

Hoyler, Michael; Parnreiter, Christof; Watson, Allan (Hrsg.): *Global City Makers. Economic Actors and Practices in the World City Network*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar 2018. ISBN: 978 1 78536 894 3; 224 S.

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This book is a collection of case studies specifically interested in how diverse intermediaries - producer service firms, commodity traders, real estate agencies, maritime firms, local government, and finance professionals - articulate economic activities in global cities. It consists of eight chapters examining the practices of such economic agents in Mexico City, Hamburg, the City of London, New York, Tokyo and Mumbai.

The authors move along the lines of Global City research, according to which global cities manage and control the global economy through advanced producer services (APS) firms. Specifically focusing on their practices, the book examines how such firms operate within and beyond the city; and how their activity impacts on global city network formation. It is suggested that these economic intermediaries, through their strong relations with their client firms, are the 'makers' of a global city, and the main contributors to global city network formation.

The book builds on the three major theoretical claims of Global City research. The first being the Global City concept, as formulated by John Friedmann and Saskia Sassen, which stresses the key role of APS firms and their subsidiaries in the emergence of global cities and their networks. APS are „business to business services provided mainly to transnational corporations“ (p. 43). The second is Sassen's definition of major indicators of global city status, expressed through the ability to provide highly specialised expertise in servicing, managing, coordinating and financing operations and production for global markets. Finally, the third and most important is the relational understanding of global city networks, through studying processes of exchange in inter-firm relations. Capitalising on the findings of recent relational economic geography research, the book has the agenda to

describe the dynamics of relational processes involving firms and individuals, and the circumstances under which these occur. The case study format highlights practice and theory, which is an advantage compared to other, more theoretical approaches.

The book has several strong points: the focus on local political-economic context and actor-oriented research, and the application of qualitative methods. They indicate the potential for new departures in Global City research, in which quantitative studies have prevailed. The studies presented in the volume demonstrate that semi-structured interviews, historical reconstruction, or qualitative social network analysis, provide a wider angle on socio-economic processes than the more narrow quantitative network-oriented research. They allow researchers to analyse the in-depth nature of relational flows linking global cities, not only through the operations of APS firms, but also through the activities of individuals representing them.

Chapter 2 showcases interesting results obtained through interview data in a study of Mexico and Hamburg by Christof Parnreiter. Mexico City and Hamburg are not first-tier global cities according to the GaWC list. Nevertheless, a high concentration of APS firms in both cities suggests that there is a demand for servicing and financing on behalf of large companies based there, attesting the global status of these cities. Having analysed the available statistical data, the author interviewed producer service professionals to understand the relationships between APS and their clients. Data from the respondents in both cities showed that APS firms not only manage and govern production lines of their clients, but also have a huge influence on their strategic decisions concerning labour, location and tax (p. 29).

In Chapter 3 Wouter Jacobs looks at complex commodity chains, through the prism of advanced producer services. He demonstrates how these are coordinated through a global network of commodity trading desks, acting as interlocking agents, and strategically located in a few cities across the globe. The article stands out, in as far as it calls for an extension of the list of types of services to be included in the APS taxonomy: this should go

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beyond firms responsible for providing intangible services, and also include those dealing with the physical movement of goods.

The analysis of a proprietary database of the City of London is the method used by Colin Lizieri and Daniel Mekic to track changing patterns in office real estate ownership (Chapter 4). A growing proportion of foreign investment into office space in the City of London shows that the commercial real estate market operating in the City is increasingly global, physically impacts the urban landscape and plays a crucial role in global city formation. The authors assert that the high concentration of non-domestic firms owning office space not only allows the City to be the centre of global capital flows, but also makes it more resistant to volatility.

