Urban Sociology

A Global Introduction

This concise yet comprehensive overview of the political and economic development of the world’s cities also offers a unique emphasis on their cultural impacts. The book stresses the transition from modern (industrial) to postmodern (postindustrial) eras and its effect on established and developing global cities, and arguments are supported with case studies for each of the main concepts of urban theory and research. Mark Abrahamson analyzes contemporary global cities – ranging from Lagos to Los Angeles, Paris to Beijing – helping students relate concepts to concrete places and understand the global nature of contemporary urban development. Rigorous yet accessible, this textbook includes key learning features designed to enrich student understanding and engagement, including chapter-by-chapter glossaries, summaries, and suggestions for further reading.

Urban Sociology
A Global Introduction

Mark Abrahamson
University of Connecticut
Contents

Preface xi

1 Introduction 1
   Differentiating cities 1
   A sociological view of cities 3
   Official definitions 6
      Historical urbanization 6
   Case Study: An Early Primate City – London circa 1650 7
   Metropolitan areas 9
   Global city-regions 10
   World trade 11
   Governing global city-regions 12
      Case Study: An Integrated Global City-Region – Copenhagen and Malmo 15
   The future role of city-regions 16
   Summary 18
   Notes 18
   Suggestions for additional reading 19

2 Cities and city-regions in the world economy 21
   Corporate headquarters and producer services firms 22
      Personnel flows 25
   Global rankings 27
      Place in the world city network 28
   Economic activity rankings 33
      A summary of economic rankings 35
   The Asia-Pacific cities 37
      Case Study: The Asia-Pacific Hub Ports: Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore 37
   Underground global commerce 39
Summary | 40  
Notes | 41  
Suggestions for additional reading | 42  

3 Modern industrial cities | 43  
Early industrial cities | 44  
*Case Study: An Early Modern Industrial City – Back of the Yards in Chicago circa 1930* | 46  
Industrialization and urban growth | 47  
Migration | 49  
Migration within and from Germany | 50  
*Case Study: From Germany to Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil* | 52  
Fordism | 53  
Fordism and planned communities | 55  
Fordist city images | 56  
Ecology of the city and the Chicago School | 57  
Concentric zones | 58  
Suburbanization and industrialization | 61  
*Case Study: Montreal’s Industrial Suburbs around 1875* | 62  
Social area analysis | 63  
Summary | 65  
Notes | 66  
Suggestions for additional reading | 68  

4 Postindustrial cities | 69  
De-industrialization | 69  
Urban neighborhoods | 72  
*Case Study: La Courneuve in Suburban Paris* | 74  
Incentives for further de-industrialization | 76  
*Case Study: Remaking the Center of Istanbul, Turkey* | 79  
The high-tech transformation | 81  
Social networks | 82  
Concentrations and investments | 83  
Attracting creative people | 84  
Gentrification and displacement | 86  
*Case Study: Super-Gentrification in Central London* | 89  
Fear of crime | 90  
Eliminating public space | 91  
Summary | 93  
Notes | 93  
Suggestions for additional reading | 95
5 Postmodern urban theory 97
   From ecology to political economy 98
   The development of political economy 100
   Cities as growth machines 101
      Growth machine studies 103
      Case Study: Historical Locations of Hospitals and Orphanages in Chicago 105
   From Chicago to Los Angeles 106
   Los Angeles and the L.A. School 107
   Fragmentation 108
   Polycentric form 109
   Decentered growth 110
   Societal and cultural differences 111
   Durkheim’s view 112
   Postmodernism 113
      De-differentiation, process, and inequality 113
      Homelessness in Los Angeles 115
      Case Study: The Causes of Homelessness in Los Angeles 116
      Exiting homelessness in Los Angeles: A comparative view 117
   The postmodern exemplar? 118
   Summary 119
   Notes 120
   Suggestions for additional reading 121

6 Income inequality 123
   Globalization and local tradition 124
      Case Study: Stockholm’s Changing Inequality 125
   Measuring income inequality 126
      Percentile shares 127
      Gini Index 129
   Inequality trends within cities and nations 130
   Multinational corporations and foreign direct investment 132
      Professional services firms 134
      Dual service sectors 135
      Case Study: MNCs and FDI in the New Delhi Capital Region 138
   Other contributing variables 139
      Political effects 140
      Familial and gender effects 140
   The geography of inequality 142
      Separation at the top 143
      Separation at the bottom 144
   Class consciousness 146
   Inequality across nations 147
   A concluding dilemma 149
Summary 150
Notes 150
Suggestions for additional reading 153

