Exploring Asian urbanization under the radar

*Asian Cities* challenges Western theories of globalization and urban growth with a fresh and stimulating look at cities in developing Asia. It questions the status accorded globalization in explaining contemporary Asian cities, arguing instead that they are being transformed by three major forces – urbanization and nation-building as well as globalization. The first two are not dependent variables of globalization, although all, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, have been shaped by capitalism.

The book reaches beyond the usual focus on metropolitan centers to examine urban life in a sample of middle-sized cities representative of hundreds of such urban centers throughout the Asian continent. In sum, it examines developing Asian cities in their own terms rather than as variants of Western cities.

This is a nuanced study grounded in quantitative findings but enriched by qualitative research that both provides additional evidence and – together with many maps and illustrations – brings the findings alive.
ASIAN CITIES
NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies

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Preface and acknowledgements

If this book had one starting point it was the experience of visiting a number of Asian cities in the late 1990s and early 2000s and being struck by the absence of the large populations of foreign-born migrants which were such a characteristic of cities in the western world at that time. This study is not only about that phenomenon and that contrast, but both provided a trigger for researching the many different ways that globalization has played out in Asian as compared with Western cities.

That research was carried out over many years and in many places and has accumulated a correspondingly lengthy list of debts which it is a pleasure to acknowledge.

The Japan Foundation and the United States–New Zealand Educational Foundation (the Fulbright program) both provided fellowships that allowed me to research facets of this project at Kyushu University (Faculty of Law) and Harvard University (Center for European Studies). I am particularly indebted to Shigeru Imasato at the former institution and Peter Hall and Patricia Craig at the latter.

I am indebted to many colleagues in the New Zealand Asian Studies Society for support and encouragement for this project, including those who courageously offered to read and respond to all or parts of the text: Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, Duncan Campbell, Paul Clark, Stephen Epstein, Pauline Keating, Hui Luo, Graeme Macrae, Brian Moloughney and Vanessa Ward.


I wish to thank the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations at Victoria University of Wellington for providing a
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welcome academic home. I wish also to thank the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, in particular Heath Sadlier, for design advice and Jock Phillips, general editor of Te Ara, the online encyclopedia of New Zealand, www.teara.govt.nz, for accommodating my lengthy absences from that project.

In the cities in which I spent most time in the course of the research I accumulated a host of debts. I can think of virtually no circumstances in which individuals, when approached, were ever less than helpful, in a variety of settings from the official and institutional to the informal. Thanks go to those who agreed to be interviewed about their lives and about the cities in which they lived or with which they were familiar (some were interviewed at a distance). They are acknowledged in footnotes, usually by pseudonyms or initials.

I would also like to thank in particular: (1) In respect of Yangzhou and Shanghai – Dai Zhongchun, Han Chao, Hu Hong, Hu Yufeng, Jiang Ding, J-C Somers, Liu Tong, Wang Ligeng, Yin Binwei, Ma Yufeng and colleagues and students at Yangzhou University, officials of the Yangzhou city administration, and Vibeke Bødahl and Lucie Olivová, joint organizers of a workshop on and in Yangzhou in 2005. (2) In respect of Semarang and Jakarta – Syaefudin Akbar, Joost Cote, Sri Wuli Fitriati, Gerry van Klinken, Bayu Nugraha, Mochamad Rachman and Singgih Sulistiyono and colleagues and students at Universitas Diponegoro in Semarang. (3) In respect of Mysore and Bangalore – Baiju Babu, Shankar Bennur, Asha Kumaraswamy, Cedric Holz, K. G. Ramachandran, Vishwas Shivakumar, K. S. Sujeeesh and Dr K. Sadashiva and colleagues at Mysore University.

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At NIAS Press, Gerald Jackson, Leena Höskuldsson, Samantha Pedersen and the rest of the team looked after me and the book extremely well. Comments on the text by anonymous readers and especially by Ross King were very helpful. I also wish to thank the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) at Columbia University, and in particular Robert Downes and Greg Yetman, for their assistance with the CIESIN-
sourced maps used in the book. Megan Torrington ably prepared the six location maps.

None of these individuals are responsible for any of the book’s failings, but they have contributed immeasurably to any merits it possesses and indeed to its realization.

Finally, I must register an irony. This book questions many assumptions about globalization and may at times seem to argue that there is no such thing. In fact it is hard to imagine the project being conducted without the benefit of globalization, in particular of global interconnectedness. From Wellington I have been readily able to maintain scholarly, informational and personal contacts with individuals in the case study cities and around the world. Online newspapers, journal articles, statistical series, library catalogs and sites such as Flickr were all indispensable to facilitating the completion of the project. The H-ASIA discussion network, and its long-serving lead editor Frank Conlon, merit particular acknowledgement and thanks. Globalization may not explain everything, but some things, including this book, would not have happened without it.

Malcolm McKinnon
Wellington, New Zealand
## Glossary and abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATM</td>
<td>automated teller machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBS</td>
<td>bulletin board system (on the internet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDA</td>
<td>Bangalore Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>central business district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFP</td>
<td>call for (conference) papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunyun</td>
<td>traveling period at the time of Chinese New Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIESIN</td>
<td>Center for International Earth Science Information Network (Columbia University)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crore</td>
<td>10 million (Indian usage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI</td>
<td>foreign direct investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idul Fitri</td>
<td>celebration at end of Ramadan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jatre</td>
<td>Hindu festival with procession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KHB</td>
<td>Karnataka Housing Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kms</td>
<td>kilometers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lakh</td>
<td>100,000 (Indian usage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUS</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing Ming</td>
<td>Chinese spring time grave-tending festival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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RMB renminbi (yuan, the Chinese currency)
Rphs rupiah (Indonesian currency)
Rs rupees (Indian currency)
STD subscriber toll dialling
WTO World Trade Organization
Part 1: Introduction
Globalization, Asian cities and Western cities

Globalization and cities in the West and in developing Asia

This study questions the way in which the concept of globalization is applied to Asian cities. Globalization is widely used to explain transformations in contemporary Asian cities. The reasoning however has been formulated mostly on the basis of the investigation of Western cities, whilst the Asian cities most cited in globalization studies are those which most resemble Western cities. But many Asian cities and most cities in developing Asia do not resemble Western cities. As Asia accounts for over half the world’s total population and Asian cities for over 40 per cent of the world’s urban population, this is a major challenge for understanding globalization. Moreover cities in other parts of the world outside the West, notably in Africa and Latin America, resemble Asian more than they do Western cities.

There are two processes affecting Asian cities which do not affect Western cities in the same way. They are, like globalization, modernizing transformations. One is urbanization; the other is nation-building (these terms will be discussed further below). They are shaping most Asian cities but they are not shaping Western cities.

This difference is not surprising. From the perspective of a North American or West European, globalization is the most marked contemporary form of economic, social and cultural transformation or modernization. This era of globalization embraces the most recent phase of technological advancement that commenced with the scientific and industrial revolutions. It builds on earlier “deaths of distance” – the nineteenth century’s railroad, steamship, telegraph and telephone; the twentieth century’s airplane, car, radio and television. It has further dissolved boundaries of time and space, and indeed created virtual worlds that have overridden all such boundaries.

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1 See below (p. 11) for the definition of “developing Asia” used in this book.
Businesses are principal drivers of this transformation. Major companies are seemingly no longer confined by the nation-state but treat the whole world as a theater of operations. Understandably for social theorist Anthony Giddens, modernity was “inherently globalizing.” Equally the “scapes” which anthropologist Arjun Appadurai formulated in the early 1990s – technoscapes, ethnoscapes, mediascapes, financescapes and ideoscapes – were characterized by “de-territorialization” and were no longer “spatially bounded”.

In comparison with globalization, other modernizations not only have long histories in the West but completed ones. Many North American and Western European cities either became or developed as industrial centers in the nineteenth century; the biggest impact of urbanization on them took place before the Second World War; the impact of nation-building on their inhabitants was most marked before the First World War; secularism, or the separation of church and state, has a complex history in Western cities and states, but it was most active as an issue in the nineteenth century.

In developing Asia the picture is different. The political, economic and technological impulses which have given rise to contemporary globalization also drive both urbanization and nation-building. I will now discuss each of these in turn.

In the words of the most prominent scholars of globalization, the phenomenon refers to the emergence of interregional networks and systems of interaction and exchange. Broadly speaking this is how it is used here – to describe any activity or encounter which engages individuals or organizations across a national boundary, excluding crossings which have a markedly regional character, such as those within the EU, between Canada and the United States, or between Singapore and Malaysia. Such crossings can be physical – of people, goods and services – financial – of capital – and virtual – as in the internet which connects individuals, companies, organizations and governments seamlessly to the world-wide web. The “crossings” can be normal – people “going about their business” – or toxic – invasion, crime, pollution or infection. They can be short-term – as in a weekend away from

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home or an overnight financial transaction – or medium or longer term – migration to another country, investment in a plant or business.

The key element in these patterns, from the point of view of this study, is that they are transformations which are expressed globally and are measured by either number or intensity. A greater global trade in goods and services, a greater global movement of people, a more intense and sustained global exchange of ideas, and a greater awareness of contexts and circumstances beyond the local, national and regional would in all instances come under the rubric of “globalization”.

The contrast that the book will return to, throughout its pages, is between transformations which can be described as global and transformations which are more usefully seen in other terms, notably as products of urbanization or nation-building.

How are these to be distinguished? The researching globalization website explores “indicators of interconnectedness and the enmeshment of states in regional and global processes”. Leaving aside for the moment the amalgamation of “regional” and “global”, this is part of what this study is engaged in. Its aim is to match indicators of globalization against indicators of nation-building and urbanization. When globalization is the only thing being measured, these other transformations of necessity become recessive. The purpose of this study is to foreground them.

Take an individual who migrates from the interior of China to a coastal city. The migration can be seen as a part of globalization because the migrant finds work in a factory producing components for a Japanese-owned company, which are duly exported to the United States. It can also however be seen as an indicator of nation-building and urbanization. The migration can be seen as “national” because it is part of a massive movement of labor which takes place within what is de facto a single labor market – the whole of China. The migration can be seen as urbanizing because the individual is moving from a country district to a city.

None of the three “triggers” can be seen as primary, and certainly not globalization. Both the national labor market and the rural–urban migration could take place in the absence of globalization (the reverse is probably not the case, but that is not my immediate concern here). The example in itself is demonstrative though of what this book is trying to do. It is not attempting to dismiss globalization, but it is attempting to place a different frame around it, one which recognizes other triggers to modernizing transformation, par-
particularly for the purposes of this study in Asian cities, but the approach could readily be extrapolated to cities in other parts of the developing world.

I now turn to urbanization. Urbanization is used here to refer to the process by which a society changes from being predominantly rural to predominantly urban. European and North American societies became urbanized – that is, with 75 per cent or more of their populations in urban areas – at least two generations ago, but developing Asian societies are in the middle of that process. If we take the three most populous Asian countries – China, India and Indonesia – rates of urbanization have risen from under 20 per cent in the 1970s to around 33 per cent in India and around 50 per cent in China and Indonesia in 2010. If developing Asian countries follow the Western trend – and there is as yet no evidence that they will not – the urbanization process in Asia is not much more than half complete in India or two-thirds complete in China and Indonesia. The urbanization still to come has major implications for Asian cities.

Urbanization is not just a matter of the transformation of the built environment – of where people live, what they work at and how many of them there are – it also entails a massive social and cultural transformation as generations of often unlettered peasants and country people give way to cohorts of educated city dwellers – the kind of transformation that drove social and political transformation in nineteenth-century Europe. This can be called urbanism. To avoid cumbersome sentences, I will at times use “urbanization” to embrace urbanism as well, at other times I will instance both.

“Nation-building” refers to the process by which a population in a particular state or territory acquires a shared identity, one common to all its inhabitants but not shared with outsiders – foreigners. Nation-building is an historical memory in North America and Europe but it is an immediate and powerful element in contemporary Asian cities. If we take the three aforementioned countries, the trajectory is somewhat different from the processes of urbanization and urbanism. Nationalist movements were a feature of the early twentieth-century history of China, British India and the Dutch Indies at a time when cities existed but were growing only slowly and the level of urbanization was low. For the newly independent governments of India (1947) and Indonesia (1949), and the revolutionary government of China (1949), nation-building was a crucial activity, whereas urbanization was either discouraged or overlooked. Nation-building remains central today however,
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albeit often in forms that would be unrecognizable to mid-twentieth-century nation-makers.  

Why are these other transformations overlooked or rather not given the same attention as globalization? There are two main reasons. The first stems from fashions in ideas that have led to globalization being given more prominence and the other transformations less. The second stems from the practice of equating globalization with the reinvigoration of capitalism, that shift from the state to the market as the fulcrum of economic life which started in the late 1970s. Capitalism is implicated in almost all transformations in the contemporary Asian city, but not all are products of globalization.

The fascination with globalization is both popular and scholarly. New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman’s The world is flat, looking at what he saw as the major consequence of globalization, was a world best-seller. Globalization is, seemingly, global: “... even a basic knowledge of geography and history turns up examples in every corner of the globe of the kinds of intercourse that turn global into globalization ...” The word itself is seductive, it is “privileged”, to use an academic term; it is invoked even when there is no compelling justification for it and on occasion tumbles into what one sardonic commentator has called “globaloney”.

City governments in Asia embrace the rhetoric of globalization and then act on it. In 2005 China’s minister of construction, Wang Guangtao, criticized the no-less-than 183 cities in that country which had vowed to build themselves into “international metropolises” with show-off projects such as huge squares, luxury office buildings and airports – while neglecting other kinds of infrastructure. Thus the cities promote the idea of globalization irrespective of whether circumstances underpin it.

In Semarang in Indonesia city statistics highlight percentage trends in nights spent by foreign and domestic visitors, thereby implying no difference in numbers – when in fact foreign visitor nights in a representative year –

8 Quoted in T. G. McGee et al., China’s urban space: development under market socialism, Abingdon, UK and New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 207.
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2007 – totalled 67,000 compared with 4.34 million domestic visitor nights. Journalism is also susceptible – reports from Jakarta of hopes of expanding Indonesia’s herbal medicine output highlight anticipated growth in both foreign and domestic demand though the former market was just $4 million annually compared with the latter’s $551 million.

The world of scholarship is not immune to fashion. One geographer has observed that recent studies of urbanism have been “accompanied understandably by a curiosity about global convergence”. Scholars of contemporary urbanization indeed readily assume a causal connection from globalization to urbanization even when the data being used confirm neither the causality nor even necessarily the closeness of the connection.

The word appears in titles and paper abstracts even when there is little globalization “meat” in the book’s or chapter’s or paper’s “meal” (though it is usually a matter of inappropriate emphasis not dissimulation). In a recent publication on Asian cities two chapters used variants of “global” in their titles, but the contents only partially supported the emphases.

Conversely, cities that in no way can be construed as “global” are overlooked. In her aptly-titled Ordinary cities, Jennifer Robinson challenged the emphasis on global connections associated with the world-cities school of research, which she saw as “consigning substantial cities around the globe to the theoretical void because of their apparent structural irrelevance”.

Scholarship in urban Asia remains, despite over sixty years of independent and independently-minded Asian governments, dominated by the Western academy and this may also explain the relatively greater interest in globalization than in national or purely urban developments. In his influential The condition of postmodernity (1989) David Harvey, though he does not actually

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9 Jawa Tengah in figures, Semarang, statistical office of the province of Jawa Tengah (Central Java) 2008, p. 439; as it happened whereas domestic nights had increased compared with 2006, foreign nights had slightly decreased.
10 Jakarta Post, 3 Oct. 2008 (Aditya Suharmoko), “Herbal medicine expected to soar this year”.
12 See for example some of the discussion in Tommy Firman, “Demographic and spatial patterns of Indonesia’s recent urbanization”, Population, Space and Place, 10 (2004).
use the term “globalization”, discusses the “time-space compression” occurring with the shift to flexible forms of capitalism from the 1970s onwards. That compression is framed in global terms, but its inferred site is the developed Western city, not the developing Asian one. Global transformations concentrated its enquiry on six advanced capitalist states, of which only one, Japan, was in Asia. Scholars of Asian origin – to judge by their names – frequently contribute to the academic literature, but they are more often based in Western institutions than in Asia itself. Those institutions which make a substantial contribution but are located in Asia – the National University of Singapore and Hong Kong University – make the point in a different way, Hong Kong and Singapore both being exceptional rather than characteristic Asian cities. Edited collections almost always have at least one Western editor and the most active international publishers in Asian studies are located in North America, Europe or Australia, with the exception of the university presses in Singapore and Hong Kong.

However the focus on globalization cannot be considered solely a product of fashion or scholarly bias. The widespread assumption that late twentieth and early twenty-first century Asian capitalism is to be equated with globalization also helps explain the relative invisibility of both urbanization and nation-building in scholarly discussion, and/or their subordination to globalization. For a Chinese observer “globalization is not a neutral word describing a natural process. It is part of the growth of Western capitalism, from the days of colonialism and imperialism.” From such a perspective globalization is the same as capitalism, and any other articulations of capitalism, amongst which urbanization and nation-building could be included, are hidden.

In twenty-first century Asian cities the identification of capitalism with globalization has been reinforced for three reasons. Firstly, capitalism was weak in much of Asia through the middle years of the twentieth century and


16 David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, Global transformations: politics, economics and culture, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 30; Asia is similarly below the radar in David Held et al., Debating globalization, Cambridge, Polity, 2005. Brian Easton, Globalisation and the wealth of nations, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2007, p. x, notes that “the vast majority of globalization books are parochial. Most have a European or American perspective”.

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its reinvigoration in China from 1978 and India from 1991 coincided with the new era of globalization. Moreover that turn to the market took the form of an export drive in both countries, China with manufactured exports and India with service exports, and these developments underlined the linkage between capitalism and globalization.

Secondly, cities in developing Asia grew between 1950 and 1980, before this most recent era of globalization, but that growth was undercut by big increases in rural populations, and also, at least in the case of China, by the government discouraging labor mobility. Accordingly levels of urbanization remained low. When urbanization gathered pace from the 1980s it was natural to see it as related to globalization. But urbanization is in the final analysis a function of differences in wages and living conditions between rural and urban areas – it is not inherently a product of globalization. Many different factors may determine those wage differentials, including government policies and buoyant economic conditions in urban areas. From a macro-economic point

Fig. 1.1: World population density, 2000. The darkest areas have densities of 250–1,000 and over 1,000 people per km². The Pacific-centered projection emphasizes that Asia is the planet’s demographic “heartland”.

of view, long-term growth or a cyclical upturn can come from investment, consumption, government spending or exports, not only the latter.

Thirdly, “nation-building” had been at the center of the newly independent and/or revolutionary regimes in India, Indonesia, China and elsewhere in Asia and of national leaders such as Nehru, Mao Zedong and Sukarno. The shift from a national to a globalist outlook from the late 1970s and 1980s seemed by definition to marginalize such endeavors. If there was capitalist activity it had to be related to globalization, not to a nation-building enterprise. Yet, to take just one example, Singapore’s history since independence in 1965 is indicative of the fact that a state with an economy organized on capitalist lines and fully integrated in the world economy could nonetheless be engaged in a nation-building endeavor.

The thread that has linked the impact of globalization, urbanization and nation-building on developing Asian cities since the 1980s is not globalization itself but capitalist modernization or modernity (I use “modernization” where the emphasis is more on the material aspects of the modernizing process). This does not in turn mean that every modernization that has happened in the post-1980 city can be attributed to capitalism. Indeed, as Gerry van Klinken has argued in respect of Indonesian towns and cities, elites are aligned with the state – local if not central – as well as with business. Nonetheless capitalism is pervasive enough to merit reference at many points in the subject matter of this study.

To place this approach in a longer time frame, the relevant nineteenth-century model may not be the British one of laissez-faire capitalism running roughshod throughout the world – the “empire of free trade” – but the German and American one of a vigorous domestic capitalism transforming cities and societies.

Methodological issues and the structure of the book

The field of study of the book is cities in developing Asia, by which is meant the People’s Republic of China, the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. 19


19 The Asian Development Bank uses “developing Asia” but includes central Asian and Caucasus states, which are not included in the geographical definition used here.
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The generalizations are not intended to apply to cities in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, which are developed countries. The two city-states of Singapore and Hong Kong, with their restrictions on hinterland migration and their developed world status, are also excluded.

The focus on China, India and Indonesia makes sense because they are the three most populous countries in Asia, accounting for two-thirds of its population, and they also cover the continent’s three “first order” regions –

Fig. 1.2: Asia population points, 2000. The larger triangles locate cities of more than five million; the smaller, cities of one to five million and the dots, cities of less than one million, down to centers of less than 100,000.

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East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent or South Asia (these last two terms will be used interchangeably). Indeed the selection can be validated even from a world population map on which the population concentrations of eastern China, the subcontinent and the island of Java in Indonesia stand out (see Fig. 1.1).

This is still a very broad canvas. Certainly it has involved the traversing of many scholarly specializations both of place and of discipline. Southeast Asia, China and the subcontinent are the province for the most part of different area studies schools; urban geography, and cultural, business, migration and media studies are just the principal disciplinary areas the scholarship of which underwrites this study. The purpose of the study is not however to add to such specialized knowledge. It is to draw out common elements in the urban Asian experience of globalization and also to highlight the contrast between that experience, the experience of globalization in the West, and widely-accepted assumptions about globalization.

The study focuses on particular cities within each of these countries. This was partly pragmatic. Ethnographic observation having contributed to the evidence base, a sole researcher has to make best use of both time and money. But it also seemed reasonable on methodological grounds. The full range of Asian cities encompasses an enormous variety of circumstances. It is difficult to think of anything that Bangkok, Ranchi in Jharkand and Xiangfan in Hubei have in common save that they are all “Asian”. But there are hundreds and hundreds of cities which share enough of the experience of globalization, urbanization and nation-building to make sampling feasible (see Fig. 1.2).

There are 200 such cities apiece in India and China and 50 in Indonesia – cities of between a quarter of a million and five million people, most of them unknown to and unvisited by outsiders. The most rapid growth in Indonesia in the 1970s took place in cities with populations of between 200,000 and 500,000 and in 2010 Indonesia had probably 200 centers with populations of between 50,000 and one million.\(^\text{20}\) As one reporter recently commented in respect of China, “places few Americans have ever heard of are racing to become China’s next new regional urban center”.\(^\text{21}\) In India Sunil Khilnani has referred to the “cities with populations of over 100,000 … the homelands of [the] ‘new middle classes’, who no longer gaze enviously at the distant

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metropolitan cities, whose horizons are not shaped by ideas of Bombay and New Delhi – cities, that, if anything, they resent and disparage.22

This does not mean the major cities are not important. Many lesser cities are part of urban regions headed by a metropolitan center. For example the cities of the lower Yangtze in China, amongst which Yangzhou is numbered, are all in the orbit of Shanghai, which has as many people as the other lower Yangtze cities put together and is within a four hour journey of all of them.23 Many middle-sized urban centers on Java are situated close to Jakarta, and indeed on some formulations are regarded as part of “greater Jakarta”.24

Such inter-relationships prompted a decision to study pairings: to draw some material from one large and well-known metropolitan center, about which a great deal had been written, and more material from one lesser known “provincial” or “second tier” center, with which it was more practicable for the researcher to become acquainted. In the case of the former, the cities were ones for which an argument for the significance of globalization seemed inescapable – Shanghai in China, Bangalore in India and Jakarta in Indonesia. The lesser cities were close, but not too close – Yangzhou in China, four hours by bus from Shanghai; Mysore, three hours by bus from Bangalore; Semarang in Indonesia, a half-day train journey from Jakarta. Profiles of these cities are provided towards the end of this chapter.

The reader may reasonably ask why other significant transformations have not been given prominence. Among the most obvious are industrialization; literacy; the demographic transition; uneven development of cities within the same country; and region-building within and amongst nations.

A focus on industrialization would have made sense if this study had focused primarily on the post-Second World War decades when industrialization policies were actively pursued, especially in China and India. In the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, however, the service sector has also played a role in the social and economic transformation of Asian cities. As for literacy and the demographic transformation, literacy rates are higher in urban than in rural areas, and birth rates lower, therefore urbanization is in effect a surrogate measure for both.

23 See comment in McGee et al., China’s urban space, p. 203.
Studies of globalization, in particular from theorists of world cities, frequently point to the differential impact of globalization on cities within countries; indeed it could be argued that it is integral to the world city approach (for which see further in chapter 2). The cities selected here are at the “more impact” end of any spectrum measuring the impact of globalization, so if the argument about the limits of globalization holds for them, it should also hold for more isolated cities. Region-building within nations, for example in respect of an Indian state, shapes some Asian cities. It is a process analogous to, but not as pervasive as, nation-building and therefore is not the subject of detailed enquiry in this book. Regionalism amongst nations is discussed in the final chapter.

The approach of the study, which involves comparing three transformations – globalization, urbanization and nation-building – places an emphasis on processes which have a beginning, middle and end. This is an approach seemingly at odds with the nuanced understandings of social change advanced in post-modern approaches in their questioning of grand narratives, and advanced in postcolonial approaches in their awareness of how deeply the past can be implicated in the present. Post-modernist and postcolonial angles of vision do illuminate the complexities and ambiguities of change. In putting three transformations alongside each other, this study highlights a particular set of complexities.

The book draws on both quantitative and qualitative material. The quantitative material includes statistical data on population movements, market size, sales figures and the like. Such information provides a great deal of evidence to support the argument that forces operating on an urban and national as much as a global scale shape city life in Asia. The available data, however, have some limitations.

The nation-state is the “unit” of globalization and many statistical series are collected accordingly. The national border is indeed a prime statistical collection point, all over the world. This is useful for examining nation-building but not so helpful for urbanization. Further, in both Indonesia and China, migration statistics are gathered by province, which makes it very hard to evaluate rural–urban migration, or are patchy, especially for economic activity in Indonesia and India, where the informal – undocumented – economy is where a large part of the labor force finds work. Statistics are not collected about major but informally-organized industries, whilst corruption and tax evasion dictates that data for other spheres of economic activity may involve massive undercounting.
Many international statistical series collect data in the first instance from developed countries, often the member states of the OECD, then only secondarily from other countries. Such data collecting is frequently obliged to overlook India and China, despite their massive size and the likely impact on any finding that is labeled “global”. Thus a tally of foreign-born populations by the Migration Policy Institute in Washington, DC does not list cities in either China or India; surveys of internet usage can make similar omissions. In sum, modernizing transformation in Asia and elsewhere in the non-Western world has many vigorous and vital facets that owe little or nothing to globalization but they are neither as visible nor as measurable as globalization.

The qualitative information is ethnographic. It aims to complement the quantitative data by foregrounding the lives and circumstances of individuals living in the cities under review. In some instances such material draws on ethnographic work by other researchers but for the most part it is the product of the author’s own investigations.

Ethnographic research characteristically involves researchers immersing themselves in a particular community or communities, for an extended period of time, mastering the spoken language and accumulating a range and depth of contacts and informants. The investigation carried out for this project does not sit neatly within such a formulation and some explanation of methods is in order.

The ethnographic investigation was carried out periodically in the case study cities over six years. For a project like this, which traverses three different countries, language is a major and immediate challenge. I am not fluent in any native Asian language and therefore on many occasions used translators or developed contacts with bilingual individuals. The language barrier was most marked in China, where English was least widespread and the use of characters rather than alphabet is a further hurdle to communication. In Yangzhou and Shanghai, more than in Indonesian and a great deal more than in Indian cities, I relied on bilingual speakers to answer questions about the urban environment as well as to translate in dealings with other contacts. The ethnographic material is least rich for China and richest for India.

I interviewed a variety of people. I was able to interview a number of individuals from these cities, or with close connections to them, in Wellington, New Zealand. In cities in Indonesia and India, I made contact with what

might be called professional informants – scholars, journalists and city officials. Having obtained quantitative information from them, I would also interview them about their own personal circumstances, if that seemed likely to be fruitful and they were agreeable. Something similar happened in Yangzhou but to a more limited extent and I did not engage in such activity in Shanghai.

In all cities other contacts were more serendipitous, a product of exploring the cities on foot or by public transport, and being open to the possibilities of encounters and what might come from them. To borrow Steiner Kvale’s metaphor, this was information garnered as a “traveler” not a “miner”.

Such investigations face a different set of challenges to those encountered in the gathering of quantitative data. These other challenges all in some way bear on the representation question: to what extent can the reader assume that the informants were representative or, even if they were, that the modes of gathering information did not so markedly shape the findings as to make them a nullity?

Connections made randomly carried particular risks of bias. I met men more than women (particularly in South India, where public space is markedly male), young more than old, and middle more than working class individuals. The reliance on individuals with English also introduced a risk of bias as they were likely to be better educated and of higher socio-economic status than the norm.

Both generally and in respect of language there were ways round the selection bias problem. Sons have mothers, brothers have sisters, husbands have wives, and fathers have daughters. Teachers or nurses know, or may well be kin to, builder’s laborers or cleaners. Fluent English speakers usually had relatives and friends whose knowledge and/or readiness to use English was far more limited, so to that extent I was introduced to a broader vernacular world than might have otherwise been the case. Also, as I discuss further in chapter three, in practice I see my findings as being most applicable to the urban middle classes, with whom I had the greatest amount of contact.


If I did succeed in overcoming these problems, I was that much more likely to encounter the power imbalance that arose where the interviewer was a relatively well-off, well-traveled and well-educated foreigner and the interviewee a less well-off, less traveled and less highly educated local. If I did succeed in overcoming these problems, I was that much more likely to encounter the power imbalance that arose where the interviewer was a relatively well-off, well-traveled and well-educated foreigner and the interviewee a less well-off, less traveled and less highly educated local.\footnote{Kvale, InterViews, pp. 292 ff.} It is difficult for an individual interviewer to assess the efficacy of his or her particular efforts to counter such a bias. Two points of reference were useful. The first was to observe that virtually no one with whom I had recurrent encounters ever solicited financial or other assistance or in any way indicated that such would be welcome – indeed where resources did change hands, either in the form of gifts, or as payment for research assistance, it was always initiated by me. The second was to allow for reciprocity, although this carried with it its own risks. To navigate between the respectful acceptance of hospitality on the one hand, while not cavalierly creating situations where the obligation to offer it was unavoidable and likely burdensome on the other, entailed a set of skills in which it was hard to advance beyond the novice stage.

Bias could also affect the interviews themselves. I pursued standard strategies to counter such risks. In interviews I interspersed impressionistic questions with more factual ones, for instance, I would ask individuals, “What other cities, if any, have you visited?” Depending on the answer I would ask a follow up such as “how frequently?” or “do your friends visit other cities as much/about as often, as you, or less often than you?” I aimed always to establish the class status and other contexts of the informant. This meant, for example, recognizing in many instances that individuals living with very limited amenities might, nevertheless, be in their own terms or that of the wider society middle class, on account to their level of education, and nature of employment. I also probed the meanings of terms or phrases used – for example if an informant used a word like “Western” or “globalization” I might then ask them to explain it rather than take the word as a given.

I believe that awareness of these risks contributed to the robustness of the ethnographic investigation, and I believe the ethnographic material presented here not only enriches the book but adds weight to its findings. Nonetheless the difference in the tests which can be applied to such material when compared to quantitative material needs to be kept in mind.

This book is divided into four main parts, and this introductory chapter is the first. Part two explores urbanization, which is broken into two chapters, one
looking at urbanization per se, that is, the material transformation of cities and the other looking at urbanism, that is, the transformation of attitudes and ways of life. In both chapters the discussion will focus both on the processes themselves and on the extent to which they can be analyzed independently of globalization. Part three argues through four thematic chapters that the shaping of the city by nation-wide influences, especially business influences, is as important to the lives of city dwellers in twenty-first century developing Asia as is globalization. In the final part and chapter of the book I ask whether globalization, urbanization, urbanism and nation-building are likely to continue to shape Asian cities. I will discuss this further at the end of this introduction.

In the sections that follow I will make more detailed cases for the importance of both urbanization and nation-building in understanding developing Asian cities, followed by profiles of the case study cities.

**Urbanization, urbanism and the city**

**Urbanization**

What does urbanization mean for cities? Urban growth is usually analyzed in terms of three elements: the natural increase of the people who already live in the city; the migration of people into the city from rural areas; and the expansion of the city such that populations formerly regarded as non-urban become urban.29

Of these three the first only contributes to urbanization if the rate of increase of the urban population is greater than for the rural population – which is not usually the case. It is the second and third that shape urbanization although even there care has to be taken with the numbers – for instance some migration to large cities may come from smaller cities – so it is intra-urban not rural–urban migration.

One contemporary definition of urbanization is “the increase in the number of people who live in places defined as urban ... the increase in the number of people engaged in non-agriculture ... and the growth in the value of the non-agricultural production in an urban-rural space.”30 The latter two parts of the definition are valuable in drawing attention to the urbanization

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30 McGee et al., China’s urban space, p. 5.
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that takes place on the margins of cities – “urban frontiers” they can be called. But it is useful to start with the first very simple definition: that urbanization means an increase in the percentage of a country’s population living in urban areas – in towns and cities. Studies of a variety of cities in contemporary Asia suggest that the three factors contribute in roughly equal proportions to urban growth and that migration and “re-classification” contribute about equally to urbanization. The commonly-held view that urbanization involves only or primarily hundreds of thousands of rural people getting to the city, on foot, horse and cart, truck, train, bus or whatever is true, but not the only truth – it is part of the story.

For the city itself urbanization, in a society which has not been urbanized but is undergoing that transformation, presents itself primarily in terms of infrastructure tasks. It involves building – houses, schools, hospitals, shops, workshops, offices, factories and official buildings. It involves servicing – sewage, drainage, roads and traffic control, street lighting, electricity and gas reticulation, public transport, airports, train stations and bus stands, a massive reconstruction of the fabric of life which, when city populations are growing fast, is never-ending, if in itself a major component of economic activity. Some of this activity is done by households – a family erecting temporary shelter with the benefit of a weatherproof plastic awning and a pirated power connection. Some is done by small businesses – a lone “auto” or taxi driver, or a pavement food-seller. Some is done by large businesses – apartment or office block construction for example. Some is done by large businesses in conjunction with a public authority – a metro rail system, a new bus station; these are the oft-cited “public–private partnerships”. And some is carried out solely by public agencies – one of which will operate the bus bumping down a poor road into a newly-developed neighborhood, whilst others build and/or staff schools, clinics, public toilets and baths.

Urbanization also occurs in contemporary North America and Europe. In the “sunbelts” of California, Florida and Spain rapid population growth and attendant building and construction activity has been a motif for generations, if in recess since 2008. Where the urban settings are entirely new – such as around Orlando in Florida or in some formerly remote Spanish littoral – the infrastructure requirements are similar to those in urbanizing Asia.

31 “Auto”, the shorthand term for an auto-rickshaw – very maneuverable motorized three-wheelers, first produced in the 1930s, which are a common means of transport in Indian cities and towns.
Other dynamics are different however – the Western societies are richer, so that the base level from which such developments are occurring is much higher. They are also much more urbanized – most of the inhabitants of these newly-developed cities have come from other cities, indeed in many instances the migration is more a town to “country” one, a long-range version of suburbanization. There is overall less population pressure, and there are fewer slums. The majority of urban inhabitants in these countries live where the urban fabric has been in place for decades and where the principal challenge is to maintain and upgrade, not to create.

These points will be developed in chapter two; urbanization “on the ground” in Bangalore, Semarang and Yangzhou will also be explored. All three cities provide evidence of both the impact of the process of urbanization on developing Asian cities and the variety of ways, some more extensive, others less so, by which it is articulated with globalization.

Urbanism
1850s Paris, 1880s Boston, 1900s Vienna, and 1920s Berlin: eras when these cities were rapidly growing and when their countries had levels of urbanization approximating those in developing countries today. They were cities in which radically new – modern – ways of organizing human life, and of thinking about the world, were being pioneered. To the Russian political activist Alexander Herzen, the once revolutionary Paris had become in the 1850s the capital of a reactionary police state; however, that was also when the poet Charles Baudelaire, in that same capital, coined the word “modernity”. London, then the world’s richest and most advanced city, had third world poverty and inequality – captured for all time by the novelist Charles Dickens – alongside its material and cultural advances. It seems appropriate in this study, with a chapter addressing urbanization, that “urbanism” should be used in place of modernity in a chapter on the social and cultural changes that accompany urbanization.

Louis Wirth’s seminal “Urbanism as a way of life” (1938) introduced the term urbanism though he argued for a theory and a range of research tasks that in fact straddled what is called here “urbanization” – ecological, technological and demographic change – as well as the social and mental/psychological areas

32 Compare the statement by Tim Bunnell, convenor of the urbanism research cluster, Asian Research Institute, National University of Singapore, on the value of de-centering “the West as the putative leading edge of urban transition, innovation and influence”, http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/article_view.asp?id=29, accessed 23 Jun. 2010.
that fall here within the ambit of urbanism. Contemporary scholars have found the term useful – “the making of new urbanism” for example – though sometimes it is used interchangeably with urbanization, sometimes not.

Urbanism as used here, like urbanization, embodies a set of transformations which are not necessarily attributable to globalization but impact powerfully in the early twenty-first century on the lives of city dwellers in developing Asia. As one call for papers argued in respect of China, “the past three decades have witnessed a drastic and extensive, if uneven, remodeling of Chinese cities. This process has been accompanied by profound transformations in urban subjectivities. In shaping the context, practices and intellectual climates that continuously inform identity, urban expansion has fostered a growing body of literature and film that address the paradoxes and ambiguities of urban existence.” These cities, in other words, are emulating the experience of cities in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Europe and North America. The story lines and settings of Balzac and Dickens, as Preben Kaarsholm has pointed out, can be applied to late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century cities in developing Asia.

This exploration of urbanism is pre-eminently an exploration of the lives of individuals who have witnessed or experienced a massive change in circumstances – from country to city, from rural occupations to urban ones, from a social life of family and neighbors to one that has the whole city as its terrain, to opportunities for both contact and privacy, to opportunities to experiment with both ideas and ways of living.

The patterns of urbanism are not as straightforward as those of urbanization. It could be said that in a rapidly urbanizing society the “hardware” of urbanization – the infrastructure and the organization that lies behind it – comes more readily than the “software” of urbanism: freedom to think and act differently, freedom for the individual from ruler and priest, from landowner or boss, from father or husband, from obscurantism and poverty.

33 Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a way of life”, American Journal of Sociology 44/1 (Jul. 1938), pp. 1–44.
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The patterns vary from one sphere of life to another; political rights may be secured ahead of rights within families.

In the third chapter, on urbanism, three areas of urban transformation will be explored: making a living; belief; and relations between men and women. In all three areas individuals navigate between a world of opportunity and freedom, but also risk, on the one hand, and a family context which offers protection and sustenance, but also restriction, on the other. These are familiar enough categories; the purpose of the exploration of them here is to build a picture of experiences which it can be seen owe little to globalization.

Making a living is the most immediate way that urban transformation affects individual lives. If individuals cannot make a living in the city they are either reduced to penury or have to return home. Because of the scale of the informal economy in cities, apprehension of the former fate – if it is not penury that brought the person to the city in the first place – is acute, more so than in Western cities where there is a larger formal sector of the economy and also more public assistance. The family remains a very important economic unit, not just because the city dweller may remit money to the family members at home but because their existence is a guarantee of the city dweller’s long range survival.

Belief encompasses the range of ways that city dwellers make spiritual sense of their circumstances. Religious observance may be weaker in cities than in country districts, but urbanism can entail new or re-invigorated forms of religious life as individuals, families and households cope with the challenges of city life.

Relations between the sexes are also characterized by both change and continuity. Again, while the city offers new opportunities, especially for women, it also can trap individuals between a new world which turns sour and an old world which then repudiates them.

These sets of experiences, the stuff of novels, memoirs and cinema, still take place in European or North American cities, but they resonate most strongly on the margins, in the lives of recent migrants or the poor, not amongst the numerically dominant middle class.

It is useful to add at this point that when we consider urbanization, the parallels amongst Chinese, Indian and Indonesian cities outweigh the differences. In spheres of urbanism, especially those involving belief and relations between men and women, the experiences of cities in the three countries diverge markedly.
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A present-focused analysis might conclude that the divergence between China and the other two societies reflects the greater degree of globalization in Chinese as compared with Indian or Indonesian society, but the social transformation that the ruling Chinese communist party initiated and/or directed from 1950 to 1980 is a more likely candidate. Other divergences are difficult to explain, for example the divergence in literacy levels between China and Indonesia on the one hand and India on the other.

Nation-building and the city
What does nation-building mean for Asian cities? The contrast between Asia and the West is as sharp here as it is with urbanization. In Western Europe and North America the nation-state is long-established, in Asia it is still being forged. This forging is very different from that which took place in the high period of nation-building in the 1950s to 1970s, but it is nation-building nonetheless. The twenty-first-century Asian nation has a capitalist orientation and it is capitalists and their “partners” – local elites, workers, consumers and the state – who are modernizing cities and shaping the nation. The nation is not disappearing; it remains an important socio-legal structure and a common market. The cities and city-dwellers in Asian nations are being shaped by a national as much as by a global capitalism; the nation has not lost legitimacy in Asia and its persistence is a dynamic element in contemporary Asia.37

Chapters four to seven focus on four facets of this nationwide modernization as it affects cities – on business itself; on the labor market; on the travel market; and on commercialized popular culture.

Business
Both overseas- and domestically-owned companies display the scale of their operations on national maps. Often they are national maps with sub-national units identified so those looking can quickly grasp that range. Widely known points of reference are used: in India and China “from Kashmir to Kanyakumari” and “from Harbin to Haikou” respectively – that is, from the far north to the far

37 Cf Sugata Bose, A hundred horizons: the Indian Ocean in the age of global empire, Cambridge, Mass. and London, Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 280, “the opponents of what are regarded as Western forces of globalization may not all be staking their position on unbending economic autarky or absolute cultural difference … if this was true of “modern” globalization, which hawked the nation-state … as one of its prized export commodities, how much truer it must be for globalization in its postcolonial phase, when colonial modernity has lost much of its sheen and value.”
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south of the country; and in Indonesia, “from Sabang to Merauke” – that is, from the far west to the furthest east.

National unity facilitates nation-wide commerce. A common currency, monetary and fiscal policy, common practices in accounting and commercial law, and no or very few internal border controls – all contribute. The range of these commercial “amenities” contrasts sharply with the barriers, which continue to exist even in the days of the World Trade Organization (WTO), to inter-country trade.

The nation is the arena for the re-shaping of old or the shaping of new customer habits in cities across each nation. A commercial life once dominated by hundreds and thousands of single retailers – be they for clothing or footwear, pharmaceuticals, plastic or electrical goods, fruit, vegetables or dry produce – is challenged by companies which seek to expand business throughout a country, or large parts of it, by advertising, using websites, creating recognizable brands, and opening multiple outlets, first in metropolitan centers, then in “tier-two” and “tier-three” cities. Certain areas of commercial life are particularly receptive, for example where there are new products such as cars and specialist magazines on cars, or road travel; or new ways of delivering long-established services, such as accommodation, through chain hotels, and groceries, through supermarkets and convenience stores. In some instances the new businesses are adding a “layer” in response to new levels of disposable income; in others they displace existing operations; in others again they make little headway; in some, they are not allowed to. But irrespective, the overall effect is to transform the national economic space.

The “biography” and personnel of businesses also contribute to the focus on the national market. Many Chinese companies have evolved out of state-owned enterprises and have a “prehistory” of familiarity with domestic conditions. When the market is opened up to competition, the global businesses may adapt to Chinese business practice and knowledge rather than the other way round. In India and Indonesia, family ownership is a common factor in companies that thrived in the business-friendly climate of the 1990s and 2000s. Even more than the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) or former SOEs in China, such enterprises draw on long-standing practices of building up and investing capital.

Companies recruit individuals who are familiar with local market characteristics and local spoken languages. This too is a dynamic sphere of business. Staff at the customer interface, whether in a store or – increasingly – on the
phone must be able to communicate with customers in the latter’s own language and ideally write in it too. A business may have an English-language web page, but its employees on the ground may use more frequently – and be more at ease in – a local or the national language, because that is what is needed. If customers are primarily domestic, employees will need to have mastered different vocabularies – and sometimes different alphabets – with the necessary high level of educational attainment which that implies. In Semarang this would be in Javanese, Indonesian and English; in Bangalore, in Kannada, Hindi, English and Tamil; in Yangzhou or Shanghai in Putonghua and Wu (Shanghainese). Companies, as they expand nationally, create a nation-wide “company culture” which complements these local identities and allegiances.

Migrants and travelers
Modernization, particularly capitalist modernization, promotes labor mobility, but where do the migrants come from? Internal migration is a marked phenomenon in India, China and Indonesia, whereas in all three countries foreign-born migrants barely register in most cities. The populations of all the cities studied in this book have many migrants but they are overwhelmingly nationals – in Bangalore or Mysore, they are from other parts of India, in Semarang or Jakarta, from other parts of Indonesia; in Yangzhou or Shanghai, from other parts of China. For these cities a “migrant” is usually a person from elsewhere in their respective countries, most often from within a 500 km radius although sometimes from much further. In this way migration flows become a facet of nation-building. At universities and then in workplaces, individuals encounter fellow students and workers from throughout the country; they encounter difference but mostly within the framework of the nation. Their conception of the nation is in turn shaped by such experiences, as will be demonstrated in chapter five.

Short-term movement for business or leisure is dominated by domestic travelers. Secondary cities in particular do not see many global travelers, nor is this likely to change. As one guide book says of Semarang, while it may be the provincial capital of Central Java it “lacks the pull of Solo and Yogyakarta.” Further, domestic travelers do not stand out from their surroundings as do international travelers, whose travel circuits and destinations are often different, thereby affecting perceptions of the significance of domestic travel

38 Lonely Planet Indonesia, 9th edition, Jan. 2010, p. 209; Lonely Planet’s Southeast Asia on a shoestring skips Semarang altogether.
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by foreign visitors. Yet Semarang and cities like it all receive many, many
domestic travelers and visitors. In the secondary cities examined in this study
such short-term movement is more important than long-term migration
(particularly from distant parts of the country), which tends to focus on the
metropolitan centers. Major holiday times such as Chinese New Year, end
of Ramadan and Diwali engulf all cities, prompting population movements
involving millions of individuals, from one end of a country to the other.

Commercialized popular culture

The fourth and final discussion which addresses nation-building in cities and
the way it relates to globalization is that of the worlds of – or markets in –
ideas and culture. Benedict Anderson’s oft-cited Imagined communities, which
explored the relationship between print culture and ideas of the nation,
provides a fruitful departure point for understanding many contemporary
trends.

In Chennai (Madras) in India, the largest Tamil-speaking city in the world,
a project offers prizes for devising Tamil-language software programs.39 A
Columbia University study of the now familiar concept of “six degrees of
separation” discovered that “though global social networks are in principle
searchable, actual success depends sensitively on individual incentives.”40
Congruent with that finding, one survey found that 85 per cent of Taiwanese
internet users remained almost exclusively within Taiwanese cyberspace.41
Careers are shaped accordingly. Nicholas P. Dirks has observed that 80 per
cent of students taking a course in South Asian civilization at the University
of Michigan in recent years had come from immigrant (presumably South
Asian) backgrounds; non-South Asians could feel a “sense of panic” about
whether they could keep up.42 “The study of Southeast Asia”, writes one of

40 New York Times, 12 Aug. 2003; see also http://smallworld.columbia.edu/ and Peter Sheridan
Dodds, Roby Muhamad and Duncan J. Watts, “An experimental study in search of global social
history of globalization, pp. 271–72.
from a ‘Taiwan users’ perspective” http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol7/issue2/taiwan.html, accessed
10 May 2009.
42 Nicholas P. Dirks, “South Asian Studies: futures past” in David Szanton, ed., The politics of knowl-
edge: area studies and the disciplines, http://repositories.cdlib.org/uciaspubs/editedvolumes/3/9,
pp. 45, 46.
its non-Southeast Asian practitioners, “will be carried out more and more in Southeast Asia itself.”43

With such findings, it is not surprising to find that it is not just the world, but also the nation, that is being imagined and re-imagined for and by city-dwellers. This activity cannot be fully separated from state power. Nationalism provides glue, as in episodes such as the 1999 Kargil clash between India and Pakistan and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Both commerce and informal social interaction however shape the changes and a focus on commercialized popular culture therefore seems appropriate. In India Hindi film and cricket have lineages from the early twentieth century, but both are also readily aligned with the market-driven nation-building characteristic of the 1990s and 2000s. Both, largely independently of the state, have forged “language” and experience that is shared across the nation. In Indonesia the use of Indonesian has fulfilled a similar function, as has the hegemonic cultural role played by Jakarta – a cultural monopoly that is indeed not emulated by any one city in either India or China. In China, as in other spheres of life, the pattern is rather different, as China has a much longer “prehistory” of national unity than either India or Indonesia. A more interesting sphere to explore with respect to China therefore is the influence of the commercial popular cultures of the “other Chinas”, namely Hong Kong and Taiwan, in re-making notions of what it means to be Chinese, in the 1990s and 2000s.

