

The megacity: between the nation-state and globalization

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Abstract

Anyone interested in the conditions for future relations – global, national, intrastate – will sooner or later encounter the phenomenon of emerging megacities. While not a new phenomenon, they are individually and taken together, establishing new realities for states, international organizations and global relations.

A similar feature, emerging in recent decades, are the effects of globalization on various levels. While quite popular a few decades ago, the concept is today criticised but it still has a point to make in describing global relations with a lasting impact.

In this lecture, we will analyse through fundamental sociological concepts how the three units – the nation-state, globalization and the megacity – relate to each other. While there is a classical criticism of globalization from nation-states, megacities – as actors within the same states – have different possibilities to relate to the consequences of globalization; a phenomenon they are both originators of, and potential victims of.

The lecture will raise and propose theoretical approaches to describe the relationship between the three main units under analysis, as an invitation to a conversation about how to theorize over megacities - in relation to their host state, as well as to their international capacity and impact.

Bio Note

Kjell-Åke Nordquist is presently professor of International Relations at University College Stockholm, Sweden. He is Associate Professor of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University, and has specialized in conflict resolution – its mechanisms and structures. As a such he has had a special interest in autonomy as a constitutionally based conflict resolution structure and Nordquist was for three years Director of the Åland Islands Peace Institute, Finland, specializing in this field. Nordquist has consistently combined academic work with extensive field work in conflict situations and has been active in mediation and reconciliation work in particular in Palestine, East Timor, and Colombia, and has contributed to various organizations, working on the situation inside and outside Burma/Myanmar. In his recently completed project, Nordquist travelled extensively for researching the field of transitional justice, including Rwanda, South Africa, Chile, Cambodia and the Balkans. This has resulted in two books on the transitional justice dimensions of truth, justice and reconciliation: *An Unlikely Dilemma* (2013) on the tension between "peace" and "justice" from a development support perspective, and *Reconciliation as Politics*, also published in Spanish under the name *Reconciliación como Política* (Univ. Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia) 2018. Presently Nordquist is involved in the research project *Fragile Cities in the Global South: Societal Security, Environmental Vulnerability and Representative Justice*, supported by the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Helsinki University, Finland, and where he studies the emerging consequences of megacities on a global level.