Synergizing Socio-Technological Innovations in Risk Society?
——Contradictions of Urban Utopia in the Information Age——

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Abstract

The century-old dynamism of urbanization has never been abating! Thanks to new technologies and globalization forces for the last two decades, hyper-modernization driven urbanism has been transforming socio-spatial landscape and life chances of global human society; creating new socio-spatial relationships which are revolutionary. This brief paper critically examines the emerging trends of global (dualistic) urbanism－the phenomenal *World City* and *Global City,* toward the building of urban utopia in 21st century; juxtaposing the calling for sustainable development in risk society.

1. The *World City* in Global (Dualistic) Urbanism－Sustainable 21st Century?

In spite of two-century long developmental problems happen in cities since the Industrialization, more and more people move into cities; and cities have been attractive for all classes and races, people at large－thought it is questionably how effective cities enable them for better quality of life. Globally, urban life has been instrumental in shaping life course of people; and urbanization has been, and still is, the major developmental challenge for any nation state. For instance, in the hyper-modernizing China, in 2011, over half of it population reside in urban areas: after two decades of economic liberalization- driven rural-to-urban migration, amounting

to over 200 million of people moved to cities. But the challenge of urbanization is just unfolding in Chinese cities that an addition of 300 million people will flow into urban areas in the coming decades (*Financial Times,* 13 June 2011). And the dramatic hyper-modernizing urbanization is occurring in most developing economies as well. Urban life is likely the future for most people in our (lonely?) planet in 21ˢᵗ century.

The City is Dead－Long Live the *World City!*

Though contested and debatable, the seminal work of Edward Glaeser (2011) Triumph of the City demonstrates how cities make people richer, smarter, greener, healthier, and happier throughout history. His urban economic writings take us a round-the-world tour from ancient Athens to modern world cities of London and Tokyo, and those in the newly industrializing economies (NIEs), like the emerging city states: Hong Kong and Singapore. Thanks to urban density-driven agglomeration of socio-economic linkages and relations, the newly socio-economic advantageous lifestyles result with the rise of civilized ways of human life and social reciprocities. But the new dualistic (new versus old; formal vis-à-vis informal) urbanism project has its own contradictions, if not socio-economic calamities, in a globalizing world. For instance, the emergence of the so-called *World City* and/or *Global City* could be both a blessing and curse for human development in 21ˢᵗ Century.

The phenomenal *World City* is a historical process of geo-economic production networking, fuelled by neoliberal economics-driven finance capital and productive forces, crafting out the new regional divisions of labor and factors of production across different specific locations globally. Yet, the processes as well as the resulting outcomes are highly differential, if not contradictory, across different places and urbanities (Massey 2007, Sassen 2001). Taking on the phenomenal rise of London (and New York) as a kind of the *World City* and its impact on the world: greater inequality, poverty, socio-cultural and environmental deterioration in the global South. . . . And critical geographers like Doreen Massey timely challenged the one dimensional neoliberal project for global economic liberalization; highlighting London's economic imperialism and the moral debts of creating more global inequalities beyond the City's physical spaces (Massey 2004)－and the normative question is: whether London should make 'compensatory payments' to those regions, and people living, outside the British *World City*?

The phenomenal success of new global urbanism, as demonstrated by the *World City* and its hierarchy imperialist order, is worth being questioned in terms of the social equity and (in)equality, socio-spatial justice of regional growth, quality of life and global sustainability; while challenging the neoliberal economics

globalization project championed by international financial institutes like IMF, WTO and the World Bank.

The complexity of the so-called *World City* can be illustrated by the dualistic (formal versus informal, rich and poor: the very essence of the *Global City*) urban structure in major metropolitan areas, like London, New York; as well as the fast-developing cities like Seoul, Singapore and Hong Kong (Chui & Lui 2009, Sassen 2001). More specific, the new dualistic urbanism is demonstrative by an anthropological study on the Hong Kong's Chung King Mansions, a run down commercial-residential mixed building in the heart of Hong Kong urban core, where a(n enclave of) diverse, less wealthy ethnic groups (other than Chinese) reside temporarily for economic purpose (same economic liberalization logic of the globalization project?) in the Asia's *World City* (Mathews 2011). Accordingly, the globalizing spaces of the Chung King Mansions are not just the embodiments of multi-cultural and ethnicities in the *World City* (-cum-*Global City*), but also the manifestation of the fluidity of global (informal?) commercial tourism of the migrant-entrepreneurs (vis-à-vis transnational corporations). The racial diverse new comers, economic visitors, tourists, or temporary residents, of Chung King Mansions are more or less socio-economically blocked from the rest of Hong Kong (as a *World City* or *Global City*?), but they have been nomadically making cross-borders or transitional practices for globalization, in terms of trading/re-cycling out and in various products and services (legally or illegally), to and from various parts of the (developing) world which are essential for the informal globalization process. . . . One specific form of the informal ethic group based business networks is connecting the developed *World City* (*Global City*) to the rest of the developing economies and provides instrumental linkages between the old and new, the formal and informal, economies (Ross 2011, Sassen 2007).

