power of a few states over the other countries<sup>33</sup>. According to Sassen, however, not only in the period of globalization but long before that “most national states were in practice not fully sovereign.<sup>34</sup>” Nevertheless, in a globalized world “territories are typically subject to multiple systems of rule rather than the exclusive authority of state.<sup>35</sup>” Indeed, the nation-states themselves open their boundaries and take the necessary steps for the economic globalization today as we witness after the 1990’s in Turkey. Today, in Turkey, as well as other developed and developing countries, these trans-national corporations have some ‘rights’ recognized by the state through the legal system.

Governments of countries articulated with the global economic system have had to pass multiple legislative measures, regulations, executive orders, and court decisions, enabling foreign firms to operate in their territories, their own firms to operate abroad, and markets generally to become global.<sup>36</sup>

Indicating the interaction between economic and political processes and institutions in the period of globalization, Sassen states that these legal regulations regarding the economy are not only technical operations but also the indicators of a profound change of mentality for nation-states<sup>37</sup>. In this manner, the process of denationalization couples with globalization as it can be observed that some of the most significant institutions of the nation-state are transformed to a considerable degree. In this picture, what we still call as “national” is in fact has shifted away from what we had once consider as national.

All of these display that new geographies of power emerge and confront with nation-states. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the global network does not operate only at the global level. Parnreiter calls these new geographies emerged as “the transnational social spaces”<sup>38</sup> which do not only cover the state and its institutions in a national scale. Interestingly, one should note the capacity of globalization to revive the local whereas it challenges the nation-state. Henceforth, the transnational social spaces find their place in not somewhere imaginary but in the sub-national localities. Reminding us the transnational institutions Sassen states that:

<sup>33</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Globalization or Denationalization?*, p.6.

<sup>34</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Globalization or Denationalization?*, p.6.

<sup>35</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Globalization or Denationalization?* p.7.

<sup>36</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Globalization or Denationalization?*, p.8.

<sup>37</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Globalization or Denationalization?* p.9.

<sup>38</sup> C. Parnreiter, *Global City Formation and Transnationalization of Urban Spaces: Conceptual Considerations and Empirical Findings*, p.1.



Although these institutions are constructed in a framework of nation-states, they are localized in a sub-national level: trans-boundary networks, formations connecting multiple local or national actors and processes. The subnational is the site for globalization. A focus on local practices and conditions emerged with global dynamics is a requirement<sup>39</sup>.

The interactions between globalization processes and some of the elements of nation-states occur in the place where the global is embedded to the national. This place is the global city or more exactly “transnational urban spaces in cities.” Here, a sub-national city becomes a site for supranational level dynamics such as global market. A good example for these processes is cross-border networks of activities who are interested in local struggles with global aims such as human rights and environmental organizations. In addition, these activist groups as well as urban people now use the possibilities offered by new information technologies. Indeed, Sassen stresses the critical role of these technologies in an age defined with “knowledge” and communication. “The technologies, the institutions and the imaginaries that mark the current global digital context inscribe local political practice with new meanings and new potentialities.<sup>40</sup>”

According to Sassen, the role of these interactive technologies is the “repositioning of the local<sup>41</sup>”. These new capabilities provide activists a unique tool in order for them to bind the local and global together. Accordingly, the world public has experienced the unexpected but enormous effects of social networks in the last uprisings in the Middle East. The rioters do not only communicate each other via these new technologies of World Wide Web, they also make themselves heard by global community. They used these networks for circulating local based information and for carrying their voices into global public space. These technologies are not only utilized by the recent rioters but also by all the activists with different agendas –the environment, poverty, human rights, etc. At this point, “local initiatives become part of a global network of activism without losing the focus on specific local struggles.<sup>42</sup>” One of the most significant examples of this is World Social Forum in Porto Allegre.

This is a new form of global-local politics rendered by internet and other communication technologies. The localities can be connected across a region, a country or

<sup>39</sup>Saskia Sassen, Globalization or Denationalization? p.2.

<sup>40</sup>Saskia Sassen, Globalization or Denationalization? p.11.

<sup>41</sup>Saskia Sassen, Globalization or Denationalization? p.2.

<sup>42</sup>Saskia Sassen, Globalization or Denationalization? p.12.



the world via these new capabilities, which have become a common platform for the people to communicate and support each other. These new developments are the signs of “the formation of new geographies of power confronting national states,” as it is stated above. With these communication technologies, non-elites have the chance to escape the boundaries of nation-states. The acts and steps they take locally become transnational in a few seconds, which is unimaginable in the period of “all-powerful” nation-states.

This portrait brings forth a very important question in this context: After the age of nation-states and in a new age defined by globalization, what are these new geographies in which the ‘transnational social spaces’ dwell? We mentioned a virtual space rendered by new technologies, which brings the local and global together by-passing the national. It is, however, to be noted that cities are also the sites of these transnational spaces. Above, these sites in the cities were called “transnational urban spaces in cities”.

As we began our narrative of the globalization with a direct reference to economy, the new significance of the city in this period should be first understood by economical terms. The very reason behind this developmental logic is nothing but the economic foundations of globalization described and detailed by such Manuel Castells, Saskia Sassen and David Harvey. Indeed, what might be called as “global capitalism” operates with the existence and help of transnational corporations and international institutions that are located and efficient in cities which by the time happen to be “global”. J. V. Beaverstock and his colleagues, J. R. Faulconbridge and M. Hoyler, in their article named “Globalization and the City”, put it directly: “The city is the central tenet and motor of world capitalist development.”<sup>43</sup>

Key agents in the process of world city network formation are not the cities themselves, but those who use the cities through the creation of intra-city clusters and inter-city relations in their everyday practice<sup>44</sup>.

Global capitalism is the restructured form of world capitalism with a new international division of labor, a new spatial organization of production and a global network of capital. The city or the global city is the site for all these three dimensions of global capitalism. Some of the cities are the new sites of production of transnational corporations whereas some of them are the centers of global capital market. As the new

<sup>43</sup>J. V. Beaverstock, J. R. Faulconbridge and M. Hoyler, Globalization and the City, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>J. V. Beaverstock, J. R. Faulconbridge and M. Hoyler, Globalization and the City, p. 2.



strategic sites for the world economy, world cities, just like the “old” capitals, have become the control centers of the capital flows and basing points. In this new world global cities are the key locations of production as well of consumption. Reminding the network between centers of nation-states, that is capitals, these global cities constitute a new network bypassing the nation-states. In this world the privileged cities are not capitals but global cities in this sense.

The mobility of individuals as workers and tourists and even the magazines and television stations emerging from leading world cities, the influence any one city stretches beyond territoriality defined by boundaries<sup>45</sup>.

### 5. Conclusion

It should be, however, pointed out that the cities that are under the influence of globalization are not only these relatively big cities defined as “global” or “world” cities. Today, we cannot only speak of “cities of globalization”, but also of “globalization in cities.” This means that all cities are affected by globalization processes and hence they are “world cities” to a certain extent. This is the end of the cities with strict boundaries and administered by the center authority of nation-states. Rather, they are more like fluid networks interacting with each other without recognizing old boundaries of nation-states. This is what makes possible for us to speak about ‘city diplomacy’: globalization and cities as the new centers of the economy and politics of the world.

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<sup>45</sup>J. V. Beaverstock, J. R. Faulconbridge and M. Hoyler, Globalization and the City, p. 3.



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