# 1 Introduction: a relational urban studies
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Although changing centuries is a purely arbitrary temporal event – it all depends on when you start counting the years – our recent entry into the twenty-first century does coincide with societal recognition of some quite momentous alterations in the condition of, and prospects for, humanity. Critical concerns for climatic change, mega-urbanization, delinquent banks, dwindling energy sources, religious nihilism, anti-social globalization, population growth and/or decline, increasing environmental disasters and new imperialist geopolitics have all come to the fore to jostle for a place on twenty-first century worldwide policy agendas. These are all massive issues that intersect with on-going vital interests within a humanity divided by (in alphabetical order) belief systems, citizenship status, class, ethnicity, gender, nation, race and sexuality. This International Handbook deals with the interface of two of the critical concerns – urbanization and globalization – through which elements of the vital interests will be addressed.

In focusing on globalization and world cities we take a specific approach to urbanization. By treating cities at a global scale we privilege the 'stretching' of their functions beyond their specific place locations. As such we are part of a recent tendency to foreground the role of 'relations' in social research; our relational geographies pivot on cities. Given the scale of their relations we can reasonably refer to them as world cities. As nodes within myriad worldwide networks, these cities may be interpreted as a special spatial organization, the geographical frame of contemporary globalization. In the relational language of Manuel Castells (1996), world cities today are the organizational grounding of spaces of flows in network/knowledge society that is challenging the twentieth century pre-eminence of territorial states as the organizational grounding of spaces of places in mosaic/industrial society.

The genesis of this particular relational approach can be traced back to the founding of the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) research network in 1998. Organized as an electronic network in cyberspace and grounded at Loughborough University – www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc – the research initiative prospered and grew, quite appropriately, into a worldwide network itself. This was largely because GaWC filled a lacuna in the world cities literature as it existed at the end of the twentieth century. It was noted that for the most part, world cities were studied individually and researchers largely dealt with internal relations rather than cities' external relations. Obviously both sets of relations are equally critical to the success of cities, but in the case of world cities, so named specifically because of their worldwide links and influences, it was particularly inopportune to neglect the latter. This became GaWC's special niche – the external relations of cities in contemporary globalization. Thus if GaWC has any claim to have influenced scholarship on cities, it is that it has contributed to re-balancing the internal and the external in urban studies. This is reflected in this volume: we begin with our initial emphasis – city

networks loom large – but we do not overdo our initial niche; internal relations of world cities feature strongly later in the book.

There was a second important criticism of the world city literature in the 1990s that GaWC has also addressed. It seemed to some observers that theoretical ideas concerning world cities were running ahead of any adequate empirical back-up. This evidential deficit was signalled very early in the development of a world city literature (Korff, 1987) but a decade later it was still 'the dirty little secret of world cities research' (Short et al., 1996), leading to sceptics such as Kevin Cox (1997, p. 1) referring to 'so-called "world cities"'. It was a key purpose of GaWC to begin the task of overturning this data problem and we have been reasonably successful in this respect: Cox's adjective and problematizing quotes are unlikely to be repeated a decade or so on, notwithstanding that we now understand all cities to be 'cities in globalization' (Taylor et al., 2007). GaWC's empirical research programme has incorporated two main strands – one extensive, the other intensive (Sayer, 1992) – that were effectively launched by two publications in 2001. In Taylor (2001) the interlocking network model was introduced as a specification of the world city network. This steered new data collection leading to measurement of the world city network (Taylor, 2004). This quantitative research was complemented by a qualitative approach to understanding the relations between London and Frankfurt at the launching of the euro (Beaverstock et al., 2001). This work indicated that this inter-city relation was primarily cooperative rather than competitive with firms using both cities but in different ways. This key finding of intensive research chimed with the extensive measurement exercise in that networks are premised on mutuality: cities in networks need each other. Both strands of GaWC research have mushroomed in the last decade and they constitute much of the content of this book.

