

**From Cars to Casinos:**

**Global Pasts and Local Futures in the Detroit-Windsor transnational metropolitan area**

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## Introduction

Over the past twenty years the topics of globalization and the global city have come to dominate the intellectual dialogue on international planning and development. Related issues like poverty, neocolonialism, sustainability, and even 'development' itself have all been subsumed into a term whose totalizing implications are matched by the breadth of its utilization in recent research, the best-known of which are so highly visible and widely cited as to hardly require specific identification.

The debate over global city status, or 'globality', with its implications of the inevitability and implied desirability of global city membership, or at least of participation in the growing network of global cities, has neglected numerous aspects of urbanization in the transnational context. The implications of this neglect are as meaningful as the aspects themselves have been unheralded. Chief among these is the very real concern with the desirability, or meaning, of globality: whether or not urban scholars and policymakers can or should see the attainment of global city status as equivalent to a city's attainment of normative goods like democracy or sustainability. There is substantial and growing cautionary evidence to show that urban globality does not guarantee urban virtue, at least as it pertains to universally considered values like democracy and human rights. The absence of fundamental human values from many global cities could be interpreted as calling into question the very meaning of globality, or at least of demanding that urban scholars broaden its definition to encompass human as well as economic values.

Reinforcing the presumed desirability of globality is its seemingly teleological aspect. Today we tend to view the progression toward membership in the club of global cities as an inevitable, irreversible progression in a manner not dissimilar to that espoused by the advocates of modernity-driven 'development' from the 1960s through the 1980s (Rist 1997). The inevitability of the progression to global city status is not only ironic considering the particularity and privilege accorded to owners of that status, which of course mitigates against any substantial broadening of membership, but is deeply married to the seeming inevitability of the progression of globalization itself- an economic, social, and physical interconnectedness that is sweeping the world.

This chapter is written to critique this dominant perspective by illustrating the means by which a particular transnational metropolitan area, that of Detroit-Windsor (USA-Canada), is operating in a manner precisely opposite to the dominant teleological trajectory projected by the advocates of globalization for world-regions like New York, Tokyo, London, as well as for emerging global cities elsewhere in Asia. Detroit-Windsor is a swiftly *deglobalizing* region- a binational metropolitan area whose global dominance has been shrinking for the past several decades. Once a leader in global automobile manufacturing and the home, as of 1955, of three of the largest five corporations in the world (*Fortune* 2008), Detroit-Windsor has undergone a shocking deindustrialization in the succeeding five decades that has devastated the economy and landscape of much of the region. Even more profound is the region's transformation from a

global leader, if not a global city<sup>\*</sup>, to what can only be described as an increasingly marginal role on the world economic stage. In spite of its location straddling two of the world's largest and wealthiest economies (USA and Canada), Detroit-Windsor stands as a signal example of deglobalization, or localization, in a world that seems to be obsessed with the opposite transformation. The global past of Detroit-Windsor is over; what lies ahead will almost certainly be a local future.

While the deindustrialization of Detroit-Windsor has been well documented (Sugrue 1996, Thomas 1997), and other scholarship has examined the region's comparative disadvantage to growing regions like that of Greater Toronto (Jacobs 2009), scholars have rarely placed the planning-level responses to it, carried out substantially at the municipal scale, into the macroeconomic context that these measures have ultimately sought to correct. Urban, regional, and state officials in both Michigan and Ontario, faced with large-scale economic shifts whose origin and remedy lies far beyond local control, have sought, through a combination of subsidy and incentives to private developers, to revitalize the economic, social, and physical landscape of the region through the construction of large-scale urban developments. The purpose of these megaprojects is as much to revise and rehabilitate the deteriorating image and physical fabric of the city-region as it is to regenerate an economy whose industrial basis is unrecoverable in a postindustrial, service-based transnational society.

