Citizenship Studies,
Vol. 11, No. 1, 83–93, February 2007

Please Stay: Pied-a-Terre Subjects in the Megacity

AIHWA ONG
Department of Anthropology, University of California-Berkeley, CA, USA

ABSTRACT *In contrast to the idea of the big city as a denationalized space of human rights, this article proposes an alternate concept of the megacity as a national space that activates "neoliberal" desires for foreign experts, creative know-how, and capital accumulation. In addition, expatriates add to and reflect the symbolic values of Asian cities arriving on the global stage. But the limited commitments of global professionals, actualized and symbolized by the pied-a-terre, deter and challenge the deep commitments required by classic citizenship. Is the global nomad a cog in international information networks, a figure who expresses the fundamental denationalized character of capitalism itself? Or is the pied-a-terre the hinge between a global meritocracy and the megacity? The talented expatriate, poised between staying and going, participates in a kind of dysfunctional marriage with the host city that suspends norms of permanent belonging.*

The skylines of Beijing and Shanghai are dominated by soaring skyscrapers that inscribe a calligraphy of global significance. In the midst of Singapore's dazzling science parks, art displays choreograph a dance of the "intellect". For emerging nations, their key cities are designed to be capitals of emerging technologies and diverse cultures that interact in the creation of material and symbolic values.

There are cyber centers in India, a multimedia corridor in Kuala Lumpur, a digital center in Seoul, media and biomedical towers in Shanghai, and a bio-engineering complex in Singapore. As accumulators and creators of informational assets, the cities endow themselves with sign values of global emergence. This mix of metropolitan might and megawatt appeal challenges established thinking about cities and citizenship.

The "mega" in megacity here refers less to the sheer size of the urban population than to the scale of political ambition invested for the urban accumulation of foreign talent and creative know-how. Leading Asian cities carry the imprint of enormous state investments, and they are increasingly planned as sites for the capture of circulating global values. These milieus of interdisciplinary cross-fertilization attract mobile managers, professionals, and scientists who can help accelerate the accumulation of material and symbolic capital. But while nomadic professionals have become crucial to the role and identity of the megacity, their commitment is delimited in space and time. This position of betwixt and between is symbolized by the pied-a-terre in the host city.

Correspondence Address: Aihwa Ong, Professor of Social Cultural Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, Kroeber Hall, University of California–Berkeley, Berkeley, CA. 94720-3710, USA. Email: aihwaong@berkeley.edu

1362-1025 Print/1469-3593 Online/07/010083-11 © 2007 Taylor & Francis
DOI: 10.1080/13621020601099898

Scholarly discussions of cities tend to downplay the role of the state in shaping the urban territory and field of possibilities for and against citizenship. The tendency has been to consider the big city as a denationalized space, a site of universal rights for all newcomers. I propose an alternate concept of the city as a national site that activates neoliberal desires for foreign experts whose presence puts into question equality of access to rights and entitlements. As an interstitial space between nation and the world, the megacity becomes a zone of mutating citizenship, as different categories of migrants are differentiated according to the kinds of tangible or intangible assets they bring to the urban economy. The pied-a-terre is the hinge between a global meritocracy and the megacity. The talented expatriate, poised between staying and going, participates in a kind of dysfunctional marriage that destabilizes notions of permanent belonging.

The City as Site of Human Rights

A popular view of the city stresses its internationalized role in converting immigrants into citizens, if not of the country, then of the city itself. Citizenship has been conceptualized in terms of resolute oppositions, between top down social engineering and bottom up class struggles (Turner, 1993), citizens and aliens (Arendt, 1998 [1958]), or social exclusions and inclusions (Marshall, 1963; Mouffe, 1992; Brysk & Shafir, 2004). Marxian-driven perspectives on class struggles proceed beyond the factory floor to the space of the city, so that much attention is given to the laboring poor, migrants, and refugees who struggle for political rights in the metropolitan centers they help build and sustain.

