

Im Rahmen der Reihe

DIASPORA. ERKUNDUNGEN EINES LEBENSMODELLS

von und mit Isolde Charim

lädt das Bruno Kreisky Forum für internationalen Dialog zum Vortrag von

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(Columbia University, New York)

DAS PARADOX DES NATIONALEN

Donnerstag | 24. Jänner 2008 | 19.00 Uhr

Saskia Sassen

US-amerikanische Soziologin und Wirtschaftswissenschaftlerin. Sie ist zur Zeit Helen and Robert Lynd Professor für Soziologie an der Columbia University, NY. Sassen prägte den Begriff Global City. Sie zählt zu den profiliertesten Autorinnen zum Thema Soziologie der Stadtentwicklungen. Sie forscht zu Prozessen der Globalisierung und den Wanderungsbewegungen von Arbeit und Kapital sowie zum Einfluss moderner Kommunikationsmittel. Sassen beobachtet, wie Nationalstaaten ihren Einfluss auf Entwicklungen verlieren. Besonders beschäftigt sie sich mit transnationalen Wanderungsbewegungen.

Der Nationalstaat ist die komplexeste Institution, die die Menschheit je hervorgebracht hat, wie Saskia Sassen in ihrer neuen historisch-theoretischen Studie darlegt. Er ist das (Zwischen-)Ergebnis einer Jahrhunderte dauernden Entwicklung von Feudalismus, Kirche und Reich. Doch seine größte Transformation steht gerade erst am Anfang - wir bezeichnen sie als Globalisierung. Sassens Hauptthese lautet: Globalisierung findet in einem weit größeren Maße, als gewöhnlich anerkannt wird, innerhalb des Nationalen statt. Gerade das Nationale ist eine der Schlüsselinstanzen, die eine Entwicklung des globalen Rahmens erst möglich machen. Zugleich besteht ein Großteil der Globalisierung aus enorm vielfältigen Mikroprozessen, die zu entnationalisieren beginnen, was national konstruiert worden war: Politik, Kapital, städtische Räume, zeitliche Strukturen und vieles mehr.

Ihr neues Buch *Das Paradox des Nationalen* (in English titled: *Territory, Authority, Rights*, Princeton University Press) erscheint im Frühling 2008 bei Suhrkamp.

Isolde Charim (geboren 1959 in Wien), Philosophin und freie Publizistin.

DIASPORA. Erkundungen eines Lebensmodells

Entgegen dem Diktum, wonach die ökonomischen Verhältnisse einen ihnen entsprechenden Menschentypus hervorbringen würden, sehen wir uns heute mit einer tiefgreifenden Ungleichzeitigkeit konfrontiert. Die Dynamik der kapitalistischen Ökonomie erzeugt eine zusehends grenzenlose Mobilität. Während die Standorte dem Sog der Flexibilisierung folgen können, sind die darin befangenen Menschen nach wie vor an fixe, „geerdete“ Identitätskonzepte gebunden. Unsere nationalstaatlichen Kulturen verfügen über keine mentalen Reserven für das Leben moderner Nomaden.

In dieser Situation wollen wir eine Art geistige Ölbohrung vornehmen – auf der Suche nach solch einer Ressource. Ausgangspunkt dafür ist das Konzept der DIASPORA. Nicht als Synonym für Leid und Vertreibung soll die jahrhundertealte Zerstreuung unterschiedlichster Völker in ihrem positiven Aspekt als reicher Erfahrungsschatz betrachtet werden. Die Reihe versucht, diese Quelle anhand unterschiedlicher Zugänge zu erschließen. Die Differenzen mögen nationaler, kultureller oder wirtschaftlicher Natur sein,

gemeinsam ist allen Diasporagruppen die Entwicklung einer besonderen Form von nichtterritorialer, überstaatlicher Netzwerkidentität *avant la lettre*, die weder vollständige Integration, noch Parallelgesellschaft bedeutet.

Isolde Charim

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to welcome you to a further session of our lecture series *Diaspora. Exploring a Life Model*. These lectures are a kind of public thinking, a process which should develop an increasing precise concept of Diaspora as a mental resource for the life of modern nomads. We opened up these lectures with Tony Judt on the Jewish Diaspora in the United States. Our next guest was the author of *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson, on the specific nationalism of Diaspora communities. Then we had here the German Turkish TV anchorman Birand Bingül. And afterwards Homi Bhabha who spoke on doubt and ambivalence as leading categories for a concept of hybridity. And last week we had here Hanno Loewy on the relationship between diaspora and Israel. Tonight we have a very special guest who catches our attention in two ways. On the one hand I am very glad to welcome the first woman to lecture in this series. And on the other hand I am especially glad that on top of that this woman is one of the most distinguished theorists on that problematic. Saskia Sassen is not only the author of *The Mobility of Labor and Capital. Globalisation and its Discontent*, but also of a book whose title becomes a notion of its own, *The Global City*. Her newest book, *Territory, Authority and Rights*, will be published in German in April 2008. The German title of the book is also the title of the lecture tonight, *Das Paradox des Nationalen*. Given all that there is just one strange thing. Do you notice? Nowhere the word diaspora. As we invited Saskia Sassen she made clear that the word diaspora makes her very skeptical. As she heard that Homi Bhabha spoke on that topic here, she said: "Oh, that kind of diaspora.", and accepted to come. What kind of diaspora this is and what kind it is not, we are very curious to know. In that sense, welcome to the Kreisky Forum.

Saskia Sassen

Thank you very much for that wonderful introduction. I want to thank all the people involved with the Kreisky Forum. I am honored to have the chance to give this talk, and thank you all for coming... I imagined Bruno Kreisky's home in the center of Vienna, but it is almost suburban here, it is almost the countryside.

