This study discusses the three waves of modern urbanization described as the Infrastructure City, the Spectacle City and the Process City. The aim is to see how we are now moving to the third wave of urbanization, herein referred to as the Process City, and what implications this has to urban studies and the production of urban culture.

The study is an essay based on interviews of the key figures of the chosen examples and related literature. The aim is to create a dialogue between theory and selected examples, such as the Helsinki 2000 year of Culture, cafe9.net as one of its projects and other similar new spaces for culture that are meta-producers of hybrid cultural functions, in order to show that a third wave of urbanization, the Process City, has become characteristic of urban culture. The main focus is on showing how communities and networks operating in the everyday life have become important elements of urbanization, in addition to the previously acknowledged urban infrastructures and isolated, one-off urban events.

This third wave of urbanization is examined through Edward Soja’s (1996) model of three spatialities. An important theoretical starting point, also common to Soja’s work, was the aim to pass beyond dualisms of micro and macro, modern and postmodern. Michel Maffesoli’s (1985) notion of “comprehensive sociology” was found useful for making this explicit. Another important theoretical consideration is that of discussing the similarities and differences between the notions of community and network.

Further studies, beyond the scope of this one, are indicated 1) in the nature and extent of the individual practices and life styles operating within the studied spaces and networks, and 2) in the general emergence of the “culture of the third”.

Principle bibliography: