

The Future of the World Cities: Beyond Economic-Military Globalism

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Introduction

These days, the concept of the “world city” (or “global city”) looks losing its popularity that once it had. Instead of that, the “creative city” are becoming a new popular concept in urban studies as well as in urban policy. This is because of the changing relevance of the two concepts. This change, in turn, reflects the change of the context in which the world cities are positioned in human society.

The world cities in the 1980s through the 90s predominantly meant an economic space with global functional reach. In the age of globalization, configurations of economic spaces enormously transformed. Particularly, economic activities such as financial and informational transaction became thoroughly transborder. Although financial and monetary policies of national government have much to do with the way in which those activities take place, it is also true that the flow of the financial and telecomm. transaction is cross-border and boundless. The world cities were formed as nodal spaces of

those boundless economic activities. In that sense the world cities were symbolic space of the globalized economy, albeit that they were symbolic space of cultural cosmopolitanism or multiculturalism as well.

The meaning of a space, however, sometimes dramatically changes. New York's most symbolic spaces of the "world city-ness" were Wall Street, World Trade Center area. After the incident of the September 11th of 2001, the site of World Trade Center became called "Ground Zero", It is now a symbolic space of the enormous tragedy entailed by global terrorism (Harvey, 2006).

Needless to say, New York is still a world city as the center of global economy. But it is also sure that it was now given an another meaning, a space symbolizing the global terror and insecurity of cities in present time.

Noteworthy is that the two meaning of New York or its downtown are both produced in a global relationality. New York is a world city amidst economic globalism. On the other hand, although it is not in battlefield, New York's downtown is a security hole embedded in military globalism, George Bush's "this is a war" statement is, its sensationalism notwithstanding, expresses the position and the meaning of this space in global relationality.

Not just economic relationality gives the meaning of New York as a space in a globalized world. Relationality in

the politico-military context also marked a new meaning on it.

In the 1980s onward, the world cities had mostly been discussed in a simplistic economic context. Then they became examined in socio-political context referring to social disparity, exclusion, impoverishment and so on. And after the 9-11, a new, global politico-military context became disclosed to New York. If so, in order to foresee the future of the world city, we cannot remain within the framework of “global economy” discussion. We need to take other, social, cultural, environmental, and particularly politico-military dimensions into account.

This paper is a preliminary attempt for that.

1. Changing World Urban Hierarchy:

Flattering of the Hierarchy?

Saskia Sassen’s *The Global City: New York London, Tokyo* (1991 and 2001) was a masterpiece book on the world city (Sassen, 1991; 2001). However, this book mainly focused on three “top of the world” cities and called them global cities. Impacted by this book, world (global) city became the goal of urban policy of a great number of cities of the world. However smaller cities with less international influence, even if searched for becoming

world cities, gradually lost their willingness for that.

Sassen's book clarified the structure of global economy centering on a few primary cities with a magnificent fact-finding and analyzing efforts. But it just threw light on the global urban system focusing on its top tier.

Sassen's point was that in the globalized economy, new move of centralization and dispersal take place in a global scale. Due to that, a small number of central, command center of the world economic activities are functionally needed, while other places are to be connected and dependent on these centers. Sassen argues that this is true even in the early 21st century (Sassen, 2001). As New York, London and Tokyo are located in a good position in global economic geography and have historically accumulated agglomeration of nodal economic functions, their position as the world cities are firm and almost embedded in global capitalism (Sassen, 2002).

Assumedly under the fluctuating global economy and telecom. revolution, urban hierarchy cannot be immutable. Sassen, however, discusses that although digitalization of business transactions might change spatial forms of the centers of global economy, centralizing forces continues to work as well. In other words, the more dispersal takes place, the more consolidating force works in the global economy. Consequently global cities or "global city-regions", whatever to call, are intact (Sassen,2002;

Scott,2001).

Recently, however, a new line of argument that is somewhat challenging to Sassen's view came out. For example, the "globalization and world city" (GaWC) research group of Loughborough University (J.V.Beaverstock, P.J.Taylor, D.R.F.Walker etc.) argued that Sassen and other global city researchers analysed only the attributes of cities while ignored the mutual relationship between them (relationality, in my terminology). In terms of simplistic comparison of the number of banks, corporate headquarters, volume of stock trades etc., still New York, London and Tokyo are outstanding world's top three. However, when they put scores of the "world city-ness" by measuring the number as well as the size and importance of the offices of corporate service firms (accountancy, advertising, banking/finance and legal service), rather flatter hierarchy is noticeable. The cities of top tier are New York, London, Tokyo and Paris, but as displayed on figure 1, the degree of the "world city-ness" between the top tier cities and lower tier second ones are not so different. In the image of GaWC group's global urban system, hierarchical character became loosened and numerous cities are positioned as world cities somewhere in a more flatter urban system.

In addition, GaWC group is attempting a "network analysis" between world cities. They compute the intercity,

intra-firm office linkages of corporate service, that is, percentage probability of that a firm in city X will have a office in city Y too. Then, they, applying component analysis method, differentiate “primary links” and “secondary links”. When this analysis was done for the top 10 world cities, the result was shown in figure 2. As seen, on the level of the primary links, London takes the most links from other cities and New York does in second place while Tokyo does in third place, much behind the top two. On the secondary level linkages, Tokyo is the number two goal point of linkage vectors, while the vectors to Hong Kong are slightly more than Tokyo’s. Namely in terms of secondary links, Hong Kong is the number one goal and Tokyo is number two (Beaverstock, Taylor and Walker, 2002).

Here again, a relatively, flatter image of global urban system is shown.

In 1999, the amount of stock trades in the US, mostly that in New York, was ten times or more as much other advanced countries. Looking this number New York is the preeminent world city with overwhelmingly massive global financial market. This impresses still ongoing centralization of economic command functions to New York, or, Anglo-American world cities as Saskia Sassen observed. However, once changing the vista point, as GaWC group suggest, more relative, more flattering urban

system is imaginable.

2. Military-Terror Globalism and the World Cities

The world cities had been preeminently an economic-cultural phenomena. It was understood as a product of global market economy. It has, seemingly, nothing to do with politics and military systems.

However, the world cities of present time are embedded in military globalism as well. In the post World War II era, along with the GATT-WTO system in economic side, NATO and other alliance system, or more preeminently, the U.S.'s world wide strategic military system alone produced a global military system, in other words, military globalism. The central place of this system can not clearly been defined. Pentagon, White House are likely candidates of that. But this center is a functional position and it does not take the form of a certain definite space or place. Spatially undefined, but functionally existent center of global military system is working somewhere around Washington D.C. and New York.

After the end of the Cold War, the world's military system became consolidated into a global one leaded by the U.S. as exemplified in the multinational force at the time of the Gulf War. But on the other hand, because of the increasingly chaotic world order and not firmly unified

security system of the world, global military system was shaky in the early 1990s.

On the other hand, the 1990s was an age of new stage of globalization. As the bipolar system was broken down, the mobility of capital, information, labor force, culture, and so on of global scale became accelerated. This globalizing force gave rise to global capitalism of today. The global capitalism, however, entailed a new religious, ethnic, cultural, regional conflicts as well as world wide dispersal of the conflict and hostility. Then, this global disorder brought about the reformation of a global military system.

Regarding to those moves, R.V. Savitch describes as follows.

“The very same forces of globalization that increased tourism, the transfer of capital, and the importance of cities also paved the way for increased terror. Technology has allowed decentralized terror cells to operate on a global scale; the easy flow of international currency and travel has provided terrorists with money and passports, and information explosion has allowed them to attract recruits and plan operations” (Savitch, 2003.p.107).

Seeing from the other side of the world, the center of the military as well as economic globalism, was

symbolically defined. It was something like New York and World Trade Center plus Pentagon. In particular, New York as a symbolic center of American as well as global capitalism was the most symbolic target of attack. As a result of the 9-11 attack, New York's position as a heartland of economic-military globalism became unveiled. Global capitalism produced the context of relationality that gave New York a spatial meaning as the center of American Empire. Even if the real military attacking on New York is not easy, pinpoint terrorist attacks with disproportionally huge scale of casualties and psychological damage are possible. So New York and other world cities in the West fell into day to day latent threat of terrorism.

