The Prospect of Cities

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Of Freedmen and Metics

At varying times in the period of pre-Roman classical Greece, the city-state of Athens accommodated large numbers of resident noncitizens. Moses Finley estimates their numbers as a ratio to citizen males at between 1:6 and 1:2.5, which is to say, from 15 to 40 percent of all male residents of the city, excluding slaves, were either freedmen or metics (Finley 1973, 48). Only Athenian citizens were permitted to own land, and citizens were expected to participate in the public life of the polis. Noncitizens, most of whom were foreign born, engaged in trade, manufacture, and money lending, activities that were considered to be beneath the dignity of citizens. As Finley writes, “The citizen-elite were not prepared, in sufficient numbers, to carry those branches of the economy without which neither they nor their communities could live at the level to which they were accustomed” (60). Freedmen—manumitted slaves—and especially metics were thus essential to the well-being of the city, and so, of course, were the slaves. Athens was far from being a self-sufficient economy. Most important, two-thirds of its grain as well as the better sorts of wine had to be imported, the grain chiefly from the Crimea. Writing in the middle of the fourth century B.C.E., Xenophon even proposed a scheme for increasing the number of metics. He suggested that metics be released from the burdensome obligation of service in the infantry; admitted to the cavalry, which was now a merely honorific service; permitted, in the case of particular worthies, to buy building lots in the city on which to construct houses for themselves; and be given reserved seats in the theater. In addition, he thought that more lodging
houses and hostelries should be built for them in the Piraeus, where most of them lived; that market officials should be offered prizes for the just and speedy resolution of disputes; and finally, and somewhat tentatively, that perhaps the state should build its own merchant fleet. Metics, he said, are one of the best sources of “public revenues,” and so it was in the polis’s best interest to attract them (in Finley 1973, 163).

I cite this example from antiquity because so many of its themes are familiar to us from our own experience, even down to the proportions in the population of freedmen and metics—our foreign-born—in some of the principal cities of the global economy. According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Singapore’s resident foreigners are estimated at 700,000 and account for more than one in five workers in this city-state (March 18, 1999, 54). Frankfurt’s noncitizens now account for around 30 percent of total population, and for Los Angeles County a decade ago the corresponding figure for foreign-born residents was 33 percent; it is undoubtedly higher now. Other similarities are equally striking, such as the reliance on foreign labor for work considered “dangerous, difficult, and dirty” and thus “beneath the dignity” of native-born citizens. Or the worry, at certain times and places, on how to accomplish the city’s work without foreign workers in the face of a rapidly aging and possibly even declining population (e.g., Japan). Assisted immigration schemes, not unlike Xenophon’s proposal, were in full swing in the post–World War II era of Australia (Castles and Miller 1998, chapter 8). The denial of full citizen rights to even long-term foreign residents is alive and well in contemporary Switzerland (Castles and Miller 1998, exhibit 9.6 on page 234). The attempt to restrict the foreign-born to certain ethnic districts, such as the Piraeus, is a practice only too familiar to us, and not only in the United States (Marcuse 1989). And the moral contempt with which so many foreign migrants are still regarded reproduces Plato and other Greek and Roman literati’s condemning views of freedmen and metics for their “vices and evil ways” (Finley 1973, 60).

In this chapter, I focus on some aspects of transnational urbanism. This perspective has so far received little scholarly attention. Michael Peter Smith refers to it as “a new optic for guiding urban research” and argues that four contemporary processes contribute to the formation of transnational networks of social action: the discursive repositioning of cities in relation to nation-states in an era of globalization; the emergence of cross-national political and institutional networks; the facilita-
tion by technology of transnational social ties; and the spatial reconfiguration of social networks that further the reproduction of migration, business practices, cultural beliefs, and political agency "from below" (Smith 2001, chapter 3). Within this broad framework, I selectively focus on two subjects: the formation of transnational communities and spaces, with examples drawn from the U.S.-Mexican borderlands, the Turkish and Kurdish diasporas in Germany, and the world of Chinese professional migrants on two continents; and the incorporation of transnational migrants into cities and the resulting conflicts.

**Transnational Migrants, Cities, and Spaces**

Migration across national frontiers is normally studied from a perspective of national policy (see, for example, Castles and Miller 1998, among countless others). As Saskia Sassen points out, nation-states, jealous of their sovereignty, focus on borders and individuals as principal sites of control (Sassen 1998, chapter 2). Yet most migrants, insofar as they are not streams of refugees driven from or fleeing their homelands (the latest victims being Kosovite Albanians and East Timorese) end up in a relatively small number of cities that occupy strategic positions in the global system. German residents without a German passport, as they are sometimes referred to, constitute 8.8 percent of the country's population but make up 30 percent of Frankfurt's. In the United States, two-thirds of the 20 million foreign-born residents in the early 1990s were concentrated in only five states and, within these states, predominantly in the major "world cities" of Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Chicago, and Houston (Friedmann and Lehrer 1997). The same is true of Asian city-regions. Greater Tokyo's share of total registered foreign population in Japan was 39 percent in 1997 (Machimura 2000). According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, in Singapore, more than one in five workers is a resident foreigner (March, 18, 1999, 54).

Transnational migration is thus a preeminently urban phenomenon that poses multiple problems for city governments, from housing and land use to the management of interethnic relations. Cities that harbor a large number of foreign residents—legal and illegal, short term and long term, heavily endowed with "human capital" as well as "simple labor"—I refer to as transnational cities. These cities occupy strategic nodes in an interregional, global network defined, in the first instance, by economic relations. Via transnational migrants, however, they are also tied to
thousands of communities of migrant origin, some little more than villages, others of a distinctly urban character. These ties are primarily social in nature (in a way that global money markets are not), though they are involved in economic transactions, such as remittances, which play a critical role in the foreign exchange balance of many receiving countries.

This dual characteristic of migrants—an uncertain home in the host city and multistranded ties to their communities of origin—has given rise to the concept of a diaspora. Originally used to describe the situation of Zionist Jews in their millennial hope to reestablish themselves on the soil of their distant ancestors in Palestine, its meaning has been extended to embrace other migrant groups, such as overseas Chinese, who maintain social, cultural, economic, political, and emotional ties of varying intensity with their ethnic homelands. Diasporic communities create a transnational social space that links places of residence with networks of families, friends, and associates in the localities where they originated, sometimes several generations earlier. Transnational migrants are thus “at home” in two or more places simultaneously; some may even hold dual citizenship. Yet, it is also true that they may be securely at home neither in the city where they live nor in the imagined community of their homeland. This feeling of being adrift, of not truly belonging anywhere, is not an unusual experience among transnational migrants and may explain their strong attachment to ethnic neighborhoods in transnational cities, where Koreans live with Koreans, Turks with Turks, and so forth, in an attempt to drown out their sense of being lost in a world that has become estranged from them (Nair 1999).