The megaprojects constructed on both sides of the border have a common basis in consumption rather than production. In each development, boosters of gambling, entertainment, and leisure projects present them as 'answers' to an economic crisis whose origins lie in declining wealth, not in its creation. The employment created by the megaprojects is marketed as a substitute for that formerly provided by industrialization, yet the economic foundation of this new economy is dependent on capturing consumption and capital from the very regional residents who have endured the difficult decline of recent decades. For all intents and purposes the new megaproject economy is a parasitic one, feeding on the embers of the industrial economy by capturing fragments of the accumulated capital generated over decades through industrial production and in possession of the region's residents. The megaproject strategy attempts to capture this capital through local consumption rather than permitting it to be reinvested or dissipated in other regions of the USA/Canada or even farther afield. Yet the majority of the profits generated by this new parasitic growth are simply reaccumulated outside the region by the mammoth corporations and wealthy individuals in control of the megadevelopments, many of whom are located in Nevada.

### **A declining industry in a declining region**

In recent decades the relative decline in the dominance of the "Big Three" American-owned automobile corporations (General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler) has been both progressive and

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<sup>\*</sup> The term as defined by Sassen [2001] and others is predicated on modern postindustrial, finance-based economies and thus is not entirely applicable to industrially-based economies like that of the Detroit-Windsor region

relentless. Hampered by competition from agile, efficient competitors in Japan and by their own patent inability to respond with innovations of their own, the Big Three saw their dominance of the US auto market shrink from a historic high of 91 percent in 1965 to 44 percent in 2009 (Ward's Automotive Group 2010). Since 2000 their decline has been swifter, with the Big Three's 2010 market share dropping 20 percentage points (Ward's Automotive Group 2010) in both Canada (Guilford 2010) and the US (Keenan 2010) and their worldwide market share dropping from 36 percent in 2000 (OCIA May 2001) to only 26 percent in 2010 (Zacks Equity Research 2010).

This dramatic decline has of course had devastating consequences for automobile-sector employment, much of which has historically been centered in Michigan in the USA and in western Ontario in Canada. In the United States alone, Big Three employment shrank from 435,000 in 2000 (Center for Automotive Research 2008) to only 171,200 in 2010 (see Table 1 in Appendix for sources). At the same time, the dramatic rise in automobile ownership and production of Big Three automobiles outside of the US has led to the Big Three's employment abroad rising from 249,622 in 2000 to 276,800 in 2010 (see Table 1 in Appendix for sources).

Despite the transfer of much of their production abroad in a desperate attempt to maintain profitability through much lower labor costs, the Big Three's losses in market share and steadily increasing costs in North America (100% increases for materials and much higher than that for employee benefits since 2000) have led to steadily increasing losses for the companies. None of the Big Three were profitable during the period spanning 2000 to 2008 (Center for Automotive Research 2008); their cumulative losses in 2008 totaled over \$104 billion (Orbis Company reports 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e.).

The 2008 economic crisis badly damaged the already declining Big Three. Both Chrysler and General Motors underwent Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings in 2009. Chrysler emerged from bankruptcy only after the sale of most of its assets to an Italian-owned consortium led by the Fiat Group (Naughton, Green and Welch 2010). This emergence also required \$6.6 billion from the U.S. Federal Government to permit Chrysler to operate as a "debtor-in-possession" of the company's facilities, permitting it to continue operating even when bankrupt (*New York Times* 2010b). General Motors required similar assistance, receiving \$9 billion in aid from the Federal Government even as it could only emerge from bankruptcy by selling its assets to a new company 61-percent owned by the Federal Government. The new "General Motors Company" promptly began the process of closing thousands of surplus dealerships and dispensing of peripheral brands like Saturn, Pontiac, and Hummer (*New York Times* 2010a). Following dramatic plant shutdowns from all three automakers, profits began to return for Ford in 2009 (Hoover 2010) and for all three corporations in 2010 (Ford: Tweh 2010; GM: TendersInfo 2010; Chrysler: Associated Press Financial Wire 2010).

