Chapter 12: Conclusion

Shanghai as a New Global(izing) City: Historical, Theoretical, and Analytical Lessons for and from Shanghai[1]

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Why Shanghai?

The rapid rise of Shanghai as a global(izing) city is unprecedented. If the world were not aware of Shanghai's rising global importance, it received a wake-up call from the shock waves unleashed by the Shanghai Stock Exchange's plunge on February 27, 2007. The city of Chicago, which had launched an aggressive bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympics, chose Shanghai to set up its first overseas development office in February 2007. The city of Mumbai (Bombay)—the heart of India's growing economic power—has fancied and fashioned itself to become "like Shanghai" by 2020, 2013, or most ambitiously by 2010. These and other recent events not only draw continuing press coverage to Shanghai but also prompt urban scholars to inquire about the essence of the "Shanghai model" that is worthy of learning by and lessons for other cities.

This book has furnished a deeper understanding of the ways that Shanghai has become transformed by the forces both of the global economy and state power in the two most recent decades. Our central focus yields two analytical benefits that other accounts cannot provide. One is an integrated understanding of the distinctive features of Shanghai as a Chinese globalizing city and the powerful forces that have shaped its developmental trajectory. And the second is a greater theoretical understanding that can be achieved by looking at Shanghai in depth and in a comparative context. In this conclusion, we highlight four broad themes from the preceding chapters that together not only yield a coherent picture of global city development, especially in Asia, but, we believe, also constitute the ground for new thinking and empirical research on globalization and global cities more generally.

Bringing History Back In; Path Dependency Is Not Out

First of all, the book points to the largely missing historical element in global city research and the looming shadow of history in fully understanding Shanghai as a globalizing city (see Chen, introduction; Wu, this book). Saskia Sassen (this book) suggests that while most of the global cities today were once world cities that tended to exist much earlier in Asia and European colonial centers than in the West, some global cities are not world cities of the past. This implies that world cities have been around longer than the global cities in industrialized countries today. However, more formerly world cities of developing countries could become global cities as the global economy expands. Therefore, a relatively narrow focus on global cities today would leave some historical analysis out, thus missing the temporal trajectory of a global city and the knowledge of whether and how different histories help make different global cities over time.

Detailed historical analysis of cities teaches us that cities, like states, may possess different historical trajectories from one another. Once a city takes root and begins to travel along a specific path of development, it will be difficult for it to change course. Why? In part, it is because cities develop their own specific histories and narratives about themselves, tales that help constitute the city, how it grew, and its unique and defining characteristics. The historical trajectory also lies in the creation of the mix and type of the industrial base of a city: formerly successful older industrial cities, such as Manchester, England, or Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, find it hard to replicate that success because of an aging population and the now-empty manufacturing relics of an earlier era. These sorts of factors – the nature of the economic infrastructure as well as the local culture – are imperatives that constitute the city, as a city, and, in so doing, they set it on a course for its future development.

In light of the global city perspective (Sassen), the question arises as to whether the forces of globalization are so strong as to completely “flatten the world,” in Thomas Friedman (2005) ’s catchy phrase, or, from another angle, to override the historical forces and the trajectory on which a city has been set. Dedicated advocates for the globalization thesis seem to believe that the forces of the economy are so powerful that they will obliterate the history of specific cities, and thereby substantially alter the historical trajectories. But such a conclusion is premature. The forces of globalization have only been with us for a relatively short time, and no one knows for certain what long-term effects they will have. One does not know, for example, how the particular cultural and political elements of a city are apt to modify and temper the impact of global forces. Presumably not all cities will become global cities: some will and many will not. One might therefore ask: is it possible that those which have become so, or will become global cities, possess a different historical trajectory than those that do not?