The case study cities

This book is primarily an argument about the relationship between globalization and two modernizing transformations shaping Asian cities, but the argument is anchored with examples from three pairs of cities.

Shanghai and Yangzhou

Shanghai, at 31 degrees north, on China’s coast near the mouth of its greatest river, the Yangtze – known indeed to Chinese simply as Chang Jiang (“great river”) – needs no introduction, but it is worth briefly stressing how limited is the zone of Shanghai which many foreigners are aware of or acquainted with, compared with the scale of the city as a whole. The “global city”, where travelers and businesses congregate, comprises the Bund along the Pu (a tributary of the Yangtze), Nanjing Road, what was once the French concession, and

the high-rise zone across the Pu with an outlier to the main international airport. Beyond that lies a built-up area housing 20 million people, many of whom are in their daily lives as remote from the activities and character of the downtown zone as if they lived hundreds of kilometers away. This is not to argue that such populations are unaffected by globalization but the “terms of engagement” are very different from those experienced by many residents of central Shanghai.

The fame that is now accorded to Shanghai was once conferred on Yangzhou, which is old, was once rich and is a legendary city still to many Chinese. Located, like Shanghai, in the delta region of the lower Yangtze, the only summits within sight on this alluvial plain are artificial. Like Shanghai, its summers are hotter and steamier than its winters are cold, but they can still be cold. Four hours from Shanghai, Yangzhou is also only an hour from Nanjing, the provincial capital of Jiangsu province, in which it is situated. It throve,
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under a variety of names, under a number of dynasties, notably the Han (around the time of the Roman empire), T’ang (around 700 CE) and Qing (eighteenth century especially). In the latter two eras, it became renowned for its cultural life and it is that life, and in particular the poetry and art to which it gave rise, which give the city prominence today in the minds of educated Chinese – and educated Koreans and Japanese.

The city underwent a precipitous decline in the nineteenth century, not least as a victim of much of the fighting during the Taiping rebellions of the 1850s and 1860s. Its great Treasury library, one of only four in the Empire, was sacked: the “angel of extermination”, wrote a moralizing Jesuit missionary in 1854, “hovers over this recently rich, voluptuous city, striking repeatedly, never pausing to sheath his sword”. 44 Coincident as that “time of troubles” was with the expansion of Shanghai (more than the mere “fishing village” of popular thinking, but not as important as it was to become), much of the cultural life and vitality of Yangzhou found a new home in the coastal city.

At the time of the Communist assumption of power in 1949 Yangzhou was far smaller than it had been in its eighteenth-century heyday. As in many other formerly “courtly” Chinese cities, the new regime was keen to promote industry and Yangzhou became a center for the prosaic manufacture of buses and trucks in particular. It has shared in the economic growth of the lower Yangtze since the 1980s, if not as dramatically as other cities, being on the further side of the river from Shanghai. In 2010 it had somewhat over one million people.

Jakarta and Semarang

Jakarta, like Shanghai, needs little introduction. Globalization has not put Jakarta on the international map as it has Shanghai, and it is more immediately obvious to the visitor than it is in Shanghai that this vast metropolis houses millions of individuals who enjoy only very modest linkages with a global economy or society. Jakarta has grown explosively since the Second World War, both through raw increase in numbers and migration from elsewhere in Java. The centralization of power on the capital of the newly independent Indonesia through both the Sukarno (1949–1966) and Suharto (1966–1998) years reinforced Jakarta’s primacy, but the persistence of that primacy since

political liberalization and decentralization began in 1998 suggests that both culture and commerce are also subject to strong centripetal influences.

Semarang is on the northern coast of Java and about half a day’s travel either way from Jakarta and from Surabaya, Indonesia’s second city. Java is an island of volcanoes, indeed it is made of volcanoes, and though Semarang is sited on the coastal plain, volcanic uplands provide pleasant neighborhoods to the south of the city center. A volcano, Ungaran, rising gracefully to just over 2000m, is a short distance further inland. It has between one and two million people, depending on how the city limits are defined, and is the provincial headquarters of Central Java (Jawa Tengah). It is much younger than Yangzhou, being essentially a Dutch foundation from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when the Dutch firmly established themselves on that coast. But it can trace connections back to earlier Muslim trading towns and states – Demak, Kudus, Jepara – which still indeed exist, but are now smaller than Semarang. Semarang throve in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with vigorous Chinese and Dutch minorities. The first rail line in the Dutch “Indies” was built south from Semarang and some of the country’s richest entrepreneurs, most notably Oei Tiong Ham, were based in the city. In 1940 it had a population of around 200,000 compared with Jakarta’s 800,000 and Surabaya’s 500,000, but both those centers, and in particular Jakarta, the national capital, grew much faster after independence.

Fig. 1.4: Jakarta and Semarang location map
in 1949, with Jakarta growing nearly twenty-fold compared with Semarang’s five- to six-fold increase. Its population is today predominantly Muslim and Javanese by culture and speech respectively, the Javanese language being heard as often as the national language, Indonesian.

**Bangalore and Mysore**

At 12 degrees north neither Bangalore nor Mysore are much further from the equator than Semarang, but at 949m and 763m respectively above sea level the climate is moderated by altitude. After the monsoon, from say November to February, it is near perfect “spring” weather, day after day in the mid- to high 20s.

Historically speaking Bangalore and Mysore are twin cities. The modern history of both dates from the restoration of the Wodeyar rajas to the throne of Mysore after the British overthrew the “usurper” Tipu Sultan, in 1799. The British abandoned his capital of Sriringapatnam, established the Wodeyars in Mysore itself, and established themselves 150 kms away in Bangalore.

The Wodeyars remained the rulers of Mysore until Indian independence in 1947. After a period of direct British rule the state “reverted” in 1881 and under a succession of enlightened chief ministers was one of the most well-run and developed in India – it was, for example, a pioneer of electrification. The state was predominantly Hindu and Kannada-speaking, Kannada being one of the four major languages of South India.

The state capital was early established at Bangalore, the center of the British presence in the state, and it remained the capital of the successor state of Karnataka, of which Mysore forms the core. Bangalore had a population of only 400,000 at independence in 1947 but by 2010 it had reached seven million and it overshadows Mysore as does Shanghai Yangzhou and Jakarta Semarang. It has a mixed population – it is close to the borders of neighboring Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, so Telugu (from Andhra) and Tamil speakers are common. English and Hindi are also widely used. In 2010 it was officially Bengaluru, but the more familiar Bangalore will be used in this study.

Mysore has a population of about 800,000. It has a more relaxed pace than Bangalore and it is still predominantly Kannada-speaking, unlike Bangalore. It is dominated by a massive palace, which looks like a palace in a story book and in a sense is. It was built in the first decade of the twentieth century after an earlier structure burnt down. Designed by Henry Irwin, it is in the romantic style known as Indo-Saracenic which was favored by Irwin and other British architects working in India at the time. On account of the palace, the
related craft industries and its many temples, Mysore receives many visitors, but it has not been uninfluenced by recent economic and social change – for example a “campus” of the software company Infosys is located on the western side of the city.

The discussion in chapters two to seven will focus on the present and the past. In the final chapter I will explore the implications of the analysis for the next quarter-century or so. I conclude that globalization will remain important but that urbanization, urbanism and nation-building may wane in significance, to the degree that they are historical transformations which have
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an end as well as a beginning and middle. This in turn suggests that that there will be a “convergence” between Asian and Western cities.

I then however make the case for seeing globalization differently, and explore the idea of a shift from asymmetric to symmetrical globalization, terms which will be introduced and discussed at that point. That shift will likely mean that Asia’s cities will be “semi-globalized” rather than globalized. And that in turn may prove to be a dominant mode of globalization in cities world-wide.
Part 2: Urbanization and cities
Urbanization and the Asian city

Urbanization and globalization

So vigorous has been the phenomenon of globalization and its impact on cities through the last twenty to twenty-five years that it is natural to assume that other seemingly less dramatic transformations are a consequence of it. Of no change is this truer than urbanization – that process by which cities and towns become more populous and more economically significant than rural areas.

For one writer globalization has produced “a familiar reconfiguration of urban space … the creation of spaces of globalization itself (for instance CBDs) and contrasting spaces of people who have migrated from various places”; for another globalization influences urban forms and structures; a third argues that “the nature and extent of urban growth is now more dependent on the global economy than ever before”.¹ For a commentator on Indonesia, the concentration of 20 per cent of that country’s urban population in the Jakarta metropolitan area may “reflect the ever-stronger integration of Indonesia’s largest cities into the global economy”. For a commentator on India, globalization and urbanization are interchangeably responsible for the depletion of forest land.² “In the era of globalization and rapid urbanization”, says another observer, “it is not the nation but the city which is seen as the circuit through which flows of capital and services occur.”³

² Tommy Firman, “Demographic and spatial patterns of Indonesia’s recent urbanization”, Population, Space and Place, 10 (2004), p. 430; Deccan Chronicle, 28 Nov. 2008 citing the vice-chancellor of Dharwad University of Agricultural Sciences.
As these examples suggest, and as was discussed in the Introduction, the interweaving of globalization and urbanization frequently takes the form of statements rather than the careful analysis of the relationship. That interweaving also focuses on locations where the linkages are most striking. Coastal China, and in particular the southern province of Guangdong, where the city of Shenzhen has grown from nothing to a population of over 8 million in 30 years, is often cited. So is Bangalore, South India’s “cyber-city”, a long-established urban center, whose population more than doubled during the years in which companies based in the city such as Infosys and Wipro developed a global business in software and outsourcing.

The linkage has also been reinforced by work on the idea of global cities. The notion of the “global city” was advanced in the early 1980s by John Friedmann and Goetz Wolff; they formulated an argument about the ways in which international capital was shaping cities and about the need for an “agenda for research and action” that drew on the insights of radical scholars of both world systems and urban studies. A few years later Saskia Sassen looked, in *The global city*, at New York, London and Tokyo and in *Global networks, linked cities* at a wider range of cities including major cities in Asia such as Seoul, Shanghai, Bangkok and Mumbai.4 In a 1998 article on the Southeast Asian city Peter J. Rimmer and Howard Dick emphasized the commonalities between urbanization in Southeast Asia and North America.5 Friedman and Wolff, and Sassen, were exploring much more than urbanization as such. But in both instances the formulation and focus of the studies reinforced the association of urbanization with globalization – and thereby downplayed urbanization that arose for other reasons and indeed in other places. Dick and Rimmer were pointing to the limitations of an area studies approach to the Southeast Asian city and their emphasis was on the convergence in urbanization trends between Southeast Asia and the West, rather than globalization per se, but one effect was also to emphasize the linkages between global and Southeast Asian trends and to overlook the differences. The significance of Western and Southeast Asian societies having very different levels of urbanization, for example, was not discussed.

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Urbanization and the Asian City

Urbanization has of course a history that goes back well before the present era of globalization. Indeed the process had largely been completed in North America and Western Europe by the middle of the twentieth century. In other parts of the world it commenced much later and in developing Asia, the most populous part of the world, it is still at full force. A close relationship between urbanization and globalization may exist at a particular time but cannot be treated as a constant. Two facets of the history of urbanization indeed suggest different findings.

Firstly, urbanization in Europe and North America was most closely associated not with globalization but with *industrialization*, which took place both in existing concentrations of populations and therefore markets (cities such as London and Paris) and in centers of new industrial activity such as the Ruhr, the English midlands and the Pittsburgh–Youngstown–Akron zone in the eastern United States. Industrialization could entail the penetration of foreign markets by the products of industry, by cheaply manufactured goods, but such goods were also sold, particularly in the case of Germany and the United States, in rapidly expanding home markets.

Secondly, urbanization in many parts of the post-Second World War developing world, and arguably in Africa through the late twentieth and into the early twenty-first century, proceeded without the stimulus of economic growth, leading to the well-known slum neighborhoods that have long been seen to be a by-word for dystopic urbanization, and in the case of Mumbai achieved global cinematic fame in the 2008 movie, *Slumdog millionaire*.6

These facets of the history of urbanization demonstrate that it is not inherently connected with globalization, but then the Friedman, Wolff and Sassen focus is primarily on the contemporary era. From developing Asia itself comes more evidence. Research shows that the major metropolitan centers in the developing world such as Mumbai and Shanghai, which readily lend themselves to a concept such as “global city”, are not the centers of greatest urban growth at the present time. Globally, nearly 2.5 billion people are expected to live in cities of up to one million people by 2015 compared with 600 million in cities of more than five million.7 Cumulatively and collectively, it is in those smaller cities that the most substantial growth will take place.

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7 See table in Cohen, “Urban growth in developing countries”, p. 31. Note that the smaller the cohort of cities the less reliable the statistics. According to Cohen there is no world-wide comprehensive data base of cities of less than 750,000 people. This may lead to further under-playing of the significance of lesser cities.
Moreover it is not possible to assume causality. One econometric analysis of urbanization in the 1990s in cities of the lower Yangtze River area sampled amongst others Nanjing, Nantong, Wuxi, Zhenjiang, Changzhou and Huayin. It found that there was some evidence of foreign direct investment (FDI) influencing city growth (that is, more FDI, more growth) for cities of more than one million (which in the case of these cities meant only Nanjing), but for others the level of development measured by GDP and the size of the secondary and tertiary sectors were better predictors of urbanization. Indeed it seems that city development in this part of the world, while it may be trigger by globalization dreams of the kind that minister of construction Wang Guangtao criticized (cited in chapter one), cannot rely specifically on foreign investment, which is “often mobile, uncertain and unstable”, but instead has relied on two assets, city-controlled land, and easy access to credit. This does not make for a disconnect of globalizing influences and urbanization but it does suggest an indirect relationship rather than simple cause and effect.

The economic downturn of 2008 onwards further unsettled the assumption of an urbanization–globalization linkage as is evident from the frequently made suggestion that China and India should – or will – promote domestic consumption (and investment). Indeed economic liberalization itself – whether in train before, during or after a downturn – is a domestic as well as a global phenomenon.

These factors in turn suggest that urbanization cannot be assumed always to be a by-product of globalization, even in Asia. Scholars have identified distinct triggers and configurations, for example on the “outer” islands of Indonesia beyond Java, and in South India. UN statistics show that the peak years for growth in urban numbers and in the percentage of the population urbanized in the years since 1970, in both Indonesia and China, took place in the 1980s, not later, when the influence of globalization could be assumed to be greater. The most rapid growth in urban numbers in India was even earlier, in the early 1970s, but at that time the rural population was also growing fast; the phase of most rapid increase in the proportion of the population becoming urbanized is not expected to occur until the late 2020s.

9 Mcgee et al., China’s urban space, pp. 19–23.
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The rest of this chapter explores urbanization “on the ground” in Bangalore, Yangzhou and Semarang. The purpose is to demonstrate the variety of ways in which urbanization, but not globalization, is shaping both cities and the lives of their inhabitants. The first section examines Bangalore, which has come to prominence precisely because of its place in the international political economy. The discussion includes an investigation of Gandhinagar, which is a hub of contemporary Bangalore but is distant, if not in space then in most other ways, from the cyber-city economy. The next section examines two neighborhoods on the margins, Kengeri on the edge of Bangalore and Jatisari on the edge of Semarang. These are where urbanization is visibly changing landscapes and lives. The final discussion considers Yangzhou, looking at both a peripheral neighborhood called Bali but also at the way that the “business” of urbanization involves representing and re-imagining the city in particular ways. Other facets of urbanization, including rural–urban migration, will be discussed in the nation-building chapters.

Bangalore: beyond cyberspace

Since the 1990s Bangalore has been a by-word – indeed a word, a synonym – for globalization. The development in the city of a service sector that carried out work that had previously been done in developed countries, but at lower cost, was the result of two transformations. Firstly, the digital revolution, which allowed the shift from high-wage to low-wage countries of service work that had previously been done in the former; and secondly the liberalization of the Indian economy since 1991, and its by-products, an “outward-looking” state government, and a set of entrepreneurs, many of whom themselves did not come from Bangalore.

This globalization of Bangalore has absorbed observers. Friedman’s The world is flat starts with the outsourcing business in Bangalore and stays in the city for the first 30 pages, returning to it frequently through the rest of the book. The fact that Bangalore was almost at the antipodes of the US eastern seaboard added to the appeal of using the city as an analog for a much broader, all-embracing process of globalization. Locals have agreed with Friedman: “Take Bangalore, it’s a global city.” “Today Bangalore is a brand that has gone global.”12 “The global way of doing business is here to stay; we are in a mode of irreversible business integration across the globe. It is no more a matter of choice, it has become an economic necessity to stay global, and hence our

services take a longer term perspective.”¹³ Even questioning locals agree: “If dams were the most important symbols of post-colonial India’s entry into the modern, the IT industry has emerged as the most important symbol of India’s entry into the global or into the new modernity marked by the pre-eminent position given to knowledge-based services.”¹⁴

It is a simple sideways move from such analyses to the conclusion that the transformation of Bangalore is only about globalization. Joseph Stiglitz has argued Bangalore has been a success story because “companies like Infosys have removed themselves from what is going on nearby. They communicate directly by satellite with the United States, and in a place where local newspapers list

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¹³ Website http://bangalorebuzz.blogspot.com, 8 May 2009, quoting Radha Nath, CEO of Global Crosswalk, a company that has just been set up to help with expat relocations; accessed 11 May 2009.

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the number of brownouts the previous day; these companies can have their own sources of power.” In contrast, “traveling ten miles was like traveling back 2,000 years. Peasants were farming as their ancestors must have.” Thus any urban transformation that is not driven by globalization is relegated to the margins or ignored. A resident of Bangalore is either a software engineer or a timeless peasant. Bangalore is either cyber-new or decrepit old.

But the story is more complex, as scholars who have focused their research on the city have recognized. In Network city (2004) James Heitzman argued that the modernization of Bangalore arose as much from state policies of the 1950s and subsequently as it did from the digital and entrepreneurial revolutions of the 1990s, with a “traditional” industry (aircraft) proving to be a seedbed for an innovative one (software). Explosive urban growth followed; globalization could not explain the scale of development that ensued. Janaki Nair’s The promise of the metropolis, addressing the contemporary city, put it more sharply: the “fact that 20 per cent of [Bangalore’s] population lives in slums, that 70 per cent of employment is in the informal sector, that 60 per cent is ill-served by public transport, challenges any claim of Bangalore as a network society.”

What are the numbers? It is hard to get beyond percentages like Nair’s, because many statistics are unknown. To take just two examples: it is not known exactly how many people work in the Bangalore garment industry – even though it may be as many as 400,000 – nor is the value of the total output of the industry or the distribution of that output known. Nor are there reliable figures on the proportion of accommodation in Bangalore accounted for by private householders who take in “paying guests”.

Nonetheless, even the numbers that are available, and however imprecise they are, give a vivid picture of a society that is shaped by many forces besides globalization. In 1951 Bangalore had a population of nearly eight lakh (779,000) that doubled in 20 years and nearly doubled again in the next ten years.

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16 Three valuable recent monographs on Bangalore are Smriti Srinivas, Landscapes of urban memory – the sacred and the civic in India’s high-tech city, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2001; James Heitzman, Network city: planning the information society in Bangalore, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2004; Janaki Nair, The promise of the metropolis: Bangalore’s twentieth century, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005.
17 Heitzman, Network city, especially pp. 259–61.
18 Nair, Promise of the metropolis, p. 119.
years, to nearly 30 lakh (three million), making it India’s fifth largest city, with its highest growth rate, before the onset of the present era of globalization.

Through these years Bangalore had a large manufacturing base, with for example 22,000 employed in Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd in the 1970s, and over 30,000 in similar large-scale industrial enterprises. The state or central bureaucracy provided around 70,000 jobs at the same time, the major textile companies around 15,000. These were substantial figures but even they were swallowed up in a total population of three million in 1981. In other words of a labor force likely over 1.5 million, probably no more than 10 per cent were employed in major enterprises.

In the 1980s and 1990s the rate of increase in employment in these industries tapered off. The new “global” industries, notably information technology and related areas, did expand rapidly, but still were far from outweighing traditional sources of employment. In the 2009 city of around seven million, about 1.5 lakh (150,000) worked in the software industries, but around 25 lakh (2,500,000) worked in the informal economy. Those 2.5 million workers, another 800,000 working in the organized labor market but not in software or business processing, and the dependents of all those individuals, were at arms length from globalization, but at the heart of urbanization. Solomon Benjamin, using a number of case studies, argued that it was the locally-oriented private sector, in both services (including retail and wholesale trading) and small-scale manufacturing, which provided most of the employment in Indian cities, including Bangalore. In Bangalore the city center was more oriented to trading, whilst the middle and peripheral zones accounted for around 70 per cent of industries, almost all in small private industrial estates or in mixed-use residential areas.

One employment survey in 2007 which tracked hiring expectations in the private sector found retail, media and fast-moving consumer goods (fmcg) demonstrating the highest net employment growth in Bangalore over a three-month period, in other words, activity related to the local market.

A press story on the maybe 3,000, maybe 6,000, expatriates in Bangalore – that is, less than 0.1 per cent of the city’s population – is yet another reminder

20 Heitzman, Network city, pp. 53, 54.
21 If Nair’s 70 per cent estimate is correct.
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that the city’s urbanization cannot be neatly equated with globalization.24 A further reminder is that as Karnataka (the state of which Bangalore is the capital) is still about 65 per cent rural, urbanization will continue. Between 2000 and 2006 alone, the built-up area of the city increased by 61 per cent, from around 186 square kms to just over 300 square kms. The city added 20 square kms of paved area annually through those years.25 By 2025, Bangalore’s population will likely have increased to about 12 million, through its own natural increase, through drawing in more people and through expanding physically into peripheral areas.26

Most of that increased labor force will have livelihoods much as described by Benjamin. Many will be employed, in one way or another, in the “building” of the city. All the elements of the city’s built environment – the transport system, the gas, electricity, water and drainage reticulation systems, housing, commercial amenities, hospitals and schools – are shaped, even pummeled, by urbanization. The Greater Bangalore city corporation (BBMP, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike), which at the end of 2006 replaced the former Bangalore city corporation (BMP) and a number of other authorities over an enlarged area, manages basic services such as roads, street lighting and rubbish collection, as well as providing schools and health care. The Bangalore development agency (BDA) zones for land use. The Bangalore water supply and sewage board (BWSSB) is responsible for bringing water from the Kaveri River, tapping ground supplies and managing three major wastewater treatment plants.27 The Bangalore municipal transport corporation (BMTC) manages bus transport and the Bangalore metro rail corporation (BMRC) is building a metro train network.28 Alongside these Bangalore agencies, Karnataka state has its own entities for industrial development, housing and slum clearance.

The speed of the urbanization – and the human failings that accompany or are the result of it – burdens all these organizations. In late 2008 the organizations themselves had not been influenced by the cyber-revolution. Offices

24 Times of India, 10 Oct. 2006; http://bangalorebuzz.blogspot.com, 8 May 2009 suggests that at peak Bangalore had one third of India’s 30,000 expatriates, but while 6,000 came in 2008, only 3,000 were expected in 2009.
and desks were stacked with files and loose papers; despite the vast array of work that needs to be done under-employment was pervasive, whilst a multitude of gate-keepers channeled access to those with power and influence. Some of the consequences were predictable. BBMP engineers were charged with corruption in September 2008 and bribes to steer development in one direction rather than another were reported in the press. Forty per cent of taxable properties in Bangalore do not pay taxes.\(^{29}\) In the first half of 2010 elections had still not been held for a council which by then had been in existence more than three years.\(^{30}\) One hundred per cent of households in the old city limits have piped water supply but only 20 per cent of households in the enlarged boundaries.\(^ {31}\) The three wastewater treatment plants account for only two-thirds of the city’s daily wastewater “output”. Land use planning is an idea, an aspiration; in practice “mixed use” – a jumble of uses – has been the norm, with retail, wholesale, industrial and residential jumbled together.\(^{32}\)

Bangalore’s challenges are substantial but not unusual for a developing Asian city. Globalization is inadequate to explain the changing character of the city. It is true that these changes are coincident with globalization but they also preceded them. They also take place over a broad space – the whole of Bangalore’s enlarged 741 square kms and its more than seven million people. This enlarged city takes in the business parks to the east of the city, with their pronounced global linkages, but also large tracts of land to the west and south.\(^{33}\)

Commentators on and guides to Bangalore draw the attention of visitors to the MG (Mahatma Gandhi) Road neighborhood. This heart of the former British “cantonment”, also known as the “civil and military station”, still bears its trademarks – with names like Brigade Road, Residency Road, Church Street, Lavelle Road and Cubbon Park. Higginbotham’s bookstore (also in Chennai), and Koshy’s coffee house are now accompanied by upscale coffee shops, shopping malls and pubs. The Westerners who pass through Bangalore are most noticeable here. While it is a distance from the new retail neighborhoods like Koromangala and “cy-burbs” such as Whitefields, MG Road too underlines a nexus between globalization and urbanization.

\(^{29}\) *Times of India*, 7 Aug. 2008.
\(^{31}\) Sudhira et al., “City profile”, p. 386.
Bangalore was historically however two cities, the cantonment and the “peta” – also simply “the city” – two kilometers to the south-west. The cantonment was created by the British at the beginning of the 1800s. From the mid-1860s it was flanked on the west, and thereby demarcated from the city, by Cubbon Park, thus reinforcing the contrast between the two although also providing a pleasant means of journeying from one to the other.34 The city for its part had grown up adjacent to a fort first established in the 1600s. This was the center of trade and production – most often of textiles – in the pre-Second World War Bangalore.35 It was “Indian” – a dense mesh of streets, businesses and houses, crowded with traffic – in a way that the cantonment, its own bazaar aside, was not.

Gandhinagar was laid out in the late 1920s, to the north of the city, east of the main train station and south of the race course.36 That proximity explains the large number of hotels (lodgings) and eating places. In about the 1970s the Dharambudi tank (reservoir), which had once fed the fort’s moat, and which lay between the railway station and the old city/Gandhinagar, was drained to become one of Bangalore’s largest bus stands. To the people traffic triggered by the train station was now added the traffic of both buses and more people.37 The bus stand is commonly called “Majestic” (in all languages), a reference to the cinema that once operated nearby (see Fig. 2.2 overleaf). Developing as it did in the 1920s, Gandhinagar became a center for this new form of entertainment. What is now Kempegowda Road became the closest that Bangalore had to an entertainment district, and cinemas remain one of the striking features of this part of the city.

Gandhinagar is remote from Infosys, Wipro and other leading Bangalore software or outsourcing companies, their business and their culture. The streets are rough and crowded with foot traffic, two-wheelers, three-wheelers, taxis and other vehicles. But it is here that many travelers encounter Bangalore for the first or an additional time. They will have come from much smaller cities in the rest of Karnataka, or the neighboring states. They will have some relatives and/or friends somewhere in the city but they will have to find their way to them. It is not wise to linger. One criminal arrested by Bangalore police late in 2008 would stay in small lodges near Majestic. He would place money

34 Srinivas, Landscapes, pp. 44–46.
35 Srinivas, Landscapes, pp. 38–41.
36 Bangalore and Karnataka 2005, p. 34.
37 Srinivas, Landscapes, pp. 40 (map), 43, 55–56; actual date of infill not given, but had occurred by 1984.
on the road and distract the attention of persons whom he had observed making withdrawals from an ATM.\(^{38}\)

On any number of building sites new structures are being put up. The “newness” does not last; the buildings are similar to those they abut, and once completed lose their newness. But they are new, this part of the city is in a constant state of change, its typical sounds the snap and crackle of demolition and the crash, clamor and clunk as the metal frame of a new building is put in place.

One of the biggest rebuilding projects in 2008 took place near the Sapna bookstore. Not easy to find (and in 2010 it had moved to new premises nearby), Sapna is nonetheless a Bangalore institution, sited not on MG Road but in the heart of Gandhinagar. Dating from 1967, it has not just a large stock of books in English, many on business, technology and science subjects, but also an extensive set of publications in Kannada, the state language of Karnataka. Both parts of the store are busy with browsers examining techni-

\(^{38}\) Hindu, 28 Nov. 2008.
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cal publications and also fiction, books for children, stationery and greeting cards, CDs and DVDs.39

Away from the building sites and the bookstore every kind of product is for sale – dry goods and clothing, lots of plastic in bright colors, and mechanical goods. There are also workshops where such items are being made or repaired. Street traders populate the pavements and the alleys, forcing foot traffic onto the streets themselves. The shop frontages look more orderly but the buildings that are housing them are tired and under-maintained.

Sapna and other businesses thrive in Gandhinagar because of their proximity to the train station and bus stand, of their centrality for urbanized but not global Bangalore. The bus stand itself is chaotic and tired looking, as are the buses and the throngs of people making their way to and from departure and arrival points, ducking in and out behind the buses themselves and round and through each other. In fact the bus stand is highly organized and efficient, just also very busy and often overcrowded. There are maybe 30 different stations, each for a different route or set of routes. For the rapidly-growing Bangalore workforce the buses provide the principal means of traveling any distance within the city, being far cheaper than autos (three-wheelers), let alone taxis or private cars.40 The network is extensive and services are frequent throughout the day and well into the evening. Each day the system carries around 3.5 million passengers – per capita, every second Bangalorean takes a daily trip. A bus fare to an outer colony or layout will cost around Rs10, but many people buy bus passes which give unlimited travel for a period, usually one month. The bus system is perennially under-funded and fare increases in August 2008 did not go very far toward improving the situation.41 Nevertheless improvements continue to be made – in new bus stops, new buses, and new – electronic – forms of ticketing.

So long as the numbers of people coming to the city and the numbers of people living in the city continue to grow Gandhinagar will remain central to the city. Its train and bus stations, hotels and restaurants, shops and cinemas

40 Rimmer and Dick, The city in Southeast Asia, p. 264, make a similar point: “The inefficiency of these cities’ public transport systems is probably much overstated. Officials and middle class residents, let alone foreigners, do not use uncomfortable local public transport and have little understanding of the systems. Flat-rate bus fares allow cheap urban commuting, albeit at slow speed; the opportunity cost is high in turns of time but not the out-of-pocket cost.”
41 Times of India, 30 Aug. 2008; cf Sudhira et al., “City profile”, p. 388 on daily bus revenue (Rs20m).
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evolve alongside globalization, not because of it. This hub – not cyber-city – is the daily reality of Bangalore for millions of its citizens.

On the urban frontier – Kengeri and Jatisari

From a common-sense perspective, urban growth must be the product of one of three trends: migration from the countryside to the city; natural increase in a city population; and “reclassification” – the labelling as urban of areas that had formerly been considered rural. Of the three, natural increase contributes to urban growth rather than urbanization, unless the rate of natural increase is far greater in urban than in rural areas, which is not usually the case. Urbanization – an increase in the proportion of the population that is urban – is therefore primarily a product of the other two. Establishing their respective contributions is not easy, particularly when migration is largely within a country and/or when statistics for such migration are collected regionally rather than by urban center and rural district. “Reclassification” may also occur in many different circumstances or require an estimate of the balance in administrative entities which may be both rural and urban. Further, attempts to analyse urbanization at this level often involve sample studies at one particular date and it is difficult to assess their representativeness over time. Moreover the phenomena are not unrelated. Natural increase in a city will partly be the product of migrants of reproductive age having children. Migrants will also have gone to live in areas peripheral to the city that have subsequently become urban. The only constant appears to be that urbanization is taking place, whatever the mechanism, in China, India and Indonesia.42

Just as at the heart of the city, so also on the urban frontier, urbanization looms larger than globalization. The central circumstance is the intersection of rural and urban life, the penetration of the latter by the former, not through the presence of rural people in an urban setting but in the presence of urban settings in once – and still to some extent – rural surroundings.

Kengeri

Kengeri, a neighborhood 16 kms to the south-west of Bangalore, on the road to Mysore, is a case in point. The bus to Kengeri travels along an at times bumpy

but adequate highway past a slew of businesses and buildings, including a large church with a hospital attached. There follows open but not empty countryside – an engineering college on one side, a 25m high entrance portal to a temple – a standout in pink and green – on the other, the striking appearance of the latter not much undercut by falling masonry.

The 1929 Mysore Gazetteer recalled the destruction of Kengeri by Tipu Sultan in the course of his battles with the British in the 1790s and its short-lived entry onto the global stage in the 1860s when an Italian, de Vecchi, attempted to start a raw silk trade. The eggs brought from Japan did not produce thriving silkworms, and the enterprise was abandoned after a few seasons, though in 2010 a silk business was flourishing at Ramanagar, further out on the Mysore Road. At the beginning of 2007 Kengeri was incorporated, along with many other exurban areas, into the enlarged Bangalore city government. Kengeri accounted for about 34 sq kms of the annexed area, with a population of around 100,000.

Kengeri therefore is no longer “countryside”. The businesses at one bus stop are indicative of that: a real estate firm; Basho footwear; auditors and tax

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43 Mysore Gazetteer (1929), vol V, p. 191; Benjamin, "Governance", p. 41.
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practitioners; “BVM electrical”; a “medical and general” business; a gift store; a post office banking agency; the Smile dental clinic; Pooja textiles; a “mobile service center” for renovating mobile phones; Mahendra home appliances (specialty, stovetops); an ayurvedic center (Indian medicine); Dr Manju’s orthotic center; a branch of the Canara Bank; an ice cream store; a jewelers. All these bar the bank occupied the street level of two-storey buildings. Above the ice cream store and the jewelers were the offices of “civil zone consultants” who evidently were combined builders, surveyors and designers. The Canara Bank rises three floors from the street, but four behind, where the ground falls away. On the pavements in front of the stores are numbers of fruit and food stands. There is a constant, but not overwhelming, movement of people. People get off buses, or wait for buses. A school bus comes past, lots of trucks and countless motorcycles. There are few private cars but many mobile phones, and a cell phone tower.

Away from the highway there are buildings of several floors which are in fact blocks of flats. This is Kengeri “satellite town” and these successive clusters of apartment buildings are all KHB – Karnataka housing board – public housing. The satellite town was started in the 1960s, the assumption being that housing and jobs would be provided close to each other. The one sample survey that was carried out in Kengeri – in the 1990s – showed that a high proportion of its population was of working age and in the workforce and with a relatively high educational status compared with Bangalore (sampled in 1973) as a whole, and a far higher proportion of its householders worked in professional, administrative or clerical occupations. Without factory plants nearby and with a proportion of accommodation offered to government employees – including the police – this outcome was always likely.45

Along a path between a series of buildings fresh produce, vegetables mostly, are on sale. Small stores in the ground levels of blocks of flats sell packaged food, water, newspapers, cigarettes and the like. It becomes evident that this area, while it may be part of the city, is on its margins. There is plenty of vegetation; the paths between the buildings are earth only; and grass grows lushly everywhere. Farmland, although with little sign of livestock or cultivation,

45 R. V. Keerthi Shekhar, “Sociography of Indian satellite towns” in S. Simhadri and R. Ram Mohan Rao, Indian cities: towards the next millennium, Jaipur, Rawart, 1999, pp. 56–57, 62–63. See also Nair, Promise of the metropolis, p. 140, from which this reference came. A considerable literature has now accumulated on similar aspects of urban society in other parts of India; see for example the session at the American Association of Asian Studies 2005 on “the new politics of urban space in India”.

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lies close to the apartment buildings, and the general effect is of something unfinished; a news report stated that roads in and around Kengeri town have not been tarred in the last 10 years.46

Some meters of descent bring the walker to a road, but one without curb or pavement, just stretches of grass immediately in front of free-standing houses. On the roof of one there is a “Kaveri” (the name of a major river) tank, but water is also collected from a public tank. This latter, mounted on a concrete base with a tap on the side less than a hundred meters away from the house, is a fixture of these kinds of settlements. Many of the nearby houses would not even have had the Kaveri tank, let alone water piped to the house. While having to fetch water from a tank looks to be hard work, in a 1930 account of Mysore Constance Parsons tells of the improvement the installation of such tanks made for residents who had previously lugged water from the nearest stream or river, and who could enjoy the sociability at the water tank that much more.47

It is illuminating in such settings to focus on the circumstances of individuals. The house with the Kaveri tank was rented in 2004 by Santosh. His housemate, Ranjan, was charged with filling a gas canister so that the cooking

could be done at night. The making, filling and distribution of gas canisters is a big business. Roadside collections of gas canisters, trucks loading or unloading them, householders signing for them or hauling them inside are motifs of this urban frontier and others like it.

The house frontage consisted of two full-height-of-house drop down corrugated iron “shutters” (so presumably it could have had two stores operating from it). Between the two shutters a door opened into a simple square room, in which there was placed a desk and a couple of chairs, one behind the desk.

From this room a door opening led into a slightly larger back room from which all the other rooms in the house, two on each side opened, with curtains rather than doors in all but one instance. Two were bedrooms. The back room to the right was a kitchen, which had an impressive fitted bench, on which stood a mortar and pestle. The remaining room was a bathroom, with a squat toilet and a big cask filled with water. Washing oneself was a recognizable if adventurous project. A submersible electric element was used to heat the water in the cask. Survivors disconnected the element before washing.

A side road took the stroller further into “countryside”. Apartment buildings occupied the slopes above but few were close by. The landscape was pastoral: afternoon haze, the gently moving trees, the clumps of lantana, the fields of crops, the occasional cow or passer-by. But it was illusory, no more than the passing of a moment brought to the ear roaring bus motors and excited motorcycles and to the eye groups of people, or single individuals, who plainly were neither farmers nor farm laborers, judging from their dress or their conversation.

Hiresh, a student, lived in a building in Kengeri from 2002 to 2005 – four years in total. He found the room through an advertisement. It cost around Rs1,200 per month exclusive of electricity and water costs. That was far too costly for a single student, but he shared it with three other students; this worked out at around Rs500 per month each. The building was privately owned and the landlord lived in another building near by; both public and private housing are found in Kengeri. The room was what was called a “middle-income room with hall” (that is, a living and sleeping area, bathroom and kitchen). In a low-income group room the kitchen would be included with the hall; in high-income group housing there would be either one or two separate bedrooms.48

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In 2002 Kengeri was more remote than in 2010. This meant that land was not so costly, nor accommodation; and the main access to the city, the Mysore highway to the city, was yet to be upgraded (that took place at the end of 2006). In 2009 Kengeri learnt of plans for it to get a traffic and transit management center, one of ten planned for Greater Bangalore, and there was even talk of the metro line extending to Kengeri.49

Even during the time Hiresh was living there the district was continually changing. Private investors put up new apartment blocks and business premises. Farmers or landowners could find themselves suddenly wealthy as demand for housing and businesses raised the price of land far beyond what it was worth as farmland. The process of “halli” (village) becoming “nagar” (town) was relentless.50

The Bangalore development agency’s biggest project to date, the Nada-prabhu Kempegowda Layout, was planned to take in 4,815 acres (just under 2,000 ha) around Kengeri and Yeshwantpur, with 60,000 sections. In this instance the farmer/landowner was offered payment in either rupees or land or a combination of the two.51

Many such developments have generated frictions which are regularly reported in the press. Farmers in another district, Byatarayanapura, became wage workers once land was confiscated in 2004 (around 2,750 acres) by the BDA for developing the Akarvathi Layout. Compensation offered in that instance was Rs400,000 per acre when the actual market price was more like Rs25 to 30 million an acre and by 2008 was more like Rs60 million. Because of litigation, this particular group of landowner/farmers had not obtained any compensation as of 2008. Sharademma (aged 65) lost rights over five acres, by then worth Rs20 million; the daughters of Chanappa (aged 62) worked as domestic servants, bringing in wages of just Rs1500 each monthly.52

Jatisari
The margins of Jakarta exhibit similar developments and similar frictions to those found in Bangalore on a massive scale, but it is also possible to observe

50 Nair, Promise, pp. 189–90.
52 Hindu, 6 May 2008.
them in a middle-sized city such as Semarang. In 2006, a number of houses were demolished at a place called Cakrawala Baru and residents forcibly removed when the owner decided to use the land for other purposes (in fact the occupants could not have afforded the market rate for the land). A year later some of the dwellers still lived close to the demolition site. Some of them lived under the highway connection bridge, while others lived with relatives or rented, while they waited to be provided with new houses. The bitterest opposition to the owner came from those occupants who had bought land off the first illegal occupants and then spent more money building houses. Land was offered by the legal owner in Ngaliyan or Mijen, both neighborhoods on the city periphery. Houses could be built either by the new occupants or by developers; either way the occupants had to find the money. As the police were involved in the eviction those evicted believed the city should consider a payment of Rphs10 million per family (about $1,000) – although that would still amount to a tiny fraction of the Rphs40 billion paid by a businessman for the city’s soccer team. But this was not feasible because the dispute was between two private parties. In contrast the city’s own relocation

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of households from the Bangar river bank, where land was needed for flood control, was facilitated by many government agencies and included a new bus route and elementary school. This development, Karang Roto, however faced other challenges – the housing was at subsidized rentals, so a dilemma arose if a household became better off but wanted to stay; whilst other families had no income so could not afford to pay even a low rent. 54

Mijen was for long a rural settlement well past the limits of the built-up area of Semarang, and Jatisari, which means rubber plantation, was no more than a locality. Jatisari is now a suburban neighborhood though its incorporation within the Semarang city limits still seems notional. The road to Jatisari rises from the coastal plain on which Semarang is located, past steadily more dispersed clusters of housing and other buildings, but also including the gleaming Walisongo University, a Muslim establishment. Kota 3SD is a striking settlement reached shortly before Jatisari. A private development with security personnel at the entrance, it is a carefully landscaped environment with streets named after trees – Jalan (road) Magnolia for example – and substantial houses, all resembling one another generically, if not in detail, in curved street after curved street. In marked contrast to an inner city or inner suburban kampong the neighborhood is eerily quiet, though there is evidence enough from clothes on lines, motorcycles and cars in drives that there are people around. There are a variety of schools and also one mosque. There are no places to buy provisions – for that you have to leave the precinct, and cross the busy main road to a band of stores which are designed to serve this and other neighborhoods like it. A second such neighborhood – PST – is less developed than Kota 3SD but if anything the houses are even more costly looking. 55

Both before and after PST, the road is a country road. There are no houses but plenty of evidence of a rural economy: rubber plantations, like the one which gave Jatisari its name, lining both sides of the road; plantings of corn and cassava. That is followed by the entrance to an “export processing zone” and a rubber factory and that is followed in turn by Mijen, which has a host of stores, many places selling food or meals and a general hustle and bustle

55 For further on such communities see Jieming Zhu, “Symmetric development of informal settlements and gated communities: capacity of the state - the case of Jakarta, Indonesia”, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, working paper series, no. 135 (Feb. 2010). Zhu argues that the development of both urban forms is in part a response to the failure of municipal governments to provide adequately for their populations.
that seems strange after the solitude of the new housing developments. A kilometer or so further, and now 20 kms from Semarang, Jatisari itself is reached. It is another private development, on a much more modest scale in terms of the layout and the kinds of houses than either Kota 3SD or PST, but more extensive than either. It has the feel of an inner city kampong with the same notices of public programs for local women, the same vigor, the sense of people moving around on a variety of errands. Minibuses serve Jatisari from Semarang and unlike the elaborate Kota 3SD or PST there are plenty of small stores selling provisions and prepared food.

Jatisari was built in 1999–2000 by Karyadeka Alam Lestari, a private, not government-owned company. The inhabitants are varied in occupation and status. There are civil servants, traders or entrepreneurs, business people, employees of private companies, teachers, policemen, even factory workers. Most of the residents are not the original people from the area, but outside, even out of Semarang city, because it is a relatively new settlement.\textsuperscript{56} The “urbanization” in this instance consists of an urban population extending over a wider area.

\textsuperscript{56} Information from Jatisari resident, 9 Apr. 2009 et seqq. email exchanges with author.
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The expansion of the city thus takes in an existing rural population such as in next door and formerly rural Mijen, which is now the name of the whole division of Semarang in this southwest corner of the city. Even in Jatisari itself there are still “real Jatisari people” who have stayed on. For local women in particular it has proved advantageous, as they can now work as housekeepers, babysitters, or food sellers, since many of the middle class women in Jatisari work, whereas before all that was on offer was unpaid domestic work, or work in farms or on factories.57

Jatisari and Kengeri and places like it are characteristic examples of what scholar Terry McGee has labelled “kotadesasi” – a mixing up of town and rural areas both in population and economic life. Scholars have queried the distinctiveness of this phenomenon, but it is certainly pervasive on the margins of many Asian cities and of a quite different character to equivalent “edge” growth in North American cities, which lack the context of a dense rural population.58 It embodies phases of urbanization which may be the product of capitalist enterprise but are only distantly articulated with globalization, if at all.

Yangzhou: frontiers and makeovers

The modern urbanization of Yangzhou can be dated back to the beginning of Communist rule in 1949. The new government did not seek to promote city growth, but it did want to have effective control of cities. In Yangzhou the city walls were demolished in 1951 and road corridors were introduced through the town and around its perimeter. These measures can be seen as both modernizing and controlling, facilitating the management of the city by the new regime, whilst also making it penetrable by automobiles, not just rickshaws. Some rebuilding in the dense mesh of one-storey buildings took place, usually of multi-storey buildings on purely functional lines.

The major infrastructural work was not directly related to the city, it involved the reconstruction of the water transport network, so served production

57 Information from Jatisari resident.
in the countryside as well as the city. What was produced in the city? From the late 1950s to the late 1970s all production was state-owned, directed and regulated. Yangzhou became a center for the motor transport industry, amongst others. For the first time in its history its economy was based on production rather than consumption.\footnote{Deborah Davis, “Social transformations of metropolitan China since 1949”, in Josef Gugler, ed., \textit{Cities in the developing world: issues, theory and policy}, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 248–52, is excellent on the pre-1978 city.}

From the point of view of an account of urbanization, however, at the end of the 1970s, when China took a new economic direction, Yangzhou was still a relatively small city embedded in a overwhelmingly rural environment. (China
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was only 15 per cent urban in 1982.) Shifts in policy since then have “unleashed” urbanization. In 1988, urban land, which was all owned by the government, was “marketized” in the sense that it could be valued, taxed according to its value and traded, thus creating an incentive for city governments, the de facto owners of it, to relinquish high value land in the central city for land further out. ⁶⁰

A recent report on China’s rich confirmed the significance of this kind of activity. For most such individuals, the key drivers of wealth creation were real estate and construction, which were linked directly to urbanization and only indirectly to globalization. ⁶¹

Near one of the approaches to the old city, the “Lanhai” – Blue Lake – development had an impressive frontage in the spring of 2009. The signage showed, as was characteristic of such places, images of fine living in gracious surroundings, these were ornamented with plenty of English phrases, appropriate for the kind of image being conveyed. Inside the lobby about a dozen individuals were seated, all garbed in subdued corporate uniform, enthusiastic to greet any enquirers and to ply them with sales information.

In the territory behind them massive cranes could be seen bending over the skeletons and filling-out frames of four or five multi-floor buildings. The ground around the buildings was no more than a building site – the landscaping had yet to occur. The economic downturn was bothersome. Lanhai was well under way and needed purchasers, and in another year or so the buildings would be completed. Who were the likely buyers for these apartments, which averaged 6,000 yuan per square meter? Many of the apartments would sell for over $100,000 (800,000 yuan), a substantial sum when a middle-level monthly income would be 5,000 yuan and such an income earner might aim at an apartment costing between $30,000 and $50,000 (240,000 to 400,000 yuan). ⁶²

So also with the completed T’ang Manor development, advertised as “North American style and Yangzhou environment linked together”, which followed a similar format except that it was costlier – indeed at more than 10,000 yuan a square meter it was the most expensive real estate in Yangzhou, situated as it was close by the city’s pre-eminent attraction, Shou Xi Hu lake.

