Global Cities as Market Civilization

Abstract

Building upon interdisciplinary efforts to understand the origins, logic and significance of global cities, this article argues that global cities should be seen as a critical component and outcome of a political project to generate a global market society. Global cities should be seen as the successful implementation of free-market political philosophy, constructed and defended by a particular historical configuration of international society. The historical transformation of urban form signaled by the 'global city' concept is tightly bound to the neoliberal restructuring of the world economy in the 1970s, underpinned by US hegemonic power. The first part of this article argues that the distinctive historical origin of global cities has shaped their current trajectories and draws the horizon of their future prospects.

Having established the connection between liberal world order and global cities, the second part of the article argues that the contemporary form of the global city is under threat from two sources. The first threat is internal to the global city form itself. Global cities have internalized the contradictory forces of market liberalism. They have registered astonishing economic growth over the last four decades, and generated vast material and intellectual resources. But, at the same time, they have become deeply divided and polarized in ways that threaten the urban fabric. The second source of threat comes from the possible weakening or collapse of liberal world order, with the accelerating decline of US hegemony. Drawing on aspects of Karl Polanyi's analysis of the nineteenth-century 'great transformation', the article argues that a number of future trajectories for the global city can be identified in the contemporary moment.

Introduction

This article argues that global cities are a product of a political project to generate a global market society. This under-appreciated aspect of the origins of global cities is now critical to understanding their current prospects. In particular, the article highlights how global cities have internalized many of the contradictions of market society, drawing upon aspects of Karl Polanyi's analysis of the nineteenth-century 'great transformation', and applying it to the contemporary global urban context. It goes on to conclude that, unlike in Polanyi's original analysis, which was largely state centric, the twenty-first century metropolis may offer a variety of new paths out of the straight-jacket of market society.

The article contributes to a number of literatures: it will be significant for International Relations scholars trying to understand the evolving role of cities within the international system, as well as Urban Studies scholars and Political Geographers who may benefit from the insights that international political theory can bring to bear on this topic. The article develops the type of interdisciplinary approach needed to transcend the limits of disciplines that seldom speak to each other. This has become a particular problem in the study of the twenty-first century city and its significance for global politics. The article seeks to make a significant contribution to the research agenda on global cities and planetary urbanization by developing an original argument about how the advent of global cities and their ongoing transformation opens up radically novel future paths for the future development of global politics. Although Polanyi himself could not have envisioned the world of global cities and megacities that characterize contemporary urban trends, (being wedded to a primarily state centric analysis), nevertheless the 'global cities' that have been shaped by exposure to waves of neoliberal financialisation have rescaled the operations of market society and the price mechanism, while at the same time developing potential alternative routes beyond market society. Although a literature has developed that argues that there is a need to 'globalise' Polanyian ideas (Munck 2002), I argue here that 'urbanising' Polanyi can also lead to striking insights.

It is widely under-appreciated that global cities are the creation of a historically specific liberal world order – and emphasizing this geopolitical aspect of the global city, which is almost wholly absent in the Urban Studies and Political Geography traditions, is another key contribution of this article. Although cities have played central roles in shaping world history, the concept of the 'global city' signifies a distinctly new urban form that is not more than four decades old. We can trace a transformation in the nature and trajectory of global urbanization back to the restructuring of the global economy in the 1970s – a restructuring and creation of the global market led by particular hegemonic liberal powers, and only possible because of a historically specific configuration of the balance of power. In this sense, the global city is both a product and driver of contemporary globalization.

Here I use the term 'global city' not to refer to a specific object (a particular city, or set of cities), but as a concept or heuristic device, designed to identify the *relationship* between urbanization and a particular historically specific form of globalized finance driven capitalism. My use of the term 'global city' is more in line with the original global city theorists, such as Friedmann (1986) and Sassen (1991), than later critiques of the term emerging from post-colonial urbanism (Robinson 2002, 2006; Bunnell and Maringanti 2010). Using the concept in this original sense - as tied to a particular mode of economic regulation (Soja 2000) - is conducive to making the linkage between urban form and the contradictions of the global free market.

This is not to deny that there are problems with this term, and the 'global city' has been subjected to sustained critique for its narrow economism, and its closing down of alternative urban experiences and conceptual repertoires outside of a selective set of financial centers. I recognize the validity of these critiques, and they become essential for understanding the multiplicity of forms that *resistance* to market society may take at the present conjuncture in cities around the world. But I also think that the original sense in which the term was developed provides a valuable insight into the

linkage between urbanization and the extension of market society that I want to develop an analysis of here.

It should also be noted that these post-colonial critiques successfully pick up on a dialectical tension between the universal and the particular that runs as a thread throughout the global cities literature and my own article. The original global city theorists were picking up on the way in which the universalizing and totalizing logics of capital are now extended via certain key cities and urban sites. This logic is not simply confined to the developed world, and we see multiple and complex core-periphery relationships emerging, not just between a developed core and peripheral global south, but also *within* the global south and *within* the global north. For Ananya Roy (2009, 825), core-periphery structures form in all places. Post-colonial critiques rightly reflect on the way in which those logics take different forms in relation to different local histories, traditions, cultures and resources.

Both of these sides of the global cities debate fit reasonably well with a Polanyian framing: firstly, the extension of market society via specific *abstract universalizing mechanisms* (now with an added focus on the global urban), and, secondly, the reception of and resistance to those homogenizing logics via *local political struggles, resistances, and adaptations* (which may be read as various instantiations of the Polanyian 'double movement' to protect society against the market.) The added value of the post-colonial critique is that we can see that the reactions that form against the global city (ie. against the prioritizing of capitalist logics in cities) are likely to take a wide variety of forms – offering multiple routes out of the universalizing and, for Polanyi, ultimately doomed utopian logic of market civilization.

It should be noted that Polanyi himself offered a 'diffusionist' analysis of capitalism and the spread of market society (Roberts 2018, 8). This means that he believed that it was a European phenomenon originally, that it occurs in a European context, and was exported via mechanisms of colonialism, trade and mimicry (a similar type of analysis is to be found in the influential Marxian theory of the origins of capitalism by Robert Brenner (1982)). The implication is that there is only one 'market civilization' – not multiple market civilizations. It is the historically specific social relations that formed in the European context that are diffused around the world – with the commodification of land, labour and money, and the abstract logic of the price mechanism, transforming local societies that it comes into contact with, in the gradual spread of market society (Lacher 1999, 321). As Philip Roberts (2018, 6) has recently argued, under market society the way space is structured goes from being concrete to virtual, as existing place bound social relations begin to be eroded by the dominance of abstract market logics. But where we do see the impact of local histories (and today this means those extra-European regions which Polanyi gave little thought to) is in the 'double-movement' of forms of resistance to the imposition of market society, which are based not on universalizing abstract logics, but on the dynamics of real place bound histories and social configurations. Here the post-colonial focus on cities outside of the developed world is vitally important.

In the contemporary connection between urban form and the restructuring of the world market we can see the link between a particular historical configuration of international society and the emergence of global cities. The United States used its hegemonic position within the international system to reshape the global economy in

the 1970s along neoliberal principles, kick-starting and shaping contemporary globalization. Cities began to respond to the new economic environment, and were transformed as a result. A select group of global cities now plays a critical role in directing the flows of the global economy. Since the 1970s, cities have swelled to immense size, stretching both vertically and horizontally (in the latter case often joining together in vast metropolitan regions that crosscut state boundaries). They have deepened transnational-networked links with other cities (utilizing advances in information and communications technologies), and have generated incredible material wealth and intellectual capital. They have become the engines and the product of globalization – to such an extent that, as I will later argue, their emergence may have tipped the international system onto a new developmental path completely unanticipated decades ago, and largely unrecognized in International Relations scholarship today.