In this chapter, I examine three very different examples of diasporic urban communities. They illustrate a number of issues that typically arise in a context of transnational migration without claiming to cover the full range of related phenomena that still need to be carefully identified and studied (for further examples, see Smith and Guarnizo 1998). My first story is drawn from the U.S.-Mexican borderlands and concerns the forging of a common socioeconomic space through the migrant circuit between Monterrey and Houston. The second story is about the Turkish and Kurdish diaspora in Germany and concentrates on the quasi-political organizations among them that link them directly with the politics in their country of origin. The third story concerns professional Chinese migrants whose frequent moves from country to country have earned them the epithet “trapeze artists.” Men and women on the
go, their business or profession requires them to be specialists in mobility. These stories, it seems to me, raise important questions about the shifting meanings of place, identity, citizenship, and loyalty.

Transnational Communities: The Migrant Circuit Monterrey-Houston

This is the story of Don Joel, who one day in 1979 decided to leave his native Monterrey, metropolitan capital of Nueva León, and cross the border, five hundred miles to the north, to Houston, Texas.\(^1\) It is also the story of a transnational community held together by powerful social ties on both sides of the border. Upon arriving in Houston, Joel worked initially as a lathe operator in a small machine shop with ties to the local oil industry. His father and two of his eight brothers had preceded him there and helped him get his first job. Before long, Joel met the woman he would marry. Doña Rosa was an American citizen, which allowed Joel to apply for a resident green card. In due course, he received a card. In 1982, only three years after arriving in Houston, Joel and Rosa started a small business, one of many such businesses in the area that transport money, letters, goods, and people between the two cities. Fifteen years later, their business was still thriving.

By 1997, they owned two vans that made the Houston-Monterrey run twice weekly. Initially, their place of business was outdoors at one of the parks in a Mexican neighborhood of newcomer migrants to Houston, but after several years, Joel and Rosa were able to afford a small space in a Mexican restaurant, renting for $350 a month. Only two employees are not members of the family—they load up the vans and alternate with Joel as drivers. At the other end of their transport business, in Monterrey, Joel installed himself in a house he bought for his father. His local staff there includes two brothers-in-law, a sister, and a nephew whose task is to distribute the money, letters, and packages to the homes of recipients throughout the metropolitan area. For these deliveries, they use two older vehicles. The bulk of their work, however, is concentrated in only two of Monterrey's eight barrios with which they are intimately acquainted and where, in turn, they are well known.

Every Friday night and Monday afternoon, a van departs Houston for its long journey south. Actual driving time is ten hours, but the vehicle may be held up at the border for an additional two or three hours. On a typical Friday evening, men will gather at Don Joel and Doña Rosa’s transport enterprise to leave their money and other goods for
delivery in Monterrey the next day. Friday is payday for many of these men, and part of what they have earned during the week is regularly dispatched to their families. Money is handled exclusively by Joel and Rosa. The precise amount is entered into a registry, and the money is placed into an envelope with the address of the intended recipient. Receipts are not handed out; the entire operation is based on personal trust. Even so, the amounts are substantial. According to Joel, the average remittance (in cash!) is $200, but actual amounts vary from $70 to $400. (Fees are charged according to the amount of money being sent, beginning with $10 for up to $300.) Thus, over a typical week, Joel’s vans will transport roughly $40,000, rising up to $60,000 during certain times of the year, such as Easter or Christmas. These figures suggest that as much as $2 million may be transmitted by only this small family business, and there are many others competing in the same line of work throughout the Houston area. In addition to cash, Monterrey migrants also send goods such as clothing and shoes, iceboxes filled with chicken, milk, and orange juice, satchels of corn tortillas, television sets, toys and bicycles, armchairs, candles and lamps, air conditioners, and tools for car repair, which are faithfully dispatched to Monterrey. Some of these items, originally acquired in flea markets and used clothing stores, are undoubtedly resold at a profit in Mexico.

Monterrey recipients are mostly young mothers with small children and infants as well as aging parents and grandparents. For them these weekly or biweekly parcels and letters from husbands, fathers, and brothers confirm emotional ties that help to weld these social networks into a living reality. Occasionally, over long weekends and holidays, some of the men will make the trip south in one of Don Joel’s vans to visit with family. Or they will call long distance. At other times, there is a return flow of goods traveling north, mostly food packages containing local delicacies, and even medicines, which in Mexico are easier to obtain without a prescription.

The many-stranded ties that bind the Mexican migrant families of Monterrey and Houston into a transnational community are not a passing phenomenon. Boys grow up in Monterrey dreaming of one day working in Houston like their fathers or older brothers. Going north is for them a rite of passage. Some, like Don Joel, will eventually marry there and have children of their own, even as their extended family continues to live in Mexico. Others will shuttle back and forth between the
two cities before deciding where they will settle. Some of them may hope to operate a transnational enterprise akin to Joel’s and Rosa’s, a business that operates with a minimum of overhead and a maximum of social capital, or trust. Over time, they will become bilingual, speaking a Spanish peppered with American expressions and English with a strong Mexican accent. Some will eventually acquire American citizenship, even as they continue to hold a Mexican passport. Others, born in the United States, will make frequent trips to visit their grandparents on the other side of the border. In this fashion, the Monterrey-Houston migrant circuit is evolving as a transnational life space in which foods, language, traditions, and popular customs acquire hybridity. The local expression for this is “Tex-Mex” and is a proud subculture of its own.

Diasporic Politics: Quasi-Political Organizations of Turkish Migrants in Germany

A very different story of transnational community is that of quasi-political organizations in the Turkish diaspora in Germany. The so-called Turkish diaspora is not uniformly Turkish, however, and a distinction must be drawn between ethnic Turks and Kurds. The latter, although citizens of Turkey, are not ethnically Turkish and claim a separate ethnonational identity. Of the 1.8 million Turkish citizens in Germany, fully one quarter are ethnic Kurds. Their largest organization is the Association of Kurdish Workers for Kurdistan. A more militant organization is Birkan, a close supporter of Abdullah Öcalan, the former leader of the secessionist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) currently on trial in Turkey.2

Political and religious factions are common among diaspora Turks. Many older residents who have lived in Germany for a long time struggle for their political rights and dual citizenship. But in the language of Nermin Abadan-Unat, the majority of Turkish associations represent “nationalist, cultural enclaves with a minimal interest in German society” (1997, 243).

