



上海社会科学院

SHANGHAI ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

SASS STUDIES

Autumn 2018

Volume 11

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On the Evolution of Global City Theories and Practices for the 21st Century

TU Qiyu

Abstract: China is currently the main driving force of globalization, and China has the most abundant urbanization practices. Towards the middle of the 21st century, a large number of Chinese cities cherish ambition and initiative for internationalization and globalization. This paper begins with the preparation practice for construction of “Excellent Global City” according to Shanghai Urban Master Plan (2017–2035), explores for internationalization and globalization of major cities in the contemporary China, and focuses on the evolution of global city theories in the “new era”. Through sorting up and contrasting the previous global city theories and practices, this paper theoretically summarizes the contributions of China’s practices to the formation of a new paradigm for global city development from the perspective of spatial embeddedness, economic resilience, social inclusiveness and cultural self-confidence establishment.

Keywords: Global City; Globalization; Shanghai Urban Master Plan (2017–2035); Chinese Path

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Introduction

In the current second decade of the 21st Century, great changes are taking place in the fundamental environment and guiding principles for city operations around the globe. For most cities with internationalization ambitions, global city competition¹, which has emerged since the 1980s, will continue. However, the global city theories, which also have emerged during the same period, are obviously difficult to support global city development practices towards the mid 21st Century. The evolution of global city is under way, from practice to concept. Basic feature of this evolution lies in the evolution from the so-called “global city construction paradigm” (hereinafter referred to as “Global City 1.0”, with a view to shaping cities based on internationally accepted standards and developing cities according to globally developed strategies) to a new paradigm of developing carrying forward characteristics at the core, relying on the strongholds, and striving for differentiated rise among global cities (hereinafter referred to as “Global City 2.0”). In the competition among many cities, the key to successful evolution lies in addressing the major problems and challenges of city development under the paradigm of Global City 1.0.

Profounder Understandings of Globalization and Global City

The concept of “Global City” and its first-generation theory (Global City 1.0) came into being under globalization tide in the 1980s. As an urban space response to globalization, hypothesis of “Global City” is quickly and extensively accepted in practice field, which has been commended as “an Instant Classic”² without derogatory sense. Hypothesis of “Global City” is put into practice by the cities all over the world. There is no exception for both the developed “Global North” and the developing “Global South”. In

¹No differentiation is herein made between “Global City” and “World City”. In the narrow sense, “Global City” is considered as merely an individual city at the top of “World City” Pyramid in a relatively large quantity. Obviously, the vision of “Excellent Global City”, proposed by Shanghai Urban Master Plan (2017–2035), aims at the top of such pyramid.

²Hypothesis of “Global City” is cited from the book *The Global Cities Reader* compiled by Neil Brenner and Roger Keil. Global city theory, represented by Sassen’s work (1991), is commended as “an Instant Classic” without derogatory sense.

the second decade of the 21st Century, in retrospect to relevant theories and practices, "Global City" not only profoundly molds the functions, forms, societies and cultures of hundreds of ambitious cities aiming for world-class cities on city front, but also greatly strengthens international ties between cities and promotes the formation of global production network on a global scale. It can be said that "Global City" and globalization have presented an associated relationship. Globalization is hardly possible without "Global City".

Global City 1.0

From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, in its infancy, global city theories were characterized by multidisciplinary integration and concerted progress. Urban planning scholars Friedmann & Wolff (1982), Friedmann (1986) and urban sociologist Sassen (1991) were the first to grasp new trend of metropolitan development at the beginning of globalization process, that is, global city is spatial responder and leader of globalization. When relevant concepts (world city/global city) are set forth, more disciplines immediately respond to them. Geography discipline opens up research horizon for social and urban networked connections by means of factor flow analysis (Castells, 1996). Peter Dicken (1998) originates geospatial response studies on global production network and globalization. For economics discipline, Krugman (1987, 1991), Fujita Masahira (2002), et al integrate previous economics studies in the field of international trade and economic geography, and give rise to a set of Increasing Marginal Benefit Theories for spatial agglomeration in the field of free trade, globalization and motivation for promotion of the worldwide urbanization process. Taylor (2001), et al dedicate to studies on identification and networked connections of global city. In 2000, "Globalization and World Cities Study Group and Network" (GaWC) was launched, which has developed into a worldwide public platform for multidisciplinary communication for global city research.