Such has been the context of the historical emergence of global cities: born in a moment of economic restructuring, grown in an environment in which US power confidently defended and projected a liberal world order. There are signs that this era is now coming to a close. 2018 opened on a world in which liberal order faces threats from many directions. Donald Trump's tenure as US President, Britain's decision to leave the European Union, the increasing assertiveness of illiberal powers such as Russia and China; these events point to a general crisis of the liberal world order that has held together in various forms in much of the world since 1945. The financial crisis of 2008 appears now to have heralded the beginning of the end for that system, and has ushered in an uncertain future in which protectionism, nationalism, nativism, border walls and trade wars are on the political agenda, not least in the very state that underpinned the post-1945 liberal order. If the global city is a creature of liberal order, how then might it survive the potential collapse of that order?

In this article I argue that the global city will be forced to evolve into new forms, and that possibilities for such an evolution are discernable at the present conjuncture. Furthermore, the possibilities for this evolution take multiple forms depending upon the richness of local urban histories, traditions and experiences and resources, which will be very different in the cities of the global north and the global south.

I argue that the continued existence of the global city in its contemporary form(s) is under serious threat from two directions. The first threat is internal to the global city form itself. Global cities have internalized the contradictory forces of market liberalism. Despite their astonishing economic growth over the last four decades, they have, at the same time, become deeply divided and polarized in ways that threaten the integrity of the urban fabric. They amplify and focus the contradictions of capitalist liberal order, and provide the spaces of centrality in which political struggle will play out. This is exemplified by the unresolved dialectical tensions that appear throughout the summary documents of the recent UN HABITAT III summit, which sets out the United Nation's *New Urban Agenda.* Here reliance on the market mechanism as a source of generative power and growth sits uneasily with recognition and endorsement of strident calls for more social justice, sustainability and the 'right to the city'.

The second source of threat comes from the weakening and possible collapse of liberal world order. The article goes on to argue that global cities must evolve to

survive in a 'global' form. Indeed, if leading states are to move in a more illiberal and protectionist direction, then the future of globalization may well rest with the trans-territorial networks of cosmopolitan and open global cities rather than the territorial nation state. But such a future can only be realised in a form that addresses the inequalities, injustices and unsustainability that are part of the very fabric of contemporary global cities.

The article proceeds in three stages. The first examines the symbiotic connection between global cities and liberal world order, and argues that their emergence marks a new global 'great transformation', one that now extends far beyond the original nineteenth-century European heartland that Polanyi analysed, to incorporate the peoples, states and urban forms of the entire planet. The second examines the connections between this and the earlier nineteenth century great transformation, drawing upon the work of Karl Polanyi. The final section examines trends in contemporary 'global' cities around the world via Polanyi's concept of the 'double movement' – arguing that such evolutions are indicated by the universalizing structural logics and contradictions of market society, but are likely to take a multiplicity of local forms.

Global Cities and Liberal World Order

Linking global cities and liberal world order is essential if we are to understand the historically unique characteristics of such cities. Intrinsically bound up with contemporary globalization, global cities draw their historically distinctive form from the global market economy that was constructed in the 1970s, and extended after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indeed, historically, one of the features of successful cities has been their ability to take advantage of favourable geographic circumstances. Whether this be the first cities of ancient Mesopotamia, those that grew along with the rise of the Silk Roads, or those that benefited from the expansion of European Empires,

> history shows that cities have tended to embrace international opportunities in waves and cycles. Cities rarely break out into international and global activities by themselves. They participate in collective movements or networks to take advantage of new conditions, and often their demise or withdrawal from a global orientation is also experienced jointly with other cities as circumstances change… (Clark 2016, 33).

Such has been the case in the latest round of globalization too – global cities have taken advantage of the opportunities afforded by the geopolitics of the late-twentieth century: a relatively stable period of US hegemony (Ikenberry 2011), underpinning a rules based liberal world order, in which a global market society has been able to develop, with leading cities such as London, New York and Tokyo at its core, and many other cities globalizing to take advantage of new opportunities (Sassen 1991). It is thus no coincidence that cities such as London and New York began to renew themselves in the late-1970s, reversing decades of population loss, post-industrial decline and fiscal crisis. They did so by taking advantage of the new opportunities on offer in the emerging global marketplace that leading liberal states had constructed

(Curtis 2016). As this logic was expanded at the global scale, cities around the world, including many in the global south, such as Shanghai, Dubai and Johannesburg, which became financial gateways and cores within the periphery (Roy 2009), began to be transformed by exposure to global flows of capital, taking up positions in the increasingly complex structures of global finance and production.

This period had a very different character than the one that preceded it. It marked a distinct shift in capitalist political economy, often characterized as the move from industrial to post-industrial capitalism in the developed world (and, as we will see, in much of the global south the extension of market society and subjugation of society to the price mechanism takes place in a context where the social democratic welfare state had been non-existent, making the implementation of the logics of neoliberalism into an even starker contrast between its beneficiaries and victims). The period between 1945 and 1970 had been, to use Karl Polanyi's terminology, one where market capitalism was embedded within a set of institutions that tamed the social dislocations that it tended to bring in its wake.[1] The post-war Bretton Woods system set a firm framework of rules and institutions for international commercial and financial transactions, underpinned by US hegemony and the dollar. Domestically, a variety of social democratic compacts (bargains between capital and labour, collective consumption organized via welfare states), fairly strict regimes of regulation to control capital accumulation, active state intervention within the national economy via various mechanisms (Keynesian stimulus, public ownership of key industries, high levels of public sector employment), worked to stabilise the impact of capitalism on national societies.

But, in response to the financial crises of the 1970s, the post-war system was system was reconstituted, The triggers for this restructuring were multiple: the spiraling cost of the Cold War, the expense of the war in Vietnam, the 'oil shocks' resulting from crisis in the Middle East. In addition to this geopolitical dimension was a crisis of capitalist profitability. Regulated welfare capitalism had led to rising wages: stimulating growth in the post-war boom years, but more recently leading to a decline in profits for the capitalist class. The saturation of domestic markets meant that firms were motivated to secure new outlets for capital.

The ideas and principles of neoliberalism,[2] which had remained out of favour for decades, were adopted as the solution to these tensions. Its central principles were a commitment to free markets, minimal state involvement in economic affairs, free

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[1] It should be noted that the partial 're-embedding' of the market offered by the social democratic welfare state is, for some, merely a *temporary* fix to the problems of market society. As Hannes Lacher (1999, 322) has pointed out, the regulating of the market in this period had the result of inhibiting the operation of the price mechanism, which led to eventual financial crisis and the collapse of the social democratic settlement in the 1970s. For Lacher, the subjugation of the market must be total if market society is to be transcended.