In *City and Citizenship*, James Holston and Arjun Appadurai seem to speak from the perspective of agrarian societies where the rural populations have not yet been brought under the umbrella of formal citizenship. They note that:

> If the formal refers to membership in the nation-state and the substantive to the array of civil, political, socioeconomic, and cultural rights people possess and exercise, much of the turmoil of citizenship derives from the following problem: although in theory full access to rights depends on membership, in practice that which constitutes citizenship substantively is often independent of its formal status. (Holston & Appadurai, 1999, p. 8)

There is a gap between the formal promise of citizenship, and the actual experiences of peasant masses and laboring classes who have never tasted the rights of national citizenship. Only by arriving at the urban periphery can the rural majority claim their substantive rights to things like public housing, electricity, and clean water.

For Saskia Sassen, the "global city" has become a site for internalizing global norms and practices associated with human rights agencies. She notes that New York City has an ensemble of global institutions including the United Nations that can help immigrants claim entitlements as citizens of the city. The paradigmatic global city awards its own citizenship based on universal entitlements. As a global center of finance and cosmopolitan culture, the city enacts a "denationalization" of the nation, producing a city-derived citizenship that is disarticulated from the home country (Sassen, 1998). Another perspective also focuses on the access of migrant workers to at least some elements of citizenship in the European context. Turkish guest workers, Yasmin Soysal (1994) has observed, can claim limited benefits and civil rights, a claim that amounts to a

"partial" or "postnational" citizenship. Finally, in a sweeping claim about a counter-Empire, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, p. 400) identify the city as a strategic place where the mobile multitude can assemble to demand "global citizenship" from capitalism's Empire.

Such approaches focus on urban conditions of possibility for the performance of liberal ethics, politics, and action.[1] The global city is conceptualized as a special political site where all human beings can congregate to realize universal human rights. But the tendency seems to be to consider the city as a universal, "placeless" site somehow disarticulated from the nation-state in which the city is embedded. There is also the suggestion that the transition of migrants in the city from non-citizenship to citizenship status is inevitable. In this connection, city authorities are presented as oppressive, incompetent, corrupt, or pliant in the face of demands by immigrants, workers, and international rights agencies.

We should note, however, that in these neoliberal times, the political work of the metropolis has also been about creating and sustaining regimes of universalization associated less with human rights than with human capital and its formation, collection, and circulation. Jean Baudrillard (2003) observes that the universal itself "has become globalized, and human rights circulate exactly like other global product (oil or capital for example)". While the city continues to be a site for claiming rights, it is also a place that favors producers of elite economic and symbolic values. For instance, New York City, the home of the United Nations, has been promoted by Mayor Bloomberg as "a luxury product" where the affluent are squeezing out the middle classes and young professionals, not to mention everyday workers (Scott, 2006). In Asia's internationalizing cities, desirable residents are less the rich and famous than the educated and talented, both local and foreign. By creating conditions of possibility for the accumulation of human capital, the megacity is also interrupting the rule of citizenship.

The City as a Desiring Machine

I have argued elsewhere that processes of reterritorialization are linked to the creation of heterogeneous political spaces within a national territory (Ong, 2006a).

In emerging Asian countries, state power has been rescaled in relation to the challenges of global capitalism, resulting in a variegated patterning of zones I call "graduated sovereignty". The re-zoning of national territory into political spaces facilitates articulation with global capital, and also enables differential governing of groups and populations (Ong, 2006a). For instance, while manufacturing zones are focused on the disciplining of labor, glamorous urban centers cultivate the national elite and enterprising expatriates. By attending to political technologies of scaling, we approach the big metropolis as first and foremost, a site for inscribing national significance.

We can say that in Asia, megacities are the most important socio-political scale for effecting state power. My use of "megacity" does not stress absolute spatial or demographic dimensions,[2] nor do I view it in terms of its functional role in the global capitalist system (Sassen, 1991). Rather, the megacity is conceptualized as a prominent "state-space" (Brenner, 2004) for articulating and regulating global flows of technology, culture, and actors. As the real estate for the meeting of national and foreign talent, the megacity gives expression to a range of desires involved in the production and circulation of values.

A number of observers have noted that desire, not labor, is the key force in contemporary capitalism (for example, Baudrillard, 1983; Deleuze & Guattari, 1983; Jameson, 1992). I consider the megacity a kind of "desiring machine" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 31), a territorial machine slicing into global flows, and thus a nexus where desires erupt into the production of flows of material and sign values. As a national prime estate, the megacity creates a milieu where different desirable forms (technology, capital, knowledge, actors, citizenship) are re-channeled and recombined to realize a constellation of ever unfolding knowledge and cultural capital. The metropolis is therefore a space for the actualizing of national desire for global values and prestige, as well as the desire for the elite stranger, as a producer and enabler of these values. The desire to break into the universal flows of knowledge and actors induces a mode of urban governmentality that is itself inflected by desire.