A quick look at some of the major Turkish associations in Germany provides an insight into diaspora politics, which, in this case, reflect the close connection that exists in Islam between religion, politics, and the conduct of everyday life (Jonker 1997).3 In 1997, 1,341 such associations were reported, nearly all of them highly politicized. Although some funds for social integration are provided by the federal government, they...
can only be accessed locally. Collective initiatives on the part of umbrella organizations depend to a large extent on individual contributions and the financial support of Islamic countries, not least from Turkey itself. By the mid-1990s, major umbrella organizations included the following:

- *Extreme right-wing nationalist (secular) organizations.* Although establishing branches of foreign political parties is prohibited in the Federal Republic, the ban was overcome by the establishment of associations such as the Greater Ideal Association, the Turkish Community, and various Turkish student and youth organizations. All of these eventually united under a single umbrella, the Federation of Turkish Idealist Associations in Europe (ATÜDF). Centered in Frankfurt, ATÜDF boasts 170 local member associations throughout Germany. According to Abadan-Unat, the federation cooperates closely with the renamed party of Alparslan Türkö, the National Action Party. The ideology of this federation is based on an extreme form of nationalism, which rejects social integration with Germans to prevent ethnic Turks from becoming a "secondary race" (Abadan-Unat 1997, 243).

- *Religious and religious-political organizations.* Up until the early 1980s, Islamic Cultural Centers (IKMB) represented the largest religious movement in Germany. Backed by followers of the Sūleymani sect of Turkish Islam, which fought against Atatürk's secular reforms fifty years earlier, this umbrella organization has its center in Cologne from where it controls over three hundred mosques and local associations throughout the Federal Republic. Its most important characteristic is its negative attitude toward cultural integration. School subjects such as music, arts, and sports are declared "un-Islamic," and members are prohibited from engaging in social contacts with "infidel" Germans.

  The most powerful Turkish religious organization is the National Vision Organization of Europe (AMGT). Established in 1976 as a branch of the National Salvation Party, later renamed the Welfare Party, this organization is also headquartered in Cologne and claims 110,000 members and sympathizers in Germany alone. In general, its political agenda is to fight secularization. Attempts at sociocultural integration in Germany are defined in the hyperbole of political discourse as treason toward Islam. The Welfare Party's leading news outlet, *Millî Gazete*, is published in Germany as well as Turkey.
• **Small separatist organizations.** The Union of Islamic Associations and Communities (ICCB) was established in 1984 by Cemalattin Kaplan, it represents a dissenting wing of the National Visions Association. After losing his nationality in Turkey for dissident activities, Kaplan settled in Cologne and started to build his own organization. He advocates an Islamic Turkish Republic on the model of Iran, and pleads for the reintroduction of the sharia (Islamic law) and the replacement of the Turkish script by the Arabic alphabet. The organization is largely self-supporting.

Another dissenting faction is the Union of Turkish-Islamic Cultural Associations (TIKDB). This association split off from the secular, rightist-nationalist ATÜDF and focuses on the preservation of the national and cultural values of the Islamic faith. Politically, it supports the right-of-center Motherland Party in Turkey, which became the ruling parliamentary party in 1997.

• **The official, government-supported organization.** The Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB) was created to counterbalance the spread of “fundamentalist” Islam in Germany. Linked to the Turkish Ministry of the Interior, the union embraces 700 local chapters with a claimed membership of about 90,000. It also enjoys the support of 215 Turkish civil servants who are on detail to Germany, and all of whom are graduates of divinity schools and thus familiar with Islamic theology.

Nearly two million Turks and Turkish Kurds are living in Germany but are not of Germany. Very few so far have opted for German citizenship. Yet, their numbers continue to increase through births, family reunification, asylum applications, and illegal migration. Emotionally, they are oriented toward their homeland. Clustered in Turkish urban neighborhoods where they have evolved a separate religious, cultural, and commercial life, they are living a self-imposed “island-like” lifestyle (Abadan-Unat 1997, 247). Homeland politics has migrated along with them, and different ideological currents are now struggling for the minds and souls of the Turkish and Kurdish diasporas. In Germany, *homeland politics has become a transnational politics.*

This is not to say that, particularly among the third generation, many Turks as well as Kurds wouldn’t prefer to live a peaceful, secular life in a multicultural Germany. Indeed, according to Tietze (1997), if one converses with young men rather than only reading the pronouncements of
umbrella organizations, a great variety of views on the question of integration is revealed. But the pull of family, religion, ethnicity, and community is a powerful one, and many young Turks are drawn by their idealism toward the idea of a reborn Islam that, they hope, will be given political form in an idealized homeland that many of them have perhaps never even visited.\textsuperscript{4}

**Trapeze Artists: Chinese Professionals and Businessmen on Two Continents**

Over a decade ago, Taipei wits coined a new term to describe the transnational existence of some Chinese, primarily from a professional and business background. *Kuangzhong feiren* (trapeze artists) are residents with established homes in more than one country, often with dual citizenship and carrying multiple passports. These *kuangzhong feiren* tend to have extended families and networks of friends and associates on both sides of the Pacific (Hsing 1997; Wang 1998; Cheng and Hsia 1999; Ong 1999; Tseng 2000). Professionals and businesspeople of whatever nationality are a famously privileged and mobile group who often know their way around national regulations that govern the entry of less fortunate migrants. In many countries, citizenship is up for sale. In the decade leading up to reunification with China, for example, many wealthy Hong Kong residents succeeded in establishing themselves in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, even as part of their families continued to live and work in the colony, now the Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People’s Republic. More recently, a similar exodus of ethnic Chinese has occurred from Indonesia, from where they have fanned out to Singapore, Australia, and North America.

*The Far Eastern Economic Review* reports an instance in the formation of these trapeze artists. After the Tiananmen incident in 1989, the U.S. government granted the more than 50,000 Chinese students in the United States the right to remain in the country. Of this group, many went on to obtain advanced degrees in computer science and electrical engineering. Today, the story continues, “they form the nucleus of a talented new generation of information-technology entrepreneurs that is forging commercial links with China.” Chen Hong is one of them. A 1982 graduate of Hian Jiao-tong University, Chen remained in the United States in the post-Tiananmen amnesty, and obtained his doctorate in computer science from the State University of New York in 1991. Today he is chairman and chief executive of GRIC Communications,
which links Internet service providers across countries. According to Chen, many of his friends are returning to China. "They have become very successful because of their connections in the U.S.," he says. "You are going to see a lot of people like us being hired back to head information-technology companies in China in the future" (March 11, 1999, 50–52).

Trapeze artists shuttling back and forth between Taipei, San Francisco, the Silicon Valley, and Chinese coastal cities are now helping China's drive to become a major economic power in East Asia. Citizenship has for them primarily a utilitarian character. As the network of guanxi relations of trust and reciprocity spreads ever more densely across the Pacific, it comes down to little more than a North American passport or resident card.  