Problématique: New Urbanism beyond the *Global City?*

Against the back drops of high-end iconic mega architectural monuments of transnational capital financed urban form (Sklair 2010), new urban spaces are also the hub of economic nomadic transits for the low-end (free-riding temporary economic migrants) globalization pilgrimage (Mathews 2011). This is what the embeddedness of the complex system of socio-economic relations in strategic sites of the contemporary urban landscape－the bolts and nuts of the *Global City* as conceptualized by Saskia Sassen (Acuto 2011, Sassen 2001, 2007). Yet, the specificity of new urban form is also characterized by its dual networking function and effects. The new informational cities in 21st century are global hinges, serving instrumental functions for global-local socio-economic, cultural and political forces, to their hubs and spokes located at different geo-political sites of relations.

Putting the *World City* onto its globalization contours − mirror-imaging the phenomenal *Global City* (Sassen 2001, 2007): the new urban form of *Global City* is more than that of the idiosyncrasies of the *World City* (Massey 2007, Taylor 2004). The specific constellation of socio-economic and power in the *Global City* is more embedded in their structural linkages, lineages and inter-play between the contradictory globalization project and urban form on the one hand; and the dynamic globalizing forces and social agencies' (critical) engagements on the other. More specific:

> Global cities are thus more than just national or regional gateways: they are connected to the widest possible tier of human interactions and they represent the highest echelon of the global urban hierarchy of cities around the planet. A global city is a type of world city that exists not solely as an articulatory site of planetary and regional urban networks, but also as a functional entity of those globalising processes of 'time/space compression' that are reconfiguring the geography of social relations and resulting in a 'multifaceted transformation of the parameters of the human condition' (Bauman, 1998). It is, quite simply, in an epoch dominated by capitalism and growing interconnectedness, a strategic hinge of globalisation (Acuto 2011: 2968).

To recapitulate the genesis and problématique of the *World City,* it is driven by economic forces at cross-borders and transnational realms, under the auspice of the nation state and international financial institutions, with social agents' crafting of transnational practices. But all these socio-economic activities are embedded in multi-racial and new ethnicities, though fluid and transient in the process, bring along with a new creation of transnational spaces and new forms of cosmopolitanism, which are distinctly different from the one brand (high-end, iconic) demonstrative high culture and high prices goods and services in the urban core. Hence, the global urbanism as demonstrated in the phenomenal *World City* is the embodiments of a variety of contradictory-dualistic urban processes, experiences and life chances − and the socio-cultural dynamics of such urbanity will shape the destiny of global sustainability: *Cosmopolitanism for Whom? New Urbanity with Equity, Human Rights and Justice?*

2. Positioning the Creative-Innovative Smart City in Risk Society?

The phenomenal hyper-urban-modernization is embedded in the genesis of the so-called *World City* like London, New York and Tokyo; followed by the regional *World City* like Beijing, Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, Istanbul, Paris, Moscow, Frankfurt, Los Angele, New Mexico and San Paulo. The new urban networks of the

World City is also globalizing thanks to new communication and logistic technologies, as shown by the advanced multi-modal mobilities, from automobiles to new communicative media of smart phones.

Torn Between the Multiple Mobilities in Dual Urbanism?

The case of *World City* has structurally anchorage with the multiple mobilities, within and beyond the specific locations of the city. Here, long-distance and frequent movement for some people is not new; what is now distinctive is the development of a 'mobility complex', large scale en-masse, hyper-speed and just-in-time as shown by the advanced informational logistic industries. This involves a number of interdependent components that, in their totality, remaking production-exchange-consumption, pleasure-seeking, work and family life, as well as friendship building. The instrumentality of global urbanism is characterized by a new configuration and compressed constellation of the urbanity with mobility complex, economy and society with the hyper-mobilities; and the new dynamic components are (Urry 2010: 199−200):

- the en-mass scale yet tailor-made movement of goods, services and people around the world
- the diversity of multi-modal mobility systems, compressing time-space exchanges
- the newly self-expanding automobility system
- the synergy of new communication media-guided physical movement
- the cross-borders and transnational mobility: e-ticketing, online-check-in and e-visa, etc.
- the contemporary governmentality on urban locations for global norms
- the new language of mobility, the capacity to compare / contrast places from around the world
- an increased multiple mobilities for people's social and emotional lives and sojourns

The new multiple mobilities regime goes along with the hegemony of neo-liberal economics, shaping the market in liberalizing economies in the last few decades! *Global City* serves strategic function for advanced capitalism in the information age; Acuto (2011: 2968) rightly specifies that a *Global City* can be characterized as a social (urban) entity that

- serves as an articulatory node of global flows;
- performs multiple and significant world city functions;
- contains central command roles within such functions;
- maintains an urban order that balances aggregation and dispersion; and

• projects such order towards the global through entrepreneurial activities.

