

ward in this regard, even though more remains to be done. It reaffirms both countries' commitment to uphold the core workers' rights identified by the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work—freedom of association, right to organize and bargain collectively, and prohibitions on child labor, forced labor, and discrimination in employment. Both countries also agree to effectively enforce their own labor laws, with the possibility of invoking dispute resolution in the case of failure to do so. For the first time, the United States and a trading partner have agreed to enforceable protections for workers' rights in the core of a trade agreement, with the same dispute resolution available for labor and environmental provisions as for the other commercial aspects of the agreement. The AFL-CIO looks forward to working closely with our brothers and sisters in the Jordanian trade unions to

improve the enforcement of labor laws in both countries.

The labor movement will also continue to pressure the IMF, the World Bank, and other international financial institutions to ensure that the conditions they impose on developing countries do not undermine the core workers' rights identified by the ILO and do not impose unnecessary and counterproductive austerity, deregulation, privatization, and trade and capital account liberalization.

We need to continue our work at both the domestic and international level, with governments and with social partners, to raise issues, change rules, reform institutions, and create space for workers to build their own unions and exercise their own political voice. ●

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THEA LEE is assistant director of public policy for the AFL-CIO.

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## Saskia Sassen

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**C**ITIES, OR RATHER networks of cities, are becoming a key site for engaging global corporate power. Global cities are particularly important because they are where the core elements of the global economy are located, in strategic concentrations of resources, infrastructures, structures, human talent, and the specialized know-how that is crucial for the management, coordination, and servicing of the global economic system. This network of global cities constitutes a strategic space for politics precisely because it is a strategic space for the global economy.

The demonstrations by the anti-globalization network have signaled some of this, but we now need to build on what they have “demonstrated”—that global corporate power can be engaged directly in certain types of places. We can see the potential for developing a place-specific politics with a global span.

Recognizing these possibilities requires understanding something about the global economy that is usually left out of the picture. I argue elsewhere (in *The Global City*) that the emphasis on hypermobility, global communications, and the neutralization of place and distance in the mainstream account of globaliza-

tion needs to be balanced with a focus on the work behind command functions, on the actual work process in the leading information industries (finance and specialized services), and on global marketplaces. This understanding incorporates the material facilities underlying globalization and the massive concentrations of place-bound resources that are part of the story. Unlike the mainstream account, it does not take the existence of a global economic system as a given, a function of the power of transnational corporations and global communications.

Because globalization is a complex, multi-scalar and multi-sited politico-economic system, developing an alternative politics will take a variety of efforts and institutions. What I am describing is, then, just one element in a broad range of initiatives. Further, because other participants in this symposium address the challenges to agencies such as the IMF, the World Bank, and WTO, I focus on a less noted type of effect in political and institution-building. This type of work is centered in cities, networks of cities, and non-formal political actors. In this case, the practical idea the editors ask for can be found in the fact that such city-based net-

works enable a cross-border politics of non-formal, political actors.

The capabilities for global operation, coordination, and control resulting from the new information technologies and from the power of transnational corporations need to be produced, managed, and serviced. Looking at it this way, we recover the material conditions, production sites, and place-boundedness that are also part of globalization and the information economy. Global cities are places where we can engage global corporate power, and go beyond demonstrating against it, because these cities are where much of the global economy is actually being organized and managed.

The global city is also a sort of new frontier zone where an enormous mix of people converges. Those who lack power, those who are disadvantaged, outsiders, discriminated minorities, can gain presence there, presence vis-à-vis power and presence vis-à-vis each other. This signals, for me, the possibility of a new type of politics centered in new types of political actors. It is not simply a matter of having or not having power. There are new hybrid bases from which to act. By using the term presence I try to capture some of this.

**T**HE SPACE of the city is a far more concrete space for politics than that of the nation. Non-formal political actors can be part of politics there in a way that is much more difficult at the national level. Nationally politics needs to run through existing formal systems, whether the electoral political system or the judiciary (taking state agencies to court). Non-formal political actors are rendered invisible in national politics. City space accommodates a broad range of activities—squatting, demonstrations against police brutality, fighting for the rights of immigrants and the homeless, the politics of culture and identity, and gay and lesbian and queer politics. Much of this becomes visible on the street, enacted by people rather than dependent on massive me-

dia technologies. Street-level politics give rise to new types of political subjects/actors.

In short, I think something enormously important can be built that would go beyond using cities for demonstrations. This urban political project could be an important building block of the politics for global justice and for demanding accountability from global corporate power without necessarily going through some sort of world state or the supranational level. It runs through places yet engages the global. It would construct a countergeography of globalization.

We see an instance of this also in the fact that citizens from many countries feel entitled and enabled to engage in demonstrations in cities that emerge as sites for global corporate capital no matter in what country these cities are located. We can think of these as denationalized citizenship practices.

Through the Internet, local initiatives become part of a global network without losing focus on their specific local struggles. These give rise to a politics of the local with a big difference—the localities are connected with each other across a region, a country, or the world. A network may be global, but that does not mean that everything happens at the global level.

The global city emerges as a strategic site where new claims by informal political actors materialize and assume concrete forms. The loss of power at the national level produces the possibility for new forms of power and politics at the subnational level. The national level as container of social process and power is cracked. This cracked casing opens up possibilities for a political geography that links subnational spaces and allows non-formal political actors to engage strategic components of global capital. ●

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SASKIA SASSEN is the author of *Globalization and its Discontents*. A fully updated version of her book *The Global City* is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.

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