

Globalized Localities or Localized Globalities?
Old Wine, New Bottles?
Anthony D. King
State University of New York at Binghamton

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Introduction

Most of us have stories about the terms 'global' and 'globalization' - the most abused and overused words of our times. My own favorite concerns the director of a University Art Museum whose collection was overwhelmingly, if not totally, 'Western'. On receiving a donation of a few small items of Chinese porcelain, she announced, "Our collection has become more global". For those who toil in these fields there is an increasing urgency to find more selective and precise conceptual language to address phenomena that are glossed under these two terms. This, among other topics, is what I want to address in this paper, the aims of which are fourfold.

First, to take up some suggestions from our hosts' proposal and see how far these suggestions enable me, not only to better conceptualize my own research agenda (and material) but also, make it available for other participants. I certainly want to examine the 'reconfiguration of localities and local subjects', and to do this, especially with reference to urban space and the material and symbolic dimensions of the built environment: to look at 'new cultural forms emerging . . . at the intersection of local and global practices', though not always as 'resistances' - but sometimes as 'accommodation'. As material (and specifically spatial) manifestations of the workings of 'global capitalism' are at the heart of my paper (albeit in the second half), in addressing, 'how capitalist dynamics . . . shap(e) ethnographic encounters' I want to ask, in particular, under what local, national, and transnational conditions does this take place?

As the particular cases I address here are located in relation to three major world capitals, Washington DC, New Delhi, and (especially) Beijing, the particular spatial phenomena I examine, though each the direct outcome of globalized forms of production and global flows of capital, are the distinct products, however hybridized, of local culture. Second, these spatial products are certainly not produced by 'uniform or monolithic forces'; and third, they are by no means 'homogenous' or 'deterritorialized'. They certainly 'emerge very differently in different parts of the world'.

In deliberately positioning my paper in this way, I want to emphasize its focus on particular instances in the cultural productions of capitalism, (especially) in terms of material and spatial transformations. The 'cultural, geographical and historical specificity' of these processes and their 'uneven manifestations' are central to my argument.

Before I address the particular substance of my research, however, my second aim is to raise the question of the different ways, and different terms - alternatively to 'the global' - in which we might conceptualize 'the world' - or, to use, Spivak's (i.e. Hegel's) phrase - to ask how the world is 'worlded' (and subsequently, 're-worlded'). For if we are to 'address the meanings that actors attach to movement itself' (and the micro and macro cosmologies with which they make sense of the world), we certainly need a much more differentiated, and sophisticated array of conceptualizations than those simply suggested by ideas such as the 'international', 'transnational', 'world-system', postcommunist, let alone the crudities of the 'postmodern', 'global' and 'globalization'. What are the alternative terminologies and conceptualizations available to us, and how can they recognize questions of positionality and the representation of indigenous/local meanings? How far can new concepts and terminologies be identified in the spaces of different speech communities worldwide, if at all?

My third objective, related to the above, is to ask how adequate is our contemporary theoretical language to represent not only so-called 'global' processes operating above the level of the nation-state (i.e. supranational, transnational), or at that level (international, interstate) but, more especially, at the level of the metropolis, suburb, neighborhood, household, dwelling or individual (transmigrant, for example, addresses the 'transnational' subject only in relation to specific identities or roles). I shall return to this below.

Finally, I want to deal, though perhaps more implicitly (through illustration), with questions of method. My experience over the years has suggested that empirical investigation goes hand in hand with theoretical development; the processes are necessarily interdependent. This should be apparent in my final section which forms the second half of the paper.

Re-thinking 'globalization'

If we want to take the concept of globalization both serious and critically, not least to address and think about cultural transformations in the world, the term needs to be given some precision. What we need to know, as Crang (1999) suggests (drawing on, and condensing, Lefebvre's [1991] three key concepts of 'representations of space, spatial representations and representational practices'), is how globalization takes place through 'conceived, perceived and lived spaces', in changing patterns of spatial consumption, for example. This is I address below. But we also need to know how a very clearly structured system of global political economy (not least related to the imperial and colonial past) has produced, and continues to produce, on one

hand, cultural difference and so-called "ethnic minorities" and the differential spaces they inhabit, as well as, on the other hand, economic and social spaces of privilege and exclusion.