It does not take sophisticated economic analysis to see that the losses sustained by the Big Three during most of the past decade cannot be maintained; no company can lose money forever, and North America, and the Detroit-Windsor region, needs to face the very real possibility that one or more of the Big Three will cease to exist within the next several years,

barring survival through ownership by, or even merger with, another company. This desperate strategy is one that Chrysler already pursued from 1998 to 2007 when it was owned by the German manufacturer Daimler AG. (Since 2007 Chrysler has again existed as an independent company.)

With much automobile production and employment historically centered in Michigan and western Ontario, the worldwide decline of the Big Three has been even more traumatic at the local level. In Michigan alone, automobile-related employment has dropped nearly 50 percent in eight years from just over 320,000 in 2000 to 125,600 in April 2010. This figure includes related supplier industries outside of the Big Three themselves (U.S. Department of Labor Statistics 2010a, 2010b). The Windsor, Ontario area, with a much smaller employment base to begin with, has lost almost 18,000 jobs during approximately the same period (Gomes 2008). Ironically, the transfer of Canadian automobile production to elsewhere in Ontario, versus the transfer of US automobile production outside of Michigan to other states, led to Ontario surpassing Michigan in vehicle production as of 2004, when both the state and the province produced 2.6M cars. Yet this figure in turn represents a relative decline from 1999, when Ontario produced 2.9M cars and Michigan 3.1M. Accompanying this decline in production has been a flurry of plant closings. In Michigan alone, 18 plants have been closed or announced for closure from 2005 to 2011. Ontario, on the other hand, has lost only two plants (Center for Automotive Research 2008).

The Detroit-Windsor metropolitan area remains heavily dependent on automobile manufacturing, but the industry's precipitous decline has caused significant economic distress. With ten percent of its workforce directly dependent on the Big Three, Windsor was in 2009 the Canadian city with the highest level of unemployment (12.4 percent) in the country (Stat Canada 2009). The Detroit metropolitan area, similarly dependent on automobile-related employment, suffered in April 2010 from the highest unemployment rate for large municipalities in the United States: 14.8 percent versus a national level of 9.9 percent (U.S. Department of Labor Statistics 2010b). During the first half of 2009, the State of Michigan Labor Department estimated that the state was losing 32,000 jobs per month, up to 18,000 of which were due to the auto industry restructuring process alone (Berlooz 2010).

### **The Shuttered Plants**

In the face of such a tremendous shrinkage of the automobile economy, any traditional economic development measures that policymakers might consider- particularly the recruitment, retention, or reopening of automobile-related manufacturing facilities- attains a sort of poignant futility. Many of the closed plants are sure never to reopen. Like the older facilities of the early- and mid-twentieth century located within the city limits of Detroit and abandoned from the 1950s to the 1970s, the regions' newly-shuttered plants will eventually become the white elephants of their locality, with demolition and reuse by even small amounts of office activity an increasingly attractive option to the continued deterioration of the enormous, abandoned facility (Ryan and Campo 2007).

Some limited reopenings have occurred through subsidies, but they have been outnumbered by closures. In 2008, Ford returned some 300 jobs to its shuttered Essex Engine Plant outside of Windsor. This is fewer jobs than were lost (900) when the facility closed in 2005, but in the face of the declining regional economy the facility's smaller-scale continuance, achievable only with a public subsidy of \$80M, was hailed by Canadian politicians as an economic development success (Vander Doelen 2008a). Yet in 2009 Ford closed another section of the plant, the Nemaq Essex Aluminum Plant, causing the loss of another 400 jobs. This part of the plant, which functioned engine blocks, cylinder heads and other Ford parts, was made redundant by a parallel facility in Mexico, or as Ford put it, by "industry cost-reduction pressures and global capacity optimization" (Schmidt 2009). Plans for this area of the plant remain uncertain.

