

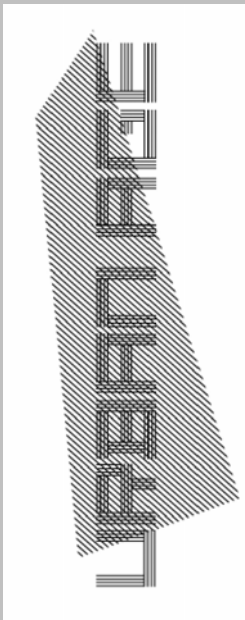
Dieter Läßle
University of Technology Hamburg, Germany

Urban Age

A worldwide series of conferences on the future of cities

LABOUR MARKET AND WORK PLACES:

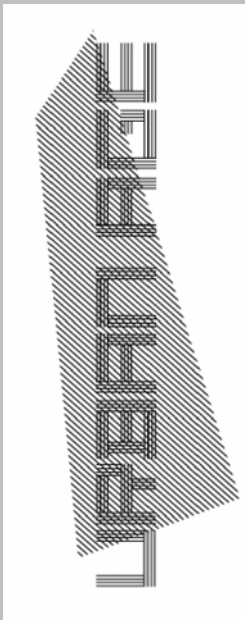
“Do jobs build cities or do cities build jobs?”



LABOUR MARKET AND WORK PLACES

“Do jobs build cities or do cities build jobs?”

- 1** The restructuring of the economic basis of the city
- 2** Labour markets as “urban magnet” – or: “how jobs attract jobs and firms as they build cities”
- 3** Cities as re-embedding contexts – or: “How the cities build jobs”
- 4** The role of manufacturing as “silent partner” to other sectors of the urban economy and of low-barrier entry labour markets as a “gateway” to social integration.
- 5** Post-industrial work demands new post-industrial work places, mixed land-use arrangements and urban spaces which sustain “civility”.

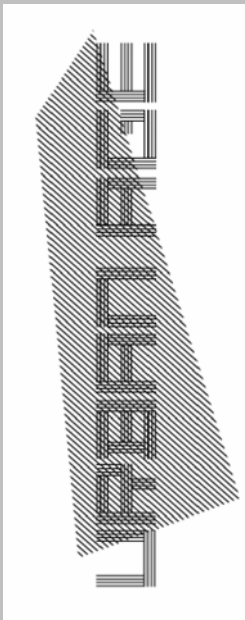


1 The restructuring of the economic basis of the city

The resurgence of big cities is due, mainly, to the substantial shift in the nature of advanced capitalist economies: the transformation of the traditional industrial system based on economies of scale with large factories and huge office towers into a knowledge economy based on creativity, social interaction and networking.

(See Bruce Katz's presentation)

As a result of this structural change in the economy, linked with new forms of globalization and the emergence of the information and communication technologies, cities have lost their function as centres of industrial production. Yet, despite the dictum that the telecommunications revolution would eliminate the need for face-to-face contact and make cities obsolete, metropolitan areas today represent privileged locations of firms in the field of new media, internet services, financial-business, design and other forms of knowledge and cultural production, this is especially so in inner-city sites.

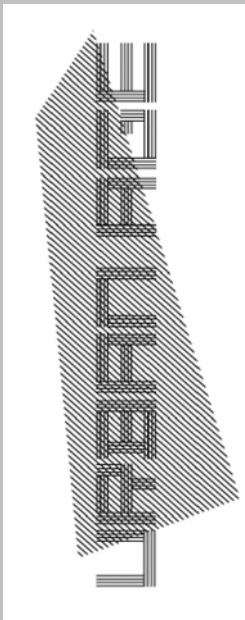


2 Labour markets as “urban magnet” – or: “how jobs attract jobs and firms as they build cities”

With the transition to a knowledge economy, intellectual labour and human creativity are becoming the key production factors and, therefore, urban labour markets increasingly function as an “urban magnet” which attracts firms and qualified professionals.

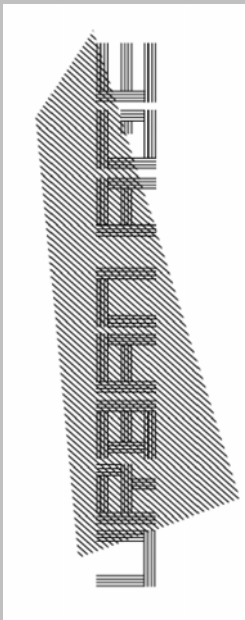
The city functions as a “**hub**” **labour market** which offers both:

- a sufficiently **concentrated and diverse labour pool** for knowledge and cultural production, which is dominated by volatile markets, rapidly changing products and a strong demand for highly skilled workforce;
- and a **vast variety of job opportunities** for more than one career from a single residential location.