“It’s all about real estate”, a Shanghai resident said. “All kinds of official bodies found they owned valuable land, once it became possible to have pri-

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⁶¹ China Daily, 22 Apr. 2009; this is discussed further in chapter four.
⁶² YH interview, 14 Apr. 2009.
vate ownership and alienation, from 1998. “They wanted to be able to realise
the value of it, and in most cases they did, and they did it as individuals too.” 63

In January 2006, dissident Wang Hui published a long investigative article
exposing the plight of workers in a factory in his hometown, Yangzhou, a
city of about one million. According to Wang, in 2004 the local government
sold the profitable state-owned textile factory to a real estate developer from
Shenzhen. Worker-equity shares were bought for 30 per cent of their actual
value, and then more than a thousand workers were laid off after mismanage-
ment of the factory led to losses. In July 2004, the workers went on strike. In
what Wang calls an agitation without precedent in the history of Yangzhou,
the workers obstructed a major highway, halted bus traffic and attacked the
gates of local government buildings. 64

In 1991 the Yangzhou city government adopted the slogan, “Nan gang, bei
shi, dong cheng, xi qu” – port in the south (i.e. adjacent to the Yangtze River),
city in the north, [historic] town in the east, and housing in the west. The city
between around 1980 and 2000 did expand from around 30 sq kms to around
100 sq kms. 65 The practice was however different from the slogan. The city
built its new administrative buildings some distance to the west rather than
the north of the old town and that is the principal direction in which the city
has expanded. Alongside major public buildings including municipal offices,
are many blocks of apartments, business offices, schools and hospitals, shops
and shopping malls. Yangzhou’s largest mall, Jinghuacheng, located five
kilometers west of the downtown area, opened in 2005. The most expensive
private housing developments are also found west of the city; many develop
shared amenities in addition to the houses or apartment buildings themselves,
to attract investors.

The westward expansion was partly designed to allow the conservation of
the old city. From 1982, Yangzhou had joined the list of Chinese cities with
designated historical and cultural status, so that not just individual monu-
ments but the whole old city enjoyed some protection. Nonetheless in the
1980s the city constructed a new thoroughfare from east to west across the

63 DJ interview, 12 Apr. 2009; see also Xiaoming Wang and Liu Yang “From architecture to advertis-
ing – the changes in Shanghai’s urban space over the last 15 years”, Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, 11/1
(Mar. 2010) and comment p. 38 that “not only in Shanghai, but also in every large or medium city
in the country, property advertisement is always the most magnificent image advertisement.”
old city, labeling it “Chufeng shili Yangzhou Lu” – the vernal spirit road across Yangzhou, ten miles long.66

West was a more logical direction than north, or east for that matter. Westward lay Nanjing, the provincial capital, just an hour away, whilst northern expansion had to be on the further side of Shou Xi Hu lake and park, and “further east” expansion involved the impediment of three water courses, including the Grand Canal. Expansion has taken place in both those directions but it is mixed residential and industrial, not administrative, as in the west. New apartment blocks sit amongst factories and warehouses for machinery and toys.

The expansion to the south proceeded too. The city located an “economic development zone” here to attract foreign investment, close to the Yangtze River and, from 2004, the new bridge across it. Large plants – electronics, clothing and footwear, other products – are scattered through the district where the configuration of clusters of village houses and surrounding farmland can also be seen. Many are joint ventures with non-mainland businesses, amongst which Taiwanese enterprises are prominent.67

The city built or widened roads into what had been farmland and block after block of apartment buildings were erected. This urbanization therefore echoed that of Semarang and Bangalore – involving as it did an expansion of the city into the countryside rather than a migration of rural populations into the city.

Bali is one such neighborhood. The too-promising name in fact simply means that it is 8 li (approximately 4 kms) from Yangzhou, southwards, so almost on the Yangtze River. Around 1999 the city government bought the land from farmers and then encouraged workers to live in the area, close to the factories and plants. Farm houses were demolished, and the former villagers were offered housing in the new town: “In Yangzhou you’d have to pay around 3,500 yuan a square meter, in Bali around 1,800 yuan, but the city made apartments available for only 500 yuan a square meter. They aren’t that good, but they are cheap.”68

66 Lucie Olivová, “Building history and preservation of Yangzhou”, in Lucie Olivová and Vibeke Bordahl, eds, Lifestyle and entertainment in Yangzhou, Copenhagen, NIAS Press, 2009, p. 22; since the 1990s it has officially been Wenchang Lu. See further on historic centers in contemporary Chinese cities, Shu-yi Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao [Shanxi], China”, Asian Research Institute, National University of Singapore, working paper series, no. 133 (Jan. 2010).
67 For further on Taiwanese investment in Yangzhou see Chien, “Isomorphism”, pp. 287, 290: Ji Jianye, a party secretary at Kunshan, an export zone which garnered a great deal of Taiwan investment, was transferred to Yangzhou in 2002; there was a significant increase in investments from Taiwan in Yangzhou after Ji assumed his position there.
68 ZD interview, 3 May 2009.
In many areas, as in Bangalore and Semarang, rural and urban remain interwoven. A 2009 snapshot captures rural life on the city margin on the cusp of change: between the houses or in tracts of land beyond them, locals grow vegetables and other produce, sometimes along road verges. In the mornings, cultivators wheel produce into the city to sell on the street or in street markets. A pen holds half a dozen pigs, whilst between two lots of houses there is open ground, weeds and some swamp. Houses are marked with striking ornamental gateways at odds with the mundane activities that take place within them - parking for motorcycles, scrap of varying kinds stored, meals eaten, clothes hung out to dry. But for all this sense of village life, these are no longer purely rural localities. Most of the adults coming in and out of the houses work in the city, a short bus, cycle or motorcycle ride away.

In 1965, Denis Graham, serving in the United States Air Force but not much more than a teenager from Kansas City, arrived in Japan to serve at the Brady
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Air Force Base just outside the city of Fukuoka and saw that city for the first time:

I just walked around the streets for some time, taking in the feel of this exotic city, and watching the people and traffic pass by. Being from Kansas City, I was used to crowds, but Kansas City was nothing like Fukuoka. The traffic was unbelievable and so disorganized. Taxis, three-wheeled trucks, and even buses seemed to pay no attention to traffic lanes. They just zipped about in a seemingly haphazard fashion. Pedestrians and bicycle riders were narrowly missed by motor vehicles, but were never hit ... I had just come to Japan after having been trained at the Army Finance School at Fort Benjamin Harrison, near Indianapolis, Indiana. Indianapolis was the dirtiest city I had ever seen, that was until I saw Fukuoka. However, although Fukuoka was dirty, with many unpaved streets and walkways ... it seemed to fit in, making it part of its allure ... the people were dressed in a mixture of traditional Japanese attire and western dress... street vendors sold strange looking food: eels, squid, fish, strange rice and noodle concoctions, and other things I couldn’t even guess at the time. Some also pushed carts filled with pots and pans or items that they sold from door to door or from a street corner ... One of my strongest memories of Fukuoka, however, was on a later trip. It was the first time I went to the main train station. From a block or more away, you could smell the odor coming from its public restrooms. It was so strong that it almost knocked you over. I always hated having to go through the station after that and avoided it whenever I could.69

No visitor to Fukuoka in the last thirty years would recognize this description, so sleek and prosperous has that city become and remained (even against the backdrop of two decades of economic difficulties). It could pass however as a description of any developing Asian city, which is what in a sense Fukuoka was in the mid-1960s – at least by the standards of the Midwest United States.

The transformation which Fukuoka underwent between the 1960s and the 1980s is an important yet easily overlooked element in urbanization. If urbanization entails a steadily increasing proportion of a country’s population living in urban areas it can (not always) entail rising levels of wealth and income and the opportunity for the urban communities not just to provide infrastructure and amenities but to advance them to a developed level.

Of the cities under review here this process is most visible in Yangzhou, but there are elements of it in Mysore and Bangalore. In Mysore the budget for parks has permitted a great deal of landscape and maintenance and the

creation of new parks in suburban neighborhoods. Traffic lights have also been installed at a much greater number of intersections than before and road paving is more thorough and systematic. In Bangalore a second tier of express buses has been introduced – fares are somewhat higher but the buses are air-conditioned and make fewer stops; and the “Namma” metro system, when opened, will transform public transportation in the city.

The most substantial changes in Yangzhou conform to developments in many other cities in mainland China. The transformation that has taken place in twenty-first century Yangzhou can be classified in a number of ways. (Arguably Yangzhou has benefited from being former party leader Jiang Zemin’s home town, except that many other cities in the lower Yangtze have undergone comparable transformations.) Some facets of it can be linked to globalization: the awareness of what cities in the developed world are like, and the use of English phraseology in characterizing the process or particular developments within it. From the point of view of the population of Yangzhou, however, or any other such city, it is primarily a process that is transforming the experience of living in the city, just as urbanization taken as a whole transforms a society.

Firstly, the central and/or provincial government has continued to build new roads, highways and bridges that have benefited Yangzhou. The most substantial, the massive Runyang bridge across the Yangtze, in the vicinity of Zhenjiang (as of 2009 China’s longest suspension bridge) has for ever ended Yangzhou’s “isolation” on the north side of the Yangtze. The expressway system had by then circled the city. The effect, certainly seen from the air or on a satellite map, was to recreate a perimeter to the city: a modern version of the old city walls.

More significantly for the “texture” of urbanization in the city itself, the city has built roads to improve approaches to particular destinations, notably to the famous He Yuan (garden) in the southeast of the old city, but also around the perimeter of Shou Xi Hu, Yangzhou’s most visited park, in the city’s northwest and across the Grand Canal (Yunhe) from the east to provide a direct link to the city’s main artery, Wenchang Lu.

Secondly the city has created and/or planted highway and road verges. Intersections that were once unregulated now have flower-beded center-
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pieces, and so do median strips on divided highways. These are sculpted azaleas and other shrubs, usually producing a combination of alternating green and maroon. Bus shelters at all bus stops are mostly recessed from the traffic lanes. In some instances store and shop frontages have been moved. And an army of street cleaners – often older individuals – are busy through most the day and into the evening, continually scouring public spaces for paper and other rubbish and working on the flower beds.

Like other cities of southern Jiangsu, Yangzhou is a city of canals and these have been the site of the most dramatic city efforts. In the 1990s the city government made the first such improvements to the canals in the historic heart of the city. They were cleaned out, paths re-laid and houses lining them white-washed to create a picturesque effect. Through the 2000s the city has improved ever more canals and their perimeters. The city has been making parks since the early 1980s and this continued through the 2000s. Where they did not exist at all the city has created them, in some places through building clearances. In 2009 canal rehabilitation was at almost every stage, from just started to completed.71

On the western side of the city there is now an exhibition center; a new Yangzhou city museum, opened in 2005; and the architect-designed railway station, which opened in 2004. On the first floor of the new museum, a massive scale model presents a picture of Yangzhou in 2020 and compares it with the actuality of 2005. In the scale model, the transformation is complete; the city is presented as a seamless terrain of orderly roads, buildings and green spaces.

This “final phase” is a distinctive aspect of urbanization in Yangzhou, as in many other Chinese cities, but how final is it? It resembles a melting process, a system where warm water circulates around blocks of ice which steadily shrink, and ultimately will disappear. It is also a process where public and private transformations proceed at different speeds, if in the same general direction.

Turn a corner from a new road or path and housing with very limited amenities comes in sight. Washing is being done in a basin, or the basin taken down to the nearby canal; an old man hoists two bucketfuls of water onto a pole, balances it across his shoulders and eases his way back to his accommodation; clothes hang on lines immediately in front of a house; a man brushes his teeth outside his doorway using water from a wall tap into an outside sink;

71 Olivová, “Building history”, pp. 26–27, discusses parks.

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a young woman disappears into one of a line of outhouse closets flanking the back entrances to a tired apartment block; rubbish is piled high in overlooked corners and the plaster has fallen away from one wall, uncovering the brick construction. Along a way there is a public bathroom.

These neighborhoods do not last – some of the most derelict are clearly that way because they are about to be demolished. The word for demolition is chāi (拆); this single character will often appear on a building about to be demolished. In some instances a glance around a perimeter wall shows no buildings at all but a demolition site. In another neighborhood old houses are flanked by new ones, but in similar style, designed in this instance to preserve an “historic” feel to the precinct. Alongside some of the ageing apartment blocks cars are parked, on the cycle ways, in narrow gaps between buildings, along alleys – places never designed for them and soon likely to disappear too. Where there has only been cold water, pipes have to be reticulated to provide hot water. Where there were outdoor toilets, plumbing has to be organized to provide indoor amenities. Where washing had been done by hand, space has now to be found in houses for washing machines.

Concluding comments

Two prominent scholars of Asian cities have conceded that “a conceptual framework incorporating both the global and the urban has proven elusive”, while accepting the argument that it is impossible to imagine globalization without cities. But that does not mean it is impossible to imagine urbanization without globalization. This chapter has examined contemporary urbanization in Asia in its own terms rather than as a by-product of globalization.

Put most baldly, urbanization takes place because opportunities for livelihoods (or the expectation of such opportunities) draw country-dwellers to cities, which duly expand, both in population and area. That expectation of livelihood can conceivably be related to globalization, if the job is the product of economic linkages between the city and the rest of the world. It might derive from other linkages however. In geographical terms, it might just as readily be the result of new relationships between the city and its hinterland or the city and other parts of the nation. In macro-economic terms it might derive from investment, or from consumption, or from government spending. In

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political economy terms it can be the product of local or regional capitalists and entrepreneurs or state actors or a combination of the two.

It may be that the historical associations between European empires and the formation of Asian cities, coupled with the contemporary export focus of Asian economies, and of China in particular, have led scholars to overlook the fact that urbanization, as other transformations of city life, can have multiple causes. Thus globalization has created a new labor force in Bangalore which in turn provides customers for the construction industry and the food supply industry – but those industries also cater to Bangalore residents who are not employed in globalized enterprises.

The chapter tested the experience of urbanization “on the ground” in Bangalore, Semarang, and Yangzhou and on their urban margins. In the case of Bangalore urbanization presented itself as a phenomenon of more and more people being accommodated within a particular urban area and the way the city met their “in situ” requirements for housing, water supply, public health and public education. It also was a phenomenon of mobility – the city had to provide roads and railways, bus and train transport. Data on the industry structure of Bangalore confirmed that this population growth was not related in all instances to globalization.

In the case of the urban margins, urbanization itself was the transformation and it took an identical form in each place. Where there had once been rural land there was now housing, schools, hospitals, shops and bus routes. Bali had factories, and those factories produced for export – in that sense Bali was more closely linked to globalization than were either Kengeri or Jatisari. In the case of the latter two, the urbanization often involved public servants, teachers, health workers and other such kinds of employees as much as factory workers. In all three settings the actual day by day experience of urbanization was similar, because the underlying circumstances which were driving it – economic growth, rising populations, the greater opportunities for employment compared with rural areas – were similar.

Finally the chapter explored the “makeover” of Yangzhou, a “makeover” that it shares in common with many other Chinese cities. There was nothing innately “global” in this transformation; indeed it could more readily be seen in terms both of a renovation of eighteenth-century Yangzhou and also a foreshadowing of an imagined Yangzhou of the future, in which its economic activity, whatever it was, was subordinate to the shaping of the city as a beautiful, attractive place to live. It is a version of what Mike Davis has
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called, in a slightly different context, an “imagineered urbanism” very characteristic of East Asia. While the “imaginers” may talk in terms of “global cities” the sensibility that shapes this vision of the city is in the first instance urban, and preoccupied with shaping urban space, whatever the economic underpinnings of that urban economy. Here too urbanization was a visible transformation, orchestrated by a city government which derived its revenue often from real estate deals which themselves flourished because the city was expanding both in population and also in area.

In the next chapter I turn to examine how urbanization plays out in the lives of those individuals who are caught up in it – the process called here “urbanism”.

73 David McNeill, “Gravity defying: whither Korea’s bid to build a world-class city entirely from scratch?” Asia-Pacific Journal, 45-2-09 (9 Nov. 2009), cites Davis on this “imagineered urbanism” where “all the arduous intermediate stages of commercial evolution have been telescoped or short-circuited to embrace the ‘perfected’ synthesis of shopping, entertainment and architectural spectacle.”
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Introduction
This book argues that the contemporary transformation of Asian cities can usefully be understood as a product of three historical processes occurring simultaneously: globalization, urbanization and nation-building. Globalization is not pre-eminent amongst the three; all deserve “equal time”.

In this chapter I explore further the urbanization part of this triad and analyze changes in social outlook and practices found in developing Asia’s cities, predominantly amongst their middle classes. The transformations include new levels of education, new kinds of occupation, and new opportunities for private space – and the ways these transformations relate to “traditional” areas of life.

As canvassed in the Introduction, the use of “urbanism” to describe these processes can be traced back to Louis Wirth’s 1938 article, “Urbanism as a way of life”, in which he advanced the argument that city life generated distinct social and cultural patterns which had to be understood in those terms. Later students of urban studies in Western societies have critiqued aspects of Wirth’s influential argument. In respect of developing world cities, Jennifer Robinson has argued that the relative lack of family connections which Wirth identifies with urbanism is not characteristic. Family ties and friendships from an individual’s “native place” do remain very important in the city, but Wirth’s conception is still pertinent as he is making a comparative point about the city in relationship to the countryside.

2 Robinson, Ordinary cities, p. 8.
3 Further, urbanism can be considered an analog of “modernity”, describing social, cultural and intellectual transformation, just as “urbanization” is an analog of “modernization”.

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These changes are readily attributable to globalization. For instance, in both Indonesian and Chinese cities watching world and in particular European football on television looms large in young men’s leisure time. In these cities the most educated, the richest and the most traveled are also the most Westernized. This intersection between globalization and urbanism is recognized by scholars: “Whereas earlier scholarly interests in ‘urbanism as a way of life’ were intertwined with theories of modernization, recent studies of urbanism in different world regions have invariably been powered by the concept of globalization”.4

In Western cities urban attitudes and ways of life are not just long-standing, they are dominant, as would be expected when national populations are composed predominantly of city and town dwellers. From this point of view it makes sense to identify globalization, in other words the “internationalization” of every facet of urban life, as the most significant transformation being undergone in such cities in the present era.

But in the cities of developing Asia, the transformations are more usefully seen as a product of urbanization and urbanism in the first instance and globalization only secondarily and sometimes not at all. It is true that this is not always evident, even to Asian urbanites themselves. Turban-wearing Sikh singing star Pammi Bai [Parminder Singh Siddhu] on one occasion said of his young male co-religionists, “They’ve adopted bad European habits – fast food, pubs and clubs. They want to show they are modern. They are forgetting their own culture.” He was asserting that the West, Europe and globalization was the direction of change, and unwelcome change at that.5

The statement merits further reflection however. It is likely that “European” – or “global”, or “Western” – is being used to criticize a transformation which is essentially intra-Sikh. “Global” is used to critique the city, modernity and urbanism because in so doing the critic’s position is strengthened. In fact the debates are taking place in the first instance amongst the populations of these rapidly changing cities; and in that sense they are a facet of urbanism rather than globalization.6

This can be seen in a number of other settings. The characters which embody modernity, the “West”, in so many Indian movie urban melodramas

4 McGee et al., China’s urban space, p. 11.
6 William H. Marling, How “American” is globalization? Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, has useful related comments, for example on “global” clothing in the Mexican status system, p. 5.
are usually locals, even if with Western connections. Asha Kasbekar refers to the “vamp” of Hindi films, up to the 1970s, who would often be identified as Anglo-Indian or Christian, with a name like “Rosie” or “Mary”, and would be working as a cabaret dancer, or some such. Rachel Dwyer has observed of the popular novels of writer Shobha De that “Foreign’ is a place without foreigners because it is always populated exclusively by South Asians … De’s writing, like Bollywood itself, is a space of cultural debate in which the West is a mere cipher … the West described by De is sketchy and unreal, a giant supermarket full of empty signs.”

Another characteristic example of this structure, where what looks to be evidence of globalization can be a phenomenon of urbanism, are movements for lesbian and gay self-assertion and self-awareness. The very language of such causes is demonstrative of globalization – the words themselves are used in variant forms in many Asian languages. Probing however turns up other findings. In his study of gay sexuality in Indonesia, Tom Boellstorff points out that “It is always clear to Indonesians … that the terms gay and lesbi do not originate in locality or tradition … [yet] most gay and lesbian Indonesians are not rich or even middle class … most have never seen Western gay or lesbian publications, nor have they read published materials produced by other gay and lesbian Indonesians.” Boellstorff explores a gay and lesbian world that in practice owes little to global influences but is centered on Indonesia’s cities. His field work is done in cities – Makassar and Surabaya and the tourist areas of Bali – and he concedes a vanguard role to cities when he writes, “Even in urban centers many Indonesians with same-gender desires remain unaware of the concepts gay and lesbi.”

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9 Boellstorff, Gay archipelago, p. 23, my emphasis.
In South India male-to-male sex finds multiple opportunities, if usually clandestine and fleeting ones, to engage in “maasti”10 (mischief) in rural areas, towns or cities, but it is in the metropolitan cities such as Bangalore and Chennai that the transformation of same sex relations into new forms of social and critical self-awareness takes place, amongst individuals who have both economic and cultural distance from family and home town circumstances. “In the main”, Shivananda Khan wrote in 2001, these “evolving and emerging identities are arising with the growth of urban, industrialized, and commercial cultures, concomitant with which is a rising sense of individuality, personal privacy, and private space.” Khan also relates these trends to the “power of the English-speaking middle-classes to access Western literature and to make more choices about their lives. It is mostly people from these backgrounds who meet, socialize, discuss and debate (usually in English) issues of sexual identities and ‘coming out’”.11 This is to make a characteristic and plausible link between globalization and social change, but if an “urban, industrialized and commercial culture” is not itself a product of globalization then the analytical distinction between urbanism and globalization remains.

In her study of two lesbian-themed Malayalam movies from Kerala in South India Navaneetha Mokkil draws a distinction between Sancharam (2004) and Deshadana Kili Karayarilla/DKK (1986).12 Sancharam did not have a commercial release in Kerala whereas DKK was neither labeled nor marketed as a lesbian film and was produced mainly for a Kerala audience. It was DKK not Sancharam that had an urban setting: “There are night shots of crowded streets with shops on both sides and political posters that festoon the roadsides. STD phone booths, ice-cream parlors, public parks, bus stations, restaurants and theaters give the audience a texture of the developing urban spaces in Kerala in that period.”13 For DKK, transformation was associ-
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ated with urbanization, whereas Sancharam’s sensibility, Mokkil argued, was essentially that of the global lesbian and gay rights movement.

As discussed in chapter one, three transformations found in the developing Asian capitalist city, which are also characteristic of the nineteenth and early twentieth century Western capitalist city, will be explored here:

• means of economic survival (drawing on Bangalore and Mysore)
• modes of belief (Semarang, Bangalore, Mysore and Yangzhou)
• relations between men and women (Semarang, Bangalore and Yangzhou)

It is possible to infer from the discussion to this point a sense of urbanism as progressive and positive but two other elements need to be taken into account. Firstly, these transformations take place in cities that carry a strong capitalist imprint. Such cities offer manifold opportunities compared with the confines of rural or small town work, society and culture, but they are also places of insecurity and danger. Freedom for the individual is a concept that resonates in the literature and politics of urbanism, but where it is dependent on money, the quest for it can exact a toll, and failure an even greater toll. Put most starkly, capitalism can choke the promise of urbanism. It is not too surprising that in worlds where public agencies do not provide welfare, the family or family-related networks remain critical for economic survival, be it through jobs, connections, inheritance or marriage.

Secondly, the discussion to date, and through the rest of the chapter, focuses on middle-class city dwellers rather than on working-class city dwellers. This concentration biases the discussion away from those whose circumstances in the city are harshest, but which are also more difficult to research.14

A final introductory point. This approach is not intended to imply that there was no “urbanism” in Asian cities in general prior to contemporary times or in the case study cities in particular. In the eighteenth century Yangzhou was

14 Three excellent ethnographies of working-class individuals, families and lives are Lea Jellinek, “Displaced by modernity: the saga of a Jakarta street-trader’s family from the 1940s to 1950s”, in Josef Gugler, ed., Cities in the developing world: issues, theory, policy, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 139–55; Alison J. Murray, No money, no honey: a study of street traders and prostitutes in Jakarta, Oxford and Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1991; Ching Kwan Lee, Against the law: labor protests in China’s rustbelt and sunbelt, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2007. In the case of Jellinek and Murray in particular, the ethnographies were the product of close association with a select number of individuals over an extended period of years.
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a highly urbanized and “urbane” city, with a vigorous commerce, a leisured urban class, and an iconoclastic cultural milieu.\(^15\) In the nineteenth century it provided the setting and inspiration for the first urban novels in Chinese. James Heitzman and other scholars have drawn attention to the rich history of urbanism in South Asia.\(^16\) As we have just seen, Gandhinagar in Bangalore, the center of Kannada cinema entertainment and the city’s transport hub, grew up alongside an old-established city. Semarang in the 1920s had carefully tended roads, department stores, cinemas and dancing venues.

In all three countries, however, levels of urbanization in historical times were very low – about 10 per cent in Indonesia in 1945, between 15 per cent and 16 per cent on the Indian subcontinent in 1950 and just over 13 per cent in China in 1953. In 2010 these figures were respectively 54 per cent, 30 per cent and 45 per cent.\(^17\) As the total populations of all three countries has tripled since 1950 the transformations of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are thus affecting far greater numbers of people, both absolutely and proportionately and will continue to do so well past the middle of the century. Because many of those individuals hail themselves, or at only one generation’s remove, from country districts, villages or very small towns, urbanism is a powerful transformative force, which touches many people who may not be directly influenced by globalization.

Making a living

In the capitalist city of the nineteenth-century novel not just the working class but the middle class was insecure. Jobs in business could fall victim to sudden turns in circumstances – a bank panic, a vigorous competitor. Penury was never far away. With public assistance in the form of charity rather than welfare, families were crucial to economic security. But a misfortune or injury befalling a bread-winner, as Edwin Reardon in George Gissing’s *New Grub Street* (1891) or Coupeau in Émile Zola’s *L’Assommoir* (1877), was enough to plunge an entire family into poverty.

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16 See for example, Heitzman, *City in South Asia*, pp. 43–105.
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The economic downturn since 2008 has been a reminder that economic insecurity can overshadow lives in the developed world too, but in the cities of developing Asia it is much more pervasive. The energies involved in securing a living, the importance of family in providing a safety net, the risks to one and the tensions that arise in the other are the substance of many lives.

In the paragraphs that follow the circumstances of a variety of individuals in Bangalore and Mysore are presented. The jobs that these individuals seek and the circumstances they find themselves in rarely have much to do with globalization – they are on the edges of the world of IT and outsourcing employment. This is to be expected – as was explained in the last chapter most educated individuals do not work in those spheres of employment. They mostly work or seek work in the formal sector or in areas such as teaching that require some professional training. Thus they are middle class. The existence of a large informal sector differentiates their situation from individuals in developed world cities, where the formal sector is dominant. That helps shape the character of urbanism in these cities and for such individuals.¹⁸

In 2004 Santosh and Asha both taught privately, from rented premises, where they also lived. Both were located in Kengeri, the satellite town explored in the preceding chapter, on the outskirts of Bangalore.

Santosh was entrepreneurial. The entrance to his studio was decorated with a prominent sign, in both English and Kannada. The English read, “Udayonmuka Music School and Acting Institute and Training Center: classes for light vocal, guitar, keyboard, piano, violin, drums, painting, makan class, break dance, harmonium, mandolin, acting, drama, karate, yakshagama, etc.”

The desk in his front room was a panel on which many, many photographs were mounted, all featuring him in one guise or another, usually performing, sometimes meeting or greeting what looked to be distinguished people. He was familiar with a wide variety of performance skills. He could provide a commentary on all of the photos – this one with the president of a dance federation, this one at a performance in Chennai, that one with his sister who had had parts in films; that one, in formal white shirt and dhoti (sarong), a special occasion with his family.

¹⁸ Time and circumstances did not permit the accumulation of an equivalent dossier of research on Yangzhou and Shanghai, Semarang and Jakarta. For studies with a working-class focus see the titles instanced in footnote 14 for this chapter.
In the rooftop classroom popular (rather than classical) and Indian (rather than Western) folk dancing was the chosen form. The children ranged from around 4 to 12 or 13, and if for some it was a matter of being baby-sat by elder brothers and sisters, all were enthusiastic and involved. They practiced a set of steps and movements time after time, all together, then a variety of groups were singled out. Later a mother and daughter took a lesson. It took place inside – night was falling and they needed light, not to read music, but to play instruments. It was intense work, all three concentrating, with mother and daughter going over and over particular sequences at Santosh’s instigation.

Asha ran a school near Santosh’s house, on open ground in front of her own house.\textsuperscript{19} Highly colored cartoon characters on the wall gave the place a kindergarten feel. Asha had lived in the Gulf for many years, in Dubai, and had only recently returned. Her husband had worked as a journalist and/or photographer with a Gulf paper. However he had had a bad head accident and it was that which had either prompted or required their return.

Asha explained that they were living in the house (which was more modest than Santosh’s) temporarily while waiting to take occupancy of one of the flats in the nearest apartment building. She was excited about the school – it had been a good neighborhood to come to, there were enough children, and it would be easier to manage once they were in the flat – but it was clearly not going to be as lucrative as her husband’s former employment in the Gulf.

So both schools were going concerns, but a year later neither was in business. The new occupant of Santosh’s house said he had returned to the city – to Bangalore. No one could say what had happened to Asha and her school. Possibly it was no more complicated than that the school had re-located. The big cartoon drawings were fading.

Another woman, though older, sari-clad and barefoot, was neither poor nor rustic. Her husband had a good job in television, and her son, who was in his thirties, had similar work. They were anxious however because she needed to have an operation and to get it done privately (virtually the only way) would cost 1.5 lakhs (that is Rs150,000 or $US3,000 – a very large sum of money for such a family). It was likely, said Santosh, that they would borrow, but reluctantly, from relatives. I surmised the reluctance would be because they would not want to incur the obligations that might accompany such a loan. Such unbudgeted expenses can be ruinous for families but also reinforce the

\textsuperscript{19} Many such schools have opened throughout the subcontinent, see for example Harvard University Gazette, 24 Mar. 2005.
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family’s role as economic unit. Doctor visits in 2004 cost one sick man Rs500 a visit – perhaps 10 per cent of his monthly income. A tooth may be extracted because it is cheaper than having to pay for treatment. When a villager from near Bangalore needed a hernia operation all the neighbors contributed. In these circumstances selling insurance is a thriving business just as collective security arrangements and then insurance were favored in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Western cities.

On the outskirts of Mysore is a large produce market. It is relatively new; the market used to be much closer to the city and the move is a comment on the importance of motor transport and the relative ease of reaching a location on the edge of the city rather than negotiating traffic-ridden Mysore. It is like a tract of new houses – broad streets, fresh curbing, large sheds or storehouses, the frontages open with stacks and stacks of grain, vegetables and spices for sale. Some of the buildings are very large, others are very small. Vinod, a man of around 50, runs one of the smaller ones.

The variety of circumstances in Vinod’s working life demonstrates as much as Santosh and Asha the uncertainty of making a living in the city. Vinod worked for many years as a cameraman for a Kannada film and television program maker. The pay was good for the time – around Rs3,000 per month when a film was being made. But the film maker then went out of business. Vinod has since worked in a variety of retail occupations, none of them secure and none of them that well paid. He ran a medical supplies store in Nanjangud, some kilometers south of Mysore, for four years for Rs 1,500 monthly. He then opened his own business on the same lines, and ran that for ten years. It did not last. He committed a lot of money to his only son’s education – around Rs15,000 per annum – and this may well have sunk the business.

In 2004 both Vinod and his son Rahul – by then 18 – worked at a newsagent business, owned by a friend of Vinod’s, at the main Mysore bus stand. Such businesses sold newspapers, water, candy and snacks, and usually had a public phone – common even with the pervasiveness of mobile phones. Between them they earned Rs3,000 per month – so the same rate per person as the medical store, but after some years of inflation, in reality they were not so well off (at that time – 2004–05 – software industry employees were earn-

20 Hindu, 6 May 2008 (hernia); DNA, 24 Dec. 2008 (polio vaccine).
ing around Rs15,000 per month, and many government employees would have been on about Rs 8,000). They were very close to home, which was a saving but then the newsstand was put on notice, because the bus station itself was to be renovated. The next plan was to set up a store in Mysore, in premises they owned themselves, which as well as newspapers and magazines would have an STD phone and video games.

In the event another plan was followed. Rahul had a school friend who traded wholesale in potatoes and onions. Vinod borrowed Rs50,000 (about $1,000) to get himself in this protected business: farmers had to sell to produce markets so a trading license was a kind of rent. Except that in Vinod’s case, although the money was enough to buy the premises, it was not enough to buy a license. He could only be a subcontractor and in practice very little custom came his way. In 2008 he still worked at the produce center but primarily on a wage for one of the larger licensed traders.

Rahul said the best job was to work for the government – for the railways, the post office, the city corporation, or the bus company.21 Such jobs, once obtained were secure, reasonably paid with subsidized meals, and assistance with housing. The competition for such jobs is intense, and the question of

whether particular social groups, for example backward castes, should have job quotas, is a fiery one. The growth of the private sector salaried economy in India has not made a big difference for most individuals: software companies and international call centers might pay higher wages but they require high levels of proficiency in mathematics or English, which most individuals cannot hope to attain.

Even for individuals with such proficiency, different courses will be, may need to be, pursued. Tarun first came to Bangalore in 2002. Like most new arrivals he stayed with relatives. He did have reasonable English and computer skills – he had studied in English through high school, pre-university courses and university, and gained a degree in computer engineering. His English was not however of the very high standard required for call center work and the computer engineering field was very competitive. He got a first job in “customer relations” in one of the big new malls that had recently opened up in Koromangala, east of downtown Bangalore. In other words he was a sales assistant. Such jobs are not that well paid, around Rs3,000 per month in 2002, but they also do not need much skill, only an ability to present well and to be helpful to customers. Tarun’s lack of Kannada, the local language, was not an issue – he mostly used English in the store. Tarun wanted better pay however. By 2005 he was working for an outsourcing company, one which transcribed material for law firms in the US, the UK and Australia. The English-language benchmark for such work – transcribing spoken, often very technical or idiomatic English extremely speedily – was very, very high (from one round of hiring only 10 individuals were selected from 3,500 resumes submitted). The pay was accordingly good – Rs20,000 monthly starting salary and a full-time 45 hour week established employee could expect Rs50,000. Ironically, those who were most employable were the well-off spouses of executives and managers who had spent extended periods of time outside India – “their husbands play golf together.”

So at this point Tarun was fully part of the globalized Bangalore economy. But his written English was not at a level that would have earned him one of the top salaries at the company; he was mostly engaged in administrative and computer-servicing tasks. He then worked for a time at an international call center – his spoken English had improved after three years in Bangalore – but he gave it up because it was too demanding on his health – a common comment about call center work, especially where night shifts were involved.

22 HC interview, 22 Nov. 2005.
By 2008 Tarun was employed by a joint-venture US–India finance company, which sold both insurance and mutual funds. There was a staff of 20, all Indian, all male, 18 on the mutual funds side and 2 on the insurance side. Tarun worked on the insurance side and fielded reports from agents throughout Kerala and Karnataka, while his colleague handled Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.23

Dilip was a 20 year old who in 2008 worked in a domestic call center in Bangalore that dealt with Malayalam, Tamil and English inquiries; he received a monthly wage of around Rs7,500. He had come from Kannanoor in Kerala, where he would not have been able to find equivalent work. His expenses were modest because he was not married and – as is usual – shared accommodation. He needed money mainly for a monthly bus pass, with its unlimited travel on Bangalore’s bus network, to pay the rent, and to buy food. He shared his accommodation with a fellow Keralite. He wanted to work in an international call center, which would have paid Rs15,000 to Rs18,000, but he had too much “MTI” (mother tongue influence).24

Hiresh, whom we met in chapter 2, also first came to Bangalore in 2002, but to study. His family was a little better off than Tarun’s and made different choices. All three children (two sons and a daughter) were assisted in further study; Hiresh studied for a law degree. During vacations he built up savings by working as a carpenter and builder – the traditional occupation of his caste.

The degree completed, he found work in the administration of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), a prestigious business school in Bangalore, whilst he looked for a job with a law firm. The challenge in the latter instance was to get a job without having any of the contacts that would have made that more feasible – he got interviews without difficulty but never job offers and thought it could be caste (Hiresh came from an OBC, an “other backward caste”, that is, a relatively low status one) or some other unspoken barrier. Speaking of the barriers such job-seekers face, he commented that “having their traditional occupations they never used to get good education, either because their parents were not keen to send them to higher studies or [because] though they are educated, the standard of the institutions in which they studied is an issue … in a sense they are semi-fried products and are usually thrown out of competition.”25

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Hiresh’s English was good – indeed vivid – but not idiomatic. Like Dilip he had sought work in call centers but he too had been turned down on the grounds of too much mother tongue influence. In 2006 he returned to his home town and secured a placement there with a local lawyer – unpaid but at least giving him experience. In 2008 he gained more permanent employment, also away from Bangalore, with a non-governmental organization. This was also through a personal contact.

Prakash came to Bangalore only in 2004, after he had graduated with a BA in history. Tarun was his original contact and he took on a similar first job as a sales assistant, in the same store where Tarun had first worked. He wanted to improve his situation so continued to apply for jobs and was fortunate – or so he thought – to get one with Titan Industries, a characteristic example of a firm which has developed a national market (see chapter four). At Prakash’s job interview, permanent employment after a period of time with the company on contract was indicated but this never occurred, although at one point Prakash was managing the entire showroom of one of the company’s Bangalore outlets.

That job had been gained by contacts too and it was another contact that took him to a job with a small construction company run by a civil engineer friend for which he acted as a site supervisor, gaining, as it turned out, valuable experience for his next job with a much larger company engaged in the same kind of work, from which he earned Rs10,000 plus a mobile phone and a petrol allocation for his motorcycle. This job took him out of Bangalore on occasion, as the company was engaged in projects elsewhere in the state, but he has remained Bangalore-based. With the slowdown in economic activity in 2008 its future was problematic and in 2009 Prakash started work with a different company but in the same general area of work – house building and fit-outs for the domestic market. Globalization was far away.

Connections were always crucial, and the more intimate they were, the more fruitful. If a family had a viable business, the future of the sons was assured. One son worked for his father’s granite business which produced paving stones; another ran a medical supplies business in Mysore with money lent by his father; a third worked in his family’s sari business; a fourth as a tailor, also in a family business. Conversely, without connections, enterprises, like those of Asha, Santosh and Vinod, were often fleeting. Large numbers of young men from Karnataka and other states spend futile months waiting for the right job. Most subsist on largesse from home. They are lured by “placement consult-
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ants … some job sites ask for Rs150 to Rs300 on assurance a resume will be posted on line”. These young men shared rooms; they did not want to settle for anything; “at least Rs20,000 is what most of us are looking for”, this in an environment where Rs10,000 would be an excellent starting salary for someone without dependents. Unsurprisingly the jobs don’t materialize.26 Like the others in this sequence of accounts, and like the majority of workers in Bangalore or Mysore, urbanism was about survival – about using connections to get somewhere, about losing your way without them. It was embedded in the world of the capitalist city but at a distance from globalization.

Religious observance

A recent commentator asked, in respect of Indonesia, “Revivalist Hinduism, militant Islam, ancient mysticism, which will prevail? Perhaps all. Perhaps none. Globalization is sweeping through Indonesia like a monsoon. A young internet-savvy generation worships not volcanoes, but Asian boy bands and English soccer clubs.”27

The converse argument can also be put however. A scholarly workshop in 2005 took as its theme “religious commodifications in Asia: re-enchantment of a globalizing world”. “Re-enchantment” paid homage to Max Weber’s assertion that “dis-enchantment” was central to modernity. Evidence for the workshop’s opposing premise, that “wherever capitalism grows as modes of modern production and consumption, religion also flourishes” can be found every day and on many streets in an Asian city.28 Rationality and religion co-exist in urban Indonesia and India, making compromises that have little to do with globalization.

Semarang

Mosques in Semarang are large and unmissable. At Pasar Johar, the market at the center of the old town, the Masjid Agung dominates. At Simpang Lima, now the retail center of Semarang, where five roads meet, and traffic races round a large open space, one precinct between two streets is occupied by the Baiturrahman mosque. Kudus, two hours east of Semarang, carries its religious significance in its name, it being a version of Al Quds, the Muslim/

Arabic name for Jerusalem. This mosque has the welcome spaciousness, airiness and lack of clutter that characterizes mosques the world over. On one weekday in 2004, midday prayers over, perhaps 100 men were leaving, collecting or putting on their shoes, chatting to each other. Some had changed into a sarong for prayer and were now changing back, but most were wearing the same clothes they had arrived in and most women around did not wear headscarves.

Two men and two young boys approached this writer in the forecourt. One of the men had what television images led one to think of as “fundamentalist” beard, untrimmed and in his case with the upper lip shaven. He was also wearing the cap (peci) that indicated (though its absence does not preclude being) an observant Muslim. The other man was older, had glasses, and taught in Semarang city, but lived in Kudus, his home town. They were keener to question than instruct, though the teacher commented on Indonesian politics. This was unavoidable because political activists were circling the alun-alun (the central square in front of the mosque) on noisy motorcycles, shouting slogans (elections were only days away). The bearded man did not proselytize, but he did hand over his business card, he ran a timber-working business in Jepara, a nearby town with many timber-working and furniture-making enterprises.

Faith and the modern world inflect each other in urban Indonesia. As a recent graduate, Mohammed worked at the newspaper Suara Merdeka for some months. He came from near Pekalongan, a Central Java town west of Semarang; he had attended the teachers’ college in Semarang because his family could not afford to send him to one of the prominent universities in the city. His English was not great and he explained, “I expected I would learn English anyway, but I did not think there would be any way of learning French except in class. And I had a very good French teacher, who had made me keen.” Mohammed’s ambition was now to live and work in Paris, and with his rimless glasses, his state of the art motorcycle and his girlfriend, he could have been a left-bank intellectual. But he had spent three years in his early twenties at a Koranic school, that is, at an institution the focus of which was on religious not secular learning, although the latter was not excluded.

had a text of the Koran in French, with commentary attached. It was not something foisted on him by his family.

Prayer was a regular part of Mohammed’s day. When he arrived one evening to work on some material, it proved to be exactly at evening prayer time, so he prayed and then resumed the scrutiny of the material. The same situation occurred with Arief, an engineer. He was wearing a t-shirt with a design made up of a collage of international brand names; he too stopped for evening prayer. This “mixture” transfers into politics. During 2004 Indonesians went to the poll three times, for parliamentary elections and then two successive rounds of presidential elections. Mohammed was adamant that Islam welcomed “political modernity” – democracy – and offered to introduce me to local members of the PKB (National Awakening Party), the largest Muslim political party and the political wing of Nahdlatul Ulama, an Islamic movement founded in 1926 and closely identified in recent years with the late Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), who served as President of Indonesia 1999–2001.

The meeting in due course took place at a house near Pekalongan in November 2005. Wahid’s portrait was on show in the room, which had a characteristic white-tiled floor, walls painted with a light green wash, and two couches and some white plastic chairs on which the half-dozen present could be accommodated. The host was in shirt and sarong, the others present in shirt and trousers; they were aged between mid 20s and mid 40s. They spoke as social democrats who believed that Islam embodied social and collective values which a capitalist economy did not, and they were optimists who believed in the possibility of a modern society informed and shaped by Islam. Islam would influence the state, not be the state.

Nahdlatul Ulama had in fact been established to give voice to traditional Islam, at a time when many religious scholars (ulama) were concerned over the rapid growth of Islamic modernism, a movement aiming at removing later accretions from the faith Mohammed was believed to have envisaged.31 Ronald Lukens-Bull has provided a contemporary report of how this traditionalist world nonetheless engages with the modern world, arguing that it does so partly by defining it as a “frame of thinking” which has allowed it to incorporate certain moral attributes including Islamic brotherhood, selfless-

ness, simplicity in living, and a concern for social justice.\textsuperscript{32} All the students in Lukens-Bull’s study attended college in the city of Malang in East Java; they were mostly from East Java, either villages or small towns, although the largest Koranic school had a national reputation and drew students from throughout Indonesia.\textsuperscript{33}

Taking an overview of the Muslim world as a whole, Dale Eickelman has made the point that Muslims in the present era have unprecedented access to sources of knowledge about their religion on account of the sharp rise in levels of literacy. Recent figures for Indonesia are 92 per cent for men, 87 per cent for women. Literacy is near-universal in cities and the newspaper-reading on the streets of Semarang and other cities is visual confirmation of this. Eickelman calls this present era that of the Islamic reformation, a reminder that the Protestant reformation coincided with the advent of a print culture in Europe.\textsuperscript{34} It is also a reminder of a set of developments – for instance literacy – that are shaping the Indonesian political and social world that are not shaped by global influences but are aligned with urbanism.

For most city as for rural people the important mosque is the local one. It can be easy to overlook because it will be intimate and small scale, not a grand, gleaming structure. One street map of Semarang marks mosques with crescents (as churches with crosses) and there are 35 or 40 on the map. That is still only a fraction of the number on the ground, so unassuming are the majority, so embedded are they in their communities. That embeddedness is almost literally the case. A night arrival at one hotel in the kampong (neighborhood) of Lempongsari, which spills up valleys over hill slopes near central Semarang, places the visitor, unbeknownst, right against the local mosque, such that the imam’s call, “Allah, Akbar”, can appear to be in the room.

By day this particular mosque, Baiturrochim as it was known, could be seen, silver-domed and topped by a crescent, with a new or very well-kept green tile roof, in the style distinctive to Java, with the three tiers said symbolically to represent shariah, tariqah and hakikat (law, mysticism and truth).\textsuperscript{35} Steps

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led up to it from the steep path down from the hotel into the kampong. The steps turned into a kind of terrace in front of the mosque which led to other houses. The imam lived round the corner with his wife. My call on the imam was puzzling to him – why did a non-Muslim, non-Indonesian-speaking foreigner want to meet him? His horizon was this suburban neighborhood and his faith, not the world.

The night before Idul Fitri, the end of Ramadan, is an important and also very appealing time in the Muslim calendar. In Semarang, as elsewhere in Indonesia’s cities, the warungs (food stalls) are all closed and there is not much traffic on the highways. The mosques are well-attended, and in some cases decorated with flashing lights. The streets and paths of Lempongsari fill with children processing, boys and girls in disorderly ranks, boys holding
candles and what seem to be palm leaves, the girls all head-scarved for the occasion, and lots of jollity. It is a picture of the way that religious observance – or facets of it – thrives in this urban environment.

South India
As in a city in Central Java, so in the cities of South India. In Santosh’s house in Kengeri a shrine dominated the main room. Well, not so much the shrine, which was dedicated to Ganesh, the friendly elephant god, as the “light show” that accompanied it. Nothing competed with this: a small dresser and some fold-up metal chairs completed the room’s furnishings, two fluorescent lights and a fan populated the ceiling. The light show rotated green bulbs, then blue, red, yellow, then all the bulbs together, flashing invitingly for about a minute before the sequence resumed.

For the secular Westerner belief and/or religious observance is a confusing part of life in South India. Familiar categories do not fit. Rahul, who worked the newsstand with his father Vinod in Mysore, but spent much of his day at

Fig. 3.3: Sabarimala trip information, Bangalore
the end of a cell phone keeping in touch with his friends, took photographs at a memorial service for his grandfather and showed off prints of the temple where the service had been conducted, and its gods.

I accompanied Harshad to a temple in Hyderabad so he could make puja (worship) for his family and for good fortune. We left via a long line of stalls selling devotional items and general goods, very much as in the vicinity of a big Japanese temple or shrine (though without as many tour buses). In the old city of Bangalore small temples, often with no more street frontage than a couple of shops, occurred every few hundred meters.

Sabarimala, in central Kerala (south-west India), is a pilgrimage site about a 45–50 hour bus ride from Bangalore. Through the latter part of the year, men from all walks of life (only pre-pubescent and post-menopausal women are eligible) form in groups and head for Sabarimala. For the duration of the usually week-long journey they eschew alcohol, sex, the razor, wear a distinctive style of lunghi (sarong) and are bare-chested. Led by a guru (teacher) they depart after a ceremony in which they are equipped with a modest stock of necessities – a blanket, other possessions wrapped together, and a coconut which is smashed against a stone at the moment of departure. Ganesh takes time off from his photography business – mostly creating commemorative wedding albums – to go on the pilgrimage. While such journeying to Sabarimala is long-established, the twenty-first century pilgrimages have a

![Fig. 3.4: Ceremony prior to departure for Sabarimala](image-url)
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contemporary feel – co-workers may go together; bus companies advertise Sabarimala trips; mobile phones are taken.

