

Pathways to global city formation: a view from the developmental city-state of Singapore

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to offer a constructive critique of the dominant (indeed hegemonic) global city/world city discourse. This is a discourse that is overly dependent upon a theoretically *globalist* perspective derived out of limited empirical studies. Moreover, this is a discourse that focuses relatively too much upon (a) the characteristics of global/world cities and (b) the processes creating global/world cities versus (b) and (c) governance issues and implications. Consequently there remain many unanswered questions about how global cities have 'come into being', and what is the role of the state in intentionally devising pathways to global city formation. In such a conceptual context, we tease out the main contours of three forms of global cities – hyper global cities; emerging global cities; and global city-states – in emphasizing the need to consider differential and dynamic developmental pathways. Drawing upon the case of Singapore, we then analyse the unique nature of the global city-state, especially in a Pacific Asian context associated with strategic 'plan rational' developmental states. The conjunction of a Pacific Asian city-state with developmentalist policies and capacities both requires and enables this form of global city to be rapidly and constantly reworked in the aim of embedding the city into an extraterritorial terrain of network relations.

KEYWORDS

Global city; world city; Singapore; developmental state; city-state.

1. INTRODUCTION

The \$2 postal stamp in Figure 1 can be read in many different ways: as a marker of the transition towards a knowledge based economy; as an indicator of the increasingly significant role of information technology in underlying global development processes; as a terrifying symbol of social control and surveillance in high-tech authoritarian times; and as a celebratory icon of the new Millennium.

In this paper the stamp in Figure 1 is read as a symbol of a *developmental city-state* in a globalizing era. It signifies (to us at least) the *nation-state* – hence the simple presence of a postal stamp to be read. Of all the world/global cities listed in league tables produced by analysts like Friedmann (1986), Beaverstock *et al.* (1999), Godfrey and Zhou (1999) or Short and Kim (1999), only two of these ‘cities’ issue postal stamps – Singapore and Hong Kong. In other words, the city-state has a broader range of powers and responsibilities than the other places analysts commonly deem global/world cities.

This stamp also signifies the spatially limited scale of the *city* ... the absence of any large (identifiable) land mass on the stamp could be the result of neglect or the practicalities of image choice and selection. In



Figure 1 Postage stamp from Singapore *Source:* Reprinted with permission of the Infocommunication Development Authority of Singapore (IDA).

our reading though, we view the swirling cloud cover and amorphous (unidentifiable) land at the edges of the globe as a sign of uncertainty/change/process/evolution that no city can ever hope to control. In other words Singapore is just a city – a tiny (647 sq. km) ‘red dot’ of about 3.4 million residents (76.5 percent ethnic Chinese) as of June 2002 situated within a swirling and turbulent sea of geopolitical and geoeconomic forces (<http://www.singstat.gov.sg>, accessed on 19 August 2003). Yet, while control is deemed an irrelevant objective, the developmental city-state of Singapore never misses an opportunity to convey how the small city must cope with and exploit (ride) global and regional systemic change in an aggressive and strategic fashion (Economic Review Committee, 2003; Ho and So, 1997; Yeung, 1999). How can a city no larger than Surabaya in Indonesia, Ankara in Turkey, Cologne in Germany, Monterrey in Mexico, Montreal in Canada, or Boston in the United States ensure that economic and social development proceeds when there are *no* natural resources within the boundaries of the city, and *no* sources of intergovernmental transfer payments (or multilateral aid)? It does so by using the powers and capacities of the nation-state (in material and discursive senses) to transform society and space within the city, all in the aim of embedding Singapore within the evolving lattice of network relations that propel the world economy. Existing space and social formations are purged, razed, flattened, cleansed, restructured, re-engineered: in their place ‘world class’ infrastructure/education/legal/financial/healthcare systems are developed, maintained and constantly refashioned. As the infamous architect Rem Koolhaas (Koolhaas and Mau, 1995: 1011) put it in a reflective chapter of *S/M/L/XL*:

I turned eight in the harbour of Singapore. We did not go ashore, but I remember the smell – sweetness and rot, both overwhelming.

Last year I went again. The smell was gone. In fact Singapore was gone, scraped, rebuilt. There was a completely new town there.

Almost all of Singapore is less than 30 years old; the city represents the ideological production of the past three decades in its pure form, uncontaminated by surviving contextual remnants. It is managed by a regime that has excluded accident and randomness: even its nature is entirely remade. It is pure intention: if there is chaos, it is authored chaos; if it is ugly, it is designed ugliness; if it is absurd, it is willed absurdity. Singapore represents a unique ecology of the contemporary.

‘Creative destruction’ is the catchphrase in Singapore; it is a process that can be initiated with *relative* ease in a spatially limited area that is governed by a unified and well-resourced government. Once global flows are grounded in the city, mechanisms are developed (via the powers of the nation-state)

to reshape the nature of the networks Singapore is embedded within; to shift from being a simple repository for layers of foreign investment (as guided by networks of transnational corporations), to simultaneously becoming an active *exporter* of development capital to potentially profitable sites around the region and the globe (hence the image of the globe in the stamp). The policy goal is to establish interactive economic relations with a broader range of economies so that Singapore can extract streams of profit from an *extraterritorial* terrain (Yeung, 2000; 2002; Economic Review Committee, 2003). As noted above, this terrain is the globe pictured in the stamp; a terrain that evolves and changes over time. The hands represent social intention to establish this terrain, and the dominant role of the state in guiding the relational transformational process. Finally, the cables, satellites and wires represent the technologies that Singaporeans will have to increasingly rely upon to establish, maintain and reshape this terrain.

The fact that city-states are globalising (both inwards and outwards) is not new, as will be detailed further in this paper. What is surprising, however, is that much of the literature on global cities has paid little attention to 'the ways in which actors and institutions as active agents in cities *make* the world-city-ness of cities' (Robinson, 2002a: 548; our emphasis). In other words how do some world (or global) cities *come into being*. Similarly, little attention has been focused on the complex interrelationships between global city formation and the developmental state (though see Hill and Kim, 2000; and Saito, 2003), nor recognised the unique characteristics of the *developmental city-state*.

This lacuna in the global/world city literature is, to a significant degree, explained by the dependency of the literature on empirical studies of two to three major global cities within large countries – London (in England), New York (in the United States) and, occasionally, Tokyo (in Japan) and Seoul (in South Korea). It is also explained by the Anglo-American base of most proponents and critics of the global cities/world cities paradigm (King, 1995; Robinson, 2002a). In such an intellectual context, we argue for the need to further extend our existing global city research agenda such that it further recognizes the enormous varieties of global cities. There is also a need to support more research that investigates, in historically and geographically specific ways, the processes through which these 'other' global cities are formed, transformed, and extended beyond their immediate urban territoriality. In short, we need stronger consideration of the *differential pathways associated with global city formation processes*.