What do these stories tell us? First of all, they are urban stories. And if I am right in saying that, in the coming decades, some fifty or sixty cities worldwide will come to play major roles in spatially articulating the global economy, it is many of these same cities that will also be transnationalized in the sense of having, say, from 20 to 40 percent of their population living in diasporic communities at the very heart of the global system. A relatively small but growing proportion of this population will be trapeze artists who move among these cities outside the official categories of migration. Professionals and business managers, they constitute a new transnational class that is always welcome, because their services are essential to the conduct of global business (Sassen 1998, 15–16; Ong 1998). Members of this class tend to be people without strong attachments to place. They are "at home" in international airports and hotels, the "non-places" so well described in Marc Augé’s provocative essay of some years ago (1995). Permanent expatriates, their families are scattered globally. Tseng Yen-Fen concludes his trenchant essay on Taiwanese capital-linked migration with these words:

By studying the migration of Taiwanese entrepreneurs along with their overseas investment, we are able to see how people are living and thinking transnationally. As members of the transnational diaspora they live daily lives depending on multiple and constant interconnections across national borders, their public identities are often configured to be more than one nation state. . . . Some assume a more cosmopolitan identity, disconnected from any particular state, that makes them think of themselves as global citizens. To this group of people, nationality is a utilitarian matter
signaling little emotional attachment. Others might prefer a transnational identity that is based on constant interconnections between host country and homeland. It would be interesting to learn in what micro-level fields various types of identities are created, maintained, and even disrupted. (2000, 162)

Transnational migrants with more modest educational and/or financial endowments tend to be considerably more grounded than this class of high flyers. They are represented by my stories from the U.S.-Mexican borderlands and the Turkish and Kurdish diasporas in Germany. The Monterrey-Houston axis is one of many such linkages in the borderlands gradually evolving into a new Mexican-American (hybrid) subculture. The tale of Don Joel’s small transport business, a key link in the bipolar transnational locality of Houston-Monterrey, tells us that those who leave their villages, towns, and cities for the strategic nodes of the global economy do not necessarily leave family, friends, and social networks behind but, undeterred by the fortified national border, maintain enduring social ties with them. For official purposes, they may be treated as “immigrant” residents in Houston, but in fact they continue to live “transnationally.” Ask them where they are from, and they will probably give you contradictory answers, depending on where and by whom they are being interrogated. Modern urban nomads, their true home is the circular journey between. A large proportion of Houston’s population continues to be attached to Monterrey, even as many families in the second city have loved ones in the first. Over time, the circuit becomes routinized, and the question of where one belongs has no final resolution.

My second story must be read somewhat differently. Turkish and Kurdish minorities are doubly marginalized in Germany. Not being of German “blood,” they will always be seen as aliens regardless of their formal citizenship status. And as Muslims, they have inherited a thousand-year history of conflict with the Christian West. It is no accident that Turkish membership in the European Union, though long desired by Turks, has been tenaciously resisted by Europeans. Turks and Turkish Kurds continue to be treated as outsiders in Germany. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to find diasporas that are self-organized through quasi-political associations that, in many cases, are based on local mosques and have intensely nationalistic aspirations. Marginalization on the German side is thus reciprocated by the self-exclusion on part of
the marginalized. And so it happens that Turkish politics are played out not only in Turkey but increasingly on German soil as well, where the issues are, respectively, independence for the Kurds in a state of their own and the transformation of the secular Turkish state into one modeled on a reading of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions. The dangers posed for the Turkish state by these politicized diasporas have led the government to organize its own umbrella association under the tutelage of several hundred officials skilled in the rhetoric of Islamic theology. Turkish and Kurdish communities in German cities are thus ensconced in ethnic enclaves where Islamic clergy command considerable influence over the mental world and conduct of their coreligionists and where the national politics of Turkey is never far away.

Incorporating Migrants into Transnational Cities

I turn now to my second major but closely related topic, the incorporation of transnational migrants into receiving cities. This is a greatly understudied and poorly understood subject. Migration studies typically work within a national policy framework, where the strategic sites of control are the border and the individual (Sassen 1998). But once transnational migrants have succeeded in entering national space, the problem of how to respond to their presence devolves to the receiving cities. Incorporating transnational migrants confronts city officials with a host of issues that have to do with communication and language, employment, social services, housing and urban design, land-use planning, education, health, the justice system, political representation, and last but not least, interethnic relations. Only a handful of studies have so far addressed these issues (Chua 1991; Watson and McGillivray 1995; Friedmann and Lehrer 1997; Lehrer and Friedmann 1997; Sandercock and Kliger 1998). And yet these issues that must be confronted, as local governments respond to a wide range of demands, deciding on policy as they go along.

I would like to illustrate this with a story about the city government of Kawasaki, a small municipality in the Tokyo metropolitan area. The study from which I have drawn this story begins with the following quote from a senior city official:

Since about 1988 or 1989, lots of foreign workers have come to Kawasaki. At that point, the city decided that foreigners living in Kawasaki are local citizens, and that consequently, the same as Japanese local
citizens, we had to ensure their access to city services. (Tegtmeyer Pak 2000, 244)

In the context of official Japanese policy, which, according to Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak is to “control ‘foreigners’ as a category of persons understood as potential threats to the integrity of the nation” (255), this statement must appear, at least to Tokyo bureaucrats, as verging on the subversive. But, in fact, it is largely a pragmatic response on the part of a local government to the rapid influx of transnational migrants. Between 1985 and 1996, registered foreign residents in Kawasaki nearly doubled, rising from 10,841 to 19,496. The inclusion of undocumented migrants might well have doubled and tripled these numbers, but those who work illegally in Kawasaki are not objects of official attention by city hall.

In response to pressure from the city’s long-established Korean community and the municipal administration’s awareness that something needed to be done to maintain harmony between immigrants and local neighborhoods, an International Office was set up in Kawasaki to coordinate service delivery to transnational migrants. Here is how one government document described the new level of consciousness:

As the number of resident foreigners has rapidly increased in the last few years, differences in customs and culture, and misunderstandings based on language have brought many puzzles and issues of mutual misunderstanding to the attention of local government and the community. . . . In doing our best to ensure that local citizens accept foreigners as members of the community without delay, we have set up Japanese language classes and clubs for foreigners who use the City’s International Exchange Center and neighborhood community centers in order to improve communications between foreigners and local citizens. (Tegtmeyer Pak 2000, 251)