Elsewhere in Windsor, the news has been equally grim. Another major employer, the General Motors Windsor Transmission Plant, was announced for closure in May 2008, due both to the simple obsolescence of the plant's principal product- four-speed automatic transmissions- and to the obsolescence of the plant itself. The plant will close in the middle of this year (2010), putting 1,400 employees out of work. The Windsor Transmission Plant was one of the oldest plants in Canada, having opened in 1920 to build engines and converted to an automatic transmission plant in 1963 as the popularity of such transmissions grew. But the plant was increasingly considered both "too antiquated" and "too expensive in terms of property taxes and utility rates" due to its "inner-city" location in the small city of Windsor (Vander Doelen and Turcotte 2008). The Windsor Transmission closure occurred despite a bevy of local and provincial incentives. "We pulled everything out of the hat over the last 18 months but if there's no product there's nothing to chase," said Ontario's Minister of Economic Development. GM concurred: "Everybody was asking what they could do. But there was no product," said a spokesman (Vander Doelen 2008d).

Over the border in Michigan the automotive plant news in 2008-09 was just as bad. In Pontiac, an industrial city 30 miles north of Detroit, GM has closed additional facilities, including the Pontiac East Assembly Plant, shedding an additional 1,100 jobs from the deeply troubled company. The loss of this plant in September 2009, whose opening in 1972 was a boon to the rapidly suburbanizing city, is a serious blow, estimated to cost the city a 20 percent drop in tax revenues in addition to the huge cost in reduced patronage and business for suppliers of the plant. Local businesses have felt a serious blow: "I used to make \$120 in tips by noon, and today I haven't made \$20," said an employee of a nearby restaurant soon after the plant closed. Employees of the plant felt similarly. "I don't know what to do," said a depressed worker. "It's still sinking in." The production of "light-duty trucks" formerly undertaken at the plant has been shifted to plants in Flint and Mexico (Martindale 2009). Local journalists were hopeful, imagining movie studios and other "new and equally vibrant" activities emerging from the wreckage of what was once by far the city's largest employer.

Amidst the ceaseless losses of the 2008-09 crisis, economic development officials were able to deliver a few pieces of better news. In Wixom, a distant exurb of Detroit, a Ford assembly plant that opened in 1957 just managed to make its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary before closing in 2007, shedding 1,100 jobs in the process. Although Ford had comprised 12 percent of Wixom's tax base, the

city was optimistic, stating that it was “achieving the transition to new economy status” typical of growing economies like Boston and the Bay Area. With the plant closed, the Michigan “State House New Economy and Quality of Life Committee” approved a tax credit package of \$100 million dollars over four years to attract three alternative energy companies, Xtreme Power, Clairvoyant Energy, and Oerlikon Solar, to convert the shuttered plant into a facility manufacturing electric batteries, solar panels, and wind turbines. (*Tenders Info* 2009). Optimistically, the companies forecast the creation of 4,300 jobs including suppliers. The refurbished plant expects to open in 2011 (Oakland News 2010). The \$100 million tax credit, however, required a special vote of the Michigan Legislature as the state had already exhausted its \$750 million budget for tax incentives for the year (Bunkley and Vlasic 2009).

While new industries like green energy may reopen a fraction of Detroit-Windsor’s shuttered automotive facilities, they are unlikely to recapture more than a small fraction of the jobs lost since 2000. Industrial retention or reopenings possess symbolic value, but they do not recreate the vibrant automotive economy that made Detroit and Windsor a metropolitan industrial powerhouse and that literally shaped much of the sprawling suburban landscape of the region. Several factors indicate that more trouble lie ahead within the coming years. The long-term health of the automobile industry is far from certain; despite the companies’ new stability post-2009, the massive industrial economies of China and India have only begun to enter the automobile market. The manufacturing of automobiles costing less than \$3,000 in India indicates that further competition to the disadvantage of the American automotive industry is almost inevitable.