The multiple mobilities driven urbanism enhances creativity and the smartness of the *World City*; driving its networking and communicative advantages that is historically new: the advanced use of informatics − transportation logistics for people and goods, paralleling those explosive information and knowledge (a form of valued and priced commodities in service economy!) mediated by information and communication technologies (ICT). Here the importance of the multiple mobilities of the creative agencies (middle class at large), for business and leisure traveling, and their informational derivatives like the networking of information-knowledge and social exchanges, should be stressed. According to John Urry (2010), Zygmunt Bauman (1998: 2) rightly highlights that "Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values − and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times". Since the late 1990s, the globally sourced-consumption in the 'rich North' escapes from specific sites, as populations are moving in, across and beyond 'territories':

> Many lives come to be less determined by site-specific structures, of class, family, age, career and especially neighbourhoods (Beck 1999 b; Giddens 1994). The site-specific disciplining of consumption is less marked. At least for the rich third of the world, partners, family and friends are more a matter of choice, increasingly spreading themselves around the world. There is a 'supermarket' of friends and acquaintances, and they depend upon an extensive array of inter-dependent systems of movement in order to connect with this distributed array of networks by meeting up from time to time within distinct places. (Urry, 2010: 200).

The new logics of the multi-mobilities regime are that people are torn temporarily and spatially in new global urbanism: the individuals are nomadic in fast-commuting, cross-borders and cross-cultural modes; and through these processes, they create new spaces and networks, in addition to have a new (sometimes conflicting) identities on the project with a worldview of their own of being "free" from, or moving beyond, the geo-spatially-bound milieu or any geo-territory.

What driven the Innovations-led Creative City?
More recently, the rise of the global-regional hubs of informational, service and cultural industries in the *World City* with very impressive economic performance attracts the attention of urban policy makers and academics alike (Robinson 2011). Accordingly, a 'creative city' urban strategy can boost economic performance of

city in general, or at the very least to mitigate the rise and fall of urban economic cycles. And through policy learning or the "best practices", a set of pro-creativity city development strategies have been tried out by cities or metropolitan governments around the world, emphasizing their "attractiveness" and visions for creativity, education and knowledge transfers. More specific, it is a conscious attempt (a recipe for urban sustainability?) to address more for human resources and creative capital held by people than business corporations per se. Professionals and creative artists holding the specific skills and knowledge which can re-making creative ideas into socio-economic reality are the so-called creative class. With a critical mass of creative professionals interacting at specific locations, it is argued that they will promote the vitality of such urban endeavor for creative city. In all, it is the emphasis on the softness (spirits?) of human creative capital formation, or attracting, in specific localities (Florida 2002, 2005; Martin-Brerlot et.al. 2010).

They are cultural industries-professions and skills that transform creativity into different socio-economic beneficiaries－the so-called creative class for urban vitalities! Hence, they constitute a class of their own (comparable to capitalist who own the means of production in Marxian conception): genesis of creative productions and services; gate-keeping the creativity generation at the least: 'supercreative core', 'bohemians' and 'creative professionals' (according to Florida 2002, 2005). The creative class is more than obviously needed in advanced digital capitalism; the new creative class is a major driver of today's economic development. The 'creative class' tends to concentrate (stopovers or extended transits) in certain cities; such cities therefore show a better economic performance. Though members of the 'creative class' are geographically not-fixed to one particular place permanently－nomadic mobility in reality; they are mainly attracted by 'soft' factors; thus cities should rather focus on these if they want to attract creative people (Florida 2002, 2005).

But the creative class thesis is undoubtedly being one-sided promotion for neoliberal economic ideologies and uncritical for the dominance of the "haves" over the "have-nots"－by a highly affirmative conception of contemporary class society; and it provides the justification for the unjust globalization project, at the expense of the underclass and the deprived ones. More specific, the creative class −cum− creative cities thesis is a biased urban growth strategy emphasizing certain functional elites' interests, urban booster ideologies at large:

> We can emphasize that there is no justification for urban restructuring measures in favour of certain functional elites of the neoliberal model of society (i.e. the creative professionals in Florida's conception). The development of a sustainable regional economic structure, supported by a highly networked regional innovation system and its various human resources, is not at all

dependent on gentrification and real estate development projects for the socially selective enhancement of central cities' attractiveness (Krätke 2010: 850).

The global urban challenge for 21st century is dialectical: the hyper-growth of *World City* and contradictory *Global City* are at the expense of the people in both developed and developing economies, for the equitable, fair and just provision of basic social infrastructure. This can be demonstrated by the policy advocacies for the World Habitat Day (3rd October 2010), by the Secretary General of the United Nations, on the world urbanization challenge ahead:

> With the theme "Better City, Better Life", this year's observance highlights the actions and policies that can improve well-being for the billion people who live in slums and other sub-standard housing around the world. . . . The challenges of urban poverty－from pollution to criminal gang culture－are not insurmountable. Many cities are finding successful solutions. Smart cities recognize the importance of good governance, basic urban services for all, and streets and public spaces where women and children feel safe. They also recognize that better cities can help to mitigate global challenges, such as climate change, by promoting energy conservation and environmental sustainability. Creating better cities demands the combined efforts of national and local governments, civil society and the private sector. . . . (Ban 2010).

Hence, the critical intervention is still very much a historically old challenge: poverty alleviation and basic standards of health and human security. But the global focus, the globalization project per se, for urbanization is questionably shifting away from the basic necessities for human survival but with hyper-modernizing mobility-hub cities for the creative class as a model for future urbanizing modernization.