In the four cities of her study (of which Kawasaki is one), writes Tegtmeyer Pak,

most city governments provide maps, information about local government offices, community newsletters, and guides to daily life in Japan in a range of foreign languages. Japanese language instruction opportunities are also increasingly available through local government for minimal fees. . . . In some cases, the classes are offered through the city’s quasi-public International Exchange Association, other classes are available at
local city-run community centers . . . in either case, they are likely to be taught by volunteers who receive some training by the city . . . Another increasingly popular way to overcome the language barrier is to offer consultation services to foreign residents. . . . In those cities which have seen rising numbers of foreign children enrolling in local schools, more extensive programs of supplementary classes and tutoring in Japanese language are being implemented. . . . Kawasaki has gone so far as to establish a Foreigners’ Advisory Council, which enables representatives from the foreign population to participate in a regular ongoing forum, ensuring communication with local bureaucrats and politicians. Other examples of this perspective are the support of hundreds of local governments for efforts to grant the vote at the local level to long-term foreign residents, and the decisions by many local governments to abolish the nationality requirements (propagated by the national government) for most local administrative positions. (252)

What is clear from this account is that even in Japanese cities, where the presence of foreign residents is still at an early stage on the long road to becoming truly transnational cities, the beginnings of a movement at the level of local government to provide essential services to transnational migrants are already becoming visible. Except for the activities of a handful of nongovernmental organizations, civil society in Japan is not yet greatly aroused by the issue of migrant workers from abroad. Nor has there been a pronounced political backlash to the foreign presence despite a recent upsurge in national feeling. What does emerge from this and other accounts is that the complex processes of incorporating transnational migrants must be resolved primarily in the spaces of everyday life.

If we penetrate into these spaces, however, the policy models that are so contentiously debated around the world don’t quite seem to fit. Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, for example, divide countries into three broad categories, based on three generalized models for the incorporation of migrants (1998, 244–50).

- The differential exclusionary model is found in countries in which the dominant definition of the nation is that of a community of birth and descent (examples: Germany, Austria, Japan, Gulf Oil States).
- The assimilationist model proposes that migrants will be absorbed into the society through a one-sided process of adaptation: immigrants are expected to give up their distinctive linguistic, cultural, and social
characteristics and become indistinguishable from the majority population (examples: France, Britain, the Netherlands, the United States, Australia up until about 1970). This model, currently embattled, is sometimes replaced with a softer version of integration. But the final goal of integration is still the incorporation of migrants into the dominant culture.

- The multicultural or pluralist model implies that migrants should be granted equal rights in all spheres of society, without being expected to give up their diversity, though usually with an expectation of some conformity with key social values (examples: Canada, Sweden, Chile, and Australia from 1970 onward).

The authors present these models as ideal types, pointing out that actual policies are invariably subject to the vagaries of politics and swings in public mood. The present conservative coalition government in Australia, for example, which came to power in 1996, has been at pains to avoid using the language of “multiculturalism” partly for fear of a political backlash to increasing migration from Asian countries. Although a number of multicultural programs that were begun under the previous Labor regime are still in place, their future remains uncertain. The debate about multiculturalism also continues to rage inside and outside the American academy. Although the presence of distinctive ethnic communities in U.S. cities is generally accepted, the role of the state is not seen as ensuring social justice for immigrants or providing for the maintenance of ethnic cultures. At the other extreme of the spectrum, in Japan, a major rethinking is currently underway about the presumed ethnic homogeneity of the Japanese people. The outcome of this rethinking process may have major implications for shifting Japanese policies away from the differential exclusionary model (Fukuoka 1998; Douglass and Roberts 2000).

Yet, for all the heat they engender, the models proposed by Castles and Miller are not especially helpful for coming to grips with the three instances of transnational migration I have described—the migrant circuit between Monterrey and Houston, the ethnopoltics of Turks and Kurds in Germany, and the world of Chinese business and professional elites and the incorporation problems they pose. We saw migrants from Turkey who, in response to their marginalization within German society, but for their own reasons as well, are opting for self-exclusion, even as
their numbers continue to increase. In the case of the transnational communities along the Mexican-U.S. border, cultural “hybridity” rather than assimilation is the long-term outcome of transnational relations. And Chinese trapeze artists, building a brave new cyberworld across the Pacific, are in many cases living in a nonplace world that seems to lie outside any policy model altogether. The phenomenon of transnational migration has thus become a good deal more complicated than was once the case.

Living with Difference: The Difficult Role of Habitus

Transnational migrants are often perceived as strangers whose very presence poses a threat to the way of life and sense of self/identity of the host society. This is an inevitable source of conflict, usually local but readily blown up to national and even international proportions by the media. It is also one of the major difficulties facing planners and activists who, on a daily basis, must confront and deal with the many interrelated issues of the successful incorporation of migrants into the local society. Pierre Bourdieu’s seminal concept of a field-specific habitus may help us to understand one of the root causes of this difficulty and so perhaps also to learn how better to manage it.6

The habitus of concrete practices requires a “social field” that has both structured these practices and has, in turn, been structured by them. According to Bourdieu, societies are composed of a large number of relatively autonomous, linked, and overlapping social fields. Some of them, such as a specific social class or, for that matter, the Algerian Kabyles—a village people of ancient lineage—are vast and encompassing, while others are more narrowly, though still quite broadly, defined. Examples would be the contemporary “worlds” of the university, artistic production, science, and medicine. According to Bourdieu, each field is structured by relations of power among the individuals and institutions that occupy the strategic positions that exert control over the field as a whole. The object of these power holders is to keep the “game” going. The game itself is a form of agonistic competition among the players in the field for the accumulation of “symbolic capital,” another key concept in Bourdieu’s lexicon. It is this constant striving for influence and power that is the real stake of the game. Specific rules must therefore be enforced to prevent the game from deteriorating into chaos.

Corresponding to each social field is a characteristic habitus that gives
each of the players a “pre-reflective, infra-conscious mastery” of the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 19). Bourdieu defines habitus as the “durable, transposable, structured (and structuring) dispositions of individuals” (Bourdieu 1990 [1980], 53). Specific to given fields, the habitus must be learned. It manifests itself as a pattern of practices so tuned to the rules of the game that to be in the field and taking part in the game is to feel comfortable and “at home” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 128). It is what one does. By the same token, practices tolerated and even appreciated in one field, say in a Melbourne workingman’s pub, would be shockingly out of place in an upscale restaurant only a few paces away, where the same practices would make everyone, not least the intruders, feel ill at ease.

The term dispositions is critical to the definition of habitus. We could say that the habitus serves as a kind of template that generates strong, normative probabilities of actual practices that are considered normal, acceptable conduct within a given field. According to Bourdieu, the habitus serves as a “generative principle” that makes possible, but also sets limits to, the “free production of all the thoughts, perceptions, and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production” (Bourdieu 1990 [1980], 55). Thus the blanket term practices covers forms of behavior, speech, bearing, posture, manners, eating conventions, aesthetic preferences, as well as ways of seeing and interpreting the world. Always gender-specific and sometimes age-specific as well, the habitus is acquired in early childhood and continues to evolve on the basis of new experiences throughout one’s lifetime. Though inscribed in the individual human body, it is a collective phenomenon in the sense that a certain habitus must be shared by all the players in a specific game. The tendency is therefore for the collective habitus to be preserved over relatively long periods of time. But because the field is subject to multiple influences, both within and outside itself, it will inevitably undergo a slow process of change, so that what used to be acceptable practices within a given field, say three or four decades ago, are no longer acceptable conduct now.