We need, Crang suggests, to see globalization as a discontinuous rather than a homogenous space, a notion of discontinuity that we could also extend to historical time. Globalization is not a single set of activities or a single 'one world' movement but a number of partially interlocking global networks which have been - and this I want to emphasize - historically, geographically, politically, and culturally constructed. Here, I want to turn to another way of "re-worlding the world", a different theoretical representation which fundamentally critiques this idea of a "singular", globular view, and gives due recognition to these historical (and other) developments: postcolonial theory and criticism.

Postcolonial Theory and Criticism

One of the phenomena I've been trying to understand recently are the conditions accounting for the quite spectacular growth in the anglophonic academy - particularly American, British, Canadian, Australian, maybe elsewhere - (and particularly in the humanities such as English, comparative literature, art history, and more recently geography, architecture) - of the new knowledge paradigm of postcolonial theory and criticism. And while the theorists of the critique are not invariably independent of those developing theories of globalization (e.g. During, 1998), the reverse is generally true (e.g. Robertson, 1992, for whom colonialism/postcolonialism merits only one brief mention).

Postcolonial criticism, according to Robert Young 'itself forms the point of questioning Western knowledge's categories and assumptions' (1990); it 'demands a rethinking of the very terms by which knowledge has been constructed' (Mongia, 1997). Such statements take for granted that, in the early part of the twentieth century, Europe held roughly 85 per cent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions and colonies which, roughly between 1947 and the early 1960s, technically at least, became independent states. Technically, because to cite Gayatri Spivak, postcoloniality is 'the failure of decolonization'.

Postcolonial consciousness, however, is not necessarily one thing. The editors of *Postcolonial Space(s)* state: 'postcolonial space is a space of intervention into those architectural constructions that parade under a universalist guise and either exclude or repress differential spatialities of often disadvantaged ethnicities, communities or peoples' (Nalbantoglu and Wong, 1996: 3). Australian geographer, Jane Jacobs (*Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City* 1996), writes 'Spectacles of postmodernity are entwined in a politics of race and nation which cannot be constructively thought of without recourse to the imperial inheritances and postcolonial imperatives which inhabit the present' (1996).

In this paper, however, I want to see a (rather than 'the') postcolonial perspective as a way of representing specific spatial processes in the world which is both less than, sometimes in opposition to, and at other times, greater than those represented by 'globalization', the latter, simply because of the historical cultural politics they can mobilise.

As I have discussed these issues in detail elsewhere (King, 1999) I will refer only briefly to what I see as the principal factors driving the quite rapid growth in the postcolonial paradigm, the

advantages of which - as I see it - is its subtle and distinctive mix of a particular kind of theorized as well as historical framing..

The rise of postcolonial studies is not just, as has been suggested (Dirlik, 1994), because of the presence of Third World intellectuals in the West (Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said) but, much more importantly, results from the considerable growth of the proportion of academics as well as students from ethnic minority backgrounds between the late 1980s and early 1990s. (In the US, combining Asian, Black and Hispanic minorities, recent new entrants now represent some 17 per cent of all academics; in the UK, though much smaller, about 5-6 per cent of academics are Black or Asian. King, 1999). In addition, the very substantial growth of international students in all anglophone countries (and other countries as well) has, in the relevant subject areas, given a huge boost to the growth of, and support for, postcolonial studies. (At my own university - an upstate satellite of New York City - in my graduate class of 12-15 students on "Postcolonialism and Culture", I can have students from, e.g. Mexico, Korea, Puerto Rico, China, Canada, or India, as well as the USA, all of whom have some history of imperialism/colonialism, as well as postcolonial nationalism in common. The experience can obviously be repeated in many US institutions elsewhere).