7 Immigrants and enclaves 154
Immigrants and their routes 154
Undocumented immigrants 156
   Case Study: Risky Migrations from Senya Beraku, Ghana, to Naples, Italy 158
Economic development and migration 159
   Cumulative causation 162
Trafficking 162
Immigrants’ contributions: perceptions and reality 164
   Social integration and acculturation 169
   Case Study: Naming Hispanic Girls and Boys in Los Angeles 169
   Segmented assimilation and panethnic identities 171
Return migration 172
   Case Study: Iraqi Women Return from Copenhagen 174
Enclaves 175
   Ethnoburbs 177
   Case Study: Chinese Grocery Shopping in Suburban Toronto 177
Enclaves as tourist attractions 178
Summary 181
Notes 181
Suggestions for additional reading 184

8 Global cities and global culture 185
Culture and the economy: traditional theoretical perspectives 186
Globalizing culture and global cities 187
   Case Study: Beholding Women’s Beauty in Nigeria 190
Limitations on diffusion 191
The cultural industries 191
   Place in product 192
Cultural networks 193
Entertainment conglomerates 196
   Related industries: advertising 199
Cultural rankings 201
   Economic and cultural rankings compared 203
Developing cultural and economic activities 204
   Case Study: Culture and Economy in Dubai 204
Summary 207
Notes 207
Suggestions for additional reading 209
## 9 Tourism and the experience economy 210

Work in an experience economy 210
Cities as entertainment machines 211
Employment and economic growth 212
Merging culture and economy 213
Tourism 214
The sameness of places 215
Selling places 218
*Case Study: Melbourne, Australia, Becomes an Events City* 221
*Case Study: The Industrial Ecomuseum in Le Creusot, France* 223
Branding cities 224
Commodification 226
Marx’s view 226
From authentic to commodified places 229
*Case Study: Gulou Hutong in Old Beijing* 230
Summary 231
Notes 232
Suggestions for additional reading 234

## 10 A political overview 235

Developing industrial cities 235
*Case Study: Class Conflict in Industrializing Boston* 237
Views of power 238
Mature industrial cities 241
Edge cities 241
*Case Study: Khimki, in the Moscow City-Region, becomes an Edge City* 246
Global city-regions 247
Economic rescaling 248
Right to the city 249
Innovative neighborhood redevelopment 250
*Case Study: Germany’s Neighborhood Social City Program* 251
Controlling surplus populations 252
Rescaling citizenship 254
Summary 255
Notes 256
Suggestions for additional reading 257

---

**Glossary**

Author index 265
Subject index 269
Preface

For as long as I can recall, urban sociologists have bemoaned the absence of a textbook that was truly global in its focus. My sample of colleagues primarily includes sociologists in the United States, and they often expressed their feelings by wishing for a text that was less U.S.-centric. No one, I think, wanted to exclude U.S. cities and, in fact, most probably wanted U.S. cities to be emphasized, but to a lesser degree than they had been in the past. Producing a book that would fill this niche has been a long-term plan of mine, although it was only a few years ago that I sat down to begin seriously writing it.

In recent years, global cities have provided one of the most researched and discussed areas in urban sociology. This interest further pushed urban sociologists toward a more inclusive worldview because although some U.S. cities would always be expected to be among the most important of the global cities, the list obviously far transcends cities in the United States. Further, the adequate study of global cities requires examination of the linkages among cities, regardless of the nations in which they are located. In writing this book, I have tried to capture the growing interest in global cities and combine it with a broad introduction to a global urban sociology.

The reader will find most of the topics traditionally associated with urban sociology are discussed in this text, including lengthy treatments of the discipline’s major historical paradigms. To describe these paradigms adequately, I have found it necessary to relate them to the major economic and occupational eras in which they emerged. Thus, modern cities are examined in relation to multiple facets of industrialization, whereas global cities are analyzed in relation to de-industrialization and postmodernism. This macro approach is balanced by a good deal of attention to how patterns of interaction shaped both by widely shared values and attitudes and by conflicting economic interests, have also shaped the ways that cities of all types develop and change.

As a result of the emphasis placed on global cities, this book contains a more elaborate treatment of the issues and topics that are typically associated with this grouping of cities, including gentrification, income inequality and class polarization, tourism, and the cultural economy. In addition, because urban sociologists and many urban geographers have almost seamlessly joined in studying and writing about global cities,
the reader will find that a good deal of recent research published by urban geographers has been integrated into several parts of the book.

Another distinctive feature of this text is the numerous case studies it contains. Each one examines a major topic discussed in the chapter, focusing on one specific city, carefully selected from across the world for its instructive value. Most chapters contain two or three detailed case studies, each of which is designed to give the reader a clear sense of how some phenomenon discussed in the chapter – tourism, inequality, gentrification, homelessness, and so on – has been experienced or occurs in one particular city. The objective is to interconnect a general issue with a concrete place.

I owe more than the brief word of thanks I can offer here to very many people, beginning with several generations of students whose questions and comments helped shape my thinking and taught me much about how to think about and present the material. I am also very greatly indebted to a number of reviewers whose criticisms and insightful suggestions helped make this a much better book than it would have been without them. Finally, I want to express my appreciation to the supportive staff at Cambridge University Press and especially to Robert Dreesen, my editor.