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Since John Friedmann's formulation of the "global-city hypothesis" in the 1980s, it has become one of the most influential conceptual frameworks for the study of contemporary urban issues. Friedmann and subsequent researchers, first and foremost Saskia Sassen, argue that in "global" or "world" cities, form and function are predominantly determined by the forces of international capital and that their socioeconomic structure is characterized by class and ethnic polarization.¹ In displaying high levels of income inequality they are especially prone to social polarization as well as residential segregation, both of which produce social inequalities. Depending on the viewpoint, Tokyo's position varies considerably in this discourse. Either Tokyo is equated with extremely socially polarized cities such as New York or London (Sassen) or (as is argued by the proponents of the so-called developmental state model) Japan is characterized by a different form of capitalism which prevents the emergence of social disparities through direct intervention by the state in the economy.

However, although studies on global cities have been published extensively in recent years, empirically substantiated literature on the impact of globalization on Tokyo's spatial socioeconomic structure is very rare.

1. See John Friedmann, "The World City Hypothesis," *Development and Change*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1986), pp. 69–83, and Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1991; rev. ed., 2001); published in Japanese as *Gurōbaru shiti: Nyū Yōku, Rondon, Tōkyō kara sekai o yomu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2008).

Lützelers sets himself the task of analyzing changes in the sociogeographical structure of Tokyo to find out whether the Japanese capital indeed lacks signs of increasing social polarization and segregation. He interweaves urban research theories with data gathered during several long-term stays in Tokyo during the late 1990s and updated through 2005 in order to develop a comprehensive analysis of the social structure of present-day Tokyo. In doing so, he proposes to scrutinize both the conventional image of a uniquely homogeneous and egalitarian Japanese society as well as Tokyo's position in global city theory.

Lützelers book consists of four chapters. In the introduction, he gives a well-argued overview of recent developments in global city and urban polarization theories and discusses the extent to which they could be applied to Japan. He outlines existing research on the internal structure of Japanese cities, primarily Tokyo, which was inspired by inner-city discourse and factorial ecology, a method of analyzing urban spatial structures by means of factors relating to housing and socioeconomic characteristics in order to divide the city into a number of distinctive, smaller areas.

In chapter 2, Lützeler investigates the extent of social inequality and economic differentiation in Japan as a whole and asks whether the residential population of Tokyo is more polarized than the population in the remainder of the country. He analyzes statistical data such as income distribution and demographic factors such as foreign population and female employment rates to explore regional dimensions of societal inequality. His findings show that compared to New York and London, the ratio of social polarization and residential segregation in Tokyo is rather low. Lützeler therefore suggests Tokyo is more like the major cities of continental Europe instead (pp. 147–53).

Chapter 3 is dedicated to a detailed macro-level investigation of changes in the sociospatial pattern of Tokyo's 23 wards. Lützeler gives a summary of the historical foundations of present-day Tokyo and points to three key events that accelerated transformations of sociospatial patterns: the Meiji Restoration, the Great Kanto Earthquake of September 1923, and the bombing of Tokyo during World War II. He then skips ahead and concentrates on developments from the 1980s onward. Lützeler uses cluster analysis to illustrate the changes in Tokyo's demographic structure, which he relates to the city's housing market, its housing situation, as well as housing politics. Using the example of Chūō and Bunkyo wards, he points out that reurbanization and gentrification processes in the last two decades have brought social upgrading. As a result, some areas of central Tokyo have gradually been transformed into a space of high-rise office buildings and high-priced residential condominiums. These developments contrast with certain areas of Shinjuku and Taitō wards that have experienced a social downgrading

in recent years. Consequently, Lützel analyzes growing social disparities and gentrification processes in both wards and—as a contrast—in Minato ward in the form of case study research in the last chapter of his book.

In each of these wards, particular patterns of residential segregation can be identified. Minato ward has experienced a residential and social upgrading in the last 20 years. Shinjuku ward contains several neighborhoods characterized by high concentrations of newly immigrated Chinese or South Korean nationals and therefore shows signs of residential differentiation. Taitō ward has traditionally housed many Japanese day laborers and other low-income people. However, the difficult economic situation of recent decades has led to an increase in the socially disadvantaged population in this ward. Lützel concludes that apart from such changes in Tokyo's spatial socioeconomic structure, there have been almost no major deviations from the spatial patterns already existing during the postwar years. At least for the period investigated, Lützel argues in his conclusion that such particular cases of societal transformation are counterbalanced by the overall sociospatial continuities in Tokyo. In this respect, compared to London and New York, which both hold a paradigmatic position in global city discourse, the increase of social inequalities in Tokyo is rather low.