On the whole, based on the joint explorations of multiple disciplines and multiple parts of the world (developed and developing ones), the understandings of global city gradually upgrade from several initial "hypotheses" to a series of "consensuses", including as follows: 1) The nature of Global City is flow hub and control node of the globalized economy; 2) Multinational corporations, especially those with various

headquarters functions, often choose to cluster in global cities at different levels, which are powerhouses for control node function of global city. As a result, multinational corporations become important stakeholders in global city governance; 3) Operational norms and governance standards of global city are highly internationalized (in the late 20th Century, internationalization was synonymous with westernization); 4) Global city is post-industrialized in terms of economic form, and features highly developed professional service sector; 5) Society of global city tends to welcome and give priority to the “elites” of globalization; 6) Cultural ecology of global city prefers metropolitan style of the European and American cities, i.e., the so-called “westernization” and “foreign style”; 7) Global cities are networked according to energy level and division of labor, and constitute spatial projection of global production network, i.e., Global City Network. Finally, there is an unambiguous consensus: Global city is highly hierarchical, which is a direct extension of world system in city system (Wallerstein, 1974). The abovementioned theoretical consensuses and the practical activities around these consensuses form the core connotation of Global City 1.0 to a considerable extent.

In addition to “consensuses” reached on Global City 1.0, some early studies are either evidenced as falsification (e.g., Friedmann Hypothesis (1986), which judges that periphery zone of world economy cannot rise to a global city), or are ignored intentionally and unintentionally (e.g., Friedmann (1986) suggests that such cities should also act as important manufacturing centers under the functional assumptions of world city; David Simon (1995) points out that mere development of a single global function is not a sufficient condition for rise to a global city; S. Sassen (1991) warns of social fragmentation, city gentrification and other problems in global city development when coordinating the conclusion on dominant position of global city). A lot of globalization research scholars criticize the shocks of cultural globalization on local culture.

In the 21st Century, new developments in global city research are mainly embodied by the expansion of research breadth and depth. Scott (2001) proposes that the development of global city in the Post-Fordist Era has entered the global city-region phase spatially. Sharon Zukin, et al. (2016) carry out the study on local commercial streets in global cities, which advances global city research from macro scale to micro

scale. On the whole, however, no major breakthrough has been made for core understanding of global city as yet. Analysis is herein made for Research Briefings of GaWC, a main platform for the exchange of global city research outcomes. Since its inception in 2000, 457 research briefings were published on GaWC platform until the end of 2017. Among them, 187 research briefings were published during 2000–2005, which was the most fruitful period of relevant researches; 113 research briefings were published during 2006–2010; 152 research briefings were published during 2011–2015 (a significant decline to 13 in 2015). Significant decline in the number of research briefings has taken place in recent years. Only two research briefings were published during 2016, and only three research briefings were published during 2017. This shrinkage has already epitomized stagnation of Global City 1.0 Theory itself. Therefore, subversive theoretical evolution is urgently needed.

Globalization Evolution

The global financial crisis in 2008 and its sustained aftermath made the 2010s a watershed of globalization and even the history of the contemporary world. As emphasized by Xi Jinping (2017) in *Report of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, “Nowadays, the world is in a period of great development, great change and great adjustment” (Page 58 of *Report of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Separate Edition)*). The world, which gradually says goodbye to the global financial and economic crisis, is advancing inclusive world, scientific and technological revolution, the UN sustainable development goals by 2030 and fight against global climate change with greater enthusiasm. Globalization is undergoing evolution.

Globalization 1.0 is still relatively simplified in terms of economic structure, which is far from real coverage for the whole world. At the micro level, multinational companies are still the backbones. Based on the global layout of multinational companies from inter-industry specialization to intra-industry specialization (Company Headquarters—Manufacturing Base—Global Logistics—World Market), international trade and financial activities, global production network (GPN) is formed at the meso level. At the macro level, the value orientation of economic globalization 1.0 is pursuing economies of scale and low-cost places,

and pushing forward the full flow of global factors, goods, services and information with market economy and free trade in terms of institutional structure.

As Globalization 2.0 as is concerned, Xi Jinping (2017) points out in *Report of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China* that “it is necessary to promote economic globalization to forge ahead towards higher level of openness, inclusiveness, universal benefit, balance and win-win” (Page 59 of *Report of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Separate Edition)*). This not only demonstrates China’s complete attitude over globalization evolution, but also represents a new understanding of globalization on the global scale. (Figure 1) The main new trends include as follows: Fair, equitable and inclusive globalization truly gains ground on a global scale; small and medium-sized enterprises rely on E-commerce platform economies to launch transnational operations; people in emerging economies raise huge demand for high-quality commodities and services; innovation propels the global economic organizations to transform from hierarchical style to networked style. (Table 1)



Figure 1 Thinking Logic of Globalization 2.0

Source: self-made figure by the author.

