

The Secrets and Future of Global Cities

A Book Review and Reflections on “Global City Makers”, Economic Actors and Practices in the World City Network – by Michael Hoyler,

Christof Parnreiter and Allan Watson, Elgar 2018

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Abstract

The rapid increase of global cities in the 1990s would count now to reach more than 100 cities. Many of these global cities are trying to influence the global economy by differentiated or similar advanced instruments. The capacities and the details of these instruments have not been scientifically investigated in detail, despite the delicate role of the global cities makers and their capacity to influence the socio-economies as powerful economic actors. These intermediary economic actors are very influential in the making and un-making global cities. The “Global City Makers” economic actors and practices in the world city network by Hoyler et. al. (2018) is been reviewed from this perspective mainly. As this book help to identify the influence of certain economic planning on the socio-economic fate of millions of peoples today. Engaging critically and constructively with global urban studies from a relational economic geography perspective, the book outlines a renewed agenda for global cities research.

Keywords: Global cities, Global city makers, Resilience economy, Urban planning, Urban

economy, Socio-Economics, Future cities

1. Introduction

The book reviews what emerged in the 1980s of beyond normal cities economic growth trend and more towards new type of economic complexity and diversity that created new global cities as Singapore and Dubai. These cities called later global cities and carried very complex intermediate capabilities. The complexity of these global cities comes from their unique way of regulation, laws, accounting, logistics and sophisticated services which were developed to create new ways of influencing the global economies.

Hoyler et al. (2018) seen that global cities are shaped by economic and political actors. Many of these economic actors are brokers or owners of real estate, commodity traders or consultants in the banking sector. Many of these actors are also expats working for transnational financial firms, offshore service providers work all together formally, or informally to articulate and control economic activities. The work of Hoyler and his colleagues conceptualized how global cities should be places where the world economy is managed and controlled, and discusses the significance of economic actors and their practices in the formation of the world city network. Hoyler et. al (2018) focused on the role of financial services, management consultancy, real estate, commodity trading and maritime industries. The book covers detailed case studies from different locations across the globe and give examples of major global cities such as London, New York and Tokyo, as well as globalizing cities including Mexico City, Hamburg and Mumbai.

2. Focus of the Book

This book of ‘Global City Makers’ targets to attract readers in urban studies, economic geography and international management as well as urban policy-makers and practitioners in globalizing firms. The authors provide an in-depth account of the role of powerful economic actors in making and un-making global cities. Engaging critically and constructively with global urban studies from a relational economic geography perspective, the book outlines a renewed agenda for global cities research.

Hoyler et al. (2018) conceptualizes global cities as places from where the world economy is managed and controlled, and discusses the significance of economic actors and their practices in the formation of the world city network. For example, the chapters on the book focus on the financial services, management consultancy, real estate, commodity trading and maritime industries. The detailed case studies are located across the globe to incorporate major global cities such as London, New York and Tokyo as well as globalizing cities including Mexico City, Hamburg and Mumbai.

The authors reviews how global cities as New York and London generate smart cities types where electronic infrastructure would differentiate their services and thus could target high talents while also having high demands for low wage workers. These global cities work as frontier space enabling global corporates domination and also allowing minor actors to enter national economies.

3. Global Cities and the Future Fourth Generation Cities

Global cities, in order to survive, the need to re-define themselves and their value towards the civilization in every era. Since the times of Athens for the Greeks, many cities continue to

play a role in the development of socio-economics which compete with the role of inspiring governments, since these cities have renewed level and capacity to create a realised inspiration on its community, as per Buheji (2016). New York and Tokyo, for example, today are changing their role from being third industrial revolution cities, since they are transforming themselves from centres of trade to centres of global finance.

With the development of 4th generation cities location or proximity to seaways or land trade routes would be minor as the economy would go where human capital and ease of services would be available. The fourth generation cities would have complex socio-economic influence based on the on the internet of things, artificial intelligence and big data, where the global city activities would be monitored in real time, WEF (2018).

Future Global Cities would be more of different silicon valley's where they would compete in their ability on demonstrating the economics of proximity to ideas and innovations that comes from multi-national highly skilled people. Cities like Manama or Dubai might compete with New York if they manage to setup the previous statement formula, i.e. proximity of ideas and availability of realised people freedom. This proximity of ideas and people attractions need thus targeted investments that bring in and attract people and this why cities like Dubai invested heavily to convert itself into an aviation, business and tourism hub. However, 4th generation global cities also would compete in creating more public spaces for people to interact through hubs, accelerators for youth and entrepreneurs, or gardens and shopping centres for the rest of the public for example.

Since these 4th generation global cities are expected to be of highly dense population, well-planned sustainable health, housing and transportation services, would be some of their priorities. In these 4th generation global cities people are expected to demand more public spaces, more freedom of regulations, i.e. allowing autonomous driving, and Uber and self-driving cars. These 4th generation cities would be unique in their ability to accommodating more people without destroying the qualities that makes them attractive to people in the first place.

4. Critique on Global Cities Research

In general, including this book, the body of knowledge still miss deep research that really avoid ignoring experiences from the Global South Cities and stop being biased toward the Global North cities, especially in relevance to the concept of development. Global cities need to be evaluated in their survival, adaptation, and growth capacities, in cases of sudden or chronic stresses and/or uncounted shocks as mentioned by Buheji (2018). Resilient cities, as per Buheji, incorporate readiness for being resilience towards different type of instabilities and stresses, includes financial recession, unemployment, inefficient public transportation, violence, or utility shortages, or any socio-economic situation that might strain the fabric of the community. This is very important for acclaimed global cities which the book didn't clearly address. In addition, the book failed to show historic changes that lead to the demolishing the global cities, to be lesson learned of how global city can end or evolve.

Hoyler et al. (2018) doesn't also discuss the need for addressing the issues of inequality in many global cities today. Labour in these global cities are becoming still more vulnerable. This work also doesn't demonstrate the importance of these cities to be environmental

friendly. The urban planning in these cities need to encourage energy conservation and water re-use.

Despite this reviewed book focus on the city's economic activities, Hoyler and his colleagues fail to show the importance of the role of the vibrancy of these cities in its sustainability. Issues like connectivity, i.e. how these cities accommodate the movement of people through transport systems need to be illustrated. Deeper socio-economic issues that ensure the resilience of the social fabric in terms of income distribution, with fair access to all quality of life services.

5. Conclusion

Hoyler et al. (2018) made a great contribution to the body of knowledge in general and to these essence of future urban planning specifically. The research of 'Global Cities Makers' could've been more comprehensive, if it managed to cover also the behavioural economics that are generated by these cities, which is becoming more of an important tool for evaluating whether the urban planning economics is adding value to the realised socio-economic outcomes, in relevance to the betterment of quality of life. More research in this line is needed in the future for both the researchers and the practitioner.

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