This paper is conceptual for the most part. The main aim of the paper is to complement in a modest way attempts (by Saskia Sassen, John Friedmann and others) at better understanding the implications of globalization and transnationalism for cities, but in a way that emphasizes the *differential* paths that cities follow as they globalize or are globalized. We do

this by moving out of the empirical terrain of North America and Europe to Pacific Asia, to develop an exploration of the interrelationships between global city formation processes, the developmental state, and the unique characteristics of the contemporary city-state. That said, while this paper is conceptual in orientation, it is explicitly devised in a manner that reflects empirically derived knowledge about how Singapore 'works' – in terms of its regionalization programmes, industrial development, urban planning, public housing programs, transport policy, and higher education policy.

We begin with an overview of two decades of global city research. We then develop a theoretical perspective on the 'global reach' of developmental city-states. 'Global reach', in this paper, is defined as the complex processes through which a city articulates itself into, and seeks to explicitly benefit from, participation in the evolving global space of flows. For cities to engender global reach (in the formation of extraterritorial terrain of network relations) they must have institutional will (political and non-political) and political legitimacy to initiate and sustain it through material and discursive practices. These themes are elaborated by drawing upon (in a more implicit than explicit way) empirical research on regionalization and urban planning *vis-à-vis* Singapore.

2. FROM *THE* GLOBAL CITY TO GLOBAL CITIES

Forms of literature

Discourses on the 'global city' and the 'world city' continue to be developed and circulated by academics in a variety of disciplines. Amidst the avalanche of writing on the topic, we now have access to a number of detailed research monographs (e.g. Abu-Lughod, 1999; Hamnett, 2003; King, 1990; Meyer, 2000; Sassen, 1991), several succinct chapters and articles that summarize associated concept(s) (e.g. Hamnett, 1994, 1995; Hill and Kim, 2000; Knox, 1995; Robinson, 2002a; Smith, 2003; Yeoh, 1999), and edited collections that interrogate the global/world city¹ concept and its application in particular parts of the world (e.g. Douglass and Friedmann, 1998; Knox and Taylor, 1995; Lo and Yeung; 1998). We also have access to a plethora of individual articles and chapters that utilize the concept when examining issues such as: regional development and change (e.g. Castells, 1996; Soja, 2000), the impact of globalization on the urbanization process (e.g. Lo and Marcotullio, 2000); the reshaping of the nation-state in a globalizing era (e.g. Brenner, 1998; Kong and Yeoh, 2003; Kusno, 2000; Taylor, 2000; Yeung, 1998); the emergence of social cleavages at a variety of scales (Castells, 1996; Hamnett, 1994, 1995; Sassen, 1991); the impact of information technology on spatial development processes (e.g. Castells, 1996; Graham and Marvin, 1996, 2001); the spatialization of network forms of

capitalism (Castells, 1996; Meyer, 2002; Sassen, 1998); the nature and impact of transnationalism in metropolitan/cosmopolitan contexts (e.g. Hannerz, 1992; Smith, 1997, 2001); and so on. Of course, the majority of these texts are derived (to a degree) *vis-à-vis* the ideas associated with influential authors such as Patrick Geddes, Peter Hall (1966), Stephen Hymer (1972), R.B. Cohen (1981), John Friedmann and Goetz Wolff (1982), and John Friedmann (1986). Tracing the lineage of such thinking also leads, in many cases, to the influential interdisciplinary writing of people like Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein.

All of the literature noted above can be categorized into three main (overlapping) fields of knowledge:

1. *characteristics of global/world cities*, especially their internal structures;
2. *processes creating global/world cities*, especially those associated with operation, relations and networks of transnational corporations; and
3. *governance* issues and implications, including the role of the state.

The first field of knowledge that is by far the largest in a relative sense, reflecting (amongst other things) positivist influences within disciplines such as geography and sociology.

In terms of broad content the first and second fields of knowledge typically analyse the role of global cities in acting as 'key basing points' for transnational corporate headquarters. In doing so global cities (so it is asserted) become embedded within global circuits of capital (Friedmann, 1986), both facilitating and reflecting the material and symbolic power of global capital. To quote John Friedmann and Goetz Wolff (1982: 310), world cities have become tightly 'interconnected with each other through decision-making and finance', and they now 'constitute a world-wide system of control over production and market expansion'.

Similarly, Saskia Sassen (2001: 3–4) suggests that:

[A] combination of spatial dispersal and global integration has created a new strategic role for major cities. Beyond their long history as centres for international trade and banking, these cities now function as centres in four new ways: first, as highly concentrated command points in the organization of the world economy; second, as key locations for finance and specialized service firms, which have replaced manufacturing as the leading economic sectors; third, as sites of production of innovations, in these leading industries; and fourth, as markets for the products and innovations produced. These changes in the functioning of cities have had a massive impact upon both international economic activity and urban form: cities concentrate control over vast resources, while finance and specialized service industries have restructured the urban social and economic order. Thus a new type of city has appeared. It is the global city.

In short, global cities are posited to act as:

- command points in the organisation of the world economy;
- key locations and marketplaces for the leading industries of the current period, which are finance and specialised services for firms;
- major sites of production for these industries, including the production of innovations.

(Sassen, 1994: 4)

Given these externally driven dynamics such cities have become associated with volatile economies, dense nodes of information and reflexive social networks, social polarization, globalized property markets, social diversity (through migration in particular), cosmopolitanism, creativity, vibrancy, and considerable human suffering. Global cities are represented as the visible manifestation of the global economy; they are the products of a transitory world system that is articulated in a 'cross-border network of some 30 – 40 cities' (Sassen, 1998: 131; also see Beaverstock *et al.*, 2000; Godfrey and Zhou, 1999; Smith, 2003). Such transnational networks of capital, so it is argued, play a fundamental role in *inscribing* the identity of each and every global city in fundamental ways.

These first two fields of knowledge have clearly generated some valuable insights. We now have a much more thorough understanding of the spatiality of the world economy; of the critical role of cities in both contributing to, and being impacted by, the forces of globalization; and of the relationship between globalization, urban change and uneven development. The global city theorem has also been an extremely useful teaching device for it illustrates, at one glance (or more), the material reach and nodality of the world economic system and its cores, margins, and blind spots (Keil and Olds, 2001: 120). However, it is also clear that the dominant world/global city discourses have emerged in particular yet often unrecognized or unstated disciplinary, epistemological, institutional, geographical, and historical contexts (Soja, 2000: 189 – 232). For example, Anthony D. King (2000: 266) notes:

with the invention of concepts of both the world and the global city, stemming largely from a dominant American academy based either in Los Angeles or New York (with regional offices elsewhere) new paradigms have been launched the result of which, in prioritizing so-called "economic criteria," has focused (if not fixed) for a decade the attention of many urban scholars on perhaps 30 or 40 cities, all but three or four of them either in Europe or the United States (Knox and Taylor, 1995; Knox, 1995).

From King's perspective, global cities tend to be written about as if they are the *product* of economic globalization: the outcome of an evolving world-system of structural nature, or the outcome of the operation of producer

services firms, or else the outcome of externalized (and hierarchical) relations between transnational firms that are headquartered within a skein of cities. As Michael P. Smith (2001: 58) also notes in his book *Transnational Urbanism*:

The global cities thesis centrally depends on the assumption that global economic restructuring precedes and determines urban spatial and sociocultural restructuring, inexorably transforming localities by disconnecting them from their ties to nation-states, national legal systems, local political cultures, and everyday place-making practices.