We can, of course, ask how far the academic 'postcolonial' agenda is being driven by the interest of postcolonial and ethnic minority audiences in the West (as a critique of Eurocentricism and cultural racism in the academy) or by the "situation on the ground" in postcolonial countries themselves - but this does not (despite Dirlik's objections) undermine its relevance as a particular frame for addressing equally particular questions, whether these relate to the system of knowledge production, education and, not least, the production of space.

But we also have to ask what analogies, or comparisons, can be made between the histories and outcomes of different European (as well as Asian and other) imperialisms (and colonialisms) in Asia, Africa and the Americas, and more recent, different forms of imperialism in Europe. Can the centralized state rule of the Soviet Union be seen from a similar perspective? Clearly, there are many forms of colonialism and their outcomes are not alike.

That there is no single 'colonial/postcolonial narrative', let alone a common set of principles to account for all cases of postcolonial urban development is most clearly evident in Abidin Kusno's recent book on postcolonial Indonesia (*Behind the Postcolonial: Architecture, Urban Space and Political Cultures in Indonesia 2000*), and the fifty year history of the development of urban planning in Jakarta, first, under Sukarno, and then, the 32 year rule of Suharto. The problem of postcolonial studies, according to Kusno (himself an Indonesian), has been a tendency to examine colonial discourse as part of an undifferentiated critique of 'the West' - without acknowledging that colonialism can come in many different forms. What Kusno argues is that, until the demise of Suharto's 'New Order' regime in 1998, Indonesia maintained a colonial regime in all but name. Moreover, Kusno departs from a key theme in postcolonial criticism, arguing that colonialism did not bring about a displacement of indigenous culture. Indeed, as the Dutch promoted the Indonesian language throughout the archipelago and also developed indigenous forms and styles of design, they helped construct a sense of nationalism in the new state. The spatially divisive system of planning, however, has been exacerbated after independence.

In summary, therefore, broad-ranging theoretical discourses, whether of globalization, or postcolonialism, need to pay very careful attention to particular political, cultural and historical conditions. Yet as far as my own current research is concerned, postcolonial paradigms provide a higher level of specificity in making sense of empirical research - to which I now turn.

Hybrid modernities

Typically, we assume that the spatial, built form manifestations of what we crudely refer to as 'globalization' are in the CBD, the downtown, evidenced by the appearance of multinational corporation headquarters, international banks or the pervasive sign of franchised global corporations - the golden M, perhaps, in some sort of vernacular disguise. What has been neglected is 'globalization' (and postcolonialism) in the suburb, both as a cultural process and especially, as a spatial, built form - phenomena conceived in regard to Crang's "conceived, perceived and lived spaces".

Both Roger Silverstone, in his *Visions of Suburbia* (1997) and Peter Taylor, in *Modernities* (1999), while both focusing on the anglophone world of the USA, Australia and the UK, see the contemporary suburb as the paradigmatic embodiment of modernity, the classic modern suburb of single family houses in large gardens in tree lined roads. "This landscape of consumer modernity", Taylor writes, "represents the culmination of four centuries of ordinary modernity". Probably conceiving of the suburb in terms of the immense proportion of society's resources invested in it, Taylor states that it is "the modern equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals of the high middle ages in feudal Europe" (1999: 58-59). With some license, he writes that, with the era of American hegemony, "the middle class suburb has spread to cities across the world" (1999: 58).

Similarly, for Silverstone,.