Smriti Srinivas has made a similar point about the celebration of a jatre (religious festival entailing a procession) in Bangalore dedicated to the goddess Draupadi, and performed by the Vahnikula Kshatriyas caste:

The sustained cultural importance of the Karaga jatre for communities in the city as well as its increasing relevance in the new suburbs ... testifies to a public sphere which has grown in the city alongside others created by television, film or literacy. Over a period of two months, a number of locales ... bodies of water, temples, communities, and cults, are brought into the cycle of performance. The festival connects caste and local identities, cults and the state authorities; fosters a rich civic culture; and supports a vibrant milieu for business and elite interests.36

Similarly, the Gangamma jatre at Malleswaram in Bangalore has been taking place for 80 years in what is now suburban Bangalore. In the words of a reporter on the 2008 celebrations,

The area might have grown by leaps and bounds and transformed into an urban agglomeration, but every year it is time for the “villagers” to worship their deity and seek her blessings for a healthy year ... 2nd Cross, Malleswaram Swimming Pool Extension, was teeming with people and displays one would now find only in rural fairs. Makeshift carousels dot the street even as robots with forecasting powers and folk dolls dispensing unusually shaped sweets vied for attention. Women dressed in yellow saris and carrying kalasha stood in long queues waiting to petition the deity for the long lives of their husbands.37

The reporter reckoned that for the “cosmopolitan urbanite” the jatre provides an insight into a Bangalore that once was. Yet the very text of the report belies that, on account of the evidence it offers of the growth and transformation of the celebration:

“In the initial years of the fair, worshipping the village deity was a limited community affair. But now the popularity has grown so much that over 1.5 lakh [150,000] people came to offer their prayers to Gangamma yesterday,” says Mr. Natarajan. The burgeoning numbers are not the only change that the jatre has seen. From a simple daylong affair, it has expanded to three days [and] the

36 Srinivas, Landscapes, p. 37.
37 Hindu, 15 May 2008 (Swathi Shivanand) “a village fair in the heart of the city”.

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deity has transformed from her ferocious looking avatar (still seen in deities in villages) into a picture of bright calmness.38

Secularism can be found in the cities of India and Indonesia but indifference to the public practice of faith remains rare. The combination of globalization and secularism that has seen residents of Western cities interest themselves in – or “consume” – Buddhism, Hinduism, or other forms of spirituality, particularly those grouped under the rubric “new age”, is uncommon in Semarang, Bangalore or Mysore.

Yangzhou

The picture in Yangzhou is rather different because for many years of Communist rule religious practice was either not sanctioned or was conducted with great difficulties. The infrastructure of faith which is such a conspicuous part of Bangalore, Mysore or Semarang is absent in Yangzhou or Shanghai – the turn of a street does not reveal a temple or shrine, individuals are not seen on their way to prayer, the muezzin’s call is not heard. The revival of some religious practice and organization – for instance the temple at Daming in Yangzhou now has monks and a stream of visitors – emphasizes rather than qualifies this observation. Private houses will have devotional corners, a comment on the long-standing tradition of respect of ancestors. Visiting some of the famous Buddhist monasteries or one of the sacred mountains is one of the more extended ways in which an individual can indicate a religious affiliation – while more secular travelers will stay a day or two, believers may stay for a couple of months. Yet the numbers are many fewer than, say, a century ago.39 The thriving of such practices in Taiwan, never under Communist rule, emphasizes a contrast with the mainland.40 At a more prosaic and popular level, palm reading is carried out on many street corners. The disparity with the public patterns of religiosity in Indonesia and India however is marked. If secularism is the future – or a larger part of it than is currently the case in either India or Indonesia – then the Communist regime “bumped” China a long way in that direction.

38 Hindu, 15 May 2008, “village fair”; see also Hindu, 27 Nov. 2008 on Someswhara temple’s car festival at Ulsoor, “a tradition in full bloom”.
39 LW interview, 16 Apr. 2009.
That religion may still play the kind of role in urban life in Yangzhou or other Chinese cities that it does in India and Indonesia can be detected via other routes however. The Falun Gong movement, which dates back to the 1990s and attracts extreme hostility from the government, has managed despite that to attract millions of adherents. Yangzhou came on to the Falun Gong news radar in 2003 when Jiangsu-born US citizen and Falung Gong practitioner Charles Lee was arrested in Guangzhou, tried in Yangzhou and then imprisoned for three years on the grounds of his Falun Gong activities.\(^\text{41}\) Some months after his release the Falung Gong-sponsored *Epoch Times* reported that the cable TV system in Yangzhou had been infiltrated to broadcast Falung Gong comment on the Chinese Communist Party and provide information on Falung Gong itself.\(^\text{42}\)

More observable to the outsider is church activity. A Lutheran church which fronts onto the main thoroughfare Wenchang Lu hosts a large congre-

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\(^{42}\) *Epoch Times*, 26 Sep. 2006. A report from the *New American* 21 Aug. 2006 says Lee was born and brought up “three hours north of Shanghai” – Yangzhou is four hours by bus north-west of Shanghai.
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In marked contrast to mainstream Western churches, but comparable to evangelical ones, the congregation has a range of ages, and men are as well-represented as women. In comparison the Catholic church, situated a kilometer or so distant, which was closed up for many years, now advertises itself as a suitable place for weddings – emulating in this way the Japanese liking for weddings with Christian symbolism even when neither of the wedding couple is a believer.

Faith tourism of the kind that thrives in India and Indonesia also survives in China, but in secular form. The Qing Ming festival in spring is an occasion to visit and tend family graves. Yangzhou residents make journeys to historic destinations such as Taishan, the mountain associated with Confucius, and Huang Shan, the “yellow mountain” south of Nanjing, but echo rather than emulate the pilgrimages of earlier times.43

In this respect, as in others therefore, Yangzhou presents a different picture to Semarang and Bangalore. Whereas polls in India and Indonesia turn up high percentages of believers, in China the largest category of belief is “without religion”. If such polling is reliable then the communist authorities, with their official atheism, were very successful. They achieved it in a society still overwhelmingly rural, and the phenomenon has persisted as the society has urbanized.

Men and women

The differing circumstances and fate of men and women drives the plot of many nineteenth and early twentieth century novels. Lily Bart, Emma Bovary, Mrs Rochester, Anna Karenina and Effie Briest are just a few of the fictional heroines whose lives are shaped, or rather misshapen, by marriage. This asymmetry with the situation of men of their own class had historical antecedents but was also grounded in contemporary circumstances. The nineteenth century capitalist city provided opportunities for women – for education, for employment, for marriage – but also risks – of insecurity, of violence, of “vice”. Such an anxiety is one of the great themes of those novels. When Anna Karenina is known to have separated from her husband on account of the affair with Vronsky; the question mark over the fate of Gervaise

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in Zola’s *L’Assommoir*; and the fate of Isabel Vane Carlyle, the heroine of *East Lynne*, condemned to care anonymously, years later and aged by grief, for her son, who has been raised by his father.

To protect against risk, families were important. But families – or those individuals with power in them – could also be limiting and damaging. In early twenty-first century cities in developing Asia similar issues arise, and similar debates. Indeed they arose a century before when reformist impulses first started to be felt in, for example, Indian Hinduism and Islam. In an early major novel in Hindi, Premchand’s *Sevasadan*, the female protagonist becomes acquainted with a local prostitute and loses status and respectability even though the men around her patronize the same house in which she takes up residence. Her sister is able to marry thanks to her sacrifices but does not want to have her benefactor in the house, because her sister’s personal history compromises her own status. The heroine accepts not just the judgment but the rightness of it. Others were not so accommodating of their circumstances and of the relationships between men and women, and rights and opportunities for the latter were fiercely debated.⁴⁴

Since the middle twentieth century a second wave of feminism has transformed the status of women in Western societies and crafted new debates in place of the old. The circumstances of life in the cities of developing Asia are such that the debates of the first wave of feminism are still cogent. This is particularly true in the subcontinent, where the discrepancy between women’s and men’s circumstances is much greater than in China or Indonesia. In both China and Indonesia, approximately 90 per cent of the adult population is literate, and literacy rates for women are no more than 10 per cent below those for men. In India just under three-quarters of men are literate but fewer than half of women – so not only are overall literacy rates lower, but the gender “gap” is much wider. Moreover, only 26.1 per cent of women are in the paid labor force compared with 84.1 per cent of men; and 60 per cent of employed women work without pay, compared with 11 per cent in East Asia. In that situation, even in places where a higher proportion of women are literate (in Karnataka the female rate was 57 per cent in 2001, in neighboring Kerala it

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was 88 per cent, the highest rate in India), women in Indian cities face many issues recognisable from earlier phases of Western urban history.  

What does this mean for the discussion in this study? It is certainly possible to point to a variety of groups working on women’s issues in the cities of the subcontinent and Southeast Asia that have their roots or driving force in the West, often with government aid agencies or NGOs as the change agents. That is globalization. But as was traversed in respect of lesbian and gay issues, it is the social patterns of the society itself which allow the transformations to take hold. The transformations in the circumstances of women are likely to happen in cities first, because that is where women can find more opportunities. That is the central connection.

South India

“It is difficult” says Prakash in Bangalore, “for a woman to be seen in public with a man who is not a relative or – if she is a student – a classmate. A woman needs to be identifiable as a wife or daughter.” A woman in accommodation on her own, or with other women in similar circumstances, with no male relative visible, and no obvious shared institutional affiliation – a hospital, a school – might be shunned by her female neighbors, who would be anxious about the moral status of such women or, perhaps more precisely, anxious about the reflection on their own moral status. Yet many such women now live in the city. Hostels and even “PG” (paying guest) accommodation impose a curfew on their residents, which can be particularly difficult for employees in workplaces such as call centers, who often work unsocial hours.

There can be exceptions of course. In one instance, Hiresh accompanied the woman cousin of married friends from Bangalore to their common destination. His companionship was effectively a delegated companionship from the young woman’s family and would have been explained as such to any enquirer, even though in this instance the two had not been acquainted until the onset of the journey.


49 *New Indian Express*, 25 May 2008 (Swetha Gopinal).
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The freedom of the city is therefore constrained by the links to the home place. “You may”, amplifies Prakash, “know no one from your ‘native’ [place] where you are living or working, but there will still be a barrier in your mind, if you are tempted to do something of which your family would disapprove.”

The arrangement of seats in the bus – which allocates forward seats to women traveling on their own or with children – is designed to provide a measure of protection – and status – to women traveling on their own, and in particular to a young unmarried woman.

The conflict between the restrictions on women and the need for economic survival creates additional tensions. Sudha, in her late 30s, divorced her abusive husband some years back. Her family consists of her mother, her brother and her son. She has another sister, but quite apart from the fact that that sister is part of her own husband’s family, they are not intimate. Sudha of necessity lives with her mother in the countryside. She would like to have an opportunity to remarry but both her brother and her son – the latter now adult – are opposed. It might be thought that it would be to their advantage to see their sister/mother independently provided for, but in their own minds this could only be done by compromising the family’s reputation, and moreover it would force the brother alone to look after his mother. So Sudha leads a restricted life, both economically and socially, whilst her son and brother both do well in Bangalore. The city offers choice, but to exercise it she would have to face a rupture with her son and brother, and no longer be in a position to offer day-by-day support to her mother, who does not enjoy good health. So she stays.

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That same economic imperative shapes dowries. While at one level they can mark a cynical attempt on the part of a groom’s family to extract as much money as possible from a bride’s family, the bride’s family can rarely be indifferent to the matter. Given that their daughter is leaving her family home, a dowry should not only ensure that she will live in at least as adequate, if not better, circumstances in her new family but also that she should have resources of her own, should some misfortune befall her or her family. An unmarried woman’s economic outlook is somber, as she is either likely to work for little income or be tied to domestic duties. Neither is that appealing to her birth family. So a dowry is an investment in the future economic security of that daughter or sister, yet much depends on the attitude of the groom’s family to the dowry – “even some of the educated here think that dowry is the gift given to the husband for his use.”

Consistent with that, it could be predicted that, as/if opportunities for young women to gain economic independence increase, then the pressure on the part of the bride’s family to provide a dowry may subside. The young women in that situation will tend to be those who are better educated and have a greater choice of jobs, so that may in turn weaken the system as a whole. Already, in many contemporary marriages, it is accepted that the dowry remains the property of the young bride; it does not pass to the husband’s family. In other words it is not a dowry in the common meaning of the word. It is also a practice which is changing in response to changes in the actual circumstances of young men and women.

Semarang

Relations between men and women are less confined in Semarang and in Indonesia, but not unconfined. Solo, an Indonesian who had been in Japan, said that he felt women in Indonesia were freer to date than in Japan but that Japanese women students were not concerned about their virginity whereas that was a major issue for women students in Indonesia.

Mohammed wanted to introduce a female fellow college student who was now teaching English at a girls’ high school and who would enjoy meeting and talking to a native English speaker. Given that the two were friendly, and evidently were neither engaged nor married, it seemed likely that she would be an “emancipated” individual, in Western clothes, with an outlook to match, relaxed about meeting a male not a member of her family, and not a Muslim.

51 Hiresh, personal communication, 18 Jul. 2010.
maybe interested in friendship or marriage. In fact from her conversation as well as her dress she was an observant Muslim and a few months later she was married.

Another friend, Dewi, arrived, the first time we met, riding pillion, appropriately helmeted, but also head-scarved, on Mohammed’s motorcycle. We went into a pizza restaurant in one of Semarang’s malls. These malls, highly air-conditioned, are popular gathering places for better-off young Semarangese, though they do not often go to the restaurants themselves, which are pricy, and I did not expect such to be the eating place of choice for a young woman like Dewi. But when she chose a place for our next meeting, it was not actually very different – not in a restaurant as such, but still in a mall, although a different one. It was true that there were there many other women dressed like her in both malls. Dewi was also an adept and insightful interpreter for me of a variety of texts on Semarang history. Most of the material was secular in content, preoccupied with things like the beginning of cinema in Semarang and new sports stadiums, but there was absolutely no sense that this was outside her purview. Nor was she at all embarrassed by a piece about transsexual performers in 1980s Semarang.

Another woman student, Aaza, who was younger, was also fully head-scarved. She was from a farming family in a highland part of Central Java, and was the first in her family to attend university, where she studied secular subjects – her major was English – and planned on being an entrepreneur when she graduated. For her, “globalization” meant using Facebook and other social networking sites, but for the most part she used them to keep in contact with fellow students and friends. Globalization could possibly be used to explain the spread of headscarf-wearing practice in Indonesia, as part of a world-wide trend in Islamic observance. Yet the particular configuration of Dewi’s and Aaza’s religiosity made most sense in the urban context of their lives – the wish for independence and freedom, the great merit of maintaining character and integrity.

Research on marriage practices by individuals born between 1935 and 1964 has shown that customary ages for marriage have continued to be a predictor of marriage age for all cohorts. The research also showed however

52 Helmets are compulsory for motorcycle riders in Semarang and most riders carry a second helmet because giving someone a ride is very common.
53 For more on dress see Lukens-Bull, Peaceful jihad, pp. 82–83.
54 For a cynical view see New York Times, 3 Jul. 2009 (Norimitsu Onishi); “Was faith fueling the headscarf boom?” Onishi asked Syafni, 53, who worked in a market. “No, fashion” was the answer.
that education led to delays in the age of marriage in all groups. It seems likely that such a trend will have continued for women reaching marriageable age since the late 1990s.

Yangzhou
Just as in respect of religious observance so in respect of relations between the sexes, Yangzhou – China – stands out. The years of the republic (1911–1949) dramatically altered the situation of women in Chinese society and nowhere more than in the cities. In the first decades of communist rule (1949–1978) gender distinctions were blurred through a common denominator of schooling and work experience. The curiosity of the period since the 1980s, when urbanization has gathered speed, is that it has also witnessed the return of marked gender distinctions – a reminder of the unpredictable effects of globalization and of the fact that urbanism carries within it the potential for multiple, not single, alignments.

One hotel in Yangzhou caters to many business travelers. The women at the front desk are young, attractive, and wear make-up, and blouse and skirt outfits. They smile a lot. At another hotel, in the grounds of the university, the women at the front desk dress in much more austere garb – hair cut short and not styled, a short dark jacket, open-necked shirt, slim dark colored pants, black “serviceable” shoes. No make-up and less smiling. Attendants at a memorial hall (museum) are similarly dressed to the women at the second hotel. With short cut hair, they are garbed in jacket and trouser outfits in either blue or brown which are far commoner at this time in China than news stories on global Shanghai would suggest.

In both the latter instances – the second hotel, the memorial museum – the women are not rude but nor are they courteous or gracious; they are very matter of fact. It is pleasing once you become accustomed to it, a democratic survival of the communist revolution perhaps. The garb and manner of these women, testimony to a revolution now ambivalently remembered, marks them as more not less modern. Their dress is a reminder of the massive modern – Communist – revolution in Chinese history, a revolution that saw


56 See further on this in Lisa Rofel, Other modernities: gendered yearnings in China after socialism, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1999 and special issue of China Review, 5/2 (fall 2005), “Collective memories of the Cultural Revolution”.

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women's dress transformed in the course of a much larger gamut of changes including the gaining by women of the right to education and to economic independence.

We do not know now how this sphere of life might have evolved if China had not taken a “capitalist turn” at the end of the 1970s, which was followed by a willingness to allow cities to grow on capitalist lines, from the beginning of the 1990s. But insofar as the pre-1978 system provided health care, and employment security for workers, so the dismantling of those structures increased economic insecurity, and therefore increased other systems for seeking such security, including through marriage and other forms of association between women and men.

The dress of the women at the first hotel is a marker of this – of a capitalist, market-driven one, in this case a market of businessmen.57 One scholar, examining accounts of migrant workers from central to south China, explains that “narratives of migrant journeys to south China represent migrants’ naïveté, shock and fascination in the face of the new city. Many of these stories are about women who find their needs and values compromised by encounters

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with men, which symbolizes the male-gendered entrepreneurial culture of the commodity economy. Other stories establish how women test and accept aspects of urban modernity.58

Similarly, on a parenting internet site, women, even though educated and with some economic independence (they would be unlikely to participate in the site if they were not so equipped) identify themselves as “so and so’s mother”. Is this an advance on Maoist-era hostility to such a lack of personal identification on the part of women? Maybe it is functional but it is hard to construe as an advance, the practice of educated women identifying themselves by reference to their relationship to a child.59

Morality and the city

Both South Indian and Indonesian cities have witnessed morality campaigns where conduct or attire perceived to be “Western” or “decadent” is condemned, as are the individuals concerned. In 2005 Khushboo, a Tamil film star, suggested that since pre-marital sex was increasingly common, women should be more alert about protection against sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. A “Tamil protection movement” filed cases in Tamil Nadu courts charging both Khushboo and Suhasini Maniratnam, another woman actor who endorsed her comments, of “defaming Tamil society”.60

Tennis star Sania Mirza got caught in cross-fire in November 2005 after she was reported as advocating safe sex “before or after marriage”, advocacy she later retracted. Papers responded by labeling the critics “moral vigilantes” or proponents of an “incipient Talibanism”. In 2009 campaigners targeted young women drinking in bars unescorted in Mangalore, a coastal Karnataka city, and Valentine’s Day (14 February) saw further action by similar groups, across India.61

58 Carolyn Cartier, “Symbolic city-regions and gendered identity formation in south China”, in Translocal China, pp. 150–51; the account is from Y Ni “Xiandai jinu pian (report on modern prostitutes)”, in H. Qiao, ed., Nanzia niuren chao (waves of women migrating south), Guangzhou, Huacheng chubanshe, 1993, which explores migration as a fraught and contradictory experience.


60 Vijay Times, 19 Nov. 2005; Hindu 29 Apr. 2010, the cases were quashed in April 2010.

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In Indonesia a pornography bill aimed to restrict a whole variety of activities formerly legitimate, including certain kinds of dancing. After many delays and much controversy the bill became law in October 2008. In many local jurisdictions women’s dress and conduct had already been regulated, for instance in South Sulawesi female civil servants were required to wear Islamic attire, female high school students to wear long skirts, and government employees to be able to read and write Arabic.62

In both British India and the Dutch Indies homosexuality was proscribed and the proscription, and many of the attitudes that underpinned it, carried over into independent India and Indonesia. The issue was mostly undressed in public debate but on occasion there could be controversy, as when a number of students at a college in Changanassery in Kerala were expelled for making a film about homosexuality, or when protests erupted at the showing of the lesbian-themed film Fire, in late 1998.63

Conversely an Indonesian cleric was defiant about his (second and simultaneous with his first) marriage to a twelve year old in the Semarang district, even though the marriage act of 1974 set 16 as the minimum age of marriage and despite protests from the Jawa Tengah (Central Java) Women’s Empowerment and Children Rights and Family Planning Agency.64

The morality campaigns can be compared to the “family values” campaigns mounted in Western countries but the register – if that be the word – is very different. Because belief remains very prominent in public life, the opinions of conservative religious leaders have far more influence than in Western societies.

A study by Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart of political and social attitudes across a range of countries found that divergence in opinion was minor on issues like democracy and political process but marked on issues of gender equality and sexual liberalization.65 The finding is not “essentialist”, that is, does not point to innate or immutable differences between Western

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63 See www.altlawforum.org, accessed 8 Feb. 2009; on Fire, see Frontline, 19 Dec. 1998. The film was attacked by activists of the right-wing Shiv Sena movement and then withdrawn, but according to the wikipedia entry on the film it was re-released, without incident, early in 1999.
64 Jakarta Post, 28 Oct. 2008 et seqq.
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and non-Western cities. It is salutary to recall how radically Western positions on such matters have changed over the years. Go back 50 years – in what Western city in 1960 would gay marriage have been condoned? Go back 150 years – patriarchal notions that men should as well as did have power over women were a commonplace. In the nineteenth-century Western city, as in the twenty-first-century developing Asian city, the asymmetry between the rights of men and women was framed in terms of protection as well as power. Present-day clashes in Western societies over “family values” suggest that such attitudes can have long after-lives, not that circumstances are identical with those in the cities of developing Asia.66

This perspective calls into question the argument that issues of gender in developing Asian cities involve a conflict between conservatism and globalization. It is true that like Sikh singer Pammi Bai locals if asked may well identify “liberated” practices in relations between men and women with the West, with globalization.67 Globalization, the West, represent consumption – pizza, TV shows, American movies, t-shirts and the like. The Indonesian phrase “seks bebas” (“free sex”) inflects and locates the practice as “Western”.68

The students interviewed on the university campus at Semarang about Indonesia’s anti-pornography law at first identified it as an issue between Muslims and non-Muslims, for example Hindu Balinese, Christians in Maluku, and Papuans, who felt it was both unduly and culturally restrictive. Such groups could readily be portrayed as “corrupted” by excessive Western influence. But in response to a follow-up question, student Aaza acknowledged that there were Muslim women’s groups who opposed the bill, and also feminist women’s groups.69

One researcher found that the women’s divisions of two political movements in Indonesia, the already-mentioned Nahdatul Ulama (of which the women’s division was known as Fatayat) and the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera – PKS) had quite different stances on women’s issues, even though both were Muslim parties: “While Fatayat staff see differences between men and women as socially constructed, PKS cadres un-

66 On Catholicism’s encounter with modernity see Michael Novak, The universal hunger for liberty: why the clash of civilizations is not inevitable, New York, Basic books, 2004; also Howard Smith, The state of Europe, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1950, on Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy.
67 Mohammed interview, 10 Apr. 2004.
69 For further on the bill see Allen, “Women and Indonesia’s anti-pornography bill”. 

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derstand men and women to be naturally different. The way women in both groups talk about matters related to equality demonstrates not only how the organizations’ views on gender diverge, but how they use Islam differently in their activism.70

Equally, for India, Steve Derne has argued that labeling family values as “traditional” opens up space for other kinds of modernity to be accepted. In Main e pyar kiya (the most popular film of 1990) the “good” heroine Suman is a traditionally devoted wife, daughter and daughter-in-law, who wears the saris and salwar kameeezes that are identified with Indian-ness. But she also works outside the home, pursues friendships with unrelated men, and enjoys a close, equal relationship with her husband. By focusing on the over-Westernization of the aggressive, forward, seductive Sima, women can see themselves as traditional Indian women who, like Suman, have adopted much of the independence that Indians associate with modern Western women, whom they would find alien.71

In other words the debate takes place within each society, not between it and the West. It is essentially, if in a highly simplified fashion, a contest between country and city, not between the West and the local society, however much that framing may be applied. The point can be taken further if it is considered that life in the city poses dangers as well as opportunities and a certain caution in conduct and attire can be strategic.

Concluding comments

How to evaluate the overall argument about urbanism, globalization and the city? That globalization shapes social and cultural change outside the West seems indisputable. Yet the material in this chapter draws attention to the enormous range of lived experiences in the cities of developing Asia, amongst educated, middle-class people, for whom such globalization is tangential.

For such individuals the city is the arena of social and cultural transformation. This is in the first instance economic. The educated seek employment

71 Steve Derne, Movies, masculinity and modernity: an ethnography of men’s filmgoing in India, Westport, Conn. and London, Greenwood Press, 2000, p. 137; Derne draws on Nandy, Intimate enemy, pp. 51, ff; see also Vinay Lal, “The near impossibility of the outsider, or the significant other in Indian film”, in Vinay Lal, Of cricket, guinness and Gandhi: essays on Indian history and culture, New Delhi, Penguin, 2005, pp. 22–53.
in the city because it pays better, so employment reinforces the new horizons that have arisen from education. Higher education in particular is likely to take place in an urban environment and indeed a case could be made for seeing education, not urbanization, as the key driver of modernity in Asian cities. (The city also influences the less educated – not the object of this study, but vastly greater in number – who come to work on building sites, or as domestic servants or street cleaners or small traders. They too have opportunities to observe and sometimes enjoy urban rituals; they are at a distance from their immediate families and the expectations of those families.)

All of this is familiar territory since at least the publication of Wirth’s article. Yet Wirth’s ideas, although carefully and systematically presented, were hardly new. He was heir, as discussed in chapter one, to a nineteenth-century practice of factual and fictional exploration of the impact of the capitalist city on the part of social researchers such as Saint-Simon and Sombart, and writers such as Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac and Émile Zola. It is the argument of this chapter that the life experience of urbanism in Asian cities today echoes powerfully those fictional but realistic treatments from nineteenth and early twentieth century European cities, for which capitalist urbanization was the central social and cultural transformation.

It is at this qualitative rather than a purely quantitative level that the argument for the centrality of urbanism rather than globalization for understanding the contemporary developing city in Asia can most powerfully be made. Some quantitative points are also relevant however. Most obviously, the life experiences of individuals in these cities rarely involve contact with outsiders in general and Westerners in particular. By “outsiders” I mean individuals coming from otherwise remote social and cultural contexts.

Non-transient Westerners are thin on the ground in most Asian cities. It has already been mentioned that in 2006 there were estimated to be fewer than 3,000 Westerners in the whole of Bangalore, a city of seven million people. On a daily basis the number would be higher, because of the business people and travelers passing through, but even those numbers would not be great and they are very concentrated in particular parts of the city. For the vast majority of Bangaloreans therefore face to face contact or conversation with Westerners is the exception not the rule. Circumstances in Semarang and Yangzhou are similar; Shanghai and Jakarta have far larger expatriate populations but they are nonetheless dwarfed by the millions of locals (these patterns will be discussed further in chapter five).
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The worlds of Santosh, or Mohammed or the women of Yangzhou cannot be explained by globalization yet that does not relegate them to the category of “traditional” or “backward”. The live in kaleidoscopic worlds, as does anyone living in a rapidly changing capitalist city. It is a world in which making a living is an erratic, uncertain enterprise; in which faith can be regular observance, occasion for celebration or simply overlooked; in which marriage provides status and security but also carries risks. They are worlds in which “of the city” or “being urban” is the here and now, in which “west” might be no more than compass point.
Part 3: Nation-building and Asian cities
4

Businesses and cities

Introduction

From urbanization, urbanism and cities we now turn to nation-building and cities, facets of which will be explored through the next four chapters. “Nation-building” may sound inappropriate because it is a term very closely identified with the mid-twentieth-century era of independence, revolution and the creation of new states and nations. How can it be applicable in an era of modernization in which private capital is as influential as the state? I have used the term deliberately to make the point that nation-building can still take place in an environment dominated by non-state actors.

As will be demonstrated, such nation-building is as important as globalization itself in shaping the cities of developing Asia. Moreover, it distinguishes such cities markedly from the cities of the West, which are located in societies for which nation-building of this kind is an historical experience.

Business capital is influential in this contemporary phase of nation-building. It is not the only element but it is the most novel, the most expansive and the most dynamic. It is not in opposition to the state, indeed the state, in China, India and Indonesia alike, provides an hospitable legal, financial, economic and social environment for capital, both at the central and local level. Other elements – workers and institutions of civil society, households and petty firms – define themselves in relationship to capital and its allies in the state rather than the other way round. For this reason it is appropriate that this first chapter of the four should be about business, the nation and the city.

In chapter one, mention was made of some of the methodological difficulties entailed in studying internal not international flows, especially in developing countries. This certainly applies to the study of business activity. There is an additional scholarly hurdle. Scholarship on business behavior in Asia has two principal disciplinary homes – cultural anthropology and business studies. Cultural anthropology utilizes a political economy frame of reference, whilst business studies utilize a micro-economic one.
In both instances, however, the subject matter focuses on activity that crosses national boundaries. Thus, a paper on building international capability on the part of Indian companies focuses on the shift from an economy dominated by state-owned firms to one facing “increased globalization and an openness to international competition”. In contrast, the implications of this activity for company strategy in the domestic Indian market are not addressed. Similarly William Mazzarella, in an anthropology paper on the impact of globalization on an Indian advertising agency, although he posits a tension between global homogeneity and the wish to preserve cultural difference, does not explore the ways in which the imperatives of selling to Indian consumers might shape company strategy independent of any preoccupation with globalization. A writer commenting on the outsourcing of US jobs to China acknowledges that “China has lost many more millions of jobs in the last decade than has the United States, whether from the closure, restructuring or sale of state-owned enterprises or, more recently, from the pressure of WTO requirements on farmers. In fact Chinese job loss is just as much the result of corporate globalization and neo-liberal privatization as is United States job loss.” In this instance the global and domestically-driven transformations are juxtaposed, but the emphasis leans towards the former because the discussion is framed in terms of the impact of labor changes in China on the US labor market.

It is not unreasonable to stress the significance of globalization. It is both real and pervasive in the cities of developing Asia. China’s massive export economy, India’s role in information technology and outsourcing, and the significance of North American and European markets to many other Asian economies are all evidence of a globalization that deeply affects many cities in developing Asia. When the textile sector entered a global downturn in 2008, the textile industry in Java struggled. Globalization involves both the “death of distance” – such that businesses in India can remotely cater to clients in the United States and elsewhere – and liberalization – such that capital, goods and services can flow freely between economies.

Furthermore, the cities of developing Asia are experiencing globalization by participating, to a degree unforeseeable even a generation ago, in international trade and exchange. For their part, Western cities have experienced globalization with ever greater penetration of their domestic markets by Asian products, sellers and investors. The international commercial environment – in particular membership of the WTO, which China joined at the end of 2001 and India in 2005 – contributes; it encourages open borders for investment and a “level playing field” for companies wishing to operate in a particular market, whether they be domestic or foreign-based, and whether the economy be developed or developing.

But two correctives are needed to this picture. Firstly, globalization is not the same as, nor need it determine, the modernization of the domestic economy. Secondly, the very fact of this domestic modernization process distinguishes the cities of developing Asia very sharply from cities in the West.

The capitalist (as it is) modernization of the domestic economy is easy to confuse with or bury in globalization because it is being carried out at the same time. In all three countries it is a recent development, though for different reasons in each of them. China has shifted from a socialist economy, in which all means of production were owned, controlled or managed by the state, to an economy in which a large part of such means are in the hands of individuals, co-operatives and companies. In India and Indonesia, where most resources have always been privately-owned, the transformation has been more in the removal of restrictions on business activity in the internal market and in some openness to foreign investment.

As that latter point implies, such modernization can be carried out by domestic or foreign companies. A 2008/09 survey of US firms in China found that 63 per cent were in China to sell to the Chinese, compared with 9 per cent who were there to sell back to the US. For this discussion company ownership is not relevant (and indeed while foreign companies enter and compete in markets they also withdraw from them). The overseas company enters a market in which a common set of legal and administrative arrangements regulate commercial and financial activity. A company could of course pursue both a national and a global strategy, or a number of national strategies alongside a global strategy. It is the way business operates across a nation and in particular in its cities that is the subject of study here. An ownership approach does not distinguish those two categories but a market approach does. For

5 Economist, 30 May 2009; survey conducted by the American Chambers of Commerce in China.
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an overseas company it entails what business scholar Pankaj Ghemawat has called adaptation; success attained by adapting to local market conditions. That can frequently mean mastering the strategies of domestically-owned and operating companies.

Alongside the transformations brought about by globalization therefore are the transformations brought about by the creation of nation-wide markets for goods and services. These transformations can be carried out with greater facility than the equivalent transformations in global markets because the nation is a unified monetary, legal, regulatory and labor entity to a far greater degree than is the world as a whole. In a socialist economy this process is managed by the state, in a capitalist or mixed economy it is managed by private companies with central and/or local government support. These companies transform the lives of city dwellers by establishing networks through which they offer established products and services in new forms or new products and services.

In India, Kishore Biyani, who will be discussed below, offers established products and services in a new way in his “big bazaars”. In his study of Zhongguancan, China’s high-tech “Silicon Valley” near Beijing, Yu Zhou points out that over 85 per cent of Zhongguancan’s revenue came from domestic sales of products and services.

The cumulative effect of many such initiatives is a re-making of national urban space that is more dramatic than globalization. It is also true that such transformations are affecting rural dwellers, but not as rapidly, and not in advance of the urban transformation.

Such dynamism emphasizes the difference between market conditions in China, India, Indonesia and other developing Asian countries, compared with developed economies. In the United States, Europe and Japan, domestic markets are mature, and growth rates in consumption are relatively modest year on year. Cyclical movements (including the 2008/09 downturn) aside, technological innovation and shifts in consumer preferences are the dynamic factors in mature markets, in other words qualitative factors. In Asian and African, and to a lesser extent Latin American domestic markets, the dynamic factors are also quantitative. Large proportions of the population are not, or have only recently begun to be, employees or consumers at more than

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a subsistence level. The shift from low-productivity rural economic activity to higher-productivity urban economic activity triggers a range of new economic activities, especially in fields such as construction, wholesale and retail trading, and the provision of new services. As one journal has said of the Chinese economy, “As prosperity spreads, and more and more Chinese are able to start affording life’s little luxuries, China’s domestic economy is starting to become a powerful engine of growth in its own right, just as happened earlier in Japan and, indeed, in the United States before that.”8

Lists of wealthy individuals confirm the profitability and dynamism of business operations in the domestic market. China is the most export-oriented of the three countries but it also provides the most vivid examples. The biggest fortunes made in the last two decades have almost all been in domestic-oriented businesses – in materials and appliance supply, construction and real estate.9 The second richest person in China in 2006, Zhu Rongmao, a former government official, made his money in real estate, as did Zhu Mengyi, fourth, Zhang Li, sixth, and Larry Yung, third, who topped the list in 2005. Eighth and eleventh in 2006 were Liu Yongxing and Liu Yonghao, who ran animal feed businesses in Shanghai and Sichuan respectively, making money therefore out of a humble but critical component in China’s massive food supply industry.10 The significant exceptions to this pattern – that is, those with significant global exposure – were Zhang Yin, China’s richest woman, and Wuxi-based Shi Zhengrong, respectively fifth and seventh on the list. They both ran manufacturing businesses, Yang in waste paper and Shi in solar power products.

Some of these individuals have had spectacular collapses, in particular since the beginning of the global financial crisis in September 2008. For the richest person on the Forbes list in 2006, Huang Guangyu, the path to wealth had been through Gome, a chain of electric appliance stores. Forbes reported that his fortune had doubled in the preceding twelve months “as Chinese consumers snap up household goods”. 2008 was not such a promising year – Gome shares lost three-quarters of their value as investors feared a domestic slowdown, and late in the year Huang was arrested on charges of stock manipulation and “economic crimes”.11

The Forbes “rich list” for China in 2008 was indeed titled “billionaire bust”, with the 40 top richest estimated to have lost nearly three-fifths of their net worth compared to 2007. Larry Yung exited his CITIC Pacific after it was crippled by a $2 billion liability arising from failed foreign exchange operations. The assets still built up however, primarily through domestic operations; Liu Yongxing, the animal feed billionaire, was at the top of the list in 2008. Wang Chaunfu, who topped the list in 2009, was a maker of car batteries for electric cars. But the list was still dominated by real estate, with eight of the top ten deriving at least part of their wealth from it. It is likely that such businesses will continue to generate wealth because of the scale of the urbanization and the consequential investment requirements that underpin it. For these individuals and their companies it is the territory of China not the world that has been the theater of operations, and the transformation of

that space has been as dramatic as the similar transformations of global space by multinational companies.

I now apply these ideas to the three urban settings – Yangzhou for China, Semarang for Indonesia, and Bangalore and Mysore for India.

**Yangzhou**

It is not difficult to find evidence of the impact of globalization on the economy of Yangzhou, not least because the city itself publicizes its foreign investments and international connections.\(^\text{14}\) The lower Yangtze region in which Yangzhou is situated has been through the 1990s and 2000s one of two engine rooms of China’s export economy (the other being the Pearl River delta in the south). Foreign investment and export production is woven into the fabric of the Yangzhou economy. An economic development zone opened in 1992, especially to attract foreign investment.\(^\text{15}\) More than $1.15 billion was invested in Yangzhou in 2007 – a 50 per cent increase on 2006 (and very likely in advance of the figure for later years).\(^\text{16}\) Mercedes Benz, Pirol (Italy) and Texas Instruments (US) have all at one point invested in the city or its neighborhood.\(^\text{17}\) Yangzhou Rongtai Industrial Development Co makes aluminum and magnesium die castings for the car, motorcycle, home appliance, telecom and construction industries; whilst EMS, the world’s biggest manufacturer of metal compound materials, produces for its Asian and European customers.\(^\text{18}\) Until 2006 the world’s largest refrigerator plant operated on an 80ha site at Kelon near Yangzhou.\(^\text{19}\)

With no product is Yangzhou more identified than with the ordinary toothbrush. A host of toothbrush plants are located in the city, including those of Yangzhou Shuguang, Yangzhou Qinqin, Yangzhou FiveStar, Yangzhou Jichen and Yangzhou IceStar. Indeed so many toothbrushes are made in Yangzhou

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\(^\text{15}\) Note that as of 2009, of a planned 72ha, only 8ha had been developed. See [www.china-briefing.com](http://www.china-briefing.com) (Dezan Shira and Associates monthly newsletter).


\(^\text{19}\) *Asia Times*, [www.atimes.com](http://www.atimes.com), Sam Ng and Yohji Yuan, 10 Aug. 2005; production stopped in July 2005 after the company’s top managers were arrested; the problems appear to have been financial and corporate.
that it has been named “toothbrush capital” of China. Overshadowing all other producers, with its plant on the highway between Yangzhou and the neighboring city of Taizhou, is Colgate Sanxiao. Sanxiao (“three smiles”) is a well-known regional Chinese brand which multinational Colgate Palmolive joined up with in 2000; the 200,000 square meter plant, now the center for Colgate’s global production of toothbrushes, is the world’s largest. It employs several thousand workers and produces more than one billion brushes a year.20

Such names and figures make an inescapable case for the globalization of Yangzhou’s economy, but they do not preclude there being domestic-oriented businesses which are transforming patterns of consumption in Yangzhou. For Yangzhou as for other cities in mainland China this story has two variations that are absent in the cities of India and Indonesia. The first is that many more large enterprises produce intermediate goods for Chinese producers or final goods for Chinese consumers. They were all once state-owned and production rather than market driven; now they are frequently not state-owned and are intended to be market-driven. The second is that the economic liberalization that started from late 1978 allowed for the development of a host of petty enterprises – restaurants, convenience stores and businesses selling plumbing or electrical or machine goods. This therefore created a world of micro-sellers very like that of Indian and Indonesian cities and characteristic of Chinese cities before the Communist takeover in 1949.

City economies in China are in effect three economies in one: the world of state-owned enterprises, adapting in lumbering fashion to a new economic world; the post-1978 world of small business; and a gleaming new world of networked retail trade. A fourth “economy” links the other three – the demolition sites where one form of economic activity has gone and another is yet to come. In almost all instances the replacement will be an exemplar of capitalist modernization.

A journey along one Yangzhou road provides a snapshot of all four. Yunhe Lu – Grand Canal road – is an eastern axis route for the city. It is populated by a series of workshops dealing with motor vehicles, automotive parts, tires and the like. They are small operations, a boss and a few workers, perhaps half a dozen. They work in an open-to-the-street covered structure, usually concrete. Most likely the boss rents the space. Metal is hammered, tires are

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20 China Chemical Reporter, www.ccr.com.cn, 16 Aug. 2000 on the merger – Colgate took a 70 per cent share in the joint company and Jiangsu Sanxiao a 30 per cent share. Company information on the internet on the number of employees varies; one page says 3,000, another 5,000.
massaged and repaired, small moving parts are manipulated back into working order. At meal time – around 11:30 – many of the workers sit on the ground, swiftly consuming their lunch of rice and vegetables, with perhaps a little meat, obtained from a nearby stall, for a kwai or two (15c-25c).

Other businesses in the neighborhood, equally small scale, include an electrical goods exchange, car parts, paint, paper, medical supplies, high pressure oil cylinders, chemicals wholesalers. An assemblage of buses is not a bus garage but a bus factory, the plant of a state-owned business. Yangzhou has long been a center for bus production.

The road crosses the Grand Canal itself, which could readily be assumed to be a river. It triggers no picturesque or romantic reactions. Barges are moored to both its banks, and two others move slowly through, one with a covered load, the other with metal girders, little changed from the traffic of a generation ago. Trucks on highways and superhighways, not barges on waterways, will distribute the new consumer goods.

Across the canal is the biggest plant along the highway, one of the production plants of the China Tobacco Company. It is housed in a low level, grey, not very clean building which stretches about 300m along the highway and is about 20m deep. The plant produces cigarettes for the local market – and
with over 60 per cent of adult males in China smoking, it is a big market in any Chinese city.\(^{21}\)

Three giant air-filled red ‘sausage arches’ advertised the Sunshine City mall. This, if not the exact future – there are more shops in business on the forecourt in front of the mall than in the mall itself – is a future. Outlets included a Haier (whiteware) distributor, a bank, a liquor store, and a business selling “Mona Lisa” bathroom fittings. The rest of the north side of the street before reaching the old city is under demolition. On the south side by contrast a raft of retail electrical and radio stores, and a big China Telecom building, took up the equivalent space.

Both the state-owned businesses and the world of small enterprise and those who work for them are being transformed by profit-seeking business capital, as likely focused on the domestic as on the export market. For a state-owned enterprise such as China Tobacco the challenge has been to switch not so much from domestic to export production, as from a production orientation to a market orientation. Forbidden to advertise, China Tobacco promotes the “Zhong Ya Tang Liu” chain stores – brightly colored small operations selling candy, liquor – and cigarettes.

For its part, the Yangzhou Yaxing bus company struggles in both the export and the domestic markets. In 1995 it was China’s largest travel bus producer; in 2003 it produced 6,000 buses, but in the first half of 2007 sold only 1,700, whilst top-performing Golden Dragon bus company in Xiamen sold more than 13,000 in the same period. Listed for some years now on the Shanghai stock exchange Yangzhou Yaxing announced in April 2009 that it would not be paying an annual dividend. 22

State-owned service businesses in telecommunications have undergone similar changes. As with China Tobacco, and Yangzhou Yixing, they are companies that historically have serviced the domestic market, and continue to do so, but in more recent years have been encouraged to be more entrepreneurial and customer-focused. TY, a Yangzhou local, has worked in telecommunications in the city since he qualified as an engineer at Wuhan University and returned home in the mid-1980s. At that time he was an employee of the original state enterprise China Telecom. He subsequently went to work for China Unicom, also a state-owned company, which was set up in 1994 to provide mobile phone services. In 2002 China Telecom’s assets were split geographically with the new reduced China Telecom being allocated those in south and central China and China Netcom the north; notionally they could compete nation-wide, in practice they both retained a regional focus. In late 2008/2009 China Unicom took over China Netcom after offloading some of its business to China Telecom. In 2010 both surviving companies had shares traded on the Hong Kong and New York stock exchanges and China Telecom ran a subsidiary in Europe, but the Chinese state retained majority ownership of both.

Through these reorganizations the companies have steadily become more market-oriented. TY has remained engaged in the same kind of telecommunications work in Yangzhou, catering to local customers, whose demands have changed as the uptake of fixed lines has been followed by the expansion of the markets for mobile phones, broadband internet and 3G technology. 23

In its eighteenth-century heyday luxury items were crafted in Yangzhou, such as lacquerware. The “three knives” for which Yangzhou was famous – the kitchen knife, the scissors and the hair cutting “knife” – told a similar story of a consumption economy, indeed reputedly the Qianlong Emperor praised

the hair-cutting skills he experienced on his visits to Yangzhou. Hair-cutting and hair-dressing remain important businesses in Yangzhou today, and they are probably relatively immune to nation-wide business strategies, being such a highly personal service.

Other small businesses tell a different story. An internet café located near Yangzhou University had about 120 terminals. Most of those using them were in their late teens or early 20s – and mostly male. They were not networking with the rest of the world. They were overwhelmingly playing games with lots of pow, zap, boom, which created a hum of noise throughout the entire premises. The average Chinese internet user in 2007 was younger, less educated and had less income than ten years earlier: “Apparently the web provides cheap entertainment and social venues for the lower middle class and students.” 24 The owner of this café rented the space and had set up the business two years earlier. It seemed reasonable to assume that he might take in 3,600 yuan per day (reckoning on 10 hours of use per machine per day, for 120 machines at three yuan per hour). Along Yunhe Lu some of the advertisements had offered work at just 1,600 yuan per month. This was both a relatively new – certainly not of 1980 vintage – enterprise, and not yet “networked” as chain. On the other hand the students could access a series of nation-wide – and international – websites, not least the Baidu search engine, the domestic Chinese rival to Google, which was attracting around nine per cent of global visitors early in 2010.25

From the screen to the eyes. The Wuliangcai optical company’s premises are inviting, with female staff greeting customers in the exuberant fashion characteristic of Japanese retail commerce. This particular outlet was established in the late 1990s. Its premises on Wenhe road are on two levels and it has perhaps a dozen display cabinets at street level and a half a dozen staff, yet it is not the largest such store in Yangzhou. The young women are all from Yangzhou. They work long hours; the store is open from 8 am to 9 pm. Their horizons are not confined to Yangzhou or even China. The daughter of one was in New Zealand, another had been to parts of Europe with her husband. The business itself however is about local Yangzhou people buying glasses and glass frames. In most cases, “extra” income is needed; by

24 Shubo Li, “The online public space and popular ethos in China”, Media, Culture and Society, 32/1 Jan. 2010 p. 64. See also Associated Press report on a Markle Foundation survey on internet use in China, cited on H-Asia 19 Nov. 2005: “A typical Chinese internet user is a young male who prefers instant messaging to email, rarely makes online purchases and favors news, music and games sites.”

any standards many of the glass frames cost a lot. With increased standards of living, such consumption can only grow. It is a business catering to a local clientele, but it is part of a Shanghai company which traces its history back to 1719 and which had opened premises in Nanjing in 1947. Such a business is not globalized but it will nonetheless be increasingly incorporated into nation-wide networks.

On the eastern city limits of Yangzhou, in an open site, the massive “Beijing New Oriental School” has been established, to prepare young Chinese – not just Yangzhou-ese – for the new global economy, whilst both Kentucky Fried Chicken (“Kentucky”) and McDonalds are prominent on one of the city’s busiest intersections. These are obvious evidence of globalization, but they also attest to the remaking of Chinese consumption patterns, and alongside the familiar global names are local enterprises with similar business plans, for example a branch of Shuijiao (“Granny’s dumplings”), one of which is strategically located on the busiest part of Wenchang road, and is always crowded.

This “synergy” or complementarity between overseas and Chinese enterprise is common. The Spanish company, Inditex, which sells fashion wear worldwide, planned to open more than 30 stores in China in 2009. Meanwhile Meters Bonwe, which sells clothes to Chinese youth, works with French and Italian designers and releases 1,500 new styles annually. Opening its first branded store in 1995, in 2010 it had more than 1,500 stores throughout the cities of China.

Tayohya or Duoyangwu (“many rooms”) also expands. A home decorating business, it was first established in Shanghai in 1999; the chain store development started in 2000, by 2003 it had 150 stores, as of 2009 it has 380 stores in more than 150 cities from “Harbin to Haikou; Hangzhou to Urumqi”. Xtep, a sportswear company, in early 2009 planned to open 800 to 1,000 new stores in the country’s second- and third-tier cities: “The financial crisis is a serious blow to companies doing OEM (original equipment manufacturer) for overseas markets … but we focus on the domestic market, which is less affected … as China’s urbanization speeds up, there is huge potential in the Chinese domestic shoe market, especially in the second- and third-tier cities.” For his part Henry Ye, chairman of the garment manufacturer, the Smartex Group,

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bought a 60 per cent stake in a chain of 300 clothing stores to reduce his factories’ dependence on sales to Western retailers.30

Such developments have cascaded. In 2010 supermarkets had yet to make a big impact in China, and certainly not in Yangzhou, but convenience stores, familiar in US and Japanese cities, had spread throughout China and in the preceding three years had appeared in Yangzhou. They offered slightly alternative rather than identical products to street sellers, but they were competitors.