Reeling in Talent

As Asian cities gear up to be centers of cybernetics, informatics, and genomics, they vie with each other to pull in brainpower from around the world. The mix of advantages for expatriates is different in each city, but talented foreigners are welcome with prestigious jobs, housing perks, maids, and conditions for pursuing an international lifestyle. Their social belonging is given form by their occupations in key industries, and also by their use of the city as a second location. Expatriates can be said to enjoy a pied-a-terre status, one that identifies the spatial and temporal limits of their link to the city. Despite the turnover, the expatriate community keeps the city in the global game. One may say that a megacity is in part defined by the number of mobile professionals and entrepreneurs who make it a long-term stop in their international itineraries.

To be recognized as truly global, Asian cities compete with each other to welcome foreign experts or émigrés who have been educated abroad. While the cities would like to call skilled foreigners their own people, there is the recognition that most international professionals and businesspeople do not become citizens. A range of work and visiting visas ease the entry, work and travel of expatriates. Other professionals are welcomed as short-term visitors (with multiple passes). All are encouraged to become permanent residents or citizens. For instance, Shanghai, as China's leading economic powerhouse, has made itself over as a national gateway for international managers and corporate employees of big firms such as British Petroleum, Ford, or Proctor and Gamble. Five-year work visas allow foreign talents to stay longer and help the city maintain its lead. In the city of 14 million, there are approximately 300,000 expatriates, including family members living in villa compounds.[3]

Singapore has also adjusted its visa scheme to favor globetrotting executives and knowledge workers. An "employment pass" differentiates between four categories of professionals by their earned income. A special pass allows international businessmen multiple entrees. A "global investor pass" that allows investors to set up new businesses easily converts into permanent residence with an investment of one million.[4] In addition, Asian cities have competed to lower tax rates for expatriates. After Hong Kong lowered the income tax for foreign residents, Singapore whittled down the tax further, making the city one of the most lucrative bases for the already well-paid expatriate. A city-state of four million people, the metropolis has one million expatriates (permanent residents and non-residents).[5]

It is important to note that Singapore is a city-state, and that it sees itself as more than a commercial or financial center. The state plays a major role in providing capital to build

a "world-class city" and to lure foreign experts and global companies. The most recent mega project is the One-North, a complex of research labs, multimedia centers, restaurants, residential quarters, day care centers, and shops. Thousands of scientists, researchers, and students have been recruited from around the world to staff the research institutes, companies, and universities. Discourses about "quality people", "techno-preneur" or "bio-preneur" citizenship broadcast the new social values of belonging embodied by expatriates. These foreign residents are called "cosmopolitans", in contrast to the "quitters" or the quarter million or so Singaporeans living abroad.

As Asian cities become more exciting places of employment and upscale living, they are managing to reverse the brain drain. There are several programs to tempt Asian émigrés to return home. China, India, and Singapore have set up offices in the Silicon Valley to lure back scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs. As more émigrés educated overseas return to Asia, they are eagerly showered with opportunities to work in cutting edge fields or to lead emerging industries. The metaphor for ethnic Chinese returnees is sea turtles ("*hai gui*") that return to nesting sites after sojourning abroad. The idiom of the return of the diaspora makes inevitable the assumption that the émigrés will eventually return with their Western knowledge and cultural practices to help modernize Asian nations (for example, Ong, 1999, pp. 43–48).

In China, the return of the diaspora is becoming central to the drive for global markets. Returnee professionals are wooed by well-paid and prestigious jobs, luxurious apartments and villas, as well as special "returning entrepreneurial" centers in the cities. Ethnic migrants who bring expertise and capital to emerging centers in Asia are not of course limited to Chinese professionals. Their Indian counterparts are called NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) who enjoy a special perks for investing in New Delhi or setting up companies in Hyderabad or Bangalore. One may say as well that the growing number of mobile Asian professionals in information and biomedical industries is feeding the growth of Asian cities, and they are rewarded with residence and employment rights that put them into a special category of overseas citizens who can take advantage of citizenship regimes in the homeland as well as abroad (Ong, 2006a).