At the same time the reuse of Detroit-Windsor’s former automobile plants is likely to be difficult and expensive. Their locations, determined according to the economic and transportation calculus of 50 to 70 years ago, are no longer competitive for “new economy” uses. Wixom is located at the far urban fringe in an area with much open land, low costs, excellent accessibility, and a lack of deteriorated neighborhoods; most other locations lack one or more of these favorable characteristics. The least competitive facilities are those constructed prior to the Second World War along rail lines in relatively dense urban neighborhoods, such as those in Detroit and Dearborn. Despite the substantial restructuring of surrounding neighborhoods in those cities at great public expense (Ryan and Campo 2007), the future of plants such as the Chrysler Jefferson East Plant and the GM Poletown Plant looks grim. Even GM admits that many of its facilities are “located in communities where there is very little interest in real estate markets” (Karoub and Runk 2010), making their future reuse problematic.

Many plants, despite their relatively recent construction in the mid- to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, can be considered brownfields, with concomitant pollution and remediation challenges. “(These) are huge complexes that are going to take huge investments to get them back into productive use,” note the authors of an Associated Press study (Karoub and Runk 2010). The same study cites an even more debilitating statistic: collectively, the Big Three have closed a total of 128 plants in the United States since 1980. Sixty percent of them have never been reopened, either remaining vacant or being demolished. The jobs picture is even direr: those 128 plants once employed 196,000 people. Today their replacements—the forty percent of plants that have

reopened- employ only 36,500 people (Karoub and Runk 2010). The overall picture is clear: automotive manufacturing is diminishing, not only in Detroit-Windsor metropolitan area but nationwide. New jobs, if firms are created them at all, are being created elsewhere.

### **The Casino Initiative: revitalization through exploitation**

In the face of this debilitating reality, economic development officials are pursuing a parallel development strategy on an international scale to not only create jobs, but to demonstrate the continued vitality and vibrancy of the Windsor-Detroit area. These new developments, housed in giant buildings employing thousands of people, have both economic and symbolic value, and their physical presence and local visibility is great. Unlike the suburban, physically unprepossessing automobile plants of the past, these new developments are located directly in the downtowns of Windsor and Detroit. The economic rationale for these developments is not manufacturing, but leisure and tourism. They reflect the economy of consumption rather than production that is shaping the economic development strategies not only of Detroit and Windsor, but of cities across North America and around the globe (Judd and Fainstein 1999). These new developments, of course, are casinos.

Public- and private-sector actors have undertaken the twenty-first century construction of the new casinos that dot the downtowns of Detroit and Windsor in the same spirit of capitalist and cross-border competition that characterized the auto industry during the twentieth. The casino competition, however, is somewhat different in geographical scale and ambition than that of the automobile industry. Whereas the Big Three were, and to some extent remain, locked in a global competition to produce innovative products at the lowest cost, the casinos of Detroit and Windsor are unable to compete on a global level as leisure destinations. They therefore compete with their national peer cities, with each other, and with smaller-scale leisure and gambling facilities in their own suburbs. Like dozens of other states, provinces, and metropolitan areas across North America, the cities of Detroit and Windsor are now increasingly locked into a competition with each other to capture more leisure dollars than the other side of the border.

The first casino in Detroit-Windsor opened in 1995 along the Windsor waterfront. Originally titled the Windsor Grand Casino, with 700,000 square feet of space and a 200-room hotel, the casino immediately drew thousands of visitors per day, mostly from the Detroit side of the river (*Crain's Detroit Business* 1998). Prior to the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, attacks, passage between Detroit and Windsor was quite easy, with only oral confirmation of identity generally proving sufficient to gain entry either to the USA or to Canada. The success of the Windsor Grand demonstrated that the casino market of the region was strong and worth exploiting. In 1995 the Windsor casino demonstrated its success by grossing C\$577.3 million. By the late 1990s, just before Detroit opened its own casinos, Windsor was grossing C\$840 million per year (Rennie 2009). This immense profitability no doubt contributed to Windsor having the second-highest employment growth rate in Canada during the 1990s (WindsorEssex 2008, page R-18).