Ownership is not critical to understanding the retail transformation involved in the spread of these stores. Lawson, Family Mart and 7–Eleven are Japanese-owned, Quik and Kedi are Chinese-owned. Shanghai has been a starting point from which convenience stores have expanded to other Chinese cities (in 2010 it was still the principal location for Lawson and Family Mart). There were around 3,000 convenience stores in Shanghai, but only 100 in Guangzhou in 2003, the year Shanghai Kedi started operations there. A story with a Shanghai by-line tells of a convenience store success: late in 2002 43-year-old Li Xiulian paid 80k yuan (nearly $10,000) as a deposit for the right to operate one of Kedi’s stores for three years. A former dairy worker, Li later put eight of the staff, mostly middle-aged women, on contracts; they had all, before being hired by Li, had to take early retirement or look for new jobs. 31

Semarang

Indonesia’s economy is not as export-oriented as China’s but it is still affected by global business cycles. The 2008 global financial crisis demonstrated the vulnerability of the provincial economy, with 13,000 workers being laid off between September 2008 and February 2009.32 Equally there is plenty of foreign investment in the Indonesian market, with overseas companies like Carrefour (supermarkets) and fast food chains like Pizza Hut and McDonald’s being prominent. The cinemas show recent Hollywood releases – perhaps 10 per month, compared with two to four local (Indonesian) productions. US shows feature on television, which also advertises Pepsodent, Lifebuoy and Dove soaps, Pepsodent toothpaste, Sunsilk shampoo, Rexona deodorant, 30 International Herald Tribune, 14 Oct. 2008 (Keith Bradsher).
31 China Daily, 7 Jan. 2003, including the way such stores have mushroomed since 1996; see also www.allbusiness.com/retail; http://www.china.org.cn/english/China/52968.htm.
32 Jakarta Post, 7 Feb. 2009, but nature of companies, products not specified; the main industries, apart from petroleum and natural gas, are textiles-apparel-footwear; mining-cement-chemical fertilizers-rubber-plywood; food (CIA world factbook, www.cia.gov); main exports are oil and natural gas; electrical appliances, plywood, textiles and rubber. Textiles are important in Central Java.
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Ponds beauty cream, Panadol, Listerine, Rinso washpowder and Everest car seats as well as BMWs and other high-priced European makes.

The large scale retail business presents a similar pattern. It was opened to foreign investment in 1999 and two prominent companies, Carrefour (France) and Makro (Netherlands) both set up operations in Indonesian cities. However Indonesian companies play the major role in shaping an idea of Indonesia in the country’s cities, including Semarang. Thus through the 2001–2005 period neither Carrefour nor Makro had as many outlets as the two biggest Indonesian companies, Alfa and Matahari, which operated exclusively within Indonesia.33

A three-day sales conference at a resort hotel near Semarang was an introduction to one of the most important domestically-oriented industries. The hotel restaurant displayed globalization, 1990s style. The inside walls featured a set of cartoon portraits – Michael Jackson, Saddam Hussain, Bill Clinton, Aung San Suu Kyi, Fidel Castro and Deng Xiaoping. The sales conference itself was not however a demonstration of globalization. All of the participants were Indonesian sales or marketing employees of a tobacco company. They all wore t-shirts advertising one of the brands, with adjectives underneath the brand name, saying things like “delicious” and “tasty”. Women and men interacted on equal terms. Most of the men were in their late 30s or 40s, the women were about the same age, although there were some older men as well and some much younger women. There was a great deal of laughter and shouting and general running around.

A more “business-like” picture of this tobacco industry could be found in Kudus. Although an important center for Indonesian Muslims, Kudus does not look that big from the ground and disappears altogether high up – from a tower all you see are the green of trees and the orange of tile roofs, none of which are higher than the trees. But it is the nose not the eye that is most engaged – by the aroma of cloves, which comes from one of a number of factories producing kretek. The kretek cigarette was devised around 120 years ago, in the 1880s. One Haji Jamahri, a Kudus native suffering from asthma chest pains, added cloves to his hand-rolled cigarettes and found the symptoms abated.34

33 Alex M. Mutebi, “Regulatory responses to large-format transnational retail in South-east Asian cities”, Urban Studies, 44/2 (Feb. 2007); see also Rimmer and Dick, Southeast Asian cities, p. 179.
34 Mark Hanusz, Kretek: the culture and heritage of Indonesia’s clove cigarettes, Singapore, Equinox, 2000; see also http://www.indonesianclovecigarettes.com/kretek.htm.
For how long Haji Jamahri’s symptoms abated (or for how long he lived!) is not recorded but from that beginning, when the clove cigarettes were sold in pharmacies, the manufacture of kretek has become an industry supporting perhaps ten million workers, from tobacco and clove farmers to factory workers. In 2000, 200 billion kreteks were smoked in Indonesia, mostly by men. They have a choice of 2,000 brands produced by about 500 companies, the largest of which are amongst the largest companies in Indonesia. Clove cigarettes are so popular that standard cigarettes, known as “whites”, are only smoked by around 10 per cent of smokers, and this despite the fact that they have about double the nicotine and tar levels of standard cigarettes. In 2004 the famed radical writer Praemodya Ananta Toer, aged and ill (he died in 2006) nonetheless celebrated kreteks, “the taste of kretek is the taste of Indonesia” and he added – “If my doctor says I shouldn’t smoke I’ll fire him. Really, why take away something so joyous in life?”

Research on the tobacco industry in Asia has focused on the penetration of multi-national tobacco companies into developing markets as the business climate in the West has become more hostile. When I first gathered information about the kretek business in 2004 there was no such penetration of the Indonesia tobacco market. But in 2005 Philip Morris International (PMI) bought one of the largest Indonesian kretek companies, HM Sampoerna, which has around 30 per cent of the Indonesia market. In 2010 Sampoerna marketed Marlboro cigarettes as well as its own kretek brands.

Nonetheless an equally important story of the industry in Indonesia is the way that the major companies such as Sampoerna and Djarum have sought to create and sustain nation-wide markets for their brands, not just in the face of foreign competition but in a market in which 2000 brands are produced by about 500 companies. Indonesia remains one of the few remaining economies where cigarette advertising is permissible, and that advertising is dominated by these companies.

The medical value of kretek is very questionable, that of herbal remedies less so. Like kretek they are big business and some of the largest companies are based in Central Java, indeed in Semarang.

The generic name for these remedies is jamu, which can be translated as “medicinal herb tonic”. Such remedies have a lengthy history in Javanese

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35 *Jakarta Post*, 26 Mar. 2004; international tobacco companies are reputedly making inroads into the kretek market, but observed advertising and consumption patterns in Semarang in 2005 and 2009 did not support that.
villages, long antedating kretak, and it is reckoned that almost 80 per cent of Indonesia’s population has consumed jamu at some time.\(^{36}\) Major companies in the industry – Gudang Garam, Jamu Jago, Nyonya Meneer and Sidomuncul – are all nationally known.\(^{37}\) Indeed Nyonya Meneer’s advertising has been a familiar part of the Indonesian streetscape for so long that it has given rise to an aphorism: “Ever heard the joke about the strongest person in Indonesia? That’s Nyonya Meneer, who has been ‘standing up since 1919’ (berdiri sejak 1919).”\(^{38}\)

A new Nyonya Meneer factory, opened in 2004, is located just opposite the main Semarang bus station at Terboyo, on the road to Demak. A visitor approaching the entrance to the Meneer complex will find daunting, if amiable gatekeepers, first security guards, all sturdy males, at the entrance and then receptionists, all young, attractive and bilingual women at the front desk.

In 2007 the production line had 1,500 employees, all women, making the various health remedies. Another 1,500 worked on medicinal plants or

\(^{36}\) Jakarta Post, 14 Sep. 2007.
\(^{37}\) For Gudang Garam, based in Surabaya, see Rimmer and Dick, Southeast Asian cities, pp. 113, 200.
\(^{38}\) Jakarta Post, 11 Jan. 2009 (Andrea Tejokusomo).
marketing – the company had annual sales of $56 million (Rphs500 billion) which is substantial in Indonesian terms where a middle income employee may earn no more than $100 per month and eat for a dollar or two a day.

Like kretek, jamu has gone through a modernization process: what gave a major company an advantage in 1970 may not work in 2010. Anthropologist Margot Lyon has explained how in the early 1980s, by which time a network of local distributors and agents had been developed and the main brands were well known, the marketing strategies of the four biggest firms shifted to selling from kiosks. In subsequent years the distribution of pre-packaged jamu has allowed for penetration to a yet wider variety of outlets, while bigger firms have increasingly sought to develop an upper-income customer base, partly through concentrating on skin care and cosmetic products.  

Developments within Nyonya Meneer further demonstrate the relationship between companies and the shaping of the national market for their products. Nyonya Meneer herself, born near Surabaya in 1895, started producing and marketing in the 1930s. After her death in 1978 there was a succession struggle which was won by grandson Charles Saerang. He brought western business methods into the company. The company has markets in Taiwan and Malaysia but the primary purpose of Saerang’s renovation was to expand vertically – to move up the value chain – rather than horizontally. He sought to win the company’s products credibility with medical and pharmaceutical professionals and thereby to ensure the company retained its lead position in Indonesia itself – “Of the great many brands of jamu, Nyonya Meneer is at the forefront of the public’s mind.”  

Saerang challenged the reputation of the products of around 1,200 small scale operators, some of whom he reckoned adulterated their product: “We believe that actual consumption of 100 per cent herbal jamu is between Rphs3.5 and Rphs4 trillion [approximately $350m to $400m], while the remainder is artificially enhanced jamu. We have to change the image of jamu, which has always been associated with the poor … research is essential in the jamu industry, without research the industry won’t grow.”

41 Charles Seerang, CEO of Nyonya Meneer, quoted in Jakarta Post 14 Sep. 2007; the article states 120 small scale producers but the immediately preceding statement indicates 1,300 total producers; see also subsequent press reports of police crackdowns on small-scale jamu makers.
On the road from Bangalore

Bangalore is frequently instanced as an example of the globalization of the world’s economy. But the attention paid to IT and business process outsourcing, that is, to call centers and other “back office” activities, draws attention away from both the dynamism of the domestic economy and the expansion of companies into areas of activity formerly the domain of a multitude of much smaller enterprises.

Take the character of already-visited Gandhinagar, where multiple small businesses, some in premises, some on the street, trade in very specific products, be it saris, shoes, plastic goods, electrical goods, maps, cards and books. Then contrast this with a Big Bazaar. Big Bazaars, one of the most visible retail endeavors in Bangalore, are part of Kishore Biyani’s retail empire, Future Group, which also includes Central Malls and Pantaloons stores. Other parallel endeavors include those run by Reliance, Bharti Enterprises and Tata – Reliance Fresh, Easy Day and Star Bazaar stores.\(^{42}\) There are many “Big Bazaars” throughout Bangalore, including on the Mysore Road, strategically located near a new bus stand and proposed subway terminal; there is a “Central Mall” close to Bangalore’s principal retail street, MG Road, and there are Pantaloons stores across the city. In his published memoir Biyani tells a

story of transforming retailing in India which is saturated in his awareness of business practice in Western countries, in particular the United States, and is vivid demonstration of one way that modernization works in contemporary India. Yet his endeavors are also a demonstration of how one retailer is transforming Indian economic space in a series of ventures unrelated to globalization. India prohibits any foreign direct investment in multi-brand retailing, which is the preserve of Indian players. But even if foreign companies were allowed entry to the market they would have to adapt – in Pankaj Ghemawat’s term – to thrive.

Another industry tells an analogous story from a different starting point. At the corner of Church and St Marks Streets is a Coffee Day outlet, and there is another one nearby on MG Road, and others elsewhere in Bangalore, the headquarters of the company. At the end of 2008 Coffee Day director Alok Gupta was upbeat: “The company’s hub and spoke model in major cities has clicked. Through this model we are at present operating about 100 cafes in Delhi, 120 in Mumbai and 135 around Bangalore. Based on this experience we will be aggressively moving into North Indian cities.”

In that sense Coffee Day is replicating Biyani’s endeavors and that of many other Indian capitalists, but there are differences. In urban settings where quantities of sweet, milk tea (and sometimes coffee) are consumed for Rs5 at roadside stalls or in restaurants, the Rs25–30 coffee on offer at Coffee Day is eschewed by most passing office workers and the like, for whom Rs30 might be 10 per cent of a day’s pay, but are popular with a more affluent, more “westernized” clientele. The design of the outlets – light colors, clean lines, big windows – underlines the contrast and reinforces the sense that Coffee Day is globalization in action, even though it is a Bangalore-based company. So also does the US equity investment in 2010 which aimed to allow Coffee Day to expand ahead of any potential rivals, notably Starbucks, yet to enter the Indian market. In the world of coffee in India, in other words, modernization is globalization, or rather, globalization subsumes other facets of modernization.

43 Kishore Biyani with Dipayan Baishya, It happened in India: the story of Pantaloons, Big Bazaar, Central and the great Indian consumer, Delhi, Rupa and Co, 2007.
44 Financial Times, 20 Jan. 2010, 20 Apr. 2010 (Amy Kazmin); see also Financial Express, Mar. 2009, on Reliance Retail Ltd’s aim to build a “state of the art” retail infrastructure in India involving convenience stores, specialty stores, wholesale and hypermarkets.
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This is understandable, given the statistics. Total coffee consumption in India doubled between 1998 and 2008 but the absolute volumes are very small – around 95,000 tonnes in the latter year compared with around 1.2 million tonnes in the US and 138,000 tonnes in the Netherlands, which has just one per cent of India’s population.47 A “Biyani-ization” of cafés and coffee consumption in India is still to come.

Titan is another expanding company. In 2008 it had 60 per cent of the domestic market share for watches sold in the formal economy. It had 247 showrooms throughout India and 700 after-sales service centers. Developed in the 1980s by the Tata Group, it was another example of an adaptive company oriented to creating a domestic market for a product that had been regarded in a purely utilitarian light. Its web pages show how a domestic company saw and shaped that market – the vision of the initiator of the company, Xerxes Desai, was to “dramatically alter [the] perception of consumers, and make Titan a fashion accessory. He knew that that was the only way that this new brand would explode the market and wrest control from the dominant [brand].”48 Showrooms were built and advertising budgets were substantial.

Such stores have remained relatively buoyant through the world-wide downturn that commenced late in 2008. Reliance, with 853 stores in 73 cities, reckoned indeed that the stores in smaller centers thrived because the local agriculture-oriented economies were more resilient than those in big cities focused on manufacturing and services.49 An expert on a very different industry – fashion design – communicated a similar message late in 2008 in referring to what was described as the “parochialism of the vast Indian market … Unfortunately or fortunately I’m the only one looking outside India … most Indian designers are happy with the amounts of money they are making.”50

Call centers are a well-understood feature of the Indian economy. The domestic call center market exists in the shadow of the international call centers yet it is not insignificant. A survey in 2003/04 suggested that the domestic call center market was worth Rs200 crore (one crore = 10 million);

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49 Times of India, 29 Nov. 2008. See also Financial Express Mar. 2009, Reliance chair Mukesh Ambani. Reliance Retail Limited (RRL), a subsidiary of RIL, was set up to lead Reliance Group’s foray into organized retail. RRL has embarked upon an implementation plan to build state-of-the-art retail infrastructure in India, which includes a multi-format store strategy of opening neighborhood convenience stores, hyperMarkets, and specialty and wholesale stores across India.
by 2007/08 it was worth Rs1500 crore. To get a full picture however, in-house operations, mostly operated by banks, needed be included; this sector accounted for another Rs3600 crore in 2007/08. By this calculation then revenue for 2007/08 was estimated at Rs5200 crore, that is, approximately $US3.5 billion compared with $US10 billion for international outsourcing.\(^{51}\)

A different calculation estimated much larger figures and an even higher ratio of domestic to overseas business: $24.3 billion in 2008/09 for domestic outsourcing compared with $47.3b for export earnings. By either calculation growth was rapid; the statement that “the domestic market will never be an alternative for the revenue shortfall … from developed economies but it is definitely a capability boost as well as a nice hedge or a stable revenue earner for these companies” may become outdated.\(^{52}\)

Typically domestic call centers are smaller and their operations simpler than for international call centers: “Outbound calls are made for telemarketing, follow-ups of orders and sales, while inbound calls could be for customer inquiry and complaints or response calls for a particular marketing campaign.”\(^{53}\)

outsourced employment at domestic call centers was estimated at 150,000 and in-house at 130,000 compared with several hundred thousand in international call centers, on higher wages.\(^{54}\) However the domestic call center jobs are accessible to large numbers of job-seekers who have too much MTI (“mother tongue influence”, discussed in chapter 3) to be employed in international call centers but are fluent in more than one Indian language: “Unlike international call centers, knowledge of another Indian language is almost a must. In places like Bangalore, some companies even look for people with three language skills.”\(^{55}\)

The road from Bangalore to Mysore – since 2007 a divided four-lane highway (although still “main street” for villages and towns en route) – can legitimately be considered part of the “city”, so important are such connectors to the distribution of goods. Trucks rival buses for dominance on the road, mov-


\(^{52}\) Financial Times, 9 Jul. 2009 (Joe Leahy quoting Milan Sheth of Ernst Young).


\(^{54}\) All figures have to be treated with caution.

ing goods around the state and the country (licenses are issued on a state or multiple-state basis). Truck driving itself is not a high status job and indeed is one that frequently attracts opprobrium – for instance drivers are accused of being responsible for spreading AIDS – quite apart from a jagged relationship with government. But there is economic opportunity in the business in a sector where nine out of ten trucks are owner-operated. In recent years there has been a shortage of drivers. The Chennai goods transport association reckoned there were 65 lakh trucks (6.5 million) and 1.5 crore drivers (15 million) in the country, but each year another 150,000 drivers were needed.

Many of the drivers on this highway will have been helped into truck ownership by Shriram Finance. R. Thyagarajan, the founder of the company, has a biography that reads like that of M. M. Visvesvaraya, a qualified engineer and the visionary chief minister of Mysore state in the early twentieth century. Thyagarajan, born in 1935 and a mathematician and statistician by training, had his early working career in a variety of insurance companies. Shriram itself for many years was a company specializing in managing “chit” schemes. These were – and are – small-scale savings and loans schemes which have long flourished in South India, often informally, which means in turn that those involved could easily see their savings embezzled. Shriram chits effectively added a quality control layer to the chit business. It started in 1974 with one branch, in 2009 it operated in four states and one union territory, had 465 branches, 6,000 employees and 65,000 agents. Unsurprisingly it had become the largest chit fund entity in India, with an “annual auction turnover” of $715 million (over Rs30 billion), a massive figure when the monthly incomes of those involved will be between 3,000 and 5,000 rupees, but plausible when it is taken into account that the Fund has over 2 million subscribers.

From chit funds Shriram Finance moved into financing second-hand truck purchases, which brings us back to the Bangalore–Mysore highway. From 2003 it operated a truck exchange site, but continues to specialize in putting truck purchases, which brings us back to the Bangalore–Mysore highway. From 2003 it operated a truck exchange site, but continues to specialize in putting truck

56 Hindu, 10 Jan. 2009, 4 Jul. 2008 on truckers’ strike called by All India Motor Transport Congress on account of rising toll and other charges at a time when truckers could not increase charges e.g. Rs3,500 to take a truck load from Mysore to Bangalore, whereas the actual cost was more like Rs4,000 (e.g. National Highway 4, Rs800 in tolls, Bangalore to Belgaum, and the driver also had to “take care” of police and other officials on the way); truckers average 350 kms a day whereas in Europe or North America the average is 800kms.

57 Hindu, 3 Sep. 2002, according to chair of Shriram Trucks.


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drivers into their own vehicles. It has 450 branch offices and 10,000 employees throughout India but it is biggest in the south: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Shriram’s zippy messages – “What the world knows as ‘BRIC’ we see as Bikaner, Rajamundry, Indore, Cuttack”; and “Our way of life for three decades – discovering fortune where you least expect”; and “Profit management practiced by our truckers are theories never taught by B-schools” emphasize both its awareness of global context (BRIC references the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China; business schools are a US innovation) but also its orientation towards domestic customers. The company culture reinforces that too. Thyagaranjan does not use spread sheets, and many of the company’s executives have been with it for 15–20 years; branch managers are given the chance to make mistakes and learn from them. It is not, in the words of one insider, “a place populated with suited-booted English-speaking managers”.

The gold jewellery business, one of India’s biggest retail industries and also a de facto part of its banking system, is also exposed to corporate marketing strategies. Small scale operators are found in cities large and small, though the largest ones stand out because of the massive billboard advertising they engage in, which becomes evident as Mysore is approached and even more so heading further south because Kerala, India’s southwesternmost state, is one of the heartlands of the business. In this instance the initiative has been taken not by a Tata subsidiary but by Reliance, which has teamed up with the Indian Post Office to offer “gold savings passbooks” which will allow purchasers to buy the gold but not have to hold it. Exactly as with the big jamu companies in Indonesia, Reliance is emphasizing the integrity of its product compared with gold of “suspect quality” (in its eyes) from neighborhood jewelers.

Even cricket, the country’s most popular sport, but also big business, is re-shaping India. Cricket is played everywhere in cities in India, by boys and young men – on open patches of grounds, on suburban streets, on city streets with overhanging buildings, in school grounds and on university campuses. Ashish Nandy got it exactly right when he described cricket as an “Indian game accidentally discovered by the British”. He was less happy about its transformation into a multi-million dollar business but his own observations

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attest to the fact that that transformation is a facet of nation-building as well as globalization: “In the popular culture of South Asian cities, cricket today ... is becoming an open celebration of productivity and professionalism ... the dominant model of heroics in cricket today depends more and more on the values of the global market and the nation-state system and is designed to alleviate the routine and tedium of everyday life through a nationalist project drummed up, paradoxically, by transnational capital.”64

Sachin Tendulkar, the biggest star in Indian cricket since his debut in 1990, was in 2009 the largest “sports brand” in the country, signing promotion deals with national and international companies that are reported to be close to $US45 million over his lifetime.65 The use of “paradoxically” suggests that Nandy sees the link as illogical, but why? Leaving to one side the fact that most of the capital in Indian cricket is Indian, not “transnational”, an alliance between a capitalist international system and a capitalist nation is predictable.

For the Indian city-dweller cricket playing is both global and national and both are constantly undergoing transformation. The most recent formulation of Indian cricket – the India premier league (IPL) – makes the point exactly. The league, which was set up in 2008 and runs an annual playoff competition, can readily be seen to be an expression of early twenty-first century globalization. The global broadcasting rights were assigned to the Indian subsidiary of Sony in conjunction with the Singapore-based World sport group; amongst the team owners is Lachlan Murdoch, son of global media magnate Rupert Murdoch; players from around the world are bid for by the various teams.

The IPL can also be seen as part of the remaking of India by business. India’s biggest property developer the DLF group paid $US50 million to be the title sponsor of the IPL tournament for five years; team owners include major domestic companies such as Indian Cements (N. Srinivasan), owner of the Chennai team. It is an Indian competition: the teams being based in Indian cities. In the first tournament, in 2008, these were Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chandigarh, and Jaipur. In 2011 Pune and Kochi were to be added.66 Bangalore is prominent in the IPL world. The city was the site of the first game in the first competition in 2008

64 Nandy, Tao of cricket, pp. xii-xiii; my emphasis.
66 Times of India, 21 Mar 2010, the successful bidders were Sahara adventure sports group and Rendezvous sports world ltd respectively, the latter set up expressly to bid for a franchise.
and Bangalore-based Kingfisher Airlines sponsored the competition umpires in 2010. The tournament’s India is a network of cities, in which all parts of the country are represented. It is nation-building, not as Nehru knew it, but nation-building nonetheless.

**Concluding comments**

The building of domestic networks and markets by capitalist businesses is an important part of the transformation that cities in developing Asia are undergoing at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Such businesses are standardly seen as avatars of globalization, but they are also nation-builders and shape the lives of city-dwellers accordingly. To the extent that it is an enterprise-led activity it contrasts with the nation-building endeavors of the mid twentieth century, but both purpose and result – the creation of a more integrated national space – are similar. That process takes place on a scale that has long since been superseded in contemporary Western countries or Japan, which is why in the latter the *global* scale of capitalism attracts much more attention – it is the scale on which the most rapid transformation is occurring.

The examples presented in this chapter indicate the protean reach of businesses as they seek to make and remake markets to their advantage. To summarize, it is possible to identify three main approaches.

Firstly, old retail systems, usually of many small retailers, are disturbed or displaced. Large companies offer new, larger, maybe brighter premises to sell the same product – this is added value, though one that comes, especially if goods are now packed, with an environmental cost. Displacement is least likely where perishable products such as fruit and vegetables or highly personalized services such as hairdressing are involved, because the cost structure of the corporate businesses will be higher. It is also less likely if the regulatory framework protects small businesses. It is more likely where the purchase is more standardized and longer-term, as work clothes and shoes.

The second approach goes one stage further. The product may be the same but it is standardized and/or “quality-controlled”. This is the process that has been followed by the tobacco and herbal remedy businesses in Indonesia, the gold savings and chit finance businesses in India and convenience stores everywhere. In all instances these ventures compete with and sometimes displace petty traders. It is in effect branding. Without the brand, no profit, with the brand, profit. Titan’s strategy is to create a demand for a particular
kind of watch; Yangzhou has branded eyeglasses and toothbrushes; Sachin Tendulkar brands by endorsing any product he chooses to be identified with.

The third and biggest and most substantial category is the creation of new networks of production and consumption. The demand for household goods expands as individuals acquire larger or new apartments or houses, which can then be filled with bathroom, kitchen and laundry appliances, soft furnishings and the like. Increased motorcycle and car ownership has a similar effect on the ancillary automotive businesses. The internet and the IT industry and all their ancillary businesses, including search engines, call centers, web designers and the like, represent another new network of production and consumption.

In all instances, these transformations are being carried out by companies, which, whether nationally or internationally owned, are following a strategy for a particular national market, be it China, India or Indonesia. City-dwellers in each of these countries are being shaped by national or national-acting businesses. Many businesses have in fact a strong regional concentration, as for example Kedi convenience stores in the lower Yangtze and Shriram Finance in South India. But that is no bar to them expanding elsewhere in the country, and the country and its sub-national units and its cities are standard frames of reference. It is not the fact of national space but the way it is shaped that is new: “to find the closest branch, just click on the corresponding region. A list of outlets with the addresses will be displayed. Select the city and get a list of branches from there.” So went the instruction on Shriram truck finance’s website in 2009, but it could be reproduced for most of the other companies whose activities have been discussed in this chapter. In such ways do businesses shape cities and nations.
Migrants and cities

Introduction
Cities with workforces drawn from all over the world are one of the key markers of globalization. The story lines of such a “world on the move” are instantly recognisable: “by a back door to the US, a migrant’s grim sea voyage”; “business is booming for smugglers”;1 “The last two or three decades have seen more people living across borders than ever before – on a conservative estimate, 40 million foreign workers, 20 million refugees, 20–25 million internally displaced people ... immigrants, refugees or minorities who live in the midst of metropolitan areas in the North and South represent the most tangible and proximate presence of the global or transnational world as it exists within ‘national’ societies.”2 Or as Gore Vidal once put it, in typically forceful prose: “A characteristic of our present chaos is the dramatic migration of tribes. They are on the move from east to west, from south to north ... eventually, with so many billions of people on the move, even the great-hearted may become edgy ...”3

Global labor migration has long been an element in the economies of Western cities. After the Second World War, Europe saw migration from the labor surplus Mediterranean countries to the cities of the continent’s north-west, supplemented in certain instances by immigration from former colonies, whilst the United States saw migration from the rural South to the cities and factories of the Northeast and Midwest. But with rising living standards and falling birth rates those labor “reservoirs” were exhausted and Europe, the United States and Canada started to admit migrants from

2 Homi Bhabha, The location of culture, London and New York, Routledge, 2004, p. xxi, though he does then discuss the need to pay attention to migrants within countries and what happens to them, e.g. the fate of economic refugees from South India in Mumbai.
all over the world, even if geography dictated regional patterns – Mexicans and Central Americans to the United States, Africans to Europe. The new migration was not just proletarian. Professionals, especially from the Indian subcontinent and East Asia, were also admitted, some initially for study but who stayed, others to fill gaps in the labor force in fields like engineering and health services. In such circumstances the percentages of foreign-born steadily climbed from well under 10 per cent to over and in some instances to over 20 per cent. In some cities favored by migrants the proportions are much higher – Toronto, Canada, the highest, with 39 per cent foreign-born; New York City 36 per cent; Auckland, New Zealand 27 per cent. But in recent years the proportions have been increasing even in cities well away from these “gateways”.

This phenomenon is correctly identified as a part of globalization, but incorrectly extrapolated from Europe and North American cities to the rest of the world, and very incorrectly extrapolated to Asian cities. This does not, it is important to state immediately, mean that Asia does not participate in global migration flows. Not only does it, but the raw numbers of migrants from Asia are among the largest in the world. Nearly four million Indonesians work outside Indonesia and at least three million Indians work in the Gulf alone, matched by perhaps 1.5 million Pakistanis and 800,000 Bangladeshis. In 2006 nearly 1.5 million Chinese-born individuals were living in the United States, the biggest emigrant Chinese population outside Asia. For China this was more than double, and for India nearly triple, the numbers of ten years earlier.5 Return migration of skilled migrants is now also a phenomenon of migration flows in and out of China and India.6

However in most of the cities of developing Asia global migration is overshadowed by domestic migration. In the cities of the three countries under review here – China, India and Indonesia – and in other densely populated countries in Asia, such as Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan and Bangladesh, rural

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5 Migration Policy Institute data hub, www.mpi.org, accessed 27 May 2009, the figure for China was 1,386,000; 2,472,000 if Taiwan and Hong Kong-born were included.

6 Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, “Migration in the Asia-Pacific region”, www.migrationinformation.org, Jul. 2009, note that India established a Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in 2004 and introduced “overseas citizenship” that allows for lifelong visa-free travel to India, among other benefits.
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to urban and intra-urban migration take place on a massive scale within the country. In these countries in-migration from other countries is on a modest scale, with the exception of Thailand. Moreover, as one migration specialist has observed “In Asia the official barriers erected by nation states to the inflow of people have been substantially more resistant to the process of globalization than barriers to information flows and movements of finance and traded goods.”

This finding can be supported by data from a 2005 study on the per cent foreign-born in 150 cities (see Fig. 8.1 for some examples). The cities are found in over 50 countries in North America, Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia. All the cities studied had a population of close to one million or over that figure. Only one Asian city was included in the category of cities with over one million foreign-born, the city-state of Hong Kong. Even there, there is a wrinkle. Of Hong Kong’s population of nearly seven million, nearly 40 per cent are foreign-born but four-fifths of that foreign-born are in fact mainland Chinese, most from the neighboring province of Guangdong. Taking them out of the equation leaves Hong Kong with a foreign-born population of around 350,000 – well under one million and around five per cent of its total population. The category of cities with 500,000 foreign-born added no further Asian cities; the category of 100,000 foreign-born – hardly a tidal wave – adds Seoul, Osaka, Nagoya, Tokyo, Taipei and Karachi. But as these are all large cities the percentages were low. And in Karachi’s case the “foreigners” were mostly migrants who came from India at the time of the partition of Pakistan and India in 1947.

The divergence between the West and Asia was in fact even greater than these tabulations imply as the survey does not include data from India and China. Jakarta was the only city in Indonesia for which data was gathered; it was recorded as having fewer than 100,000 foreign-born. The effect of including them would have only reinforced the contrast. Jakarta was indeed estimated to be home to no more than 50,000 foreigners. For India the figures – if those born in what is now Pakistan or Bangladesh are excluded – were likely to be even lower, if the numbers in Bangalore (see chapter two) are indicative.

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8 Lisa Benton-Short and Marie Price, “Immigrants and world cities: from the hyper-diverse to the by-passed”, GeoJournal, 68/2–3 (Feb. 2007).
The labor markets in these countries are therefore primarily domestic labor markets, and in this chapter I explore these labor markets and the way they shape the case study cities. The turn from state-oriented to market-oriented economic policies has triggered substantial migration flows, as restrictions on labor mobility – in practice if not in theory – ease and as both rural populations and the populations of low wage regions, whether they are rural or urban, seek opportunities in the labor markets of cities which are experiencing market-led economic growth.

As was discussed in chapter one, it is not easy to find data on internal migration. Indonesian censuses track inter-provincial migration, but sample for rural to urban migration. Inter-provincial migration probably accounts for no more than about one in five migrants. Definitive figures for the total numbers of internal migrants in Indian or Chinese cities are very hard to come by. Fortunately where data does exist the numbers are often substantial enough to allow some generalizations to be made. Ethnographic information adds “three-dimensionality” to the discussion, although it cannot be a complete substitute for quantitative data.

**Bangalore**

In India Malayalaees, the people of Kerala, the country’s most south-westerly state, are well-known for moving outside the state. Malayalaees are certainly global emigrants, or at least Gulf migrants – an estimated 2.16 million Keralites worked outside India in 2009, of whom 90 per cent were in the Gulf. It is joked that they range even further: when the first men return to the moon – “Welcome Sir”, says the Malayalee at his lunar tea-stand.

Malayalaees are also found throughout India however, “from Kashmir to Kanyakumari”; in Delhi alone, of an estimated 700,000 South Indians


11 See Castles and Miller, “Migration in the Asia-Pacific region”; Castles and Miller do not cover internal migration about which they state that “accurate figures are not available”; they estimate perhaps 100 million migrant workers in India and between 100 and 150 million in China. In contrast, they cite an estimate by demographer Graeme Hugo of around 20 million Asian workers world-wide, outside their country of origin. See also Daniel Naujoks, “Emigration, immigration and diaspora relations in India”, Migration Policy Institute, www.migrationinformation.org, October 2009, which however gives an implausibly low figure of 20 million internal migrants.

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perhaps 100,000 would be Malayalee.13 According to the 2001 Indian census around 2.3 million Malayalam speakers lived outside Kerala, most of whom would have been born in Kerala, a figure higher than the number who worked in the Gulf at that time (around 1.8 million) and a big proportion of a Kerala population of about 32 million. They are found in all the major cities of India, but the closer to Kerala, the more of them there are. Hiresh, first met in chapter two, would identify other Malayalees time after time in Bangalore. “See those pupils with their teacher – they’re on a school trip from Kerala.” “How can you tell?” “I just know.” At a crossing, another man suddenly points at Hiresh, “Malayalee” he says, then walks on. “How did he know?” “He can tell, just as I can.”

As with many South Indians, Malayalees, when they leave their home state, are to many intents and purposes emigrating. Neither their language nor its alphabet are of use outside the state. Depending on what kind of work they want to do or where, Malayalees who depart will be competent in English or Hindi or both, and in another regional language like Kannada. In practice, in Bangalore, where only around 40 per cent of the population is Kannadiga (of Kannada ethnicity), many of the Malayalees or other migrants, such as Telugus, Tamils or northerners, will get by with spoken and written English and spoken Hindi; they will barely be fluent in Kannada.14

This “emigration” is not transnational however. It requires no documentation to get on a bus and go from a Kerala locality to Bangalore – no more than the price of a bus ticket. If the migrant has contacts in the city then staying there is not so difficult either. The accommodation is shared, savings can be spun out on a modest ration of food, and then the task is to find a job. Compare this with the process involved in migrating to the Gulf or to the United States. In the former case, quite apart from the cost of the visa, passport and plane fare, an agent’s fee will almost certainly have to be paid as employment is usually contracted. In many instances indeed the migrant is bonded. Immigration to the US is effectively barred to all except the most

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13 *Deccan Chronicle*, 27 Nov. 2008; 100,000, pro rata with Kerala’s share of the South India (four southern states) total population, would be a conservative estimate if it is assumed that the Keralan migration rate is greater than that for Tamils, Telugus or Kannadigas.

14 De Swaan, *Words of the world*, table 4.1 pp. 74–75, data from the Indian census 1991, tabulates 31 million Malayalee speakers, of whom seven million can also speak both English and Hindi and 37 million Kannada speakers of whom six million can speak both the other two languages. Fluency in English and Hindi is much more common in South India than ability to speak only one of the two languages. The tabulation does not show any Malayalees or Kannadigas able to speak each other’s language – presumably the totals are too small to register.
well-educated, and in science and engineering rather than the humanities. The alternative to education is money. These choices, or lack of them, also apply to other receiving countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The statistics are not precise; at least three per cent of Bangaloreans may be Malayalee, making for a population of around 200,000 in 2010. Prakash reckoned that every business of any size in Bangalore, any business that has office operations, would have at least one Malayalee. Bangalore is much larger than any city in Kerala and many Malayalees came for either work or education. Of Prakash’s graduating class from northern Kerala 10 were still close to home, two were in Kochi (Cochin), a city in Kerala and three were in Bangalore.

Jalahalli is a neighborhood on the northern margins of Bangalore. It is not so far out as Kengeri; there is no intervening farmland, just built-up areas that get more spaced out as the kilometers go by. It is far enough out however for it to back onto a state forest. There is nothing distinctive at all about it at first glance – it has the usual mixture of houses, shops selling fresh produce, groceries, household items, stationery, baked goods and sweets, pharmaceuticals,

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15 Heitzman, *Network city*, p. 52, says three per cent spoke Malayalam in 1971 as their first language (Kannada was 37 per cent, Tamil 25 per cent, Telugu 18 per cent, Urdu 17 per cent and Marathi 4 per cent).
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alongside banks, workshops, schools and temples. Only a closer look shows this to be a Malayalee neighborhood: houses with distinctive Kerala features, such as the ornamentation on their facades, or with the householder’s name; distinctive plants; vegetables used in Malayalee cooking on sale; the school notices and a restaurant advertisement in Malayalam as well as Kannada and English.

The most significant and conspicuous evidence of Kerala in this Bangalore neighborhood is an Ayappan temple. The Ayappan movement focuses on the Sabarimala in southern Kerala, which was mentioned in chapter three. While the numbers of Ayappan devotees are greatest in Kerala they are also found outside the state, not least where Malayalees concentrate, so in this Bangalore neighborhood there is advertising of regular bus departures to Sabarimala from immediately adjacent to the temple (see Fig. 3.3).

Which came first, temple or houses? Almost certainly the houses; the earliest date back to the 1970s or 1980s when this district was on the margins of Bangalore and the land would have been cheap. With a few Malayalees established, more came, and the infrastructure of temple, school and shops followed. Now it is an established neighborhood: Malayalee newcomers could not afford to buy houses in this neighborhood; they can go to others like it, but newer – or poorer – dispersed around the city.

The Malayalee story of Bangalore is a fragment of a much larger migration story that is replicated in all the big cities of India. The big – and increasingly many lesser – cities in India draw the educated and ambitious from small town and countryside, and the uneducated and underemployed from the countryside. As one reporter has put it in respect of Mumbai, whilst the elite live in virtual exile, seeing Mumbai as a point of departure for Europe or North America, “The city teems with millions of migrants who see it in exactly the opposite way: as a mesmeric port of arrival, offering … a chance to invent oneself, to break with one’s supposed fate. The lens of Dickens or Horatio Alger offers an easy picture of Mumbai: wealthy and poor, apartment-dwelling and slum-dwelling, bulbous and malnourished. In office elevators, the bankers and lawyers are a foot taller, on average, than the less-fed delivery men.”16 To another commentator the citizens of Bangalore are “a new kind of people, freshly urbanized and adapting to the factory clock, the thread of a belief that they were at the center of a new kind of world”.17

16 International Herald Tribune, 6 Nov. 2008 (Anand Giridharadas).
This migration is not primarily a story of globalization, neither in its duration, nor in the places of origin of the migrants. The 2001 India census recorded for Karnataka approximately five million inter-district migrants, two million inter-state migrants and just 44,000 international migrants. Many in all three categories would be in Bangalore. Bangalore has been absorbing migrants throughout its contemporary history; by one estimate the migrant proportion of the population was 57 per cent in 1961 and 63 per cent in 1971. Rapid urban growth since then has actually decreased the proportion of recent migrants; of the metropolitan area’s population of 5.7 million in 2001, about two million were migrants. Nonetheless such numbers – for just one city – equate to about two-thirds of the total of Indian migrants to the Gulf, and are much more balanced in gender.

About 1.2 million of the migrants into Bangalore were from Karnataka state, mainly from its rural area, while the remaining 800,000 were from outside the state. So for Bangalore the primary catchment for migrants is the small towns and country districts of central and south Karnataka. A lone survey of migrants to Kengeri showed that nearly a third of the satellite town’s inhabitants came from nearby parts of Karnataka and nearly half from Karnataka as a whole. One newspaper reports on thousands of laborers and their families migrating to large cities to look for work, a product of depressed conditions in the rural areas. On one Saturday alone in 2008, 17 special buses for migrant laborers were arranged from Raichur, just over 400 kms from Bangalore. The migrants came even from districts with irrigation.

Such migrants, usually with limited education, seek jobs in construction and building, if male, or domestic service, if female, although rural women can often also be seen on building sites, working alongside men, particularly in tasks of clearing sites of the debris from demolition, or engaged in earth moving. If open ground can be found – it may be a tract of land that has been neglected by its owner, where a development was planned that did not go...
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ahead, or a house demolished but nothing to replace it – they will build rough shelters, with some rainproof roofing. Construction in particular, because it requires physical fitness and not a lot of literacy or language skill, attracts migrants from all over. They can also be from the north of India – from Orissa or, like two stone masons working on a building site in western Karnataka, from Rajasthan. Many of the construction workers are from poor northern Karnataka or heavily populated neighboring parts of Tamil Nadu.

City life prompts – and buries – thousands and thousands of migrant stories every day: 30 Orissa families rescued from bonded labor in a Kolar brick factory just outside of Bangalore; tribal migrants from Rajasthan trying to make a living selling ceramic pots huddle in inadequate tents during the monsoon rains, yet anxious lest they be driven on by traffic police or city officials. For such migrants, gaining “hakku patra” – rights to property with which it is possible to take out a loan, for example – is a persisting ambition. Politicians promise them, fail to deliver on them, leaving migrant slum dwellers at the risk of seeing their habitations removed by government or a private developer.

Migrants do not stay put, their back and forth journeys contribute to the mobility of the Indian population. The Rajasthani men return home, when they can afford it, to buy more stock to sell in Bangalore. The “golden quadrilateral”, a highway network under construction in the 2000s linking all India’s metropolitan centers, makes the journey faster. Elections can trigger a clear-out from the construction industry as workers return to vote but also because they can expect to be paid for assisting candidates during the election campaigns. The election over, they return to the city.

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25 Hindu, 6 May 2008, being paid around Rs150 a day for long hours and tough work would work out at around Rs3,600 a month.
26 See also Hindu, 6 May 2008, the construction industry sourced labor from Bihar, West Bengal and districts in Karnataka – mostly in the north (consistent with Prakash’s observation); Hindu, 18 May 2008, Karnataka usually gets construction workers from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, but “following increased construction activity in cities such as Chennai, Nasik, Pune and Indore, workers are migrating there”.
28 Hindu, 6 May 2008, the reference is to the Khader Shanf Garden slum, now in Chickpet constituency, formerly Chamaraipet; see also reference to demand for hakku patra by longstanding Tamil migrant/slum dwellers in Mandya, Hindu, 7 Mar. 2008.
30 Hindu, 6 May 2008, but another source contrasts the Rs150 per day on a building site with that much for attending one campaign meeting.
There are also migrants, like the young men in chapter three, who have enough schooling or college education to be employable in Bangalore’s offices and shops, or indeed come to the city for some of that education. They too can come from all over India. Many of the northeasterners in the city, for instance, physically distinctive because of their “East Asian” appearance and culturally distinctive because a high proportion are church-goers, are students. Hiresh’s apartment building in Kengeri housed mostly “out-of-town” students: two Tamils; a Thai who was studying library and information science; and two groups of engineering students, one South Indian, the other from Bihar, in the north. Niresh is a medical student from Andhra Pradesh, but his brother lives and works in Bangalore, so that makes it easier for him to come to the city for his training. Malayalee students, mostly women, but with some men, crowd the city’s nursing schools and colleges, some of them the young women on their own discussed in chapter three. 26-year-old Anu from Hassan in central Karnataka, the daughter of a truck driver, had a certificate in tailoring and embroidery and was looking for work in the clothing industry. The Oriyan artist Bishnu Prasad moved back and forth between his home town in Orissa and Bangalore, while producing several paintings a week. The large Tamil population, long-established in Bangalore, has historically been well-represented in clerical occupations.

The city is cosmopolitan, but cosmopolitan with the variety of Indian “nationalities” rather than foreign ones. The triggers for the change are identical to those which trigger globalization – greater ease of movement, greater ability to gain information about opportunities in other places, and the existence of those opportunities. But the scale of this movement to the cities and throughout India is far greater than the migrant flows and other movements between India and the rest of the world, the Gulf excepted: the largest Indian-born migrant community beyond the Gulf – in the US – numbered 1.5 million in 2006. It is for these reasons that it is valid to see Bangalore and to a lesser extent Mysore being shaped in this respect by a nation-building process as much as by globalization.

32 Times of India, 7, 19 Feb. 2007.
33 Hindu, 2 Jan. 2009.
Shanghai and Yangzhou

Internal migration is also shaping and re-shaping contemporary China. The outlines of the story are well known. China has a long urban tradition and some estimates of urbanization in Han dynasty China suggest 17 per cent urbanized and during the Song dynasty around 21 per cent. Economic decline and instability in the nineteenth century aside, massive increases in the rural population would have depressed the urbanized percentage; moreover the Communist government which took power in 1949 did not promote urbanization, and the residency system (hukou) introduced in 1958, while not directly aimed at restricting geographical movement, had that effect. In 1978 estimates were that China was about 18 per cent urban. The figure usually quoted for 2010 is 45 per cent which is therefore a massive change in just over 30 years, and the raw numbers are equally staggering, given that China's total population rose from 950 million to 1.35 billion in those years. In other words the urban population in those years rose from around 160 million, depending on the definitions used, to over 600 million. Equally, the number of migrants grew from 60 million in 1992 to 120 million in 2003 and 230–240 million in 2010, according to official calculations cited in the media.

If China follows the trajectory of urbanization in the West, Japan and Korea, that is only a “two-thirds” point. In 2003, of the rural laboring population of around 900 million 23 per cent had migrated, a further 28 per cent were working in non-agricultural rural enterprises while the remainder – around 350 million – were still living off the land. However it is construed, it is a massive transformation compared with the just 200 million people who, taking the world as a whole, currently live outside their homelands, an absolute number and proportion (three percent of the world population) that has not changed markedly for some time.

The lower Yangtze river valley region, in which Yangzhou is located, and with Shanghai at its head, is one of the hubs of this transformation. In 2000, the “floating” population of Shanghai accounted for around 25 per cent of the city’s total, so, depending again on how the calculations were made, between

35 Timothy Oakes and Louisa Schein, “Introduction”, in Oakes and Schein, Translocal China, p. 5; Guldin, Urbanizing China, p. 229.
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three and five million people. In her study of Shanghai in the 1990s and early 2000s, Pamela Yatsko identified some of the structural circumstances facing migrants in that city: “The city, like others in China, only allows migrants to do certain low status jobs ... kicking them out of the city if they cannot prove they are employed. Migrants mix little with the Shanghaiese ... the majority of the migrant workers are men who find work on the city’s omnipresent construction sites ... migrant women sometimes work as maids ... or in decrepit barbershops in bad parts of town ... washing hair for 10 yuan a head and, in some cases, providing sexual services for a bit more.”

If, in the months after the onset of the economic downturn in late 2008, migrant numbers were no longer increasing, they were also not likely to be falling that dramatically given that employment opportunities were likely to be no better in the country districts from which the migrants had come.

As in India, residency rights were a hurdle for migrants. The hukou was not easy to obtain, and that in turn meant that migrants did not have rights to health care, to education for their children, to buy a house or to borrow money. As they moved up the entrepreneurial ladder, the obstacles did not disappear so much as become more complex. Cell phones cost more; trucks and cars were licensed only to residents; migrants could not lease land. In Dalian, in north-east China, graduates could get registration but migrant workers from rural areas and those without degrees still faced restrictive policies. In Shanghai, Zhao Liping from Anhui province had neither insurance nor other benefits: “If I get really sick, then I’ll go back to Anhui ... if we have a more severe illness, we just borrow money from family and friends.”