Lützel's voluminous and deeply researched book is the revised version of his 2005 *habilitation* thesis. Over many years, the author has ambitiously gathered an impressive amount of data and literature about Tokyo's socioeconomic, sociogeographic, and demographic structure and has carefully analyzed them. The research design and conceptual framework of this study, namely, to position Tokyo between the two contradictory poles of global city theory on the one hand and development state theory on the other, is convincing. His results highlight the counterbalancing function of Japanese politics on social polarities triggered by globalization. Lützel comprehensibly demonstrates the importance of analyzing locally gathered data and facts to explain inner-city gentrification and polarization processes rather than employing a decontextualized approach. In providing both empirically substantiated materials about Tokyo as well as carefully articulated methodological approaches, Lützel's book definitely helps to fill an important gap not only in Japanese studies but also in urban studies generally.

However, as are many other studies on cities, Lützel's book is to a certain extent only a snapshot. Most of the world's big cities underwent far-reaching transformations of their political, economic, social, and cultural systems during the twentieth century, and they will continue to do so. Japan is facing increasingly interconnected and interdependent social problems of many kinds such as population shrinking and aging, which also affect the social makeup of its cities and villages. Will these problems have a positive or a negative impact on living conditions in Tokyo? For example,

with regard to the predicted decrease of Tokyo's population in the coming decades, the prominent Japanese architect Ohno Hidetoshi expects lots of vacant space in Tokyo and assumes that housing will probably become more affordable.²

Ohno's positive view seems to be a single voice rather than a representation of a general vision about the future, however. In the recent past, growing social disparities have generated a discourse on Japan as a "gap society" (*kakusa shakai*), that is, a society of growing social inequalities as well as a country with a big divide between the capital city and the regions (*chiiki kakusa*). In 2006, one year after Lützelers had completed his research, the phrase *kakusa shakai* made a national list of the ten trendiest expressions. The reasons for Japan's becoming a "gap society" are very complex. For example, there is no doubt that globalization has shifted the social and economic landscape in Japan, as it has everywhere. Furthermore, the 1990s recession, the so-called lost decade, put an end to the lifetime employment system with its ample benefits, which substituted some functions of a welfare state. Particularly for the young generation, working conditions have worsened tremendously. Young people increasingly work as part-timers on temporary contracts that offer few benefits and hamper their efforts to become middle-class people. Likewise, the number of homeless is increasing.

In recent years, much has been written about such social problems in Japan. Recent overall statistics even suggest that the social divide in Japan might not become as drastic as many reports suggest. For example, according to an OECD report in 2008, income inequality and poverty both declined in Japan over the previous five years, reversing a long-term trend toward greater inequality and poverty. Nonetheless, this report also states that Japan's level of poverty (meaning people who live on less than half median incomes) is still the fourth highest across the OECD area and it can be assumed that solutions for Japan's difficult economic and social situation lie in the distant future.³ This statement is concordant with the findings of economist Tachibanaki Toshiaki that the degree of inequality of outcome in terms of income distribution has been increasing since the 1990s, and its present-day level is one of the highest inequality levels among advanced countries.⁴

Lützelers' results demonstrate that there is a striking difference between

2. Ohno Hidetoshi, "Tokyo 2050 Fibercity," *Japan Architect*, No. 63 (Autumn 2006), pp. 25–49.

3. OECD, *Growing Unequal? Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries* (2008), http://www.oecd.org/document/53/0,3343,en_2649_33933_41460917_1_1_1_1,00.html (downloaded September 4, 2009).

4. Tachibanaki Toshiaki, "Inequality and Poverty in Japan," *Japanese Economic Review*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2006), p. 26.

the perception of living in a society of social gaps on the one hand and the actual social disparities as they can be traced in data about Tokyo's socio-spatial pattern on the other. Even if data on income equality and poverty indicate growing social disparities, it seems to take longer for such a situation to surface in spatial data. This difference highlights the complexity of a challenging research issue, namely, to analyze both the relationship between the transformation of urban space due to socioeconomic changes and the way people perceive these transformations. Lützelers study has laid a thorough basis for related research projects.