"Suburban culture is a consuming culture. Fueled by the increasing commoditization of everyday life, suburbia has become the crucible of a shopping economy. It is a culture of, and for, display. The shopping mall, all glass and glitter, all climate and quality control, is the latest manifestation of the dialectic of suburban consumption. The hybridity displayed in the shopping mall is a representation, a reflection and a revelation of the hybridity of suburbia. Suburbs are places for transforming class identities. The differences grounded in the differences of position in the system of production have gradually, as Bourdieu states, been overlaid and replaced by the differences grounded in the system of consumption" (1997: 8-9)

While I agree largely with Taylor and Silverstone here, there is, however, a major omission in their accounts. Neither pays sufficient attention to the dependence of suburbanization, both as an economic as well as a physical, spatial, ideological, and architectural phenomenon, on the internationalization of the economy, not least, through the processes of imperialism, colonialism and the workings of the world economy and international division of labor. As I have discussed these topics elsewhere I won't go into them now, except to remind ourselves of the vast transfer of resources and accumulation of capital that characterized imperialism, not only fueling industrial urban development in the metropole but also promoting the economic, social and spatial expansion of suburban development. Or, in the British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese colonies, the laying out of colonial urban space, subsequently to provide the spatial infrastructure for different kinds of suburban development, whether in Algiers, Morocco,

Indonesia, India, Malaysia or elsewhere. Along with these developments went the transculturation and hybridization of suburban spatial and architectural forms. We need some historical background.

In the nineteenth century in the West, as the industrial bourgeoisie got larger, the suburb represented a move to an imaginary, more exotic, even foreign universe, one represented by new names, new spaces, new forms, new plants and shrubs, imported from all over the colonial world (Preston 1999). Quite early in the development of the spatialized social differentiation that became the suburb, three spatial forms (non-native to northwest Europe or north America) were appropriated from other cultures to give new meanings to suburban life: the villa, the verandah and the bungalow.

Villa, both as term and architectural idea, came into the English language from the Italian as a response to a renewed interests in the classics in the 17th century. However, it entered into the fashion conscious vocabulary of England only from the late 18th century during the first spurt of the expansion of the bourgeois classes. It also entered Germany about the same time. Its transplantation to the USA early in the nineteenth century was an outcome of similar conditions. 'A villa' wrote A J Downing, the architectural writer, 'is the country house of a person of competence or wealth sufficient to build it with taste and elegance'. Where a cottage could be looked after by a family, 'a villa requires the care of at least three or more servants' (1850). The verandah, another exogenous space and term, imported originally from Spain and Portugal via colonial routes from India, was an additional spatial device devoted to conspicuous consumption. The bungalow - the classic single-storey suburban dwelling - in the country but not of the country - was equally a product of imperialism, by the first decades of the 20th century, becoming the suburban house of choice, first in California, then throughout the USA, Canada, before being transplanted (as well as translated and transformed) to Australia, New Zealand, Britain, South Africa and elsewhere in the mid twentieth century (King, 1984, 1995). Let me turn from the 'Western' suburbs of the early 1900s to those of the East (and West) of the early 2000s.

Old and New Neologisms

Suburb, as we know, is a term and phenomenon that has been around at least since the fourteenth century, even though massive suburban expansion in Western cities was a nineteenth, early and then mid- twentieth century phenomenon. The idea of the suburb as a lifestyle however is especially associated with the late nineteenth century when the term suburbia first entered the OED (1895).

We don't have to be Latin scholars to recognize that sub-urb originally implied that the suburban settlement was 'sub' (i.e. under or below) the city - a generic growth out of the city. What I want to suggest here is that, today, in many cities round the world, we no longer just have sub-urbs - we also have supraurbs (or alternatively, globurbs) whose origins - economic, social, spatial, architectural - are not only no longer generated from the city, or even the country, but develop from outside the nation - state itself. They fly in, touch down at the airport (the new urban center, replacing the old town hall and town square (Sudjic, 1992)), and are nourished by umbilical cords that are not only infinitely extendable but no-one knows where they end - taking in imagery from films, TV and transnational travel². But rather than attempting to account for

these developments simply in terms of the contemporary gloss of "globalization" I shall maintain that, just as before, the suburbs of today continue to be generated by forces of imperialism, colonialism, nationalism, as well as the diasporic migratory cultures and capital flows of global capitalism.