Consider now the case of Kabyle village society in its transition to a transnational migrant society. Bourdieu undertook extensive anthropological studies of Kabyle society during the latter half of the 1960s, a work that resulted in his first major book, published in French in 1972 and, five years later in an English translation, Outline of a Theory of Prac-
The Kabyles are an ancient, predominantly agricultural, tribal people of North Africa, whose center is the rugged Kabylia region of Algeria. Forming one of the larger divisions of the Berbers, they are known for their fierce resistance to the successive conquerors of the region and were in the forefront of the struggle to drive the French colonial government out of Algeria. Slow to adopt both Muslim religion and Arabic speech, they still retain, in the central and southern parts of Algeria, their vernacular language.

The Kabyles are a phallocentric, highly regulated society that finds its legitimacy in a cosmic worldview based on the binaries of light and darkness, outside and inside, and dominant/virile and subordinate/receptive. Bourdieu’s “The Kabyle House or the World Reversed,” (in 1990 [1980]) gives both the flavor of his writing and a glimpse into the world of the Kabyles in their mountain strongholds.

The interior of the Kabyle house is rectangular in shape and divided into two parts, at a point two-thirds of the way along its length, by a small openwork wall half as high as the house. The larger of the two parts, some fifty centimeters higher and covered with a layer of black clay and cowdung which the women polish, is reserved for human use. The smaller part, paved with flagstones, is occupied by the animals. A door with two wings gives access to both rooms. (270)

The lower part of the house is the place of the most intimate secret within the world of intimacy, that is, the place of all that pertains to sexuality and procreation. More or less empty during the daytime, when all the (exclusively female) activity in the house is centered on the fireplace, the dark part is full at night, full of human beings and also full of animals, since the oxen and cows, unlike the mules and donkeys, never spend the night outdoors; and it is never fuller than in the wet season, when the men sleep indoors and the oxen and cows are fed in the stable. The relationship that links the fertility of the humans and the fields with the dark part of the house... is here established directly (274). . . .

At the centre of the dividing wall, between “the house of the humans” and “the house of the animals,” stands the main pillar, supporting the “master beam” and the whole framework of the house. The master beam (asalas alemmas, a masculine term) which extends the protection of the male part of the house to the female part, is explicitly identified with the master of the house (274–75). . . .
In contrast to man's work, which is performed outdoors, women’s work is essentially obscure and hidden... Inside the house, woman is always on the move, she bustles like a fly in the whey; outside the house, nothing of her work is seen.” Two very similar sayings define woman’s estate as that of one who can know no other abode than the tomb: “Your house is your tomb”; “Woman has but two dwellings, the house and the tomb.”

Thus, the opposition between the women’s house and the men’s assembly, private life and public life, the full light of day and the secrecy of night, corresponds exactly to the opposition between the dark, nocturnal, lower part of the house and the noble, brightly lit, upper part. The opposition between the external world and the house takes on its full significance when it is seen that one of the terms of this relation, that is, the house, is itself divided in accordance with the same principles that oppose it to the other term. So it is both true and false to say that the external world is opposed to the house as the male to the female, day to night, fire to water, etc., since the second term in each of these oppositions splits, each time, into itself and its opposite.

The house, a microcosm organized on the same oppositions and homologies [qualities of similarity in structure, form, or function] that order the whole universe, stands itself in a relation of homology to the rest of the universe. But, from another standpoint, the world of the house, taken as a whole, stands in a relation of opposition to the rest of the world, an opposition whose principles are none other than those that organize both the internal space of the house and the rest of the world and, more generally, all areas of existence. Thus, the opposition between the world of female life and the city of men is based on the same principles as the two systems of oppositions which it opposes to one another. The application to opposing areas of the same principium divisionis that establishes their opposition ensures economy and a surplus of consistency, without involving confusion between those areas. (276–77)

The world of the Kabyle house is indeed a World Reversed!

Imagine now a number of Kabyle families as they move from their mountains aeries to the city. To make the contrast as stark as possible, let that city be Frankfurt, Germany. At first, only the men made the move at a time when Germany was importing large numbers of gastarbeiter
(guestworker) from abroad. The work and the pay were good, and after some years, the men decided to bring their families from Kabylia to join them. Once in Frankfurt, they and their families moved into tenement flats that had absolutely nothing in common with their dwellings back home. The cosmic order that had always given meaning to their lives was now shattered for good.

Kabyle men worked on construction jobs and had picked up enough German phrases to get by in their daily work. Their children, if they were old enough, were sent off to school, where they soon became fluent in the Frankfurt vernacular, although at home they continued to speak their own language, increasingly peppered with German expressions. But what about the women? What was their place in the new setting?

The tenements where the newcomers lived stood in an old Frankfurt neighborhood of older working-class Germans intermixed with a sprinkling of Moroccan and Turkish guestworker families. A few local shops catered to the Ausländer, or foreign migrants, but to get to a mosque, they would have to take public transport for a suburban location. Initially, what would eventually grow into a small Kabyle community found accommodations through personal connections, but once a beachhead was secured in the neighborhood, others soon followed. The Kabyles tended to cluster together, as did the Moroccans and Turks, glad to find people like themselves, and similarly disoriented, with whom they could talk, recalling familiar scenes from the old country and pouring out their pain, and who could help one another cope with this new life. Occasionally, their kids would come home from school with tearful tales of chicanery and harassment inflicted on them by their German schoolmates. But who was there to complain to and set matters right? Their children's teachers spoke no Arabic, their menfolk had to report to work every morning, and the women, vaguely fearful, couldn't even begin to contemplate contacting the school authorities to protest the rowdy waywardness of their children's tormentors. It was scary enough for them to venture out onto the street to buy ingredients for their next meal, in an area where hardly anyone spoke their language and where they, themselves unable to read Arabic not to mention incomprehensible German, might easily lose their way. Danger seemed to lurk everywhere. For instance, there was the threat of being "at the mercy" of male shopkeepers whose hair was blond and whose blue eyes looked on the black-clothed women with intentions they were unable to read. Come evening,
their menfolk, tired from work, would return home, expecting the familiar dishes of Kabylia, but they would often be obliged to make do with whatever was set before them. The flavor had gone out of their food.