According to Stephen Graham, Bush administration's "war on terror" produced an "urban imaginative geography" that separated and opposed the "target (terrorist) cities against homeland cities. Such a oppositional relationality brought the world cities into military context. Even if the real military attacking to New York is not easy, pinpoint terrorist attacks with disproportionally huge scale of casualties and psychological damage are possible. So New York and other world cities in the West got to face day to day latent threats of terrorism. So, "securitizing everyday spaces and systems" became needed. Re-engineering of urbanism with

permanent intelligent surveillance, “defensive” urban design and planning and so on are necessitated. The world cities are transformed into “the domestic front in the anti-terror war. (Graham, 2006)

It was unforeseeable situation from the world cities in the 1980s.

Savitch argues not only the relationship between 9-11 and globalization but also the paradigm change of urbanism as a result of this incident. Three factors could have impacts to the urban paradigm. First, diffusion of terrorism throughout the cities of the world. So far, urban terrorism was mainly local phenomena in Middle East, Northern Ireland and ex-Soviet area, but it is now dispersed to the entire urban world. Second, 9-11 revealed possibly tremendous scale of economic damage. Economic loss of the 9-11 is estimated as about 83 billion dollar, approximately same as that of the Hanshin Earthquake of 1995. 125,000 jobs were lost and vacancy rate of office was jumped from 0 % level up to 10% etc. Third, urban and architectural design also are somewhat changed. “Defensive dispersal” of firms from skyscrapers took place after the incident. Although it was an overreaction, opinion polls showed that many Americans, urban dwellers in particular, feel anxiety. A kind of trauma might be left among the people in urban America.

So, what about the future of the world cities? Can they retain the present economic prosperity and hegemonic position? Global terrorism and global military system have much do with the world city question. Deserves to be remembered is Lewis Mumford's arguments about the world cities. He told, the world city is a hope for the future of mankind. However, for realizing that hope, the world cities need to be supported by a world order..

New York was, and still is, a microcosm of the world. Although struggles with segregation issue has been the fate of this city, it somehow built a multicultural, pluralistic city. Now New York needs to exert not only the economic influence but also to show the example of building a urban order.

Conclusion: multiple faces of the 21st century cites

The world city in the late 20th century created a real global linkage of economy and information. That globalizing power was so intense that local cultural, moral, and political identity became swept away (Kamo,2000). Within them, the world cities to a certain degree succeeded to reproduce the diversity of the world within it, but outwardly tended to exert hegemonic and sometimes destructive functions on other, heterogeneous systems. Consequently it gave rise to the "clash of civilization".

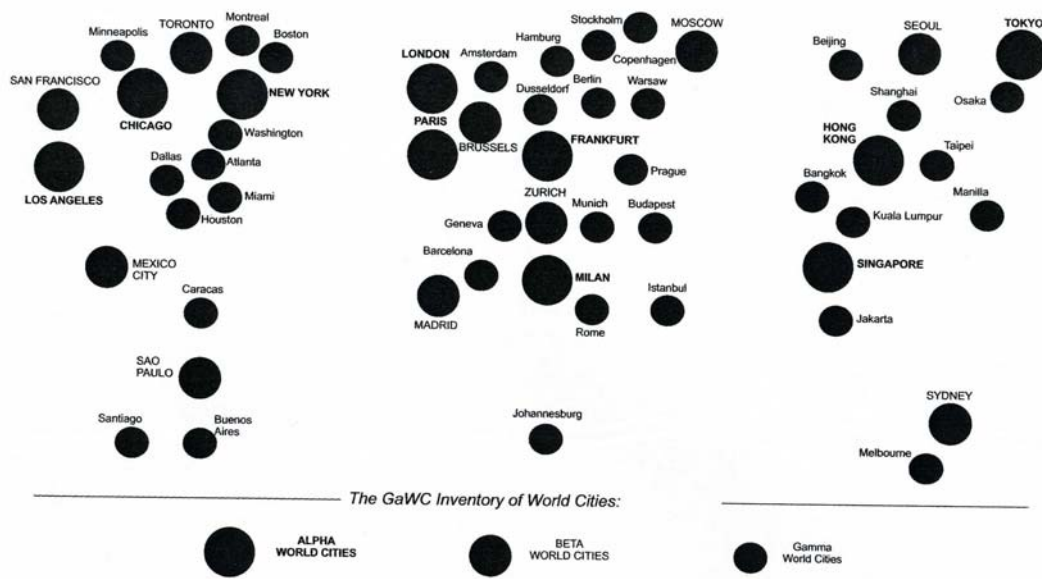
The future of the world cities is, overshadowed by the fear of urban terrorism. Bush administration's "war on terror" policy could not overcome the potential insecurity and anxiety of the American urban dwellers. Seemingly nothing serious happened and order of urban America is basically maintained at the moment. However, in backstage, day to day intelligent surveillance is being undertaken. It might be said a psychological "marshal law" system,

Taking the chance of the change of political cycle, another approaches are deserved to be tried.