Indeed, I am not a scholar of diasporas. I used the word a long time ago when I was doing my first research on immigration in the late 1970s, and I used it in a way that extended its meaning. At that time its meaning was deeply ensconced in the historicity of the Jewish condition. I expanded it to include what I was seeing as an emergent condition deep inside New York: a sort of diaspora, but of a very different kind -- a Latin American working class immigration. I had barely arrived in New York. Later on this extended use of the term became common as more and more researchers worked on immigration. I stopped using it.

I am going to use it, perhaps only once, tonight. And it is definitely going to be with a different meaning from common usage today. This way the term becomes a vehicle to see something that is left invisible, illegible when you use typical categories. We will get to

this point in the discussion eventually. But I want to start with the notion of conditions of unsettlement, that is to say, a condition of not fitting, not being properly “housed” in existing structures, whether that is because of identity issues, because of class issues, because of political issues.

In fact, I will talk about the citizen in the current period. This foundational subject for membership in the liberal state can be assumed to be fairly settled. The renationalizing of membership politics we are seeing due to emergent anti-immigration sentiments, should function as yet another factor strengthening and settling the citizen – the country is declared to be theirs.

Yet, I argue that the citizen is not properly “housed” today, not even in our liberal democracies. And the, other foundational subject for membership in our liberal democracies, the alien, mostly immigrants, is conceivably even less properly housed today than in the recent past.. Both the citizen and the alien are far less unitary subjects than they were in the past. For instance, a little known fact, even among immigration researchers, is that today we have a new class of individuals who have portable rights that they can carry worldwide; this is a rights-bearing subjects whose rights are now global: they hold for the new transnational professional and managerial class and they derive from the major global regulators, especially WTO. These portable rights hold for all signatory countries to the WTO treaty. This is an elite that is the most protected type of subject today, better protected in a way than the average citizen in our liberal democracies. At the same time, the international human rights regime is a new source of rights for both the citizen and the alien; indeed, as it has increasingly become institutionalized, it is especially immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, and refugee women who have benefitted from the human rights regime. All three of these displacements are types of unsettlement. And they have a taste of the diasporic. Again, the three unsettled subjects are the improperly “housed” average citizen, the new elites with globally portable rights, and the alien who becomes the object of a human rights decision). But they lack a critical, historically speaking, dimension of the traditional diaspora: attachment, orientation to a place that is beloved and idealized. The only way that I can insert the term diaspora here is by opening up the meaning of “attachment/orientation”. What is it that these unsettled subjects are attached to?

Perhaps one starting point in answering this question is a couple of propositions that frame much of my thinking about these subjects.

The first one is that the formal political apparatus today accommodates less and less of “the” political –in these sense of le politique, das Politische. In fact, we have Chantal Mouffe here who has just published a book that is coming out, *Über das Politische*. She will probably never forgive me for what I am saying because I come from such a transversal angle into this subject. So the first proposition is that the formal political apparatus accommodates, holds, contains less and less of the political. This then raises the question, where is the political? Where is it being made? It is still partly being made inside the state, still partly in formal structures. But I argue for a sort of political informality as well. I consider this political informality a variable. So at one end is the

multinational corporation, which I argue is also functioning as an informal political actor because strictly speaking its legal persona is a private persona. At the other end of the variable we have informal political actors who could be citizens, or tourists travelling to go demonstrate somewhere in the world where the IMF or the WTO is meeting, and they are doing so on a tourist visa. So, political informality as a variable. Some we might think of as not so very attractive informal political actors and others more attractive.

The second proposition is that the relationship between the state and the citizen is a transformed relationship. One way of describing this is that it is marked by growing distance between the state and the citizen, and that this growing distance emerges out of a partial displacement of each, the state and the citizen. The citizen is here understood as a formal rights bearing subject that is the foundational subject for political membership in our liberal societies. In this displacement one could then, if one were so inclined, insert notions of the diasporic: the state itself is not totally at home anymore compared to where it was thirty or forty years ago – the Keynesian period. Neoliberal policy has repositioned the state – in the national economy, in the national political system, in national imaginaries. Something has changed. When it comes to citizenship, from a distance it all looks like not much has changed. It is a highly formalized institution in some of its features. You really have to go crawling inside it to detect the changes.

My basic methodological position here is that I locate my inquiry at the point of incompleteness of the institution of citizenship. I conceive of citizenship as an incompletely theorized contract between the state and the citizen. And I think it is meant to be that way. It would be horrible if it were completely theorized because it would be rigid. In that incomplete theorization lies the possibility of internal transformation, no matter how formal an institution it is. I locate my enquiry at that point of incompleteness, thereby positioning myself to detect changes. Again, given the concern with the diasporic in this lecture series, my notion is, then, analytically using this concept of diaspora, in a way that unsettles the concept itself. Why? Because, ultimately, I do think that to understand the diasporic and to use it to its full potential, not just as a historical condition but as an analytics that allows you to see, unsettlement is part of the story. On some level you have to unsettle your own position in order to really grab it. Otherwise you are stuck with a thick historical condition that we can describe as diasporic. The concept is so powerful, but also so charged with historical meaning. If it is going to work analytically for us as a category, and that is the way I can make it work, then it has to unsettle its own historical meaning. It has to be working rather than be descriptive.