The solo success of the Windsor casino was not long in attracting envy, and competition, from the American side of the river. In November 1996 Michigan voters approved “Proposal E” authorizing the construction of up to three casinos in downtown Detroit. Both the Mayor and the City Council supported the Proposal because of the number of jobs that the casinos promised to bring. Industry experts predicted that as many as 11,300 jobs could be created, generating up to \$1.5 billion in annual revenue for the casinos. The attraction of casinos for both local and state politicians numbed both by the relentless deterioration of Detroit and by the unhealthy regional automotive economy is not hard to imagine.

Proposal E was designed to provide business opportunities for locally-based organizations interested in opening casinos. Two such companies, 400 Monroe Associates and Atwater Entertainment, Inc. received two of the three casino licenses, with the third going to MGM Grand, Inc. of Las Vegas. All three companies were granted the right to open temporary casinos in existing buildings in the city while finalizing their “permanent” sites. The peculiar “temporary casino” strategy was linked to a misguided planning notion that “clustering” the casinos along the city’s downtown waterfront, in a manner directly imitative of Windsor Grand’s location across the river, would be a more successful development strategy. Ultimately the difficulty of acquiring land and the success of the casinos in their existing “temporary” locations led to the abandonment of this strategy in 2002.

The first of the “temporary” casinos to open was the MGM Grand. As proposed in 1997, the MGM casino project consisted of a 100,000 square foot casino in addition to an 800-room hotel, restaurants, movie theaters, and even 70,000 square feet of convention and meeting space, all located along the eastern edge of State Route 10 leading to the Canadian border. By 2002, with the agreement to abandon the idea of the riverfront casino cluster, MGM committed to rebuilding its casino in a permanent location only one block north of its temporary one. The new casino was even larger, occupying several former city blocks with a sixteen-story hotel and a large shopping and restaurant complex. The total cost of this new casino was \$800 million.

Perhaps the most distasteful episode in Detroit’s casino construction was that of the Greektown Casino, financed in part by two local entrepreneurs with longstanding professional ties and substantial political influence. As a result one of the casino contracts was earmarked for the Greektown project. The ‘temporary’ site was located in the midst of the busy Greektown restaurant row and adjacent to Interstate 75 in structures that were coincidentally purchased in anticipation of casino legalization. However before the casino could open, both entrepreneurs were forced to sell their shares in the company as the result of a background investigation. The Greektown casino was therefore the last of the three casinos to open in late 2000. Like MGM, the Greektown casino also expanded, purchasing additional land for its own hotel, theater, and convention spaces.

The third and final Detroit casino was called the Motor City Casino. Motor City was owned by a local company but developed in partnership with Circus Circus Enterprises, Inc., again of Las Vegas. The Motor City casino was located only half a mile north of the MGM Grand, also along

Route 10 Freeway. Motor City actually reused a piece of Detroit's industrial fabric, occupying an abandoned Wonder Bread factory with 75,000 square feet of gambling space and several restaurants. Additions were made to the complex beginning in 2005 as the casino added hotel conference space, and theater facilities.

The casinos worked their gambling magic. By late 2000, the two open Detroit casinos and the Windsor Grand were each generating over a million dollars in revenue daily. By 2008, the three casinos together had generated \$1.36 billion for the year (Rennie 2009), on line with analysts' original forecasts of \$1.6 billion per year, with up to \$200 million of those revenues being returned to local, state, and provincial governments in taxes. On a regional level, Detroit and Windsor were successful, drawing visitors from as far away as Cleveland, according to one hotel operator. But analysts were skeptical, doubting the competitiveness of such a "cold-weather" region. As one drily noted, "This [Detroit-Windsor] isn't a destination market, it's a local market" (Slavin 2000).