[2] There are many who question the cohesiveness and effectiveness of neoliberalism as an ideology and political project. However, I would follow Gilbert (2013, 8–9) in arguing that there is enough consistency for neoliberalism to be considered variously as 'an aggregation of ideas, a discursive formation, an over-arching ideology, a governmental programme, the manifestation of a set of interests, a hegemonic project, an assemblage of techniques and technologies'. It should be noted that a pure form of actually existing neoliberalism does not exist (indeed, as we shall see, given the internal contradictions lurking within the creed, it could not exist). Compromise and pragmatism have always accompanied political attempts to instantiate the theory in a variety of contexts and settings.

movement of capital, and the extension of the competitive dynamics of the market to most aspects of social life. The result of the successful political project to implement these ideas – which became known as the Washington Consensus - was a new spatial order: an integrated global economy, in which cities and regions would take on a pivotal role. In place of the tightly regulated capital controls of the post-war period came a great expansion of global financial markets, as capital was freed to move internationally to seek the best returns. This in turn led to the great rise of the transnational corporation, and the growth of foreign direct investment, as firms sought new opportunities beyond their saturated domestic markets. The mobility and speed with which finance flowed around the globe were greatly augmented by the emergence of the new information technologies, and the advent of computerized trading exchanges and stock markets.

Under these new conditions, key actors within global cities, in particular the Transnational Corporation, have taken the greater freedom from state regulation encapsulated in neoliberal principles, and used it to generate massive agglomeration economies. This had an impact on the material form of cities. Where previously the scale of cities had been partially constrained by the boundaries of national markets, suddenly many of these barriers had been removed. Cities such as New York and London began to transform into financial hubs, while much of their former production was outsourced to the global south. Under the purer form of market society that was emerging, urban spaces began to evolve in the ways charted by the global city theorists that attempted to explain the increasingly apparent changes to major cities in the 1980s and 1990s (Acuto 2011; Friedmann 1986; Sassen 1991; Taylor 2003). Such scholars sought to trace and explain the visible changes to urban form materializing in this period: the growth in physical size and population density, the stretching across trans-territorial regions, the vertical growth of the central business district, the accumulation of wealth, the growing and deepening web of interconnections between cities. This process could be observed in cities around the world, albeit with different impacts as the new economic environment interacted with cities' variable histories and institutional and resource endowments. But a consistent trend has been the sucking in of people and resources to the gravitational well of urban centres, generating immense wealth for some, but also overloading public services and urban social fabrics in many cities, as we see in the great growth of informal settlements and slums of the developing world over the past four decades (Davis 2006; UN-Habitat, 2008).

Drivers of Global City Formation

Cities have been particularly open to such transformations for a number of reasons. First and foremost is the special relationship between urban space and economic development. It has long been noted by Economists and Urbanists that cities develop agglomeration economies that set them apart from non-urban areas. In the late-nineteenth century Alfred Marshall (1891) drew attention to the advantages that population density and the clustering of business activity offered for productivity and growth. Firms start to draw advantages from their proximity to other firms via scale-economies in production and transportation. They also benefit from diversity in the labour market, as well as enhanced knowledge exchange, as cities draw the most talented and best educated in search of opportunity and excitement: the urban 'buzz' (Florida 2004).

Once this process begins cities start to benefit from cumulative positive feedback loops and path-dependencies (Glaeser 2011; Jacobs 1984; Krugman 1995; Storper 1997; Soja 2000). Here the specific history of cities interacts with the more abstract world of economic thinking (Polese 2011). After history has bequeathed a certain city its competitive advantages, the economic logic of agglomeration sets a path of cumulative growth, given the right choices and favourable ongoing conditions. But, in the modern period, crucially for our understanding of global cities, this path is only unimpeded in societies where cities are freed from political constraints to pursue capitalist economic growth under relatively free market conditions, where the price mechanism is unleashed and the economy is relatively disembedded from society. Once established, under a free market regime, city size, in terms of demographic weight and market size, is the crucial factor in generating self-sustaining growth.

The intrinsic advantages that come from clustering and density in cities were, then, supercharged by neoliberal globalization, as cities were opened up to deeper economic links than ever before. In the contemporary period, centrality (in the sense of being the geographic center of a market) means being a major hub in a network that stretches around the globe. With the great expansion of the reach of transport and communications technologies, cities have become more important, and it has become even more crucial to be close to their centers. Rather than undermine the competitive advantage that arises from location and scale in cities, falling transport and communications costs allow that competitive advantage to widen, as those firms already benefitting from agglomeration economies can extend their reach into markets previously beyond them. Thus we see the oft-remarked paradox of globalisation in operation: the expansion of the world market drives a concentration of power and wealth in *particular* places. The greater the market size, the bigger the city. And the greater the reach of global market society, the greater the reach of the global city across time and space.

This brings us to a second key reason behind the emergence of the global city: the need of an increasingly dispersed global economy for command and control functions for economic decision making. Key nodal global cities, via their concentration of powerful economic actors, offer this capability, precisely because the state's role in this area has been undermined by neoliberal politics, and relocated to transnational corporations. Global cities become sites of concentration of knowledge and expertise. Again, historical legacies play a key role: London, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Chicago, Shanghai, Johannesburg, have emerged as leading nodes precisely because they have an established legacy on which to build cumulative advantage. Sassen (1991) showed how the central business districts of such cities accrete ever more density and complexity, as a host of new ancillary firms grow up to service the expanding and increasingly complex needs of business: finance, insurance, real estate, marketing, advertising, as well as the high end services required by an increasingly wealthy urban elite. This is an implosion of power, resources, talent and creativity into very select geographical locales.

Thirdly, the city has been transformed because of a vast wave of rural to urban migration. Behind the back of our traditional accounts of world politics, urban trends have been steadily transforming the planet. The world moved rapidly across the course of the twentieth century from an overwhelmingly rural population to a

predominantly urbanized one. The historian Eric Hobsbawm (1994, 289) argued that the trend unleashed by this long migration into industrial cities is a historical watershed: 'the most dramatic and far-reaching social change of the second half of [the twentieth] century, and the one which cuts us off forever from the world of the past, is the death of the peasantry'. Already in the first decade of the twenty-first century we have become a predominantly urban species – a profound change from the rural world of just a century ago. Over 3 billion more people are expected to move to cities by 2030, and urban space is expected to triple over the next 30 years (Glaeser and Joshi Ghani eds. 2015). We might note that this fact itself transforms the stable world of states that has in the past centuries characterized political order: states are no longer primarily rural entities, but now incubate cities that come to dwarf many existing states in size and economic clout (Toly 2017). Such cities are gaining in confidence and importance, but do not yet have matching political power – a likely source of tension with states in the coming decades.

Although in the developed world global cities have markets that have to accommodate a growing urban population, in much of Africa, Asia and Latin America this decline in the global peasantry is seen as a 'perverse urban boom', where the growing urban population bears little relation to the size of a city's economy, and the classical link between urbanisation and manufacturing and industrial growth has been broken. Mike Davis (2006) relates how the neoliberal debt restructuring programs pursued by the International Monetary Fund (one of the key institutional mechanisms by which the price mechanism was extended to parts of the global south) in the developing world have deregulated agricultural markets and pushed vast numbers of rural labourers into cities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia: a recipe for global slum production.