Returning to the notion that the formal political apparatus accommodates less and less of the political, in my latest project I do a parallel methodological move to the global city. In that earlier case, my stance was that to understand the global economy I had to enter it, to detect its vulnerabilities and needs, rather than stand outside and admire its (supposedly) seamless globality. In this latest project, it has to do with entering the state, rather than standing outside it and either admire its powers or pity its demise at the hand of global firms and markets. The state is a master category -- for the global city the master category was the global economy. I like to describe myself as a digger in the shadow of master categories. Master categories are enormously powerful. They don't lie. But they have a

problem: their light, their capacity to illuminate something, is so strong that they produce a vast shadow around them that keeps all kinds of things that might be part of the story in a deep penumbra. Theoretically, conceptually, methodologically that penumbra is the zone where I do my research –theoretical, empirical. In the case of the global economy it then became the global city. It turns out that the global economy has leaden feet. It is not just about space-time compression; it is not just about hyper mobility and placelessness. In going digging in that penumbra I came up with the global city concept, model, which is chock-full of stuff that both enables and drags this hyper mobile capital down.

In the case of the state, entering the state meant detecting inside the state apparatus a variety of conditions that are getting lost in the main debates about globalization and the state. I recognize that I look at all of this from a very particular perspective. I am not a state scholar per se, nor do I want to be one. So I come at it from scholarships and debates that have to do with globalization. That is one of my main terrains for study. Much of this scholarship and debates posit a tension between the global and the national, so that the global and the national are conceived of as mutually exclusive, what one wins the other loses. Out of this zero sum relationship comes a second debate. Some argue that with globalization the state has become weaker, and even that the state might disappear. Others argue that not much has changed, that the state is basically the same as it has been for a long time. If you look at the formal state apparatus, its administrative structure, not much seems to have changed.

My position diverges from both of these lines of arguments. One feature that characterizes both is that they stay outside the state, they observe the state from a distance, so to speak. They “gaze” at “the” state. By going inside the state, I find a rather different landscape, even though it is partial, and on some general level the institutional outline of the state has not changed much. What happens inside the state? It turns out that *because* of globalization some parts of the state gain power. Other parts do lose. But we cannot simply say that “the” state loses or that nothing has really changed. Both of these are far too simple to capture the new power alignments inside the state. I began to work on this ten years ago when I was doing research about global finance and found that ministries of finance were gaining power, often vast amounts of it, in shaping national economic policy in a growing number of rich and poor countries. Central banks also gain power; the fact that setting up a European Union Central Bank turned out to be a far more feasible effort than expected was partly because it was a critical need for the global corporate economy. The point is that the executive branch, whether it is prime ministerial or presidential, gains power with globalization.

From this representation of the state I can argue that some parts of the state are being repositioned in global logics. This could, in turn, be interpreted, as a move into a type of diasporic condition: part of the state has exited the historically produced insertion of the state in the national, yet it maintains an orientation, even if from a global position, towards the national. This is clearly stretching the meaning of the diasporic. But that is what I did when I first used the category diaspora to interpret some of the features of the new Latino immigrant communities in New York in the 1970s. I am intrigued and entertained by this notion that the globalized parts of the state are both outside and inside

the national. Please understand I am experimenting –using this setting of a lecture series on the diasporic to push the concept to its limits, over the edge. I do use my talks to experiment.

Let me elaborate on these re-alignments inside the state that make me take that interpretive move into the language of the diasporic. Here are a few logics that feed this repositioning of parts of the state in the current global era. One is the fact that particular agencies linked to the executive branch of government are critical for the implementation of a global corporate economy. Ministries of finance, central banks, department of commerce, and other specialized government agencies have had to do much work to implement the global corporate economy. This has the effect of de-nationalizing some aspects of state work –it is a partial and very specialized type of state-work that gets denationalized. The overall effect is that these parts of the national state, mostly under the control of the executive branch, increasingly develop logic that align them with global logics, no matter the nationalist speech-acts of the executive branch. In this particular historical period, especially with a global logics of corporate global capital my political hope is that it could also re-orient towards global logics that have to do with somewhat nicer things like the global environmental issues, human rights. .

Secondly, the global regulators, such as the IMF, WTO, and all kinds of other regulators you have never heard of, only deal with the executive branch of government. The executive gains in power compared to the legislature through these transactions with global regulators; and it increasingly positions itself in these global logics. If you were one of these regulators you would also prefer dealing with the executive branch because it is behind closed doors, private, off the record. If you deal with a legislature or parliament, the negotiation is a public debate, and it can become a public brawl. Public debates can get messy, and they slow down negotiations. I think this is one of the important features of legislatures -- they slow down politics so the average busy citizen can, in principle, catch up.

Third, the executive branch increasingly gets aligned with global corporate logics. This is partly a consequence of the work done by parts of the state to help develop the corporate global economy, as mentioned earlier. A concrete example is President Bush proposal that the Dubai Ports Corporation manage several major ports of the United States. The willingness of Bush to have an Arab corporation do this stood in sharp contrast to his declaration of a global war against key segments of the Arab world. I should say that while this is a United States case, other countries actually have similar cases. I actually thought that was one of the more enlightened, probably the only one, that Bush ever proposed. I thought this was an excellent idea precisely at a time when so many Arab countries and muslims felt threatened and mistreated by the US. It should be clear that Bush was for it not out of an enlightened stance to these geopolitical matters but rather because alignment with global corporate logics is today partly structural for the executive branch. There are many such cases, many below the radar screen, not as dramatic as one involving an Arab country's corporation.

We can see the executive branch of government as increasingly situated in a terrain that is institutionally and operationally criss-crossed by global circuits and their logics. This creates a separation from the rest of the state apparatus, including parts of the executive branch, which remains far more ensconced in national logics. There is a shift, partial and highly specialized, in the role of the executive, in the position of the executive towards the global economy: it has one foot in the global, and one foot in the national. And this separates it from the legislature and from the judiciary and from much, though not all, of the public administration.