Table 1 Comparative Analysis of Globalization Evolution

Analysis Dimension	Globalization 1.0	Globalization 2.0	Globalization Evolution Direction
Basic Concept	Limited coverage under center-periphery pattern, limited openness and game-style globalization	Openness, inclusiveness, universal benefit, balance and win-win	Towards more equitable and fair globalization
Overall Pattern	World center is basically stable, hegemony only moves within the center, and there is no room for the rise of periphery.	Emerging market economies, represented by China, East Asia and BRIC+, rise as a whole.	Emerging market economies are strong enough to influence the world market and agitate the world. This is rarely seen in modern and contemporary history.
Micro-level foundation	Dominance of multinational corporations; Global expansion of the market, global configuration of the production, headquarters control; Progressive increase in scale efficiency	Rise of the platform economy; Focus on traffic divergence and go-between for supply and demand rather than possession; Progressive increase in marginal benefit	Emerging market economies enjoy increasing chances of "synchronous running and overtaking" in the new field
Meso-level manifestation	Multinationals-led global production network	Global e-commerce network and global innovation network characterized by innovation	Basic organization mode of production changes from "management and control" to "collaboration"
Macro-level manifestation	Focus on supply side expansion; Production division and function deployment on a global scale, search for the cheapest supply source, transfer stock capacity: international trade imbalance	Focus on demand side reform; Remarkable growth of the middle class in emerging market economies leads to changes in the main social contradictions: approach to satisfying the sharply increasing new demands at higher level	Sharp increase in demand under shift from the existing supply to high quality is an important good news for world economy

(continued)

Analysis Dimension	Globalization 1.0	Globalization 2.0	Globalization Evolution Direction
Spatial Demand	Global production network requires global city to act as traffic hub and control node	Clustering of economic activities, flattening of economic organizations, and virtuality of economic flows	From the birth of global city to the evolution of global city

Source: self-made table by the author.

Global City 2.0

The first round of globalization evolution, directly projected at the city level, is manifested by collective collapse of the benchmark global city images. From “Occupy Wall Street”, “Fallen London” (*Times Weekly* cover title on October 20, 2008) to Paris Riots, the basic consensus of the entire Global City 1.0 is highly doubted. In the field of research, the sharp drop in GaWC research briefing since 2014 can also be a corroborative evidence. But global city practices have not been interrupted. On the contrary, global cities mostly increased during two evaluation time points in 2010 and 2016, as identified by GaWC research, for which developing countries contributed most.

In echo with globalization evolution, development trend of global city is also undergoing major changes. It is advised to roughly compare these changes in terms of city nature, city relation, city competition situation, city development strategy, city planning, city industries, spatial architecture, etc. (Table 2)

Table 2 Comparative Analysis of Global City Evolution

	Global City 1.0	Global City 2.0
City Nature	Location of the headquarters; essentially hierarchical with controlling power.	Gathering place of platforms; essentially networked with synergistic power
City Relation	Horizontal zero-competition, vertical subordinate control	The relationship structure is diversified and is no longer fully evaluated by comprehensive energy levels Highlight of differentiation between omnipotence and specialization (e.g., New York and Boston; Shanghai and Hangzhou)

(continued)

	Global City 1.0	Global City 2.0
City Competition Situation	Zero-sum relationship: competing for resources of eternally limited multinational headquarters	Competition and cooperation relationship: This can achieve multiple wins The huge middle class pushes demand to soar up; E-commerce impels numerous small and medium-sized enterprises to plunge into globalization, and service enterprises branch out
Development Strategy	Benchmarking Strategy The only difference lies in the level of global city	Differentiation Strategy Comprehensive global city: the main strategy is improving weak links. Specialized global city: the main feature is building strong points
Planning Orientation	(Function, style, layout and industry of a city) Homogenous orientation so as to meet "internationalization" standards of multinational corporations	(Positioning, style, layout and industry of a city) Heterogenous orientation so as to seek differentiation and complement, or sail in "blue ocean"
City Industries	Highlighting professional service sector that serves the functions of headquarters economy	Emphasizing industry integration and development, and laying stress on establishment of complete industry and innovative ecosystem.
Spatial Architecture	Focus on central city CBDs, industrial parks and noble communities, paying attention to attracting multinational corporations; indifference to balance and justice	Omni-bearing molding; emphasizing the open system; emphasizing the intensification of attraction power and innovation power

Source: self-made table by the author.