In studying Shanghai as a globalizing city, a historical perspective is particularly valuable for showing a strong, albeit ironic, connection between Shanghai's past and present, and whether new opportunities in a different era may allow the city to free itself from past political and economic constraints, or to benefit from former strengths. Shanghai had reached the status of today's top-tier global city by the 1920s when it was mentioned in the same breath as New York and London and known as "Paris of the Orient and New York of Asia" (see Chen, introduction, this book). Shanghai ranked as the world's sixth largest city behind London, New York, Tokyo, Berlin, and Chicago in this order. More importantly, it had become by far the most dominant financial, industrial, shipping, and cosmopolitan center in China.

By 1936, Shanghai had half of the number of banks, money stores, and trust companies, both foreign and domestically owned, in the entire China. By 1933, Shanghai accounted for more than half of China's total industrial output. From 1986 to around 1930, Shanghai consistently handled about half of China's foreign trade, and absorbed 34.3 percent of China's total foreign investment in 1931. During 1902-1904, Shanghai accounted for 69 percent of the 529 Western books translated into Chinese in China (Qi and Xiao, 2005). In effect, Shanghai was dominant then because the rest of China was so underdeveloped. Today Shanghai's weight in China's economy is much smaller, accounting for only 5.4 percent of China's GDP, 9.5 percent of China's foreign direct investment, and 23.6 percent of China's total trade in 2003 (Qi and Xiao, 2005).

In light of the distinction between the world and global city (Sassen, this book) and Shanghai's historical status, Shanghai was clearly a legitimate world city around 1930, and its quest to become a global city in the late 20th century is, in a way, a reprisal of its past glory that began and evolved as a market town and cotton production center over several centuries (Johnson, 1995). Despite drawing most attention among all Chinese cities from historians of urban China, Shanghai's recent rise from its storied past confronts the double or opposite pull of path dependency on becoming a global city in the future.

On the one hand, Shanghai was remade into an overwhelmingly industrial city by rigid socialist central planning with its emphasis on production rather than consumption and China's international isolation from 1949 to 1980. While the textile industry was dominant, the broader industrial expansion in Shanghai over four decades created an entrenched manufacturing base, which accounted two-thirds of the city's GDP by 1990 (see Table 1.1 in Chen, introduction). This entrenched manufacturing economy has shifted since the early 1990s as a result of government downsizing older and inefficient industries and promoting services, which grew rapidly and contributed to half of GDP by 2003. It thus appears that state power can loosen the severe constraint of path dependency in reshaping the economic composition of Shanghai and thus (re)turning it "back to the future" into a global city of multiple functions in finance, shipping, and trade. But path dependency carries a heavy inertia. Shanghai's service sector's share of GDP is far from the 70-85 percent range of such global cities as New York, London, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. At the current pace of growth, Shanghai's service sector gains 0.5 percent of its share in the municipal GDP annually and will reach only 58 percent of

GDP by 2015 (Qi and Xiao, 2005). It appears as though in the foreseeable future Shanghai will remain on its path dependent development, one that characterized by balanced manufacturing and services, and one that represents a new kind of global city equally shaped by its past and present.

The State's Double Edge as a Powerful Builder of Global Cities

Regardless of how far one would go with the view that globalization weakens the nation-state (see Ohmae, 1995 vs. Rosenau, 1997), taking this view leads to the expectation that the state has limited power to shape global cities. The opposite view sees the state as very important, if not crucial, in the development of global cities. While Sassen characterizes the state as more of an enabler of global city formation (see Sassen, 2006), others attribute a dominant developmental role to the state, especially in Asian global cities such as Tokyo and Seoul (e.g. Hill and Kim, 2000). Irrespective of their past differences in the scope and functions of the state, both Singapore and Hong Kong governments have been involved in promoting and fostering competitiveness, with formerly laissez-faire Hong Kong adapting to and becoming more dependent on state-driven development and internationalization of mainland China (Ho; Lui and Chiu, this book).