Now imagine that one day, a young woman from the city's Office of Multicultural Affairs appears in the neighborhood, accompanied by an interpreter. She invites the Kabyle women to a welcome festival for newcomers from abroad to be held at the Römer, the city's main square. And she invites them to come dressed in their “native costume” and perhaps perform some village dances for the audience. The event would be popular, drawing thousands to the festivities. The Kabyle women would scarcely know how to reply to an invitation that, though spoken by the skilled interpreter in mellifluous Arabic, asked them to dance before the eyes of thousands of strangers. And perhaps they think to themselves, “Woman has but two dwellings, the house and the tomb.”

I hope this imaginary journey has been sufficiently instructive to raise a number of questions. We have seen how the Kabyle habitus is strongly gendered, defining very clear roles and even physical spaces for both male and female. It is also evident that their habitus is deeply integrated with a view of the world, and indeed of the entire universe, which, though deeply patriarchal, confining women's place to the enclosure of the house, is a worldview so complete in itself that even the dwelling reflects it symbolically in its layout, domestic space being tightly controlled with regard to who may occupy it at what times and for what purpose. For all of its rigidity, it provides a strong sense of order and security for all members of the clan. The world is as God has ordained it. Outside forces are repelled, sometimes fiercely, and the culture remains intact. The great turning point in Kabyle life came with the Arab conquest in the eighth century, when Kabyles converted to Islam and began using Arabic as the new lingua franca of the region while retaining their own vernacular. Their strictly enforced habitus guaranteed that the social order of Kabyle peasant society would be reproduced down through the centuries, from one generation to the next. Cultural changes no doubt have occurred over the past twelve hundred years, but we know little about them.

Migration to Germany shattered this habitus once and for all. The tenement flats in cosmopolitan, multicultural Frankfurt allowed none of the practices to be maintained that had been central to their life in Kabylia. It is nevertheless interesting to note that transnational migrants
in Frankfurt (as indeed in all transnational cities) tend, at least initially, to cluster in what we may call *affinity environments*. As distinct from ghettos, affinity environments represent a voluntary clustering of migrants in certain districts that, by virtue of their proximity to each other, offer material and cultural support and ease the psychological strain of coping with the strains of surviving in a city where none of the familiar cultural cues are present. Absent these cues, situations arise that can lead to a serious misreading by both newcomers and older resident populations of practices that, harmless and even well-intentioned in themselves, may easily be interpreted as hostile, leading to flare-ups of passion.

The adjustment of migrant families to their new life is mediated through gender, age, and education. The men work, leaving their dark, airless, and overcrowded flats in the morning, to return only at night. In this way, they maintain their dignity as Kabyle men: they are not house husbands “who brood at home like a hen in its nest” (Bourdieu 1990 [1980], 276). Men’s place is out of doors, women’s place is inside the home. But in a city like Frankfurt, Kabyle women cannot remain shut in. They have to run errands, use public transport, look after their small children, perhaps become involved with a Kabyle women’s group. In this wider range of contacts, they must venture out into public space and learn its geography, its opportunities and dangers. Their inability to speak German, let alone read it, turns out to be a major handicap.

Kabyle children growing up in Germany are the real problem, however, especially the boys, since girls are more under the supervision of their mothers and are likely to be more inclined to submit to the rules of the patriarchal order in “exile.” Marriage in the traditional manner may be arranged for them, and on reaching puberty, some of the girls may even be sent home to relatives in Kabylia to get them out of harm’s way. But the boys assimilate rather quickly to their new surroundings and are powerfully attracted to the material youth culture of Germany. This brings them inevitably into conflict with their parents, who may still harbor thoughts of eventually returning to an even more idealized Kabylia, and are likely to be “in denial” about the very real cultural disruption they have suffered.

And there is this further consideration. Many of the Kabyles’ German neighbors are not particularly friendly toward the newcomers or, indeed, toward the other *Australänder* living in the area, Turks and Moroccans. There are so many barriers to mutual understanding: physical
appearance, religion, language, the smell of food and even of bodies. And there is also a feeling of resentment, because many Germans, especially among the unemployed, believe, rightly or wrongly, that it's the Austra"o"nder who are taking their jobs away. Kabyle kids experience this resentment physically, hence their many tales of woe. Children want desperately to belong, but in the end, Kabyle boys have only each other. And so they form gangs that are up to all sorts of mischief, from graffiti to drugs, and they fight with (perhaps) local Turkish and Moroccan gangs that have come into existence for much the same reasons: rejection by Germans, poor performance in school (language, cramped quarters at home), frustrated material dreams, the need for some recognition by one's peers, and so on.

Youth gangs add a reality dimension to the neighborhood, where older German residents now have an objective reason to feel insecure and are threatened by muggings and street violence. Police presence is increasingly visible, and boys quickly learn that the German police are likely to see things mainly from a German perspective. After all, they have a habitus of their own. The result is that the number of Kabyle, Turkish, and Moroccan arrests is disproportionately large in Frankfurt.

In the opinion of many Germans, the Kabyles are intruders. Originally, they may have been brought to Frankfurt as guestworkers, but that was then, and this is now. It's true, they may have had the legal right to bring their families, but no one asked them to stay on and disrupt the peaceful neighborhood with its Biergarten, small grocery shops, and butchers. The character of the neighborhood has changed and, in the opinion of the German residents, much for the worse. Their grown-up children no longer want to live there, and are likely to move into "nicer" suburbs as soon as possible. And what began as a mixed neighborhood and an affinity environment for Kabyles, Turks, and Moroccans may, in the longer term, turn into a less benign foreign ghetto.

How are places, like our imaginary Frankfurt working-class neighborhood, severely strained by their insertion into the global economy, most powerfully by transnational migration, to be reconstituted? And is reconstitution, assuming it is desirable, a genuine possibility? This is the question I explore next.

Placemaking As Project?

In an excellent theoretical reflection on the "politics of place," Arif Dirlik argues the case for conceiving of "place as a project" somewhat
along the lines of what the "modernist project" was in its dimensions of development, social analysis, and culture, only in a very different direction (Dirlik 1999, 43–56). For Dirlik, place is a topographically and ecologically situated, inhabited space, a locality whose boundaries are porous, but even so, a particular world, with its own historical memory and shared understanding of itself. I want to pick up on Dirlik's proposal, using my imaginary Kabyles in Frankfurt to further explore the meanings of habitus. In this next stage of our journey, I will give a more precise definition of *place* and a pragmatic meaning to *project* that differs significantly from Dirlik's use of these terms.

I have already referred, if somewhat obliquely, to the transnational character of Kabyle migration. In their (temporary?) and voluntary exile, the Kabyles are living simultaneously in two countries: the Algeria of their origin and the Germany of their work. In the latter, they earn money and raise their families, but their emotional home continues to be Kabylia in whose stony and unforgiving ground their culture has its roots, where their relatives continue to live, where their remittances go, and where they are politically engaged. In Frankfurt, by contrast, they are socially and politically excluded. Thus we may call Frankfurt a divided city, a place torn apart by migration from outside the EU.