The legislature (or parliament) loses power and responsibilities. The bundle of policies implemented to strengthen the global corporate economy -- privatization, deregulation, liberalization—takes away oversight functions and regulatory functions from the legislature (or parliament). And it becomes an increasingly domestic actor, even if it has the will to go international. We as citizens have the strongest legal standing vis-à-vis the parliament or the legislature, much more than with the judiciary or with the executive branch, whether prime ministerial or presidential. Here, then, is where I see this strange shift in the ground on which the liberal state stands. At the limit, it could be interpreted as a slightly diasporic shift of the executive branch vis-à-vis the rest of the state.

While the United States might be the most extreme version of this development, it is happening in quite a few other states as well. The UK is one of them. Not enough research is being done looking at the executive branch of government through this lens of structural repositioning. Mostly the growing power of the executive is seen as a consequence of the state of exception (national emergency due to the threat of terrorist attacks); the state of exception is an anomaly which is supposed to disappear once there is no emergency anymore. What I am getting at is part of the normal functioning of the state: a foundational, though partial, change in alignments and orientations inside the state that is part of the evolution of the “liberal” state. The growing distancing and separation inside the state between the executive and legislative branches brings with it with different logics ascendent in our utility functions of the executive versus the legislature. It is an interesting distance. And what language to use to interpret it if you want to exit the descriptive language of the state itself? It is an interesting proposition if you want to think about it.

These transformations inside the state signal that citizenship, so deeply connected to the national state in its modern incarnation, is likely to undergo changes as well. This is not, in my view a one to one change: what changes in the state is reflected in a change in the institution of citizenship. It is a far more mediated interaction. The argument I want to make is that as the state's round has shifted so the citizen's ground has also shifted. What for the executive branch of government is a repositioning, even if partial, in global logics, for citizenship may well be an opening to transnational and postnational experiences of political membership. In both cases there is a partial exiting of the national encasement of these two highly formalized institutions but also a looking backwards onto the national from outside. Here, then is where I see the possibility of a diasporic element, or stance, in both of these deeply national institutions.

One proposition coming out of my research is that the distance between the citizen and the state is growing. The state and the citizen have less to do with each other when neoliberal policy leads to the privatizing of more and more services once delivered by states. In the US even welfare is now being contracted out to private firms –so a citizen may be getting support from the state but she has few interactions with the state. Prisons are being privatized in the US –it is more like running a motel where you want to fill all the beds.

The rights articulated through the subject of the citizen are of a particular type and cannot be easily generalized to other types of subjects. Yet the complexity and multiple tensions built into the formal institution of citizenship make it a powerful heuristic for examining the question of rights. Building on this complexity and these tensions, one organizing thesis in my work is that citizenship is an incompletely theorized contract between the state and its subjects. Further, it is meant to be incomplete, given the historically conditioned meaning of the institution of citizenship. This incompleteness makes it possible for a highly formalized institution to accommodate change--more precisely, to accommodate the possibility of responding to change without sacrificing its formal status. Incompleteness also brings to the fore the work of making, whether it is making in response to changed conditions, to new subjectivities, or to new instrumentalities. It is at this point of incompleteness that I position my inquiry.

A key element bringing these various histories together and in some ways securing the durability of the institution of citizenship has been the will of the state to render national major institutions that might well have followed a different trajectory and to some extent did for most of recorded Western history. Political membership as a national category is today an inherited condition, one experienced as a given rather than as a process of making a rights-bearing subject. Yet today's significant, even if not absolute, transformations in the condition of the national generally and the national state in particular help make visible the historicity of the formal institution of citizenship and thus show its national spatial character as but one of several possible framings. At the most abstract or formal level not much has changed over the last century in the essential features of citizenship unlike, for example, the characteristics of leading economic sectors.

The theoretical ground from which I address the issue is that of the historicity and the embeddedness of both citizenship and the national state. Each has been constructed in elaborate and formal ways. And each has evolved historically as a tightly packaged national bundle of what were often rather diverse elements.

Some of the main dynamics at work today are destabilizing these national bundlings and bringing to the fore the fact of that bundling and its particularity. The work of making and formalizing a unitary packaging for diverse elements comes under pressure today in both formalized (for example, the granting of dual nationality and recognition of the international human rights regime) and nonformalized ways (for example, granting undocumented immigrants in the United States the "right" to mortgages so they can buy homes). Among the destabilizing dynamics at work are globalization and digitization, both as material processes and as signaling subjective possibilities or imaginaries. In multiple ways they perform changes in the formal and informal relationships between the national state and the citizen. There are also a range of emergent political practices often involving hitherto silent or silenced population groups and

organizations. Through their destabilizing effects, these dynamics and actors are producing operational and rhetorical openings for the emergence of new types of political subjects and new spatialities for politics.

Thus citizenship, even if situated in institutional settings that are "national," is a possibly changed institution if the meaning of the national itself has changed, as I argue elsewhere (2006a). The changes brought about by globalizing dynamics in the territorial and institutional organization of state authority are also transforming citizenship. I interpret these types of changes as a partial and often incipient denationalizing of citizenship to distinguish it from post-national and transnational trends, which are also taking place. With denationalization I seek to capture something that remains connected to the "national" as constructed historically, and is indeed profoundly imbricated with it but is so on historically new terms of engagement. Incipient and partial are two qualifiers I usually attach to my use of denationalization. From the perspective of nation-based citizenship theory, some of these transformations might be interpreted as a decline or devaluation of citizenship. Thus, one critical question is whether these transformations occur even when citizenship remains centered on the national state, that is, even if it does not necessarily become postnational. I argue that yes, and that it is important to capture these transformations which are easily obscured by the fact that the institution remains national.

Today's unsettlement helps make legible the diversity of sources and institutional locations for rights, as well as the changeability and variability of the rights-bearing subject that is the citizen, notwithstanding the formal character of the institution. We can detect a partial redeployment of specific components of citizenship across a wide range of institutional locations and normative orders, going well beyond the national bond. This redeployment of citizenship components beyond the national bond could contain a partial diasporizing of citizenship.

At some point we are going to have to ask what the term immigrant truly means. People in movement are an increasingly strong presence, especially in cities. Further, when citizens begin to develop transnational identities, it alters something in the meaning of immigration. In my research I have sought to situate immigration in a broader field of actors by asking who are all the actors involved in producing the outcome that we then call immigration. My answer is that it's many more than just the immigrants, whereas our law and public imagination tend to identify immigrants as the only actors producing this complex process.

I want to begin to conclude this talk by exploring the meaning of political informality.

Unlike the "citizen," the immigrant or, more generally, the alien, is constructed in law as a very partial, thin subject. Yet the immigrant and immigration have been made into thick realities, and as words they are charged with content. In this tension between a thin formal subject--the alien--and a rich reality lies the heuristic capacity of immigration to illuminate tensions at the heart of the historically constructed nation-state. These tensions are not new, historically speaking, but as with citizenship, current conditions are producing their own distinct possibilities. Further, the changes in the institution of citizenship itself, particularly its debordering of formal definitions and national locations, has implications for the definition of the immigrant. Confronted with

postnational and denationalized forms of citizenship, what is it we are trying to discern in the complex processes we group under the term immigration? On the other hand, the renationalizing of citizenship narrows the definition of the citizen and thereby that of the immigrant. As a subject, then, the immigrant filters a much larger array of political dynamics than its status in law might suggest.

Working with the distinctions and transformations discussed thus far, I want to explore the possibility of two somewhat stylized subjects that destabilize formal meanings and thereby illuminate the internal tensions of the institution of citizenship, specifically the citizen as a rights-bearing subject. On the one hand, we can identify a type of informal citizen who is unauthorized yet recognized, as might be the case with undocumented immigrants who are long-term residents in a community and participate in it as citizens do. On the other hand, we can identify a formal citizen who is fully authorized yet not fully recognized, as might be the case with minoritized citizens and with subjects engaging in political work even though they do so not as “citizens” but as some other kind of subject, for example, as mothers.

Perhaps one of the more extreme instances of a condition akin to informal citizenship is what has been called the informal social contract that binds undocumented immigrants to their communities of residence. Thus, unauthorized immigrants who demonstrate civic involvement, social deservedness, and national loyalty can argue that they merit legal residency.

At perhaps the other extreme of the undocumented immigrant whose practices allow her to become accepted as a member of the political community are those who are full citizens yet not fully recognized as such. Minoritized citizens who are discriminated against in any domain are one key instance. This is a familiar and well-documented condition. However, a very different case is the citizen who functions as a political actor even though she is not recognized as such. This is a condition I see emerging all over the world and read as signaling the limitations of the formal political apparatus for a growing range of political projects. Women are often such actors.

Some of this becomes particularly clear in the case of immigrant women who come from countries with rather traditional male-centered cultures. There is a large literature showing that immigrant women's regular wage work and improved access to other public realms has an impact on their gender relations. Women gain greater personal autonomy and independence while men lose ground. Women gain more control over budgeting and other domestic decisions, and greater leverage in requesting help from men in domestic chores. Also, their access to public services and other public resources gives them a chance to become incorporated in the mainstream society--they are often the ones in the household who mediate in this process. It is likely that some women benefit more than others from these circumstances; we need more research to establish the impact of class, education, and income on these gendered outcomes.

Besides the relatively greater empowerment of women in the household associated with waged employment, there is a second important outcome: their greater participation in the public sphere and their possible emergence as public actors. Women are more active in community building and community activism and they are positioned differently from men regarding the broader economy and the state. They are the ones that are likely to

have to handle the legal vulnerability of their families in the process of seeking public and social services for their families. They emerge as public actors, and in these negotiations make something akin to “the political.” The men, in contrast, lose publicness. They become private, invisible – going from job to the domestic space, with no public institutions in their life, not even the corner bar that they had back in their country.

Finally, these women who want to stay, who do not want to go back home, shop, and they shop for massive dining room sets, and huge iceboxes, and so on. And while they claim that they do this to be better mothers and wives, in the process they are settling the household down with all these materialities.

Women emerged as a specific type of political actor during the brutal dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s in several Latin American countries. It was precisely their condition as mothers and wives that gave them the clarity and courage to demand justice and bread, and in a way protected them from attack by the armed soldiers and policemen they confronted. Mothers in the barrios of Santiago during Pinochet's dictatorship, the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, and the mothers regularly demonstrating in front of the major prisons in Salvador during the civil war were all driven to political action as mothers -- by their despair over the loss of children and husbands and the struggle to provide food in their homes.

These are dimensions of formal and informal citizenship and citizenship practices that do not fit the indicators and categories of mainstream academic frameworks for understanding citizenship and political life. The subject that is the housewife or the mother does not fit the categories and indicators used to capture participation in public life. Feminist scholarship in all the social sciences has had to deal with a set of similar or equivalent difficulties and tensions in its effort to constitute its subject or to reconfigure a subject that has been flattened. The theoretical and empirical distance that has to be bridged between the recognized world of politics and the as yet unmapped experience of citizenship of the housewife.

Perhaps the most evolved type of site for these types of transformations is the global city. The global city concentrates the most developed and pronounced instantiations of some of these changes and in so doing is reconfigured as a partly denationalized space that enables a partial reinvention of citizenship.