In building Shanghai into a global city, the Chinese state, that at the municipal level, in particular, has gone above and beyond its Japanese and Korean counterparts in playing a stronger and broader role (Wu; Zhou and Chen; Zhang, this book). This role distinguishes the full strength of the decentralized state in China where one might otherwise expect an erosion of state power due to the triple impact of decentralization, marketization (privatization), and globalization. Quite to the contrary, with a unique blessing by the central government, the empowered and aggressive Shanghai government has demonstrated its capacity to harness the forces of the market and foreign capital as an efficient means of upgrading the metropolitan economy at an uncommonly rapid pace.

The reconstituted and localized state power has made a tremendous difference in the speed of urban development. Exemplifying this central-to-local state-led development, the central government allowed Shanghai to be one of the first few major Chinese cities to experiment with selling the use rights of state-owned land to foreign investors in the early 1990s. By 2000, Shanghai had raised over US$13 billion from leasing land for infrastructure construction and urban redevelopment. As a former mayor of Shanghai commented then, if Shanghai depended on the central government for traditional budget allocation instead of raising funds through land lease, the urban renewal projects completed from 1990 to 2000 would have taken 100 year to complete. That was not necessary considering that Shanghai has attracted over US$120 billion in foreign investment since 1992 (see Chen, introduction).

There is no doubt that the concentration of power and decision-making in China's Party-state is chiefly responsible for the unparalleled rapidity at which the building of Shanghai as a global city has occurred. It simply would not have happened elsewhere. But is the same Chinese state capable of managing the adverse consequences of globalization that can happen just as rapidly? What must and should the state do to offset them? In a democratic society there is a system of rights and a history of local popular participation that limits the extent to which any government can suddenly reverse course. Democratic institutions like a constitution put limits on these matters. In contrast, the state’s handling of the “backlashes” of marketization and globalization in Shanghai continues to rely on top-down macro-control and administrative interference.

At the same time, there are significant differences and tensions emerging between the operations of government at the local and at the national level in China. Consider this episode, for example. In Shanghai, the very high rate of private ownership (close to 80 percent by 2005) became a dominant factor in dictating housing supply and demand and keeping property market very “hot” and prices sky high, which makes housing increasingly unaffordable for more people. The central government first introduced cooling measures in 2005 targeting a few coastal cities like Shanghai, but the market showed few signs of cooling. Further measures were introduced in May 2006. These included raising down payments on loans for luxury homes from 20 to 30 percent, taxing proceeds from re-selling homes within five years, instead of the existing two, and ending bank loans to developers unless they funded at least 35 percent of project costs from their own capital. The government also introduced rules to increase low cost housing, requiring developers to designate 70 percent of the units in a property project to apartments of no more than 90 square meters.[2] Eventually, the Shanghai real estate market slowed with a 10 percent drop in property prices in mid-2006, but it partly resulted from the municipal government's big push to promote more sales of lower-priced apartment units in the city’s outskirts to lower the average city-wide property price (Chen, 2006).

This particular episode exemplifies the increasingly divergent interests and priorities of the central and municipal governments. Whereas the central government is concerned about macro-issues such as inflation and other symptoms of overheating, local governments target growth because it means more jobs and less risk of social unrest, and, in turn, it helps local officials advance their political careers through rewarding promotions. The inability of the Chinese state to reassert itself fully is closely tied with China's economic development becoming more and more led by the local government. Local governments have essentially become like businesses that compete among themselves to maximize GDP, which forces them to maximize their revenues through multiple channels to maintain high property prices, highway tolls, and sales taxes.