My examples come from the USA, China, and India. They illustrate the very different transnational, postcolonial or neo-imperial flows of capital and culture, migration and urban and architectural design, as well as the particular dynamics of locality that help account for them.

Supraburbs and Globurbs

(This section to be illustrated with slides)

I begin with the US capital, Washington DC, and some of the new supraurbs/ globurbs that have been created in the last two or three decades in Northern Virginia, significantly, not far from the Pentagon and Dulles airport. The new migrations which have largely helped to form them - mostly, but not all, Asian (and later, Asian-American) "were, and are, in different degrees, tied to American foreign policy as well as patterns of colonialism and nationalism. Asian Americans, as well as Latinos/as have arrived in the United States as a result of colonialism in the region and the ensuing colonial wars": (Yun, 2000) (in the nineteenth century, with Spain, or, later, in Korea, Vietnam, and more recently, with actions in El Salvador, Grenada, Somalia). Immigrants of Asian and Central American descent - with their local suburban economies as also their distinctive mall architectures - carry the traces of wars. For government, military, and intelligence reasons, "Pentagon connections are today highly significant for first wave refugees from a number of countries to North Virginia" (Wood, 1997, p 59). Near Seven Corners in Fairfax County, the Eden Center/Plaza 7 "replicates a small Vietnamese marketing town" (ibid), with its Saigon East store, typical (gold) jewelry shops and cultural entertainments. It is the center of attraction for some 50,000 Vietnamese Americans in the metropolitan area.

In the mid 1990s, however, Vietnamese were 'second only to the Salvadoreans in the number of immigrants entering the Washington metropolitan area' (ibid), largely represented in restaurants, food stores and in the (inherently suburban) landscaping business. Koreans, another war-related community, are largely centered on Annandale, where they support a large suburban mall, grocery and distribution center for Korean goods and several restaurants. Other war-refugee groups from East Africa - Somalis, Eritraians, Ethiopians - refugees of some status, often educated in the US, are also to be found in this area³.

Unrelated to America's overseas wars are the significant numbers of highly-educated Indians in other Washington suburbs, linked mainly to high tech industries in the region (the headquarters of America On Line and other dot com companies), with their commercial and cultural centers, and Bollywood movie house at Loehman's Plaza on Arlington Boulevard. In the long duree, this Indian presence must also be accounted for by the long-term colonial anglophonic connection, with Indians (from India) taking up almost 50 per cent of the 200,000 highly sought-after H1-B visas for professionals issued in 1999 (Bose, 2000). Though language is not the only factor taking postcolonial anglophonic Hindi speakers to a postcolonial America where indigenous, native American languages (e.g. Iroquis) have been virtually wiped out, it is one, among others, that makes Germany, for example (also attempting to woo high tech Indian professionals to its labor-starved computer industry) far less attractive (xxxxx Guardian Weekly, July 2000).

Beijing

In examining the cultural and spatial transformations taking place in Beijing, the first thing to note are the 55 million overseas Chinese who bring some \$30 billion investment into the country every year- 60 per cent of it from, and through, Hong Kong, 15 per cent from Taiwan. (Ramesh, 2000).

In the early 1950s, Chairman Mao, with the help of Soviet planners, erased swathes of the ancient fabric round the Forbidden City to make way for a socialist "people's space" of Tianenman Square. Today, Mao (as well as previous emperors) would no doubt turn in his grave to see central Beijing transformed into an "International Metropolis" (Li Rongxia, 2000), and major global financial center (Short and Kim, 1999). The developments described below, therefore, need to be seen in the context of a Beijing (population 12.5 million) where the urban fabric, consisting of the ancient Forbidden City at the center, a rapidly diminishing area to its north of traditional, single-storey 'hutong' settlements, masses of 6-8 storey walk-up apartment complexes from the socialist era, and a very rapidly-growing array of huge and expensive private apartment buildings often over thirty stories. 'Traditional' housing is being replaced by 'modern' housing with a vengeance (but only in the 'collective', apartment house form). In the 1990s, however, the shape of housing has taken a completely new (capitalist) direction.