The world city strategy so far was predominantly economic one. But today diverse ideas, concepts, philosophies and policies are intermingled. Now people's thinking about urbanism in the 21st century is much more diverse than any time before. Speaking about the concept of the city, other than the world city, creative city, sustainable city, liveable city, compact city, downsizing city, slow city and so on are being discussed as different conceptualization of the 21st century city. Through reshuffling those concepts and ideas, we might be able to find some alternative paths.

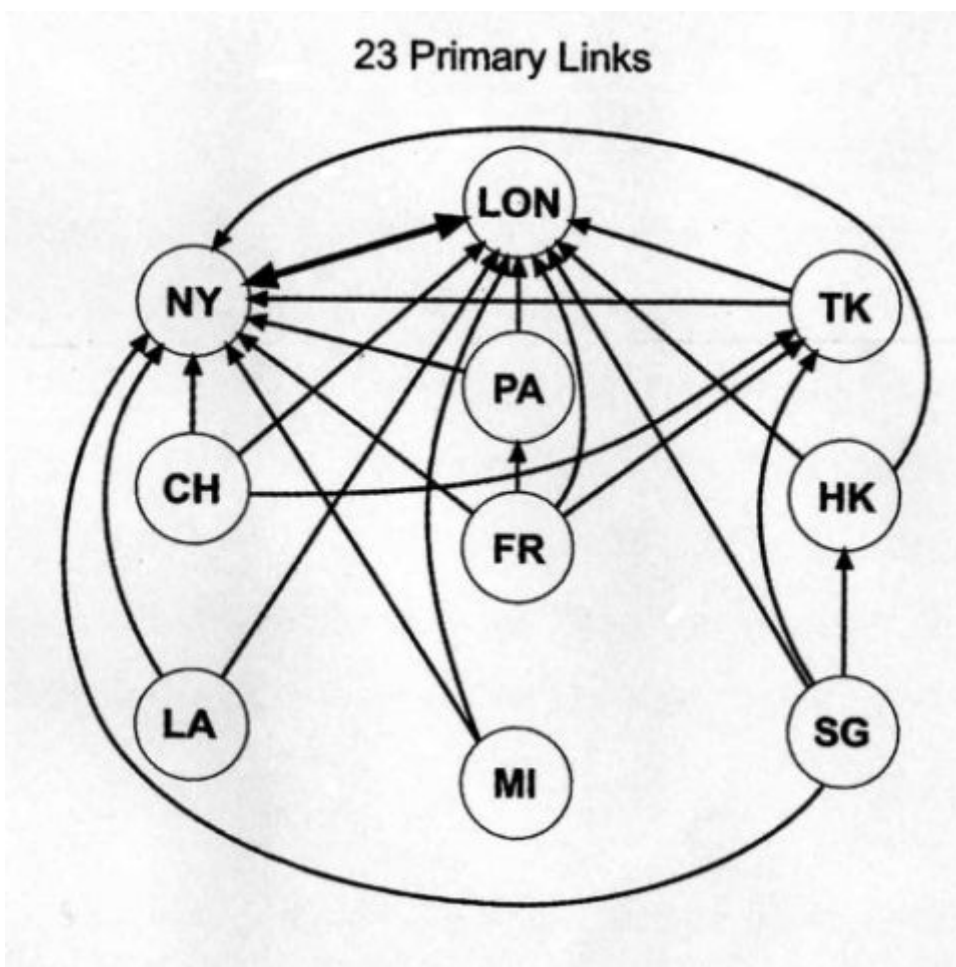
Figure 1 The new world's urban hierarchy

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)



Source) Taylor, Walker, and Beaverstock 2002

Figure 2 Primary Intercity Office Lincages



Source) *ibid.*.

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