Among these returnees are scientists and professors trained in the latest fields who are attracted to jobs in the new areas of biotechnology and biomedicine. Singapore has funneled billions of dollars into science research, and the centerpiece of this endeavor is Biopolis, a center for stem cell research that has been called a virtual "research nirvana" by visiting scientists. The complex has attracted about 1, 200 scientists, half of them ethnic Chinese trained overseas. The head of Singapore's national science research agency remarked that "Some people collect butterflies. I collect scientists" (Traufetter, 2005). The leader of the Genome Institute is Edward Liu, a Hong Kong-born naturalized American who is now Singapore's top science hero. Expatriate Chinese professionals are increasingly viewed as a kind of deterritorialized nation available for recruitment to augment the urban professional and economic class in Asian cities. Needless to say, this intermingling of elite citizens with global nomads and returning emigres has a destabilizing effect on citizenship itself.

A Space of Mutating Citizenship

Classic notions of citizenship are based on a system of equivalents; all citizens are equally valued, and ideally all newcomers should have claims on citizenship. This view of universal rights is anchored in the modern industrial liberal order, where the state seeks to

protect the rights of all citizens through political rights and social entitlements (Marshall, 1963). But in an information age driven by innovation and migration, ambitious cities are becoming spaces of mutating citizenship. Robert Reich notes that "symbol analysts"—many of them immigrants—were essential to the "new economy" of the 1990s (Reich, 1991). Another perspective ties the vibrancy of American cities to their capacity to attract and retain a "creative class" of professionals and bohemians in information age industries (Florida, 2002). Others have observed the crucial presence of managers and the superrich in great cities, focusing on functions they play in sustaining the financial networks and the hegemony of a capitalist world system (Short, 2004).

From the view of emerging Asia, the metropolis becomes the strategic site for managing tensions between deterritorialized markets and territorialized nationalisms, and for reaching out to foreign talent while securing national interests. The ambitious city is increasingly shaped by a milieu where neoliberal norms regulate citizens and strangers alike. Yet, the connection between hypergrowth cities and expatriates remains under-theorized in relation to citizenship.

George Simmel makes two observations that are suggestive for my thinking about cities and foreigners. First, Simmel notes that the metropolis is a site where money and intellect "converge and accumulate" and, through the process of exchange, create a new order of value.[6] Second, the stranger in the city is "a person who comes today and stays tomorrow". The status of aliens is shaped by nearness and distance, involvement and indifference, belonging and non-belonging to the urban environment. At the same time, this strangeness of strangers produces a reciprocal tension that marks them as members of a social group (Simmel, 1950, pp. 402–408).

This axis of belonging and non-belonging characterizes not only the status of the cosmopolitan stranger. The contemporary expatriate also ruptures the fabric of citizenship, inducing a similar ambiguity in the status of the native. The dual process of belonging and non-belonging has different implications for expatriate and citizen in today's Asian megacity, and raises questions as to how they are to be differently governed in a city being reconfigured as a global space, and how to manage the tension between self-enterprising strangers and security-conscious citizens.

The urban quest for global actors shows up the limits of a notion of citizenship as a set of stabilized political elements. In the urban assemblage formed by markets, politics and security, citizenship as a fixed set of political rights and duties is destabilized, as market criteria come to modify the claims of nationality (Ong, 2006b). While the rest of the country may be still governed according to strict laws of citizenship, the would-be global city breaks with the norms of citizenship in its strategic search for values in a global field of migratory talent and limited commitments.

Pied-a-Terre Status

Part of the urban claim to global rank rests on an image of multiculturalism. But Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Singapore, with their long-term multicultural residents, have developed careful distinctions among different categories of migrants and aliens. The preference is for "expatriates", a code for skilled foreigners, and to exclude "migrant workers", or aliens who engage in low skill or menial labor. The discourse of multiculturalism is dominated by the claims of elite foreigners than those of migrant workers. For instance, when Indian professionals demanded respectful treatment from Chinese-bias institutions in

Hong Kong, their complaints stirred a debate over whether the city's "world-class" ambition can afford to offend expatriates. Meanwhile, the street gatherings of Filipina maids have always been perceived as damaging to the glamorous image of the city. Similarly, in multicultural Singapore, foreign domestic workers brought in under time-limited contracts are not permitted to become permanent residents or citizens (Ong, 2006a). In China, the household registration system treats rural migrants in cities as non-citizens. Thus, nursemaids and construction workers in Shanghai have no residential rights outside the places of employment. In other words, low skill aliens whose labor power are essential to the living standards of great cities have very limited claims on respect, residence, and rights. In contrast, these cities are united by their eagerness to attract foreign professionals who are warmly welcomed and induced to take up pied-a-terre status indefinitely.