3. Contradictions of Hyper-Modernization -cum-
Dialectics of Ecological Urbanism

In the informational 21st century, the crisis-ridden capitalism develops with a whole array of contradictions; not just the excessive consumption-driven wastages and high-carbon emissions in our limited-to-growth Earth, but also social calamities driven by the commodification of human life chance and socio-economic reciprocities, resulting in socio-economic and culturally divided and polarizing world. All these drive humanity towards many crises, let alone global and regional financial crises in the last two decades, under the shadow of global climate change!

The Trilogy of Developmental Myths for Hyper-Modernizing Urbanism?

Newly industrializing economies (NIEs) in Asia, like South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, follow economic development trajectories of Japan－the first Asia's modernizing country, to transform their nations from a developmental state to a semi-welfare state (Peng & Wong 2010). Yet, there is divergence and inherent contradictions of development when these economies survive in the waves of globalization. The developmental tensions are more or less represented in the emergence of the dualistic urban logics; more problematic, the divided socio-economic opportunities within the same urban space, in the so called *World Cities*: Tokyo, Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong and Singapore. The 21st century (new and phenomenal?) urban contradictions of the globalizing spaces and their local hyper-modernization are embedded in three separate mythical arenas but with repercussions beyond their localities.

First and foremost, it is the problematic *World City,* with the accumulation, agglomeration and high frequencies flows of people, knowledge and capital, focusing on certain major communication and transportation hubs with global networks in different regions: Tokyo in Asia, London and New York at the each ends of the Atlantics, following by regional hubs or national economic capitals of the NIEs and Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRICs). Under globalization, cities become the nodes and hubs of the spatially extensive flows of various kinds and the sophisticated, intensive-cum-extensive networks of exchanges and communication－ranging from globalizing formal or informal economic networks to transnational socio-cultural networks of various social agencies. But the burgeoning analyses on the world of cities, especially the fast modernizing urbanization regions, are always biased for wealthier urban spaces:

> The intertwining of modernity and development in urban theory, then, has established a landscape in which assumptions about the incommensurability of wealthier and poorer cities are taken for granted, and reproduced it through separate literatures that find few grounds for careful and mutual comparative reflection. However, one line of connection persists, since accounts of wealthier cities are often generalized as claims to universal knowledge about all cities. And although those writing about wealthier contexts seldom reflect on the experiences of poorer cities, there is a substantial implicit comparativism in the writings of scholars of poorer cities, who frequently choose to or need to engage with these 'theories', for example, by working creatively to understand the situations they are working in, to secure publication in international journals, or to authorize their research findings for a wider audience (Robinson 2011: 3).

Second, the new global (-regional-local) production networks have been embedded by neoliberal economic doctrines (of the World Bank, IMF and WTO alike) for opening or liberalizing the market growth model, with the promotion of export-oriented, or free enterprise advantages, special economic zones; like those special economic zones championed by Asia NIEs and the BRICs, China and India in particular, which are integrated as the national industrialization strategy with strong state direction, turning the economic zones into catalysts for export-oriented industrialization" (Bach 2011, Bhattacharya 2010). Accordingly, the new mode of industrial-spatial policy for economic development in these NIEs creates these zones, "serving premised on infrastructure and transformative of the national economy, focus on a range of objectives from diversifying a regional economic base to supporting the development of small and medium enterprises, information processing, or off-shore banking, insurance and securities." (Bach 2011: 103−104, McCallum 2011). But since these export-oriented, special economic or enterprise, zones are so deeply embedded in their regional environment that they become hybrid zones/cities and enable the formation of the dualistic world cities.

Last and more recently, the *World City* thesis has been reinforced by a new breed of labour forces, apart from the nomadic poor as noted in the case of Hong Kong's Chung King Mansions (Mathews 2011), namely those creativity and innovations fostered by the so-called creative classes in smart cities. Here, the human face of new urbanity in 21st century should be emphasized. Synthesizing research works on the mobility of creative workers in European cities, a recent study challenges the thesis about the high(er) mobility of the creative class − at least it is not the case in European creative hubs (Martin-Brelot, et.al. 2010), which highlights that (1) the European creative class is not as mobile as Florida (2002) suggested; (2) the so-called 'personal trajectory factor' (or 'personal connection factor'), that is not taken into account by Florida (2002, 2006) and other writers, is very important for the European context. In other words, European (and to a large extent in Asia's differential linguistic and cultural heritage) creative workers in multicultural milieu do not seem to be much more mobile than their counterparts in (English speaking) USA. Since creative people are having their own unique character-personality by and large . . . it is rightly to stress the importance of the localness (vis-à-vis the globalizing ones) and their creative idiosyncrasies:

the majority of respondents [members of creative class] in our survey were born or studied in the region where they currently live, which suggests that not only international but also long-distance national migration plays a subordinate role in their life. This can be explained by the strong embeddedness of European talent workers in the local labour markets through personal networks, or the particular functioning of the housing market in European countries,

which may impede mobility. 'Rooted territoriality' is one of the important conditions for the preservation of cultural diversity in Europe. It keeps the patchwork of national distinctions and local customs in a sustainable shape (Martin-Brelot, et.al. 2010: 866)

The Global Dualistic Structure: Inertia and Dynamics in New Urbanity

The new urbanism under hyper-modernization is driven by the hegemony of neoliberal economic ideologies, resulting in the globalization-driven social polarization. More specific, the advanced use of ICT in banking and financial sectors, coupling with the logistics and trading operations for global manufacturing and trading, is instrumental in creating a free global market of advanced capitalism: *digital capitalism* – the condition where ICT networks are directly generalizing social and cultural range of capitalist economy as never before (Schiller 1999). In the information age, *digital capitalism* therefore is predominantly a global corporateled market system. It is also free to physically transcend territorial boundaries and, more importantly, to take economic advantages of the sudden absence of geopolitical constraints on its development.