While such discourses are providing some important insights into the forces shaping urbanization at a variety of scales, it could also be argued that they are relatively 'globalist' in nature (Robinson, 2002a, b; Smith, 2001), and overwhelming of more grounded and culturally oriented perspectives. There is a sense that the dominant global city discourses are producing accounts that frame cities such as New York and London as 'instants in a global space of flows' (Thrift, 1997: 139). Meanwhile, some complementary discourses are now emerging; discourses that accept the role of 'the economic' in urban transformations, while also being relatively more cognizant of the role of the state and local cultural factors in scripting these urban transformations.

Witness, for example, Janet Abu-Lughod's insightful book *New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: America's Global Cities* (1999). Abu-Lughod, while observant of the impact of macro-economic economic forces, and the utility of abstraction and modernist modes of analysis, also incorporates (in insightful ways) a relatively grounded and situated mode of analysis. In doing so she consequently highlights the 'multiplexity' of contemporary global cities (Amin, 1997; Amin and Graham, 1997; Amin and Thrift, 2002).

Another point worth noting with respect to the dominant literature (and research) on global cities is that it exhibits an Anglo-American (and especially London/New York) bias. As Godfrey and Zhou (1999: 269) note, '[T]he analytical bias inherent in world-city studies reflects and in turn perpetuates well-established Eurocentric views of the global economy under the guise of objective data'. They note, for example, that the reliance upon counting TNC headquarters as a criteria for global city status fails to acknowledge the smaller (more networked) nature of Asian firms; firms that are also active at regional and global scales via inter-firm business networks (thereby underweighting Asian cities in global city rank tables; see Yeung, 2004). This said, work on global cities had to start somewhere: it is therefore the duty of other authors (including us) to critically engage with the global city concept, though in other geographical and temporal contexts, and from different theoretical viewpoints. The Anglo-American bias with respect to the production of knowledge on global cities also mirrors

the general bias in academia with the vast majority of published (and high-impact) authors based in North America and Western Europe, including in development-oriented disciplines like Economics, Geography, Sociology, and Political Science (Garcia-Ramon, 2003; Gutiérrez and López-Nieva, 2001; Yeung, 2001; Yeung and Lin, 2003).

As our above comments allude, much progress has been made in developing insights into the characteristics of global/world cities, and the processes creating global/world cities, especially those associated with operation and relations of transnational corporations. However, the dominant focus on economic globalization (in the form of market forces, private firms, and interfirm networks) in the global cities of North America and Western Europe, has led to the circulation of a relatively *coherent* global city discourse (i.e. *the* global city). This is a discourse that generates resource allocation bias towards highlighting commonalities between global cities, or possible global city status in terms of function, role, linkages, structure, problems, form and process (Amin and Graham, 1997; Markusen and Gwiasda, 1994; McNeill, 1999). But, as Amin and Graham (1997: 417) note:

The problem with paradigmatic examples is that analysis inevitably tends to generalise from very specific cities, both in identifying the changing nature of urban assets and highlighting normative suggestions for policy innovation elsewhere. What should be a debate on *variety and specificity* quickly reduces to the assumption that some degree of interurban homogeneity can be assumed, either in the nature of the sectors leading urban transformation or in the processes of urban change. The exception, by a process of reduction or totalizing, becomes the norm . . . (our emphasis)

Thrift (1997: 142–143) also highlights the implications of adopting a ‘one city tells all’ approach to urban studies; an approach that reflects the dominance of ‘representational’ theories of urban change (on representational theory see Thrift, 1996), the subtle effects of Eurocentrism in urban studies (McGee, 1995; Robinson, 2002a), and structurally influenced ‘globalist’ perspectives in urban studies (Hill and Kim, 2000: 2168, 2187). Furthermore, even arguments that reinforce the specificity of local politics in world city formation are structured in a way that assumes all world cities are embedded within a much larger *national* context, and that they are governed by overlapping ‘political units’ (e.g. Hill and Kim, 2000; Keil, 1998: 632). However, the resonance of this literature for urbanists studying urban transformations in the developing world is not as effective as it could be (Robinson, 2002a).

The discourses that dominate the analysis of the global city generates further dissonance when one moves from a concern with (1) characteristics and (2) processes to (2) processes and (3) governance. The second and especially the third fields of knowledge are also relatively weak in terms

of both volume and content. Academics have devoted the majority of their resources to abstraction and theorization about what a global city is, how it relates to the modern world economy, what life is like within the global city, and what kind of relational networks might exist between global cities. Yet, as Douglass (2000) and Hill and Kim (2000) point out, there are many unanswered questions about issues such as how global cities have 'come into being', and what is the 'role of the state and national economy' in globalizing cities. More specifically, since the 1986 proclamation of the 'world city hypothesis' by John Friedmann:

A question that loomed large but went almost wholly unanswered in the following body of world city research was straightforward yet complex: *how does a city become a world city?* Research on global cities seems to accept without question that a few cities, notably London, New York and Tokyo, are automatically first-rank global cities (Sassen, 1991), while a host of others, such as Paris or Los Angeles, are included but possibly at a lower level, and still others are assigned to a vague secondary or tertiary status (Friedmann, 1986; Hamnett, 1994). (Douglass, 1998: 110; our emphasis)

Indeed it is this type of question that has greater purchase in public policy circles, with considerable potential for enhancing quality of life within global cities. That said, such issues cannot be understood unless one grounds the analysis in a geographically and historically specific manner (Keil, 1998; Smith, 2001). In other words the focus needs to be reoriented towards *process* and *governance* (i.e. understanding the nature of developmental pathways). This point is particularly important when pursuing process and governance issues in Asia, a region associated with ethnic-based network forms of capitalism (Hamilton, 1991; Olds and Yeung, 1999; Yeung, 2004), resistance to the adoption of liberal economic and public policy prescriptions (that are so evident in global cities such as New York and London), and the presence of active and relatively powerful 'developmental states' (Appelbaum and Henderson, 1992; Evans, 1995; Hill and Kim, 2000; Saito, 2003; Woo-Cumings, 1999).

From governance and the global city to globalising cities through governance

As noted above, the global city/world city concept has considerable policy relevance. Policy, program and project planning in numerous *cities* around the world is now being framed by goals to acquire, or reinforce, some form of global city status. In academic circles, associated concepts such as the post-Fordist city (Mayer, 1994) and the entrepreneurial city have also emerged (Hall and Hubbard, 1998; Harvey, 1989). The shift from *governance* to *governance* is noted in multiple locales, as are the policy challenges

of dealing with problems such as social polarization, gentrification, transport congestion, and tensions over immigration (Douglass and Friedmann, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Sassen, 1994; Yeoh and Chang, 2001).

