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Hong Kong Becoming a Chinese Global City

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Abstract

Largely a reflection of its strategic economic position in East Asia, Hong Kong has often been cited as one of the significant examples in the literature on world cities. Despite Hong Kong's status in the mapping of world cities in the global economy, few attempts have been made to use the case of Hong Kong to reflect upon the theoretical and analytical underpinning of the literature on global cities and/or world cities. This paper serves the purpose of engaging in such a discussion. Particularly, we shall argue that the dual economic and political restructuring that Hong Kong has undergone in the past two decades is best understood in the light of its integration into its neighbouring region and, more importantly, the national ambit of China. Instead of becoming more global (in the sense of an intensification of the disembedding dynamics and thus further integration into the global economy by loosening its attachment to the nation-state), Hong Kong's economic development is increasingly embedded in China's grander national marketization project (which, in its turn, is in many important ways shaped by the forces of globalization). Hong Kong is becoming a *Chinese* global city. By underlining the Chinese dimension and its pertinence, we contend that the national project is increasingly making its impacts on Hong Kong. And on the side of Hong Kong, its struggle for survival and recovery from the recession triggered by the Asian Financial Crisis has brought it closer to China. Our analysis of Hong Kong as a Chinese global city highlights the place-ness of the global city, which is shaped by the interactions among the global, the local, as well as the national.