In 1998, Beijing had a stock of 21,000 units of residential property especially "designed for overseas buyers" either "quality apartments" or "single family houses". The major clients for these are foreign multinational firms (and their executives), overseas investors (not least, diasporic Chinese) but also local Chinese, suddenly grown rich with the shift to free market capitalism⁴. In the mid 1990s, villas were a major sell to overseas Chinese. At Regent on the River, 17 KM west of the city center is a 19 acre estate of luxury suburban homes "surrounded by lovely woodland, rivers and streams". The nomenclature and designs of these "European and US style houses" are chosen to reach a more residentially discriminating Euro-American-Chinese clientele - "The American, the Nordic, the Baroque, Mediterranean, Classic European, The Georgian". "River Garden Villas or Phoenix Garden Villas are located near "the only world class 18 hole golf course, managed by Japan Golf Promotions". Alternatively, there are Garden Villas, King's Garden Villas, the Beijing Eurovillage - for the managers of global capital flows. Images of Beijing Dragon Villas, "beautiful American-Canadian residences," provide more precise evidence of the transcontinental connectivity of places, linking this transmigratory, diasporic overseas Chinese business class around the world.

The villas are compared to other houses in Beverly Hills in California, Long Island in New York, and Richmond in Vancouver, Canada.⁵ This latter is especially interesting as, with the influx of (especially) Hong Kong migrants into Vancouver in the decade from the late 1980s, residents of Chinese descent in this upmarket suburb of Richmond increased from 7 to 37 per cent of all residents (Mitchell, 2000, p.13)

By summer 2000, there were something over one hundred of these 'luxury residential' complexes clustered in seven locations, predominantly round the outskirts of the built up area of the city, accessible from the 4th Ring Road, and with the main concentration around the Airport Expressway. Those closest to town (in Sanlitun and the 'second Diplomatic Area'), some thirty in all, are largely tall apartment complexes. The villa developments are (expectedly), further out,

closer to the airport, or to the north, beyond the Asian Games Village (Jones Lang LaSalle, Beijing Luxury Residential Map, 2000). For their (mainly) transnational residents - employed, for example, by IKEA, Hoechst, BASF, BP, Siemens, Audi, NOKIA, Coopers and Lybrand, Hewlett Packard and others - they are within reach of (non-indigenous) facilities such as the German School, Beijing International School, Montessori KG, Family Hospital, in this case, in the 'third Diplomatic Area'. In these outlying areas, carefully located by the Beijing planning system in the middle of open country, far from the noise, pollution, and not least, intense crowding of the Chinese capital, are the Purple Jade Villas, King's Garden Villas, Fragrance Garden, Beijing Riviera Villas, Capital Paradise Villas, Silver Lake Villas, Legend Garden Villas, Regent on the River, Dynasty Gardens - all powerfully promoted (and signalled) on huge hoardings as one drives along the otherwise building-free, excellently surfaced, tree-lined highways towards the airport. All developments have appeared in the last eight years.

Seen for the first time, the Beijing 'villa phenomenon' brings to mind two phrases: Robert Hughes 'Shock of the New', being suddenly confronted by a 'built environment experience' produced by the juxtaposition of one completely new cultural product within the cultural space of another (as if finding an entire block in central Manhattan suddenly planted with thatched roof English cottages) and Homi Bhabha's 'white, but not quite' in that, on a closer look, the 'local' becomes apparent through the 'global', or better, the 'Chinese' obtrudes through the 'American'.