Global city discourses have also become associated with development thinking at supra-urban scales. For example, at the *global scale* the incorporation of global city thinking is evident in key policy documents such as the World Bank's (1991) report *Urban Policy and Economic Development: An Agenda for the 1990s*; a seminal text that highlights the World Bank's growing awareness of the significance of urbanization and urban policy to national and international economic development activity. More recently the World Bank (1999, 2000), the Asian Development Bank (Stubbs and Clark, 1996), and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS, 1996, 2001) have all released documents that provide evidence of the growing awareness of how cities, and especially global cities, facilitate economic development processes at both national, regional and global scales. As the World Bank (1999: 26; also see World Bank 2000b) notes:

With improvements in transport and communications, cities are now linked directly to international markets. This trend, coupled with increased intensity in the use of information, financial, and other services by all types of firms, means that cities face more exacting requirements as sites for high-quality services to producers and greater competition for foreign and domestic investment (Harris 1997; Sassen 1998). Urban areas sharing large regional markets (border zones and port cities, such as those surrounding the South China Sea) are becoming closely networked, sometimes developing interdependencies across national boundaries that are as close as, or even closer than, those with their own hinterland.² By reducing the traditional market position of some cities and fostering the growth of others with different locational and production advantages, the liberalization of trade and financial flows is contributing to large spatial shifts of population and output. These changes imply that now more than ever, cities need to provide solid public services and a business-friendly environment to retain their traditional firms or to attract new ones, domestic or foreign.

At the *national scale*, countries as diverse as China, Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea, Canada, and England are concentrating relatively more attention and resources on particular city-regions. Some, like China or Malaysia, are using cities to connect the nation to the global space of flows, while concurrently using such cities to propel social change (including the development of more reflexive citizens) in particular directions. Tim Bunnell (2002a, b), for example, highlights the role of the nation state in Malaysia as it spurs on the restructuring of Kuala Lumpur (through the development of projects like Kuala Lumpur Central City

and the Petronas Towers) so that Malaysia is (a) 'put on the world map' while also (b) connecting 'the nation to global technological and cultural-economic sectors' and (c) constructing a 'national *conception* of information society.' Further up the Pacific coast, mainland Chinese and Shanghainese officials are restructuring Shanghai (via sectoral and territorially defined development projects to propel regional (Yangzhi River Delta) and national economic development processes (Logan, 2001; Olds, 1997, 2001; Wu, 2000, 2003).

At the *urban and regional* scale within large nations, governments around the world are on a drive to achieve world or global city status. From Africa to Europe (e.g. Berlin) to Asia (e.g. Kuala Lumpur), local governments are refashioning policies, programs and projects in a manner that integrates metropolitan areas into the global space of flows in both material and discursive realms. The perception of a global space of flows has engendered a strategic and 'entrepreneurial' development strategy on the part of the local state, driven by the perception that cities and regions are engaged in rigorous inter-urban competition (Castells, 1989; Fainstein, 1994; Hall and Hubbard, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Jessop and Sum, 2000; Lee and Schmidt-Marwede, 1993; MacLeod *et al.*, 2003). In short, a global city discourse has emerged in public policy circles; one that is used by political and business groups to formulate and/or legitimize neoliberal development policies (Douglass, 2001; Machimura, 1998; Robinson, 2002a, b).

And finally, at the unique level of the *city-state*, we see the rapid reshaping of policies, programs and projects in the context of an awareness of what global/world city status brings with it, and what might be required to become such a city... in other words, such city states are intentionally adopting some form of global/world city discourse as they reshape policies in the light of perceived insights generated by this discourse. For example, in late February 2000, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), arguably still a city-state, released a strategic planning document noting that Hong Kong 'must clearly establish itself as one of the world's truly great international cities and a leading city in Asia – Asia's World City – as it has been termed' (Commission on Strategic Development, 2000). The Chief Executive (Tung Chee-hwa) elaborated on his thinking on Hong Kong's long-term vision in his 1999 Policy Address in association with this plan:

Hong Kong already possesses many of the key features common to New York and London. For example, we are already an international centre of finance and a popular tourist destination and hold leading positions in trade and transportation. These are all pillars of our economy. If we can consolidate our existing economic pillars and continue to build on our strengths, we should be able to become

world-class. Then like New York and London, we will play a pivotal role in the global economy, be home to a host of multi-national companies, and provide services to the entire region. . . . We have the thriving Mainland next to us. We are a melting pot for Chinese and Western cultures. We are a highly liberal and open society. Our institutions are well established. With such a strong foundation, we should be able to build on our strengths and develop modern and knowledge-intensive industries, erect new pillars in our economy and open up new and better prospects. (Commission on Strategic Development, 2000: 5)

It is clear from the full document that the Hong Kong government has been cribbing notes from Saskia Sassen's books, as well as from publications by John Friedmann.³ Hong Kong is being framed by an urban and economic development discourse that posits the main role of the city to be that of nodal point in a globalising world economy; a socio-spatial formation that functions as a control centre 'for the interdependent skein of material, financial, and cultural flows which, together, support and sustain globalization' (Knox, 1995: 236). Such development discourses have tangible material implications for they are being instituted in the city-state; a relatively small spatial unit that is managed by unified level of government.

In summary then, cities around the world, and especially in the Asia-Pacific region, are being proactively globalized by a myriad of policies, programmes and projects that are shaped by global/world city discourses. As Douglass (1998: 111) notes,

[the] appearance of "world city" as the new shibboleth of global achievement has not been missed by governments in Pacific Asia. . . . In realising that the status of their national economies will be increasingly determined by the positioning of their principal urban regions, governments in Pacific Asia are actively intervening in the physical restructuring of cities in the new competition for world city prominence.

How the state actively intervenes to create a global city is the focus of the remainder of this paper. However, the discussion needs to be embedded in an awareness of the diversities of global cities that exist, and in terms of state capacity to generate developmental pathways in changing geo-economic contexts. In such a conceptual context, we tease out the main contours of three forms of global cities – hyper global cities; emerging global cities; and global city-states – to emphasize the importance of considering differential and dynamic developmental pathways. In this analysis we devote particular attention to the nature of the global city-state, especially in a regional context associated with strategic 'plan rational' developmental states (Henderson, 1993; Low, 1998; Woo-Cumings, 1999). The conjunction of the city-state with developmentalist policies and capacities both

requires and enables this form of global city to be constantly reworked, and to generate an extraterritorial terrain of network relations.

3. VARIETIES OF GLOBAL CITIES

The above review of the global city literature shows that while much has been said about the attributes and characteristics of a global city, relatively little attention has been devoted to the differential pathways to global city formation. Many proponents of global city research have ascribed the formation of global cities to their functional roles in global restructuring and international divisions of labour. From such a conceptual perspective, territorial entities emerge as 'global cities' because these are the nodal spaces where the managers, coordinators, and servicers of the global economy need to be spatially situated. However, despite these insights on the spatiality of the global economy, few studies have explained the sources and governance of the grounding process, or of the role of global cities in facilitating the formation of extraterritorial linkages via socio-economic networks (Dicken *et al.*, 2001; Smith, 2003).