These are spaces that can exit the institutionalized hierarchies of scale articulated through the nation-state. That reinvention, then, takes the institution away from questions of nationality narrowly defined and toward the enactment of a large array of particular interests, from protests against police brutality and globalization to sexual preference politics and house squatting by anarchists. I interpret this as a move toward citizenship practices that revolve around claiming rights to the city. These are not exclusively or necessarily urban practices. But it is especially in large cities that we see simultaneously some of the most extreme inequalities and conditions enabling these citizenship practices.

In global cities, these practices also contain the possibility of directly engaging strategic forms of power, which I interpret as significant in a context where power is increasingly privatized, globalized, and elusive. Where Max Weber saw the medieval city as the strategic site for the

enablement of the burghers as political actors and Lefebvre saw the large modern cities as the strategic site for the struggles of the industrial organized workforce to gain rights, I see in today's global cities the strategic site for a whole new type of political actors and projects.

Current conditions in global cities are creating not only new structurations of power but also operational and rhetorical openings for new types of political actors that may have been submerged, invisible, or without voice. A key element here is that the localization of strategic components of globalization in these cities means that the disadvantaged can engage the new forms of globalized corporate power and, further, that the growing numbers and diversity of the disadvantaged in these cities under these conditions becomes heuristic in that they become present to each other. It is the fact of such "presence," rather than power per se that generates operational and rhetorical openings. Such an interpretation seeks to make a distinction between powerlessness and invisibility/impotence, and thereby underlines the complexity of powerlessness. Powerlessness is not simply the absence of power; it can be constituted in diverse ways, some indeed marked by impotence and invisibility, but others not. The fact that the disadvantaged in global cities can gain "presence" in their engagement with power but also vis-à-vis each other, does not necessarily bring power but neither can it be flattened into some generic powerlessness.

I want to conclude by saying that I see emergent dynamics that are not quite global nor national, but they are constituted deep inside the national. This is the tension I am interested in. Thus it is not just about transnationalism or post-nationalism, though these are two critical dynamics -- there are such good scholars working on these that I stay out of it. I go digging in this little shadowy zone where all kinds of little things are happening, which are de-nationalizing what was historically constructed as the national. But they remain inside the national. This points to the fact that formal and not-so-formal national elements are no longer well-housed in traditional national settings --but neither are they trans- or post-national. Here we can capture a diasporic element in that the attachment to the national remains on some level, but it is from an unsettled position. How to name this precisely? I am not sure. But I must say that talking with Isolde about the diasporic I began to open up the category --the project became to unsettle the notion of diaspora itself. Perhaps this is a way of historicizing what we mean by diaspora, extricating it from its current still strong historic roots. One question I have, and I throw it back to you the audience is whether using this unsettled category of the diasporic illuminates issues that other categories, such as globalization, don't illuminate?

Thank you very much.

Isolde Charim

Thank you, Saskia. I found a lot of diaspora in what you said. Diaspora for you is a kind of disaggregation or unsettlement of all kinds of notions. It was not only the topic but it was also the method of your work.

Saskia Sassen

That is right. A good case is one of my first publications, a project on immigration in New York at a time when few if any were writing about immigration. Immigration was not an issue and not a subject. There was not literature for interpreting certain immigrant conditions. I was researching Latinos who were discriminated against, minoritized, who did not have the wherewithal at that point to make themselves present and have voice (as they do now), and who kept a very strong orientation to their countries as origin, partly as a dream of return or as a mental refuge. I saw some literature on the Jewish diaspora. I decided to use the concept in order to see something that gets lost when we just represent immigrants as minoritized and oppressed. I used diaspora to theorize the Latino condition as more complex. But I did not keep working with the term, I left it. Commentators picked up on my use because it was perhaps a first for many to see this historically marked concept used analytically (with a completely different referent –the Latinos of NYC! So it is very interesting to me to use it here now, in yet another way, yet another unsettling of the original historical category. I like what you are saying. Indeed, to me the diasporic is one way, it is a thick way of capturing a slight unsettlement, a destabilizing. It is unsettling to witness, also. The diasporic can be unsettling to witness.

Isolde Charim

To be more precise, is this not also a kind of disconnecting identity and practice? Let's come back to the example you gave us, the housewives, the Latino mother who is the one who is settling the family. In fact, what is happening there is this not that we have a disconnection between the practice of settling the family, of getting involved in all these kinds of political struggles, and the identity and the self-reflection of what they are doing? So the diaspora element starts in this disconnection and in this de-subjectivation.

Saskia Sassen

I think there is something like that. We could really spend some time entering that kind of interpretive frame and that empirical case. One begins to see things slightly differently. Not using the traditional categories of, in this case, feminism, but using other categories. That is also an unsettlement. We can take subject A usually examined or represented through a particular set of categories and use a completely different set of categories. What happens?!

Isolde Charim

That means you are opening the field of political activities which are not linked to identity.

Saskia Sassen

That is right. Not everybody notices that. When identity becomes a master category, as it now has, I just stay away from it, from master categories generally. That is my basic strategy. When my students are doing research on immigration, or on globalization, I ask

them to suspend use of the term. If you are working on racism and feminism, I ask them not to use discrimination. Because these are master categories. They are thick, they evict many other elements from our view.

Question

One word you did not use in your presentation, inter-dependence. It is the growing interdependence that requires on global scale global rule making. My second question is, don't you think that we are living a de-verticalization of our societies, that means moving from command and obedience to interaction, and that this new structure also applies to the relationship between citizen and state? Don't you think that that relationship has become closer as we move into a partnering in public space in governance regimes replacing governmental order? Let me make a brief remark on the women in New York. They are behaving in New York as they are behaving in the poblaciones in Latin American cities. It is the women who go to the Plaza de Mayo, it is the women who organize and not the men.