Even in 2009 hukou status was not gained as a matter of course and newspaper stories about the discrimination which migrant workers still experienced


41 Cited in Yatsko, New Shanghai, p. 121.
were common.\textsuperscript{43} Yang Cheng, a 26-year-old hair stylist in Shanghai, first left his home village in the province of Hubei in 1999 to work in a watch-making factory. Managing to get together the money to train as a hair stylist, by 2009 he earned 5,000 yuan a month but still did not have residency status: “As the second-best option, I bought an apartment back in Hubei and changed my hukou to an urban status there.”\textsuperscript{44}

A 33-part TV series \textit{Wǒjū} – which could be translated “living like a snail” – went on air in 2009. It featured two 20-something sisters, both graduates, as they went through the challenges of trying to find somewhere to live and to work to pay for it in Shanghai. One blog reported that “On China’s largest university BBS, Tsinghua University’s newsmtth.net, discussions involving Woju have been among the top ten most popular topics everyday since the series premiere.” So accurately did the series capture the darker side of migration that as of 2010 there had been no re-runs.\textsuperscript{45}

Virtually all migrants are Chinese. Shanghai does have a substantial foreign migrant population, which also deploys far greater spending power and influence than the domestic migrant population and is very conspicuous in the heart of the city, around the Bund, Nanjing Road and in the former French concession. However, the numbers are small both in comparison to comparable cities in other parts of the world and in comparison to the numbers of domestic migrants. The total is perhaps 100,000, less than one per cent of Shanghai’s population, and perhaps three per cent of its total migrant population. The scale and significance of this foreign population will be further explored in chapter eight.

Where does a city like Yangzhou fit into this pattern? Not neatly. Indeed the situation of a city like Yangzhou is a reminder that generalities about labor migration have to be sifted through particular experiences. The particularity in this instance is the economic and demographic weight of Shanghai and to a lesser extent Nanjing. These are cities which migrants from inland China will have heard of, whose working conditions they will have information on and where they will likely have contacts from their home place. So it is to such cities that migrants head. Moreover, a city like Yangzhou, if it needs unskilled labor, is not so large that it cannot attract it from its own neighborhood. In a

\textsuperscript{43} See for example \textit{China Daily}, 16 Jan. 2009, “Thirty years on, migrants still on outside looking in”. See also the full discussion in Murphy, “Introduction”, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{China Daily}, 3 Mar. 2010. For further reportage see \textit{Financial Times} 6 May 2010.

cheap restaurant in the old city of Yangzhou the customers included workers from near Huaian, a Jiangsu city north of Yangzhou (and in a poorer part of the province), working at the time on a demolition site in Yangzhou.  

An additional factor and one harder to evaluate is that, since the passing of its heyday in the eighteenth century, Yangzhou has been a place from which, not to which, people migrated. Families who did well in Yangzhou might relocate some if not all of their family members to Shanghai, as in the case of the He family, the owners of the He Yuan in the southeast of the old city, now a national historical monument. A steady stream of rough and ready “Subei” people also made their way to Shanghai as did some of Yangzhou’s most beautiful women.

So while, like other lower Yangtze River cities, Yangzhou attracts migrants, the migration is usually over relatively short distances. A survey of migration between 1985 to 1990 – more recent data is hard to come by – revealed that the biggest flow affecting Jiangsu province, in which Yangzhou is located, was to Shanghai. This far outweighed in-migration to the province, the largest

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component of which came from neighboring Anhui and from Sichuan, a more distant province but the most populous in China. 48

Informal discussion in Yangzhou suggested that the rural migrants who typically were employed in construction were from rural parts of Jiangsu or Anhui – in the former instance they would not be picked up by national statistics. Informal questioning also confirmed that the notion of leaving Yangzhou on completing education was well established, usually to look for work in Shanghai or Nanjing. Yangzhou in the minds of graduating students was firmly established as such a place, a “provincial” or “escalator” town which was an appropriate place for education but not for working life. The familiar journeys were to or from places nearby. Of students interviewed, one had done a first degree at Hefei in Anhui, others at Nantong, Wuxi and Qidong (all Jiangsu cities). The two latter both hoped to go on to do more study, preferably in a Shanghai university. 49

Nor were the motives for migration unchanging. As rural populations became better educated their reasons for migration changed, and arguably “modernized”: “Young people in the rural areas watch the same TV programs and chat with their peers on the Internet … they are exposed to the same influences as their counterparts in the cities.” 50 That said, it was precisely such exposure that could prompt migration. As Yang Cheng, quoted above, also said, “I watched how people lived in the cities and I wanted to be one of them.”

Internal migration in China in the 1990s and early 2000s may have completely dwarfed external migration but it was clearly related to globalization. Migrants were drawn to the booming coastal cities, in which the boom conditions were partly driven by exports and foreign investment. However internal migration had other dimensions. The direction of migration was not unchanging, it was a function of wage differentials and job opportunities. In 2008 tens of thousands of workers were fired from export-oriented factories in Dongguan in Guangdong as forward orders collapsed. When orders picked up again in late 2009, the factories sought to re-hire, only to find that the workers were no longer available. In Sichuan, long a province of out-migration, the average wage had reached 1,000 yuan a month and there

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was plenty of work owing to the government’s investment stimulus package.\footnote{Asia Times, 2 Mar. 2010 (Olivia Chung).} In March 2010 a number of newspapers issued an unprecedented collective call for the abolition of the hukou system.\footnote{Financial Times, 1 Mar. 2010; \url{http://guanyu9.blogspot.com/2010/03/editorial-calls-for-abolition-of-hukou.htm}, accessed 3 Mar. 2010; see also \emph{China Daily}, 3 Mar. 2010, “Hukou reform urgent, says official”.

\section*{Jakarta and Semarang}

The focus of internal migration in Indonesia has been on migration out from Java to less populated islands, and especially on the transmigration policy, in which resettlement in the “outer” islands was officially encouraged. With the end of such state-sponsored policies, long range migration is now the exception. From the whole of Central Java just 581 families migrated under the transmigration scheme in 2007, a 32.5 per cent decrease over 2006.\footnote{Gardiner, “Migration and urbanization”, p. 119; \emph{Jawa Tengah in figures}, 2008, p. 52.} The total population of Central Java was 32 million. In practice, urbanization and migration have historically been predominantly a Javanese phenomenon. Java had a net gain of just over 700,000 urban residents in the 1970s for example, which was 75 per cent of the national total.\footnote{Graeme J. Hugo et al., \emph{The demographic dimension in Indonesian development}, Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 94.}

Most migration in Java takes place to other places on the island, and most markedly to Jakarta. “They choose Jakarta”, wrote one reporter in 2002, “because, compared to other cities, they see it as the best place to realise their dreams. Their dreams become even more strengthened when homecoming migrants from their villages tell them about their success stories.”\footnote{\emph{Jakarta Post}, 3 Jan. 2002.} As in Shanghai, Bangalore and other major Chinese and Indian cities, such in-migration far outweighed in significance the numbers of foreign-born.

A 1995 population survey showed the significance of Central Javanese (especially of the young) in-migration to central Jakarta during the 1990s.\footnote{Si Gde Made Mamas and Rizky Komalsari, “Jakarta: dynamics of change and livability,” in Jones and Douglass, \emph{Mega-urban regions}, p. 130.} Overall Central Java recorded 673,000 “life-time” immigrants in 1995 but five million emigrants. As Jakarta recorded a net gain of 1.7 million and West Java recorded a net gain of over 1.7 million it is evident that the capital and its environs were the destination of the majority of Central Javanese migrants. For no other province except Lampung in the south of Sumatra, facing Java, was net

\footnote{Si Gde Made Mamas and Rizky Komalsari, “Jakarta: dynamics of change and livability,” in Jones and Douglass, \emph{Mega-urban regions}, p. 130.}
migration over one million. Proposals for restricting internal migration – in theory identity cards with a local address are required for residency – elicit an expected response from those who would be affected: “What’s wrong with looking for a job?” asked a 31–year-old who had just come from Wonosobo, Central Java and whose spouse worked as a housemaid near Jakarta.

A characteristic trigger for migration is the return of people to the capital from the Idul Fitri festival at the end of Ramadan. Why not accompany them? In 2007, 109,000 post-Idul Fitri newcomers were caught without papers, although most were only fined, rather than being sent home. In 2008, the authorities predicted an extra 200,000 relatives or friends would accompany Jakarta residents back to the capital; it turned out to be less than 100,000, but still a large number.

For a peanut vendor in Central Jakarta, his home town of Brebes, near Tegal in Central Java, was “a hard place to make a living. We count on the rain for agriculture. If we are lucky enough to get water, we still can only harvest our crops twice a year. So it's usual for people from there to

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migrate to the capital. Just because we’re poor doesn’t mean we don’t deserve to earn a better living in the city.” 60 Not all who filter into Jakarta stay in the city proper; many will move out into the broader metropolitan region, to find unskilled work in factories.61

To university students in Semarang the characteristic migrants were individuals who were not well educated, and headed off to Jakarta once schooling was finished. Initially they would stay with relatives and help them in a food stall (warung) or other small business. Others – especially young women – would do domestic work in households, others a variety of menial jobs. After a time they might set up a business of their own.62

They may find that their “sponsors” are not that well off. Mohammed reckoned that of his 1992 school class in Pekalongan, maybe 30 per cent had gone on to higher education; of the others perhaps half had stayed in Pekalongan and the other half had migrated to Jakarta. In both places they might be in some kind of business or they might be unemployed. Mohammed reckoned there was an embarrassment factor – those who did not “make good” in Jakarta were reluctant to come home, except at the most mandatory times, such as Idul Fitri.

Migration takes place to other cities on Java too, but it is not so pronounced and the catchment for migrants is provincial, not island-wide. Historically Semarang was a city of migrants (41 per cent of its population in 1930) as many came to find work as servants and in industry, mostly from neighboring regencies (districts). A 1985 survey showed that 91 per cent of Surabaya’s population (ethnic Chinese included) were born within East Java; 59 per cent within the city of Surabaya; almost 80 per cent of migrants came from the city and surrounding East Java. Semarang resembles Surabaya more than Jakarta: two thirds of Jakarta’s migrants come from further away than West Java, its immediately neighboring province. 63

As in Bangalore and Yangzhou key “migration moments” occur in the course of higher education, for which far more opportunities are available in cities. Of students I interviewed in Semarang, Arief came from Magelang, Mohammed from Pekalongan, Achmad from Surakarta, Aaza from Wonosobo – all from Central Java towns, with which they will retain close family connections and

60 Jakarta Post, 4 Nov. 2002.
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to which they will frequently return, but in which they are unlikely to find professional employment. University faculty similarly have often started out in small towns and country areas, reaching Semarang at the onset of adulthood. Their migration is part of a “nation-building” process. I asked Supi why he had decided to come to UNDIP in Semarang, all the way from southern Sumatra. “I wanted to find out more about Indonesia, about my own country,” he replied. “Indonesia is one of the world's biggest countries, but most people of our generation in Indonesia know nothing about it.”

They are not just migrating geographically, but also socially. For many of them, they are the first ones in their families to have higher education. For one who was second generation the transformation is still close; he was certain that his grandfather, still living, who was born in the 1930s, could neither read nor write, although that had not stopped him encouraging his daughter (the student’s mother) to educate herself, or her children. To come from other parts of Indonesia, like Supi, is not as yet so common, except to attend the most prestigious universities such as Gajah Mada in Yogyakarta. As a result of the presence of that university it is considered that “Jogja” (the informal form of Yogyakarta) has a cosmopolitan feel, triggered by the presence of students and scholars from many different parts of Indonesia, and the world.

When the students find employment they are also likely to take up educational opportunities sponsored by their employers. Thus Mohammed, who was on the payroll of a university in Semarang, was studying for a higher qualification in Bandung. Will these individuals migrate further? Of the five students, two had already been overseas, and the others would be interested but do not see it as practicable, for financial and family reasons. Of the students in the Faculty of Humanities that Supi was aware of, only five or six had been outside Indonesia. Many of those who want to go away expect to come back. Mohammed, who as we have seen wanted to spend time in France, was one such. To him, migration was something poor, uneducated and unskilled women did, not professionally-qualified persons such as himself, “For the middle class, to work overseas is the last choice.”

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64 Mohammed interview, 8 Apr. 2009.
66 For internal migration in other countries of Southeast Asia see Rachel H. Racelis and Paula Monina G. Collado, “The Manila MUR: continuing magnet for migrants” and Sutiprapa et al. “Bangkok”, in Jones and Douglass, Mega-urban regions.
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Concluding comments

The cities of developing Asia are being profoundly shaped by domestic labor migration. A “free” labor market is an important building block of capitalism – workers should be able to offer and withhold their labor without restriction. While labor markets in China, India and Indonesia are not completely “free”, the movement of workers or potential workers within each economy is much easier than it is where the worker has to cross an international boundary. When globalization focuses on labor markets it naturally focuses on those international movements, which appear to be such a striking marker of globalization generally. These other capitalist labor markets are then overlooked; the poor quality of information about them, as has been mentioned already, reinforces the bias.

Capital is not the sole agent of change in Asian cities; workers make decisions too, even though the range of choice may be much narrower. Those decisions, which may take a worker and his or her family across the country, or from countryside to city, shape new patterns of urban life. The mixing up of populations in the major cities of Indonesia, India and China is a mixing up of populations from all over those countries, with different languages, religious practices, and cultural habits. Such mixing up may not lead automatically to homogenization but it does require the development of linking practices. One of these – the use of a common language – will be discussed in chapter seven. But such a measurable development is grounded in less measurable ones – the impact of working in an environment with co-workers from throughout the country; the impact of sending one’s child to a multi-ethnic local school or simply of that child growing up with children from other parts of the country; the sharing of street and leisure space with an immense variety of other individuals, but all co-nationals; the possibility of intermarriage across ethnic boundaries.

Such developments and practices also shaped Western cities in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. “Peasants” became “Frenchmen” when they migrated to work in cities or were enlisted in the army. A notion of what it meant to be a German was enhanced as migrants filled the industrial centers of the Ruhr, Saxony and Upper Silesia in the Wilhelmine era – and also helped defined “German-ness” against Polishness and other ethnicities. Even the United States, a famously mobile society, and one whose nation-building involved a massive global migration, experienced something similar as African-Americans migrated to northern and mid-western cities from the Second World War on, and as migrants from the Great Plains and other states headed...
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to California and other Pacific coast states. But in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, while domestic migration has continued to be significant in Western countries, it has not been a “nation-transforming” phenomenon as it currently is in China, India, Indonesia and other Asian countries.

The argument can even be made that the migration that accompanies globalization is not the most “advanced” form of migration, and therefore globalization cannot be assumed to be the most advanced form of modernization. Take Indonesia again as an example. Overseas migrants overwhelmingly go to work as domestic servants (if women) or as laborers (if men). In both instances the migration is of the unskilled, whereas within Indonesia migration includes that of students, the newly-graduated, and administrative and professional workers on transfer – in other words it has more life-cycle elements to it and can as often be urban–urban as rural–urban. Secondly, migration is primarily a function of economic disparity, not of globalization per se. Studies have shown that there is a threshold of per capita income – or rather, a threshold in the ratio between two per capita incomes – above which labor migration will tail off.67 Within a country this will also be true but because of the life-cycle component in migration, it is not likely to tail off as much. Thirdly, migration is often supply rather than demand driven. Both the migrant business and its dark sibling, the people-smuggling trade, need custom and will promote often completely unrealistic scenarios to potential clients. Within a country migrants are likely to have more information about where they are going, what they can do when they get there and how to return home. The contrast is not absolute of course. Highlighting it provides a useful corrective – and one to which I will return in the concluding chapter – to the automatic assumption that something global is also more advanced and that the story of migration around the world is primarily a story of globalization.

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67 Economist, 28 June 2008, citing Kathleen Newland of the Migration Policy Institute, www.mpi.org. Based on experience of countries like Spain, Portugal, Greece and Korea, emigration usually slows when income per person approaches a threshold level in relation to income levels in the richer countries to which the migrants are heading.” The tipping point, she says, is when the ratio of incomes reaches about 1:4 or 1:5, especially if the upward trend seems stable. For migrants looking to go to North America or Western Europe this would imply a threshold of $6,000 to $7,000 per annum. Once average incomes pass this point, worker migrant flows, it is argued, are likely to tail off.
Travelers and cities

Introduction
This book argues that the twenty-first century cities of developing Asia are being modernized and that much of the drive of that modernization is urban and national rather than global in scope. This chapter advances this argument with respect to the travel and hospitality industries. The nature of travel to and from the Asian city has changed dramatically as the burgeoning urban economy both provides new kinds of travel services and creates or responds to demands for them.

Some of these developments can readily be characterized as a phenomenon of globalization. Much of the travel business “style” and its products are clearly imitative of Western (or Japanese) models. International travel is a high status good and increasingly resorted to by middle-income as well as affluent urban Chinese, Indians and Indonesians. As with business generally too, statistics on international travelers or on international investment in the travel business are much more accessible than equivalent domestic figures.

The domestic market for travel goods and services is however far more substantial in Asian cities but it is under-studied. David Gladstone’s From pilgrimage to package tours is a significant and useful exception.¹ The most recent (2009) study of tourism in Southeast Asia, after citing a 1993 observation that there was then little research available on domestic tourism, concedes that the situation is “still unsatisfactory”.² The same could readily be said of domestic as compared with international business travel.

¹ David Gladstone, From pilgrimage to package tours, London and New York, Routledge, 2005.
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As with the other themes in this part of the study, this dynamism of the domestic travel market is a reality for Asian cities and city dwellers but not for their North American or European counterparts. The great decades of capitalist transformation of domestic business and leisure travel in the US were arguably the 1920s and the 1950s, in Europe the 1950s and the 1960s. In the contemporary era the greatest transformation in the West has been in global business and leisure travel. The appetite for truly global traveling – and it is salutary to keep in mind that even in the US and Europe the majority of holiday journeys are still carried on within a country or within close range of it (Germans to Austria for example) – dates from the advent of long-haul aircraft. The earliest, the Boeing 747, nicknamed the jumbo jet, made its first flight in 1970. That is as good a year as any to mark the intersection of the history of Western or Japanese travel with the advent of globalization.

The story of travel in developing Asia is different. There has always been a great deal of internal travel in Asian countries – in the nineteenth century observers noted how quickly Indians going on pilgrimages took to train travel – but the commercialization of travel that has characterized the experience of the Asian city dweller has taken place only over the last quarter century. The global transformation has taken place as well but it has occupied a secondary place.

This chapter will look first at business travel, particularly in China, and then at leisure travel in Indonesia, India and China. It will concentrate on surface travel – the expansion of domestic air travel and its implications for cities merits a study of its own.

Business travel
The entrances are confined but adequate with standard front desk and two to three individuals ready behind it. It is constantly busy with people coming and going, often family groups or clusters of young people. There is no dining room as such but a café off to the side. The rooms are small but wireless access is standard, and they are quiet and clean. The most significant thing about them is that they are part of a chain. Many years ago, a businessman in California was determined to offer standardized and therefore economical accommodation – no unit would be more than $6 a night. The Motel 6 chain spread across California and other western states in the US on account of this successful formula, which survived inflation and the abandonment of the six-dollar tariff (although not the name). Motel 168 had a similar purpose; al-
though not exactly motels, the 168 referred to the 168 yuan which the lodger could expect to pay for a room. Moreover with a play on the words for each number, “yi liu ba” it could be “yao liu ba”, meaning “want to stay, ok”.

Some rooms are still available for 168 yuan – most are not – but the concept of accommodation which is standardized through many outlets has been very successful. It is inspired not just by the US motel company but by the five star western-style hotel accommodation that has spread through China. However those hotels with their bilingual staff and their standard quota of Westerners and other foreigners were out of reach (or out of the inclination) of many salaried but not necessarily that well-off Chinese, and Motel 168 is for them.

It is a brand launched by the Shanghai Merrylin restaurant company in 2002 to compete in the “express budget hotel industry”. In 2009 it had two outlets in Yangzhou. One was on Wenhe Lu, one of the principal thoroughfares of the city. It was noisy, there was no parking, but it was close to the downtown area, indeed was in it, and close to some of the principal attractions of the city. It exploited that location while the other Yangzhou hotel exploited its location, being on the edge of the city but easy to reach from expressways.

Motel 168 – like many other such chains, including China’s largest and most successful, Home Inn – was not, except in one respect, a demonstration
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of globalization. While the chain’s website stressed the international standards in its hotels – western bathrooms, for instance – and the site is trilingual – Chinese, Japanese and English – its market, its customer base and its operations were used by mainland Chinese. It was of Chinese, by Chinese and for Chinese. While some English might be spoken it was fairly rudimentary and key instructions – to operate the aircon system, to use the menu – were only in Chinese. Observation suggested the customer base is over 95 per cent Chinese so this was entirely logical.

Motel 168 used electronic means to reach its customers, it presupposed a degree of mobility and homogeneity and indeed the business model itself came from the United States. But the space that was being transformed was not global but national. The Japanese-language and English-language websites allowed visitors to identify locations through a map of China with hyper-linked locations, but the Chinese-language site dispensed with the map – desired locations were expected to be in people’s heads. By the end of 2007 130 hotels had been opened in cities across China. In mid-2009 it operated in all provinces bar Fujian, Guizhou and the six western and north-western provinces.

Another new product provided a complement. In the bookstores in Yangzhou and Shanghai, and indeed in bookstores in all cities, sections are now dedicated to road travel information, both city maps and road atlases. It is a comment on the relative lack of private travel by car in Indonesia and India that such road atlases are not on sale in large numbers in the cities of either of those countries, but are now common in Chinese cities. The atlases, although produced by a number of companies, are in standard format. The country as a whole is the frame of reference. Within that, individual maps are allocated to each province. In this respect they resemble many road atlases in the United States, in which almost every state is unvaryingly allocated a page, never mind whether it is the size of Texas or Connecticut. In China each province is allocated a page, and where the province is on the national border, there is no map information supplied for the adjacent non-Chinese territory – it is blank. Aspirant or actual drivers or travelers pore over the maps, and the picture of China’s cities, and the linkages between them, that they create.

A similar phenomenon to Motel 168 can be found on the road between Bangalore and Mysore. Approaching Mysore the first big advertisement for
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a Ginger hotel in the city appears (as also billboards advertising many other hotels). A Tata endeavor, like Titan, the Ginger concept dates back only to 2004, when the first “Smart Basics” hotel was opened in Bangalore. It is not in any way derivative of the budget motels in China but it is to all intents a parallel endeavor: an economical, standardized chain of business hotels, in its case colonizing the Indian cities where Motel 168 and Home Inn are colonizing Chinese ones.³ By mid-2009 Ginger hotels were found in 18 cities across India with another five locations scheduled.⁴ Avoiding in those first years the largest cities, it has spread a network through second and third tier centers where the accommodation market is less competitive. This is not to say that at some point expansion beyond national borders will not occur, but it is not the business focus.

In Indonesia domestic chains of business hotels are not so evident, but the business character of many individual hotels is evident from their clientele, and from occupancy rates which follow the standard business pattern of being high through the working week and lighter at weekends.

The appearance of these new kinds of accommodation therefore is a transformation that parallels that of globalization. The scope for deepening is enormous – there are over 50 Motel 168 outlets in Shanghai alone, but provinces in Dongbei, for instance, are only served by one or two.⁵ Further, recall that Merrylin is only one such chain. In January 2009, China had 2,805 budget hotels with a total of 312,930 rooms. Motel 168 was one of the top ten along with Home Inn, JinJiang, 7Days Inn, Hanting, GreenTree, Super 8, Ibis Hotel, Vienna and WHWH. Home Inn alone opened 200 hotels during 2008 and planned comparable expansion in 2009 and 2010.⁶

As with products like jamu in Indonesia and home decorating in China, the business objective is to create, standardize, and thrive in a domestic market. On the way, smaller operators may lose business – the plan is about capturing market share as well as about expanding the market. And optimism was the rule, even in the face of the 2008 slowdown: “the demand for three

⁵ See also comment in International Herald Tribune, 14 Oct. 2008 (Keith Bradsher) on Smartex Group head Henry Ye, who converted the original headquarters of his company in Xiamen into a hotel to appeal to the growing numbers of domestic travelers; and story in www.spiegel.de, 20 Aug. 2008 on this rush to build hotels in Beijing on the assumption of a buoyant post-Olympic domestic travel market and reference to Home Inn as “China’s first and largest budget hotel chain”.
star hotels in India will continue to be robust with a host of international games events lined up in 2009–10.”

**Idul Fitri**

As that last comment suggests, cities are affected by the demands of leisure as well as business travel. An hour east of Semarang, Demak has a significant mosque associated with the Wali Songo, the nine holy men traditionally credited with the conversion of Java to Islam, and places associated with their activities are popular places to visit. Demak was reputedly the place where Sunan Kalijaga drew the population to Islam through theater.8 *Lonely Planet* reckons that seven visits here are equivalent to one haj to Mecca and the buses parked along the alun-alun (square) in front of the mosque bring Indonesian Muslims, not foreigners, to Demak.

The traveling world of Semarang is dominated by locals and visits to family and/or to holy places are prominent in that. In 1987 341,000 people, virtually all local Muslims, it can be assumed, visited the great mosque at Demak with its adjacent holy graves. By 2000 this had reached 607,000. In 2000 around one and a half million are said to have visited the tomb of Sunan Kalijaga at nearby Kadilangu. George Quinn has argued that a principal reason for such large numbers of local travelers is improvements in roads, which, even to remote sites, now usually have permanent surfaces and are served by buses. When Quinn first visited Kahyangan, a holy place near Tirtomoyo in the south of Central Java, pilgrims had to walk about two kms along a rough, steep track to reach the site. Not any longer. At the busiest sites, most pilgrims come by bus and communities around the sites rely more and more on pilgrims to provide a prime source of income.9

The travel “climax” of the Indonesian year comes at Idul Fitri, the Muslim new year at the end of the Ramadan fasting month (mentioned in connection with its impact on migration, in chapter five). It produces the “mudik” – the return to home villages, towns or cities by millions of people that dwarfs any movement by foreigners around the Indonesian archipelago. In 2005 it was estimated that around 17 million people made journeys (still less than 10 per cent of Indonesia’s population) with outgoing and return journeys all taking

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8 Lukens-Bull, *Peaceful jihad*, p. 49.
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place within a few days. The news stories multiplied. SMS messages were taking over from “traditional” (sic) Idul Fitri cards, and the largest cellular operator recorded 40 million text messages on the first day of Idul Fitri 2003, 87 million on the same day in 2004. Bus drivers were upset that higher bus ticket prices meant fewer travelers, but holiday travel overall, said another story, was up by four per cent, and the number of people traveling home by third-class train increased by 170 per cent. All hospitals and community health centers on main roads in Central Java, the province of which Semarang is the capital, were required to stay open 24 hours before, during and after the holiday as 3.1 million travelers passed through, 1.35 million on public transportation, 1.4 million in private cars and 350,000 on motorcycles. The trip from Jakarta east to Cirebon, which normally took four hours, took 14. One of those traveling across Central Java was Didiek Sugianto, 30, who worked for an international oil company in Jakarta:

Most of my family lives in Jakarta, while my parents and grandparents live in Malang, East Java, so during the Idul Fitri holiday the family usually takes time off to return to our hometown and get together at our grandparents’ or parents’ house.

Dahono Fitrianto, also 30, was not passing through Central Java but stopping in Semarang, to “maintain relationships. Going home can also be seen as a way to show our gratitude to Allah”, he said.

In the Semarang neighborhood of Lempongsari cars arrived crammed with passengers, who packed up and left again three days later. Mohammed rode his motorcycle the two hour journey to Pekalongan. Reza and his family were getting ready to make their own Idul Fitri journeys, starting early the next morning. Reza was reasonably well-off. He worked for Bank Mandiri, one of the largest banks in Indonesia (state-owned) and had recently been appointed to a more senior position out of town. He had decided to stay on in Semarang because his wife had just started a business – selling dresses – in one of the big shopping malls in Semarang, and they were building a bigger

10 *Jakarta Post*, 2 Nov. 2005; 17 Sep. 2007, at least 4.21 million people were expected to pass through Central Java from Jakarta, West Java and Banten (the province in the far west of Java) on their way to their hometowns in both Central and East Java during 2007’s Idul Fitri exodus, an official said over the weekend.

11 All these items are taken from *Jakarta Post*, 29 Oct. to 7 Nov. 2005; they could be repeated, almost verbatim, for any subsequent year.


house further out of town than Lempongsari. Their family links took them in both directions from Semarang, first to Kudus, then to Cirebon. They made both journeys by car, staying one night at Kudus, and one night in Cirebon.

Many traveled by train, but Idul Fitri stretches the public transport system almost to breaking point. On one car on a service from Semarang to Pekalongan there was space only in what would have been the driver compartment, if it had been at the front of the train. There was already a young fellow there, he had come from Jakarta to Semarang to spend the first days of Idul Fitri with his wife’s family and now, leaving ahead of her, was to visit his own family at Tegal before returning to the capital. A little girl appeared at the open window – her father had hoisted her up, she was duly helped in and then he came in as well. That meant four passengers in the driver cabin; the WC across the corridor only had a family of three. The corridor itself was also full. The whole was confirmation that everything the papers said about the “mad” Idul Fitri rush was true – except that the Jakarta Post had mostly talked about the crush of people leaving Jakarta, and this train was headed towards Jakarta.

In Pekalongan accommodation was hard to come by, and it was likely that it would cost a lot. It was the pricier hotels, whose forecourts were full of cars, and Indonesians, that had no vacancies. The Hotel Indies did have vacancies. It was simple enough, one storey high, a long courtyard with rooms opening off it, that could variously house two, three or four people. At 40,000 rupiahs ($US5) it was economical and the other guests seemed content, and looked to be all Idul Fitri visitors and certainly all Indonesian. That they were visitors was confirmed in the morning when batik sellers – Pekalongan being the center of batik – had their wares on display, not for Westerners, who were nowhere to be seen, but for the Indonesian visitors.

So pervasive is the Idul Fitri exodus that it embraces non-Muslims too; psychologist Pius Heru Priyanto who taught at the Soegijapranata Catholic University in Semarang and was himself Catholic would be returning home to Yogyakarta. Not everyone goes “home” either. The forecourts of Semarang hotels were unprecedentedly full of late model cars, mostly belonging to affluent Chinese-Indonesians who were taking days off from business in Jakarta, Surabaya or other cities.

Affluent travelers could also be encountered at Bandungan, a one-hour bus ride from Semarang. The bus follows the main road south to Yogyakarta and Solo, but turns hard right after a few kilometers to take the road to

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Bandungan. Soon it becomes evident that the bus is climbing, but circling the mountain (Ungaran) at the same time. The view of the coastline at Semarang from out the right side of the bus disappears, instead we look inland. This is rural Java, an island of 150,000 sq kms with 70 million people, but while there are vehicles on the road and a few settlements, the landscape is not crowded, whilst the air through the open bus windows is refreshingly cool. Bandungan is reached – the road is steep, passing buildings on either side, then we turn abruptly left onto a level street, and disembark. The street, plus three or four others, is Bandungan. Hotels and guest houses are spread out, lining roads both up the mountain from the town, and further around the mountain. Their clients are overwhelmingly middle-class Indonesians. Indeed upper middle class because the tariff is too high for those on standard middle-class incomes – Rphs120,000 a night in 2004 (about $20). Two late model German cars drive up and disgorge a number of family members. They too are Indonesians. A well-dressed woman, sleek and sulky; a casually dressed – polo shirt, light-colored pair of pants – man but with gold jewellery and designer sunglasses. Three children, an older man, an older woman.

How representative are such groups? Observation of such forecourts suggests they are far more common than foreigners, and the Semarang statistics instanced in chapter one confirm that finding. Such travelers can probably afford to travel outside Indonesia but their money goes much further inside the country. The staff is deferential to them, perhaps more than they would
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be to the likely Western client – a young backpacker or “silver nomad”. Class, not race, defines the encounter.

A young Indonesian guest questions a foreigner’s decision to visit. The Indonesian youth had never been to Bandungan before, he explained, but he had been “everywhere else” – to “Jogja”, to Solo, to Semarang. He lived in Magelang, a middle-sized town not far from Yogyakarta, on the road to Semarang. “Why did you come here when you could have gone to other places?” He was not puzzling, it transpired, as to why a foreigner would visit Indonesia, or Java, but why Bandungan, and not a more exciting larger place in East or Central Java – Solo, Yogyakarta, Semarang or Surabaya.

Other contacts shared information about their journeys, making clear the reality of a world of domestic Indonesian travel which included school children, even if this was not visible to the outsider. Mohammed had been on school and/or family trips to Bali, Jakarta and Surabaya. Arief had traveled throughout Central Java, though not much further until he got to Bangkok as a graduate student.

At the dramatic Gedung Songo, a site of Hindu monuments further round Ungaran, the visitors were almost all Indonesian. They account for most travel in the country (and other Asians outweigh Westerners roughly 3:1 out of the 5.5 million total of overseas visitors). In Central Java domestic travelers in 2007 accounted for nearly four million visits compared with the fewer than 100,000 visits by foreigners (in both instances the average stay was about 1.5 nights). Jakarta had 800,000 foreign visitors but even that was dwarfed by the nearly four million domestic vistors, although the foreigners stayed longer – around three days to the Indonesian two or less. (In Bali, as might be expected, foreigners outnumber Indonesians, but only by a ratio of 2:1, approximately two and half million to one and a quarter million, with both groups staying an average of between three to four days.) Foreigners spend on average between $1,000 and $1,500 a visit but the vastly greater numbers of Indonesian travelers would counter the disparity in the grand totals of spending.15

Chamundi

On Chamundi Hill near Mysore, six women walk across an open expanse of ground. One is dressed in tones of green, one in reds, one in olive greens,

15 All figures including average spend are from Statistics Indonesia, Badan Pusat Statistik, http://dds.bps.go.id/eng/aboutus.php?table=1&id_subyek=16, tourism data.
one in turquoise/aqua, one in mauves and one in purple and gold. They are ornamented in a variety of places – ears, necks, wrists and ankles. Their feet are bare. They must know each other well – they are talking, gesturing and laughing. They range from 30 to 60 in age – they may be kin or friends, or both. Three men walk past the women. They are dressed in standard shirt and trouser outfits, with shoes; they could be officials, they do not linger at the stalls, but stride past the coca-cola sign, the hawkers holding shades against the sun, the bolts of fabric hanging from hooks attached to stall awnings.

Why all these visitors? Chamundi Hill has been a place of pilgrimage for hundreds of years. The 1,000 steps that provide one route to the top are at least 300 years old, for instance. So the women are pilgrims, but they are also tourists, or “day trippers”. They have paid, or will pay, their respects to the temple, but they are clearly also here to enjoy themselves. And they are not alone. At any one time on this mild November Sunday, during a holiday time, there are perhaps one thousand people on the hill, maybe a few more – it is a big expanse. There are family groups, clusters of young men, groups of young women, couples. Most are walking. A few motorcycles pass by but no

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16 *Times of India*, 7 May 2004, “Karnataka tourism tracks pilgrim path: in recent years we have noticed a lot more Jains coming to Karnataka because this is the only state with so many places of religious importance to them.”
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cars, whilst buses are confined to one end of the precinct. The adult women are almost all in saris or tunics and trousers; the young girls in t-shirts and trousers or dresses, and young men in standard trousers and shirts. Most, like our six women, are barefoot or will be so once they approach the temple.

There are two main entrances and people are lined up at each. The Rs10 line has perhaps 500 people in it, but it moves quite quickly; the cheaper line is filled with three dozen or so young men bare-chested and garbed in orange loin-cloths, but they take their turn with the other pilgrims. Near the temple exit a team of people are proffering food, a characteristic temple practice, to anyone who wants it – a tasty dahl.

The temple precinct provides plenty of opportunity for amusement, whether the visitors take advantage of it or not. There are small stores selling saris and silks, food and drink, astrology and handbags, images and devotional cassettes. There is a post office, a hotel, a police office. Hawkers sell postcards, coconuts and flowers and ice cream, the latter in highly-colored attention-grabbing cones.

In Mysore, the foreign tourist may be the rainbow but other Indians are a more tangible “pot of gold” at the end of it. One calculation is that throughout India five million travelers make overnight train journeys every 24 hours, which computes to two billion journeys per year. If bus journeys are added in, the number could reach three billion. The Indian government rates around 2,500 hotels, but the census records over 400,000 hotels and other forms of accommodation.

The Karnataka tourist department has targeted tourists from northern and eastern India on the grounds that they have a large spending capacity. Northerners will make it to remote places, such as little-frequented parts of northern Kerala. In his entertaining account of travels in “small town” India, Pankaj Mishra constantly met North Indian travelers in the South – the middle class Bengali family he met at Kanyakumari (the very southernmost tip of India) for instance, for whom this was “their second trip to the South. They had been to all the major hill stations in the north; they had travelled through Rajasthan; they knew Orissa like the back of their hands …”. Nor need they have felt they had left home – four young fellows from Kanpur who had also made it to Kanyakumari “had found people from the North

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17 Gladstone, Pilgrimage to package tour, pp. 15–16.
18 New India Express, 3 Jul. 2008.
19 Pankaj Mishra, Butter chicken in Ludhiana; travels through small town India, New Delhi, Penguin, 1995, p. 188.
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wherever they went”.20 Luring more North Indians to the South has long been a popular idea; in 2003 a Karnataka advertising campaign in Gujarat, New Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and other states produced 300 inquiries in one week.21

Travelers can come from much closer to hand too; for instance, in the case of Mysore, from Bangalore. Through the nine days of Dasara, a major festival, in 2008, the Karnataka state bus company planned to put on an extra 450 buses, helping thereby to ensure 100 per cent occupancy for hotels in Mysore; customers included Sanjay, a corporate trainer in an IT company and Keerthi, a sales manager at 3M India. Most travel enquiries, reported one newspaper, were for routes that included pilgrimage and leisure. 22

Other times of the year can be equally busy. A long weekend in April 2008 saw the precinct around the Majestic bus stand in Bangalore overrun by a “sea of humanity”. P. S. Patil, a state government employee, was taking two children to Chaveri, his native place, for the weekend; Vijayalakshmi was to travel to Davangere and Hassan to extend invitations to relatives to a coming-of-age ceremony for her son.23 The expectation that invitations for weddings and other functions will be delivered in person is a frequent prompt for travel.

For its part, Chamundi Hill, the top-ranked site in Mysore, received just over 12.27 million visitors in a recent year. Of those, 12 million were from other parts of India; leaving just 270,000 – most of them Westerners – from outside.24 On the whole the Westerners spent more,25 but they do not necessarily stay as long, and they spent in different places anyway – at the markets rather than around the temples. Nearly 80 per cent of tourism revenue in Karnataka state, of which Mysore is a part, came from Indian travelers.26 And Karnatakans travel too. In November 2009 Vinod and his family traveled to Tirupati, site of the Tirumala Venkatesewara temple, a pilgrimage center in

20 Mishra, Butter chicken, p. 190.
23 Hindu, 12 Apr. 2008 (for the Hindu upanayama, or thread ceremony).
24 Deccan Herald, 11 Aug. 2003, figures were for 2002; comparing with Business Standard 11 Jan. 2008, which says Chamundi Hill 12.1 million and the Palace 2.5 million (1999, 1.9m), the 2003 story may refer to Chamundi, not Mysore as a whole; see also Times of India, 20 Aug. 2008, Mysore got 8 lakhs in the first four months of 2008 which translates pro rata into 2.4 million annually; New Indian Express, 6 May 2008, Goa gets c. 2.5 million visitors million annually, of which c. 2.2 million are domestic.
25 Times of India, 14 Jul. 2008 – at Hampi, shop owners prefer high-paying foreigners to Indians.
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southeastern Andhra state, which by some claims receives more pilgrims annually than any other pilgrimage site, world wide.

Not everyone is a pilgrim, even formally. Just outside Mysore there is advertising for the V-guard battery company but the real attraction is one of two Wonder-la parks operated by V-Guard (the other is on the outskirts of Kozhikode in Kerala). As with other businesses, a company is creating and/or profiting from a new urban consumer market: “The urban sprawl across India presents a huge opportunity for the development of amusement parks. There are close to 150 such parks in India but in Florida alone, in the US, there are 200 theme parks.”

If the visitors to Chamundi or Wonder-la are from outside Mysore they may stay the night in the city. Such travelers are hard for the Western visitor to “see”. Mishra’s Bengalis, or the family returning to Chennai from a temple-cum-family trip to Maharashtra, may not seem very different from four migrant workers who have been working on contract in the Gulf for two years; or from a Christian pastor returning to his congregation in Madurai.

Language does not assist either. In some cases English might be used for traveling, but more likely a mishmash of Hindi, English and one of the southern languages, probably Tamil – but then again, maybe not. Whatever, it is unlikely the non-Indian language traveler will detect the ham-voiced exchanges that identify the Indian traveler to the local.

At night the travelers are invisible too. Here is a hotel for them – the cash desk at the front, then upstairs, there is an open space, with a few assorted chairs, a table tennis table, a bench of computers, with keyboards overly in need of cleaning, against one wall. Off this are rooms with multiple beds. A family could take a whole room – or individual travelers could take a bed. There are shower and washing facilities down a corridor and often a public restaurant on the ground floor – although if you do not like that one, there are plenty of others to choose from. It is tidy, functional, understated, and the travelers who stay there merge into the general population.

The Westerners are on the margins. A recent visitor to Kolkata described “walking around the city … for a week or so, often as the only Westerner in sight … I saw almost no tourists … apart from the young backpackers on Sudder street, in what used to be a red-light district.” A newspaper reported the existence of a large ruined church deep in the Karnataka countryside,

28 Times of India, 10 May 2006; National Geographic, Apr. 2008, p. 97 (Calvin Trillin).
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exposed in its once underwater home by the drying up of a dammed river. The report refers in passing to “heaps of twittering British and French” tourists on their way to Halebid and Belur. This was before the word took on its most recent meaning. Did Westerners “twitter” in the sense the reporter meant? It was a curious echo of Western descriptions of Japanese tourists in other places; and gave a different cast to other stories – of the expatriates in Bangalore who brunch every Sunday at the Leela Palace hotel; the Western film wannabes in Mumbai; the medical “tourists” who come to hospitals for operations costing a fraction of what they would back home. These individuals were not precursors of a global world, so much as birds of passage, hovering for a few moments over India.

Shou Xi Hu

Hu Hong wrote out the characters swiftly, without hesitating, and then translated: “If you divide the moonlight in three, two parts will be in Yangzhou.”30 “It is a poem everyone knows,” he explained apologetically, the apologetic tone an acknowledgement of anyone who felt excluded from the charmed category, “everyone”. “Oh, and one other,” and he wrote more and then translated again, “Bind yourself with a lot of money to ride the crane to Yangzhou.”31 Then, he looked up questioningly, as if to ask, “How much does someone want to find out how little they know?”, then bent to writing again, four lines this time. “This”, he said, pointing to the new-written characters, “is the most famous poem in Chinese, and it is also about Yangzhou, by Li Bei, another Tang dynasty poet.”32

Any Chinese person who was asked whether they knew of Yangzhou, had they been to Yangzhou, what did they know about Yangzhou, responded favorably – the answers were always “yes”, “no, but I would like to”, and “a beautiful place, Tang dynasty poetry, gardens, lakes, pleasure …” Answers

29 Deccan Herald, 2 Nov. 2004 (French and British); American Way, Mar. 2005 (expatriates); India Today, 8 Nov. 2004 (Mumbai wannabes); Vijay Times, 1 Nov. 2004 (medical tourists); see also New Indian Express, 8 Nov. 2004, competition between India and Singapore for “medical tourism” (Singapore was getting 200,000 such visitors annually at that time).
31 Also cited in Ginger Hsu, A bushel of pearls: painting for sale in eighteenth-century Yangchow, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 4, “Carrying thousands of strings of silver around my waist, I ride on a crane leaving for Yangchow”.
32 “At Yellow Crane tower in the west/My old friend says farewell/In the mist and flowers of spring/He goes down to Yangzhou” (http://www.cctv.com/program/civilization/20070621/107256.shtml).
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like this from Japanese and Koreans too, thus far does the fame of Yangzhou reach. Answers like this found on the printed page too:

Ever since Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty visited Yangzhou, the city has been a renowned place amongst poets and literati: renowned by many, renowned for a long time. Ordinary people follow suit. Even today, if you mention the name of Yangzhou to people, they will nod and shake their head, saying: “An excellent place! An excellent place!” Especially for those who have never been to Yangzhou but have read some Tang poetry, Yangzhou will always have an image as beautiful as a mirage seen from afar.33

One account of Li Dou’s Huafang Lu (Chronicle of the pleasure barges/barques of Yangzhou, compiled 1764–95), tells of occasions on which desks “were set out in the garden with calligraphic tools ready to hand; tea and fruit available for refreshment; brushes flying till poems were written ... wine and delicacies rewarding each poet for his labours; and the day ending with musical performances.”34 These merchants with their gardens, trees laden with blossom then fruit, their libraries, their poetry readings, literary games, the musical theater performances, the restaurants, teahouses and bathhouses, in which they meet each other, and conduct liaisons, with women, with youths, seemed saturated in a timeless, traditional China. A century and a half later Zhu Ziqing remembered from perhaps twenty years before “foreign records from the Modeli company” being played on the boats that plied Shou Xi Hu lake.

Nearly another century on, travelers, predominantly Chinese, come to Yangzhou to see Shou Xi Hu lake, the famous He and Ge gardens in the old city, to observe the crafts and enjoy the Yangzhou cuisine. If they come from a long distance they are most likely to come by train or bus; if from Shanghai or Nanjing, then as likely by car. Many parts of the old city have been “tidied up” and new tourist precincts have been established, the most substantial being adjacent to Ge Yuan. Travelers, having visited the garden, can stroll through reconstructed streetscapes, hear some Kunshan or Kun (Kunqu) opera being performed and buy Yangzhou specialties. In the neighborhood wall plaques now inform the visitor, with a full text in Chinese and a shorter English version, of long gone historic sites, such as that of the Ma brothers, who had one of Yangzhou’s most famous libraries in the eighteenth century. A small iron

34 Finnane, Speaking of Yangzhou, p. 199; see further on the “dream” fostered by Li Dou et al., pp. 4, 204–08, 296; Hsu, Bushel of pearls, pp. 62–63 (including the numbers of boats).
cannon dating from the 1840s and found during excavations in 2000 is on display. In the southwest corner of the old city a part of the city walls has been excavated and carefully reconstructed.

LW, a Beijing visitor, rents a bicycle to see the sights and gets to the salt merchant’s museum, the memorial hall for the “Ba Guai” (the eight eighteenth-century “eccentric” painters) and the memorial to Shikefa, who died resisting the Qing defeat of the Ming dynasty in the course of which Yangzhou was attacked and laid waste.

The stream of visitors to Yangzhou is matched in other parts of China. Days off for wage workers at Chinese New Year, at Qing Ming (a holiday in early April), in early May and in early October see millions of urban Chinese traveling – at Qing Ming in 2004 6.1 million Shanghainese traveled to rural Shanghai and neighboring cities to pay homage to ancestors. The travel movement at Chinese New Year, known as Chunyun, is regularly touted as involving the “biggest movement of people on earth”. It is the Chinese equivalent of Indonesia’s Idul Fitri exodus. Nation-wide labor migration has made the scale of the movement much greater in the 1990s and 2000s than in earlier years, and estimates of the numbers making journeys range around 200 million to 300 million. Most travelers go by train or bus and high speed trains help manage the numbers but rising levels of car ownership in China will introduce another dimension to the movement.

The number of foreign tourists to China, particularly those who venture beyond Beijing, Shanghai and a few well-known places like Guilin and Yangshuo, do not make much of a dent in these figures, not least because the number of Chinese traveling within their country is rising even faster than the number of foreigners, from an estimated 524 million in 1994 to 1.610 billion in 2007. Moreover the term “foreigner” has to be treated with care. In 2007, China received over 131 million overseas visitors, but of those more than 101 million came from Hong Kong and Macao and another 4.6 million from Taiwan, in other words more than 80 per cent of them were on some calculations “Chinese”.

37 *Financial Times*, 9 Jul. 2009, June car sales in China were nearly 50 per cent higher than in the same month in 2008; 8 Dec. 2009, car sales race ahead in India, China.
Nor do the “fully” foreign and the Chinese necessarily see each other. In his study of tourism in the southern Chinese province of Guizhou in the 1990s, Timothy Oakes has shown how Western visitors pursued an “eastern circuit” where they could see indigenous people, whereas Chinese tourists followed a “western circuit” where they could see theme parks and packaged scenery. In the case of Yangzhou, many of the foreign visitors are on excursions from Shanghai, but Yangzhou is not as close as Suzhou or Hangzhou, which offer comparable attractions in an easy there-and-back one day journey. The foreign traveler will follow such an excursion with an “eastern circuit”-type destination rather than to another imperial garden city, and Yangzhou’s tourism economy will remain primarily a domestic one.