One key agent in all global city formation processes is the *territorial state*. Though recent studies of the formation of global city networks note that in an era of trans-state relations the nation state is becoming less relevant in understanding global city formation (e.g. Keil, 1998; Taylor, 2000), the state, in its various institutional and spatial forms, continues to exert a critical influence on the processes and governance of global city formation. In his study of global city formation in Europe, for example, Brenner (1998: 27) argues that '[g]lobal city formation cannot be adequately understood without an examination of the matrices of state territorial organization within and through which it occurs.' Similarly, Douglass (2000: 45; our emphasis) recently expanded this argument by pointing out that '[t]he obscure nature of state-world city interaction is related to a larger mystery, namely, *how* centers currently identified as world cities actually became world cities.' We therefore need to pay more attention to the processes through which some cities emerge as global cities. In short, the role of state territorial organization is particularly important in this research pursuit (see Brenner *et al.*, 2003; Peck and Yeung, 2003).

In the remaining part of this paper, we develop a typology of global cities, not to encourage static thinking about forms of global cities, but instead to reinforce the dynamic pathways associated with varieties of global cities. In developing this typology, we pay particular attention to the third type of global city – *the global city-state* – and examine some key features of its governance process. In doing so, we hope to lay the ground for richer and more nuanced studies of global/world city formation; i.e. the process of *becoming*, versus the characteristics of *being*.

A typology of global cities

To begin, we reinforce our support for arguments by Keil (1998) and Douglass (2000) that there are divergent pathways to global city formation, such that there is a mosaic of global cities. In developing this heuristic tool we also draw inspiration from the work of Jennifer Robinson (2002a) who has argued that analysts need to be more sensitive to the *diversity* of cities and city futures, and Jonathon Beaverstock and Peter Taylor (Beaverstock *et al.*, 2000) who have also sought to develop a corporate service-derived categorization ('Alpha', 'Beta', and 'Gamma' world cities) for differentiating different types of global cities. This said, we do not go as far as Robinson does in rejecting the 'categorization' of cities, nor do we primarily focus upon the attributes and relations (of corporate service firms) associated with different types of cities as Taylor and Beaverstock do. Rather, we have chosen to spatialize states, and focus on states as entities with particular spatial characteristics and capacities (on this issue also see Ferguson and Gupta, 2002). In our view the differences amongst established and emerging global cities can be attributed to different historical and geographical contexts of emergence and path dependency, and different configurations of internal institutional capacities and discursive practices (by strategic actors).

Figure 2 presents three types of global cities: (1) hyper global cities; (2) emerging global cities; and (3) global city-states. For clarity purposes there is no attempt to map out all three types of global cities onto one world map.

(1) *Hyper global cities*. The characteristics of *hyper global cities* as New York and London are very well known today as a result of several decades of global city research, especially that conducted by or inspired by John Friedmann, Saskia Sassen, Peter Taylor and their colleagues. These global cities are comprehensively integrated (via networks) into a nested hierarchy of regional, national, and global economies. As portrayed in Figure 2, hyper global cities have strong embedded relationships with their immediate hinterland, the so-called 'global city-region'. As argued by geographers and planners from UCLA (e.g. Scott, 2001; Scott *et al.*, 1999), these global city-regions have emerged as the fundamental spatial units of the contemporary global economy (the so-called 'regional motors of the global economy') though they have no formal and particularly coherent political presence on the national or international level, especially in the US.

The rapid emergence of hyper global cities is explained by the fact that globalization has accentuated the importance of spatial proximity and agglomeration in enhancing economic productivity and performance advantages. Large global city-regions function as territorial platforms for firms

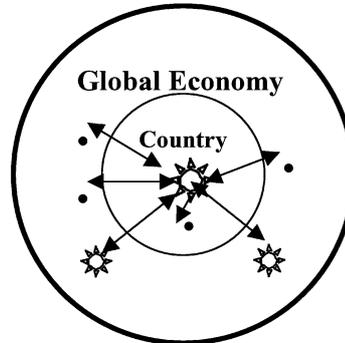
REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

1. Hyper Global Cities

↔ Very well integrated into the global economy through both inward and outward flows

☀ Global city-regions

• Cities



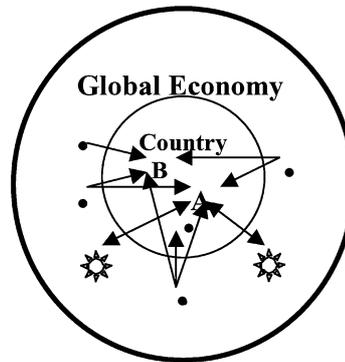
2. Emerging Global Cities

→ More reliance on inward flows from the global economy

☀ Global city-regions

A/B Emerging global cities

• Cities



3. Global City-States

↔ Very well integrated into the global economy and experience direct influence

☀ Global city-regions

○ Global city-state

• Cities

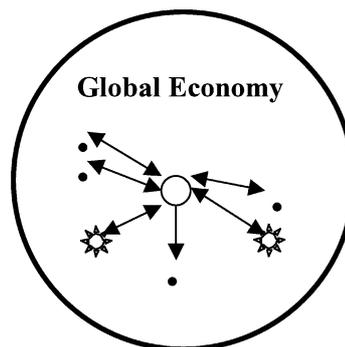


Figure 2 A typology of global cities.

to compete in global markets. These firms are embedded in the relational assets of these global city-regions (Scott, 2001; Scott and Storper, 2003; Storper, 1997). In particular, these global city-regions 'are thus coming to function as territorial platforms from which concentrated groups or networks of firms contest global markets' (Scott *et al.*, 2001: 14). In Figure 2, these intense networks of flows are illustrated in the inner circle in which the global city is located.

Hyper global cities are not only embedded in their immediate global city-regions, but they are usually engaged in competitive relationships with other (global) city-regions in the same home country. This dimension of inter-regional interaction is very important to our understanding of why few dominant global city-regions can co-exist within one country unless there is significant degree of functional specialization. Indeed Figure 2 shows only one dominant global city-region within a country, although it has significant interaction with other regions in the same country (represented by various two-way arrows).

To a certain extent, the competitiveness of a particular global city-region is determined by its role and functions within global city networks that transcend specific regions and/or countries (Coe *et al.*, 2003; Dicken *et al.*, 2001; Sassen, 1998). For example, London is the only viable global city-region in the UK because it has developed such a strong momentum in serving as a strategic node in the global economy. Given this situation it is virtually impossible for another city-region in the UK to compete with London (Allen *et al.*, 1998). The same logic may be extended in a sectoral sense and applied to understand the dominance of New York as a global city-region in the financial world of the US, San Francisco as a global city-region in the high-tech world, and Los Angeles as a global city-region in terms of cultural industries (Abu-Lughod, 1999; Scott, 2000). All three global city-regions operate at different levels, and are embedded in disparate (albeit overlapping) geoeconomic networks that reach out across space. All three global city-regions owe their successes in becoming dominant global city-regions less to interaction and flows *within* their home countries, than to their articulation into the global (cultural) economy; an economy embedded in networked global city-regions that are dispersed across the globe. That said all hyper-global cities/global city-regions are critically dependent upon much larger national markets for their survival (Hill and Kim, 2000).