But this International Handbook has been designed to be more than a 'working report' on a decade of GaWC research. The topic of cities and globalization is very large, too large for any one research group to cover adequately, but fortunately its study has attracted many researchers beyond the GaWC network. We have selected some researchers whose work we admire and which blends in well alongside mainstream GaWC fare. They cover many important themes that GaWC perforce neglects so that we have taken the opportunity of editing this Handbook to create a much more rounded and comprehensive treatment of world cities. In addition, the interlocking network model, although developed to describe cities in contemporary globalization, has been recently interpreted as a generic model of city networks which has allowed GaWC research to be extended historically (Taylor et al., 2010). Although the dearth of historical context for world city studies has not been widely recognized – the main exception is Anthony King (1990), one of our invited contributors – this new development in GaWC research is featured below alongside the main contemporary concern. In fact, perhaps unexpectedly but rather conventionally, this volume starts with 'history' as part of the 'rounding out' of our subject matter.

We have divided the Handbook into three main Parts:

- Part I covers the antecedents needed for understanding world cities and globalization; it is divided into three sections, starting with four historical chapters focusing on pre-modern city systems, city systems underpinning modern hegemonies, cities in imperialism and political world cities. The other sections have four chapters on

the basic concepts used to study cities in globalization, dealing with network modelling, city cooperation, global city and world city concepts, and large city-regions, and chapters on four key examples of empirical measures of inter-city network relations: airlines, the internet, corporate relations and advanced servicing.

- Part II introduces a variety of world city analyses in four sections. The starting point is five chapters on different important infrastructures (airports, offices, fairs, events and smart cities), followed by eight chapters on aspects of world city economies (corporate networks, business knowledge, highly skilled labour, finance, cultural economy, star architects, media and sex), five chapters dealing with questions concerning world city governance (city-region governance, sustainability, planning, surveillance and infectious diseases) and six chapters on the important matter of multiple divisions within world cities (social polarization, gentrification, the super-rich, low-paid migrant labour, cultural diasporas and suburbanization).
- Part III is devoted to case studies, thirteen chapters in all, another indication of our strong commitment to empirical work to sustain the study of an ever-changing subject matter.

These three Parts represent the 'broader GaWC' that constitute this International Handbook.

The case studies are particularly important since they act as a counterpoise to the previous sections covering world city topics in a more general way. First they allow the Handbook to better express the variety of urban outcomes that are found in contemporary globalization. To promote this we have commissioned several different forms of essays – on city-dyads and triads (NYLON and the Indonesia–Malaysia–Singapore Growth Triangle), city comparisons (Shanghai–Beijing–Hong Kong, Berlin–Warsaw and UAE world cities) and multi-nodal city regions (Randstad Holland); on a variety of single cities from different parts of the world (Mexico City, Mumbai, Accra, Brussels, Las Vegas and Sydney); and a non-nodal urbanism (South Florida) – covering different themes from previous chapters but now grounded into a specific geographical context. This is a very important part of the Handbook and not just because of the targeted empirics. Much of the mainstream GaWC research, especially the quantitative extensive work, appears monolithic in its implications and has been criticized as such (Robinson, 2002). However, describing large numbers of cities as nodes in a world city network does not mean that we are reducing every city to being a pale imitation of London or New York. As Castells (1996), and before him Jane Jacobs (1969), have made explicit, cities are best understood as processes. This idea has been at the heart of all GaWC research: every city is constituted of myriad urban processes represented by a particular outcome at the point of study. Thus the world city network process is very strong in London and New York and this is reflected in their network measurements and the fact that they are often applauded as 'global cities' (Sassen, 2001). But both cities encompass so much more than this particular globalization process and this is even more the case for other economically less important cities. In fact all the cities treated in chapters in Part III of this volume do appear as measurements in the world city network (Taylor et al., 2011) and this will be useful information in specific contexts, but we would never claim that such measures represent all that these cities have to offer. Globalization, and the city relations within this meta-process, are essentially complex theoretically, and effectively

messy empirically. In much of GaWC's research over the last decade we have tried to make some sense of this complex mess by focusing narrowly on specific processes; in this Handbook we have released ourselves from this constraint through Part III with its wonderful variety. Understanding is an iterative practice alternating order and diversity and both are properly represented below.

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