One of the key characteristics of the new globalised urban form is, then, a combination of spatial concentration, as wealth and resources accumulate in specific places, coupled with a concomitant diffusion and spreading out: of gigantic urban sprawls and endless informal settlements. Vast wealth disparities, an embattled middle class (Florida 2017), immigration and slum production, insecurity of tenure, uneven access to services, the creation of private spaces and networks: these trends describe the morphology of global cities, while also threatening their future cohesion *as* cities (Graham and Marvin 2001; Burdett, Sujic et al 2007). Although this production of inequality is replicated around the globe, in ways that interact with specific cultural and historical modes of political and social life, it is often most stark in the global south, where statehood has been a relatively recent development, and the legacies of social democracy are absent from these particular histories and have left no structures to soften the impact. These inequalities generate what the UN has called the 'urban divide':

> The urban divide is the face of injustice and a symptom of systemic dysfunction. A society cannot claim to be harmonious or united if large numbers of people cannot meet their basic needs while others live in opulence. A city cannot be harmonious if some groups concentrate resources and opportunities while others remain impoverished (UN-HABITAT 2008, ix).

Indeed, as Sassen's initial global city theory argued, the polarisation of wealth is an intrinsic part of the nature of the global city. The concentration of high-level jobs in the informational economy, and the disproportionate financial rewards of such work,

serves to generate huge disparities in income. At the same time, the servicing of the 'global elite' is facilitated in part by growing informalisation of parts of the economy. What emerges is a squeeze on the middle-class, and the widening of social divisions within such cities.

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis we have seen a growing awareness of these dynamics of inequality, and their increasing prominence in public discourse. A mechanism of centralisation sucks into the global city all sorts of systemic contradictions (Brenner 2014). Global cities are both the product of the globalisation of capital and labour, but also the front-line of its contradictions, and the likely site of their crisis:

> If we consider that global cities concentrate both the leading sectors of global capital and a growing share of disadvantaged populations (immigrants, many of the disadvantaged women, people of color generally, and, in the megacities of developing countries, masses of shanty dwellers) then we can see that cities have become strategic terrain for a whole series of conflicts and contradictions (Sassen 2005: 39).

These related facets of the global city – its centralisation of power and its polarisation of wealth – make it a volatile and unstable entity. Elites, who benefit from the wealth generating capacities of the global city, have started also to fear it. Stephen Graham (2016) has shown how the superrich in both the global north and global south have begun to secede from the city by constructing and inhabiting private work and living spaces and transport networks high above and separate from the everyday streetlife of the city: in spates of new skyscraper building, or in the private helicopter fleets of Sao Paolo that bypass the crime and congestion of the streets below. Much of Graham's account of these polarized cities resembles familiar dystopian science fiction – and yet they are rooted in contemporary realities.

In its implementation of neoliberal principles, the global city (in our sense, as a heuristic device applied to highlight similar structurally induced trends in multiple cities around the world) embodies a new global 'great transformation'. It is the leading edge and highest expression of market society today. In their current form, global cities offer an urbanised and globalised expression of the return of old instabilities, which Karl Polanyi long ago argued must inevitably result from the contradictions of an untrammeled free-market liberalism. Such instabilities were present in an earlier, nineteenth-century attempt to build a global market society – a period that led to multiple backlashes, economic collapse, the rise of totalitarianism, and world war. For Polanyi, these were symptoms of the desperate attempt to re-embed the market in society. In the post-war period the social democratic project had attempted greater balance between markets and society. But the advent of a global neoliberalism, after unleashing four decades of rampant transformation, now seems to be buckling under its own contradictions, and bringing forth a new set of morbid symptoms. One of these symptoms is a swelling tide of populism of both left and right, a reaction against globalization, often manifest in a clear cultural divide between urban and rural areas.

Nowhere are the contradictions in contemporary global cities, and our difficulty in coming to terms with them, more evident than in the *New Urban Agenda* set out at UN-Habitat III. In October 2016 fifty thousand people converged on the Ecuadorian city of Quito for UN Habitat III: a vast gathering of national political leaders, city

mayors, technocrats, grass roots activists, private companies and charitable foundations. Their goal was to set the agenda and direction for urban development over the next twenty years. The *New Urban Agenda* emerging from Quito is designed to grapple with the many pressing global-scale challenges that rapid urbanization has brought.[3] At the same time, it seeks to harness the unique generative capacities of cities and tap their potential.

Doing these things simultaneously, it argues, is the key to a livable twenty first century. But the *New Urban Agenda* is saturated with contradictory aims that appear set to end in a dialectical collision. The harnessing of the generative economic power of cities and markets are at the heart of the document. But alongside is another set of core values to be promoted and defended: social justice and the right to the city, environmental sustainability and the protection of ecosystems, poverty reduction, equality and livability.

Leading urban neoliberal economists such as Edward Glaeser (2011) see the market as the most powerful mechanism for solving the problems that mass urbanization throws up. For Glaeser, and others of his ilk, urbanization is absolutely key to the continued global transition from poverty to prosperity (Glaeser and Joshi-Ghani eds. 2015). And cities *are* the most critical resources we have for solving global challenges. As we have noted, urban agglomeration and density increase productivity and innovation. Cities are hubs of knowledge, entrepreneurship and innovation – crucibles of creativity and growth, and sources of transformative ideas. Marrying density to information technology, for example, can help to produce smart-cities that reduce urban environmental footprints. City-to-city governance networks, such as the C40 Climate Leadership Initiative[4] (an amalgam of 91 cities, representing 25% of world GDP, working to mitigate climate change) have a truly global reach, and offer non-state governance solutions to global problems in the wake of state failures (Boutelegier 2013). Cities may now have the growing resources and capabilities to offer routes out of market civilization. And, indeed, this may be critical, for it could be argued that the state is so implicated within the project to generate market society that we need to find other forms of agency that can find a way forward. Such agency would spring from civil society, as others have remarked (Lacher 1999, 324; Latham 1997). But what has not generally been considered is that a transformation of the twenty-first century metropolis could offer new political possibilities for the international system of the twenty-first century.

However, many of the problems and pathologies of cities – their environmental impact, their inequality, the privatization of public space – are generated by the very market forces offered here as solution. Cities are finding it hard to reconcile their potential with their pathologies. They are set on a form of urban growth that is ultimately corrosive of both the city and the environment. Continuing on the current developmental model will overload a planet set to add 3 billion more urbanites in the next two decades. Leaving inequalities and uneven access untouched will become a serious source of social and political instability. The paradox at the heart of the UN's *New Urban Agenda* is that many of these social problems are generated by market externalities and market failures under neoliberal capitalism. Neoliberal market

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[3] http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf : Accessed 21.2.18
[4] http://www.c40.org : Accessed 4.5.17

ideology - in particular, extensive privatization of public assets - has tended to systematically undermine many urbanites' 'right to the city' over the last four decades, while at the same time generating rampant inequality (Harvey 2012). Solving the paradoxical relationship between the market and the city will be key to the future of global politics.

In summary, we can identify two distinct trends in the analysis of the global city phenomenon. Firstly, global cities were generated by a unique iteration of international society, which sustains and protects them. They are shaped by their role as nodes in a global market economy, from which they benefit disproportionately in relation to other areas of the national territory in which they are embedded. They benefit from agglomeration economies, through density and clustering, which have been supercharged by the opening of up of flows of global capital and finance.

But, secondly, they are also manifesting rising levels of polarisation, inequality and social injustice, and are contributing disproportionately to the destruction of the natural environment, as a vast variety of diverse societies are subjected to the abstract logic of the price mechanism. Privatization of space is effacing old working class neighbourhoods and local solidarities in the developed world, while the trend towards exclusion reaches its extreme in the informal cities and slums of the developing world (an issue so pervasive now that it cannot be meaningfully solved by any state policy (McGuirk 2014)), and in the secession of wealthy elites into new private spaces only selectively connected to the older urban space. If the material form and architectures of the global city are 'society made durable', (Latour 2005), or comprise an 'infrastructure space' with its own structural disposition (Easterling 2014), then we can clearly see in the global city form both the gains and the pathologies of the last four decade's project to generate a global market society, as well as in the actually existing form of structural violence blighting the societies of the twenty-first century (Farmer 2004).