To sum up, hyper global cities and their regions are deeply integrated into the contemporary global economy. They are relational city-regions of the highest order, attracting and distributing unprecedented volumes of material and non-material flows at a variety of scales. The transformation of these gateway cities is also related to historical context (e.g. imperialism and transnational migration) and geographical context (e.g. national capitals and agglomeration advantages). Once set in motion, these hyper

global cities and their hinterland regions often gain momentum and the logic of path dependency becomes increasingly important.⁴

(2) *Emerging global cities.* While some cities in today's world economy are hyper global cities (and/or global city-regions), there are other cities that *strive* to become global cities. We designate these as *emerging global cities*. In the parlance of the Globalization and World Cities Study Group and Network (<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/>) these cities would be classified as Beta (second brightest) and Gama (third brightest) world cities. In seeking to do so, these cities draw in significant resources and inputs from their home countries, as well as from multilateral institutions (in the case of developing country cities). As shown graphically in Figure 2, an emerging global city (A or B) has only limited relational linkages with the global economy (in a relative sense compared to hyper global cities). It is also much more dependent upon *inward* flows of development capital, people, goods and services and information from the global economy. Instead of acting as an interactive strategic node in the coordination ('command and control' in Sassen's terms) of the global economy, emerging global cities act as coordination/channeling centres responsible for receiving or channeling inward flows. Such global cities do not (or cannot) facilitate the *export* of significant outward flows of *development* capital (or information) to service the global economy, as often expected in dominant definitions of global cities (such as London). That said they do facilitate outward flows of surplus capital in the forms of profits generated by TNCs (Armstrong and McGee, 1985). The flow arrows in Figure 2 are primarily unidirectional, representing inflows from the global cultural economy into a particular emerging global city (A) before these inflows are further redirected and/or distributed further down the urban hierarchy in that country. Because these cities are emerging and striving to become global cities, there is more potential for competition from other urban centres in the same host country. City (B) in Figure 2, for example, may pose as a challenger to the aspirations of (A) to become a global city. This competitive condition, of course, does not apply to those developing countries dominated by a primate city (e.g. Bangkok in Thailand or Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia).

The emergence of aspiring 'global' cities depends significantly upon pre-conditions in terms of endowments of institutional resources, economic linkages at different spatial scales, and political fabric. For example, nation states often deploy substantial resources (and initiate regulatory changes) in the goal of transforming these cities into global cities (Logan, 2001; Robinson, 2002a, b). The intention, of the nation-state and increasingly multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, is to use these cities to enable the nation to 'plug' into the global economy. Such cities play a critical role for they act as the specific locales within a country where key actors and institutions analyse, represent, and associate with the global space of flows

(see Amin and Thrift, 1992; Castells, 1996; Meyer, 2000). This role is not a new one in the history of capitalism (Held *et al.*, 1999). In today's globalizing and post-colonial era, however, what is significant is that many nation states in developing countries are engaging in novel discursive practices, and mobilizing disproportionate material resources to 'construct' representations of entrepreneurial global cities (Jessop and Sum, 2000). Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor project and Shanghai's Pudong mega urban development are two obvious examples of global city formation projects from the Asia Pacific region (see Bunnell, 1999, 2002a,b; Olds, 2001; Wu, 2000; 2003). In both cases, massive public resources have been poured into developing and promoting 'show-case' projects that theoretically qualify both Kuala Lumpur and Shanghai as global cities. Both cities compete for hosting the tallest buildings in the world (Kuala Lumpur's twin Petronas Towers will soon be replaced by another building in Shanghai). Of course, the specific national contexts in the emergence of both Kuala Lumpur and Shanghai are quite different. But one common process in both emerging global cities is that there is a very strong political and institutional will to construct them as 'national projects'. Whereas Kuala Lumpur has the personal favour of Prime Minister Mahathir, Shanghai's interests are well represented by the large number of China's top leadership who came from Shanghai (from former President Jiang Zemin to former Premier Zhu Rongji). Whether these emerging global cities will eventually converge in their characteristics and developmental pathways towards those hyper global cities may be a moot point. The critical condition is the sustainability of *national efforts* in developing particular cities to become global cities. The politics of governance in this case represents a reterritorialization of state power from the national scale towards the urban scale. As suggested by Brenner (1998), the European experience shows that global cities are increasingly coordinates of reterritorialized state institutions and power in an era of globalization. They are part of the attempt by re-scaled 'glocal' territorial states to promote the global competitive advantage of their major urban/city regions.

(3) *Global city-states*. Third, the above national-urban convergence in the rescaling process is even more apparent in the third type of global city – the *global city-state*. To a large extent, city-states (e.g. Hong Kong and Singapore) are unique historical and geographical realities because the state is contained within a fully urbanized and spatially constrained territorial unit. The national and the urban/local scales are effectively juxtaposed under what we call (somewhat awkwardly) the *UrbaNational* scale. Global city-states are clearly different from hyper global cities and emerging global cities because they do not have an immediate hinterland within the same national territorial boundaries.⁵ To a significant degree, broader regions (e.g. Southeast Asia) and more distant parts of the globe become

their hinterland. The development of a terrain of extraterritorial influence emerges when the global city-state functions like (1) hyper global cities, both attracting in material and non-material flows, and in functioning as a command and control centre for the flows and networks that reach out at regional (for the most part) and sometimes global scales. Not surprisingly, global city-states play key roles as international financial centres, acting as the basing sites for the intermediaries of global finance (Meyer, 2000; Yeung, 2002, 2004). The strong financial role of the global city-state is a key factor in the Alpha ('the brightest') status accorded to both Hong Kong and Singapore by Beaverstock *et al.* (1999, 2000; also see Meyer, 2000).

Referring to Figure 2, it is clear that in global city-states, the (national) state has virtually direct access to the global economy. State policies can be shaped to develop the city-state into a global city-state. This process implies that the city-state must be not only an attractive location for material *inflows* from the global economy, but also an *origin* of development flows (versus mainly repatriated profits) to participate in the global economy. As defined in the introduction to this paper, the term 'global reach' best captures the dynamics of the global city-state formation pathway. It illustrates how a specific territorial organisation (e.g. the city-state) is able to extend its influence and relations in the global economy through encouraging both inward and outward flows of people, capital, goods and services, and information.

Global city-states differ from hyper global cities in at least three important ways. First, global city-states have the political capacity and legitimacy to mobilise strategic resources to achieve (national) objectives that are otherwise unimaginable in non-city-state global cities. This is the case because they are *city-states*; they are represented and governed by the state in all of its roles. Table 1 (adapted from O'Neill, 1997: 295, with permission) outlines the roles of the 'qualitative state' in a modern economy. When one recognises that a unified state in city-states plays *all* of these roles (including the 'creation and governance of financial markets', and the 'management of territorial boundaries'), and that the territoriality of governance is miniscule in comparison to most nations (e.g. it takes 45 minutes to drive a car from one side of Singapore to the other), the unique nature and capacities of the global city-state becomes all the more evident (see Sim *et al.*, 2003). This is an issue that development planners in larger nations (e.g. Sydney, Australia) are well aware of since both hyper global cities and emerging global cities are governed in a relatively more complex, less coherent, and less strategic fashion.