Like the circulation of values, expatriates are time-limited residents in big Asian cities. Professionals footloose in international labor markets are increasingly shopping for the "best" job platforms now emerging in Asia. Maintaining a secondary urban residence is after all a regular feature of expatriate careers.

There is a case to be made for pied-a-terre status as a political position between different regimes of citizenship. As flows of global capital, knowledge, and actors become territorialized in dominant cities, the interstitial positioning of expatriates is key toward maintaining circulations in the global system of production. Think of the bank commercial for an earlier decade: "Our Man in London/New York/Tokyo". Professional nomads are at once situated and circulating, and they embody a kind of market citizenship—occupation-driven, mobile, temporary residence, here today, gone next year—bodies that express the sign value of the extraterritorial reach of the global city itself. The pied-a-terre subject is a social form through which global capital inserts itself into the matrix of the national state, by establishing a residential presence in key urban nodes of global systems.

From the perspective of the emerging nation, the most prominent city is a national hub for selectively culling and combining actors both local and global in the interests of national development. As a Singapore technocrat remarks, encouraging the "movement of goods and people is the only way to stay global". Furthermore, "outside judgment and expertise are important" for raising the profile of emerging cities.[7] As a haven for the talented and creative, the Asian metropolis seeks to accumulate global expertise from successive weaves of foreign experts and returnees. The spatial and occupational capture of world-class experts is so valuable that their pied-a-terre needs are willingly accommodated. The host city makes a fine point about citizenship only at their own peril. In the majority of situations, the citizenship of expatriates is besides the point, though their localized professions and perks impinge on the living conditions of local citizens.

The visiting expert is attracted not only by job perks and tax breaks, but also by the creation of global lifestyle conditions in the Asian megacity. There is a building spree of office towers, convention centers, and international hotels in Asian capitals. In addition, foreigners are gaining ownership of choicest neighborhoods where so-called "modern luxury condos" have been built to resemble chic pieds-a-terre in Manhattan. In Shanghai, there is a gold rush of foreigners buying up residential and office space in Putong, many times the size of Manhattan. Expatriate communities—Japanese, European, American, Indian, South American—are ensconced in gated neighborhoods with names like Bellagio and Santa Monica. Even mid-range foreign managers and teachers can enjoy pretty luxurious lifestyles in Chinese cities. By comparison, the vast majority of urban Chinese citizens cannot afford access to such lifestyles.

In Singapore, branded hotels (such as St. Regis and Ritz-Carlton) provide upscale facilities for international businessmen and professionals. Less exalted foreigners can purchase condos in gated villa compounds. The Biopolis is complemented by special villages within landscaped gardens and parks. The foreign director of a leading biomedical institute was recently rewarded with a penthouse in the Four Seasons hotel. Expatriate families are served by international schools, day care centers, and supermarkets. The availability of luxurious conditions for work and pleasure is central to the city image as an aspirational real estate. These urban accouterments for the global nomad attest to their strategic importance as pied-a-terre subjects, that is, urban residents major cities cannot afford to ignore.

Foreign wealth and talent help the emerging city to realize its self-image as a center of cultural capital and vibrancy. In China, the growing presence of foreign actors and companies has inspired a thrust toward more global cultural presentations. Opera houses, museums, malls and restaurants display fusions of Chinese cultural heritage with Western elements. Expatriates and visitors are induced to acquire Chinese antiques and paintings by contemporary Chinese artists. A cultural cluster in Xuanwu district of Beijing and Moganshan Road in Shanghai are vibrant Sohos that have drawn critical international investment and collection. The Xinxiandi complex of shops and restaurants built around a historical building that was the early meeting place of the Communist Chinese Party has converted some of the city's most significant places into a space of global consumption. A critical mass of global nomads stimulates citizens to be self-enterprising actors in the globalized urban space.