One vivid example of this can be seen adjacent to the car and bus parks located round the perimeter of Shou Xi Hu, especially at weekends or during public holidays. In front of a park entrance an early morning visitor will see a swathe of stands and stalls, still covered over: they could be anything – indeed might not even be stands. It is perhaps only because they are at the entrance to a big park that it seems reasonable to assume that they have something to do with the park, and the visitors who throng it in fine weather. A few hours later the scene of the “encampment” is transformed. In place of the covers, there are racks and racks of giant stuffed plush toys. The open back of a truck reveals more shelf-loads, presumably ready to be given an airing.

Giant teddy bears, smaller teddy bears, polar bears, other bears, pandas, dogs, rabbits, ducks, chickens, and the like, rest on shelves, or are looped together and hang on hooks on tall poles. A few fortunate ones stretch out comfortably on canvas chairs. Whether in truck or on stalls or in chairs they gaze blandly and placidly at the world. Each stall has around 70 inhabitants and there are about 40 stalls – there could be 2,500 stuffed toys in all. This would make 5,000 round the whole park (there were toy stands at all the park entrances). Each day several hundred of them would be sold. From mid-afternoon, buses pulled steadily out of the car parks adjacent to the park. Through almost every window of every bus could be seen a giant stuffed toy, usually though not always being held by a woman. Perhaps 50 people in the bus, perhaps 25 toys per bus. The buses were not full of foreigners, but of visitors from Shanghai, Nanjing, other parts of Jiangsu, or Zhejiang. From Shanghai it is an eight-hour round trip, with its “manifest” on the return leg.

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weighted by the large toy contingent. If 10 buses left from that zone and 10 from each of the others and each had 25 toys in it, that would be 500 toys sold. If they sold for around 50 yuan apiece (some bargaining took place) that would be 25,000 yuan for those busloads alone. If a stall holder sold five in a day that would be 250 yuan. Bought for 20 yuan a piece? That would be cost 100 yuan, profit 150 yuan, though presumably out of that would come a rental for the stall and other incidentals. It seemed possible: many of the toys were made by small-scale producers in the immediate vicinity of the city.

Yangzhou is China's biggest center for soft toy production, most of which is exported. After the 2008 economic downturn in the US and Europe export sales fell sharply. Toys were stockpiled, because local demand was not enough to absorb the surplus production. The day will come, if Shou Xi Hu is the model, when the domestic visitors will be consuming enough soft toys to put a smile back on the faces of the toymakers.

**Concluding comments**

The late twentieth century and twenty-first century city in developing Asia is being shaped by capitalist modernization. One of the most vivid expressions of this is the accommodation and related businesses that cater to the travelers
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to and from these cities. The travelers are mostly domestic and so are the businesses. The global dimension of travel, though significant on occasions such as the Beijing Olympics or the Shanghai Expo, or in locations such as Goa, Phuket and Bali, is not as salient when developing Asia is taken as a whole. Business travel and domestic tourism account for a significant proportion of economic activity.

The experience of tourism in Japan suggests that the pattern of massive domestic tourist numbers and more modest international numbers may persist. The very scale of domestic tourism in affluent Japan and Korea makes the travel industry less dependent on and less oriented to international travelers. The ratio of foreign to domestic tourism consumption has long been low in Japan compared to Western countries, registering at 6.2 per cent in 2001, compared with figures of over 30 per cent for France and over 20 per cent in the United States and Australia.  

The travel and accommodation businesses and the individuals who make use of their services are not explicitly engaged in “nation-building”. For companies the nation is an obvious frame for their activities, which may nevertheless have risen out of a business strategy which started off in one city or province. For most travelers journeys between cities within the nation are simply more straightforward, not least because passports and visas are not required. Further, domestic travel and accommodation are offered in a range of modes and prices that roughly conform to the spread of local incomes and therefore are accessible to vastly more people than overseas travel, which almost invariably involves at least one plane flight.

In such indirect ways travel consumers contribute to a sense of a city, any city, being a part of a nation. LW, the Beijing professional, aimed to visit every Chinese province, whilst Hiresh wanted to see India’s capital, New Delhi, as much as he wanted to visit other parts of the world, which in any case were beyond all practicability on his income. Many Indonesians had traveled as youngsters with their parents to at least a number of cities on Java, if not elsewhere in Indonesia.

Many individuals of course neither want to nor can afford to travel nationally, but their journeys overlap with the journeys made to and from neighboring cities, which overlap in turn with journeys made to yet further away cities and so on. Nation-wide state rail networks linking all major cities

obviously reinforce the national frame of reference even when only a short journey is being made, but it is also created by bus companies which, though numerous and often private-owned, nevertheless leave cities from the same dedicated bus stations, and follow similar practices to each other in ticketing, routing, passenger pick up and drop down and making intermediate stops as they travel between city and city.

The effect of all of these factors has been to make the nation a “travel universe” for many millions of Chinese, Indians and Indonesians, much as the world is for affluent and interested Westerners and Japanese.
Commercial popular culture and cities

Introduction

In the preceding three chapters I have explored the impacts on Asian cities within major Asian nations of the capitalist modernization of business, migration and travel, and weighed that modernization in each case against the significance of globalization. This chapter examines the world of commercial popular culture, in particular cinema and popular music, and makes analogous comparisons. In his oft-cited study, *Imagined communities*, Benedict Anderson drew attention to the importance of print media, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries particularly, in shaping the idea of a nation. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries it is reasonable to explore cinema and popular music, two prominent manifestations of popular culture, from a similar angle. There is an added dimension that fits them for such a discussion. Print culture was by its very nature embedded, if not in the nation, then in a language community. Cinema and popular music, while also shaped by language, are also more mobile forms of media, as production from Hollywood has most powerfully demonstrated. Both therefore sit astride the globalization/nation-building nexus.

It may seem appropriate to expand or shift this discussion to take into account one very dynamic area of commercial popular culture, namely the world of information and communication technologies and in particular internet and mobile phone usage, not least because they so clearly are a dimension of globalization. In practice, however, they do not lend themselves so well to analysis as the more “traditional”, but still “global”, worlds of cinema and popular music.

In the case of the internet this is partly because of its relatively low penetration, especially in India and Indonesia. In 2009 internet access in China was variously estimated to reach between 20 and 27 per cent of the PRC population, that is, anywhere between 250 and 340 million people. Either
figure is far behind developed Asian countries such as South Korea or Japan, where internet access is more or less universal but it is far ahead of both India and Indonesia, for which access in 2009 was estimated at 12.5 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.¹ It is true that these percentages would be heavily concentrated amongst young city-dwellers, but at that point a second difficulty arises, which is the lack of more precise or usable information about internet use, particularly in developing countries.

Mobile phones are much more pervasive and may also soon provide a primary route into the internet. India had around 520 million mobile subscribers at the beginning of 2010 – equivalent to two in every five Indians having such a phone. The market was growing at an annual rate of around 50 per cent.² Indonesia had around 150 million subscribers, with a penetration rate of 65 per cent in early 2010.³ A big hurdle however to the study of phone usage, and also of the internet, is the relative lack of research relating usage to social patterns. Where such studies do exist they are most often focused on political empowerment and therefore addressing a different set of issues than those which are the preoccupation of this study.⁴

A study of internet access would allow one point cogent to this study to be made and that is the question of the “de-anglicization” of the language of the internet. English users accounted for about 35 per cent of internet users in 2005 but 27.6 per cent in 2009, with Chinese taking second place with 22.1 per cent of users. Whereas English users of the internet had increased by 237 per cent since 2000, Chinese users had increased by 1,087.7 per cent. Japanese and Korean are also major internet languages, accounting for 5.5 per cent and 2.2 per cent of users respectively.⁵ Neither is expanding at the rate of Chinese but in the future other Asian languages may become more

significant and Hindi and Indonesian are two obvious candidates. The notion of “parallel worlds” on the internet, shaped by language, provides an analog to the discussion which follows on language, cinema and popular song and it is to these I now turn.

A focus on the national in discussing commercial popular culture would make little sense in respect of a Western city. For those cities the nation is no longer a dynamic or compelling frame of cultural reference. Indeed cities and regions are as likely to be engaged in culture-making as nations. Popular culture thrives within the nation but in the late twentieth century it is largely global in character, albeit with a marked American inflection. A global language – English – is a widely-understood second language in most mainland European cities. The West’s metropolitan centers – Los Angeles, New York, London and Paris – are global rather than national “capitals” of culture, fashion and celebrity.

Global crossovers generate dynamism and excitement in the cities of the West, for example films such as Memoirs of a geisha (2005) or the previously mentioned Slumdog millionaire. Such crossovers bring “the east” into “the west” and it is natural to assume that such a pattern of cultural globalization is reciprocated – Asian cities after all have long been exposed to westernization. The shift away from state-centered nation-building, from the 1980s onwards, made it even more natural to assume that popular culture, in developing Asian as in Western cities, would be shaped globally rather than nationally.

As with business and labor, however, popular culture plays out differently in the cities of developing Asia than in Western cities. Certainly it is no longer directed by the state as it was – in aspiration if not reality – through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The state does play a role, as will be discussed. But popular culture is principally commercial, driven by a profit-making entertainment industry and by its consumers – those ordinary city-dwellers whose myriad decisions about which tune to hum, which song to sing, which film to watch, which language to use, which metropolitan city’s life-style to aspire to help determine that same profitability. And as with business and labor, this shaping of a nationwide market for commercial popular culture differentiates Asian from Western cities.

This chapter’s first section looks at the commercial popular culture of Bangalore and Mysore, focusing on the place of Hindi and other Indian lan-

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6 For a skeptical view on the future of crossover films see Financial Times, 27 May 2009 (Joe Leahy, citing producer opinion).
guages in shaping the contours of that culture. The second section looks at the role played by cultural production from Taipei and Hong Kong in shaping popular culture in mainland Chinese cities, and the third looks at the role of Jakarta and the Indonesian language in the commercial popular culture of the cities of Java, including Semarang.

Fig. 7.1: Learning the Kannada alphabet

**Kannada, English and Hindi**

The Kannada alphabet is appealing. It is “cursive” – the characters are curved more than straight, as if the roman alphabet was primarily vowel not consonant letters. A page in an alphabet book tells a story of how the letters evolved from early scripts, followed by explanations of “families” of letters. The practice pages start with a dotted open-to-the-top semi-circle that has to be filled in anti-clockwise, to which is added a loop to the right end of the semi-circle, then a horizontal line with a hook, to the end of the loop, and
that way a letter has been constructed. There are familiar images attached to
letters, an elephant for instance because one letter is the starting letter of the
word for elephant.7

If Kannada is symbolized by an elephant it can seem in Bangalore that
this elephant is at risk of extinction. For what seems self-evident, at first
glance, is that in this city Kannada is expiring under the impact of the global
language – English. Hardly surprising, it might be thought. Bangalore is after
all “cyber-city”, with about 30 per cent of India’s IT professionals. There is no
doubt that the language of cyber space and the cyber industry in Bangalore
is English. Step away from the section of the bookstore that is reserved for
Kannada texts and step out into the street – and everywhere there is English.
In the global cyber city, globalization is a matter of language as well as
commerce.

Anisha, a Bangalore-based journalist, was informative – in English, of course.
The newspaper office had banks of computers, exactly like a newspaper office in
a Western city, with people both at the terminals, and moving around between
them. The next day’s paper had just been “put to bed” and Anisha had time to
answer questions. Was not Bangalore the capital of Karnataka, a state set up in
the 1950s to bring all Kannada speakers within one political unit? Surely that
should have meant a vitalization of the language in the city?8

Not so, answered Anisha. Fifty years and more on, English was winning. In
Bangalore, the hub and capital of Karnataka, English-medium schools
were favored; English had indeed been the favored teaching language at her
own school, where she was fined for speaking Kannada. Now, a generation
later, her niece can only speak Kannada – she can neither read nor write it;
in school she has only learnt Sanskrit and English. English is the language of
technology, computers and outsourcing, as the massively English-language
advertising for jobs in those sectors makes plain. Kannada is the spoken
language, or at least one of them.9

An encounter in Mysore reinforced this finding. A walk past the law courts
must have coincided with a break in the court proceedings because the open
area in front of the court building was full of lawyers. The men were black
suited and white shirted, with distinctive white collars; the women, of whom
there were a fair number, though far fewer than the men, in longer-cut black

7 Website www.kannada.com informs.
8 With over 40 million speakers, there are more Kannada speakers in the world than there are
Dutch, Greek, Norwegian or Polish speakers.
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jackets, black pants and white blouses. The courts in South India function in English. But standing adjacent to these lawyers no English conversations could be heard, even though any one of them, if approached, would be able to speak English and would certainly enter the courts and conduct their proceedings in that language.

“Well of course”, said Anisha. “That’s the thing. Kannada, or it might have been another language, is a spoken language. But it is ‘low status’; the upper middle class in the city has adopted English.” As one distinguished writer has put it, for them Kannada has become a “kitchen” language, “particularly if there is a grandmother.” The Kannada schools are the worst schools, the Kannada newspapers are for the middle to lower middle class, not for the elite or upwardly mobile. Kannada writers are all bilingual, able to write in English as well as Kannada.

So is Kannada on a slide and English on a roll? For deputy chief minister Siddaramaiah in 2004 an unhealthy trend had set in of giving the “utmost importance to English”. “The fight of Kannada”, said Chandrasekhar Patil, popularly called Champa, was “part and parcel of the fight against globalization ... Western forces were trying to destroy the native languages in the garb of globalization.” For a professor of literature, Indians’ “natural bilingualism” was being sacrificed on the “altar of globalization”.

And that returns us to the question. Was this the globalization thesis in action? – the cities of the world being turned into one, and an English speaking “one” at that? Well maybe, but there are many strands to the story of Kannada in Bangalore and its future. It is not just – or only – a story of globalization. Kannada is no latecomer in the language stakes, no made-up language, alphabet and literature of ethnic enthusiasts. Indologist Sheldon Pollock, a Sanskrit expert, recounts how when he learnt Kannada he “began to see powerful interactions between Sanskrit and a local literary language in ways that you simply cannot see if you’re looking at the history of Sanskrit divorced from the history of regional languages.” Pollock is here talking about changes going back a thousand years.

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11 Vijay Times, 2 Nov. 2004 (Siddaramaiah), 3 Nov. 2004 (Champa); Champa was speaking on the occasion of his election as president of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat. Siddaramaiah noted that the Vidhana Soudha (state legislature) had still not fully implemented Kannada in its proceedings – and blamed this on officials who felt superior only when they spoke in English.
12 Deccan Herald, 15 Nov. 2004 (Meenakshi Mukherjee).
Importantly for this discussion, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Kannada thrived alongside, it could even be said because of, English. English was introduced as the language of government and administration in India – replacing Persian (the language of the Mughal rulers of India) – in the 1830s. This was the case even in a “native” state like Mysore. All its official publications were in English, a language which Brahmin officials determinedly mastered, as their forebears had mastered Persian before. But “it was the Kannada printing begun by the Basel Mission [in the mid to late nineteenth century] that gave rise to journalism and the publication of literature, old and new, in all parts of Karnataka.” Kannada drama was reinvigorated first through the impact of visiting Parsi troupes from Bombay, then by translations of Shakespeare and other playwrights into Kannada, which led to a mushrooming of professional theaters after 1900. Professional companies traveled throughout Kannada-speaking areas to get audiences; in the north, away from the patronage of the court in Mysore, rich locals spent money on Kannada theater. One company had its own generator to produce electric light on stage as early as 1901.

In 1956 language-states were formed in South India: four main languages, so four principal states. Mysore took in the Kannada-speaking areas to its north, doubled its size and duly changed its name (1973) to Karnataka. At that time, English was valued not as a global language but as an Indian link language, particularly by South Indians. The official language, Hindi, was widely spoken in the north but not well understood in the South. English offered protection against Hindi hegemony. Indeed like cricket, it could be said, English was domesticated.

Does that not prove the point? That this recent phase of globalization has changed the rules of the game, and turned English from companion to competitor? Yet before reaching that conclusion it is important to examine a second “front” in Kannada’s fight for survival in Bangalore: popular culture and, especially, cinema.

16 Website www.statoids.com gives 1 Nov. 1973 for the change.
It is a weekend afternoon. Lines form early for the shows, boys and men in one, girls and women in another. The men are casually but tidily dressed in trousers, shorts, sandals. The women are in saris or in tunic and trouser outfits, the colors complementary in each outfit. Some of the young women will be in t-shirts and jeans or dresses. All, without exception, have good skins and look well-nourished. In their groups people are talkative and animated, obviously looking forward to the show. Vendors make steady sales, moving amongst the crowd selling drinks and eats.

You cannot miss cinema – or rather, cinema advertising – in South Indian cities, including Mysore. The billboards are as large in Bangalore and Mysore as elsewhere in the south. “Sangam – first fully air conditioned cinema in Mysore” shouts one. Others have images of the cinema stars covering expanses of building facades, displaying vertically as well as horizontally. Usually two or three of the principal characters/actors are on display, two men perhaps, or a man and a woman (a pairing of two women is rare).

It is entertainment but it is also identity. Through 2004 a campaign was mounted by Kannada-language activists seeking a moratorium of some weeks – sometimes three was suggested, sometimes seven – on the release of non-Kannada-language films in the state. The aim was to encourage patrons, who want to see films as soon as they are released, to watch Kannada films, not films in other languages. Some activists indeed wanted a complete ban on either the showing or making of non-Kannada films in the state.

In late October 2004 the conflict turned ugly. A mob smashed the office of the KFCC (the movie distributors’ organization), one city theater (Movieland) and another film distribution office in Bangalore. Cinemas showing non-Kannada films had windows smashed and some films were exhibited only under police protection. Months later, rioters stoned the outside of a multiplex showing a non-Kannada film, a press cameraman was injured and the multiplex closed the next day. A day later two more cinemas were attacked and their screens damaged.

“No one goes to Kannada films,” Anisha explained, “but there is a whole industry dependent on them.” Only one recent Kannada film had had any success. It had become a downward spiral: to save money the films were low budget, they got shown only in B-grade movie theaters, so they did not attract good audiences; they usually only ran for a day or two, then closed. You could not get much closer to globalization than that. Kannada was a distinguished language, with over 40 million speakers, but it was being pushed out of schools, government and now ... the cinema.
Which is all true, except that it was not English that was driving Kannada out of the cinema. Take an excursion around the cinema map of India. There is not just Bollywood; there is also Tollywood (Telugu cinema) and Kollywood (Tamil cinema). The 40 million or so speakers of Kannada are dwarfed by over 80 million Telugu speakers, concentrated in the neighboring state of Andhra Pradesh, with its capital at Hyderabad, and 70 million Tamil speakers (including those in Sri Lanka and Malaysia) in equally close Tamil Nadu, with its capital at Chennai (formerly Madras). Moreover Telugu and Tamil are more dominant in Hyderabad and Chennai respectively than Kannada in Bangalore – as already mentioned only about two-fifths of Bangalore’s population is Kannada-speaking. “I know Telugu,” explained Anisha, “because that’s my mother’s native language.” “Was she from Andhra?” “No, from Kolar, but that’s a Telugu-speaking area even though it’s in Karnataka. So I learned Telugu though not Tamil, but that’s unusual. So many Tamils came to work for the government here in Bangalore for years; it’s been as commonly spoken in Bangalore as Kannada for a long time.”

Kannada’s struggle is then not just about globalization, it is also about its fortunes in the multi-faceted language world of India. It was not Hollywood that was the object of the Kannada film industry and cultural elite’s hostility. Hollywood barely knew the dispute was taking place. Local movie distributors and theater owners who wanted the non-Kannada films received the strongest support from non-Kannada but still Indian film industries. They threatened a boycott of the Kannada film industry if the embargo on the release of non-Kannada films went ahead.

The battle was between Kannada on the one side and Tollywood, Kollywood – and Bollywood – on the other. That brings us to the remaining player in the language wars, Hindi, the language of Bollywood films, of around 400 million people and used by another 300 million – big numbers indeed. Hindi

17 The “K” from Kodambakkam, the movie-making neighborhood of Chennai; “Tollywood” can also refer to Bengali cinema, after the Tollygunge neighborhood of Kolkata. Through a further linguistic jump “Sandalwood” is the analog for the Kannada language industry – sandalwood being a well-known Mysore product.
18 Pavan Varma, India, p. 151 says Chennai is about one third Telugu-speaking.
19 Deccan Herald, 23 Sep. 2004, Kannada writers and artists supported the Kannada film industry cause, including Girish Karnad, Girish Kasaravalli and Chandrashekara Kambar.
21 Deccan Herald, 27 Oct. 2004; see also Deccan Herald, 23 Sep. 2004, on the formation of a “joint action committee” of the Indian film industry to take on the Kannada industry; a boycott would have included a ban on providing any services to the Kannada industry.
has had a curious history. It was settled on as a national language at independence, but in practice has never superseded English as the language of government and public life, not least because South Indians, most of whom are not native Hindi-speakers, successfully challenged the notion of a language that would favor one part of the country – the North, the Hindi-speaking “heartland” – over the South.

Nonetheless in film and popular music, if not in the courts or in government, Hindi was – and is – heard more often than English. What the “hard” power of the state could not do, the “soft power” of cinema, television and music has made a dent in. Bollywood has not thrived on account of any restrictions in recent years on Hollywood films or other American entertainment. TV listings in India display Oprah, The Bold and the Beautiful, Miami
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*Vice, The Simpsons*, etc. amidst a raft of “global” American channels such as Hallmark, HBO, National Geographic and Discovery. India releases of *Garfield* and Michael Moore’s *Fahrenheit 9/11* were timed for the big holiday season (in November) of Diwali. TV specializes in Hollywood remakes: to one commentator, Star Plus’s *Karma-Koi Aa Raha Hai Waqt Badalney* seemed “a clear lift from comic-strip-turned-Hollywood-blockbuster *Spider Man*”. In an interview Bollywood director Ram Gopal Varma explained that his most expensive ever film, *Sarkar*, was in part a tribute to one of his favorite films, *The Godfather*. “I bring in a certain realism which I could have imbibed from Hollywood, or wherever”, he added.22

Even taking such influence into account, the world of Indian cinema remains a “parallel universe”.23 About 70 films in English are released in India each year – making it one of the five largest markets in Asia for Hollywood but it is still a small number in relation to Indian-language releases of around 850 films, of which around 250, and those likely the most lucrative, are in Hindi. Hindi has a leading place not just in cinema but in television, music and popular culture generally, one which reaches, if unevenly, across urban India.24 Ramachandra Guha cites lyricist Javed Akhtar to the effect that Hindi cinema is in effect an extra state of the union, alongside all the territorial states, which “having borrowed elements from here, there and everywhere ... then sends the synthesized product out for appreciation [and gives Indians] a common language and universe of discourse.”25

In a Bangalore bar, “It’s our national language” shout out cheerful local drinkers, and break into snatches of lyrics from Hindi film music. Hindi is one of the main languages used in Bangalore, alongside Kannada, Tamil and English; Prakash reckoned that around 70 to 75 per cent of Bangaloreans knew some Hindi; historian Guha affirms that in both Bangalore and Hyderabad “It is the preferred medium of communication between those who speak mutually incomprehensible tongues.”26

23 *New York Times*, 16 Apr. 2004, the term was used by film critic A. O. Scott.
24 *Financial Times*, 22 Mar. 2005 for numbers; it is my own interpretation that Hindi films are the most lucrative; Hindi cinema also penetrates rural areas, which are beyond the ambit of this discussion.
26 Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 767.
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Moreover Hindi has become “cool” not through “fighting” English but through “joining” it. An English-medium school in Areacode in northern Kerala offers classes in Hindi and college students there train as Hindi-language teachers. An advertisement for a Bangalore-based NGO requires English and Hindi fluency. With the spread of cable TV, in particular, in the mid 1990s, local music channels started using a mixture of Hindi and English in their programming, “redefining music video with an irreverent mix of kitsch, wit and Hindi film clips: whether you call it Hindu Hop or Grunge by the Ganges, it is a brand new genre.”27 Hindi with a smattering of English – Hinglish – acquired status, a product of “market forces, pop culture and globalization.”28

Star Plus is a Hindi entertainment channel that has broadcast throughout the subcontinent since the mid-1990s. It “markets” dreams of Bombay to countless hundreds of thousands of young people throughout the subcontinent: “They leave their jobs and families and come to Mumbai to make it big ...”29 The dialogue on a Star movie shifts back and forth between Hindi and English.30 A TV talk-show features a good-looking, 40ish host and an audience full of vocal university students. The show has an English title. But the exchange barely makes sense to a monolingual English speaker. This is not because the English which is spoken is poor – far from it. It is that here too both host and students shift easily between English and Hindi.31 The same again with an “advice” show – three women panelists, the host, a psychologist, and one other. The host and the psychologist both have flawless English but also shift back and forth between Hindi and English, perhaps partly for the benefit of their listeners and the third panelist.32 The 2008 movie release

31 See also Rachel Dwyer, "Shooting stars: the Indian film magazine, Stardust", in Dwyer and Christopher Pinney, Pleasure and the nation, p. 261 on the use of Hindi in the predominantly English-language Stardust: “The use of Hindi [in one paragraph] is deliberately humorous ... [it] is used elsewhere to add spice; to show exasperation or, more often, simply to sound ‘cool’.”
32 See further on such “code-switching” Rakesh M. Bhatt, “In other words: language representation, identity mixing and third space”, Journal of sociolinguistics, 12/2 (2008), pp. 177–200, especially comment pp. 192–93 that the absence of a gloss or translation of Hindi terms used in some English-language TV news "reflects mixed language practices and identities as a cultural expression of a new class identity: the English-knowing bilingual middle class, a class of people who are not positioned within traditions but are creatively reworking their inherited sociolinguistic resources.”

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Dasvidanya, starring the popular Vinay Pathak, did the same thing. One scene featured charades: thumbs up meant the word or word clue was in English, thumbs down, that it was in Hindi.

As the English-language Star TV channel runs advertisements in Hindi, it is not too surprising that the same thing happens in newspaper advertisements. “Welcome to Star One. Star ka naya hindi channel, that’s set to change the way you watch television ... tune in at 8 pm and you’ll agree, apni tuning jamegi.” It is possible for an English-speaker to make sense of the advertisement, and it is in an English language paper, even though it is for a Hindi channel (and indeed advertising on the Hindi channels is often in English). Further, the Hindi is in roman script, not Devanagari, the Sanskrit-based script that is regularly used for Hindi (as on Indian rupee bank notes for instance).

One writer has drawn attention to subcontinental antecedents of this hybrid in Rekhti, the vernacular rather than literary form of Urdu which incorporated words and idioms from north Indian spoken language, much as cinema Hindi has incorporated English.33 Hindi indeed is a close relative to Hindustani, the “bazaar language” that operated as a lingua franca throughout the subcontinent before independence in 1947, much as Malay functioned in the Netherlands Indies.

In both Mysore and Bangalore there are pockets of Hindi and Urdu speakers, some representing long-established Muslim populations, some recent migrants from the north. The term “Hindustani” is not heard now, but Kannada and other South Indian-language speakers may use something very like it – rather than more formal Hindi – when traveling in other parts of South India, especially when having dealings in stores, restaurants and lodgings.34 Abram de Swaan has argued that at independence India missed an opportunity in opting for the more formal Hindi as the national language over the informal Hindustani, which had been adopted as the primary language of the Indian National Congress in 1925.35

Has a version of Hindustani come in by the back door? “If you want to make a film now, which is authentic and truthful to the way urban Indians speak, it has to some extent to be in Hinglish.”36 That Hinglish may be more

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Hindi than English, given the near 400 million speakers of the former in India: “Hindi is the new language of affluence ... 70 to 80 per cent of news consumption is from Hindi channels and such channels are the fastest growing medium in domestic broadcasting, partly because Hindi reaches a vast consumer market in small town and rural areas that are no go for English language broadcasting ...”\(^{37}\)

Kannada has to make its way in a volatile cultural milieu within India that has seen Telugu, Tamil and especially Hindi survive and flourish in that same world that has seemingly been doing Kannada in. It is not mainly or only a story of globalization as usually defined, and the “reports of death” are exaggerated. After years of making low-grade movies, in 2005–06 the Kannada cinema managed to produce ones that cinema-goers wanted to see, and much of the tension went out of the cinema wars, indeed for the next few years Kannada cinema did well.\(^{38}\)

Bangalore and Mysore for their part have not become predominantly Hindi- or “Hinglish”-speaking cities nor are they likely to become so soon. But just as their use of English links their inhabitants to a global world, so their use of Hindi links them to an Indian world. The argument which de Swaan made in 2001 about the motives for non-Hindi-speaking youth to learn Hindi still holds good:

If their perspective (their “definition of the game”) is Indian society ... they are perfectly rational in choosing Hindi, since it increases their opportunities for direct communication in Indian society more than any other language. Only if they define the whole earth as their world, that is, if they aspire to an international career in business or science, would English be the better choice – they can always add English to their repertoire if and when they make it to college level, that is, when their global aspirations become more realistic.\(^{39}\)

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39 De Swaan, *Words of the world*, p. 79; see also Maruthi P. Tangirala, “Language choice and life chances: evidence from Indian civil service examinations”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44/39, 26 Sep. 2009, which argues that perceptible changes in preferences of candidates taking the civil service exam over the period since 1979 reflect a new confidence in using Indian languages, led by Hindi.
Asian Cities

Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taipei

In China, as in India, a nation-wide commercial popular culture is shaping the lives of the inhabitants of contemporary cities as much as if not more than global popular culture. The Chinese story varies in significant ways from the Indian one although the end result is similar.

The Chinese state is a far older and has been a more persistent phenomenon than either the Indonesian or the Indian states and through its entire history its language has been written in Chinese characters. That language could be called “Chinese” but the fact of it being a character script rather than an alphabet allowed the language to be read by individuals speaking a variety of dialectal variations or even different languages, the characters representing as they did words, not letters. What did this mean in Shanghai and Yangzhou? Shanghai was a variant of Wu, a language of the lower Yangtze, spoken also in Suzhou, Wuxi and other nearby cities. It was mutually unintelligible with Mandarin. Yangzhouhua was regarded as part of the family of Mandarin dialects but had strong dialect variations.

The advent of universal primary education, at least in the cities, confronted the character-based written language with a dilemma. As pupils flooded into schools, would they be taught to read and write the characters using their own language or dialect, or using the “language of Beijing” – Mandarin – which to most was almost a foreign language, and to some completely so? From the 1920s onward the decision of successive governments – both Nationalist (1911–1949) and Communist (since 1949) – was that school pupils would be taught reading and writing in Mandarin. The decision was in part justified because around two-thirds of Chinese spoke variants of Mandarin and there was no other language or language group of comparable numerical weight. The Nationalists called the language Guoyu (national language) and the Communists called it Putonghua (common speech) but it was essentially the same.

For the purposes of this discussion the important factor is that the state actively sponsored a particular language form and that this would apply throughout China. Just as in India, there were also informal forms of cultural nation-building. Just as in India also, the two impulses need not be regarded as opposites, indeed in China some of the proponents of the popular music and writing of the time were active in such fashion precisely to create a sense of national identity amongst their fellow Chinese. Nevertheless there is a dif-

ference, not least because the informal channels did not have the power of the state behind them.

It is well known that Shanghai became a center of modernity in China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, overshadowing neighbor cities such as Suzhou and Yangzhou. Popular music developed in the 1920s and 1930s in Shanghai, much as it did at the same time in Mumbai and Jakarta or for that matter Cairo or Tokyo.

This was partly a global phenomenon. Anglo-American recording companies such as RCA and HMV were involved and the focus of the activity in Shanghai was witness to its role as the gateway between China and the world. It was also a nation-building phenomenon. In early 1920s Shanghai the musician Li Jinhui (1891–1967) began to compose children’s musicals, and to produce gramophone records. He set up a musical company to produce shows known as the Ming Yue (bright moon) Society. He wrote the first Chinese popular song of the era in 1927. Li wanted to advance national unity and, accordingly, he released this and subsequent songs in Mandarin, even though it had been made in Shanghai, where most people could not speak Mandarin.41 Thus the “queen of popular song”, Zhou Xuan (1918–1957), who was one of Li Jinhui’s protégés, and was known for her “golden voice”, sang in Mandarin in the 1930s. The establishment of Shanghai as the center of the popular music and cinema industries was a form of national modernization, but of a different kind to that pursued by the main political movements. It was commercially driven, racked up massive sales of both music and movies, and succeeded by attraction rather than coercion.42

Once the Communists took control of the mainland in 1949 the Shanghai popular music and entertainment world was shut down. Surely it would die? However the continuation of non-Communist regimes in Hong Kong (a British colony) and on the island of Taiwan (where the defeated nationalists established themselves) ultimately ensured the continuity and survival of capitalist Chinese popular cultures.

Initially this must have seemed unlikely. Firstly, neither place was flourishing. Hong Kong was an overcrowded and impoverished city whilst the island of Taiwan, almost as impoverished, was in effect a colony in which mainland refugees governed a mostly Taiwanese population. Secondly, the main lan-

41 Szu-ma Chien “The rise and generic features of Shanghai popular songs in the 1930s and 1940s”, *Popular Music*, 24/1 (Jan. 2005).
The language of Hong Kong was Cantonese (Guangdonghua) and the main language of Taiwan was Taiwanese (known also as Taiyu, Minhanhua or Hokkien), neither of which was mutually intelligible with Mandarin. Thirdly, it seemed likely that in due course both would pass into the control of the victorious Communists, and certainly Beijing’s rhetoric stressed that both Taiwan and Hong Kong were parts of the motherland that would in the course of time be reunited with it, thereby completing the restoration of national integrity that had first been breached during the 1840s opium wars. Finally, the numbers seemed on Beijing’s side too: a mainland population of 550 million compared with only two million in Hong Kong and eight million on Taiwan.

By the 1960s however it was evident that a different trajectory was being followed. Both Hong Kong and Taiwan were now thriving economically. In the wake of prosperity came an expansion of commercial popular culture in cinema, television and radio, helped partly by the migration of talent from Shanghai after 1949. In popular music, both “Cantopop” and “Mandopop” were born, Cantopop describing the music produced in Hong Kong and Mandopop its Taiwan equivalent. Whereas Cantonese lyrics were dominant in Hong Kong, Mandarin (hence “Mando”) lyrics dominated in Taiwan, in part because of the official discouragement of Taiwanese. But even in Hong Kong, some singers released recordings in Mandarin to widen their appeal to Taiwan and the mainland. This pattern became more marked in the 1990s. Wai-chung Ho cites Beijing-born Faye Wong, who started out singing Cantonese pop; her first Mandarin album, in 1994, remained for months at number one on Taiwan’s top ten charts.

What kind of influence did these Hong Kong and Taiwan developments – combined under the rubric “GangTai” – have in mainland cities in the 1980s and 1990s?

Individuals who grew up in those cities in the 1980s and 1990s attest to Taiwanese influence. CH, born 1980, from Inner Mongolia, thought that the Taiwanese and Hong Kong style of Mandarin had been “very popular and imitated”, even though it “sounded ‘ya, ya, ya’” as he put it. He attributed its popularity to the effects on younger people of seeing the language spoken


that way on television and in films. CJ, born 1985, from Xiamen, agreed that the high status accorded to the Taiwan-accented Mandarin had more to do with fashion than anything else. ZD, who grew up in Yangzhou, agreed, whilst HL, from Wuhan, thought that people in those years “learnt to love” through Taiwan soap operas. 46

In the later 1990s and into the 2000s, Taiwan popular music remained influential, if not as prominent as in the late 1980s and early 1990s. 47 The mainland may have produced a star like Cui Jian, but Taiwan-born Jay Chou and Jack Zhang remained amongst the most popular. 48 Su Rui, born in Taiwan in 1953, who first sang as a 15-year-old in blues bars in Taipei in the late 1960s, had a big Mandarin hit in 1983, “The Same Moonlight”; she performed live in Beijing in 1998 for the first time and returned in 2004. 49

Insofar as youth or indeed individuals of any age in Shanghai or Yangzhou respond to these musical and cultural influences from Taiwan and Hong Kong, are they participating in cultural globalization? Both Taipei and Hong Kong remain “other”; Hong Kong a Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic, Taiwan de facto recognized as an independent entity in a variety

of settings, for example APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) and the WHO (World Health Organization). Neither can be visited from mainland cities unrestrictedly, as mainland Chinese can visit other cities on the mainland. They are both capitalist societies and economies – indeed Hong Kong regularly heads lists of countries ranked by the degree of economic freedom. The cultural products come out of a capitalist music and entertainment industry which relentlessly promotes new stars, new songs and new films to maintain profitability. They are also highly globalized. English is the main language of the Hong Kong government and legal system and it has a large Western expatriate population; Taipei has close connections with both the United States and Japan in investment, research and education.

In a variety of ways, however, Taiwan and Hong Kong are a part of China. Mayfair Yang has argued that the Taiwan and Hong Kong cultural “invasion” exposed the Shanghainese – and other mainland Chinese – to ways of being Chinese that were not shaped by the Chinese state. The use of Mandarin is a distinctive, even exclusive link between Taiwan and the mainland. Singapore aside, they are the only two countries in the world for which it is an official language. China is the sovereign power in Hong Kong. So it seems reasonable to identify the influence of Hong Kong and Taipei popular culture on the mainland, as evidence of both cultural globalization and capitalist modernization with a nation-building inflection. That would seem to be the stance of the mainland Chinese state, which shifted from banning and/or controlling access to commercial cultural imports in the 1970s and 1980s to wholesale buying, co-production and profit-sharing from the 1990s onward.

What next? Now that commercial popular culture also thrives on the mainland, will the Taiwan-Hong Kong variant of capitalist modernization wane? The appeal of the mainland’s principal centers affects even minorities like Uighurs and Tibetans who are politically disaffected from China: the Uighur singer Askar Grey Wolf was a rock star in Xinjiang in the early 1990s, “but Beijing was the rock capital, so he headed east …” For remote parts of China, as one scholar has observed, the compass for modernization points to the more modern parts of China as much as to the West.

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51 HL personal communication, 16 Jul. 2010.


53 Oakes, Tourism and modernity, p. 7.
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For his part Cui Jian made visits to Taiwan from the mainland in 2007 and 2009 because he was well known and popular there. For their part Taiwan television companies, like many other Taiwan companies, have seen their future on the mainland: “The mainland is where our future market is, and all TV stations in Taiwan that wish to grow must do this … since our product is in the Chinese language, we have no hope of exporting it into the US … so our biggest market is China.”54

Even if so, over nearly thirty years from 1980 Hong Kong and especially Taiwan popular culture played a central role in cultural nation-building in the cities of China that was matched by no such equivalent influence from any city on the mainland, not excepting even Shanghai. It may yet persist. According to the organizer of Jay Chou’s concerts, the fast-expanding apparel firm Meters Bonwe (mentioned in chapter four) footed two million yuan (around US$250,000) of the expenses for marketing Chou in Shanghai and sponsored his “Ten Perfects Meters Bonwe” concert in Beijing in September 2003.55 As one columnist put it in 2009, “Although the Chinese mainland is now often considered a key destination for all pop idol wannabes as a market, there is little doubt that the Taiwan music stars are still the most influential. Just pop into any karaoke and it will be the music of S.H.E., 5566, Zhang Zheng Yue, MC Hotdog or any of a multitude of Taiwan singers that mainland people follow that is heard.”56

Jakarta and the Indonesian archipelago

The images of global popular culture are powerful in Semarang, particularly around Simpang Lima, the crossroads that is the retail heart of the city. The cinemas show recent Hollywood releases – perhaps 10 per month, compared with two to four local (Indonesian) productions.57 US shows, or adaptations of them, such as “Indonesian Idol”, are prominent on television. A local “boyband” identified U2 and Britpop bands as their principal inspirations; ice cream trucks play “Jingle Bells” in 33 degree heat, presumably from some idea that it would prompt “cold” associations (though it seems unlikely anyone would know the words). Turn to the newspapers: a slew of advertisements for studying English, equally many advertisements in English, but in

54 Wu Enwen, manager of Dongsen TV news, interviewed by Mayfair Mei-hui Yang and cited in Yang, “Goddess across the Taiwan strait”, pp. 331–32.
55 Fung, “Western style, Chinese pop”, p. 78.
56 Edwin Yue, China Daily, 30 Sep. 2009.
57 Mohammed interview, 10 Apr. 2004.
the Indonesian language press, for jobs in business and finance. Sections in bookstores are labeled “manajment”, and “psikologi”.

Whereas in both India and China the notion of an opening to the world economy and the consequences can be precisely dated – to 1978 in the case of China and 1991 in the case of India – no such date exists for Indonesia. The turmoil of 1965 saw the installation of a regime, the “new order” of President Suharto, which was far more sympathetic to engaging Indonesia with the capitalist world economy than had been its predecessor. Yet the state remained the dominant actor in cultural life throughout the years of Suharto’s rule, which ended in 1998. That date, which saw the advent of a reformist, less militarized, more democratic and more decentralized political system, is therefore a useful departure point for evaluating two aspects of popular culture, the metropolitan role of Jakarta and the status of Indonesian. Both were supported by the state. What would happen if popular culture became commercially rather than state-driven – would the global take over?

In fact the record of a dozen years suggests that this has not happened. Jakarta has remained a center for the dissemination of popular culture, despite the salience of global cultural products, and Indonesian has not only retained its status in Indonesian life, it has probably expanded it. These are the observed effects. The theory, consistent with the arguments made in respect of cultural nation-building in China and India from the 1980s, is that both popular culture and individual decision-making can pick up where state-centered nation-building leaves off.

To understand this process it is useful to recall that in the cities of Java, as in cities in China and India, there was a history of the commercial production of popular culture from the 1930s when, “For the first time, Indonesian and Indonesian–Chinese musicians and film stars, who were usually singers too, became well-known via the film and radio media … singers such as Miss Rukiah, Mr Moh Mochtar and Mr Tang Ceng Bok popularised kroncong and other widely liked songs with Malay language texts, such as Terang Bulan (‘Full Moon’).”

58 Nuraini Juliastuti, “Whatever I want: media and youth in Indonesia before and after 1998” (tr. C. Lestari and N. Juliastuti), Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, 7/1 (2006), p. 142, “Data from an alternative media catalog published by Peniti Pink – a zine distributor in Jakarta – stated that in February 2004 there were already 223 alternative media produced by Indonesian youth of the generation born in the 1980s and who started their college in the year 2000.”

That cultural production was centered on Jakarta – Batavia as it was then – and it continued to be so centered in the twenty-first century. A 2002 evaluation of the Indonesian music scene since 1998 argued that “The three musical domains – the local, the national and the global – exist in Indonesia today, not in opposition but in tandem, although the national level is losing its position since the downfall of Suharto.” This last statement, however, is not supported by comment in the same article that “Indonesia’s music industry, centered in Jakarta, defines Indonesian popular music as either “national” or “regional”. National genres, including rock, hardcore, rap, country, jazz, disco, house, Hawaiian, pop Indonesia, kroncong, dangdut, qasidah, generally feature lyrics in Indonesian (though sometimes in English) and are marketed primarily in urban regions throughout the archipelago.”

Jakarta is not on the global city “radar”; nearby Singapore, a city with about 20 per cent of Jakarta’s population and less than two per cent of Indonesia’s but with a GDP more than one-third that of Indonesia, outshines Jakarta in the eyes of the rest of the world. Does that make it more likely that outsiders will overlook Jakarta’s national significance? Not necessarily, as that role is also overlooked in respect of cities such as Mumbai and Shanghai, but overlooked it is. Yet it does not take long to become aware, or to identify, the present-day

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cultural vitality of the city and the hold it exerts on the rest of Indonesia. The Chinese-Indonesian neighborhood of Glodok retains its significance as the center of the music and entertainment industries for the whole of Indonesia and a magnet for many young Indonesians: “Yudi, 19, and Tarman, 20, walked out of the Senen train station side by side with next to nothing but their guitars, their guitar cases on their backs and their determination to make it big in the bright lights of the big city of Jakarta. ‘We want to be like the Changcutters,’ said Tarman, referring to the music band from Bandung, West Java, who gained fame for their 80’s style costumes and music.”

“Pembetawian” – “jakartanization” – captures something of this. “Betawi” is the Indonesian name for the people of Jakarta, taken from the city’s colonial name, Batavia. It can be negative. For the Balinese and in Balinese, “Jakarta” is the site of the discredited New Order regime, of the less authoritarian but still effective regimes since, and of much of the capital invested in Bali since the 1990s, which in combination drain wealth and power from the Balinese. In Semarang there is talk of Jakarta’s domination of television, Indonesian cinema and the worlds of music, literature, art and ideas, even with the decentralization of the latter since the “reformasi” of 1998.

The influence is not always seen negatively, however, and it is also evident in language use. The two main languages of the island of Java are Sundanese in the west and Javanese in the center – including Semarang – and the east, but in Jakarta, Betawi (the same name for the language as the people) is commonly spoken. It is a version of Malay, and as Bahasa Indonesian, the national language, is also a Malay variant, the scope exists for cross-fertilization. Abram de Swaan has noted the much greater success of Indonesian in Indonesia as compared with Hindi in India, not least because a vernacular form of Malay was adopted as the national standard. One commentator has argued that, with many youngsters in Jakarta and other large cities nowadays speaking the language of Jakarta amongst themselves, the use of Jakarta Malay or Betawi is “nationwide even though it is not the national language”, and attributed the popularity of the language to its association with what was stylish and with modernity.

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63 De Swaan, Words of the world, pp. 81–95.
64 Ruddyanto, quoted in Loven, Watching Si doel, p. 273.
NB, from Wonosobo in Central Java, grew up speaking both Indonesian and Javanese as his parents, one of whom was Javanese, the other Chinese-Indonesian, both made a point of talking to him and his siblings in both languages; as a result he does not have a “strong” accent in Indonesian, which is seen to be an advantage. DS had grandparents from Yogyakarta but grew up mostly in Jakarta, speaks only a little Javanese and cannot read it. When she visits her grandmother the latter speaks to her in Javanese but DS answers in Indonesian.65

Indonesian does also gain influence as a “formal” language. Time spent with Mohammed’s family in Pekalongan entailed conversation with his father. He asked questions which Mohammed translated, and afterwards I asked Mohammed whether I had been hearing Javanese, because I knew it was his domestic language. “Oh no,” Mohammed said, “my father spoke Indonesian.”

“But if you and he usually speak Javanese to each other, and you had to translate regardless, why would he use Indonesian?” Mohammed replied, “Because he was with a Western visitor and Indonesian seemed the more appropriate, modern, cosmopolitan language to use, to him, even though the visitor could not understand it.”66 There is an echo of this in Praemodya Ananta Toer’s autobiographical memoir, in which he describes an encounter between his teacher father and three officials: “‘We’re here, Meneer Toer, to talk about the school.’ My father responded in Javanese ... as the seriousness of the conversation increased, less Javanese was used, being replaced by Dutch and Indonesian.”67

University students in Semarang interviewed in 2009 made confirmatory comments about the relative status of Indonesian and other languages. “Young people are not interested in local languages,” they said, using the English word “local” to embrace all Indonesian languages except Indonesian itself, from Javanese with maybe 70 million speakers to a language in inland Borneo or Papua with only a few hundred. “They want to learn English or another foreign language,” they explained, and then devised a diagram which placed English at the top, for use throughout the world, flanked by other foreign languages. They identified Japanese, Chinese and French (Dutch, interestingly was absent), followed by Indonesian, for use outside the home and

66 See further on this Loven, Watching Si doel, p. 260.
not least when an Indonesian finds herself or himself in another part of the country. During Mohammed’s working weeks in Bandung, for example, he of necessity spoke Indonesian because he could not speak the local language, Sundanese. At the “lowest” level, the local language is used in the home and other domestic settings.  

The hierarchy is replicated in the print and other media. Newspapers, magazines and books appear overwhelmingly in Indonesian – in the case of books many in translation from English. Television is primarily an Indonesian medium, as is national political and business life. Most conversation in offices or on university campuses is conducted in Indonesian. Even with 70 million speakers Javanese does not deploy the array of media outlets that might be expected of such a widely-spoken language. There is no daily newspaper in Javanese, for example, and although there are Javanese television channels the programs – according to the students – are not interesting to young people. Most website music portals are national in orientation and use the Indonesian language, although they also discuss Western popular music.  

At the beginning of this chapter it was explained that it can be difficult to dissociate state-centered from commercial popular culture. In the case of contemporary Indonesia there is a distinctive variant. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), president of Indonesia since 2004, has released three music albums of songs of his own composition. The 2009 album had performances by a host of nationally known singers. State Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs Andi Mallarangeng said that unlike SBY’s first and second albums, the latest one was set to embrace more young listeners, and the album was “packaged in a way that would attract and entertain young people.”  