Second, and on a related note, global city-states are not constrained by the tensions inherent in national-versus-urban politics (or regional development politics) confronting so many developing, and for that matter, developed countries that aspire to 'construct' their global cities. In other words there are no intra-national regions or cities competing for material

Table 1 Roles of the qualitative state in a modern economy (derived from O'Neill, 1997: 295)

A. Maintenance of a regime of property rights

- maintenance of private property rights
- recognition of institutional property rights
- basic rules for the ownership and use of productive assets
- basic rules for the exploitation of natural resources
- rules for the transfer of property rights (between individuals, households, institutions and generations)

B. Management of territorial boundaries

- provision of military force
- economic protection through manipulation of:
 - money flows
 - goods flows
 - services flows
 - labour flows
 - flows of intangibles
- quarantine protection

C. Legal frameworks to maximise economic cooperation

- establishment of partnerships and corporations
- protection of intellectual property rights
- the governance of recurring economic relations between:
 - family members
 - employers and workers
 - landlords and tenants
 - buyers and sellers

D. Projects to ensure social cooperation

- maintenance of law and order
- undertake national image making processes
- other coercive strategies

E. Provision of basic infrastructure

- Provision or organisation of:
 - transportation and communications systems
 - energy and water supply
 - waste-disposal systems
- assembly and conduct of communications media
- assembly and dissemination of public information
- land use planning and regulation

F. Creation and governance of financial markets

- rules for the establishment and operation of financial institutions
- designation of the means of economic payment
- rules for the use of credit
- maintenance of the lender of last resort

(Continued on next page)

Table 1 (*Continued*)**G. Creation and governance of product markets**

- regulation of the market power of firms
- the selection and regulation of natural monopolies
- the promotion and maintenance of strategic industries
- the provision of public goods
- the provision of goods unlikely to be supplied fairly

H. Production and reproduction of labour

- demographic planning and governance
- provision of universal education and training
- governance of workplace conditions
- governance of returns for work
- social wage provision
- supply and governance of child care
- provision or governance of retirement incomes

I. Control of macro-economic trends

- fiscal policy
- monetary policy
- external viability

J. Other legitimization activities

- elimination of poverty
- maintenance of public health
- citizenship rights
- income and wealth redistribution
- urban and regional development
- cultural development
- socialisation
- enhancement of the environment

and non-material resources. The politics of city/nation-building tends to be focused on the strengths and weaknesses of policy options rather than which intra-national territorial unit is deserving of attention and resources.

Third, the most prominent of these global city-states – Singapore and Hong Kong (until 1997) – are the products of colonialism, and then post-colonial political dynamics. Colonial origins helped to shaped urban destinies that were (and still are) tightly intertwined with the evolving global economy. This colonial history has helped to engender an openness to constant change, and an outward-oriented and relatively cosmopolitan sensibility. Colonialism also helped to lay the legal, linguistic, and technological (esp., transport) foundations for integration into the contemporary global economy. Finally, postcolonial political dynamics (esp., the 1965 ejection of Singapore from Malaysia) concentrated the minds of politicians on the necessity of pursuing the global city pathway years before academics and planners were speaking of the ‘global city’ or the ‘world city’ (see Mauzy and Milne, 2002).

How do global city-states acquire the capacity to spur on global reach? While there are a variety of factors to consider in such a discussion, it is clear that we must turn our attention to the building of institutional capacities in the global city-state. In particular, we consider two interrelated aspects of this process of building institutional capacities: *developmentalism* and *political control*.

To some ultra-globalists, globalization leads to the end of the nation state (Hill and Kim, 2000; Ohmae, 1990, 1995). This view fundamentally distorts the transformational nature of the nation state in today's global economy. Held *et al.* (1999: 55, 81) argue that the emergence of international regimes of governance has transformed the nature of global political economy such that national governments are increasingly 'locked into an array of global, regional and multilateral systems of governance,' resulting in a world of 'overlapping communities of fate'. The reconstituted role of the nation state in today's global economy, however, does not necessarily diminish its role in governing its national space; the role of the state is simply being reshaped (Brenner *et al.*, 2003; O'Neill, 1997; Peck and Yeung, 2003; Yeung, 1998; Weiss, 1997).

In the case of global city-states, the dialectical contest between the nation state and global forces is becoming even more apparent. Whereas a global city-state may serve the global economy well through its role as a command and control node, the nation state may have certain developmental objectives that run against the call for putting the global logic of capital above the local/national interests of citizens. To accomplish these sometimes contradictory objectives (of caring for citizens and serving the global economy) the nation state in global city-states often takes on a developmental role. Developmentalism and the developmental state may sometimes be a historical legacy (e.g. in Japan and South Korea). They may also be a consequence of intense political struggles that ended with the dominance of one political power/coalition. Their emergence is therefore highly specific within particular historical and geographical contexts.

In Johnson's (1982) original study of post-war development in Japan, the 'developmental state' is characterised by several attributes (see also Leftwich, 1994; Wade, 1990; Woo-Cummings, 1999):

1. the top priority of state action, consistently maintained, is economic development, defined for policy purposes in terms of growth, productivity, and competitiveness rather than in terms of welfare. The substance of growth and competitiveness goals is derived from comparisons with external reference economies which provide the state managers with models for emulation;
2. the state is committed to private property and the market, and it limits its interventions to conform with this commitment;

3. the state guides the market with instruments formulated by an élite economic bureaucracy, led by a pilot agency or 'economic general staff';
4. the state is engaged in numerous institutions for consultation and coordination with the private sector, and these consultations are an essential part of the process of policy formulation and implementation; and
5. while state bureaucrats 'rule', politicians 'reign'. Their function is not to make policy but to create economic and political space for the bureaucracy to maneuver in while also acting as a 'safety valve' by forcing the bureaucrats to respond to the needs of groups upon which the stability of the system rests (i.e. to maintain the relative autonomy of the state while preserving political stability). This separation of 'ruling' and 'reigning' goes with a 'soft authoritarianism' when it comes to maintaining the needs of economic development *vis-à-vis* other claims and with a virtual monopoly of political power in a single political party or institution over a long period of time.⁶

At a national scale, a developmental state that satisfies these conditions has much greater capacity to effect global reach in the building of an exploitable extraterritorial terrain in the aim of benefiting the city-state, while simultaneously enhancing the formation of global linkages via the attraction of FDI (and foreign firms). For example, in Singapore a plethora of state-directed institutions, policies, programs, and projects have emerged to spur on the *outward* investment process: this is in part because the historical underdevelopment of indigenous entrepreneurship in the private sector has convinced the state that regionalization drives cannot be effectively taken up by private sector initiatives only (Perry *et al.*, 1997; Yeung, 1999, 2002).