In the foreseeable future, there is likely to be a continuing tension between the interests of the central government and those of the municipal government in Shanghai. And, in the end, it will be the power and authority of the central government that is likely to be decisive. No better example of this tension, and the assertion of authority by the central government, exists than in the case of the pension scandal in Shanghai, which led to the oust of its Party secretary in late 2006. Groomed as China's global city for the future, Shanghai faces a bigger dilemma than all other cities in China in balancing the continued power of the local state in city building and its increasing tension and contention with the central state in sustaining market- and global capital-driven economic growth and dealing with its undesirable socioeconomic consequences. The tension between the central state and the powerful Shanghai government will only grow as more downsides of rapid marketization and globalization catch up and spill widely. This not only will test the tolerance level of both political actors but also further complicate and compromise their capacities of managing their relationship and solving local problems. Shanghai offers a sobering lesson about how the powerful Party-state builds a global city and is increasingly unable to cope with its repercussions. The initial strength of the state as a global-city builder has turned into a delayed weakness in managing Shanghai as a galloping global city. Further complicating this process is how Shanghai under the new Party secretary will balance between sustaining its nationally prominent position against its role in "serving" the national interests as expected by the central government.

Rediscovering the Regions of Global Cities

By emphasizing the themes of Shanghai's past and the double-edged role of the powerful Chinese state, we have addressed two weak elements in global city research. We now tackle another deficient aspect — the largely overlooked connection of global cities to their broader regional contexts and conditions. The literature on global cities teaches us a lot about their functional influence as control and command centers, relative positions in worldwide hierarchies and networks, and local social and spatial inequalities. But it shows us relatively little about the global cities' relations with their immediate and broader regional hinterlands, even though there was clear evidence that globalization via foreign investment and transnational migration had long spread beyond the central city and penetrated the suburban areas of American metropolises such as New York and Chicago (Greene, 1997; Muller, 1997). This insufficient attention to the city-region nexus could be attributed to two strong emphases of the global city literature on: 1) the external positions and functions of global cities in the world economy, and 2) the structure and consequences of their globalized local economy and society.

The paucity of empirical research on the concept of the global city-region introduced by Scott *et al* (2001) also means that we know very little about the different types of cases that would fit under the global city-region rubric. What is known is based much more on global city-regions in industrialized economies where we find more established global cities (e.g., New York, London) integrated with their metropolitan regions. There is limited empirical knowledge about the regions around cities in developing countries that are globalizing at different paces instead of having already reached global city status. Compared to mature global city-regions with dominant international service functions such as finance, globalizing cities have very different mixes of economic sectors and functions that foster the growth of their own distinctive regional spaces and activities. Shanghai again provides an important illustrative example of how both history and the state have come together to produce key spatial and socioeconomic relations characterizing a new globalizing city-region.

From the late 1800s to the 1930s, Shanghai attracted a steadily growing amount of capital, labor, and goods from southern China (Guangdong in particular), interior China, and the surrounding Yangtze River Delta (YRD) region, especially from Ningbo due to the famine and unrest in many of these places and the relative stability associated with the presence of the International Concessions in Shanghai (Qi and Xiao, 2005). This process eventually consolidated Shanghai as the dominant economic and shipping node for the YRD and much of China. Now more than a century later, Shanghai's rise as a globalizing city features a similar and yet different relationship with this region.

The investment-driven economic boom of Shanghai since the early 1990s has driven up land and labor costs in its densely populated central city where land has become more scarce, and thus more difficult and expensive for investors to lease. The average wages both of factory workers and technicians in Shanghai are now more than double those of their counterparts in interior cities, while the average pay for managers and senior managers in Shanghai is three times higher. In 2005, the annual pay of manual labor in Shanghai averaged US$2,979 compared to the large interior cities of Chongqing and Chengdu at US$1,787 and US$1,489, respectively. Land cost in Shanghai approximately doubled that in some secondary cities in the YRD. So development began to spill into the surrounding YRD region, especially to booming secondary cities such as Suzhou and Kunsan, and even smaller cities like Wujiang (see Map 1.1 in Chen, introduction).