Globally speaking, the present form of informatization of people's work and societal (virtual) encounters has reinforced a dual, if not divided global society: the informational-based informal economy is juxtaposed with a downgraded labourbased informal economy resulting in a spatial structure: a city which combines segregation, diversity, and hierarchy (Castells 1996, 2000). The ICT enhances a flexible production regime, generating more wealth and global economic activities. But far from developing an equitable and better society, the ICT-driven supermodern society has produced more social disasters in the period 1960s to 1990s than ever before (WCSDG 2004; see Fig. 1).

Recent studies confirm the worsening of global inequality, over the last half century! Highlighting the polarization of life chance and differential impact of economic liberalization, a recent study tracks the trend of global income inequality and confirms that global inequality is still the dominant trend for the last few decades (Ortiz & Cummins 2011: 11–19; see Fig. 2) – using a Power-Purchasing-Parity (PPP) dataset in constant 2005 international dollars to measure the distribution of world income from 1990 to 2007: while the overall picture of global inequality improves under the PPP measure, as compared with the market-exchange rate (where all national income estimates are compared in constant 2000 U.S. dollars), the data still confirm severe income disparities. In 2007, the top 20% of the world owned 70% of total income compared to just 2% for the bottom 20%. And the poorest 40% of the global population increased its share of total income by an insignificant 1.7% in the period 1990 to 2007. Furthermore, Milanovic (2005, 2009)
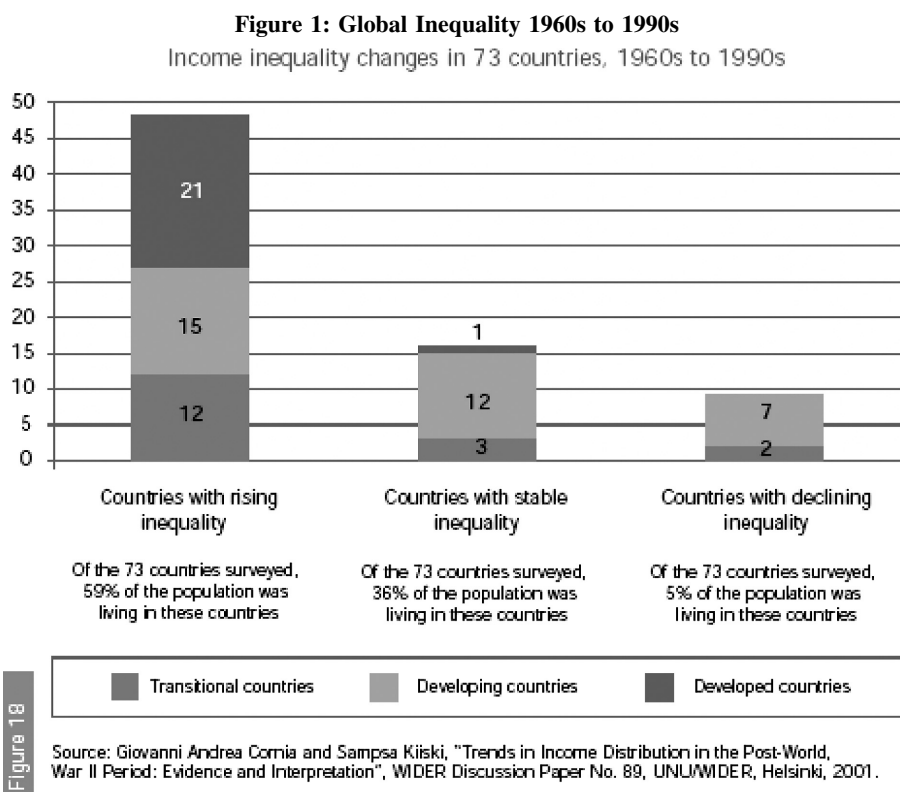
Figure 1: Global Inequality 1960s to 1990s

Income inequality changes in 73 countries, 1960s to 1990s

	Countries with rising inequality	Countries with stable inequality	Countries with declining inequality
Developed countries	21	1	
Developing countries	15	12	7
Transitional countries	12	3	2

Of the 73 countries surveyed, 59% of the population was living in these countries

Of the 73 countries surveyed, 36% of the population was living in these countries

Of the 73 countries surveyed, 5% of the population was living in these countries

Transitional countries   Developing countries   Developed countries

Source: Giovanni Andrea Cornia and Sampsa Kiiski, "Trends in Income Distribution in the Post-World, War II Period: Evidence and Interpretation", WIDER Discussion Paper No. 89, UNU/WIDER, Helsinki, 2001.