*Place* and *place consciousness*, terms that have come into increasing use, tend to have a positive connotation, just as *placelessness* is generally regarded as what Gertude Stein is supposed to have said dismissively about Oakland, California: "There is no there there." In my own vocabulary, however, the subjective quality of a place, what can perhaps usefully be called its character, is neither good nor bad. Always a locality, but of uncertain dimension, its character is what it is. To borrow a terminology derived from Marxism, an Oakland or Frankfurt (or any specific subdivision of these cities) is merely a place *in* itself, not necessarily *for* itself. If it is to become the latter, that is, if it is to begin to think of itself *politically*, it must, for a significant part of its population, become a project.

The "home away from home" the Kabyles made for themselves in Frankfurt was gained at the expense of the "affinity environment" of the resident German population they disrupted, unintentionally to be sure, by settling into their neighborhood. It is this disruption of a finely tuned German working-class habitus that many among the German residents resent, and it is why they wish the foreigners would go away, preferably to where they came from. A place so torn apart will have the character that it does, a wounded, divided, conflicted place, but it will never be
able to think of itself politically as a place for itself that is inclusive not only of Germans, but of Kabyles, Turks, and Moroccans as well. To become that kind of place, to mobilize itself around common objectives, will require something more than the rhetoric of multiculturalism.

In the late 1980s, a Social Democratic and Green coalition captured the Frankfurt City Council and, under the charismatic leadership of Daniel Cohn-Bendit, established the city’s first-ever Office of Multicultural Affairs (Friedmann and Lehrer 1997). It was a valiant, if under-funded effort that, by a variety of ingenious means, attempted to institutionalize something like a local citizenship for residents “without a German passport.” I followed the story for a number of years, until a more conservative council was elected and Cohn-Bendit departed for the European Parliament in Strasbourg. But my guess is that the anti-foreign sentiment among many Frankfurters hasn’t changed very much over the decade, and that the once so proud designation of local citizen has left a bitter aftertaste for a population that continues to be socially and politically pushed to the margins, much as was the case before the experiment with multiculturalism. When, as a result of the last federal elections in Germany, the Greens joined the Social Democrats, this time in a “red” coalition, one of the first moves they made was to launch a proposal that would make it much easier for aliens to gain German citizenship, including even dual citizenship. Initially, this brave attempt was hooted down by the conservative opposition even before it reached the federal parliament, making it abundantly clear that, as far as most Germans are concerned, citizenship is a privilege reserved chiefly for those of German ancestry (“blood”), and not for swarthy foreigners.7

I nevertheless maintain that the notion of a local citizenship—of granting local citizenship rights to migrant residents—has merit and is actually the basis for what must become a three-pronged approach to integrate transnational migrants both socially and politically in the spaces of everyday life. The aim would be to create an environment in which local places, now torn apart by migrant settlement, can be sutured and healed and begin to be proactive on their own behalf. Briefly, the three prongs are special education to assist foreign kids of both genders to overcome the learning difficulties they experience in their host city, supplemented by adult education programs, especially for migrant women; job creation programs in cities and regions suffering economic depression, specifically targeted at immigrants; and restructuring local governance ar-
rangelands in ways that will give more visibility and voice to the excluded population and get them actively to participate in programs for the betterment of their own neighborhoods. None of these programmatic suggestions will be easy to implement, and results are not guaranteed. But in principle, they should help to foster something like local citizenship and pride in place that will go a long way toward healing the social body. Short of a multilayered approach such as this, wounded places will remain wounded, ghetto formation will almost certainly follow, and anti-foreign feelings will seek to find expression in nationalist parties that, like Austria’s Freedom Party and similar movements throughout the world, thrive on racism and may ultimately do great harm to our liberal democratic order.

Concluding Comments

There are several reasons why I have taken an explicitly transnational perspective on the phenomenon of cross-border migration. The language of transnationalism helps us to focus attention on social interaction in the context of both sending and receiving communities. It allows us to delineate a common sociocultural and political space joining two or more communities divided by international boundaries. It helps us to identify key cities in the global economic order that, by virtue of their strategic position, attract large numbers of transnational migrants whose social networks extend outward into transnational space, reconfiguring the web of global relations in new and unanticipated ways. Social, political, and cultural contacts are globalizing no less than economic relations but in ways that are particularized and not necessarily in conformance with the geography of capital. Finally, the concept of transnational leaves open the question of where migrants and their families will eventually settle, abandoning their sojourner status to become either immigrants or return to their homelands.

I have looked at two facets of transnational urbanism. The first had to do with the way that cross-border migrations link receiving cities with communities of migrant origin, creating a counterpoint to the Castellsian “space of flows” of information, money, and commodities. The principal focal points of these new linkages are the global cities of the world economy that, in the present optic, I called transnational. It is principally these four- or five-dozen cities around the world that are thus well along on the road to becoming denationalized. Global control
centers and switching points for capital “without a national sign,” they are also trading centers with multiple international destinations and home to millions of migrants from abroad. But these transnational migrants do not leave their communities of origin behind but continue to interact with them in a variety of ways and with varying degrees of intensity. Denationalizing cities are thus slated to be the new “free zones” in a world of cities and candidates to become the quasi city-states of the future.

Second, I took a closer look at the problem of incorporating large numbers of transnational migrants into these cities. Because this is still a largely neglected subject, I concentrated on only one aspect of this process, the tensions that transnational migration inevitably provokes in the host society. Drawing on Bourdieu’s twinned concepts of habitus/field and on his researches in Kabyle village society, I tried to show what happens when the patriarchal, Islamic Kabyles leave their mountain villages and migrate to a city such as Frankfurt, Germany. By their very presence in a German working-class neighborhood, however, the Kabyles challenge and indeed threaten the habitus of the older German population who, moreover, see the intruders as competitors for their jobs. At the same time, the Kabyles’ own habitus is disrupted as they come into close contact with German society: men at work, women at home and in the neighborhood, and children at school. The result is a deeply conflicted and increasingly dysfunctional society and place, and what begins as an exercise in multicultural politics ends with a foreign ghetto. The only way to deal with this difficult situation, I argued, is to extend local citizenship in both its social and political aspects to the Kabyles, a project that would involve innovations in education, job creation, and local governance. At the same time, the imagined and real fears of the German population would have to be addressed.

In conclusion, I would like to plead for more research on the complexities of migrant incorporation into transnational cities. The questions that arise in this context are legion, and we are far from having an adequate theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of successful incorporation. Before such a framework can evolve, however, many more detailed studies are needed. In the present climate of widespread hostility toward transnational migrants, both documented and irregular, the urgency to undertake such studies is great.