In short, new thinking of Global City 2.0 not only gropes for the direction of globalization evolution towards openness, inclusiveness, universal benefit, balance and win-win, but also incorporates many new ideas and new paradigms of urban development, including at least understandings of inclusiveness, fairness, impartialness, sense of happiness, innovation, low-carbon development and fight against climate change. In this regard, Global City 2.0 implies more "considerable elements" than Global City 1.0, and shows more "concerns" than Global

City 1.0. Of course, whether the idealized concept sparkles realistic vitality should also stand the test of the reality. (Figure 2)

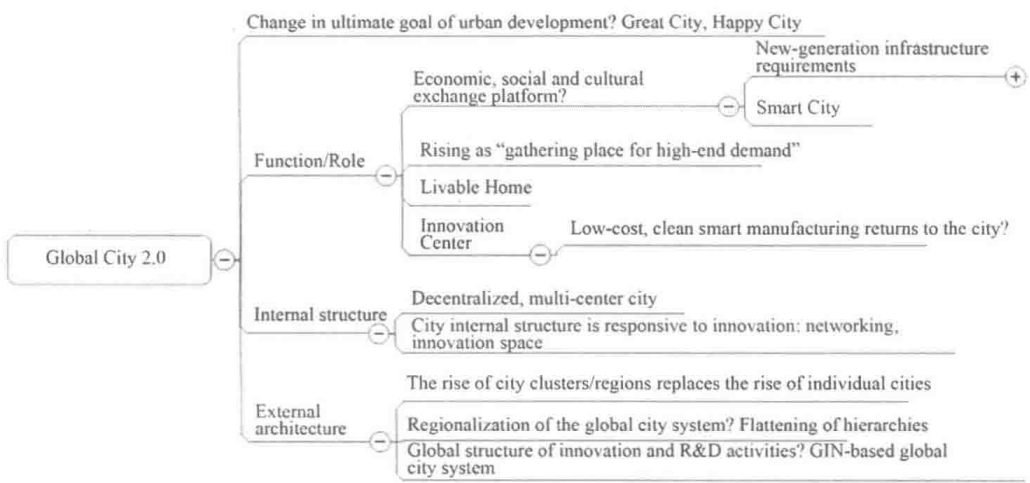


Figure 2 Thinking Logic of Global City 2.0
Source: self-made figure by the author.

Primary Theoretical Challenges for Evolution towards Global City 2.0

As a type of city theory, "Global City" undergoes the unprecedented rapid release from theoretical hypothesis to practical use. It was quickly applied in practical realms in the 1990s. One of the characteristics of these early practices was benchmarking for the European and American cities in terms of city function space, landmark architectural style, soft environment form, and cultural style. In different contexts, "globalization", "internationalization", "alignment" and "westernization" and other words prevailed. It should be objectively acknowledged that such practices have positive effects as a whole. Many cities in developed and developing countries have achieved development and revitalization. City development, oriented to Global City 1.0, plays an important role especially in the development of Asia, which can be fully evidenced by urbanization data and global city evaluation.

However, City development, oriented to Global City 1.0, essentially follows and replicates the development experiences and paths of Western cities. At the stage of Global City 1.0, reform, opening up and development of such cities partially follow suit achievements of the Western benchmark

cities with higher efficiency and wider scope, which demonstrates “catch-up effect” on the whole. Therefore, it is difficult to observe the substantial transcendence from the perspective of city development significance. It is also difficult to observe the negative effects in the development of Western cities, which are substantially “shirked” in the practice of followers. Therefore, in order to successfully implement the evolution of global city development paradigm, the key lies in vigorously addressing major problems and challenges in the practice of Global City 1.0.

Embeddedness Riddle of Global City Development

The concept of “Global City” suggests more direct global connection beyond the inter-state relationship: Global City Network, which also leads to strong offshore development trend around the practices of Global City 1.0. Conceptually, there is indeed “globalization” that advocates that global cities must be incompatible with their regions and countries (Parker, 2004, Clark, 2017). Practically, the intensity of the connection flows between some global cities is high than that of connection flows between global cities and other cities and regions in the same country, which is also commonly seen. Dubai’s maverick, verge of bankruptcy to relief acceptance, London people’s petition for London’s withdrawal from the UK in the UK European Union membership referendum (“Brexit”), the role of Barcelona in Catalonia’s independence farce are all true stories on Embeddedness Riddle of Global City Development. What is really the source of power of a global city?

Perplexity of Global City Economy in “Virtuality” and “Reality”

The basic consensus of Global City 1.0 Theory (although not unanimous) is that producer service sector, represented by professional service industry such as financial insurance real estate (FIRE), is the basic economic form of global city. Emphasis on the professional service industry, make a clear distinction between Global City 1.0 and versatile global city specialized in manufacturing, service and shipping in the traditional context (Geddes, 1924, Hall, 1966). In reality, what is appropriate proportion of primary, secondary and tertiary industries in the European and American cities? Moreover, a number of innovation hubs (cities) rise, such as Silicon Valley, Bangalore, Tel Aviv and Shenzhen. London (Techcity Project), New York (Silicon Valley Cluster and Roosevelt