While the revitalization of downtown Detroit was an obvious aim of Michigan's casino acquiescence, another equally obvious aim, given the decision to site all three casinos along interstates leading to the Canada border, was the interception of dollars that might otherwise be spent across the river. The 2001 crackdown on what was formerly the world's longest undefended border, while operating much to the detriment of (US-owned) automotive industries accustomed to 'just-in-time' delivery of parts to and from plants on either side, worked to benefit the Detroit casinos. US officials fearful of Canadian-borne terrorists tightened entry regulations by requiring both birth and identity documentation as well as extensive questioning and even random searches of vehicles. Faced with delays at the border and the perception of a difficult crossing, many Americans simply stopped going to Windsor. By 2008 U.S. citizen journeys to Canada had dropped to the lowest numbers since 1972, dramatically depressing foreign visitation to the country as a whole (Quinn and Deslongchamps 2008).

The effects of the competition- and border-driven visitor depression on the Windsor casino were disastrous. Between 2000 and 2008, Windsor's gambling revenues dropped 60 percent, and employment declined in concert, dropping from 5,400 in 2001 to only 2,000 in 2009 (*The Economist* 2009, Vander Doelen 2009). In a desperate attempt to recapture visitors, the Windsor Casino was rebranded and rebuilt as "Caesar's Windsor", with the Ontario government investing over C\$400 million (Vander Doelen 2008c) in a renovated structure with a 27-story hotel tower (the tallest structure in Windsor), a 5,000-seat "Colosseum", several new "upscale eateries", and a 100,000 square foot convention space (Glaser 2008). With up to 80 percent of visitation dependent upon US residents, Windsor began offering desperate incentives (Glaser 2009). In June 2008 the new Caesar's Windsor decided to offer \$3500 in tunnel fare to US visitors on a first-come, first-serve basis (Vander Doelen 2008b). By 2009, Caesar's was even offering application forms (Hall 2009) and free passport photos (McArthur 2009) to encourage US visitation.

On the other side of the border, Detroit's reign atop the local casino food chain seemed impregnable, but nothing lasts forever. Elsewhere in Michigan, the Potawatomi tribe, after

years of legal struggles, opened their own “FireKeepers” casino in 2009 less than two hours west of Detroit on Interstate 94 (Hepker 2009). Another casino in Gun Lake, Michigan was also preparing to open in early 2011, creating additional competition for casinos already hampered by the post-2007 economic downturn (Associated Press State & Local Wire 2010, Daly 2009). Competing for a shrinking pool of money and a growing tide of unemployed, these new casinos seemed bound to create only more trouble for both Detroit’s and Windsor’s cars-to-casinos strategy.

## Conclusions

This chapter can only begin to illustrate the complexity, challenges, and ultimate futility of attempting to arrest the decline of the globalized automobile industry, with its significant local origins and history in the Detroit-Windsor region, with the subsidized transfer of the equally globalized casino industry, with no local origins or history whatsoever. Amidst the ebb and flow of global capital and global goods, the 2008-onward economic crisis has dramatically reinforced the Detroit-Windsor transnational metropolitan area’s fading from the global scene, just as they have been fading for decades. Detroit and Windsor’s citizens may be global consumers, but their region’s global contribution is dropping steadily as the Big Three automotive industries lose market share, shed employment and profitability, and ultimately risk surrendering their independent existence as corporations.

In this deglobalizing region, the economic, social, and physical consequences of the death of the US-owned auto industry are painful to behold. Public policy, whether at the local or provincial or state level, can do little to alter this bitter economic calculus. When national-level subsidies are required to return a fraction of lost jobs, as in the case of Windsor’s Essex Ford plant, the ultimate futility of retaining or attempting to regenerate automotive jobs becomes clear. The long-term manufacturing trend downward for the region seems irreversible, and when decline is steep and rapid as it has been since 2000 and increasingly since 2008, little forward progress is possible- only a slowing of inevitable decline.