Figure 18

(Source: WCSDG 2004, p.44)

Figure 2: Summary Results of Global Income Distribution by Population Quintiles, 1990–2007 (or latest available) in PPP constant 2005 international dollars

	Global Distribution (%)		
	1990	2000	2007
Q 5	75.3	74.4	69.5
Q 4	14.9	14.2	16.5
Q 3	5.4	6.3	7.8
Q 2	3.0	3.4	4.2
Q 1	1.5	1.7	2.0
# of observations	99	127	136
% of global population	86.1	91.1	92.4
% of global GDP	85.3	87.4	88.6

(Source: Ortiz & Cummins 2011: 16)

Figure 3: Estimated Global Gini Indices, 1820–2002

Year	Gini
1820	43.0
1850	53.2
1870	56.0
1913	61.0
1929	61.6
1950	64.0
1960	63.5
1980	65.7
2002	70.7

(Source: Milanovic 2009)

and Cornia (2003) confirm the historical growth of global income inequality since 1960s (to 2002, most updated data available; see Fig. 3). In all, we can conclude that, irrespective of method of measurement on global income disparities, global income inequality remains exceptionally high throughout the post World War II modern history.

Notwithstanding that all of these are the consequences of the globalization project! Not without exception, all developing economies aided by transnational corporations networking have been integrated hierarchically into the global system of capitalism, and the globalizing process of integration widens the gaps and causes socio-economic divisions and divides between communities, countries, and regions. Even the neo-liberal economic ideologies−oriented international bodies, like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recently questions the globalization-driven global problems, aiming to re-examine the global mitigation for poverty and development problems−shortfall of bilateral and multi-lateral aid for developing economies in the midst of global change (http://www.aideffectiveness.org/).

4. New Cosmopolitanism in the Information Age: the Quest for Eco-Humanity Synergy?

But what is the future (crisis?) for cosmopolitanism in the informational 21st century? Critical urban theory should actively take on the challenge of the informational city, as posed by emerging urban growth ideologies. David Harvey (2009: 17−36) has recently challenged Immanuel Kant's conception of cosmopolitan law, criticizing it as having dependency upon certain kinds of restrictive geographical thought that implicated what he thought to be the finite qualities of a globe divided into discrete culture-language areas, or territories. In other worlds, the notion of global cosmopolitanism is in question; the variations of the differential, or multiple, modernity are more likely the reality in the advanced informational, digital capitalism in a globalizing world.

New Cosmopolitan Individualization in Compressed Hyper-Modernizing Risk Society

Cosmopolitanism in the informational 21st century has a new historical meaning for humanity, people at large, vis-à-vis the ecological world; it is the specific reference to the sense, or essence for, the milieu where and when we live and survive, and longing for longevity across generations, sustainability in historical terms. For the new historicity of humanity, it is rightly noted that, with reference to Doreen Massey (2005) seminal work on socio-spatial relationship of human beings, the

sense and essence of "place":

> Through all these configurations and developments of place as inherently
> relational, place itself emerges not as a logical and local counterposition to the
> global scale. Place is not opposed to the planet. It is instead an ongoing
> assemblage, constellation, and agonistic coming together of narratives and
> trajectories that are in themselves insufficiently conceptualized as either local or
> global. The spatiality of place, in this sense, provides the sphere of the
> possibility of the existence of multiplicity (Massey 1999: 279). The negotiation
> of difference in place is always a process of, and invitation to, reconstellate the
> 'we', and place's geographical challenge thought this way is precisely that it is
> never closeable. . . . . Thinking place as relational is one way of grounding the
> challenge of the unexpected, the discontinuous, that planetarity poses. Living in
> the imagination of this kind of place, this kind of planet, offers a way of living
> together beyond the proscriptions of the avowedly cosmopolitan (Jazeel 2011:
> 92−93).

In other words, there is multiple differential modernity in the informational, risk,
global society; and the new challenge for urban cosmopolitanism, as represented by
the emergence of new world cities and their new socio-economic and spatial
networks in a globalizing world, is the sense of place and essence of humanity in
the hyper-modernity. Here, the new representations of multiple hyper-modernity are
demonstrably by the emerging contradictions in NIEs and BRICs.

With reference to David Harvey's (1980) *The Condition of Postmodernity*
thesis, Chang (2010) rightly articulates that since the mid-20th century, the spatial
integration −cum− temporal condensation of (compressing) political economic and
cultural activities within a short historical time of less than two-to-three decade on
the global and local scales has been the condition for capitalist modernity; and
under the globalizing forces in the information age, the compression process has
intensified to such an extent that national societies have increasingly become
obsolete as units of self-contained modernity. Even South Korea, having a very
strong traditionalism for family values for marriage, reproduction and filial piety, is
subjected to the hyper-modernizing urbanism for the "individualization of life course
as decided by oneself"−women act defiantly against family values: instead of
following family tradition for human reproduction, total fertility rate for South
Korean women is among the least reproductive ones.