In the next section I will analyse the historical content and trajectory of this project more fully, drawing critically upon Karl Polanyi's concepts and analysis of the nineteenth century attempt to generate an international market society, and its consequences. These ideas then underpin an examination of the possible future trajectories for global cities, and the latent potentials that may be emerging in the contemporary moment.

Global Cities and the New *Great Transformation*

In the second part of this essay I want to consider the possible paths open to global cities at the contemporary conjuncture. If the historical origins of the global city have inscribed in space the consequences and contradictions of neoliberal ideology, then can global cities negotiate these contradictions or reshape themselves into new forms? Can global cities remain 'global' in an international system in which existing forms of globalism are under threat, just as they were in the collapse of the liberal order that began in the late nineteenth-century?

Global cities have developed a novel set of capacities and capabilities under neoliberalism that could be redirected and reconfigured by alternative political

projects. Recent developments in technology, governance and urban democracy hold out the promise that the global city can evolve to become the more socially just and sustainable city that the UN's *New Urban Agenda* envisages. Transnational networks of democratic global cities engaging in a parallel global governance system might even offer a new globalism distinct from the state-centered governance system of the last forty years. Indeed, cities long predate the contemporary international system and capitalist political economy – they are an enduring polity that has taken a variety of forms throughout history (Buzan and Little 2000; Taylor 2013). The reconfiguration of the current form may have the potential to revolutionise and reshape the broader international system as well as the city.

But without reform and evolution the current developmental path of global cities will be unsustainable. To continue upon the neoliberal trajectory is likely to lead to a dystopian future, in which trends towards division, exclusion and authoritarianism accelerate. Global cities enfold a dialectic of progress and decay. For all their achievements, for all their concentration of knowledge, wealth and culture, they also retain this dystopian quality. As the UN (2008) itself declares, global cities are divided cities, concentrating wealth and poverty into close proximity. In this sense they amplify and materialise the inherent contradictions within neoliberal market society, and become sites of political tension and confrontation: we have seen this quality repeatedly in events of the past decade: in the Paris and London riots, in Tahir Square in the Arab Spring, in Occupy Wall Street. Cities centralise and focus political conflict.

Such conflict was viewed by Polanyi as the inevitable outcome of the vast project of social engineering attempted by the creation of a market society. Polanyi's excoriating critique of the damage done to traditional communities and the social fabric by the political project to create a market society in the nineteenth century continues to resonate in the new period, because many of the fundamental beliefs and aims of the earlier period have been revived by the neoliberal project. Many of the features of that period are also reappearing in new forms: rampant inequality, social dislocation, economic instability, the rise of illiberal social movements, a trend towards nationalism and authoritarianism within states, and a declining liberal hegemonic state were also core features of the politics of a century ago. This has led to a revival of Polanyian ideas in recent years (Dale 2010). Polanyi's arguments are imbued also with a new relevance and force by the social conditions that we see forming in contemporary global cities, which, as physical locations, focus and amplify the systemic problems that market society brings; although Polanyi, of course, never foresaw the possibility of the types of transnational global cities that characterize contemporary urbanization, and offer new capacities, capabilities and resources with which to develop different forms of multi-scalar politics.[5]

In many respects the neoliberal attempt to construct a global market society under the protective carapace of US hegemony may be seen as part of a *longue duree* ideological struggle, reconstructing the earlier nineteenth-century great transformation on an expanded *global* scale. It represents the reemergence of dreams of a self-

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[5] One thinker who did was Henri Lefebvre (1991), operating in a Marxist register, who noted how the production of urban space became the driving force of capitalist expansion, centralizing and concentrating in material form the dialectical contradictions of the capitalist social relation.

regulating market that were first put in to practice in nineteenth-century Britain, and went on, through the mechanism of British hegemony, to structure international society in that period.

Polanyi argued that the collapse of this system in the tumultuous years between 1914 and 1945 was a direct result of the contradictions of free-market liberal capitalism, as well as the attempt to universalize this system. World War, the Great Depression, the rise of the dictators in the 1930s; all were seen by Polanyi as reactions to a system that contained within it the seeds of its own destruction. The post-1945 period of Keynesian economic management and social democracy now stand as an interregnum: between the persistence of this utopian dream, although not an escape (Lacher 1999). And yet the pattern repeats: the implementation period of the 1970s and 1980s, the great expansion of the 1990s, and the morbid symptoms signaled by the 2008 financial crash and its continuing aftermath. Polanyi argued that the social costs of this project were too much to bear in the nineteenth-century, and gave rise to attempts to re-embed the market in society. Just as the nineteenth-century industrial cities exhibited all the pathologies of untrammeled market capitalism chronicled by Marx, so too do contemporary global cities instantiate in material form the dislocations and ruptures of the expanded neoliberal project.

The Nineteenth-Century Great Transformation

It is worth reminding ourselves of Polanyi's analysis of the nineteenth-century *Great Transformation* to show how its contemporary global form both follows, but is significantly different from, it predecessor. One of the most significant differences, I will argue, is that global cities now offer maturing alternatives to the state in developing new ways to transcend market society.

The idea of a self-regulating free market of international scope is both one with a history stretching back over 150 years, but also a relatively new idea in the long sweep of human history. The original great transformation was, for Polanyi, a gigantic work of social engineering, designed to dislocate the economy from society and reconstitute each as separate institutional spheres. Before this time the market had always been subordinate to society – the idea that it could be an autonomous sphere, and even come to control society, was unheard of.

The notion of the free market was, then, a historical rupture. It had its origins in nineteenth-century Britain, and constituted a conscious political project, driven by Enlightenment ideals of social improvement. It was a system to be built on the intellectual foundations offered by classical economists such as Smith, Ricardo and Malthus, who had sought to illustrate how the power of the market mechanism could achieve overall societal benefits. These thinkers re-envisioned human beings as rational actors motivated to maximise monetary gain. When adopted by the ruling classes in the 1830s, these ideas underpinned the creation of the free market and the construction of the price mechanism.

The creation of market society involved the application of both state power and immense violence - both to bodies and to long-held social customs. Both were necessary to overturn deeply embedded traditional societies. Britain was fertile ground for this intellectual project because it had already weakened such traditional

customs through the enclosure of common lands in previous centuries, leading to the emergence of a form of capitalist agriculture (Wood 2002). The path to full market society was thus already partly prepared.

But further decisive steps were needed to generate the full shift from mercantilism to market capitalism. These came with the abolition of the Poor Law in 1834, which created a fully-fledged market in wage labour by removing traditional social safety nets and forcing self-reliance. The advent of the great industrial cities and towns of the nineteenth-century marked the destruction of traditional forms of rural life, and their replacement with the abstract mechanisms of market exchange analysed by the classical sociologists such as Marx, Simmel, and Durkheim.

What was unique about this market society was that for the first time land, labour and money had been turned into abstract goods. And this is at the heart of Polanyi's critique of market society. These are seen to be 'fictitious commodities'. They are not the typical fabricated commodities of human labour, but commodities made so only by the application of state power: the state is inside each, and massive state power, legislative strength and physical force are required to make them appear to be natural goods. There is nothing natural about the free market – it is an artifact of state power (Gray 2002, xiii).