Policymakers’ and politicians’ actions since the 1990s seem to show that the only viable alternative for this binational region dependent upon the dying automobile industry, as for other declining cities across North America from St. Louis to Detroit (Judd 2003), is the new leisure economy of recreation, tourism, and consumption. But in the very different and very competitive world of leisure the “cold-weather” cities of Detroit-Windsor will find it difficult to compete on a global or even national scale. With cheap air tickets and abundant choices for travellers, the local casinos will never be able to outmatch their better-equipped and longer-running competitors in warmer climates with bigger markets. The fundamentals of the leisure equation are unalterable: even had they ten or twenty casinos, Detroit and Windsor would unlikely be able to compete with Atlantic City or Las Vegas. The region’s new leisure economy of gambling has provided new jobs, buildings, and construction activity to boost the spirits of

local leaders and citizens, provide thousands of service-sector jobs, and make a few headlines, but the cost, likely never to be tallied, has undoubtedly been just as high.

Similarly, the limits of Detroit-Windsor's cars-to-casinos strategy are already apparent. Lost amidst the gleeful revenue projections of Detroit-Windsor's four casinos is the dispiriting fact that a great amount of casino revenue has come from the accumulated savings of local residents whose funds have come from the automotive industry or its multiplier effects. In its postindustrial leisure-driven development policy the region has embarked upon a privately-operated taxation strategy, with the major change being that the majority of the revenues generated have gone to casino corporations rather than to the government. Only in the most desperate economic circumstances does such a self-predatory strategy make sense. The recent casino expansions are a further sobering reminder that expansion is the only means for these facilities, in the absence of a growing economy, to compete. In the second decade of the twenty-first century the retreat of the automobile industry and the incursion of the predatory casino industry into Detroit and Windsor is doubtless far from over. How far the tides of globalization will ultimately retreat in this binational region, and what further physical, social, and economic damage manufacturing will leave behind as it continues its inexorable decline, remain to be seen.

Early in the twentieth century, Detroit and Windsor's economies specialized in supporting automotive and related production, almost to the exclusion of all else. The ongoing decline of this industry offers an opportunity to reshape the region's identity around more than the simple supplanting of auto-related activity with leisure- it offers the chance to permit a badly-needed diversification. While traditional new-economy sectors like healthcare, information- and biotechnology, supported by such progressive venues as Wayne State University's TechTown campus, offer one avenue to attain the "creative class" status (Florida 2002) sought by cities across North America, another potential path to renewal lies in historically underrepresented "industries" like "DIY" (do-it-yourself) culture, art, music, and alternative transportation. These latter industries, seemingly insignificant compared to the titanic old-industry firms still persisting, might just provide a new foundation utilizing the talents and interests of today's Detroit-Windsor citizens, including the many underprivileged residents of these cities, just as the automotive industry once did. It should not be too much to hope that even a fragment of the public subsidies and policy energies dedicated to retaining the region's declining industries might be dedicated to helping generate those that will support the next generation of residents of the deglobalizing Detroit-Windsor region.

## Appendix

Table 1. Sources for Big Three Employment figures in US and Overseas, 2000 and 2010.

							<b>DETROIT 3 TOTAL</b>
	GM	Source	Ford	Source	Chrysler	Source	
<i>Nationwide</i>							
2000			165,081	Ford 2002			<b>425,132</b>
2010	*	Naughton 2010	61,200**		*	Naughton 2010	<b>171,200</b>
<i>North America</i>							
2000							
2010			73,000	Targeted 2010			
<i>Worldwide</i>							
2000	195,374	Shepardson 2009	352,380	Ford 2002	127,000	McCracken 2005	<b>674,754</b>
2010	196,000	Guilford 2010	198,000	Krisher 2010	54,000	Hoover's 2010	<b>448,000</b>
<i>Abroad</i>							
2000							<b>249,622</b>
2010							<b>276,800</b>

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