2 Labour markets as “urban magnet” – or: “how jobs attract jobs and firms as they build cities”

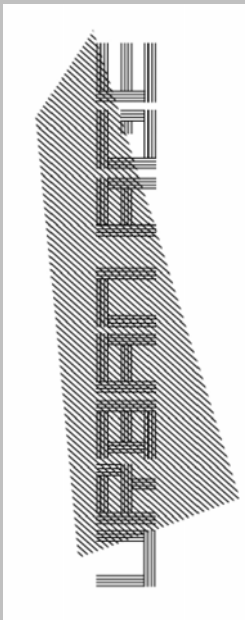
Firms increasingly look at the availability of qualified labour force in their location choices, and qualified professionals look for places with a high variety of employment possibilities and urban living conditions. This activates a cumulating dynamic between labour demand and labour supply. In this cumulating dynamic the urban labour markets function as a framework for common learning and the creation of specialized pools of knowledge and skills.



3 Cities as re-embedding contexts – or: “How the cities build jobs”

Directly linked with the structural transformation of the economy and the dynamics of globalization and digitization are processes of disenclosure, blurring and disembedding:

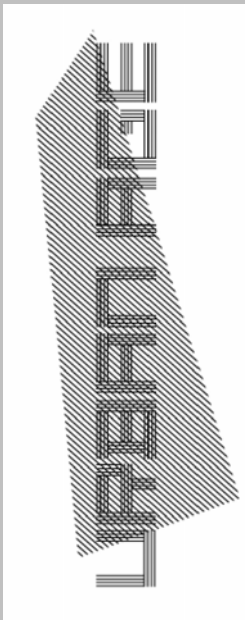
- The place-bound „location-spaces“ of firms are transformed into „network-spaces“.
- The standardized employment relationship erodes;
- Locations and boundaries of work places become fuzzier and fuzzier, and firms more and more virtual.
- Boundaries between “working world” and “living world”, between working hours and leisure time are getting fluid and at the same time “work” and “life” are becoming functionally and spatially stronger interrelated;



3 Cities as re-embedding contexts – or: “How the cities build jobs”

As a consequence of these processes, a complex variety of “space-time-configurations” emerges and transforms the “city” into a “layered city” (Peter Marcuse)

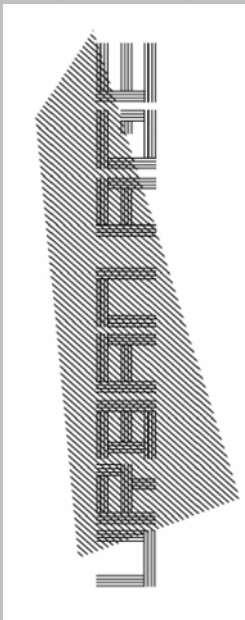
These ongoing processes of *disenclosure of the organization of work* and the *blurring of the traditional boundaries between work and living* reinforce the embedding or re-embedding of the knowledge and cultural economy into urban contexts.



4 The role of manufacturing as “silent partner” to other sectors of the urban economy and of low-barrier entry labour markets as a “gateway” to social integration.

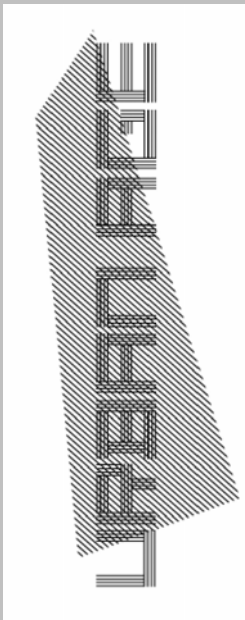
Despite the significant deindustrialization process in the last decades, manufacturing still plays an important role in the urban economy as “silent partner” to other sectors, such as creative, cultural and health care industries. This “urban” manufacturing sector is – as the MAS/ PRATT Center Study points out – no longer characterized by the smoke-stake industries of the past, but by a mix of small and medium-sized firms that are integrally related to the City’s service industries and local demand.

(See the presentation of Susan Christopherson)



4 The role of manufacturing as “silent partner” to other sectors of the urban economy and of low-barrier entry labour markets as a “gateway” to social integration.

At the same time these production businesses and “niche” firms provide important employment opportunities with low entry barriers for people with different cultural back-grounds and qualifications. Especially for a city as New York with a high level of immigration, that translates into a pillar for innovation and economic growth, “urban” manufacturing plays an important role as “gateway” to social and cultural integration.



5 Post-industrial work demands new post-industrial work places, mixed land-use arrangements and urban spaces which sustain “civility”.

Post-industrial work demands new and flexible building typologies that are open to changing uses and furnished with high quality standards and a specific aesthetic recognisability.

The resurgent city requires a land-use strategy which aims to a careful balance between economic development, housing, recreation and a high quality environment.

A basic principle for the innovative and sustainable city is diversity: diversity of industries and firms, but also the diversity of people and cultures and urban spaces. In this sense, resurgent cities depend on diversity, strangeness, tolerance and openness. But at the same time the increased demand for social interaction implicates that people feel safe as a result of “civility” (see Richard Sennett: “Civility and Urban Space”)