In Singapore, the stress is on foreign experts' transfer of cutting edge knowledge and intellectual practice to citizens. Foreign professors are hired in the universities to convert the city into "a global schoolhouse" (Olds & Thrift, 2005). Scientists at the Biopolis mentor researchers and students, among other things, in order to help develop a scientific culture. Next door, a new multimedia center, the Fusionpolis, will draw thousands of overseas experts to develop a workforce focused on entertainment media and artistic experimentations that cut across disciplines. The premise of such urban clusters is that orchestrated encounters and exchanges foster a geometric growth in innovation and creativity. In short, these cities see themselves as experimental systems, enrolling foreign talent to nurture different strands of value production and creative ferment.

Experts and expatriates alike are now coded as values in their own right. Their pied-a-terre location adds speculative value to the Asian metropolis, helping to shape an economy of symbolic real estate. The city as a spectacle of globality—international residents, cutting edge industries, stunning skyscrapers—draws its aspirational value from the concentrated presence of expatriates. Developers, entrepreneurs, and professionals directly and indirectly represent the city's stock of economic and cultural worth. Foreign habitués contribute to the international chatter about the future movement of prices across world cities. Thus, an ensemble of affluent and educated people both local and foreign is itself a branding mechanism for the host city.

The stress on cultural consumption and style is so prevalent in Asian cities that many foreigners have flocked there to give them new architectural profiles. The famous architect Rem Koolhaas designed the CCTV monument (with a cutout) in Beijing, next to a stadium (shaped like a Chinese basket), both in time for the International Olympics in 2008. He has also been invited to stage Shanghai as the site of an International Expot in 2010. In both cities, these global events—relayed by electronic media around the world—attest to their

arrival on the global stage. Cultural lessons are vamped up so that Chinese citizens will be welcoming to the flood of foreign visitors. Taxi drivers are putting on uniforms and learning English. The presence of a significant number of foreign actors is a symbolic image of the city itself, as a participant in the creation and exchange of global signs and values.

Don't Go

Finally, the question is whether we can consider the pied-a-terre subject a simulation of citizenship, or a figure who expresses the fundamentally denationalized character of fast-moving capitalism itself. Or do the elite occupations, economic benefits, and social privileges attached to the mobile professional add up to some kind of hyper city status that sidesteps citizenship?

How do we reconcile the tension between figures in an international system of symbolic signification on the one hand, and actual citizenship in the great metropolis? City authorities desire global nomads to stay on but their very *modus operandi* is to move on.

I view the global nomad as an ultimate "city-resident", a betwixt and between figure whose role is central to the emergence of the new techno-metropolis. The pied-a-terre status is more a state of political liminality than of citizen simulation. During his passage through the city, the expatriate is temporarily released from the social norms of citizenship, and his political origins are muted. As a resident in the megacity, the global nomad is in a space of innovation configured by multinational and denationalized interactions and encounters, the very conditions favored by global capitalism. The very ambiguity of status releases creative thinking and practices that contribute to the formation of new values desired by the information economy. For the globetrotting professional, the interstitial phase in a particular city is necessary step to the next occupational rung, perhaps back in the West. The megacity's desire to prolong or stabilize her presence may even be read as a form of self-critique of the limits citizenship imposes on the accumulation of fast-moving capital and innovation.

We should remember that the idiom of global talent articulates not only global markets, but also the security of actual citizens. As Asian political discourse makes clear, foreign experts are needed for building the economic power of the nation, but we cannot therefore assume that the urban capture of foreign experts is a process of "denationalization" by global capital. The urban desire for global expertise is rather part of the larger political design for national emergence. Governing practices scaled at the level of the megacity must attend to the ambivalence of citizens as it becomes a talent market and playground for international actors. Citizens question why foreigners should be showered with tax breaks, the best jobs, and best housing, while their loyalty to the nation-state is uncertain. Unfortunately, while these are vital questions by citizens, the megacity, in its desire to accumulate global values, is increasingly less relevant as a site for distinguishing between the rights of citizens and those of talented outsiders. After all, the amassing of foreign intellectual capital underpins the global citizenship of Asian cities, and by extension their homelands.