Since 1999, Suzhou has attracted over 1,000 industrial enterprises set up by Shanghai-based companies with a total capitalization of over US$5billion. Shanghai became the largest investor in Suzhou, accounting for over 35% of the total capital investment by 2004. In 2005, Suzhou's GDP ranked fifth in the country at US$50.8 billion, and its industrial output totaled US$150 billion, good enough for second place behind Shanghai (Chen, 2007). More generally, the Suzhou government officially adopted the strategy of more actively linking with Shanghai through both competition and cooperation across different industries and services. But the loss of capital and companies was seen by Shanghai as a threat to its broad manufacturing base, prompting the Shanghai government to launch an initiative of keeping old manufacturing jobs and growing new ones in Jiading and Qingpu Districts bordering Jiangsu province (see Map 1.1 in Chen, introduction).

While the policy of protecting non-competitive manufacturing may be unwise and ineffective, the Shanghai government has maintained the traditional practice of top-down, large-scale spatial and planning and population redistribution. With the most densely populated central city in China, Shanghai's central Huangpu district has an astonishing 126,500 people per square kilometer, giving each person less than eight square meters.

In addition, the average housing price in central Shanghai quadruples that in the far outlying areas. To reduce this density and take advantage of the large housing price differential, the Shanghai municipal government in 2001 drew up a massive plan to build one new city and nine new towns (each of which is themed after a European country including Germany and Britain) with a combined population of 5.4 million and 60 new small towns with populations of around 50,000 each outside the outer ring road. The expansion of the transport network including the metro and roads will allow people to live away from downtown Shanghai but easily commute into the center for work in about one hour.

While these towns may become home to millions of Shanghai residents displaced from the city center, many families already face the tough choices of moving out to the new and more spacious suburban housing or staying put in the old and crowded central-city dwelling. Those families who have moved like the lower mortgage payment, larger living space, better air quality, green parks, modern facilities, and diminished noise in the suburban towns of Pudong, but they also miss the familiar social networks, shopping and transport convenience, and even the lively activity in downtown Shanghai. Despite the compensation they receive from the government and/or real estate developers for vacating their housing units, some residents refuse to move because they simply do not like the idea of a long commute to and from downtown Shanghai. Others do not like the inconvenience in lagging commercial facilities and social services (Chen, 2006). The small number of wealthy people with cars from central Shanghai who have bought high-end apartments and luxury villas in the German (Anting New Town in Jiading) and

British (Thames Town in Songjiang) towns generally use these properties as second, weekend homes.

Shanghai's changing regional links provide clear evidence of the reactive role of the municipal government in maintaining the city's slipping manufacturing advantage relative to lower-cost nearby cities as well as its proactive role in creating a form of integrated metropolitan development. Hong Kong also has become more integrated with the Pearl River Delta region in its move back into (the return of sovereignty in 1997) and forward from China's enlarged global orbit more recently (see Lui and Chiu, this book). Singapore's symbiotic relations with the neighboring regional growth triangle involving parts of Malaysia and Indonesia remains strong as it has extended its global reach through the key agency of the Economic Development Board (Ho, this book). By considering Shanghai within its broader regional context, and having shown parallel developments both in Hong Kong and Singapore, we have shown yet another direction in which research on global cities may be extended.

A Grounded Relational View on Global Cities

In addition to those three theoretical themes already identified here, we advocate yet a final one – the effort to incorporate a grounded relational view into global city research as a substantive and methodological lesson from Shanghai. Though it is easy to characterize and criticize global city research as being strong on the macro level but weak "on the ground," this is true especially when we look for evidence to establish links between community- and individual-level phenomena and the large-scale structural and spatial dynamics of globalizing cities. We also know relatively little about the ways in which the differential effects of global, national, and local forces become manifest in communal life and individual behavior. The absence of such information reveals an important lacuna in the global city research agenda. And it can be partly, if not wholly, attributed to the methodological difficulties of measuring and modeling the small scale effects of globalization, particularly in comparison to the increasingly sophisticated macro-level quantitative measures and analysis of global city networks.