The extent of the 'luxury' is perhaps best conveyed by the price. In a city where average wages are in the region of 2000 RMB (\$200 p.m.) villa prices in the Beijing Riviera complex are from some \$765,000 to \$1.3 million (total floor area for the lower range about 250 square metres to 464 square meters for the more expensive). Rentals (for a 400 sq m villa and above) range from \$9,000 to \$13,000 p.m., plus a management fee (for owners and renters) of between \$492-\$677 p.m. and a membership fee for the Club (providing a wide range of recreational/sporting facilities) of \$120 p.m. In its promotional literature, Beijing Riviera markets itself as 'North American style in the Beijing suburbs. Beijing Riviera has succeeded in replicating North American Life and Architecture'. The Capital Paradise Villas are 'a leading expatriate society in Beijing with 500 European style villas'. Over the last twenty years, according to the Beijing Riviera literature, 'Beijing has exerted itself as one of the world's greatest international capitals. With over 100,000 expatriates from over fifty countries, Beijing offers an opportunity for interaction unrivaled in most other Asian cities'. The complex, a walled and gated compound with 'electric sliding gates' (as are all of these villa developments), houses 700 residents, 'ambassadors, embassy staff, executives of the world's leading companies', representing twenty-eight countries. Thirty per cent of whom are from the US, and from four to seven per cent from each of France, Australia, Germany, UK, Taiwan, Singapore, as well as China⁶. For these prices, the villas come with the most up-to-date American fittings (some of them, of course, made in China) - bathrooms, kitchens, home theater, gym, bar - and a full complement of top class, leading edge interior furnishing and furniture. A regular shuttle bus runs between each of these developments for the 20 minute journey to the city. The architects, developers, mortgage banks, as far as can be ascertained, are Chinese firms in Hong Kong and Singapore.

The major feature marketed by these developments is security. Dragon Villas, the most expensive of these luxury villas, 231 'residences fit for royalty' with fourteen different designs (from 341 to 886 sq meters) and 'utilizing North American style architecture' are 'behind

carefully guarded stone gates'. Dragon Villas 'puts residents' safety first. An infra-red alarm system seals the community's outer walls; at each villa, closed circuit TV and coded alarm systems ensure residents' safety and security'. The presence of (at least some of) the two hundred security guards - paid at the rate of 800 RMB p.m. (\$80) - is pervasive⁷

I shall not elaborate too much on these developments here. The facts of uneven development are as glaring as the reproduction, in the grossest of senses, of the spaces and socio-political conditions of colonial cities - not least, Shanghai in the 1930s. What is particularly striking, however, is the massive and rapid shift over a period of less than one decade from collective to individual forms of housing - represented by the individualised Western (now increasingly globalized) villa, as the epitome of the individualized, consumption-oriented suburb⁸.

Though superficially 'similar' to some North American suburban developments, these Beijing globurbs are no more perfectly mimetic of their generative models in 'the West' than were the colonial houses before them (King 1990). Local conditions are paramount. With some singular exceptions, plot sizes are minuscule compared to what might normally be assumed, in the West, to be appropriate for such huge villas. High land costs may be an explanation; but Chinese house-owners, whether in China or Vancouver, unlike Anglo-Saxons, put higher values on inside than outside territory. Wide open spaces are American, not Asian longings. High, solid, and impenetrable walls - the historically enduring feature of Chinese domestic architecture - divide the handkerchief sized plots from each other. Glazed roof tiles lend an Italian housing idea a Sinicized finish. Above all, the regimental system of management control exercised on these developments totally contradicts the individualized treatment and serendipitous semi-neglect often characteristic of private suburban property in 'the West'

Delhi and Bangalore

The overall conditions producing new forms of transnational (and especially, supraburban) space in India are, in some ways, comparable to China but the results are also very different, not least because the large diasporic Indian population (between 15 and 22 million, Ramesh 2000) have very different political histories, cultures, and diasporic geographies. The Indian diasporic population can be grouped, historically and geographically, into five main clusters, the largest, and probably the wealthiest, of the five groups being the four million in the USA (1.3 million), the UK, Canada, Australia and other western countries. This latter group, well-educated, often in professional occupations, have been called the "priviligentsia" (Jamesh, 2000). In total, all overseas (or non-resident) Indians contribute some \$10 billion in annual remittances and deposits in Indian banks of Non-Resident Indians (NRI's) amount to about \$23 million (ibid).