In a hyper-modernizing society, as shown in many NIEs, the modernization and
urbanization have been compressed and speed-up within a limited time frame of two
decades. The inter-generational life course of the population is being forced within a
spectrum of pre-modernity to hyper-modernity; namely, within a three-generation

family, the grandparents are still very much pre-modern, the middle-age parents are within the baby-boomer cohort, and the youngest ones are communicating with smart mobile phones. The socio-cultural consequences of such a compressed modernizing complexity are significantly to re-defining and re-shaping (young) people's world views; life chances and lifestyles are highly and distinctly differentiated between three generations though they spatially residing in the same locality. For instance, the newly acquired worldview of South Korean young ladies are the anti-thesis of the traditional role model for good family responsibility of being a good housewife－giving birth and caring all (infant to aged) family members; namely, they have almost no aspiration for forming a family (either permanently single or married with no child, nor living with their parents-in-law) and less likely to have new born (the world lowest total fertility rate of 1; less than the replacement rate of 2.1). Even if they got married, the chance of getting divorce is more than 50% (of the married couples, according to statistics). The new gendering role(s) calls for liberation and independency has undermined the very basis of human species survival by not reproducing enough for the whole population (Chang 2010).

Similarly, the miraculous consequences of Chinese economic miracle and demographic innovations of "one-child policy" in the last three decades also supersede the trajectory of South Korean socio-economic development (Yan 2010): the traditional extended (three generations) families and nuclear families (spouses have two children) are no longer the norms (less than 50% of the total households in whole population). All these demonstrate new phenomenal contradictions in 21st century hyper-urbanizing Asia's NIEs, like South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, and more recently China as well, that they are going to have dis-continuity in terms of demography－it is a slow motion of population decline (moving towards demographic suicidal?) by not having human reproduction in the long run. Here, the logics are the enhanced individualization processes in a compressed socio-cultural liberation in flux in the hyper-modernizing urbanism within a short (20–30 years) historical time.

Individualization in hyper-modernity, according to Ulrich Beck (1992, 1999 b), demonstrates a fundamental shift in the relation between the individual and society meaning that the self-radicalization of modernity has set the individual free from most previous all-encompassing social categories in industrial society, such as family, kinship, gender, and class, and has emerged as the reproduction unit for the social in a risk society. And the challenge is how to make the individualization process for global sustainability in the risk realm functional for humanity at large.

The challenge seems to be met by recent global social activism. But in a highly globalizing world in the information age, the emerging cosmopolitanism is

embedded with the diversities and complexity of human civilization in, through and beyond cross-cultural and cross-border exchange-encounters and flowing. By facilitating and reinforcing various civic progressive networks for the better world (say, the campaigns to end global poverty, global peace movement and sustainable future), vis-à-vis the globalizing economic hegemony shaped by international business and governmental organizations (IMF, World Bank and WTO; G 8, G 20 and World Economic Forum), it is possible to make transnational advocacies network and to create cosmopolitan coalitions of progressive social agencies for sustainable future－the so-called cosmopolitical realpolitik (Beck & Grande 2010: 435; Lai 2008).

To quest for sustainable future in a globalizing risk society in the information age, the cosmopolitical realpolitik should be articulated (Beck & Grande 2010: 436) with the following premises:

1. the new historical reality of world risk society is that no nation can master its problems alone; those who play the national card will inevitably lose.
2. global problems produce new cosmopolitan imperatives which give rise to transnational communities of risk.
3. international organizations are not merely the continuation of national politics by other means; they can transform national interests.
4. cosmopolitan realism is also economic realism. It reduces and redistributes costs because costs rise exponentially with the loss of legitimacy.

The essence of cosmopolitanism is a specific critical engaging approach to ensuring that one's own (individual or collective) interests are promoted and made to prevail. Cosmopolitan realism calls for respect for one's own and everyone interests, and taking an inclusive position for ideals and virtues. In this process of recognizing one's and everyone position－for the pursuit of individual and (compatible to) collective goals, juxtaposing the national and (serving for the) global ones, interests become 'reflexive national interests' through long term engaging strategies of self-limitation; more precisely, empowerment arises from self-limitation. In reality, however, the path towards a sustainable one is rocky and for cosmopolitan realpolitik, it is full of challenging contradictions. The right approach facing these challenges is a critical re-examination and reflection on the ethics and norms of human civilization on the one hand, and bio, ecological ethics of the natural world on the other. Hence the future for cosmopolitan realpolitick is open; all subject to our progressive endeavor (Beck & Grande 2010).

Strategically, the new cosmopolitanism call for fresh critical engagements of individuals in global system; thanks to new media of the Internet and the "Clouding of ICT", people can engage in global affairs more than ever－one forgotten

dimension of social innovations originated from people can be rejuvenated for participatory actions, in and beyond the cyberspace, with all kind of self-generating media contents (Lai 2008, in press).

New Cosmopolitanism-driven Reflexive Eco-Modernity?