By including two chapters – Chapters 10 and 11 – that focus specifically on community (re)building and consumer behavior in globalizing Shanghai, this book makes some progress in redressing these deficiencies in global city research. As Chapter 10 indicates, globalization leaves many footprints on communities in Shanghai, including the involvement of foreign capital in building gated luxury communities, foreigners marrying locals and becoming long-term residents, and the presence of foreign fast food restaurants and convenience stores in a large number of traditional neighborhoods. These global influences, however, are entangled with and filtered through state-initiated housing and community governance reforms that exert both independent and interactive effects on community development.

Moving from a grounded view to an explicit microscopic relational approach, Chapter 11 shows that while globalization facilitates the rapid growth and broad availability of a variety of consumer goods in Shanghai, there are personal attributes and qualities that affect the reach of global forces into the everyday lives of local residents. In particular, consumers with stronger global connections are more likely to consume global products. The global connections of people also make a difference in how they feel about the environment and services of their communities. More recent evidence suggests that people with global connections are also more likely to live in high-end and more exclusive residential areas in Shanghai (Chen and Sun, 2007). At both the community and the individual levels, in other words, Shanghai is rapidly becoming tied to global events and transactions, so much so, in fact, that we can no longer conclude that the local is simply local.

Besides adding to the distinctiveness of Shanghai as a globalizing city, the findings from Chapters 10 and 11 also contribute to the literature on global cities by demonstrating the value of a grounded relational approach as a means of bridging the divide between the large- and small-scale levels in all global or globalizing cities. Some of the seemingly distinctive attributes of Shanghai look far less so when seen in the light of the broader comparative perspective displayed in the non-Shanghai chapters of the book. These materials thus help in identifying a set of general opportunities and constraints on global city development under any national and local circumstances. These include the path dependent trajectory of a city's history, the double-edged role of the state, and the regional context of a global or globalizing city.

Concluding Observations

As we bring the book to a close, we want to leave the reader with two final observations. One concerns the distinctive way in which the two halves of the book are linked. The entire book could have been about Shanghai with more chapters dealing with other facets of its local transformations. This exclusive focus on Shanghai would have been easily justified given the tremendous attention on and interest in the city. But to have done so would have been at the expense of advancing the global city literature and highlighting the distinctive features of Shanghai. By embedding Shanghai in the theoretical and comparative frames of Part 1, we not only have eschewed "Shanghai exceptionalism or exclusiveness" but we also have established more useful reference points for the more focused analyses of Shanghai in Part 2.

And the other is that the four themes, in combination, can provide new elements and insights into research on global cities. History is deeply etched into a global or globalizing city, as Shanghai has demonstrated. Constrained by being the center for the Yangtze River Delta region, on the one hand, and a broadly industrialized city under state planning, on the other, Shanghai has traveled a difficult path to become a global city. Its experience thus illuminates the continuing tension between its own historical roots and the efforts by the state to overcome this history. The struggle, itself, marks the Shanghai experience as fundamentally different from the experience of global cities in advanced industrialized countries and should provide a sobering lesson for globalizing cities in developing countries. Through and beyond the broad structures of history, state power, and regional context, global forces penetrate to the very bottom of cities by altering the consumption patterns and lifestyles of local residents. Shanghai provides another lesson that illustrates using a grounded relational approach to understanding the mechanisms by which the global-local social and cultural nexus emerges.

Where do we go from here? In exploring and extending new avenues of global city research, Shanghai will remain a source of new evidence and ideas that beg to be evaluated through further research. As we learn more about Shanghai itself, it will help us to better appreciate and understand how global forces shape metropolitan growth and development. This book, we hope, provides an important step on this long journey.

Notes

1. We thank Dennis Judd for his helpful comments and suggestions for developing and improving the structure and substance of this chapter through its earlier versions.
2. Industry Overview, "Real estate: cooling the fires," *China Economic Review*, August, 2006; accessed on http://chinaeconomicreview.com/subscriber/articledetail/1397.html.

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