This symbiotic relationship between the megacity and migratory talent crystallizes conditions not for the simulation but the suspension of citizenship. Like serial monogamy, ephemeral liaisons between global nomads and particular cities are successive engagements that seldom stabilize into permanent arrangements. Such occupational

habits deter and challenge the deep commitments required by classic citizenship, to say nothing of the universal ideal of human rights. In short, the megacity is the Las Vegas of globetrotting professionals, for whom the pied-a-terre is a temporary location for staging the next placement in the career trajectory.

Megacities generate great inequality, sharpening and concentrating divisions between the highly educated and the less so, between global managers and migrant maids, professors and janitors, human capital and manual labor. While the cosmopolitan mirage of megacities projects a multicultural globality, the urban condition is shaped by divisibility and even incommensurability of human worthiness rather than by a fusion of multicultural horizons that consolidates our common humanity. The great city today is a site where national citizenship is pried open for a contingent citizenship based on meritocracy. It compels ordinary citizens to increase their brainpower as a condition of more secure attachment to the metropolitan motherland.

Notes

[1] For a contemporary discussion of citizenship as a tension between public virtue and private interests, see Habermas (1973).
[2] The "megalopolis" has been defined entirely in terms of size, that is, eight million. It is predicted that by 2015, 19 of the 33 megalopolises will be in Asia. See Koolhaas (2003, pp. 4, 6).
[3] Xinhua News Agency, 25 September 2004.
[4] http://www.contactsingapore.org.sg/moving_visas_Employment.shtml
[5] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Singapore
[6] Simmel (1990, pp. 505–506).
[7] Interview with top scientist administrator, 6 June 2006, Singapore.

References

Arendt, H. (1998 [1958]) *The Human Condition*, Introduction by M. Canovan (2nd ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Baudrillard, J. (1983) *Simulations*, P. Foss, P. Patton & P. Beitchman (Trans.) (New York: Semiotext[e]).
Baudrillard, J. (2003) The violence of the global, in: A. Kroker & M. Kroker (Eds), a129, 20 May, available at www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=385.
Brenner, N. (2004) *New State Spaces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Brysk, A. & Shafir, G. (Eds) (2004) *The Citizenship Gap: People Out of Place* (New York: Routledge).
Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1983) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, R. Hurley, M. Seem & H.R. Lane (Trans.) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
Florida, R. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books).
Habermas, J. (1973) *Theory and Practice* (Boston: Beacon Press).
Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2000) *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
Holston, J. & Appadurai, A. (1999) Introduction, *City and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press).
Jameson, F. (1992) *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press).
Koolhaas, R. (2003) *Mutations: Harvard Project on the City* (Barcelona: ACTAR: Arc En reve centre d'architecture).
Marshall, T. H. (1963) *Class, Citizenship, and Social Class* (New York: Doubleday).
Mouffe, C. (Ed.) (1992) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy* (London: Verso).
Olds, K. & Thrift, N. (2005) Cultures on the brink: re-engineering the soul of capitalism on a global scale, in: A. Ong & S. Collier (Eds) *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, pp. 270–290 (Malden, MA: Blackwell).
Ong, A. (1999) *Flexible Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press).
Ong, A. (2006a) *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham: Duke University Press).

Ong, A. (2006b) Mutations in citizenship, *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 22(3), pp. 499–503.

Reich, R. (1991) *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).

Sassen, S. (1991) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Sassen, S. (1998) Whose city is it? Globalization and the formation of new claims, *Globalization & Its Discontents* (New York: The New Press).

Scott, J. (2006) Cities shed middle class and are richer and poorer for it, *New York Times*, Section 4, 23 July, p. 1.

Short, J. R. (2004) *Global Metropolitan: Globalizing Cities in a Capitalist World* (London: Routledge).

Simmel, G. (1950) The stranger, in: K. Wolff (Ed.) *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, pp. 402–408 (New York: Free Press).

Simmel, G. (1990) *The Philosophy of Money*, D. Frisby (Ed.) (2nd ed.) (London: Routledge).

Soysal, Y. (1994) *The Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Traufetter, G. (2005) Biotech in Singapore, *De Spiegel*, 26 March, available at http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,349122,00.html

Turner, B. (Ed.) (1993) *Citizenship and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).