Saskia Sassen

Interdependence is a word that can be used in many different ways. I agree that there are many novel types of interdependence today. When it comes to certain uses of the word I do, indeed, really stay away from it. But this lecture was of a certain sort. I give many different lectures. In some lectures I do talk a lot about interdependence. I just want to clarify that. I am not an anti-interdependence word user. But I do have trouble with the definition of globalization as growing interdependence because I think that it does not explain. I find extremely interesting the second point you made. There are a whole set of interdependencies which are actually operating horizontally among citizen groups, civil society organizations and so on, but not necessarily creating a rapprochement between state and citizen. And then you said, in the context of governance. Now, governance, of course, is very often used to describe a kind of governing, ordering, not done by governments; it could be private corporations, the IMF, and other such institutions, but also civil society organizations as you suggest. I agree with you that there is a whole set of new interdependencies. I also think that many of these do, indeed, de-verticalize. The fact of citizens being able to make new global jurisdictions through lawsuits in national courts is a de-verticalizing. You don't go to an international court, you go to a local court and then it crawls, it worms itself through various instruments into a global jurisdiction. This is an amazing option. Or the rise of NGOs. That is also de-verticalizing. But that does not necessarily preclude that there is also a growing distance between the state and the citizen as a rights bearing subject. These are partly empirical questions. They will vary from country to country. On a deeper, conceptual foundation I think that they can co-exist in the same way that nationalism, new nationalisms, the re-nationalizing of immigration policy can co-exist with de-nationalizings of other kinds of policies and conditions. One could just stand back and say, that some of these growing interdependence might well be camouflaging, obscuring these new distances.

On the women in the north and the south. The difference is that the men in the north, these working class migrant workers who become invisible become private subjects. They are more like the feminized subject, we could say, whereas in the south the men still

have got a public persona, even if just in the corner bar, and they are still highly gendered as males, machos...

Question

For the last fifteen years I heard increasingly people use a concept that I am not quite sure I know what it means and that is the concept of civil society. What do they mean when they use that concept? Does that concept fit within your own framework and how?

Saskia Sassen

In fact, it is a concept that I do use. You got to use it when you are talking about a certain set of issues or subjects. But I am not comfortable using it, for a couple of reasons – though I should say that I tend to use it as global civil society. Here is my take on this matter of global civil society. It comes back to what the prior questioner was also alluding to in terms of de-verticalizing. Let me start with the brutal position that I come from: much of what actually constitutes global civil society is very local and non-cosmopolitan. And that is fine. I admire Amnesty International, Oxfam, all the great institutional actors that produce a space for global civil society, that enact global civil society, that expand it. But, I argue, they would be nothing without all the civil society activists, whether it is the environment, whether it is human rights, whether it is just development, whether it is fair trade etc., who are very local, often immobile, and non-cosmopolitan. They are obsessed with the local torturer in their town's jail, the local factory polluting their community's water, and so on. And this obsession is what gives them the energy, the focus, the passion, that is what makes their struggle part of the quotidian rather than some abstract idea or norm. We need both levels to have global civil society –and that is the only way I can think the concept. Civil society without the global in front is a slightly different category because when you add “global” it suggests (incorrectly) a move towards the cosmopolitan. Do I use the term? Yes, but I use it to mark a space, an actor, in this category that is usually overlooked or obscured: this non-cosmopolitan, immobile, localized actor full of passion and energy, focused around a very particular issue. I think these actors for the constituting of global civil society. For a whole variety of reasons. /And there is a real interesting dynamism. Again, it is a parallel of the powerful global civil society.\ One gets the impression that for many people it is now a master category: all has been said when they say global civil society. But what happens in the shadows of the category? There we find the localized, immobile, non-cosmopolitan actor. And this is an infrastructure for the global. I often play on these tensions. But when you deal with national civil society it may well be different. Eastern Europe produced the category as a forceful way to capture a new reality after the wall came down -- we all know that history.

I have a new project on cities and war. This is another way in which I deal with this -- I do move away from the typical discourse. One of the theses organizing the research design is that cities may be losing a capacity they have historically had to produce the civic out of conflict, out of difference, out of inequalities. The civic is an achievement, because I don't think that the civic is about designing a public space. The civic comes out of difference, out of conflict, out of inequality. I use this notion also to analyze how Europe has handled immigration, how under certain circumstances, European cities

strengthened the civic, overcoming the conflicts and the racisms. This overcoming meant they in fact produced something that is the making of a capability. When confronted with a certain kind of conflict the national state will tend to militarize the conflict rather than triage it into something that goes beyond that conflict, such as the civic. So back to my project, my sense is that cities today are losing that capacity to triage conflict, inequality, difference, except for complex global cities where conflict can produce the political –not quite the civic, but still, better than war. So when I look at the national civic and national civil society I ironically see a troubled condition; here the question of war functions as a heuristic. But when I look at global civil society and I bring in my non-cosmopolitan, immobile, obsessed activist then I can recover the capacity of cities triaging conflict and hence of constituting the civic –though increasingly it takes the form of the political, especially, political informality. I think this is a very interesting shift.

Question

The political seems to have a shift to the exceptional state. The Bush government starts to work when 9/11 happened. Schröder was re-elected after the flood. Katharina was more damage to the Bush government than anything else. So this was a shift to the exceptional state. And there the political has arrived and all the security measures and immigrant, also. But is immigrant not the counter-concept to the citizen? A citizen is a bearer of a bundle of rights, and the immigrant is not the bearer of a bundle of rights, not even the permission to stay sometimes if he is an illegal immigrant. But the interesting thing in America was that the so-called illegal immigrants started to demonstrate which is usually the right of a citizen. Was this not an interesting new development? Immigrants who are not bearers of a bundle of rights start to behave like bearers of a bundle of rights.