In his investigation of commercial real estate investment market practices (Chapter 5), David Scofield uses qualitative social networks analysis. Having studied data from transactions datasets in New York and London involving intermediation (broker) agencies and large investment firms, plus a series of interviews, the author concludes that the real estate market in both cities is highly dependent on the individual social networks of acquisition managers. These social networks, in which individuals are linked by experience and trust, are locally anchored. Considering these findings, it is obvious that beneath firm-to-firm relationships less visible structures of social networks operate which, in reality, articulate global city making processes.

Interviews are the core method in Sakura Yamamura's account of transnational professional migrants in Tokyo (Chapter 6). The author adopts an actor-based perspective in her analysis of the impact of the global phenomenon of international migration on shaping the urban space of the city. The subjects of her study are 45 transnational professional migrants working in finance and residing in Tokyo. The analysis of her interview data reveals their socio-spatial patterns as both corporate actors and individuals, and how the city of Tokyo responds to their needs by creating transnational urban spaces. This process, however, has its downsides. For example, urban areas in which transnational professionals tend to reside provide a complete infrastructure of inter-

national schools, English-speaking real estate agencies, ethnic restaurants and other services necessary for a comfortable lifestyle. But they also function as isolating 'ghettos' that, eventually, make integration more difficult.

Bart Lambregts, Jana Kleibert and Niels Beerepoot collected their data through interviewing professionals employed in offshore customer service support in Mumbai (Chapter 7). The idea was to understand the role that the offshore service industry plays in making second- and third-tier cities important strategic nodes in global city networks. Collecting data through interviews can be very challenging. It is not uncommon for respondents to request anonymity. And it was this type of challenge that the authors were up against in the quest to access „information in the highly secretive offshore financial service sector of Mumbai“ (p. 131).

In Chapter 8 Markus Hesse explores the role of discourse in the process of city-making, by applying discourse and situational analysis methods. He takes the case of Hapag-Lloyd, a shipping line headquartered in the port of Hamburg. As a result of changing trends, notably increasing global competition, seaport cities - historically centres of trade and logistics - are forced to restructure their activities. Their challenge is to maintain their position as important maritime hubs within the global network, while, at the same time, providing the wherewithal to stay in local hands and thwarting foreign takeover attempts. This clash between global and local interests creates a situation calling for a coalition between the local corporate/industry sector, government and civil society. Through the unique case of the port of Hamburg the author demonstrates that global city-making is not a process that can be limited to APS firms, but a multi-stakeholder concern where historical roots and identity play a crucial role.

Michiel van Meeteren and David Basens use the method of historical reconstruction as they enquire on how ABN AMRO, an Amsterdam-based bank, acting upon the strategic advice of management consultancy firms, eventually collapsed. The authors thereby fill an existing knowledge gap in Global City research with regard to the possible negative consequences of APS (consulting) firms

on their global clients. As in the case of ABN AMRO, the consequences, brought about by a series of erroneous strategic and tactical decisions, could not be anticipated. Historical reconstruction allowed the authors to unveil not only the events preceding the bank's failure, but also to link these to the rapidly changing political-economic context in which they occurred. The chapter demonstrates that APS do not invariably play a decisive role in global city making processes, and that other external factors need to be taken into consideration. In the case-study, local political-economic interests to sustain Amsterdam's status as a global banking services hub were not in line with the changing landscape of the global banking market. From the early 2000s onwards this was increasingly operating through a short list of first-tier cities, and from which Amsterdam was excluded.

The articles in this book, point toward new trends in Global City research, which is becoming more actor- and context-focused. The qualitative methods showcased in the volume complement previously developed quantitative models. Data collection is not an easy task, as the operations of APS firms are often subject to professional secrecy. The authors have undertaken a genuine effort to add depth to what remains a relatively obscure term (APS), adding that these firms are not necessarily restricted to customized services, but can also be client sector specialised. They demonstrate how city-making processes are composed of the simultaneous actions of various types of economic actors (both corporate and institutional). And they return individuals to the centre-stage of decision-making, who often act or react within the limits of bounded knowledge based on established practices and narratives.

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