Focusing *inwards*, the political power and control of a developmental city-state distinguishes it from municipal governments in most global cities because it is able to bypass national-state/provincial-city politics typical in many global cities. In Singapore, for example, immigration policies and borders can be tightly managed to facilitate labour market restructuring – a capacity that no other global city has (Yeoh and Chang, 2001). One ministry (the Ministry of Education) develops and implements education policy from the pre-school to the tertiary levels (Olds and Thrift, 2004). And on land use planning matters, the statutory board responsible for urban planning (the Urban Redevelopment Authority)⁷ answers directly to the Ministry of *National* Development. In turn, one key agent of national development (the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB)) has near monopoly power at determining the strategic direction of the economy (see Koh, 2002; Low *et al.*, 1993). Given that the EDB formulates and implements national economic development policy, and the URA then falls in line to that ensure land use planning supports EDB directives, the politics of urban change is highly charged, hierarchical in nature, and it

rarely becomes complicated by citizen involvement procedures (compared to most Anglo-American global cities). Furthermore, the consequence of intertwining the national and the urban is that *all* urban planning policies, programs and projects are suffused with the politics of nation-building in the post-colonial era (see, for example, Chua, 1996; Kong and Yeoh, 2003). More pragmatically, 100% of the country/city is planned by one authority, with every square centimetre of the city/island being managed in a fine-grained manner (Koolhaas and Mau, 1995).

Given the role of the state (as outlined in Table 1) *vis-à-vis* the limited size of the territory being governed, the global/world city formation process has been both rapid and unique. State guided urban restructuring, in the context of the rapid development of Pacific Asia over the last three decades, has facilitated the formation of deep and complex global economic linkages and interdependencies. The juxtaposition of both national and city governance in the hands of the developmental city-state necessarily implies that it is also able to extend its control over most aspects of social and political life of its citizens. The net outcome of this control is that the state is able to mobilize social actors and tremendous resources to meet its national objectives (e.g. global reach). It is also able to eliminate major opposition to its developmental policies through social control and discursive practices. Under these circumstances, the (nation) state becomes the city and the city becomes the (nation) state. The global reach of the city-state becomes an institutional extension of the influence and relations of the nation state on a global scale.

It should be noted that not all actors in a city-state, and not all city-states, are willing and/or able to initiate and complete such processes of global city formation. Much depends upon existing political-economic and social-organizational processes, the capability of key actors (firms, state, and institutions) in exercising power to implement certain strategies that situate the city-state in a beneficial manner to the global spaces of flows, and the complex and intertwined influences of history and path dependency.

4. CONCLUSION

Analysts need to become more cognizant of the sheer variety of global cities, and the differential pathways to global (or world) city formation. Concurrently, analyses of urban transformation and global city formation must be situated within historically and geographically specific contexts: this is because the existing literature on global cities has (to date) focused somewhat too narrowly upon a few 'champion examples'. This was perhaps inevitable given the relative power of hyper global cities such as late twentieth-century London and New York, and the concentration of influential and well-funded urbanists in these cities. This said, the 'geography' of urban theory in relation to the global/world city has been too

often unstated, with 'understandings of city-ness' [global city-ness] coming to 'rest on the usually unstated experiences of (mostly western) cities', with cities 'outside the West' being 'assessed in terms of this pre-given standard of (world) city-ness, or urban economic dynamism' (Robinson, 2002a: 531–532). In short, the situated knowledges and the local epistemologies that produced the first waves of knowledge (from the 1980s on) about the global city need(ed) to be illuminated somewhat more forcefully, while also breaking down the discursive hegemony of these local epistemologies.⁸ There are signs this is happening, both because of the increasing reflexivity demonstrated by influential analysts such as Saskia Sassen (compare, for example the first (1991) and second (2001) editions of *The Global City*), and because of the broader histories and geographies that are associated with work on the global city (see, for example, the myriad of cities and temporal windows evident in the working papers available on the GAWC site (<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/publicat.html#bulletin>)).

For us, the largest lacuna of knowledge in global city studies has been, and continues to be, in relationship to *global city formation processes*. A large volume of work has been focused on corporate service networks, and global service centre functions but in the process the complex relationship and interdependency between globally active firms (and other institutions such as NGOs) and the state has become somewhat sidelined. Moreover, this complex relationship must be spatialized itself, with a deeper sense of the different state formations associated with different types of global cities at different historic periods. The complexity associated with global city formation processes is particularly apparent for us from the vantage point of Singapore, and our interests in the context of the evolution and development of the global city-state. While hyper global cities as London and New York continue to be reinvented by a rich assortment of agents and forces operating at a variety of scales, city-states such as Singapore and Hong Kong vigorously pursue relatively singular and focused Urbanational developmental strategies.

The implication of recognising the diversity of global cities is clear: there is no 'cook book' approach to global city formation just as there is no 'model city.' And again, while we do not go as far as Robinson (2002a,b) in deeming all cities 'ordinary cities' (c.f., Amin and Graham, 1997), we agree with her that the academic field of urban studies needs to become more humble, and open about the limited purchase of all of our situated knowledges and local epistemologies (even in a globalizing context).

In a policy sense, then, *the* global city model is in serious doubt. Calls for the attainment of global city status in many countries may also be unfounded or unrealistic, thereby shutting down alternative development scenarios that have the potential to be more appropriate and achievable given the continued diversity of conditions across space and time. Global cities, be they Alpha, Beta or Gamma global cities, or hyper, emerging or

global city-state global cities, should not be viewed as an idealised end-state phenomenon. Instead all of these cities are the outcome of a wide range of processes, all of which are shaped by *state/space* (Brenner *et al.*, 2003). Given the diversity of state roles and capacities around the world, we should therefore expect equally diverse global city formation and transformation processes.

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NOTES

- 1 From this point on we will use the 'global city' term. While there are some people who attempt to differentiate between 'global city' and 'world city' we do not.
- 2 The footnote in the original states: 'Gipouloux (1997), argues that: (cities') 'strategic importance now lies less in location than in capacity to master factors such as finance, production, and innovation. . . . city functions, not city size, are important to economic position in the global economy'(p. 16).
- 3 Despite the emergence of insightful analyses of global and world cities by people such as Peter Taylor, Jonathon Beaverstock, David Meyer, Neil Brenner and Nigel Thrift, it is really the work of Saskia Sassen and Sir Peter Hall that has most effectively 'travelled' into policy networks and shaped the formation of urban and economic development programs and projects. This is an issue worthy of study from a 'sociology of knowledge' perspective.
- 4 This path dependency, however, also creates problems for the decline of certain global cities (e.g. Tokyo).
- 5 Even in the case of post-1997 Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), it remains a city-state with substantial autonomy. There are no free flows of capital, people, goods and services from other cities and/or regions of mainland China to HKSAR.

REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

- 6 See also Johnson (1982), Wade (1990), Evans (1995), Weiss (1998), Woo-Cumings (1999).
- 7 Details on the URA are available at (<http://www.ura.gov.sg/>).
- 8 See Longino (2002) and Sheppard (2003) on the unstated nature of 'local epistemologies'.

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