But, Polanyi argues that the attempt to turn human labour and nature into abstract commodities must ultimately fail, as it runs up against increasingly strident calls for social protections. And, just as robbing people of their social protections and cultural institutions generates an inevitable backlash, so also, as we have come to know, does the commodification of nature generate its own revenge. As Polanyi argued, 'leaving the fate of the soil and the people to the market would be tantamount to annihilating them' (Dale 2010, 59-60). Such failure was the fate of the first market society, which lasted little more than a generation. But before that failure it came to shape nineteenth-century international society, as the hegemonic power of Britain enabled it to attempt to 'reconstruct the world in its own image'.

Market Society and International Society

Just as today, the expansion of market society internationally required a particular configuration of international society (a fact often missing from the accounts of global city theorists). Just as US hegemony has underpinned contemporary globalization, it was British hegemony in the nineteenth-century that enabled liberal ideas to be projected onto the wider system (Cox 1981). The great transformation was then configured into an international system that extended and locked in the emerging market society. This interlacing system was comprised of a number of key elements.

Its geopolitical component was the balance of European great powers that has come to be known as the Concert of Europe, in which the British held the pivotal offshore balancing card. This balance underpinned an unusually long 'commercial peace', that endured until 1914. The commercial peace was partly a product of the spread of a new order of constitutional state government after the French Revolution, and the newly empowered bourgeoisie supported the spread of free markets, the rise of high finance, and accelerating capital flows. The emerging system was cemented by the adoption of the Gold Standard in the late 1860s. This was the cornerstone of the new

system of international political economy – an institutional innovation that put the theory of the price mechanism into practice internationally (Dale 2010, 64). World commerce was now so entwined with the international monetary system, supported by British hegemonic power, that it was hoped that war would become unthinkable.

Although hailed at the time as the key to an enduring international peace, in reality the rigidity of the Gold Standard would mean imposing upon societies costs that they would ultimately refuse to bear. As Britain began its slow relative decline protectionist tendencies across Europe emerged, as societies sought to insulate themselves from the vagaries of the free market. Attempts to universalize the theoretical construction of the gold standard, Polanyi argued, ultimately led to its collapse in the turbulence of the early twentieth century, and with it a short lived form of European market civilization.

As we have seen, this system bears many striking similarities with the period of globalization we have witnessed from the 1970s onwards, although, as has been noted extensively in the literature on neoliberalism, one of the key differences is the way in which the market is no longer seen as a natural phenomena, but as the conscious product of states (Foucault 2008). Here the liberal hegemonic state power has been the United States, which enjoyed an unparalleled unipolar moment in the 1990s, underpinned the commercial peace of contemporary globalization, but has since entered its own period of relative decline. Free market ideologues have once again been at the intellectual heart of this system – represented by Hayek's (1944) blast against the social democracy of the post-war period, and by Milton Friedmann (1962) and his influential *Chicago Boys* (a set of economists, trained at the University of Chicago, who were then instrumental in the spreading the 'great transformation' into non-Western contexts and regions). Self-regulating free market ideology had been internationalized once more via the Washington Consensus, and institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. The non-democratic and proto-authoritarian nature of this hegemonic structure is captured in Stephen Gill's (2003) concept of *New Constitutionalism*, which describes the political project to empower free market capitalism as a universal model for future global development. The US dollar underpinned the system, while finance was again freed considerably from regulatory constraint to reshape the global economy, in its wake engendering the new role for global cities. This period was, then, a rerun of the experiment in utopian social engineering and universalization of market society that had ended so badly before, but on an expanded global scale. As John Gray (2002, xxi) has argued, it is as if the 'rational planners had learnt nothing from the disasters of the twentieth century'.

In both periods market liberals sought via these mechanisms to expand the market to universal scale: to create a new form of universal civilization. In both cases the price mechanism would bring in to being *homo-economicus.* Both periods represent attempts to 'disembed' the economy from its social controls – and in both cases the bands of social solidarity and collective organization were loosened (Ruggie 1998). In the first case the age-old forms of traditional society were uprooted. In the second, the social democratic projects of many developed states were dismantled, while, again, in the developing world, traditional forms of rural life have been destroyed in the eruptions of the vast mega-cities, on a scale now dwarfing the industrial urbanization of the Victorian period.

The Double Movement

In both cases market civilization remained an incomplete dream, undermined by its own internal contradictions. The utopian quality of this dream comes from the assumption that all of the diverse cultures and forms of political organization displayed throughout human history might be effaced by a single market civilization converging upon one set of abstract values. But this enlightenment dream of mastery and control could never be imposed upon the diversity of human political life. The market is a place that can be discovered by the archeologists spade, but the market mechanism exists in a realm of pure abstraction (Dale 2010, 17).

Polanyi identified the seeds of the collapse of nineteenth century market civilization and international society in this very attempt to impose an abstract blueprint onto diverse societies. He argued that the violence inherent to generating such as system, as well as the inherent instabilities of free-market capitalism that Marx had laid bare, must inevitably lead to various forms of reaction. The internal contradictions of these projects undermine them from within. Market generated structural violence must inevitably bring forth counter-movements. These would be moves to re-embed the market in social institutions to protect communities from the uncontrollable forces of market globalization. For Polanyi they might take many forms: some reactionary, some progressive. Some might attempt to shore up the system with various reforms, as in the various Factory Acts improving the working conditions of Victorian Britain. Other responses may be more disruptive and revolutionary – and Polanyi viewed authoritarianisms of both left and right in the early twentieth-century in this vein. Polanyi's term for this swing of the pendulum is the *double movement.*

It should be said that the double movement is a capacious concept that can be deployed to cover almost any number of responses to market society (220). For Polanyi it was a *universal* instinct when faced with such a project: albeit one that took different forms depending upon local conditions. The *double movement* is thus a heuristic device that Polanyi uses to illustrate a truth of market society: that, when imposed upon communities in ways that destroy both their livelihoods and the lifeworld on which they subsist, those communities will look for new political ideas and forms of organization with which to defend themselves against market failures and excesses.

After forty years of engineering a new global great transformation – the period in which contemporary global cities were generated and have become a planetary scale material expression of its dynamics – we have begun to see new symptoms of Polanyi's double movement. There is a three pronged crisis of market society: the stripping bare of neoliberalism's ideological credibility in the 2008 financial crisis and the politics of austerity and rising populist backlash; the relative decline of the liberal hegemon and the US's own crisis of global leadership, exemplified by the protectionist leanings of the Trump administration; and the divisions and inequalities now manifest in the extremes of the global city, both within the city and between urban areas and their hinterlands, as well as the failure to generate sustainable and socially just urban forms in the global south. The dream of a universal free market is once again dissipating.

Two important differences distinguish the two eras of reaction. The first is the extent of the system: it now has a truly global reach, beyond the European heartland of Polanyi's original theory, which opens up the possibility of a huge diversity of responses. The second is the extent to which the state has devolved authority to non-state actors; particularly the growing forms of governance capacity within global cities. In the neoliberal period the state has actively empowered other actors, via mechanisms of privatization and devolution. Although an unintended outcome, this empowerment of other actors opens up the possibility for the international system to evolve in unexpected ways – and here the emerging capacities and capabilities of the global city form are key, as we will discuss in the next section.

One distinct pathway forward may be not the emergence of some new form of the state, but a passing of the batten to global cities. Polanyi saw the state as the mechanism by which social protections would ultimately be restored. But today the possibility is crystalizing for a more radical and far-reaching form of urban politics. What if the devolving tendencies of the neoliberal state, and the immense urban boom catalysed by neoliberal globalization, has generated a new form of political and economic unit that offers a novel evolutionary pathway for the international system (Curtis 2016)? What if global cities now represent the possibility of globalism without universalism – a new form of global order in which the state and its institutions no longer play the only governance role?

We may now be seeing the early stages of the emergence of a different form of political community in the global city – one that stretches to link the local with the global, and offers the possibility for a new form of polity wholly unexpected forty years ago. What if today's double-movement takes the path of democratic renewal within transnationally connected global city networks, linking the local to the global scale in unprecedented ways (Barber 2013)? Whatever their origins in the neoliberal moment, global cities, in both the global north and south, now offer a set of capacities and capabilities, and a size, reach and economic importance, that suggest that they will play a critical role in the development of the global politics of the twenty-first century (Roy 2009). They are developing tendencies that suggest that they can be the locus of democratic renewal, of new forms of citizenship, and new styles of global and transnational politics. But these tendencies must be nurtured: the global cities of the future cannot remain the divided and unsustainable forms that neoliberalism has fostered. If they are to be fit to meet the transnational governance challenges of the twenty-first century they will need to be reshaped.

Urbanisation is a genie that cannot be put back in the bottle. Cities of this size will be a feature of world politics in the twenty-first century. This is a critical shaping moment for the future of global urbanization. Global cities thus face a turning point. They have the potential to foster the higher form of community that Polanyi hoped would emerge from market society. But they must now evolve. The final section of this essay now looks at what such an evolution may look like. It focuses upon two extreme ends of the spectrum of possible futures – because, as we have seen, there is no guarantee that the double-movement must be progressive. The first represents an authoritarian consolidation of the systemic violence working through the medium of unequal cityspace. The second offers the possibility of rebalancing global cities and international order along more democratic and sustainable lines.

Unfolding Trajectories: Global City Futures

As the primary material manifestation of the social (Soja 2000), today's global cities are the central place in which to discern signs of Polanyi's *double movement* - the seedbed of alternative political projects and developmental trajectories. In this final section I will argue that we see the shadowy outlines of many possible futures coalescing in the possibility spaces of the contemporary conjuncture. Here I focus broadly, on two diametrically opposed trajectories (although these are more like ideal types, and a multiplicity of responses are possible, taking in a variety of histories, cultures and political configurations). The first I will call *authoritarian secession*: an attempt to shore up an increasingly unjust and unequal crisis ridden form of neoliberal political economy. The second coalesces around claims for the *right to the city*: attempts to redirect global urbanization, and to discover new forms of political community.

Authoritarian Secession

The first trajectory is one of increasingly authoritarian responses to instability and injustice, as the contradictions of market society mount.[6] In this first scenario the structural violence of the global city is laid bare and intensified. This trajectory manifests itself in the secession of wealthy elites from urban life, and in increased surveillance and segregation of urban populations. The secession of wealthy elites is not seen in flight *from* the city, as in past waves of middle class exodus to the suburbs in the 1960s and 1970s, but in various new forms of bordering *within* the city - in the gated community, in the trend towards the construction of inaccessible vertical structures, and in the proliferation of privatized transport and energy networks.

Indeed, if horizontality describes the sprawl of the suburbs and the slum, the secessionist dimension is now the vertical: the augmentation of the urban footprint with exclusive new spaces reaching skyward. Stephen Graham (2016) relates how around the world elites are building vertical towers that act as miniature luxury cities within the city. The new super-tall and super-thin 432 Park Avenue Tower in Manhattan exemplifies this trend towards super-elite residential tower construction: incredibly low density, spacious, luxury urban living in the second highest tower in Manhattan, which holds a mere 104 apartments. Super-elites are taking to increasingly 'luxified skies' in cities around the world. These operate as 'eyrie-like refuges' for an elite that wants to be in the city but not part of the city, as it abandons public space for a cocoon of secure private dwellings and transport corridors.

Such luxury towers are increasingly fortified and disconnected from the urban fabric, where the surrounding public space is often secured and patrolled by private security firms. Increasingly the means of moving between such private spaces also conforms to the secessionary principle. In São Paulo, for example, the residents of such towers can bypass the street-level entirely via the world's largest fleet of private helicopters. Graham describes an aesthetic of voyeurism alongside a political economy of fear, as wealthy elites are both fascinated by the urban life far below them, and yet unable to

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[6] There is a growing literature on 'authoritarian neoliberalism' (Tansel, B. 2017) that speaks to this trend.

participate in the city as authentic citizens. This secession cannot be sustainable, because it enacts a separation from the wider urban life on which even wealthy elites ultimately depend, including the wide variety of work that sustains their lifestyles. Such elites become parasitic on the creative dynamism and productivity of the city as a whole. All cities are ultimately the product of common labour.

Secession from the city also takes other forms, and entails other consequences. What we have seen in the construction of global cities is also the construction of a selective infrastructure of globalism. This manifests in the bounded networks of value that form contemporary infrastructure space. As Sassen (2014) has argued, what characterizes contemporary globalization is a selective technological connectivity: valued spaces of global cities are stitched together into transnational communications and transport networks, while, at the same time, they may remain disconnected from much of the physical city in which they are located. Such privatized infrastructure networks replace the 'integrated ideal' that characterized the social democratic period and helped construct the nation (Graham and Marvin 2001). Today the nation state is being unraveled and the valued fragments reassembled in globally dispersed networks.

A similar logic also permeates the corporate world. Corporations are an essential component of any global city, and yet tax revenues from both large corporations and wealthy individuals have dwindled, leading to resentment and the attenuation of the public life of the city and the services municipal governments can provide. Cities often struggle to win back their share of revenues from state government. Logics of exclusion underpin these trends - exemplified by the selective investments of high finance in the shaping of cities via private spaces and infrastructures.

Finally, there is also here a trend towards secession from nature itself that is intrinsic to capital's antagonistic relation to the natural world. This can be seen most clearly in post-modern dreams of the city as a hermetically sealed dome, in which nature is excluded and a fully artificial environment takes its place (Graham 2016, 244-276). Combining these trends with the 'retreat inside' represented by private luxury apartments, linked by condo-corridors, private lobbies, elevators and amenities, sky-bridges, sky-trains and interior cities, leaves us a world of cities within cities. In its acceleration of inequalities and new bordering practices, the global city becomes the simulacrum of post-modern thought, a self-contained copy, albeit one whose closure is always illusory, as if any city could ever be fully removed and insulated from the life-world on which it rests. This is ultimately a dystopian trajectory at the end of which there can be no winners.

The Right to the City

The alternative trajectory would be one involving the re-embedding of the market within society, which must reshape the urban fabric of the global city. Alternative forms of the double movement would focus on trying to loosen the grip of the forms of structural violence in evidence today. In the first instance, as it has throughout history, urban public space becomes the focal point for political struggle. Political protest often attempts to capture urban centrality: from Tahir Square in the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, and anti-globalisation protests. Urban riots have been a notable trend, seen in the simmering discontent of Paris, Stockholm and London in

recent years. The 'right to the city' – which was originally articulated by Henri Lefebvre back in the 1960s - has become a rallying cry in the face of waves of privatization, gentrification, dispossession and the predations of speculative finance capital around the world (see Harvey 2012 for an overview). Although in many places protest has had to face increasingly brutal and militarized urban policing, the centrality of discussion of the 'right to the city' in the language and goals of UN HABITAT's *New Urban Agenda*, however limited its scope, is a signal that there is a power and legitimacy to the idea, and momentum for change.