The social, spatial and cultural transformations taking place around particular cities - Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore - has to be seen (if we can believe the advertisements) in the context of two or three phenomena. One of these is the transnational process of transmigration, in which migrants move regularly between "home" and the "destination country, shifting capital (and ideas, practices) between them (Glick Schiller et al. 1992).. More especially, however, it has to be understood through the particular stance of the Indian state which, first, has legislated two distinctive categories - the Non Resident Indian, giving particular privileges and gaurantees regarding the investment of property capital in India, and the PIO, Person of Indian Origin (with

similar financial and legal privileges) . Both of these categories carefully cultivate an Indian identity: one of belongingness to the state, but another, transnational identity, that can operate in the market.

The third factor to note, however, is the distinctive postcolonial identity (and I use this phrase in a very positive way) in which property advertisements (taken from the widely circulating weekly magazine, India Today International) represent the new suburban developments with which developers tempt NRI's worldwide to invest. Let's start with the ubiquitous villa⁹.

Much of the advertising is directed to flattering the cosmopolitan nature of the potential investor, people "who have known the very best the world has to offer", who recognize that apartments are "world class", and for those who move between the business worlds of the US, the UK and France. Here, if we can believe the ads, a transnational, if still anglophonic, domestic (and in cases, postcolonial, maybe colonial) suburban villa architecture is in process - with villas emanating or labeled from the US, England, Scotland, postcolonial Britain though also Morocco

Conclusion

What do I want to say with these mini city stories?

+ First, within a framework of an apparent "globalization", to stress the importance of historically sub-global processes, processes which, as I have indicated, have only included certain states, peoples, ethnicities who have, as a consequence, been 'marked' by these specific experiences. But also, to emphasize the importance of place, and people, as "constitutive of, and central to the functioning of 'global' (cultural as well as) economic circuits" (Mitchell, 2000)

+ Second, to counter the frequently expressed 'homogenization thesis' that is often associated with "globalization", understood as global flows of labor, culture, or capital. To recognize that when ideas, objects, institutions, images, practices, performances are transplanted to other places, other cultures, they both bear the marks of history as well as undergo a process of cultural translation.

This can happen in any or all of three ways

1. Most simply, for material phenomena, they frequently change their form, their social use, or function.
2. Even though arriving in similar forms (whether material technology or images) they are invested with different cultural, social or ideological meanings.
3. The different meanings which material objects, ideas or images acquire depend on the highly varied local social, physical and spatial environments into which they're introduced and the equally varied local conditions under which they develop..

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- 1.The phrases in quotation are taken from the Hugh Raffles' initial e-mailed prospectus, July 2000
- 2.This is an aspect seemingly ignored by Joel Garreau in his otherwise interesting book, *Edge Cities*.
3. I am indebted to geographer Joe Wood, previously of George Mason University, now Provost, University of Maine, for a tour of the area described and for much of this information.
4. As I was told in August 2000 by my Chinese guide, as we visited some of these new outer globurban villa developments, 'Before 1979, there was no rich class. Those with power were party officials - but they didn't have much money and, in any case, there was nothing to spend it on'
5. These advertisements are from the English language paper, *China Daily*, circulating in the US in the mid 1990s.
6. According to a representative of Jones Lang LaSalle, Beijing, villas on the most expensive compounds are owned or rented by American and West European countries and companies, the less expensive, by those from East European and less wealthy Asian countries.
- 7.Professor Jeff Cody of the Chinese University of Hong Kong informs me that despite the apparently excessive security on these villa compounds, one German resident was brutally murdered in a messed-up burglary earlier in 2000. Entering and leaving the main gates of the compound generates conveys all the atmosphere of a high security prison, or army barracks, not least in terms of receiving a military-style salute on departure.
8. Prior to the building of these developments, the (presumably much smaller numbers of) expatriates lived in hotels and apartments in the city.
- 9.As I have discussed these developments elsewhere (King, 1998) I have curtailed this section.