Sharing strong affinities with Doreen Massey's calling for geographies of responsibility, the social agency in geo-politics thesis of Iris M. Young (2003, 2004, 2007) proposed a 'social connection' model in which political responsibility is derived from the ways in which different actors are shaping, as well as being shaped, in structural social processes. The new political responsibility represents a collective practice, articulating social justice with the evaluation of individual conduct and social interaction in a non-reductive way. This alternative is a new model of "shared responsibility" between individuals and the communal one in which responsibility is distributed across complex networks of causality and agency (Barnett 2011: 252). Here, the normative challenge for the *World City*, the globalization project at large, is echoing the critiques on the inequalities derived from new labor process in capitalism.

The mistaken functional specific land use in cities throughout the last century is doomed to failure! For future, a socio-cultural compatible, small scaling and mixing-up of urban land/space use is the key for sociable, livable cities: people need spaces for socio-economic reciprocities, aiming and achieving socially sustainability. To achieve this, we need both normative appeals and positive logical reasoning, taking into account of multiplicity of urbanity in a globalizing world; say the least is the respect for social, economic and cultural rights and human needs at large.

Without a significant change of the pro-growth development model as championed by the market-friendly international governmental organizations, like IMF, World Bank and WTO, human civilization will be destined to be suicidal. Perhaps, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' characterization on the inherent contradictions of the crisis-ridden capitalism is partially right, as in the context of 21st century, the pro-growth development model is grave-digging: strong population growth in urban centres, along with multiple mobilities, excessive global consumption and rising carbon emissions. . . all are destroying human life and ecological worlds (Urry 2010: 192)－global climate change is an irreversible destiny: frequent flooding and drought, and (un-)seasonal disasters and catastrophes, plus extreme weather conditions become the norm, with no exception. And the only way for human survival is more or less to mitigate such global crisis in the coming decades, pursuing ecological modernization.

Up to late 2011, global initiatives for climate change have not been successful, especially in nurturing global green house gases emission limits after the Kyoto

Protocol. . . . The United Nations' climate change summit in Copenhagen (COP15; 7−18. December 2009) disappointed not just environmentalists and political leaders, but global society at large, by failing to produce a legally binding treaty on reducing greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide (CO2). Seemingly, it is also a double-failure of the United Nations' initiatives on Climate Change for both the Bali Conference on Climate Change (3−14. December 2007) and the COP15.[1] More specific, the post-Copenhagen preparative meetings for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have been repeatedly toning down for a "flexible" and "comprising" approach for achieving something just for non-legally biding agreement for Cancun (Mexico) Climate Change Summit (COP16), 29.November to 10.December 2010−while the next hope will be another round of talks for Climate Change Summit in South Africa 2011. . . . Perhaps more and more global summits (until the end of human civilization?) are needed prior to the consensus building and formation of the global will for the (dying?) human species and for ecological urban-modernization−But we are running out of time!

Climate change is especially intertwining with a global-regional-local energy crisis, with the excess use of, and dependency on, the carbon emission fossil fuels but is exacerbated by the under-investment and development for renewable energy. The inertia against "the global solution for global problem" is ironically demonstrated also by well participation of the emerging economies, like the BRICs and the once reluctant participant for global governance for climate change, U.S.A. Here, the role of BRICs is particularly critical in shaping global warming that since 2007, the BRICs countries, representing one-fourth of the world GDP, have contributed to over 30% of global energy use and 33% of CO2 emissions from fuel combustion (IEA 2009 a/b; Olivier & Peters 2010). At the very least, they are the growth engines, requiring more energy, emitting more greenhouse gas, for (or destroying?) global development in the last decade and for the coming ones as well.

The timely crucial issue is how societies around the world manage hyper-urban-modernization with clean and renewable energy re-sourcing, with less carbon footprints or neutrality, during climate change crisis−some form of smart city with sustainable energy re-sourcing locally is urgently required. In other words, the paradigmatic shift requires more than technological change per se; normative and ethical questions and choices to foster the shift towards ecological modernity are deemed urgent necessary.

Obviously, problems of and solutions for climate change are more than politics and technologies per se; the contradictions and mitigating strategies are socio-

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1) See http://unfccc.int/2860.php and http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_15/items/5257.php, for the COP15 and COP16.

political therefore need "politicking". But we should be reminded that too much of the concept of 'climate politics' castrates climate politics. It ignores the fact that climate politics is precisely not about climate but about transforming the basic concepts and institutions of first, industrial, nation-state modernity. Here, the calling is for a transformation of our life world (Beck 2010: 256). Hence, the new worldview for sustainable development should be a fundamental shift of developmental course for the greening of economy and society－reflexive ecological modernization for global-cum-local sustainability.

At this historical conjuncture, in the midst of the informational risk society, the normative call for social justice, vis-à-vis, the globalization project, is more than obvious timely. Rather than thinking in philosophical terms of social justice as idealized models, there is an identifiable shift for global actions of transnational advocacies for economic, social and cultural rights in the realm of human rights from the poor of the exploited by the *World Cities* and *Global City*, with the down-to-earth experience and feelings for intuitive understandings of injustice and social calamities resulting from the free flows of capital. And humanity can only survive if human feeling and normative judgments on human rights, socio-economic developmental justice, and sustainable development, can turn people for greater responsibility for knowledge creation and global actions－new urban utopia with progressive cosmopolitan *realpolitik!*

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