Respecting groups with a very different “location” to the president, Tom Boellstorff has made the point that for gay and lesbian Indonesians the archipelago – Indonesia – is a shared and accepted point of reference for individuals who will not always be “at home” in their native place, but who are most unlikely to ever have left Indonesia: “Gay and lesbian Indonesians understand their social worlds in national rather than simply global terms.”  

The notion of “Nusantara”, the Indonesian word for the archipelago and a common informal way of describing the country, provides one final way of

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68 Mohammed interview, 8 Apr. 2009.  
71 Boellstorff, *Gay archipelago*, p. 7, italic in original; see also pp. 18–20.
analyzing cultural nation-building in an Indonesian city. Watching television with Reza and his family in Semarang one evening I saw that the news was full of stories about Idul Fitri, the end of Ramadan (discussed more fully in chapters five and six), which created an “insider/outsider” boundary around the Indonesian nation. The Balinese terms jero/jaba, which are echoed in other Indonesian languages, convey meanings of inner and outer, the familiar and the not-so-familiar, and are used both in respect of buildings and of social interaction. 72 It seemed striking that the Indonesian media, given Indonesia’s position on the global radar, should do the same, and yet that was exactly the effect of watching in this middle-class household, as the story line switched from a family reunification in one part of the archipelago to a story involving animals, to an update on traveling conditions in Java. As one commentator has put it, “Like radio only more vividly because of its visualizing power and its high-tech cachet, television was devised to be both the channel and the manifestation, the nightly dramatization of a shared cultural identity.” 73 It was the archipelago not the world that was the imagined community.

**Concluding comments**

This last of four chapters on the nation and the city has explored the way that commercial popular culture is a dynamic *national* as well as a dynamic *global* phenomenon in the cities of developing Asia. This national dimension disappears from sight if the city is seen primarily in terms of globalization.

A final useful way to grasp the dynamic character of this national activity is to explore the relationship between the metropolis and the provincial city. Such classifications have European antecedents in the pre-industrial eighteenth century, in the concentration of political and economic power in capitals such as Paris, London and Vienna and the correspondingly peripheral status of other centers. Capitalist, industrial society proved to be equally adept at making cultural hierarchies as culture clustered near cultural production and culture production clustered near financial, commercial or political capitals.

We can see analogous patterns at work in Indonesia, China and India, countries which have variously one, two and many metropolises. Jakarta was

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not so prominent before independence – it was not that much bigger than Surabaya – but it grew much faster thereafter and despite political decentralization after 1998 its hegemony is uncontested.\textsuperscript{74} It is the center of political, financial, commercial and cultural power in Indonesia. For the purposes of this study however it is important to emphasize how recent this process is, shaped not just by Jakarta’s own urbanization but by that of other Indonesian cities, a process which enlarges the market for the different facets of its cultural production. Semarang is by comparison unequivocally a provincial city.

Shanghai forged a role as a financial and cultural metropolis in the 1920s and 1930s. With the return to a capitalist economy in all but name in the 1980s it has again acquired – or promises to acquire – that status. Hong Kong and Taipei cycled commercial popular culture from the mainland and back to it. The other city in the picture is Beijing, which is a cultural as well as a political capital.\textsuperscript{75} Indeed in the contemporary hierarchy of Chinese cities these are the “big two”, followed by second-tier cities like Harbin, Changchun, Xian, Chongqing and Guangzhou, and then by third-tier cities, of which Yangzhou is one. Again as with Jakarta and Indonesia, it is important to be reminded of how recent this process of urbanization and metropolitanization is, and therefore of what a dynamic aspect it is – the equal of globalization – in shaping urban life in China.

It is no accident that Janaki Nair entitled her 2005 monograph on twentieth-century Bangalore \textit{The promise of the metropolis}. Bangalore has to compete with the longer-established metropolitan centers of Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai; in India metropolitan-ness is even more dispersed than in Indonesia or China. Bangalore is not yet unqualifiedly metropolitan as are Jakarta and Shanghai, but it is not provincial either. Mysore is clearly marked as a two-tier city but Bangalore’s situation is transitional. That in itself is a reminder of the fact that the dissemination of popular culture within the nation is a dynamic facet of urban life in the early twenty-first century.

\textsuperscript{74} See Hugo et al., \textit{Demographic dimension}, pp. 97–98 on Jakarta’s post-independence primacy.

\textsuperscript{75} Xiulian Ma and Michael F. Timberlake, “Identifying China’s leading world city: a network approach”, \textit{GeoJournal}, 71, 2008, pp. 19–35, give the accolade to Shanghai.
Part 4: Looking ahead
Asian cities and 21st-century globalization

This book has argued that contemporary globalization operates differently in Asian as compared to European and North American cities because in developing Asian cities, but not in contemporary Western cities, it is taking place simultaneously with urbanization and nation-building, all three being variants of modernization.

This chapter explores the likely trajectory of this pattern for the quarter century to 2035 or thereabouts. It first explores the future of urbanization, urbanism and nation-building. It then discusses the shift that is likely to take place from “asymmetric” to “symmetrical” globalization in Asia, terms which will be explained below. The implication of this for the relationship between Asian cities and globalization will then be discussed.

Urbanization, urbanism and nation-building

Levels of urbanization in China, India and Indonesia in 1970 were all around 25 per cent. Despite having long-established traditions of urban life, and modern cities that had grown on the back of commerce with the rest of the world, around three-quarters of the population in each of these countries was rural. In 2010, as we have seen, the urbanization level in Indonesia and China hovered near 50 per cent and in India was around 30 per cent.

This increase in the proportion of the population that was urbanized was also accompanied by a massive increase in absolute numbers, as the populations in all three countries had doubled since 1970. When the total numbers involved are taken into account, it again becomes clear why globalization must be seen in a different light in the developing Asia than in the West. Urbanization has overshadowed globalization.

What about the future? The 2007 UN population survey from which the historical figures are taken has made calculations as far as 2050. It estimates that in 2035 Indonesia’s level of urbanization will reach 70 per cent, China’s over 60 per cent and India’s nearly 45 per cent. The total numbers amount
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to 900 million in China, nearly 700 million in India and 200 million in Indonesia.¹

These are massive numbers but this book is focused on urbanization as transformation, not as outcome. By 2035 population increases will have leveled off and the rate of urbanization will have fallen, simply because the three countries will be predominantly urban. The shift is indeed marked. In the case of China, from annual urban growth rates of nearly five per cent in the late 1980s to under one per cent after 2030; in Indonesia, from over five per cent in the 1980s to under one per cent by 2035. For India the growth rate in the urban population is predicted to fall to below two per cent only after 2035 but at no time was the rate as high as in China or Indonesia. However in India, unlike Indonesia or China, the urbanized proportion of the population will continue to increase because the shift from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban population is taking place at a later date, as was discussed in chapter two. India’s peak five year period for urbanization over the 1970–2050 period is predicted to be 2025–2030.²

In the same chapter reference is made to the impression a young American gained of the western Japanese city of Fukuoka in 1965; he drew a picture of a developing world city which was almost unrecognizable to anyone visiting Fukuoka even ten years later. Is the rapidity of the transformation of Japanese cities a portent of how rapidly the same kind transformation may play out in Chinese, Indonesian and Indian cities?

Maybe, but two considerations need to be kept in mind. Firstly, in 2035 the “completion” of urbanization will only just have been reached in respect of Indonesia, and will be a decade away for China and arguably two to three decades away for India. Secondly, extrapolation is just that – it is entirely possible to envisage circumstances where urbanization does not proceed at such a rapid rate or is not accompanied by economic growth but by the “urban involution” described by Warwick Armstrong and Terry McGee a generation ago and advanced with a different emphasis by Mike Davis in 2004. If such circumstances come to pass, urbanization and its challenges will weigh heavily on cities throughout developing Asian in 2035.³

If we turn from urbanization to urbanism, what trajectory can be expected? Can it be assumed that urban populations of developing Asian cities, of which a majority will be urban-born, will have adopted socio-cultural traits that are more urban than rural? Will their socio-cultural traits have converged with those of urban societies elsewhere in the world or will they continue to diverge?

Urbanism is a more complex phenomenon to analyze than urbanization. One important form of analysis has been labeled alternative – or multiple – modernity. It had its origins in modernization studies in the late 1950s and 1960s which explored the variety of ways that newly-independent countries, which could be assumed to be following a Western “template” of modernization, in fact were doing something quite different. Some of this enquiry looked back at Japan’s “dark valley” of 1931–1945 – how was that to be reconciled with standard teleologies of modernity? Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph also attempted reconciliation, in respect of caste in India. “From an expression of hierarchy, privilege and moral parochialism of the old order,” they observed, “caste has become the means to level the old order’s inequalities by destroying its moral base and social structure. In doing so, caste, in its new form, the caste association, has served to attach the peasantry to the ideas, processes and institutions of democracy ... modernity has entered into Indian character and society, but has done so through assimilation, not replacement.”

Such a finding suggests that alternative kinds of modernization and therefore a distinctive, divergent urbanism could be expected to shape Asian life for many years to come. Relabeled “modernity” in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the discrediting of “modernization” which that conflict brought in its train, it generated a substantial literature in the late 1980s, 1990s and into the 2000s. Not everyone was persuaded however. Anthropologist André Béteille has pointed out that in respect of certain markers – ritual injunctions

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about food and physical contact, the link between caste and occupation, and endogamy – “caste was growing weaker, very slowly, almost imperceptibly in some cases, more clearly and noticeably in others. It is only when we turn to politics that we get a different picture.”7 Sociologist Volker Schmidt explored areas of modern life such as the practice of science, medicine and economic policy, in which evidence of convergence was marked and the case for multiple modernities was therefore weakened. He also instanced the need to compare like with like: “After all, East Asia – the first non-Western region in the world to become fully modern – began to modernize much later than the West.” For Schmidt, “varieties” rather than “multiple” was the appropriate qualifier to “modernity”.

Japan, an East Asian but fully modern society, has provided a useful point of reference. In Re-made in Japan, editor Joseph J. Tobin pointed out that “Quantitative analyses of Japanese consumer preferences and behavior can be used to show that over the past century Japan has become more Western and modern – Western in the sense that traditional food, clothing, furnishings and forms of entertainment have been displaced by imported goods; modern in the sense that the Japanese have become dramatically more urban, educated, mobile and technological.”9 Mitsuyo Kakuta’s popular 2004 novel Woman on the other shore, about the life and circumstance of a mid-30s woman in 1990s Tokyo, supports the argument. A Western reader might find its setting fresh but not its situations.10 From this point of view urbanism produced convergence.

David Ralston and colleagues entered a business studies debate on convergence versus divergence by formulating a notion of “crossvergence” in which socio-cultural variables (usually seen as promoting divergence) and business ideology (usually seen as promoting convergence to Western capitalist norms) intersected. Yet in a 1996 paper Ralston and his colleagues found that individuals in more outward-looking cities and regions of China were

8 Volker Schmidt, “Multiple modernities or varieties of modernity?” Current Sociology, 54/1 (2006), pp. 83–86. See also Frederick Cooper, Colonialism in question, pp. 114–49, for a very full and skeptical discussion of the application of the concept of modernity outside the West. Broadly speaking, Cooper thinks the concept needs always to be carefully historicized.
more individualist than those in inland cities and regions, which had been less affected by China’s opening to the world, a finding which appeared to be convergent.¹¹

In *their* investigations Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris found major divergences on gender equality and sexual conduct between Western and non-Western (and particularly Islamic) societies.¹² Did this suggest the survival of tradition or the presence of alternative modernity? In a work drawing on the same body of data, Inglehart and Christian Welzel produced a two-part finding. Part one was path dependency – that the character of a society shaped the change it underwent. That finding was an argument for divergence. The other part of the finding was that cultural change does occur and that it is grounded in industrialization and urbanization – an argument for convergence.¹³

Is it possible to bring these different perspectives together? Ines Eben von Rachnitz, summarizing the debate at a September 2009 conference on the theme of varieties of modernity, observed that “While those involved in cultural studies ... tended toward an alternative modernities approach, those involved in sociology, politics and economics tended towards a varieties of modernity model.”¹⁴ Certainly actual divergences between Western and developing Asian cities can be substantial and may persist for some time. To take just one example, in India the “literacy gap” between men and women, and between urban and rural populations is in each case about 22 per cent, with an overall literacy rate of 65 per cent.¹⁵ Compare this with Western cities


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and societies where literacy rates display neither gender nor rural–urban divergence. Such dramatic contrasts do not themselves however make the case for a persisting divergence between the urbanism of cities in developing Asia and of cities in the West. What would divergence look like if there were no disparate socio-economic indicators? It would be much more muted. That said, in the years between 2010 and 2035, and especially in the subcontinent, where the urban transformation is at a different stage than it is in Indonesia or China, the fact of recently urbanized populations will have a big socio-cultural impact on developing Asian cities.

It would be possible to engage in predictions about the impact of nation-building on cities similar to these which have just been made about urbanization and urbanism, but there are reasons not to. Firstly, business-inspired transformations of domestic life are dependent on the continuation of a particular political and economic configuration – one in which the state is sympathetic to the private ownership and use of capital within its national territory. If such a configuration does not survive, it is uncertain what might replace it. It could be an inward- or backward-looking capitalism, a return to or installation of socialism and/or the break-up of the state. Given the variety of possible outcomes, it is extremely difficult to predict the consequential implications for nation-building activity of the kind explored in chapters four to seven.

Secondly, if the configuration does survive, then it is a matter of applying the arguments that have just been presented in respect of urbanization and urbanism. In other words, over the next quarter century, will the course of nation-building endeavors lead Asian cities to converge with their Western counterparts or not? On the one hand, the nation-building activity that has been explored in this study may reach a plateau after which business and society will interact in Asian cities rather as they do in Western cities. On the other hand, they may interact in quite different and distinctive ways. At that point however this approach merges with the previous discussion on modernity. It is more fruitful to analyse the future of globalization.

Globalization – asymmetric and symmetrical

Through most of the discussion in this book globalization has been seen as a phenomenon that arose in the West, to which Asia, and the rest of the world, has reacted. This is borne out by what usefully can be called the asymmetric
character of globalization, which is grounded in economic disparities between developed and developing countries. The sale of Chinese goods or Indian services to the West is premised on a cost differential. Equally, labor migrates from low wage to high wage countries, not the other way round; there are over one million Indians in the United States but a far smaller number of US nationals in India. Not that it is a simple matter of price or wage differentials. Hollywood’s production costs are much higher than those of other cinema industries, but its asset base, continually reinforced by buoyant earnings from its dominant position in the US domestic market, gives its entertainment corporations the leverage to promote their films internationally on a scale not available to any other cinema industry.

Symmetrical globalization, on the other hand, assumes that these disparities will be of diminishing or no relevance. In describing Western cities as globalized, the discussion in earlier chapters has focused on asymmetrical elements in that globalization: the exposure of Western cities to cheap goods and services from Asian economies, the presence in Western cities of large migrant populations, hailing particularly from low-income countries, and the hegemonic character of Western popular culture. But developed world cities also display elements of symmetrical globalization, in the increase in trade and other kinds of exchange amongst the cities and citizens of Europe, North America and Japan. One example is the rise in international study on the part of high school and university students. As economic disparities narrow between developing Asian and Western cities can we expect to see more of this kind of globalization and less of the asymmetric kind shaping Asian cities?

The question is difficult to answer but in fact we do not need to be certain about if or when such disparities will be overcome to justify exploring the implications of such a convergence. These can be considered under two heads. The first involves exploring “multiple globalizations” and this will be discussed immediately below. The second involves considering the way the shift from one kind of globalization to the other can reinforce other scales of interaction, be they regional, subcontinental or national, of the kind discussed in chapters four to seven. In those chapters the focus was on transformations taking place over time. Here it is on variations played out in space, but follows the same themes – economies, populations and popular cultures.

A series of studies have indeed questioned the assumption that globalization should be seen exclusively through Western or US eyes and argued
instead for “many globalizations”. This is not a matter of “looking through the other end of the telescope” – at Chinese factory workers not US consumers, at Indian call center workers not British clients, at the migrant in her homeland not in a Western city. It is rather a matter of recognizing that the driving forces of some forms of globalization arise in non-Western, including Asian countries.

One expression of this is commercial. Chinese and Indian businesses are active internationally, as North American, European and Japanese companies have long been. Chinese outward direct overseas investment amounted to $16.1 billion in 2006, less than a quarter of foreign direct investment in China in the same period but still substantial. Bangalore-based business service companies Wipro and Infosys gained between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of their revenue from continental Europe in 2008/09. Even Indonesian finance and real estate companies have embarked on global operations, though with less success.

An analogous expression of multiple globalization is cultural, the “easternization” associated with the popularity of East Asian martial arts, ayurvedic medicine and/or acupuncture, Bollywood dance, and Indian and Chinese cuisine. This involves the visibility of Asians not just as unskilled migrants or as professionals seeking advancement but as accepted “players” in the creative and commercial life of Western cities, be they South Asian writers such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy or Ali Sethi, Chinese actors such as Jet Li and Gong Li, or corporate “stars” such as Lakshmi Mittal, chair and CEO of ArcelorMittal, the world’s largest steel company in 2010.

The “world beyond” can become an object of the Asian imagination rather as it has long been for Westerners and Japanese. The archetypical expression of this in the West in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century has been the Lonely Planet guidebooks, which, while ostensibly preoccupied with

16 Peter Berger and Samuel P. Huntington eds, Many globalizations: cultural diversity in the contemporary world, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2002; Marling, How “American” is globalization? Veseth, Globaloney, pp. 124–25, citing Italian culinary magazine Gambero Rosso, states that there are twice as many “reasonably authentic” Italian restaurants outside Italy as there are McDonald’s restaurants throughout the world (approximately 60,000 compared with 30,000).
20 “Easternization” is used in Berger and Huntingdon, Many globalizations, p. 14.
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difference, have in fact transformed the whole world into a terrain that can be interpreted and traversed by any Western traveler. The Japanese traveler has long been provided with parallel information: guidebooks with carefully annotated maps of each foreign city with place names marked in Japanese phonetic characters to aid correct pronunciation, and a proliferation of travel and exploration literature and television.

Since the 1990s the Chinese traveler has been offered something similar. In a 2004 documentary series on Chinese public television a tall, handsome Chinese presenter took his viewers on a “pole to pole” journey through the Americas. One sequence was filmed at ruined city and ceremonial center near Mexico City. Dressed casually but with style, he engaged in smiling repartee, assisted by an interpreter, with curious local working Mexicans, all shorter and darker and ready for manual work. He noted that the parallels between Quetzalcoatal, the Mexican serpent figure, and Chinese dragons “reminded the crew of their ancient Chinese civilization back home”. The sense of a Sinocentric world, which could look both at ancient civilizations and other contemporary societies from a position of modernity and affluence, was palpable. Chinese atlases and world maps, as their Japanese counterparts, with their Pacific Ocean-centered cartography, have long tacitly made an analogous point.

Such an encounter overlaps with the notion of “south-south” globalization, a facet of Asian globalization that is not so visible to the West. China and India are not just commercially active in the West; their enterprises negotiate resource contracts throughout Africa and South America and elsewhere in the world. China has bought farmland internationally – a reaction to the supply chain difficulties in the global food trade in 2008. A recent survey estimates the number of Chinese living and working in Africa at anything from 150,000 to over 500,000. In Papua New Guinea, a “resource frontier” state similar to many in Africa, “new Chinese”, that is those who have come recently from the mainland or Taiwan in recent years, total around 10,000.

Away from political economy other south-south relationships shape urban life in developing Asia. While attention has been paid to the recent global im-

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pact of Bollywood, it has long been a staple of movie-going in the Middle East and Africa.²⁵ And well-off Asians travel, like Westerners, beyond the confines of home country or region. For one visitor from Bangalore, Mauritius, with a near 60 per cent population of sub-continental origin, and houses that “look very much like our bungalows”, was a place of choice.²⁶

The Islamic world generates its own south-south movements. In 2004 there were 4,000 Malaysian and 6,000 Indonesian students studying Arabic and Sharia (Islamic law) and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) at Al Azhar in Cairo.²⁷ The presence of such students in Egypt is a reminder of many other student journeys, for example foreign students from Africa and Southeast Asia who study at universities in Bangalore.

One of the largest “south-south” movements is quintessentially Islamic: the haj to Mecca, the pilgrimage which all devout Muslims are expected to make at least once in their lifetime if they have the means. Numbers have escalated since long distance plane travel has brought Mecca within the reach of many ordinary Muslims who live at a great distance from the holy city. The numbers are so great that the Saudi government organizes quotas by country/Muslim population thereof. Indonesia has by far the largest number of Muslims of any country – over 200 million. Even if not all are observant the numbers who are and who might therefore contemplate haj, are massive. The quota for example allows 200,000 Indonesians per year to travel to the holy places.

The cultural messages that circulate through the contemporary Muslim world demonstrate that. The gleaming white and very new-looking mosque Baitul Hasanah, located on one junction on the outskirts of Semarang, is in “Middle Eastern” style, with a domed central building, rather than with the pitched Javanese roof characteristic of most local mosques. So is the city’s most recent and by far its largest mosque, Masjid Agung Jawa Tengah (the Great Mosque of Central Java), with its grand colonnaded approach with mauve highlights on the cream columns with light red on the awning; inside


²⁶ Deccan Herald, 30 Oct. 2004; Indians c. 25,000 out of total of 718,000, the largest numbers (2004) were from Europe http://statsmauritius.gov.mu/ei487/tourism/tourism.pdf p. 11; see also Deccan Herald, 5 Nov. 2004, “Mauritius, Malaysia and Singapore are fast becoming a favoured destination for honeymooners”.

²⁷ Al Ahram Weekly, 28 Oct. 2004 (Gamal Nkrumah).
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it is massive too, perhaps 60 by 60 meters, with a domed roof echoing Arabian styles.28

The economic advance and rising income levels that accompany the shift from asymmetric to symmetrical globalization however also reinforces other scales of interaction and it is to these that I now turn.

Global markets and home markets

Globalization naturally focuses on exports and imports, or more broadly on flows of goods, services and capital between countries. World-wide the long-term trend has been to see these flows increase in relative significance, and the importance of such international exchange in propelling the economies of China, India and Indonesia in recent decades cannot be underestimated.

The scale of global capital flows in the 1990s and 2000s increased that dependence but the volatility of the world economy since 2008 has demonstrated that there are risks as well as rewards for any one economy in being dependent on the international economy. The idea of “BRIC” involved identifying commonalities among Brazil, Russia, India and China, in particular their large emerging domestic markets, but the origin of the term – it was devised by a London financial analyst – indicates its grounding in the intersection of national economies with international trade and finance.29

Two factors act as counterweights. Firstly, an economy can shift – and usually does shift as it becomes more developed – from production for final demand to much greater production and exchange within industries. This is the process of intra-industry exchange which has developed markedly in the decades since the Second World War: “Fifty years ago all trade was inter-industry ... [but] in 1996 57% of US international trade took place within rather than between broad industry product groups ... it constitutes more than 60% of trade between European states and about 20% of Japanese trade.”30

28 See also Sarah Moser, “Arabian Nights architecture: the adoption of fantasy Middle Eastern design in constructing Indonesian and Malaysian identities”, in Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture lecture series, MIT, spring term 2009, [http://web.mit.edu/akpia/www/lecturescurrent.htm]; Ross King, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya: negotiating urban space in Malaysia, Honolulu and Singapore, University of Hawai’i Press and NUS Press, 2008. Putrajaya, 30 kms south of Kuala Lumpur and the new administrative capital of Malaysia is described by King (p xxiv) as being “implicated in attempts to deny some forms of globalization (Anglo-American) and to embrace others (pan-Islamic, Middle Eastern)” (p xxiv).


30 Easton, Globalisation, p. 51; the lower figure for Japan is indicative of the extent to which Japan has to import raw material and industrial inputs.
Intra-industry trade is even more significant within an economy and again, the more developed the economy the more of it there is. This can be presented theoretically: “In a world of high costs of distance, the pattern of economic activity corresponded broadly to where people lived. That correspondence also largely applies when the costs of distance are very low. However between these scenarios, economic activity concentrates in a few economic centers … the phase of international inequality may be a transition.”\(^{31}\)

Higher wages and higher incomes mean more intra-industry trade and larger domestic economies.\(^{32}\) A plumbing equipment company in Bangalore may source inputs from, and sell its output to, businesses or final consumers in Chennai, Hyderabad, Hubli and Tumkur. A plumbing business in Hyderabad may source inputs and sell to businesses or final consumers in Bangalore, Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Bijapur. If there is a plumbing company with a national network much of this “intra-industry” business will also be “intra-company”, but in many instances it will involve contracts with external (to the company) but domestic (within the nation) suppliers and purchasers. Similarly, as one analyst of the Chinese IT industry has commented, “Unlike smaller countries … large developing countries such as China have large and growing markets in their own right … the Chinese domestic market … allows domestic companies the opportunity to move directly into own-brand manufacturing rather than moving progressively from manufacturing others’ brands to creating their own.”\(^{33}\) As was discussed in chapter four, the Indian software and outsourcing business has historically been oriented to global customers, but has scope to expand in its own domestic market.

Secondly, domestic consumption and investment can rival export demand. The Asian Development Bank commented towards the end of 2009 that “Developing Asia’s level of openness may be less than optimal, in the broad sense that demand is geared excessively toward external demand … the region may be consuming too little and saving too much, and consequently relying disproportionately on foreign markets to purchase its output. Rebalancing domestic economies will move the region toward a level of openness where exports continue to make significant contributions to growth but a more

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31 Easton, *Globalisation*, p. 211.
vibrant domestic economy provides a measure of resilience against external shocks.”

This finding is hardly surprising. Domestic consumption, the driving force of economic activity in most western countries since at least the 1950s, had not reached its full potential in any developing Asian economy by 2010. Indeed official Chinese statistics show that in the years 2003 to 2007 domestic consumption contributed no more than 40 per cent to GDP, compared with some years in the 1990s when it contributed over 60 per cent. Rising domestic consumption can generate demand for imports – of raw materials, industry inputs, consumer goods and services – as has been vividly demonstrated in the fact of the US’s massive balance of payments deficit with China. China itself, although a major exporter, is also a major importer. In the years 2005–2007 net exports of goods and services contributed around 20 per cent to GDP, but if domestic consumption increases, China’s net exports of goods and services is likely to fall. For this discussion the relevant point is that the related growth in imports is a function of an expanding domestic economy, which in turn has implications for Chinese cities.

Whether such developments will happen seamlessly – or indeed at all – is contested. Critic Ho-fung Hung sees the export-oriented China of the 1980 to 2010 period hostile to a boost in the domestic economy that could harm its competitiveness: “No sooner had the government taken its first step toward domestic consumption-driven growth than vested interests in the coastal export sector complained loudly about their worsening prospects. They asked for compensating policies to safeguard their competitiveness, and attempted to sabotage further initiatives to raise the living standards of the working classes, such as the New Labor Contract Law—which would increase workers’ remuneration and make firing them more difficult—and the managed appreciation of the yuan.” Certainly much of the vigor of the domestic economy has come from large capital-intensive projects rather than rising household consumption.

Hung’s argument however overlooks the possibility that those same export-oriented entrepreneurs could themselves be both more integrated with and able to profit from the domestic market. As one reporter observed early in 2009, “In the past two months, I visited 20 cities in China and visited with the CEOs of 30 small- to large-size enterprises. In every city I visited, the malls were busy, the restaurants were full, and the mood was cheerful and bustling … Most Chinese believe that growth in domestic consumption, urbanization, and industrial productivity in their country now has an unstoppable momentum. While the global recession may throw a speed bump in front of 2009 growth, it cannot divert China from its path of development and growing prosperity.” A political endorsement of such an outlook came from senior political figure Li Keqiang, widely expected to be a future prime minister. He vowed that China “would act swiftly to shift from an over-reliance on exports to greater domestic consumption.”

It is impossible to arbitrate confidently between these two positions. Even if Hung’s position is correct, however, there will be increased intra-industry trade and private consumption in the Chinese economy – it simply will not be as substantial and robust if incomes rise more speedily. Over the longer term, that is the next forty years rather than the next four, it is difficult to imagine a government sensitive to issues of political stability indefinitely suppressing domestic consumption when the wherewithal exists to expand it.

What does this mean for a city like Yangzhou? The intra-industry linkages-domestic consumption pattern sketched out here has long characterized the major developed economies of the European Union and the United States. Japan’s level of intra-industry international trade is not as great but domestic consumption and investment make major contributions to its GDP too. Symmetrical globalization, in other words, coexists with large home markets.

Research by Alan Rugman and colleagues has taken this a step further, finding that in economic terms the world is “semi-globalized”, as they describe it, around three main clusters – Europe, North America and East Asia. They argue that these groupings are weightier than particular national entities and/

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or to the world as a whole. Regionalism thrives in an intra-industry environment because while markets can be global, inputs are preferably sourced from nearby, which may be just beyond a national border. A 2006 analysis of data for 348 of the world’s 500 largest multinational firms (the 348 which provided the relevant data) showed that the 154 of them which were domiciled in North America (usually US) averaged 75 per cent of their sales in North America. Forty of the firms, amongst them businesses in the retail, utility and financial sectors, did all their business in North America.

The definition of a “region” is mutable. This particular survey only covered firms that had some international presence – many firms in the United States do not operate even in Canada or Mexico; in these terms the United States, with its massive domestic market, could itself be regarded as a first order region. Mexico and Canada, for both of which the US market is crucial, would not be – for them, the “region” would be North America.

East Asia is Rugman’s third major region. The Rugman formulation includes Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, whilst some other schemes take in parts of Southeast Asia. Again, this is mutable. China, which in 2010 overtook Japan to become the world’s second-largest economy, could be, like the US, virtually a region on its own. Just as in the US today many companies in China will source their inputs primarily from producers in the domestic economy and will sell primarily in the domestic market. The conclusion though, from the point of view of a city like Yangzhou, or even like Shanghai, is not so different irrespective of whether the region is “just” China or embraces all East Asia – the global horizon will be less salient and the regional/national one more salient.

India’s circumstances are somewhat different from China in that less than a quarter of its output has habitually gone to exports (22 per cent in 2008) and growth has always been driven by domestic consumption more than by exports. The transformation in Indian cities is one of rising incomes on

40 Deichmann and Gill, “Economic geography”, p. 46. The Asian Development Bank points out that while there are high levels of intra-regional trade, much of it is in parts and components which are then incorporated into finished goods sold in Europe or North America, http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Key_Indicators/2009/pdf/Highlights.pdf.


42 For more on this, see Paul Krugman in Masashisha Fujita, ed., Regional integration in East Asia from the viewpoint of spatial economics, Basingstoke and New York, Institute of Developing Economies, 2007, pp. 162–63.

43 International Herald Tribune, 10 Jan. 2009 (Joe Nocera).
account of increased productivity and therefore rising consumption rather than a boost to consumption that might come from a shift from exports to investment or consumption. The greater disposable income creates opportunities for businesses to shape and grow markets in India’s cities, whether the businesses are foreign or Indian-owned or -operated. “So notable is the drive to find products for the Indian mass market that it has a name, ‘Indovation’”, that is, high volume products developed to “suit the habits and needs of India’s shoppers”.44 Such processes are likely to increase intra-industry trade in India because their operations will stay “close to the ground” to exploit the efficiencies that come from intimate relationships with supplier networks. Like East Asia, the subcontinent has an internally close-knit but externally bounded human geography and by economic – not to mention demographic and cultural – criteria it has the potential to be one of Rugman’s first order regions. In the longer-term therefore the regional pattern already evident in East Asia may develop amongst India and its neighbors although many political and trade barriers would have to be overcome first.

What in turn do these developments mean for the cities of China, India and Indonesia and their inhabitants (it is reasonable to assume that Indonesia will witness similar developments on a more modest scale)? Asian nations will become more globalized, not least because they will continue to export and become increasingly significant importers both of industrial inputs and of consumer products. But the globalization will be symmetrical and that in turn means that in Asian cities, as in Western cities, economic life will thrive on account of both a host of intra-industry linkages, many of them strongest within the home economy, and of the growing significance of consumer demand.

If this seems implausible, it is more or less an exact description of the way the Japanese economy evolved in the 1960s to 1980s. Japan became highly significant in world trade from the late 1960s onwards, but this significance was accompanied by an ever-larger Japanese domestic economy, such that most Japanese were involved in supplying and/or consuming goods and services produced by Japanese businesses operating in Japan. The forces that shaped Japanese cities through those years will shape the cities of developing Asia in the years to come.

44 Financial Times, 18 Jan. 2010 (James Lamont).
Global populations and domestic populations

In October 2009 Peter Hessler wrote of Lishui in Zhejiang, in the heart of China’s export zone, that it was “a third-tier Chinese factory city, with a central population of around two hundred and fifty thousand. It’s rare to see a foreign face in Lishui. But despite the absence of foreigners, the city has been shaped almost entirely by globalization, and traces of the outside world can be seen everywhere.”45

This disjunction, which Hessler mentions to dismiss its significance, is characteristic of asymmetric globalization. Chinese workers might migrate to the US; US workers (as distinct from companies and their ancillary workforce) do not migrate to China. The same is true of Mexico, of the Philippines, of Kerala in India – of any exporter of low cost labor.

What will happen between now and 2035 in Asia? Assuming some change, one of three scenarios may play out. Firstly, asymmetrical migration may continue but “in reverse” as it were, with low cost labor migrating into, not out from, soon-to-be-developed Asia. Secondly, migration may take place globally, but more symmetrically. And thirdly, inter-country migration may not be that significant in shaping the demography of cities in China, India and Indonesia.

Two of the most developed Asian cities, Hong Kong and Singapore, already have large migrant populations of construction workers and household employees, mostly from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and China in Singapore, and from mainland China and the Philippines in the case of Hong Kong. This is the first scenario. In 2009, of Singapore’s population of 4.84 million, at least 1.2 million were immigrants.46

It is unlikely however that this model will apply soon to the “average” cities of India, China and Indonesia. Unskilled migrants will for the foreseeable future be recruited from within each country. For that to change either the pool of internal migrants would have to shrink dramatically and/or the wages offered in cities would be unattractive. The rural population of China presently stands at nearly 700 million, in India the same and in Indonesia at over 130 million, so the pool of migrant labor is not going to shrink that fast. Urban wages will also likely remain higher than rural wages.

If we project forward to 2035, and assume increased urbanization and increased affluence in Asian countries, a different problem arises – where to

45 New Yorker, 26 Oct. 2009.
find migrants? Statistics from some South and East Asian countries show the scale of intra-regional migration. In 2005 Malaysia, with a total population of 21 million, was estimated to have over two million migrant workers (of whom perhaps half were undocumented), mostly from Indonesia, but also from the subcontinent, Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines. In Taiwan in 2003 just under one-third of all marriages were contracted with foreigners; overwhelmingly these were marriages of Taiwanese men with usually mainland Chinese or Southeast Asian women. Migration arises primarily from economic disparities and in the case of Taiwan and Malaysia much higher incomes have triggered these regional movements which are dominated by unskilled laborers working in “3D” – “dirty, difficult and dangerous” – occupations; construction, cleaning and primary industries in the case of men, and domestic service (of which the Taiwanese marriages are really a variant) in the case of women. As and if income levels rise throughout Asia the disparities that underpin such migratory movements will wane. From where then will the migrants be found? In the case of India and China and even Indonesia, with their large populations, any demand for low cost foreign migrant labor would likely rapidly outrun supply.

In comparison there is some evidence for the second scenario, for “symmetrical” global migration – migration flows taking place amongst groups of roughly comparable skills and earning power. Singapore has an increasing number of professional migrants from India and China employed in universities, hospitals, law firms, finance companies and high-tech businesses. For their part, in 2010 Chinese cities had many more foreigners than they did even in 1990. When J. G. Ballard visited Shanghai, the city of his upbringing in the 1930s, in 1991, he commented that

Shanghai had always been a European city, created by British and French entrepreneurs, followed by Dutch, Swiss and Germans. Now, though, they had gone and Shanghai was a Chinese city. All the advertising, all the street signs, and neon displays were in Chinese characters. Nowhere, during our week in Shanghai did I see a single sign in the English language ... Shanghai had forgotten us, as it had forgotten me.

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In fact cities such as Beijing and Shanghai have seen communities of foreign professionals grow in the last two decades and similar communities are long established in Bangkok, Jakarta and Manila; indeed certain precincts of these cities with their range of international hotels, brand name stores, dealer galleries, brunch restaurants, cafés and themed pubs are visibly “expatriate” neighborhoods. Ballard certainly would have been startled to learn of the estimated 50,000 to 100,000 foreigners in Shanghai in mid-2009.\(^{51}\)

Such however has been the rate of urbanization and the growth in Shanghai’s population from domestic migration that this is less than one per cent of

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the total Shanghai population. Even the five per cent foreign-born that some Shanghai boosters aim for is well below the percentages for cities like New York and London (36 per cent and 27 per cent foreign-born respectively). The professional migrants are visible on account of their relatively high purchasing power relative to locals but they do not make much impact on the overall demographic pattern of these cities. Nor are they linked into the power structure as were the equally small number of Westerners found in Europe’s Asian territories around 1900. Numbers alone do not determine impact and a lack of political power may be countered by a persistence of political influence, but numbers alone do matter, as observations about the impact of migrants on the social, economic and cultural character of Western cities attest.

This brings us to the third scenario, that inter-country migration will not be that significant in shaping the demography of Chinese, Indian and Indonesian cities. The globally multi-ethnic city is a staple of popular and scholarly discussion of globalization and it takes an effort of the imagination to absorb the fact that the “average” city of the future – a city of maybe three million people in India or China – will not be so configured. These cities will have global connectivity and a leavening of expatriate professionals but their ethnicities and languages will mostly be drawn from closer at hand.

That “closer at hand” is happening even with expatriate populations. In Jakarta, for example, Japanese and Koreans, who have been present since the 1970s, have been joined since the 1990s by Chinese, Indians and Filipinos filling middle management positions; perhaps two-thirds of Jakarta’s expatriate population is of Asian origin.

Again it is useful to consider Japanese and Korean experiences, though with the caveat that the demographic homogeneity of both countries is as much a product of state policy as is the heterogeneity of Western cities. In the case of Japanese cities, policies have sought to blunt the attractions of the Japanese labor market to migrants whereas Western jurisdictions have often exploited that attraction. But the consequences are not so dissimilar from what will be the likely scenario in the cities of the developing Asia of the

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53 H-Asia thread, 21–22 Aug. 2009 on numbers of foreigners in Asia in the 1890s and in 1919. In both instances the total numbers were small; and in 1919 nearly two-thirds of foreigners in China were Japanese (144,000 out of 220,000).
54 Jakarta Post, 28 Mar. 2008 (Sarah Porter and Bruce Emond), “Changing faces”; the largest communities in Jakarta were US, Japanese, Korean and Indian.
future. Multi-ethnic populations are now a staple of urban life in both countries, but not on the scale of Western cities. Foreigners are common enough in Tokyo – where there are estimated to be some 200,000 – and in the cities of Kansai (Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe) but in other cities the numbers are much less. Fukuoka, a city of one million in western Japan, which prides itself on its internationalism, had just over 21,000 registered foreigners in mid-2008, most of whom were Chinese or Korean. In a 2001 survey as many as 40 per cent of Japanese responded “hardly ever” to a question about how frequently they encountered foreigners. This may have changed somewhat in the decade since 2001, especially as visitor numbers to Japan, especially from East Asia, steadily increased until 2008, but the total numbers relative to the Japanese population of 125 million are not high – from around 400,000 monthly in 2001, to around 700,000 monthly in 2008. South Korea reported a quadrupling of its foreign-born population between 2004 and 2009 but from a very low base; the 2009 figure of somewhat over one million was still only two per cent of the total population.

It is also relevant to touch on the demographic future of Western cities themselves. Intra-Western migration is not and will not be a major phenomenon of Western cities. “When differentials in income are minor, as in the case of the EU-15 countries, labor migration is likely to be small, an outcome reinforced by cultural and linguistic barriers. Few persons from Munich wish to take up work in Lyon, and vice versa.” At the same time the replenishing of European and US city populations from developing countries may wane, not on account of changing EU and US attitudes – though that may occur too – but because of developments in the migrant-sending countries. The fertility rate in Mexico, whose emigrants account for the largest migrant population in the US and a majority of the United States’ undocumented population, has undergone a steep decline, from about 6.7 children per woman in 1970 to about 2.1 in 2010. The number of new entrants into the Mexican labor force is expected

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59 Demeny and McNicol, “Political demography”, p. 263 (EU-15 refers to the EU membership before the 2004 enlargement).
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...to decrease from 750,000 in 2010 to 600,000 in 2020, and 300,000 in 2030. The fertility rate in Egypt fell from 5.2 in 1985–90 to 2.9 in 2005–10. The labor surpluses that have been such a big push factor in global migration will eventually reduce. Over time Asian cities may prove to be models for North American and European cities, rather than the other way round.

Commercial popular culture

As with populations, we can postulate a variety of scenarios for the evolution of popular cultures in Asian cities over the next quarter-century. Firstly, asymmetry; secondly, symmetrical globalization, with different popular cultures engaging in a high degree of interaction on broadly equal terms; and thirdly, symmetrical globalization, but with different worlds of popular culture co-existing rather than interacting.

The first scenario is that of a persisting Western cultural hegemony. In practice, that is not applicable because both East and South Asia (although not Southeast Asia to the same extent), have long had vigorous, largely autonomous commercialized popular cultures. Japan’s status as a major developed economy and society has played an important role in the later twentieth century in forging a style of popular culture that was influential across East Asia. For its part, the subcontinent, despite its colonial and then third world status, was home from early in the twentieth century to a commercial popular culture in the form of Hindi and other cinemas, as discussed in chapter seven. Arguably it was the key elements of this industry – the themes of its films, the overwhelmingly rural and illiterate nature of its audience – along with the sheer size of its “home” market, which initially enabled it to defy Western-inspired globalization.

Does that make scenario two – different popular cultures across the world engaging in a high degree of interaction – more likely? Could we see a “masala” globalization to which East Asian, subcontinental and Western popular cultures contribute on equal terms? It is possible. Germane to this discussion however is the fact that neither in East Asia nor the subcontinent does the entertainment industry display global ambitions on the scale of Hollywood in its heyday. Both entertainment businesses reach beyond their “homelands” but most powerfully to diasporic populations and within their immediate neighborhoods.

60 Newsweek, 7 Jun. 2010; Félix Vélez, secretary-general of Mexico’s National Population Council is the source for the new entrants data.

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That brings us to the third scenario, the regional dynamic. Scholars of East Asian popular culture such as Douglas McGray and Koichi Iwabuchi and Nizman Otmazgin have analysed the networks creating this regional cultural sphere.\(^62\) McGray has described how “Namie Amuro … built a huge fan base in Asia without ever going on tour to the United States. Millions of teenagers in Hong Kong, Seoul and Bangkok covet the latest fashions from Tokyo, most of which never make it in New York. Japanese lifestyle magazines, some of the most lavishly produced in the world, are smuggled by illegal distributors across Asia as soon as they are on the newsstands in Tokyo, though none has launched an American edition.”\(^63\) It is not surprising then to learn that in the 1990s Japanese department stores, far more than their American counterparts, were the models for department stores throughout East Asia and that East Asian tourists in the 2000s have been drawn by a “deep fascination” with Japan: “They want to see the country that has long been the region’s front runner, in high technology, fashion and popular culture.”\(^64\)

As with economic life, regionalism per se may not be as significant for the 700 to 900 million urban Chinese as for the smaller populations of South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan; the inhabitants of a city in China will be less aware of the “regional” character possessed by popular culture than the inhabitants of a city in Korea or Taiwan. It is in Seoul, not in any Chinese city, that a bibliography on East Asian integration is compiled.\(^65\)

The notion of a “near abroad” is a more fruitful way of conceiving of the future of commercial popular culture from a Chinese standpoint. That terminology would take in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, sometimes collectively referred to as “Greater China”, and we are thus brought back to the discussion in chapter seven. One example of the overlapping of categories is evidenced in the evolution of Taiwanese (Hokkien) popular music: “The very songs and television programmes that were being held up by nativist Taiwanese politicians during the 1990s as symbols of Taiwanese nationhood are now finding a market of considerable size in the PRC. Hokkien television dramas and pop songs may well be used to promote the idea of a proudly


\(^{65}\) See www.asianintegration.org.
Independent Taiwan; but they can just as easily be employed to demonstrate how much Taiwan has in common with Fujian.”

With respect to the Indian subcontinent, affluence has brought new sources of vitality and ensured the status of the subcontinental film and entertainment business as a “parallel world.” As with East Asia, the boundaries of that world are mutable. It certainly extends beyond India, and nowhere more powerfully than in its immediate neighborhood. The population density map of Asia obscures national boundaries within the subcontinent, baring the zone of the Thar Desert lying astride the central part of the India-Pakistan

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66 Taylor, “Hokkien entertainment industry”, p. 73.
67 See chapter seven, footnote 23.
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border, but highlights the great swathe of thinly-populated territory that circles the subcontinent to the north, north-east and to an extent the north-west. Further, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were part of one political entity just over 60 years ago (40 years ago in the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh).

Like China therefore, India has a “near abroad”, despite the history of inter-state hostility between it and its neighbors: “At Bahktar cinema in downtown Kabul, an Indian film runs to a packed house. Indian films and music cassettes are in great demand”, said one 2004 report.68 In Pakistan, according to a Times of India story, women were “crazy” about Star Plus serials such as Kasauti zindagi ki and Kyonki sas bhi kabhi bahu thi.69 “You may have songs on saawan or benarasi paan”, says Salman Ahmad, lead guitarist of the Pakistan Sufi pop band, Junoon, “but if you are a Pakistani musician it’s only the presence of [Indian] stalwarts like Shubha Mudgal and Amitabh Bacchan that can make Pakistanis take note and sing alongside you”. Bangladesh has long banned Bollywood films but they are widely viewed in that country via pirated DVDs and satellite TV channels.70

The evolution of commercial popular culture in Indonesia is harder to assess. In some ways it resembles the Philippines, in its openness to cultural influence from the West. On the other hand Islam provides a cultural breakwater absent in Chinese or most Indian cities, and when combined with language also allows Indonesian “culture” to reach beyond its borders. Malaysia’s preoccupation with forging a national identity around a conservative Malay Islam seemingly acts against this, but it resonates at other levels: “The potential for fracturing of the conservative turn resides in recognition of the rich origins of Peninsula Malays and, simultaneously, of the bursts of creativity and cultural differences that characterise their distant relatives in the ever-different and ever-fragmenting communities of the Archipelago.”71

In sum, there is reason to expect stable national (in the case of large nations like China, or India), subcontinental or regional cultural groupings to

71 King, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, p. 249; see also Joel S. Kahn, Other Malays: nationalism and cosmopolitanism in the modern Malay world, Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with University of Hawai’i Press, 2006.
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persist. In a 2010 opinion piece Parag Kharma argued that the age of nations had passed and the age of cities had arrived. Such arguments overlook the way that nations are more than states: they are, particularly the large nation-states of Asia, subcontinental in scale. Schemas that set cities against nations, seeing the former not the latter as the future, fail to take this into account.

Concluding comments

This brings us to the end of this enquiry into the relationship of cities in developing Asia to globalization, leaving two main concluding points to be made, one broadly historical, the other more geographical.

The first is to emphasize that over the past few decades phenomena that have played out primarily within a country may just as significant for understanding the character of cities as are global phenomena. They are more difficult to research because data for such a wide variety of transactions is gathered, and standardized, at the national level, whereas data on equivalent transactions within a country is gathered less, more irregularly and with more inconsistencies. Nonetheless the economic and demographic scale of China, India and Indonesia makes it particularly fruitful to engage in such enquiries, to moderate assumptions about the impact of globalization with reference to them and to investigate urbanization, urbanism and nation-building in their own terms rather than as sub-sets of globalization.

The second is to emphasize that, while globalization will continue to shape cities, it will do so in ways that do not neatly fit the early twenty-first-century model. The modernization of Asia will have as a by-product the shift from asymmetric to symmetrical globalization and a diminution therefore in certain markers of globalization, notably particular kinds of economic, demographic and cultural imbalances. The paradox, it could be said, is that as and if levels of development converge amongst different continents, globalization may become less, not more salient. Globalization will continue to affect cities throughout the world in a variety of ways but hundreds of “semi-globalized” cities of one, three or five million people deep in India, China or Indonesia, not to mention other parts of the world, will be as much if not more a part of the story as are the globalized cities of Europe and North America today.

72 See further along these lines the discussion in Martin Lewis and Karen Wigen, The myth of continents: a critique of metageography, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997; Demeny and McNicoll, “Political demography”, p. 275.
73 Parag Kharma, “The age of nations is out, the age of cities is in”, Foreign Policy, Sep.-Oct. 2010.
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