There is also a growing dialogue around the notion of the 'urban commons', and discussion on the possible shape of new economic and governance models for both cities and transnational spaces (Ostrum 1990; Harvey 2012). In cities such as Detroit, where post-industrial decline has led to contraction, new space for experimentation in new forms of urban living has been opened up, such as radical experiments in urban farming.[7] Indeed, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that urban and peri-urban agriculture already contributes 15-20% of the world's food – much of this being subsistence farming.[8]

The cosmopolitan nature of global cities also provides a space for new forms of identity to emerge that can challenge older forms of nationalism. As multicultural and cosmopolitan spaces with an open orientation to the world, cities have begun to show distinct signs of tension with the national polities within which they are embedded. Voting patterns between major cities and rural populations in two strongholds of neoliberalism recently gave evidence of a growing division: in the 2016 Presidential election in the United States there was a clear preference for Democratic candidate Hilary Clinton, while in the United Kingdom's referendum on European Union membership there was a strong preference for retaining membership in British cities, and even some talk of London seceding from the UK to form an independent city-state.[9] We can also see political tensions playing out between the state and the city in the executive order to strip US Sanctuary Cities of federal funding, the resistance put up by those cities, and the power that they have demonstrated to resist.[10] Global cities have immense diasporas, and see themselves as umbilically connected to other parts of the globe. This is why they are likely to defend a form of globalism, even in the face of protectionist sentiments espoused by national governments. Mayors in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago know that putting up walls will damage the fabric of their cities.[11]

As well as alternative forms of citizenship and identity, global cities also offer the potential for democratic renewal, at the very point at which national democratic life seems increasingly attenuated. What is interesting about current prospects for democratic renewal in global cities is their multi-scalar reach, and the emergent

[7] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/jul/11/detroit-urban-renewal-city-farms-paul-harris : Accessed 10.6.17
[8] www.fao.org/urban-agriculture/en : Accessed 10.6.17
[9] https://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/11/12/upshot/this-election-highlighted-a-growing-rural-urban-split.html : Accessed 10.6.17 ; https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/blog/global-insight/global-cities-brexit-london-autonomy : Accessed 10.6.17
[10] http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-sanctuary-legal-battle-20170127-story.html : Accessed 10.6.17
[11] http://duckofminerva.com/2016/12/wptpn-global-cities-in-a-time-of-populist-nationalism.html : Accessed 10.6.17

capacity to link the local and global. The increasing prominence of the figure of the global city mayor on the world-stage is indicative of the growing voice of global cities in global affairs – traditionally the exclusive purview of state diplomats (Acuto 2013).

This urban link between local populations and the growing governance initiatives of global cities offers a new form of scale-jumping assemblage that can match some of the global governance challenges of the twenty-first century. A current project run by the City Leadership Laboratory at University College London has begun to map the diplomatic activities between cities, as well as the now over 200 city-to-city networks that have formed, many in the last four decades (Acuto and Rayner 2016). Such transnational city-to-city networks have begun to make a real impact on global governance. Perhaps the most prominent example here has been the C40 Climate Leadership Initiative, but urban governance networks encompass security, health, public safety and many other areas. Global cities formed, as we have seen, partly to provide global economic governance functions. But now they offer unexpected and increasingly sophisticated forms of political governance. They also possess a specific form of power: the ability to convene and coordinate networks in the pursuit of particular goals – as in the array of private and civil society actors contributing to the C40 Climate Leadership Initiative. The contribution of private actors and authority will be essential to achieving urban sustainability and justice, and cities need to find ways of successfully enrolling them in actor-networks, and directing the emergent distributed agency of such networks towards political goals (Latour 2005). Recently discussion has focused upon the potential for the emerging capacities and capabilities of global cities and their networks to be redirected towards new forms of political organization, whether this takes the form of a Global Parliament of Mayors (Barber 2013), or a new Transnational Municipal Confederalism (Bookchin 1992).

Ultimately the prospects and limits for new forms of political life will lie in the increasingly shifting relationship between the state and the city, which will take multiple paths throughout the world (Roy 2009, 825-827). One of the key areas here is control over the urban tax base, with many cities complaining of immense fiscal transfers, and the inability to control their own budgets. But just as important will be the future relationship with finance capital. If the market is to be re-embedded within society, then moves will need to be made to gain control over the finance capital led urban development that has led to such staggering inequality within urban built environments, and also to the ongoing crisis in housing. As Graham's accounts of the vertical secession of the super-rich from the city show, new economic models are required to take back control of urbanization. The growing disconnection between housing and labour markets can only widen under current economic models, driving out the middle classes and hollowing out the ability of cities to achieve continued economic and social success (Florida 2017). Any moves to reinvigorate the city as a democratic space will need to address the power and freedom of finance capital.

Finally, emerging forms of technology offer the potential to contribute to the construction of smart, green and resilient cities. The Internet of Things, smart grids, sensors and big data form an array of interlinked technologies that offer the potential for greater control over the dynamics of urban development. However, technologies develop within social systems, not independently of them, and such technologies may need to be repurposed along with the free market form of capitalism in which they

have developed. But they offer new capacities and capabilities that will be critical in any move to a post-neoliberal and post-carbon urban future (Mason 2016), alongside the vast intellectual and creative human capital inherent within a technologically connected network of over 1000 cities incorporating 500,000 people or more; a dynamic density and creative reservoir unknown in human history.

The possibility for an urban renaissance, and, indeed, a revolution in political order, lies within the global city form. But it needs to be freed from the inherited forms of structural violence in which it is currently held if it is to be fully realised.

Conclusion

It is perhaps insufficiently realized within the literature that the global city could only have arisen within a liberal world order, and within the period in which the global free market was engineered. In its purest form, the global city would represent the leading edge of a global market civilization.

But that pure form is an illusion – and no really existing market civilization is possible. Today's global cities exhibit, in myriad ways, the contradictory logics of free market capitalism. Their very survival is now threatened by the rise of illiberal forces and the possible collapse of globalism. It is also threatened by the internal contradictions of neoliberalism itself, which such cities inscribe in space, in all their potentials and pathologies. Polanyi's analysis of the first attempt to engineer the free market seem to have lost none of its clarity on the instabilities and problems such a project brings in its wake.

What Polanyi could not have foreseen are the new capacities and capabilities that cities on this scale have been exhibiting, especially in the governance gaps left by the retreat of the national state. Polanyi was on the look out for new, higher forms of political community rising from the ashes of market civilization. He saw how the estrangement and alienation of the individual was generated by rampant commodification – and how the abstractions of market society mystified social and economic relations, blocking individuals from seeing the wider systemic picture, and making it impossible for them to properly formulate moral choices.

Polanyi expected that higher form of political community to be fostered by the state. But some of the contemporary developments we have charted here offer the intriguing possibility that the city may be the locus of new forms of political order in the twenty-first century that could potentially transcend market society; containing within it the seeds of new forms of urban democratic participation, new forms of cosmopolitan identity, new ways of technologically augmented living, and new networks for transnational urban global governance. What seems clear is that, in its current form, the global city is inherently unstable and unsustainable. The path its evolution takes will tell us much about the political direction of the international system in the coming decades.

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