Saskia Sassen

I have written about that, actually. I am very glad you brought this up because I forgot to mention a distinction that is critical to the way I analyze it which is that the growing power of the executive that I am talking about and that I analyze in *Das Paradox des Nationalen* is not anomalous. The state of exception, the emergency state, the Patriot Act, each is supposedly an exception, and in that sense anomalous. The executive only has taken so much power because there is a crisis, the war on terror. Some of this added power is indeed due to the emergency. But I am interested in looking at the systematicity, not at the state of exception. I examine how the structural development of the state in this phase itself produces added power for the executive branch of government. When I speak of the hidden rules of permission in the law, I am not interested in fraud and criminality by multinational corporations. I am interested in how the law, not its violation, is actually used for producing excessive power.

You mentioned immigrants also protesting. Absolutely, I have a whole other lecture on immigrants besides the one I gave you on citizens, but I thought I talked enough. I think that the immigrant today is caught up. The formal subject is the alien. Those aliens are immigrants. But not all aliens are immigrants. Because the alien is a broader category than immigrant. But the immigrant is making, also with other actors, involved informal jurisdictions. I want to mention a couple of examples. You mentioned one very important point. At the time when the Congress of the United States was discussing criminalizing

illegality (which means escalating the type of violation that is illegality, to make it a crime, which is a sharp escalation). If you are a criminal and you are caught, you go to jail. It is as simple as that. At the time of the Congressional debate, millions of immigrants went on the street, some carrying signs saying “I am an illegal and I have the right to have rights.” They didn’t invent that language, but there it was. One of the terms that I use is that we see a shift towards effective nationality, nationality as an instrument for having rights rather than a more exalted allegiance to the state, the willingness to die for the state, a more substantive notion of nationality. Being a citizen is one of the best ways of having rights, of having the right to have rights –this is effective nationality. This is a very interesting shift: it is not a thick meaning of nationality as exclusive allegiance. It is actually an instrumentalizing of nationality, which becomes one vehicle, albeit still the most powerful one. But there are other instruments: all the free trade agreements grant transnational professionals portable rights, and the human rights regime gives us all, including undocumented immigrants, rights.

There is an incident that illuminates yet another dimension. The former Mexican President Fox, a cowboy, came to the US at the time of the Congressional debate and, among others, met with a whole bunch of illegal immigrants in a farm in Illinois -- in the fields. This went beyond existing forms of extraterritorial authority among national states, a well established regime (embassies and consulates are the best example). Fox’s encounter went well beyond the embassy regime whereby a foreign country is entitled to access foreign territory because this is the only way the international state system can work. By chance that evening I was at dinner in New York with his foreign minister, whom I had never met. I greeted him saying, “your President has just invented a new informal jurisdiction,” As it was in that moment that this thought struck me suddenly. This Minister of Foreign Affairs, who I knew has a reputation of being very smart, reacted as someone who suddenly sees something -- also he suddenly saw it. We both understood in that moment that what the President of Mexico had done was produce a form of extraterritorial authority for himself which is basically informal because it is not part of the formal regime.

I have long said that the immigrant, especially when an immigration first begins, is a vanguard actor. When I see a new immigration like the Senegalese immigration to Europe, when it begins, my first question is not to go document the characteristics of the immigrant themselves (level of education, poverty, etc). No. I see the immigrant as signalling, telling us, that some transformations are afoot in her country. I ask myself, what is happening in the country or the region where this immigrant came from. The arrival of a first time new immigration signals the making of a new history where they came from. And very often it is about IMF or World Bank “economic restructuring programs” and their devastating effects on traditional economies. There is a parallel with what is happening inside our countries. For instance, the “sans papiers” are not simply undocumented. By now they have emerged as a subject that is also making politics. I do think that immigrants today are actually making something, history, politics, new jurisdictions, in this particular time, conjuncture. There are a variety of reasons for this, not unconnected to some of the dynamics and trends I presented.

Question

You dealt with terms of global, national, even urban, but you omitted the image of the region. To me the national boundaries are very often arbitrary and changing and have very little meaning after a while whilst regional identities often carry the cultural meaning of the people much more so. Why didn't you refer to this?

Saskia Sassen

Ah! a question about words. I don't think it is accidental that I am getting so many questions about why I didn't use this word and that word. I grew up in six languages which means that I don't know one single language perfectly. Language for me is not a discipline but a zone of experimentation. Region is one of those concepts that has a thick history, thick realities. You have got to know what you are talking about when you deal with region. I have dealt with cities mostly, so I have stayed away from "region" because there is only so much one can do as a researcher and scholar. However, I have made an argument and I have written about it, that while some traditional markers of regions may be less pertinent today, the notion of regionality assumes a new kind of importance in a global age. There is a kind of regionality emerging today that does not fit comfortably in the historical space geographies of regions. The new kinds of interdependencies, the de-verticalizing, that the new importance of sub-national spaces such as global cities and silicon valleys, the new trans-national spaces, all are leading to the forming of a new kind of region. But it does not necessarily correspond to that older social geography of the familiar regions we have. So this regionality can cut across existing formal regions. It cannot encompass the older regions completely, but mix partial areas of several older regions. The category regionality is enormously powerful nowadays because there are new spaces that can be constructed as unitary spaces that cut across older boundaries. I think that the notion of critical regionalism is also coming back, but refitted to contemporary politics and struggles. In the United States a group of us, through the Regional Plan Association are trying to understand what are the larger regionalities getting shaped through the material practices of all kinds of actors. So we have identified ten mega-regions. One interesting aspect is that some of these mega-regions cross into Mexico, into Canada.

Isolde Charim

Thank you very much for coming.