

Pacific Asia is the fastest growing region in the world, and its very large cities ; world cities ; have been laying a critical part in spearheading economic growth and social and cultural transformation.

Economic Planning Agency, Japan. In an historical analysis of the system of world cities between A. This finding is echoed by King Other more important factors may include the strength of the economy to which the city belongs, its location in relation to zones of growth or stagnation in the international economy, its attraction as a potential basing point for international capital, and its political stability. There is, however, a broad consensus that the operation of the new international division of labour is spatially articulated through a global network of cities Heenan, ; Friedmann and Wolff, ; Timberlake, ; Henderson and Castells, This was later extended to the world city hypothesis in which the roles of mega-cities are highlighted Friedmann, Friedmann emphasized that the processes of urban change had become increasingly oblivious to national boundaries. Similarly, Nakakita submitted that the very concept of national boundaries had been altered because of, first, dramatically reduced prices in transportation, information, and communications owing to technological innovations and, secondly, the abundance of business opportunities to transfer managerial resources. An outstanding example of the globalization of Japanese firms is furnished by the meteoric rise of Kumagai Gumi in the construction industry, which captured more than one-third of all overseas contracts won by Japanese construction contractors in and Rimmer, None the less, in the new territorial dynamics consequent upon global restructuring, many countries are faced with the contradiction of "placeless power and powerless places" Henderson and Castells, In any event, these arguments provide the explanation for the borderless economies that, on the basis of economic logic and transcending national boundaries, have emerged in several parts of Pacific Asia. Internationalization of production and finance has meant the internationalization of administration and control through advanced producer services, activities assisting user firms to carry out administrative, development, and financial functions, whether these are research and development, strategic planning, banking, insurance, real estate, accounting, legal services, consulting, advertising, and so forth. It is this that has extensively changed the employment structure in the "advanced" capitalist countries and it is the growth of such activities and employment that [is seen] as being intrinsic to the formation of world cities. Hitherto a central conceptual underpinning of the world city system has been one premised upon "dependency. They all denote linear types of economic relationships. What distinguishes the functional urban system in Pacific Asia from previous conceptualizations is its accent on "interdependency" rather than "dependency. This permitted the deepening of intra-firm trade and the division of labour between head offices and their subsidiaries abroad, thus effecting a greater division of labour between Japan and the concerned countries in the region. What has emerged here is a "functional city system. In the "functional city system" being identified here, it is the "functions" of a city that largely determine its role and importance nationally, regionally, and globally. In a borderless economy, these functions are spatially footloose and highly sensitive to cost factors and locales that are the most attractive for the generation of those functions. Thus, instead of a city system by population size, a linkage of cities through an important functional network tends to strengthen the external economic, social, and political relations of a given city within the network more than a city outside of the network. As the processes of globalization of production, capital markets, telecommunications systems, airlines and tourism, networks of transnational corporations, flows of new technology, investment and labour force are interwoven and superimposed one over another on major cities across the nations at the world regional level, the accumulation of different functions by a given city forms a foundation for its external linkage and economic strength of growth under the current world economic system. For instance, the populations of Singapore and Bangkok are smaller than that of Calcutta but both Singapore and Bangkok are emerging as world cities as their functional linkages have expanded with the global economic integration and rapid growth of Pacific Asia. As one illustration of a new global production network of transnational corporations, Fujita and Ishii examined the locational behaviour and spatial organization of some major electronics firms between and and have found as follows. Nine leading Japanese

electronics firms increased their new production plants much more rapidly in overseas countries than in Japan. In particular, the share of East Asia is increasing while those of North America and the European Communities are rather stable, which also implies that the share of the rest of the world is decreasing fig. This observation also confirms a location theory well known in Japan that when production facilities are relocated and spread over a system of cities the "central managerial function" Cheusu-Kanri-Kino tends to concentrate in a major metropolis table 2. In other words, the more a firm decentralizes its production network, the more the decision-making function tends to centralize. The spread of FDI from Japan has in fact created an ever stronger functional city system of manufacturing production over the world. In a much more limited scope, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and ASEAN countries also have become the home countries of an increasing number of transnational corporations spread across the Asian cities and extending towards the rest of the world. All of this spontaneous growth of a network of industries has reinforced the functional linkage of the Asian cities with the rest of the world. The spatial transformation in response to the global restructuring may be observed at several levels. At the individual city level, because of the primacy of finance in the new world economy, there is a tendency for capital to be centralized in a fewer number of cities. The importance of any city is directly related to the range of key functions it can attract and provide for in the global division of labour. Briefly, three groups of functions may be identified, namely, goods and commercial transactions, movement of people, and information flows. For manufacturing functions within large cities, such as Bangkok and Jabotabek, they are more likely to be located in the suburban region because of relatively cheaper land costs and more stringent pollution controls on the environment in the urban area. Fujita and Ishii, Fig.

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